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# Empowering Co-researchers with Intellectual Disability as Coequal Contributors in Participatory IoT Research

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ABSTRACT: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) places obligations on researchers to be more inclusive in their design practices and protect the fundamental rights of people with disabilities in design decisions, relevant to access, consent, control, autonomy, privacy and protection. However, researchers require new knowledge and skillsets to understand the lived experiences of intellectual disability, facilitate their participation in design processes, and effectively integrate the CRPD into IoT solutions. The 'RED Framework - Cocreating Rights Enabled by Design [RED] for IoT in Intellectual Disability' project, is a participatory project addressing how the CRPD can be integrated into design practices and embedded into the Internet of Things (IoT), focusing specifically on applications in ID. It is well documented in HCI and participatory design that the functionality of technologies directly effects the social context in which design and innovation occur (Simonsen & Robertson, 2013). To help maximise the project's potential in co-creating research outputs with co-researchers with lived experience of ID that align with the CRPD principles, the potential power imbalances experienced by co-researchers with lived experience in participatory research must be considered. This poster details key challenges hindering, and enablers promoting, coequal research contributions amongst researchers with lived experience of ID, as reported in current literature.

Research Team:

Lead by Professor Eleanor Bantry White, **University College Cork** (UCC), this is an interdisciplinary collaboration between UCC, **Queens University Belfast**, and community partner **Praxis Care**.

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Primary Objective of the 'RED Framework'

Help researchers who design technologies for the internet of things, to be inclusive to persons with lived experience of intellectual disability. Technology designers lack knowledge and skillsets in integrating the CRPD into design practices.

Methodology and Methods



Participatory Co-Creation Workshops involving:

Research Team

- Co-Researchers with lived experience of ID; Social Science and Technology Researchers.

Participants

- Technology and Social Science Researchers
- Persons with lived experience of ID.

Inclusive Co-Research Barriers + Enablers

- Challenging vocabulary hinders participation amongst co-researchers with Down Syndrome. (Scott et al., 2026)
- A rights based research approach demands that co-researchers with disabilities are provided with effective opportunities to demonstrate their preferences regarding research project components. (Nicholson et al., 2024).
- Co-researchers with ID may commence research with a hierarchical outlook, being accustomed to cultures where their independent thinking is not encouraged (Di.Lorito et al, 2017).
- Ensuring meaningful participatory research with persons with disabilities, requires varied communication approaches & tailored training materials and accommodations (Corcuff et al., 2026)
- Research topics which are relevant personally to researchers with IDD are viewed positively (Dudley et al., 2025).
- Research training empowers co-researchers with ID to identify their strengths and develop research skillsets (Ćwirynkało et al., 2024)
- A lack of societal recognition of co-researchers exists owing to negative societal attitudes regarding disability (Vega-Córdova et al, 2020).



Expected Project Outcomes

- **Novel Framework**
  Mapping Inclusive Design Practice to 'CRPD'
- **Learning Module/Toolkit**
  Inclusive Design for IoT technology
- **Seal of Quality Tool**
  Designers self-assess their Practice
- **Methodological Innovation**
  In Co-Creation Methods

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