

ICRA

International Communication
Rights Alliance 

This is a policy statement for the International Communication Rights Alliance (ICRA). A policy statement is an important document that explains a group's plans and activities. This document is about communication rights for people with communication needs. Communication needs are different for each person.

Introduction

ICRA made this policy statement. ICRA is a group of individuals and organisations including:

- the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)
- Deafblind International (DbI), and
- the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI).

The ICRA started in 2020.

ICRA speaks for all people with communication needs.

ICRA started because governments are not doing enough for people with communication needs. ICRA wants governments to:

- Take note of the people who have communication needs
- Understand what communication needs are and what they need to do
- Understand what tools and devices people need
- Make services better
- Run programs so people have a positive attitude to people with communication needs

What do we mean by people with communication needs?

The ability to communicate depends on things:

- inside the person's body
- outside of the person's body. [1]

People with communication needs have difficulties with all or some of these things.

Inside the person's body: People with communication needs may have:

- physical disabilities
- difficulty in the way their muscles work
- problems with brain function

Outside the person's body: People with communication needs have:

- different opportunities for education
- people around them with different attitudes and skills
- different personalities that can help them, or hold them back.

Communication Rights and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability

The Convention talks about communication in Articles 12, 21 and 24. It lists all the things that are part of communication, such as:

- different languages,
- what words look like
- braille
- tactile communication
- large print
- accessible multimedia such as television, with captions or sign language interpreters
- written language that is easy to read, audio options for written information, plain-language
- human-reader
- augmentative and alternative modes, such as pictures, Key Word Sign
- communication technology, such as devices or iPads with speaking Apps.

Communication is important for all other Articles as well.

Why is communication important?

People with communication needs are different from each other in:

- things that they need
- life situations

Their needs are always changing.

They need:

- people who understand them
- communication supports
- technology to help with communication (e.g. Voice Output Devices)

These things should be available whenever the person needs them.

If these things are not available, this means that countries have not followed Article 12, 21 and 24 of the Convention.

Communication is a part of our daily lives. Everybody has the right to communicate and talk to other people.

Call to Action – What we want the Committee to do

1. The ICRA wants the committee to:
 - take note of what we have said to guide the CRPD committee work
 - encourage governments to take actions that improves lives of people with communication needs.
 - make sure every country knows how important communication needs are.
 - make sure every country knows different ways to communicate.
2. The ICRA wants countries that signed the Convention to:
 - collect information about people with communication needs. For example:
 - a. how many people are there in your country with the different communication needs?
 - b. How much funding do they get?
 - c. How many staff trained in communication needs do you have?
 - d. How many facilities and schools for people with communication needs do you have?
3. The ICRA wants the government to:
 - make sure people with communication needs get what they need on an ongoing basis.
 - support campaigns about communication needs in education settings, such as schools.
4. The ICRA wants schools to:
 - improve on what they know about communication rights.
 - work well with different services who help people with communication needs.

5. The ICRA wants services that help people with communication needs to:
 - share information.
 - share their services.
 - encourage their members and the public to support ICRA's plan.
 - make sure people know how important meeting communication needs are.
 - run training on how to be a good communication partner for
 - a. public services e.g., transport providers, libraries
 - b. the general public

This training should be run or co-run by people with communication needs.

6. The ICRA wants companies and investors to:
 - find ways to improve communication access.
 - spend money to make technology for people with communication needs.
 - support different services who help people with communication needs.
 - make communication needs one of their top responsibilities.
 - involve people with communication needs in conversations about access, such as about:
 - a. making and testing new technology
 - b. services

7. The ICRA wants the public to:
 - respect people with disabilities, including people with communication needs.
 - learn more about what communication needs are.
 - support different services who help people with communication needs.
 - go to training on how to be a good communication partner

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1. The ICRA uses "body function and structure" to talk about communication needs. This is from a document called International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organisation, 2001)