



## Rethinking disability empowerment: Inclusive communication management in arts-based social entrepreneurship

Lusy Mukhlisiana<sup>1\*</sup>, Nayla Ramadhanisa<sup>2</sup>, Khansa Dei Nabila<sup>2</sup>, Indi Aires Firdaus<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master's Program in Communication Science, Telkom University, Jalan Telekomunikasi No. 1, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Department of Digital Public Relations, Telkom University, Jalan Telekomunikasi No. 1, Bandung, Indonesia

\*Email: lusymukhlisiana@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia's 22.5 million persons with disabilities face multilayered exclusion, such as physical, communicative, attitudinal, and systemic, resulting in low labor force participation (49,2%). While social entrepreneurship has emerged as a strategic mechanism for inclusive participation, the specific role of communication management in art-based disability empowerment remains underexplored, creating a critical gap between theory and practice. A qualitative multiple case study was conducted at two Bandung-based social enterprises. Tab Space (technology-oriented, providing platforms for artists with disabilities) and PUKA (culturally-oriented, adapting traditional Sundanese arts for diverse disabilities), from February to July 2025. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and focus group discussions with 10 informants. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis with the help of NVIVO 15 software. Analysis identified two core dimensions: Brand Awareness (175 coding references), dominated by Brand Recognition (39%) and Brand Recall (34%); and Communication Management (98 coding references), led by Interpersonal Communication (36%) and Competence (25%). PUKA employs a "product-first" strategy, while Tab Space adopts a "personal-adaptive" approach. Multi-level challenges were identified, spanning microsystem emotional dynamics to macrosystem cultural stigma. The study introduces the Integrated Model of Inclusive Communication for Social Entrepreneurship (IMCSE), synthesizing asset-based communication, multi-level engagement strategies, and a paradigm shift from charity-based to rights-based communication, social entrepreneurship theory, and disability studies within the Indonesian art context. IMCSE recognizes people with disabilities as equal partners in the inclusive social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**Keywords:** *disabled artists, disability empowerment, IMCSE model, inclusive communication, social entrepreneurship*

### INTRODUCTION

The urgency of addressing disability empowerment is rooted in a long history of structural exclusion (Oliver, 1990). The case for empowerment arises from long-standing social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2013). People with disabilities are disproportionately exposed to poverty, unemployment, and social stigma that compound one another. In Indonesia, deeply embedded cultural stigma, including the perception that disability is a result of spiritual transgression or personal misfortune, continues to shape public attitudes and institutional responses (Indarti et al., 2024). This stigma translates into tangible barriers: access to education, vocational training, and public spaces remains severely limited. Studies show that persons with disabilities in Indonesia are far less likely to complete secondary education and far

more likely to be employed informally or not at all. The empowerment of people with disabilities, therefore, requires addressing not only material conditions but also the communication environments, social narratives, and organizational cultures that continue to reproduce their marginalization. Empowerment, as understood in this research, is not merely about involving people with disabilities in activities; it encompasses their transformation into active agents who exercise autonomy, define their own narratives, generate economic value, and participate as equals in social and cultural life (Hein & Ansari, 2022). This includes concrete forms such as art exhibition participation, income generation from creative works, collaborative decision-making within organizations, and community advocacy, dimensions that this study documents empirically.

Amid these pronounced economic participation challenges, the creative economy, particularly within the arts sector, has emerged as a promising avenue for inclusive empowerment. Data from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (2022) highlights the performing arts and fine arts subsector contributing approximately 2.8% to Indonesia's national creative economy GDP. Although seemingly modest, this subsector reveals substantial potential, particularly in fostering empowerment through inclusive cultural and artistic engagement. Nevertheless, the journey toward genuine inclusion within the arts faces considerable barriers beyond the often-discussed physical accessibility issues. Rodrigues emphasizes that communication, informational, social, and attitudinal barriers pose even more significant obstacles, further complicating efforts to achieve authentic inclusion in artistic spaces and organizations (Rodrigues et al., 2022).

Against this backdrop, social entrepreneurship has increasingly emerged as a strategic mechanism to bridge the gap between marginalized groups and meaningful social inclusion. This approach merges social missions with sustainable business practices, distinctively fostering inclusion through innovative, market-driven solutions. However, despite its potential, social entrepreneurship is not without risks. Mauksch and Dey's research provides valuable caution, revealing how market-oriented strategies, while facilitating economic participation, can inadvertently create subtler forms of exclusion if not managed inclusively (Mauksch & Dey, 2024). Conversely, optimistic perspectives from other studies offer encouragement. Krüger and David, for instance, illustrate the transformative impact entrepreneurship education can have on empowering individuals with disabilities by not only enhancing their practical business skills but also fostering greater self-confidence, autonomy, and self-determination across various life contexts (Krüger & David, 2020).

Integral to achieving authentic empowerment and inclusion is effective and inclusive communication management. Inclusive communication extends significantly beyond mere technical accessibility; it necessitates authentic representation, active participation, and meaningful engagement within organizational contexts (Wolfgruber et al., 2022). Subsequent studies further reinforce the essential link between inclusive communication practices and overall organizational engagement, particularly highlighting the effectiveness of inclusive leadership frameworks that integrate open, accessible, and transparent communication (Ashikali et al., 2021).

The selection of Tab Space and PUKA as research sites is not incidental but theoretically and empirically motivated. Both organizations operate in Bandung, Indonesia's third-largest city and a recognized hub of creative and cultural industries,

yet they embody distinctly different approaches to inclusive communication. Tab Space represents a technology-driven model that employs digital accessibility tools and adaptive artistic platforms, while PUKA represents a tradition-based model that draws on local Sundanese cultural heritage as a vehicle for disability inclusion. Together, they offer a complementary contrast that enables a richer, more comprehensive understanding of inclusive communication strategies across different organizational philosophies. Furthermore, both organizations were identified through a preliminary mapping of disability-oriented social enterprises in Bandung as demonstrating sustained operational engagement with artists with disabilities over a minimum period of three years, active community partnerships, and documented empowerment outcomes, criteria that make them exemplary cases for in-depth analysis.

Recognizing and responding to these complexities, the current study specifically investigates inclusive communication management within two distinct yet complementary social enterprises in Bandung, Indonesia: Tab Space and PUKA. Tab Space, established in 2019, exemplifies a technology-oriented empowerment approach, integrating adaptive technologies with contemporary artistic practices to foster inclusive creativity among artists with disabilities. Notably, Tab Space has spearheaded several innovative initiatives, such as the Digital Art Accessibility Lab, Inclusive Performance Series, and expansive Community Outreach Programs. These initiatives have successfully established partnerships with more than 25 arts and technology institutions, actively empowering and serving over 200 artists with disabilities from diverse backgrounds.

Conversely, PUKA (Pulas Katumbiri), embodying a more culturally-oriented model, offers an alternative approach grounded in local heritage. Since 2020, PUKA has operated a fully accessible cultural center in Bandung, emphasizing the adaptation and preservation of traditional Sundanese arts through methodologies tailored specifically for diverse disabilities. Notable programs include the Adaptive Angklung Ensemble, Cultural Heritage Documentation initiatives, and Traditional Sundanese Arts Adaptation Workshops, demonstrating exemplary practices in inclusive cultural engagement. To date, PUKA has effectively trained more than 120 artists with disabilities and over 65 inclusive art instructors. Furthermore, the organization actively advocates for inclusive cultural policy reform at both regional and national governmental levels, solidifying its influence within the cultural sector.

The intentional and strategic selection of Tab Space and PUKA provides a comprehensive and comparative exploration of inclusive communication practices, capturing both technological innovation and cultural preservation approaches within the creative city's vibrant ecosystem. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) critically analyze the practical implementation of inclusive communication management within these distinct social entrepreneurship models, (2) identify and deeply explore challenges and barriers impeding effective inclusive communication, (3) evaluate the direct impact of inclusive communication strategies on enhancing social agency, autonomy, and meaningful participation among artists with disabilities, and (4) develop the Inclusive Management of Communication in Social Entrepreneurship (IMICSE) model.

The IMICSE model does not emerge from nowhere, nor is it an arbitrary theoretical construct. Rather, it is the product of systematic inductive analysis of

empirical data from both organizations, interpreted through a synthesized theoretical lens that integrates Inclusive Organizational Communication Theory (Putnam et al., 2017; Mumby, 2013), Social Entrepreneurship Theory (Dees, 2011), and Disability Studies, particularly Asset-Based frameworks (Mauksch & Dey, 2024) and the Social Model of Disability. The model is grounded in observed organizational practices, interview data, and thematic patterns identified through NVivo analysis. Its formulation addresses a specific gap in the literature: the absence of a theoretically coherent and empirically grounded framework that simultaneously addresses communication management, disability empowerment, and the institutional dynamics of arts-based social enterprises. The convergence of these theoretical traditions, none of which, in isolation, fully explains the phenomenon studied, is the exit problem of this research: what model of inclusive communication can adequately account for the complexity of empowering artists with disabilities through arts-based social entrepreneurship?

The conversation about the role of communication in creating a truly inclusive environment is now increasingly being discussed in the world of organizational research. Wolfgruber et al., (2022) offers insightful and surprising findings: employees who feel less engaged are demanding more communication, both formal, informal, and hybrid, about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI issues) compared to those who already feel very involved. These findings are particularly relevant when we talk about people with disabilities who often face layered barriers in accessing organizational communications.

Ashikali et al., (2021) further strengthens the argument for the importance of communicative leadership. Splitter et al., (2024), found that employees often fail to gain the CEO's attention not because of a lack of ideas, but rather because of a lack of discursive competence to integrate their operational knowledge with Corporate Themes. Apparently, "entrepreneurial doings" guided by the ideal of empowerment can produce new and subtle forms of exclusion. These findings remind us that good intentions alone are not enough without a deep understanding of the complexities of disability issues (Mauksch & Dey, 2024).

However, not all studies show pessimism. A study provides a more optimistic perspective through its study (Sari et al., 2024). Other studies further enriched the discussion by developing an IEEPD (Inclusive Entrepreneurial Education for Persons with Disabilities) framework that integrates social innovation approaches (Krüger & David, 2020). A more cautious perspective through an analysis of work integration social enterprises (WISEs) identifies that while WISEs have the potential to be "vessels of empowerment", there is a risk of deflection from broader mainstream policies (Chui et al., 2023). In the other hand, the art world offers a unique dimension in disability empowerment (B. Lee & Jenifer, 2025). Critical ethnographic research in South Africa shows the transformative potential of performing arts (le Roux et al., 2021). Contact with the performing arts provides important skill development and social opportunities (Pickard, 2021). Complementing this picture, an APRE (Access, Participation, Representation, Empowerment) framework that conceptualized four dimensions of social inclusion barriers that need to be changed by arts organisation management by identifying social inclusion barriers (Collins et al., 2022).

Research in the Indonesian context shows unique characteristics. Indarti et al., (2024) identifies the unique characteristics of Indonesian social entrepreneurs:

passionate, compassionate and highly empathic, creative and innovative, risk-taking, resilient and perseverant, flexible and adaptable, proactive and well-connected, and able to mobilize. By using online methods with the support of sign language interpreters, they showed a significant improvement in the entrepreneurial knowledge aspect of the participants (Sari et al., 2024).

Based on this comprehensive literature review, several significant research gaps were identified. Existing study has yet operationalized how inclusive communication functions as a strategic mechanism within a social entrepreneurship framework for disability communication-driven empowerment models. Second, empirical evidence on the specific mechanism of inclusive communication in organizational settings remains sparse, particularly in the Global South. Existing studies are predominantly situated in the Western European context (Wolfgruber et al., 2022; Hein & Ansari, 2022; Collins et al., 2022), and the single Indonesian study identified (Indarti et al., 2024) focused on entrepreneurship outcomes rather than communication processes. This geographic and contextual gap limits the transferability of existing frameworks to Indonesian social enterprises, where cultural dynamics, regulatory environments, and disability perceptions differ substantially. While the arts have been recognized as a vehicle for disability (Le Roux et al., 2021; B. Lee & Jenifer, 2025; Collins et al., 2022), these studies examine access and participation without developing a replicable communication model. The specific communicative strategies through which art-based social enterprises build brand identity, manage internal inclusion, and sustain empowerment narratives remain theoretically uncharted. This gap is particularly evident in the absence of any model that integrates brand communication with disability empowerment at the organizational level. Fourth, and equally critical, the sustainability dimensions of inclusive communication initiatives remain largely unexplored. Studies such as Chui (Chui et al., 2023) and Hein & Ashari (Hein & Ashari, 2022) have raised concerns about the risks of structural dependency and benevolent marginalization in disability-focused organizations, yet no empirical study has examined how communication strategies contribute to or undermine the long-term economic and social sustainability of such enterprises. Addressing this gap is essential, as sustainability constitutes a foundational prerequisite for genuine empowerment rather than temporary inclusion.

This research is built on the integration of three main theoretical perspectives that interact with and reinforce each other. An Inclusive Organizational Communication Theory developed from Putnam's work (Putnam et al., 2017) and expanded with the perspective of Critical Communication Theory (Mumby, 2013) which is also complemented by the inclusion model of Inclusion Theory (Mor Barak, 2005) as well as the perspective of Inclusive management, public participation & collaborative decisions (Feldman et al., 2009). This theoretical framework positions communication as a constitutive process that transmits information and shapes organizational reality and power relations. Then, Social Entrepreneurship Theory (Dees, 2011). This theory conceptualizes social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach to addressing social problems through sustainable strategies. Key elements include social mission, innovation, resource mobilization, and impact measurement (Austin et al., 2006). In the context of art, this framework recognizes art as a legitimate form of cultural expression and a powerful medium of social change. The integration of these three theoretical perspectives provides a solid foundation for

understanding the complexities of inclusive communication management in social entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of disability empowerment through the arts.

## METHOD

This research is grounded in the interpretative paradigm. The decision to adopt this paradigm aligns with calls for more nuanced, actor-centered research approaches in organizational communication (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Building on this philosophical foundation, a qualitative approach was adopted to explore the 'how' and 'why' of inclusive communication practices. This approach is ideal for understanding cultural and contextual nuances (Dhakal, 2022) and allows for rich exploration of motivations and interpretations related to inclusive communication and disability empowerment. Qualitative research allows in-depth exploration of intrinsic phenomena in specific contexts (Rashid et al., 2019).

This study employed a multiple case study design, focusing on two social enterprises, Tab Space and PUKA. A case study design is appropriate when exploring contemporary phenomena in real-world contexts with limited researcher control over events (Yin, 2013). It also enables within-case and cross-case analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008), enhancing the transferability of findings. In addition, drawing on Stake's interpretive orientation, each case is treated as a bounded and contextually embedded system, emphasizing complexity and experiential understanding (Stake, 1995). While Yin provides the structural logic for multiple-case design, Stake's perspective informs the interpretive depth of case analysis in this study.

The study employed purposive sampling to select informants who could provide rich, diverse insights. Criteria included stakeholder role, engagement level, and a minimum of one-year involvement with the organization. A total of ten informants were selected, balanced across both organizations. Table 1 below provides a summary of informant characteristics. To refine sample depth, a snowball sampling element was integrated; initial participants referred others who met the same purposive criteria, maintaining rigor while allowing access to additional relevant informants. Data saturation was achieved after the tenth interview, when no new codes or themes emerged, confirmed through iterative coding and theme development using NVIVO's query functions.

Table 1. Characteristic of Research Informants

NO	INITIALS	ROLE	ORGANIZATION	DURATION
1	D.N.A	Founder	PUKA	Since 2017
2	A.N.N	Creative Team	PUKA	2+ years
3	S.A	Finance & Administration	PUKA	2+years
4	N.D.P	Partner (SLB Teacher)	External - PUKA	Since 2017
5	I.R	Founder/Creative Director	Tab Space	Since founding
6	R.R.S	Art & Program Director	Tab Space	Since founding



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7	A.F	Art Facilitator	Tab Space	1+year
8	A.A	Artist with Disability (Neurodivergent-Autism Spectrum)	Tab Space	1+year
9	A.S	External Collaborator	Arafura Media Design	1+year
10	A.B.G.	Academic Expert	University	N/A

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Source: Researcher's Processed Result (2025)

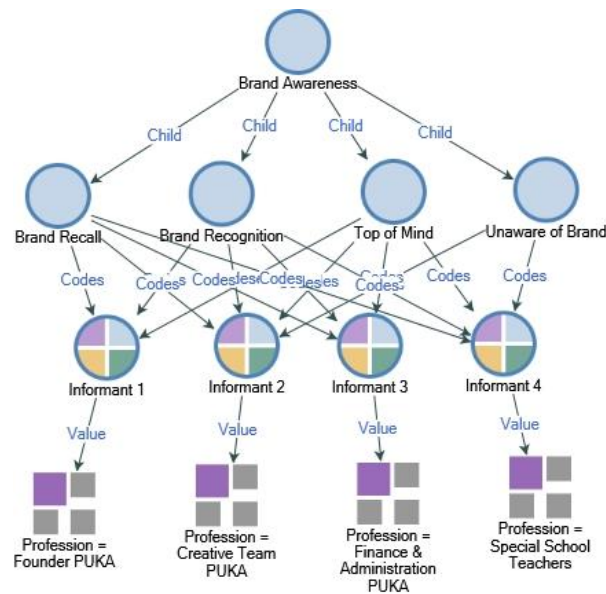
Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which identifies and interprets patterns across datasets (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Thematic analysis is a method used to analyze qualitative data that involves identifying and reporting patterns in a dataset, which are then interpreted for their inherent meaning (Naeem et al., 2023). Analysis proceeded through familiarization with data via repeated reading, initial coding using NVIVO 15, development of nodes and themes, pattern identification using query functions, and visualization for thematic mapping. NVIVO 15 facilitated systematic data management, supported multiple data formats, and enabled visualization of relationships between codes, which strengthened analytical rigor. To ensure coding consistency, two researchers independently coded 20% of the dataset (McHugh, 2012), achieving a Cohen's Kappa of 0.77, indicating substantial agreement. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved collaboratively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings derived from NVIVO-assisted thematic analysis. The two main dimensions, Brand Awareness and Communication Management, emerged inductively from the data. Initial open coding of interview transcripts, FGD records, observation notes, and organizational documents generated over 420 coded references across 12 preliminary nodes. Subsequent axial coding and thematic clustering revealed that these nodes consistently coalesced around two overarching thematic clusters: how the organizations build public recognition and identity (Brand Awareness), and how they manage interpersonal and institutional communication with and for artists with disabilities (Communication Management). These two dimensions were thus not imposed a priori but arose from the convergent logic of the empirical data, supported by theoretical resonance with Aaker's brand equity framework (Aaker, 1991) and Kaye's communication management model (Kaye, 1994). The following subsections present findings according to these dimensions, followed by analysis of empowerment impact, dual strategy comparison, implementation challenges, and theoretical integration through the IMICSE Model.

### Brand Awareness Dimension: Building Inclusive Identity

The results of data analysis using NVIVO reveal two main dimensions that are the backbone of the implementation of inclusive communication in the two organizations studied. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of how inclusive communication operates in the context of social entrepreneurship that empowers artists with disabilities.



**Figure 1.** Brand Awareness Dimension: Building Inclusive Awareness  
Source: Researcher's Processed Results

Figure 1 shows the Brand Awareness Dimension with four key components. Brand Recognition emerged as the dominant theme, accounting for 39% (68 references) of all coded data in this dimension. This high proportion reflects the central role of visual and product identities as primary gateways to public recognition of these organizations and their artists. The finding is contextually meaningful: in arts-based organizations, every visual output, an artwork, a performance, a digital post, simultaneously functions as a communication product and as a representation of organizational identity. This dual function is strategically deliberate. As articulated by a PUKA creative team member, the organization consciously foregrounds artistic quality over disability labeling: "We actually want to highlight the work itself, the creativity of our friends with disabilities. Most audiences know PUKA for its colorful products, not for the disability aspect, because we want to highlight work that truly deserves appreciation" (A.N.N., Creative Team, PUKA). This approach creates a distinctive visual signature that enables immediate identification among stakeholders, a point confirmed by an external partner: "It is immediately recognizable, because PUKA has its own distinctive characteristics compared to others. If you look closely, there is always a vibrant color signature in every product" (N.D.P., Partner, Special Education School). As one founder further explained: "When people see the artwork and then find out it was made by someone with Down syndrome, their reaction changes completely. That surprise is our most powerful communication tool" (PUKA Founder, Interview, March 2024). Together, these accounts confirm that Brand Recognition in this context operates not merely as visual familiarity, but as a carefully constructed aesthetic identity that carries embedded empowerment messaging.

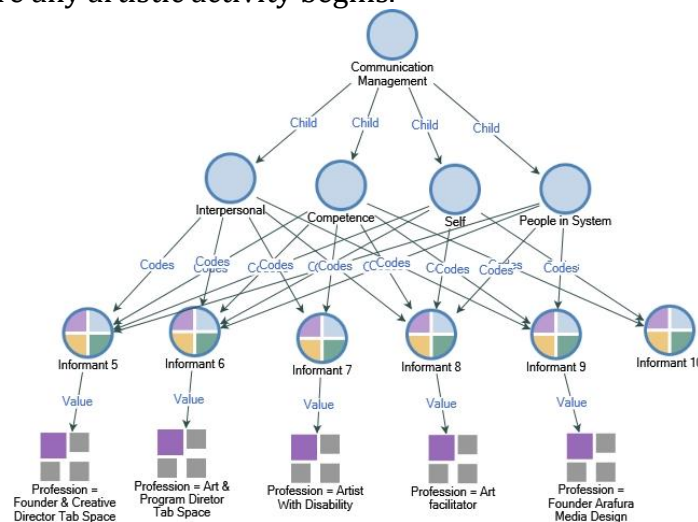
Brand Recall placed second, registering 34% (60 references), demonstrating stakeholders' capacity to remember the organizations even without visual prompts, a strong indicator that the organizations' empowerment narratives have been effectively internalized. The high Brand Recall rate surpasses typical social enterprise benchmarks, suggesting that disability-focused narratives may carry stronger

retention power than general social causes (Austin et al., 2006). This likely stems from the cognitive dissonance experienced when audiences encounter high-quality artistic output of communities previously underestimated. The underlying narrative driving this recall is explicitly articulated at the foundational level: "From the 'From Disability to art-ability' narrative, the most important thing to emphasize is the increasing value of the creative works of our friends with disabilities and their struggle for employment after graduation. PUKA wants to show that people with disabilities have great potential and deserve recognition" (D.N.A., Founder, PUKA). This narrative anchoring explains why stakeholders retain memory of the organization beyond visual cues, which they are retaining a value proposition, not merely a logo.

Top of Mind awareness stood at 21% (37 references), indicating a solid positioning in stakeholders' minds when considering disability and arts issues. While not yet dominant, this figure demonstrates that both organizations are recognized as key references within the inclusive social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Finally, Unaware of Brand constituted only 6% (10 references), pointing to a relatively high level of organizational awareness, though this 6% also represents a remaining space for strategic communication to reach untouched audiences

### Communication Management Dimension: Humanistic Communication Structure

Analysis of 198 coding references in the Communication Management dimension reveals a humanist communication structure anchored in relational and interpersonal dynamics. Interpersonal Communication dominated with 36% (71 references), confirming that in empowering people with disabilities through art, personal and relational approaches are foundational. Interview data consistently highlighted that facilitators and program coordinators in both organizations invest significant time in understanding individual communication styles, emotional states, and disability-specific needs before any artistic activity begins.



**Figure 2.** Communication Management Dimensions: The Humanist Foundations of Inclusive Communication

Source: Researcher's Processed Results

This relational investment is not incidental; it is the operational foundation from which all other communication activities derive. As the Art and Program Director of Tab Space described, the approach is deliberately personal rather than clinical: "We don't have a psychology background, so our approach is more personal, like friends or family. We try to transfer our knowledge as designers and creative industry practitioners to our artist friends with disabilities, so they can also create" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). This friend-or-family framing is reinforced by the organization's stance on empathy as a non-negotiable precondition for communication: "If there is no empathy, communication simply cannot happen. Tab Space does not want people to come here out of pity, so far they come because they genuinely appreciate the work, and finding out it was made by neuro artists is a bonus" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). As one program coordinator from Tab Space similarly reflected: "You cannot just give them a task and expect them to engage. You have to first build a relationship, communicate at their pace, understand their world" (Tab Space Coordinator, FGD, April 2024). This relational primacy aligns with the principles of inclusive communication that prioritize respect for individual uniqueness and building equal partnerships (Wolfgruber et al., 2022).

Competence followed at 25% (50 references), indicating widespread recognition of these organizations' communication skills, encompassing not only technical capacity but also the ability to translate inclusive values into tangible operational practices. Crucially, this competence is not assumed but earned through repeated, sustained engagement with artists. As Tab Space's founder noted: "People are surprised we can work with neurodivergent individuals. But once you get to know them and work together, they are not a major challenge anymore" (I.R., Founder, Tab Space). This observation is significant: it reframes perceived communication difficulty as a function of unfamiliarity rather than inherent limitation, positioning organizational competence as the accumulated result of genuine relational investment.

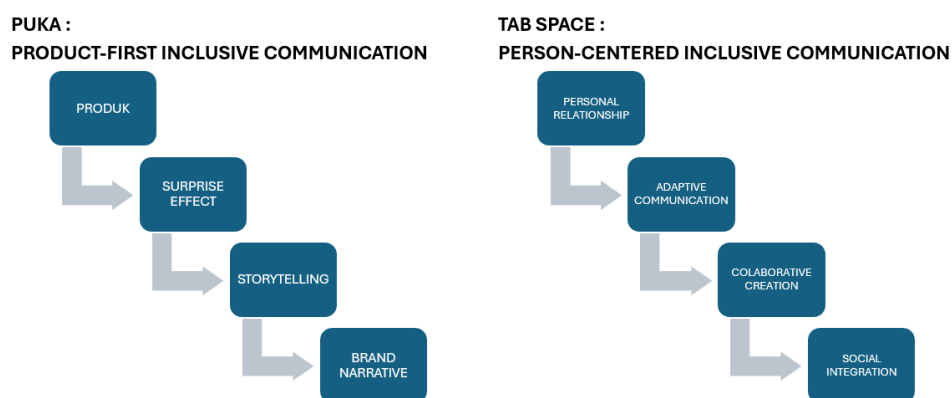
People in System accounted for 23% (45 references), reflecting organizational awareness of the broader stakeholder ecosystem, from families and communities to policy institutions and support agencies. Within this dimension, transparency emerged as a critical mechanism for sustaining trust across the system. This is most concretely illustrated in Tab Space's practice of full financial disclosure to families: "Whenever we have a project, we never withhold information from the families, how much the project pays, how much the artist receives, what Tab Space gets, we explain everything. That is probably what makes families trust us and feel like they belong here" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). This practice operationalizes the broader principle of inclusive stakeholder communication, demonstrating that systemic trust is built not through institutional authority but through radical openness.

The Self at 16% (32 references) captured the intrapersonal dimension of communication that is particularly significant in the empowerment context, as developing a strong self-concept and communicative confidence is itself a form of empowerment for artists with disabilities. The most direct evidence of this dimension comes from the artists themselves. When asked to describe their experience within the program, one artist offered a response whose simplicity carries substantial weight: "Comfortable and supported, facilitated" (A.A., Artist with Disability, Tab

Space). This three-word articulation encapsulates what the broader communication management framework is ultimately designed to produce, an internal state of safety and agency from which authentic creative expression and self-development can emerge.

### Dual Strategy Implementation: PUKA vs Tab Space

Two distinct but complementary approaches emerged from the organizational analysis. These approaches reflect fundamentally different philosophies of inclusion, each responding to the specific characteristics of their communities and organizational missions, yet both converging on the same commitment to asset-based empowerment. PUKA's approach centers on visibility through artistic output, positioning disability not as a limitation to be accommodated, but as a source of creative identity to be celebrated publicly. This philosophy is articulated directly by the organization's founder: "We want to highlight artability, their capability to create, to be productive, and to produce products that are genuinely sought after by the public. That is the core" (D.N.A., Founder, PUKA). Tab Space, by contrast, operationalizes inclusion through economic participation and professional recognition, embedding artists into value-generating structures where their contributions are formally acknowledged and compensated. As a collaborating partner observed: "Tab Space knows its positioning, neuro friends have their positioning as artists, valued for their work, value, and output, where they receive a profit-sharing arrangement from what they produce" (A.S., Collaborating Partner). While PUKA foregrounds narrative and identity, and Tab Space foregrounds economic agency and professional standing, both approaches share a foundational rejection of charity-based models, insisting instead that empowerment must be demonstrated through the market value of what artists create, not through institutional goodwill alone.



**Figure 3.** PUKA and TAB Space Inclusion Communication Strategy  
 Source: Researcher's Processed Results

**Table 1.** Comparison of Communication Strategies: PUKA and Tab Space

Aspect	PUKA (Product-First)	Tab Space (Person-Centered)
Strategic Focus	Quality products made by PwDs	Personalized communication per disability




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Communication Style	Visual impact, surprise effect	Adaptive, tailored to individual capacity
Public Perception Impact	Reframes disability as capability	Encourages empathy and long-term engagement
Brand Contribution	Builds mass recognition and visibility	Builds trust, loyalty, and community

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Source: Researcher's Processed Results

### Multi-Level Implementation Challenges

The study identified challenges across multiple ecological levels using Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). These challenges were not merely observed but documented through rich interviews and observational data that reveal the structural and relational textures of inclusive communication barriers. At the microsystem level, the most frequently cited challenge was the difficulty in managing emotional dynamics during artist-facilitator interactions. Artists with disabilities often bring complex emotional histories and heightened sensitivities into communication encounters; facilitators noted that reading and responding to emotional cues required specific training and patience that not all staff possessed. At the mesosystem level, misalignment between organizational communication strategies and family expectations emerged as a significant barrier. Families sometimes interpreted the organizations' emphasis on artistic ability and commercial viability as dismissive of the care needs of their relatives, creating tension that required careful mediation. At the exosystem level, gaps in industry and policy-level support for disability-inclusive practices, including a lack of accessible procurement frameworks and inconsistent enforcement of disability legislation, limited organizational capacity. This structural gap is compounded by a persistent public literacy deficit regarding disability issues more broadly. As one member of PUKA's creative team observed: "The challenge is that people in this country lack education about our friends with disabilities. Some people who respond to our content about disability issues react carelessly and insensitively" (A.N.N., Creative Team, PUKA). Such responses place an additional communicative burden on organizations, which must simultaneously manage public education and organizational reputation within the same communication channels.

At the macrosystem level, prevailing cultural stigma and ableist social narratives remained the deepest and most resistant challenge. As one informant from PUKA described: "The hardest thing is not teaching them to paint, it's fighting people's assumptions that they cannot paint at all" (PUKA Art Facilitator, Interview, February 2024). This assumption-based resistance is further complicated by widespread conceptual confusion about the very meaning of inclusion. As an expert informant noted: "Many people still do not understand what 'inclusive' truly means. Inclusive means everyone, regardless of disability, gender, age, or background" (A.B.G., Expert Informant). When the foundational concept remains contested or misunderstood at the societal level, organizations face the additional task of building definitional consensus before inclusive communication practices can even take root.

Additional challenges included unrealistic stakeholder expectations regarding artist capabilities and the ongoing need for specialized inclusive communication training for staff. At the operational level, this manifests in the repeated misidentification of organizational identity itself, a challenge that consumes disproportionate communicative resources. As Tab Space's Art and Program Director recounted: "Sometimes people come to Tab Space without reading about us first, some think we are a foundation, some think we are a community. Their expectations vary widely. So we often have to repeat the same information, even though it is already available on our website" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). This pattern reveals a critical gap between organizational communication output and audience reception, one that points not only to stakeholder awareness deficits, but to the broader challenge of sustaining coherent organizational positioning in an environment where public understanding of disability-inclusive social enterprise remains fragmented

### **Empowerment Impact Outcomes**

Three major transformative impacts were identified from the data, each evidenced through concrete instances observed in both organizations. These outcomes represent authentic forms of disability empowerment, not merely symbolic inclusion, but substantive transformation of artists' agency, economic standing, and social participation. The first, Self-Confidence Enhancement, was demonstrated through increased artist participation in public exhibitions, media appearances, and community events. Informants described observable changes in body language, communication, assertiveness, and willingness to engage with unfamiliar audiences. This confidence-building is not incidental but structurally designed into how both organizations approach participation and recognition. Tab Space's founder described the mechanism directly: "We support them to be confident in their work. The form is through appreciation; if there is an event that all artists can participate in, we include everyone, not just selected ones" (I.R., Founder, Tab Space). This principle of non-selective inclusion ensures that confidence-building is experienced as a collective norm rather than an individual reward, reinforcing the sense of belonging that underpins sustained self-development. This sentiment is echoed by the organization's Art and Program Director, who grounds the practice in a conviction of inherent artistic worth: "We show that their work matters. We boost their confidence because they genuinely deserve to be exhibited" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). Together, these accounts confirm that Self-Confidence Enhancement in this context is not a passive byproduct of participation, but an intentionally engineered outcome of inclusive exhibition practices and affirming communication cultures.

The second, Economic Agency Development, was evidenced by income generation from creative works; artists in both organizations reported selling artworks through exhibitions, commissions, and collaborative projects, with some achieving sufficient income to contribute to household finances. This aligns with Mauksch & Dey's emphasis on asset-based empowerment through productive economic participation (Mauksch & Dey, 2024). Crucially, this economic dimension is communicated outward not merely as a transactional exchange but as an invitation to collective participation in a broader inclusive economy. As one member of PUKA's finance and administration

team articulated: "With purchasing our products, customers are not only getting a physical item—they are participating in building an inclusive economy for our friends with disabilities" (S.A., Finance & Administration, PUKA). This framing is strategically significant: it repositions the consumer from a passive buyer into an active co-contributor to social transformation, effectively extending the empowerment narrative beyond the organization's internal community and into the marketplace itself.

The third, Narrative Transformation, was visible in the successful shift in stakeholder perceptions from charity-based to rights-based models, a shift that was actively facilitated through strategic communication choices made by both organizations, including framing disability not as a condition to be pitied but as a source of a distinctive creative perspective. The economic communication strategy evidenced above is itself a manifestation of this broader narrative transformation: when customers are invited to participate in building an inclusive economy rather than simply donating to a cause, the underlying logic of the transaction changes from charity to contribution, from pity to partnership. This discursive repositioning represents perhaps the most durable form of empowerment impact, as it reshapes not only how artists see themselves, but how society is invited to see them.

This study revealed that inclusive communication in art-based social entrepreneurship operates through two primary dimensions: Brand Awareness and Communication Management, with Brand Recognition (39%) and Interpersonal Communication (36%) emerging as dominant factors. The research identified dual strategic approaches, which are product-first and person-centered, both effective in different contexts, while uncovering multi-level implementation challenges spanning from individual emotional management to societal stigma.

Analysis of 175 coding references in the Brand Awareness dimension (Aaker, 1991) uncovers interesting patterns. Brand Recognition dominates with a percentage of 39%, indicating that in the context of art-based social entrepreneurship for disabled people, visual and product identities are the main gateway to public recognition. This is very relevant considering that art is a medium that relies heavily on visual and aesthetic aspects. Social entrepreneurship organizations that focus on empowering people with disabilities through the arts seem to have succeeded in creating an easily recognizable identity, which is likely to reflect the values of inclusivity in every work and product produced. It's not just about the logo or design, but rather how each visual element tells an authentic empowerment narrative.

Brand Recall in second place, with 34%, shows the power of narrative embedded in stakeholders' minds. The high Brand Recall rate (34%) surpasses typical social enterprise benchmarks reported in previous studies, suggesting that disability-focused narratives may have stronger retention power than other social causes (Austin et al., 2006). This divergence likely stems from the emotional resonance and cognitive dissonance created when audiences encounter high-quality artistic output from marginalized communities. In the context of disability empowerment, the ability of stakeholders to remember the organization without visual stimulus indicates that inclusive messages have been successfully internalized. It demonstrates the effectiveness of storytelling in communicating an authentic and meaningful empowerment mission. Top of Mind with 21% indicates a fairly solid position in the minds of stakeholders when they think about disability and arts issues. Although it is

not yet dominant, this figure shows that the organization has positioned itself as one of the references in the inclusive social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Interestingly, Unaware of Brand is only 6%, indicating a relatively high level of awareness. However, this 6% gap remains a space for developing a broader communication strategy to reach untouched audiences.

Analysis of 198 coding references in the Communication Management dimension (Kaye, 1994) reveals a humanist communication structure. Interpersonal communication, which dominates with 36%, confirms that in empowering people with disabilities through art, personal and relational approaches are the main key. This aligns with the principles of inclusive communication that prioritize respect for each individual's uniqueness and building equal relationships. Competence in second place with 25% indicates that stakeholders have recognized the organization's communication skills. In the context of social entrepreneurship, these competencies concern technical communication skills and the ability to translate inclusive values into tangible operational practices. People in the System with 23% indicate an awareness of the importance of communication in the broader ecosystem. This shows that organizations are focused internally and understand their role in complex stakeholder networks, ranging from people with disabilities, families, communities, to support institutions. The self with 16% shows a reflective dimension in communication, which is especially important in the context of empowerment. Strong intrapersonal communication is the foundation for individuals with disabilities to build confidence and express creativity through art.

### **Communication as an Instrument of Empowerment**

The linkage between these two dimensions reveals that inclusive communication in art-based social entrepreneurship serves as a branding strategy and a fundamental empowerment instrument. Strong brand awareness, especially in recognition and recall, is a platform for developing humanistic interpersonal communication. Therefore, a study stated that brand recognition is the ability of consumers to identify a brand quickly, which is crucial for establishing a connection with them (J. W. Lee, 2024). The dominance of interpersonal communication, combined with high brand recognition, shows that an inclusive communication approach has created a space where art becomes a universal language that connects various parties regardless of physical or cognitive abilities. This indicates that the social entrepreneurship model studied has succeeded in creating an ecosystem that is economically sustainable and socially transformative.

### **Dual Strategy Approach: PUKA vs Tab Space**

The data shows two different but complementary approaches of the two social entrepreneurs. PUKA implements a "product-first" strategy that creates a "wow effect" when consumers know people make quality products with disabilities. This is in line with the Social Model of Disability, which emphasizes focusing on abilities rather than limitations. While Tab Space applies a more personalized and adaptive approach, tailoring communication to each artist's disability spectrum. This approach allows for more flexible adaptation to diverse communication needs. This

complementary strategy aligns with the Social Model of Disability by emphasizing abilities (PUKA) and the need for tailored inclusion (Tab Space). The implementation of inclusive communication in both organizations reflects an Asset-Based Communication Model that integrates strengths-first communication focusing on artability rather than limitations, co-creation dialogue treating artists as active partners in communication, an economic empowerment narrative emphasizing economic contribution, and a social integration framework facilitating full participation in society. This approach is in line with the findings of a study on emancipation from benevolent marginalization, where inclusive communication serves as a tool to empower rather than compassion people with disabilities (Hein & Ansari, 2022).

### **Multi-Level Challenges in Implementation**

The findings of the study revealed that the main challenge is the stigma and lack of public education about the abilities of people with disabilities. Meanwhile, in the performing arts, there are still obstacles to social inclusion that are set in people's perceptions of the abilities of people with disabilities. Unrealistic stakeholder expectations are also a challenge. The results of the interviews show that some stakeholders lack understanding of the characteristics of artists with disabilities. In addition, challenges also arise from internal social entrepreneurs, such as the need to understand how to manage mood in communicating with artists with disabilities. Human resources working in both institutions should ideally be provided with inclusive communication training. They also need time in the process of adapting personal communication with artists with disabilities. The study reveals layered challenges categorized using Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1981), operating at the microsystem (emotional dynamics), mesosystem (family-organization alignment), exosystem (policy gaps), and macrosystem (cultural stigma) levels. Concrete examples from case interviews illustrate how misperceptions of artist capacity and unrealistic expectations hinder inclusive communication.

### **Empowerment Impact: Multi-Dimensional Transformation**

From the perspective of disability empowerment, both organizations have succeeded in increasing the self-confidence of artists with disabilities through recognition, where the work of artists with disabilities is appreciated in exhibitions and media. In addition, an element of economic agency is shown through the income from the artists' work, which is in line with Mauksch & Dey's opinion on economic empowerment through an asset-based approach (Mauksch & Dey, 2024). The increase in the confidence of artists with disabilities also arises due to their involvement in events and collaborations with various parties. This, of course, strengthens their social participation where the performing arts facilitate inclusion through the development of communication skills, confidence, and social networking.

The study results show a transformative impact on stakeholder perceptions, which further strengthens the idea that narrative-based communication can change public perception from a charitable model to a rights-based model. The PUKA and Tab



Space data show similar effectiveness in changing stakeholder perceptions. This, of course, also has an impact on brand awareness. NVIVO's analysis showed the effectiveness of inclusive communication in building strong brand recognition (39%), indicating the success of visual and narrative communication strategies. Empowerment is visible through three major shifts: self-confidence through participation in exhibitions and media; economic agency through income from creative works substantiating asset-based empowerment (Mauksch & Dey, 2024); and narrative transformation as both organizations successfully shift stakeholder perceptions from charity-based to rights-based narratives. This demonstrates that inclusive communication is not merely representational but instrumental in reframing social roles.

### **IMICSE Model: Inclusive Communication Integration**

Based on data analysis and the synthesis of the latest literature, this study formulated an inclusive communication model that integrates the Asset-Based Communication Framework (Mauksch & Dey, 2024) and Multi-Level Disability Engagement Strategies. This model describes that communication should emphasize the unique abilities and contributions of people with disabilities, not limitations. The data shows the effectiveness of PUKA's "product-first" approach in creating a surprise effect. Then artists with disabilities are equal partners in the communication process, moving beyond the virtuous marginalization towards true empowerment.

At the macrosystem level, prevailing cultural stigma and ableist social narratives remained the deepest and most resistant challenge. As one informant from PUKA described: "The hardest thing is not teaching them to paint, it's fighting people's assumptions that they cannot paint at all" (PUKA Art Facilitator, Interview, February 2024). This assumption-based resistance is further complicated by widespread conceptual confusion about the very meaning of inclusion. As an expert informant noted: "Many people still do not understand what 'inclusive' truly means. Inclusive means everyone, regardless of disability, gender, age, or background" (A.B.G., Expert Informant). When the foundational concept remains contested or misunderstood at the societal level, organizations face the additional task of building definitional consensus before inclusive communication practices can even take root.

Additional challenges included unrealistic stakeholder expectations regarding artist capabilities and the ongoing need for specialized inclusive communication training for staff. At the operational level, this manifests in the repeated misidentification of organizational identity itself, a challenge that consumes disproportionate communicative resources. As Tab Space's Art and Program Director recounted: "Sometimes people come to Tab Space without reading about us first, some think we are a foundation, some think we are a community. Their expectations vary widely. So we often have to repeat the same information, even though it is already available on our website" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). This pattern reveals a critical gap between organizational communication output and audience reception, one that points not only to stakeholder awareness deficits, but to the broader challenge of sustaining coherent organizational positioning in an environment where public understanding of disability-inclusive social enterprise remains fragmented

## Empowerment Impact Outcomes

Three major transformative impacts were identified from the data, each evidenced through concrete instances observed in both organizations. These outcomes represent authentic forms of disability empowerment, not merely symbolic inclusion, but substantive transformation of artists' agency, economic standing, and social participation. The first, Self-Confidence Enhancement, was demonstrated through increased artist participation in public exhibitions, media appearances, and community events. Informants described observable changes in body language, communication assertiveness, and willingness to engage with unfamiliar audiences. This confidence-building is not incidental but structurally designed into how both organizations approach participation and recognition. Tab Space's founder described the mechanism directly: "We support them to be confident in their work. The form is through appreciation, if there is an event that all artists can participate in, we include everyone, not just selected ones" (I.R., Founder, Tab Space). This principle of non-selective inclusion ensures that confidence-building is experienced as a collective norm rather than an individual reward, reinforcing the sense of belonging that underpins sustained self-development. This sentiment is echoed by the organization's Art and Program Director, who grounds the practice in a conviction of inherent artistic worth: "We show that their work matters. We boost their confidence because they genuinely deserve to be exhibited" (R.R.S., Art & Program Director, Tab Space). Together, these accounts confirm that Self-Confidence Enhancement in this context is not a passive byproduct of participation, but an intentionally engineered outcome of inclusive exhibition practices and affirming communication cultures.

The second, Economic Agency Development, was evidenced by income generation from creative works; artists in both organizations reported selling artworks through exhibitions, commissions, and collaborative projects, with some achieving sufficient income to contribute to household finances. This aligns with Mauksch & Dey's emphasis on asset-based empowerment through productive economic participation (Mauksch & Dey, 2024). Crucially, this economic dimension is communicated outward not merely as a transactional exchange but as an invitation to collective participation in a broader inclusive economy. As one member of PUKA's finance and administration team articulated: "With purchasing our products, customers are not only getting a physical item—they are participating in building an inclusive economy for our friends with disabilities" (S.A., Finance & Administration, PUKA). This framing is strategically significant: it repositions the consumer from a passive buyer into an active co-contributor to social transformation, effectively extending the empowerment narrative beyond the organization's internal community and into the marketplace itself.

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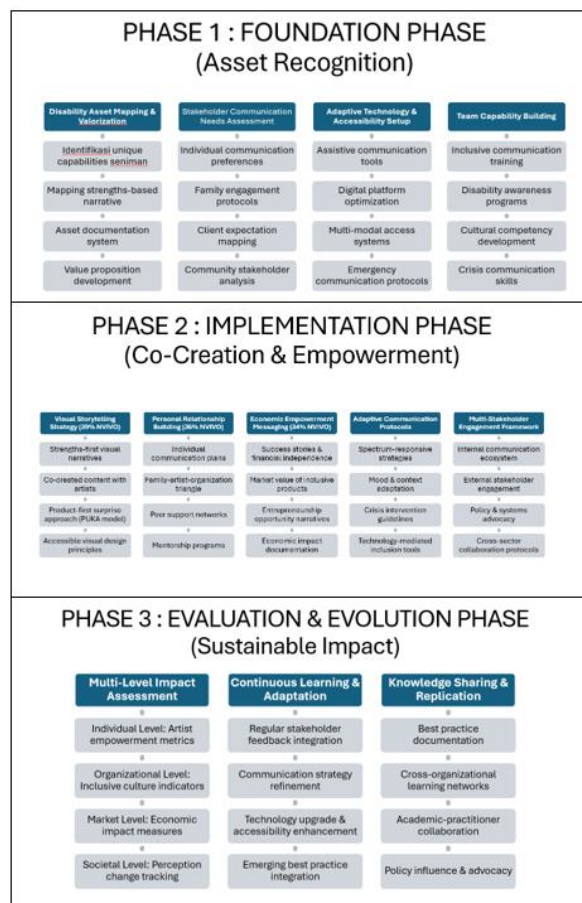
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**Figure 4.** IMICSE Model: Inclusive Communication Integration  
 Source: Researcher's Processed Results

The Integrated Model of Inclusive Communication in Social Entrepreneurship (IMICSE) synthesizes the Asset-Based Communication Framework and Multi-Level Disability Engagement Strategies. Theoretically, the IMICSE model advances organizational communication scholarship by operationalizing the constitutive view of communication (Putnam et al., 2017) in the specific context of disability empowerment. It moves beyond descriptive accounts of inclusive communication to provide a normative and prescriptive framework: communication is not only a medium for transmitting information but a constitutive force that shapes identities, power relationships, and social possibilities. In this sense, the model contributes to Critical Communication Theory (Mumby, 2013) by identifying how arts-based social

enterprises can use communication strategically to disrupt ableist power structures and create genuinely inclusive organizational cultures. Furthermore, the IMICSE model bridges the theoretical gap between Social Entrepreneurship Theory (Dees, 2011; Austin et al., 2006) and disability-inclusive management, demonstrating how social mission, innovation, and resource mobilization can be oriented specifically toward communicative empowerment. The model also contributes to the disability studies literature by providing an empirically grounded alternative to charity-based frameworks, positioning people with disabilities as communicative agents and co-creators rather than as beneficiaries of others' goodwill (Hein & Ansari, 2022).

Key levels of the IMICSE model include: the Micro Level, which focuses on adapting communication based on individual capacity; the Mezzo Level, concerned with institutionalizing inclusive communication practices within organizational structures; and the Macro Level, aimed at shaping social narratives through media advocacy and policy engagement. The model highlights art as a strategic medium for narrative change and the potential of digital platforms to scale inclusive communication. To build the confidence and social relationships of artists with disabilities, it is important for both organizations to utilize the performing arts as a means of inclusion in communication strategies as well as leverage social networking technologies to expand the reach and impact of inclusive communication.

The analysis of NVIVO data and the results of the interview interpretation revealed that the implementation of inclusive communication in social entrepreneurship for the empowerment of artists with disabilities requires a paradigm shift from charity-based to an asset-based communication approach (Mauksch & Dey, 2024). Successful implementation depends heavily on the organization's commitment to moving towards true inclusion that recognizes people with disabilities as valuable contributors to the social entrepreneurship ecosystem (Hein & Ansari, 2022).

Key findings include the effectiveness of dual strategies—a combination of product-first (PUKA) and person-centered (Tab Space) approaches demonstrates effectiveness in different contexts, supporting flexible implementation of inclusive communication; the multi-level nature of barriers, which operate from individual mood management to societal stigma requiring systematic intervention; technology as an enabler, with digital platforms and supporting technologies essential to expanding the reach and impact of inclusive communications; and art as a communication medium, with performing arts and creative works serving as powerful tools for narrative transformation and social inclusion.

Based on the findings of the research, several strategic recommendations can be implemented by social entrepreneurs in the field of disability empowerment. These include the gradual adoption of the IMICSE model, starting from the micro level with individual communication adaptation before developing to the mezzo and macro levels; the development of a dual strategy approach combining "product-first" and "person-centered" strategies according to target audience characteristics; investment in technology infrastructure including accessible websites, mobile applications with universal design features, and communication systems accommodating various disabilities; capacity building for staff through inclusive communication training covering different disability types, adaptive communication techniques, and emotional management; strategic partnership development with educational institutions,

companies, media, and disability organizations; and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems measuring both quantitative metrics (reach, engagement) and qualitative indicators (satisfaction, empowerment) from artists with disabilities and other stakeholders.

The IMICSE model advances communication theory by operationalizing asset-based principles in a rights-based framework. It emphasizes co-creation, adaptive strategies, and the power of performative arts. However, some limitations must be acknowledged. In terms of scalability, the model is context-sensitive and may face challenges when applied to larger or more complex organizations where interpersonal communication is difficult to maintain. Regarding cultural specificity, the model was developed based on two Indonesian case studies, and its assumptions and mechanisms may not be fully transferable to different cultural or legal contexts where perceptions of disability and inclusion vary. With respect to technology dependency, the recommendation for digital platforms presumes accessibility and literacy, which may not be available in marginalized or rural communities.

## CONCLUSION

This research examined inclusive communication management in social entrepreneurship for empowering artists with disabilities through an analysis of Tab Space and PUKA. Key findings reveal that effective inclusive communication requires shifting from charity-based to asset-based approaches, recognizing people with disabilities as equal partners. Both product-first and personal-adaptive communication strategies proved equally effective, with strong brand awareness (Brand Recognition 39%, Brand Recall 34%) supporting interpersonal communication (36%) as the primary success factor.

This paper contributes by introducing the Integrated Model of Inclusive Communication for Social Entrepreneurship (IMICSE), which integrates Asset-Based Communication with Multi-Level Disability Engagement Strategies across micro (individual), mezzo (organizational), and macro (societal) levels. Theoretically, the IMICSE model advances the field by demonstrating how Inclusive Organizational Communication Theory, Social Entrepreneurship Theory, and Disability Studies can be productively integrated to explain and guide inclusive communication in arts-based empowerment contexts. The model operationalizes the constitutive view of communication, contributing to Critical Communication Theory by showing how communication shapes not only organizational processes but the very identities and capacities of marginalized artists. It also challenges social entrepreneurship scholarship to take communication seriously as a dimension of both social mission and impact measurement, not as a secondary concern but as a constitutive mechanism of empowerment itself. The model bridges communication theory, disability studies, and social entrepreneurship, advancing theoretical understanding while offering practical applicability. This research has several practical implications. For social entrepreneurs, it provides actionable insights, including inclusive recruitment and adaptive communication protocols. For policymakers, findings inform shifts from charity-based to equity-driven inclusion frameworks. Theoretically, this paper contributes to paradigm shifts toward empowerment and dignity-centered models in disability entrepreneurship.



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