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Centre for
Disability
Studies

Life as a Worker: An Inclusive Research Approach to Exploring the Experiences of People with Disabilities



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who are the inclusive research network?	1
What is our Research About?.....	2
Here's What Some People Said About Human Rights	3
Access to Human Rights	3
Respect of Human Rights.....	4
Equality & Discrimination	4
It's about INCLUSION not exclusion	5
What Helps People With Disabilities Have a Great Life? Here's what some people said... ..	6
Money	6
Employment.....	6
Access to health.....	7
Access to education	8
Access to transportation	8
Support	9
Housing	9
now Let's look at our Rights as a Worker	10
How we did Research on Life as a Worker?	11
We collected information about what 24 people said about their experiences as a worker	12
Employment Status	13
Question 1: Do you think you have equal opportunity to do the work you want to do?14	
Question 1 Responses: 'yes'.....	15
What people who responded 'yes' said about equal opportunity	16

Question 1 Responses: 'No'	17
What people who responded 'no' said about equal opportunity	18
Question 2: do you have security and safety at work?	19
Question 2 Responses: 'yes'	20
What people said about safety and security at work	21
Question 2 Responses: 'No'	22
What people said about safety and security at work	23
Question 3: Is it easy for you to find the job that you want to do?	24
Question 3 Responses	25
What people said about finding a job	26
Question 4: Is it important that you can get to and from work and that you can get around your workplace easily?	27
Question 4 Responses	28
What people said about getting to and around their workplace	29
Question 5: How important is training for you to get a job and keep a job?	30
Question 5 Responses	31
What people said about training	33
Conclusion	34
The UN convention and employment	34
What we found out	35
What we learnt through being inclusive researchers	36

WHO ARE THE INCLUSIVE RESEARCH NETWORK?

We are a group of co-researchers with intellectual disabilities, their supporters, and university researchers from the Centre for Disability Studies. We do research together. Our motto is “nothing about us, without us!”



WHAT IS OUR RESEARCH ABOUT?



- We wanted to do research about the right of people with intellectual disabilities
- We learnt about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- We wanted to find out about how people with intellectual disabilities experienced their rights in their day-to-day life
- We learnt that not a lot of research had been done in this area

HERE'S WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAID ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

ACCESS TO HUMAN RIGHTS

“You have the rights, but you have to know about the rights”

“Some people didn't even know they had rights”

“Some people knew they had rights but were afraid to speak up”

RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

“Not only about having rights. It’s about knowing what your rights are and having them respected”

“Respect should come from the government, teachers, employers, support staff”

EQUALITY & DISCRIMINATION

“People with disability need to be given a fair go. Not be discriminated against and have their choices listened to and respected”

It’s not only about having rights, but knowing what your rights are and having them respected!

IT'S ABOUT INCLUSION NOT EXCLUSION

“We think everyone should know about our rights (that means people with disability and the community)”

WHAT HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE A GREAT LIFE? HERE'S WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAID...

MONEY

“It helps us to have enough money and to do things that help us with support and access”

EMPLOYMENT

“It is hard when you are in a work environment, when you’re the only person with a disability. You’re just trying to do your best and they don’t understand how slow or how much information you need to do your job efficiently”

“We want to try to be ordinary people. We’re not stupid and we have got the right to be at work. Never underestimate a person with disability who knows what they are doing”

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

“Having a doctor you like and trust”

“You need a support worker who you trust and remembers appointments”

“You have got to have an understanding of what’s going on or have a support worker that knows your background history”

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

“If I wanted to do a course, I would have to look at support with the notes”

“It is important to have a good education with disability, because it helps you to learn stuff that helps you later in life”

“Access to computers for gaining knowledge”

ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

“Getting access to transportation is important o be able to get to places”

SUPPORT

“We think it might be interesting to do the interviews again now that the NDIS have rolled out in NSW”

HOUSING

“Right to Safety”

“I think it is important to make sure no one is going to take advantage of you. You have to ask questions in order to get the answers you need”

NOW LET'S LOOK AT OUR RIGHTS AS A WORKER



- We have looked at people's rights in the areas of health, housing, education, and employment
- This paper only looks at employment rights
- Article 27 of the Convention says that people with disabilities have the same chances and rights at work as everyone else
- Our research question is **“What are the experiences of people with intellectual disability around their rights as workers?”**



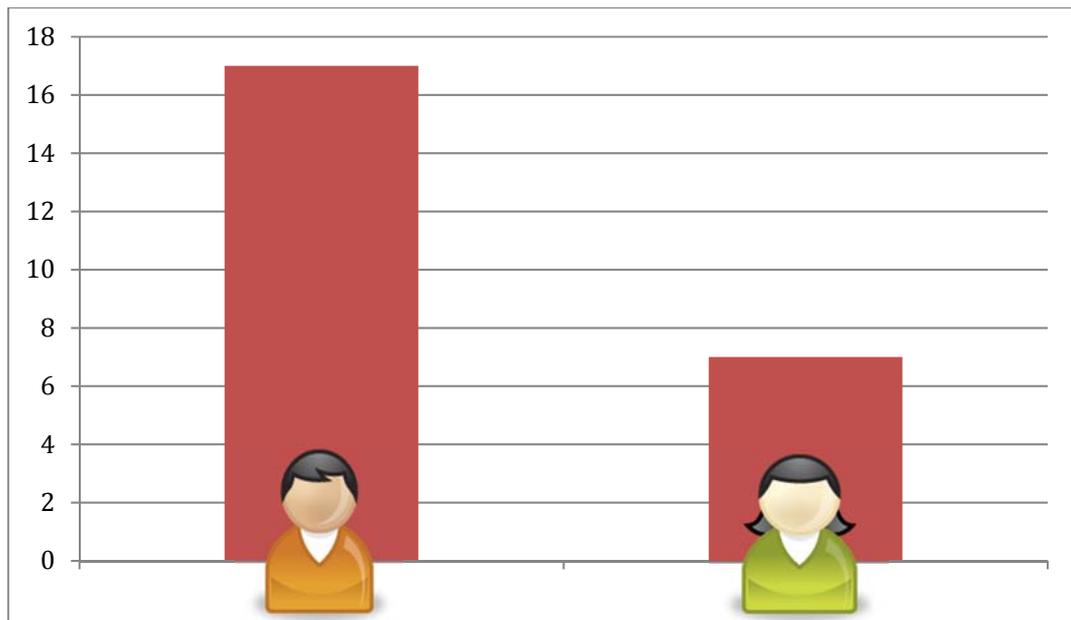
HOW WE DID RESEARCH ON LIFE AS A WORKER?

- We decided that interviews were the best way of getting the information that we wanted
- So we developed a series of questions on rights at work
- One co-researcher with intellectual disability and one without conducted the interviews
- The study was approved by the ethics committee at the University of Sydney



WE COLLECTED INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT 24 PEOPLE SAID ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AS A WORKER

We interviewed 17 men and 7 women

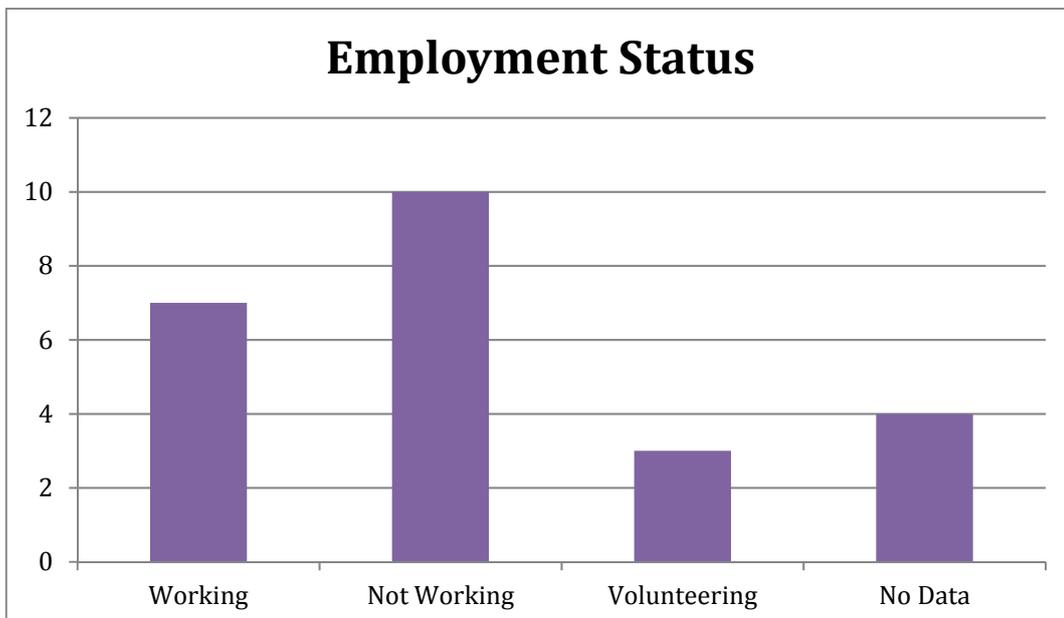


EMPLOYMENT STATUS

7 of these people we talked to were currently working

10 were not currently working but some had held a job in the past

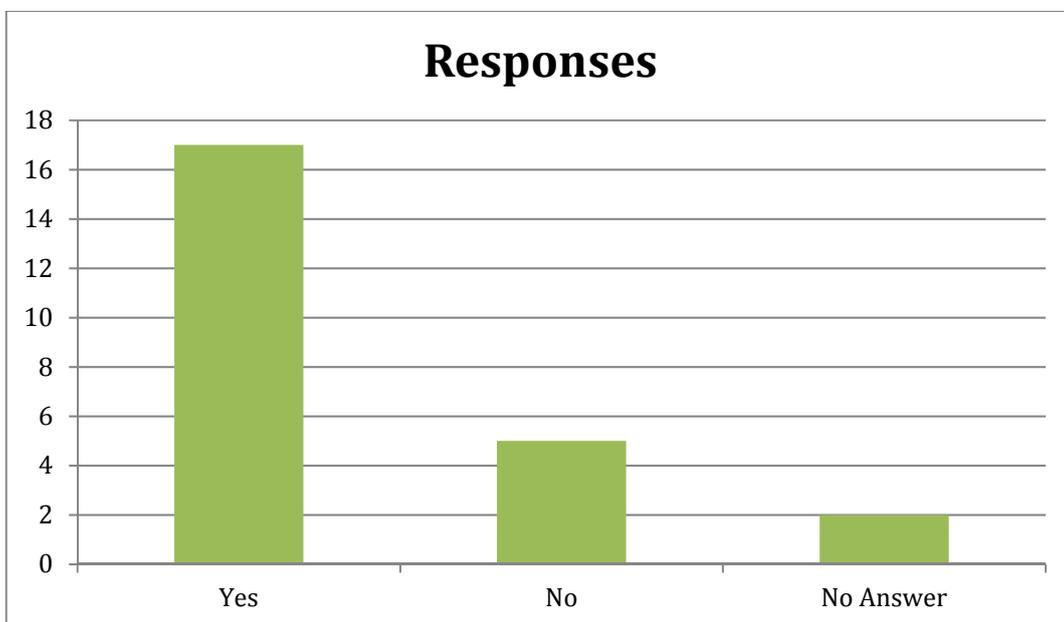
3 people had a volunteer position.



QUESTION 1: DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO DO THE WORK YOU WANT TO DO?

In response to this question:

- 17 said 'yes'
- 5 said 'no'
- 2 gave no answer



QUESTION 1 RESPONSES: 'YES'

People who said 'yes' said that they were happy about their opportunities because they:

	Have a job NOW that they like/ Had a job in the PAST that they liked
	CHOOSE not to work at the moment
	Do VOLUNTEER work

WHAT PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED 'YES' SAID ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

One person told us that he is working with dedicated staff and working in a team. He has the opportunity to teach others and learn from others.



QUESTION 1 RESPONSES: 'NO'

People who said 'NO' said they were UNHAPPY about their opportunities because of:

	<p>Bullying</p>
	<p>Not getting a fair go</p>

WHAT PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED 'NO' SAID ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

One person said:

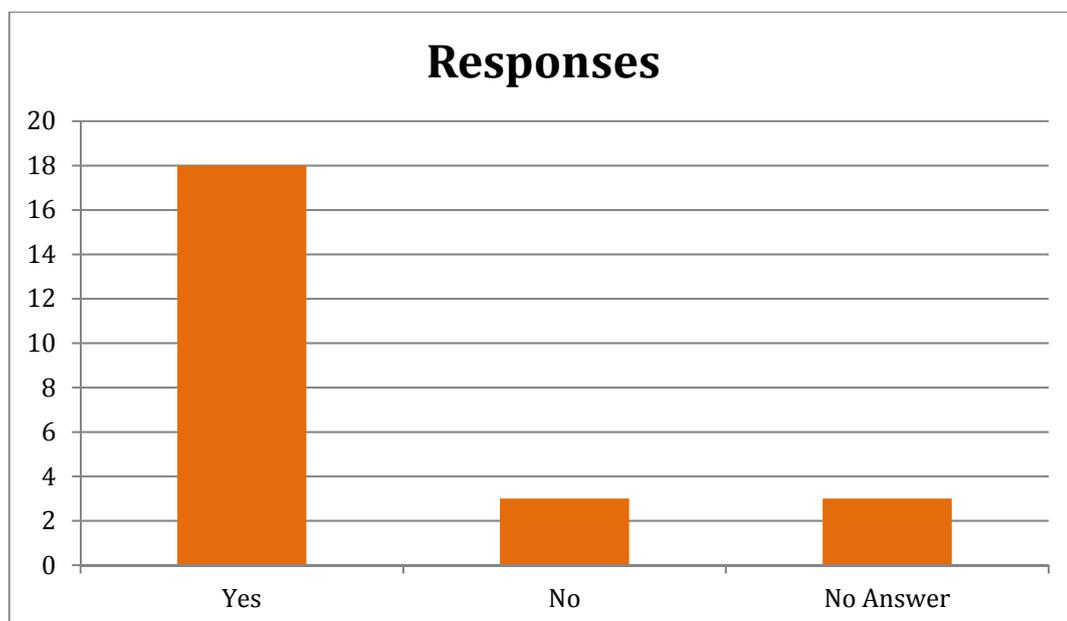
“[There are] people out there who don't give people a fair go with disabilities (...) They should give them more of a go I think. So, people should, because it's hard for them.”



QUESTION 2: DO YOU HAVE SECURITY AND SAFETY AT WORK?

In response to this question:

- 18 people said 'yes'
- 3 people said 'no'
- 3 people didn't answer



QUESTION 2 RESPONSES: 'YES'

People who said 'YES' spoke said:

	<p>People at work are helpful</p>
	<p>Their work had good Work, Health, and Safety</p>

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT SAFETY AND SECURITY AT WORK...

One person said:



“Yes, people are nice
and helpful. When I
ask for help they come.”

QUESTION 2 RESPONSES: 'NO'

People who said 'No' spoke about:

	No job security
	Bullying
	Poor Work, Health, and Safety

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT SAFETY AND SECURITY AT WORK...

This is what one person said:

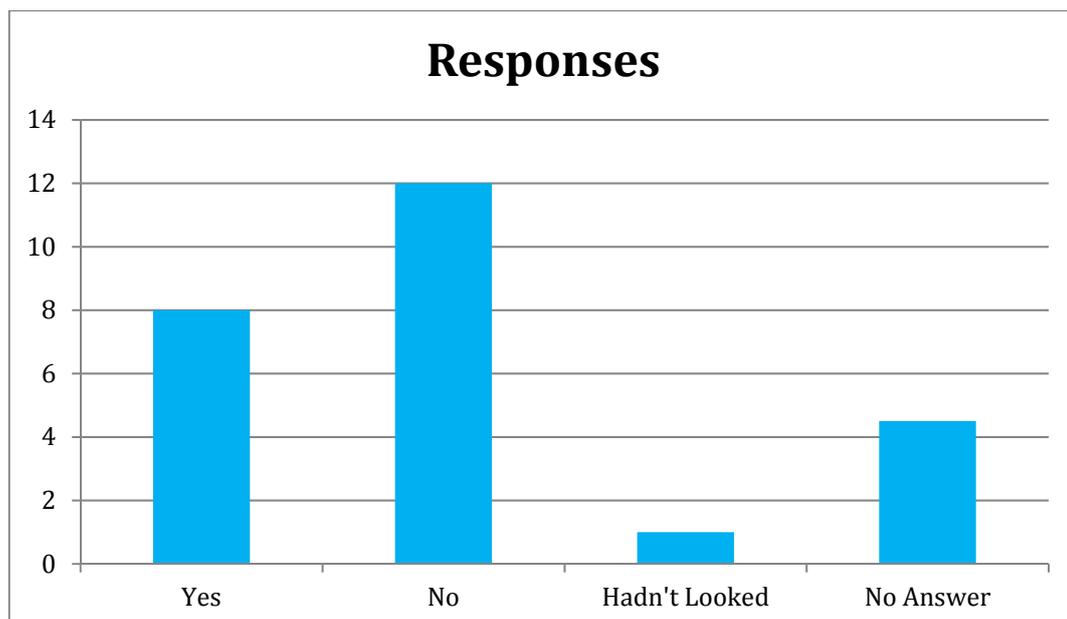
The room at their previous work was 'too tiny' and not ventilated. The person got a sinus infection because of this which was the main reason why they left the job. He also experienced high blood pressure while working there because he was anxious.



QUESTION 3: IS IT EASY FOR YOU TO FIND THE JOB THAT YOU WANT TO DO?

In response to this question:

- 8 people said 'yes'
- 12 people said 'no'
- 1 person said that they hadn't looked for work
- 3 people didn't answer



QUESTION 3 RESPONSES

People who answered this question said:

	<p>I found my own job</p>
	<p>I got help finding my</p>
	<p>It's difficult</p>

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT FINDING A JOB...

This is what one person said:

‘The person found an ad for a paper run in the local newspaper, rang up about it and got the job.’



Another person said:

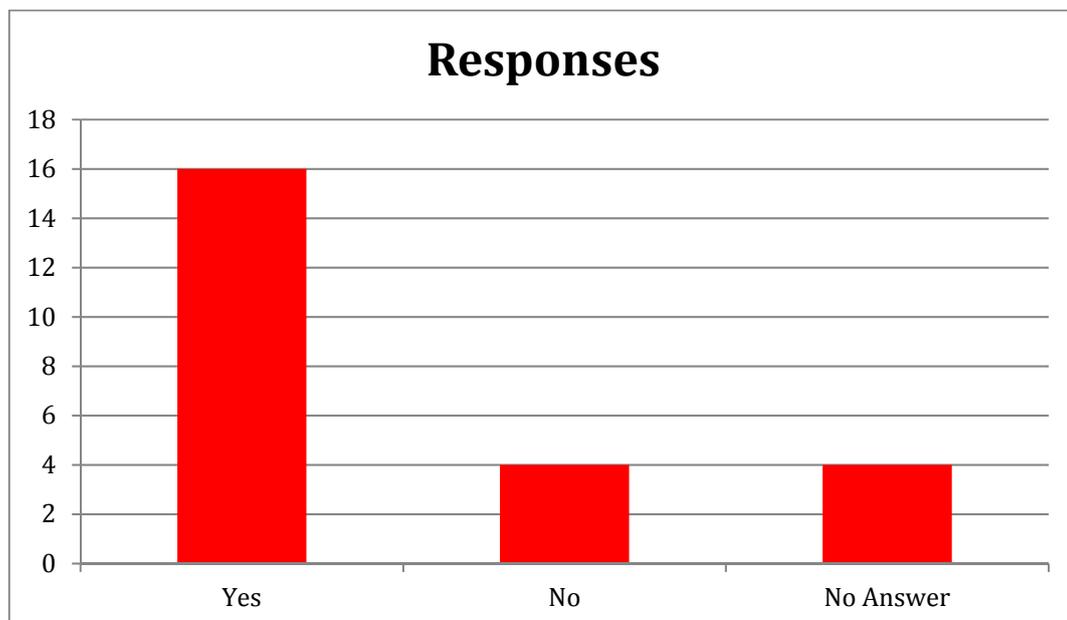
‘With the employment situation at the moment it’s hard to find a job anywhere.’



QUESTION 4: IS IT IMPORTANT THAT YOU CAN GET TO AND FROM WORK AND THAT YOU CAN GET AROUND YOUR WORKPLACE EASILY?

In response to this question:

- 16 people said yes
- 4 said no
- 4 did not answer



QUESTION 4 RESPONSES

People talked about:

	Public Transport
	Coping
	Wheelchair Access
	No Issues

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT GETTING TO AND AROUND THEIR WORKPLACE...

This is what one person said who that they had ‘no issues’:

“I can walk really well. Never been in a wheelchair.”

This is what someone said about public transport:

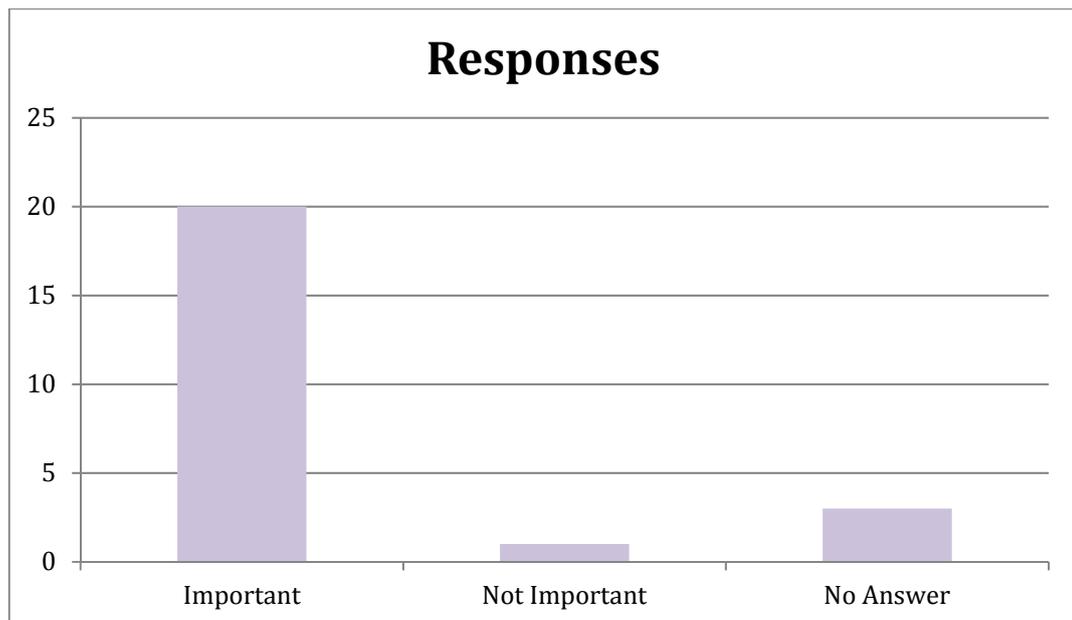
“I have anxiety with buses.”



QUESTION 5: HOW IMPORTANT IS TRAINING FOR YOU TO GET A JOB AND KEEP A JOB?

In response to this question:

- 20 people said 'Important'
- 1 person said 'Not Important'
- 3 people didn't answer



QUESTION 5 RESPONSES

People responding to this question said:

 <p>Training Room</p>	<p>Training is important to keep my job</p>
	<p>Would need help with training</p>
	<p>Working conditions</p>

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	<p>Looking for work</p>
	<p>Has to be safe</p>
	<p>Same rights for people with disabilities</p>

WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT TRAINING...

One person said:

“Very important - but are they willing to do that for me? Can’t take pressure when employers are in your face. [I] would struggle.”

Another said:

“Hopefully future employers will accept people with intellectual and learning disabilities. Want to be treated like any other normal human being. Have to accept and be patient.”

And:

“I just want to get a job and earn my own money. I have hope for the future.”

CONCLUSION

THE UN CONVENTION AND EMPLOYMENT

Article 27 of the Convention says that people with disabilities have the same chances and rights at work as other people.

Were the people we interviewed experiencing the same chances and rights at work as other people?

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

In summary, the important things that people told us were:

- People with intellectual disabilities don't always get a fair go, although they are good workers and they want to be treated like everybody else.
- They are sometimes treated differently or bullied
- Sometimes their workplace was not safe and had poor physical access
- Training is the key to employment for people with disabilities.

WHAT WE LEARNT THROUGH BEING INCLUSIVE RESEARCHERS

For us, doing research together was a **new experience**, where we learnt to **respect** other peoples' views, keep information **confidential** and to **not impose** our own point of view.

We learnt a lot about **communicating** with different people, for example using easier language and using assistive technology.

We have demonstrated **stamina** throughout the course of the project and our **ability to relate** to other people with disability. We are passionate about advocating for others.