International Diabetes Federation
Europe



T2GETHER Summit

Brussels, October 2026

T2GETHER
IDF Europe
T2D Community

EVENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

From 9 to 11 October 2026, IDF Europe welcomed members of its **T2GETHER Community to Brussels for the third annual T2GETHER Summit**, bringing together **people living with type 2 diabetes (T2D) from across Europe** for a weekend of learning, exchange and connection.

Launched in 2023, T2GETHER is IDF Europe's community of people living with T2D, established to **strengthen their voice** and support them in becoming **confident and effective advocates**. Through Summits, training and ongoing opportunities for involvement, T2GETHER aims to empower its members to contribute to **meaningful change in diabetes care, research and policy.**

The 2026 Summit marked an important milestone in the development of the Community. Alongside **welcoming new members**, it provided the opportunity to **celebrate the completion of the first pilot T2GETHER Advocacy Training Programme**, launched earlier in the year.

This year's Summit brought together 31 T2GETHER members:

- **16 new members** joining the Community
- **13 existing members** completing the pilot **T2GETHER Advocacy Training Programme**
- **2 existing T2GETHER members** providing **peer support** throughout the weekend



By bringing together **people at different stages of their advocacy journeys**, the Summit created opportunities for **shared learning, encouragement and informal mentorship**. More experienced advocates could share their **knowledge while gaining fresh perspectives** from new members, who brought their own experiences, questions and ideas.



The Summit was supported by **Tara Humphrey, Founder and CEO of THC Primary Care,** who facilitated several interactive sessions and moderated discussions throughout the weekend.

The programme combined **practical advocacy training, interactive workshops, panel discussions and opportunities for personal reflection**. Beyond the formal sessions, the weekend highlighted the importance of **bringing people living with T2D together,** creating space to share experiences, build relationships and strengthen a sense of community.

STRENGTHENING THE T2GETHER COMMUNITY

The Summit began on Friday evening with a **welcome dinner,** providing an informal opportunity for participants to meet one another and **reconnect with familiar faces.**

For some, it was their **first opportunity** to engage with others living with T2D from different countries. For others, it was a chance to **renew relationships** established through previous Summits, training and T2GETHER activities.

Saturday began with a **light-hearted group icebreaker** that brought plenty of laughter, helped everyone relax and created a welcoming atmosphere for participants to start **getting to know one another.**



With the group warmed up and introductions underway, the programme continued with an **overview of IDF Europe's work and priorities,** presented by **Regional Manager Elisabeth Dupont**. Participants learnt more about the organisation's advocacy and policy activities, its collaboration with national diabetes associations, and the opportunities available for people living with diabetes to contribute to its work.

An important feature of this year's Summit was its **emphasis on peer learning**. Rather than separating new and experienced members throughout the weekend, the programme combined **joint activities with parallel sessions tailored to different levels of advocacy experience**.

This approach allowed participants to **learn from one another,** recognise shared experiences and explore **how they could support each other** beyond the Summit. It also reinforced the programme's broader **train-the-trainer approach,** encouraging participants to share their knowledge and learning, support peer engagement and **help build advocacy capacity** within their own communities, national networks and organisations. In this way, the programme aims to **foster a connected network of advocates, leaders and mentors** who can continue to support one another and strengthen T2D advocacy **across Europe.**

Although members came from **different national, cultural and healthcare contexts**, the opportunity to connect with others **who understood the everyday realities of living with T2D** emerged as an **important aspect of the weekend.**

FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE TO ADVOCACY

A central theme throughout the Summit was exploring how **personal experiences** of living with T2D can be transformed into **meaningful advocacy.**



Active listening and storytelling

The first workshops focused on **active listening and storytelling** as essential skills for effective advocacy.

During an interactive exercise facilitated by **IDF Europe's Youth Engagement and Strategy Lead, Cameron Keighron,** participants worked in pairs to share **a personal experience** and then retell their partner's story to a small group. The activity highlighted the **importance of listening carefully,** understanding what matters most to another person and representing their experiences **accurately and respectfully.**

Building on this exercise, **Tara Humphrey** guided participants through a **practical storytelling workshop,** introducing a simple framework for structuring a personal story around four elements: **Me, Moment, Meaning and My Call to Action.**

Participants were encouraged to consider **how they could communicate their experiences** in a concise and **engaging way,** helping audiences understand not only what happened, but **why it matters and what needs to change.**

The discussions **highlighted several recurring themes,** including the challenges of **managing a lifelong condition**, the impact of **assumptions and stigma,** and the importance of **involving people living with diabetes** in decisions that affect their lives.

Storytelling was also explored as a way to **build understanding and human connection,** helping to bring meaning to data and evidence.





DEVELOPING ADVOCACY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Following the joint sessions, participants divided into two groups for activities tailored to their experience.

Group A: New T2GETHER members

New members were introduced to the **foundations of diabetes advocacy**, exploring what advocacy means, why it matters and the different ways people living with T2D can become involved.

Facilitated by **IDFE Europe's Director – Policy and Strategy, Sabine Dupont**, the session highlighted **opportunities at individual, local, national and European levels**, from speaking up during healthcare consultations to contributing to research, awareness campaigns and policy discussions.

A further workshop facilitated by **IDF Europe's Communication and Engagement Manage**r, **Marian Brennan**, explored **storytelling in greater depth,** including how **personal experiences can be combined with reliable data and evidence** to strengthen advocacy messages.

Group B: Advocacy Training participants

Members completing the pilot Advocacy Training Programme took part in sessions designed to build on the **knowledge and skills gained through earlier modules**, with a focus on applying their learning in different advocacy contexts.

One session focused on **positioning and reframing T2D** within wider policy and societal discussions, encouraging participants to identify the messages they wanted **policymakers, healthcare professionals and the public** to better understand.

Discussions highlighted the need to challenge **oversimplified perceptions of T2D**, particularly the tendency to attribute the condition solely to **individual lifestyle choices.**

Participants reflected on the **complexity** of living with a lifelong condition, the **fear of developing diabetes-related complications**, the daily demands of **self-management** and the importance of recognising people living with diabetes as **active partners in their own care.**



A further discussion explored how the **experiences and preferences** of people living with T2D should inform the development and evaluation of **treatment options,** reinforcing the importance of **meaningful involvement from an early stage.**

These discussions provided a starting point for further exchange with the Advocacy Training graduates, with IDF Europe planning to continue exploring these topics with the group and **identifying opportunities to translate their perspectives into meaningful advocacy activities.**

COMMUNICATING & COLLABORATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

One of the central sessions of the Summit brought participants back together for a panel discussion on **communicating and collaborating with different stakeholders.**





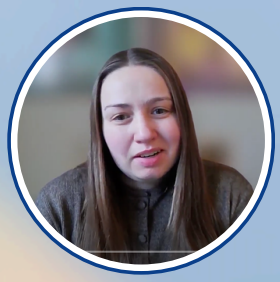




The session featured video contributions from **Rebecca Mantegazza from the Association du Diabète in Belgium,** and **Emma Doble, Patient and Public Strategy Editor at The BMJ.**

Rebecca emphasised the need for **greater representation** of people living with T2D in diabetes associations and the many ways **individuals can contribute to advocacy,** from peer support and involvement in projects to sharing their experiences with wider audiences.

"What matters is that people living with diabetes have a place at the table when decisions, initiatives, or projects that affect them are being developed." — Rebecca Mantegazza



Emma highlighted the **growing recognition of lived experience** as an important form of **expertise in medical research and publishing,** sharing examples of how people living with health conditions contribute as **authors, reviewers and members of editorial boards.** She encouraged participants to recognise the value of their own experiences and the insights they can bring:

"I really encourage you to think about your own lived experience as an incredible set of unique skills, unique insights, and to see the value in all of that experience." — Emma Doble

Building on these perspectives, a panel discussion moderated by Tara Humphrey brought together **representatives from healthcare, research, policymaking and industry:** Konstantina Boumaki, Cameron Keighron, Sabine Dupont and Maddy Farnworth, respectively.

The discussion explored the **distinct value** that lived experience brings to decision-making and how people living with diabetes can **build productive relationships** with different stakeholders. A recurring message was that lived experience provides **knowledge and insights** that cannot always be captured through clinical data, research findings or policy statistics alone.



For healthcare professionals, **understanding people's everyday experiences** can help ensure care is better aligned with their circumstances, preferences and priorities. Konstantina Boumaki highlighted the importance of **open communication and shared decision-making,** encouraging people living with diabetes to actively participate in discussions about their care.

"It is very important in this appointment to share your story and your views." — **Konstantina Boumaki**



Cameron Keighron highlighted the importance of **involving people living with diabetes from the earliest stages of research**, emphasising the value of moving beyond consultation towards genuine co-creation.

"We get better data, better research, and better quality answers to questions when we have that piece of the puzzle included."
— **Cameron Keighron**

For policymakers and industry, lived experience can provide **important insights into the practical impact** of decisions, services and innovations.

The panel also offered practical advice for advocates looking to **engage with stakeholders for the first time.** Participants were encouraged to understand their audience, communicate a **clear message**, support their arguments with **relevant evidence** and identify a **specific action** they would like stakeholders to take.



As **Sabine Dupont** explained: *"You need to know what you're going to be communicating and what you're going to be asking for."*

The discussion also explored **barriers to effective collaboration**, including differences in **knowledge, communication, expectations and trust**. Panellists highlighted the importance of openness, **mutual respect** and building relationships over time, while emphasising that meaningful involvement requires **more than simply listening to people's experiences**.



Representing the industry perspective, Maddy Farnworth from **Novo** highlighted the importance of **building trust** and ensuring that involvement leads to meaningful action:

"Trust is lost when people feel that their voice is being heard but nothing's being done about it." — **Maddy Farnworth**

Following the Summit, additional **video contributions from representatives of Bayer and Roche** were shared with participants, offering further **industry perspectives** on the value of lived experience and the importance of involving people living with diabetes in shaping their work.

Overall, the session reinforced the importance of recognising lived experience as a valuable form of expertise and ensuring that people living with diabetes are **meaningfully involved in shaping decisions that affect their lives.**

PUTTING ADVOCACY INTO PRACTICE

Following the panel discussion, participants worked in **small groups** to translate issues of concern into practical advocacy messages.

Using examples such as **stigma, access to diabetes technologies and experiences within healthcare systems**, groups were encouraged to identify their **intended audience**, develop a **clear message**, formulate a **specific request** and consider the **most effective way to communicate it.**



The exercise demonstrated how personal experiences can be developed into **focused advocacy messages tailored to different audiences,** helping participants move from identifying problems to proposing practical solutions.

CRITICAL THINKING FOR DIABETES ADVOCACY

With access to an increasing volume of diabetes-related information through online platforms, social media and personal networks, **critical thinking** has become an important skill for advocates.

A practical workshop explored how to **assess the reliability of diabetes information, recognise potentially misleading claims and respond constructively to misinformation.**

Through a series of real-world scenarios, participants considered how to **distinguish credible information from unsupported claims**, identify trustworthy sources and communicate responsibly with others.

The session also highlighted the importance of **respecting personal experiences** while recognising that what works for one individual may not be appropriate or effective for another.

Participants were encouraged to approach information critically, seek reliable evidence and **remain mindful of their responsibilities** when sharing information within their communities.

A MOMENT OF REFLECTION & CONNECTION

Sunday morning began with a group reflection on the experiences and discussions of the previous day. What followed was a particularly moving exchange, with participants **openly sharing their emotions and expressing gratitude** for the opportunity to connect with others living with T2D.

For many, this was the **first time they** had been in a room surrounded by others who **truly understood their experiences of living with the condition**. Participants spoke about the **importance of feeling understood**, supported and part of a community, highlighting the value of these connections beyond the knowledge and skills gained through the programme.

The discussion reflected a **strong sense of belonging and renewed motivation,** with participants expressing enthusiasm for staying connected, supporting one another and continuing their advocacy journeys together.

EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES & UNMET NEEDS

Following this reflection, the morning continued with an interactive session exploring the **lived experiences, burden and unmet needs** of people living with diabetes.

Maddy Farnworth from Novo introduced findings from a **global survey** of people living with diabetes, providing a starting point for discussion and reflection.

Rather than focusing solely on the survey findings, the session invited T2GETHER members to consider **how the results resonated with their own experiences**, where they recognised **similarities and differences**, and whether the findings reflected the realities of living with diabetes in different European contexts.

The discussions provided an opportunity to explore how experiences and needs **may vary across individuals, countries and healthcare systems,** reinforcing the importance of considering diverse lived experiences when identifying priorities for diabetes care and advocacy.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVOCACY AND INVOLVEMENT

The final day also provided an opportunity to look at how T2GETHER members can **continue contributing to advocacy activities beyond the Summit.**

IDF Europe presented examples of members' involvement in recent activities, including contributions to **conferences, European-level discussions, research projects, focus groups and national initiatives.** These examples demonstrated the many ways people living with T2D can use their knowledge and experiences to contribute to diabetes advocacy.

The discussion also explored opportunities for **continued engagement with national diabetes associations** and the **wider T2GETHER Community.**

For graduates of the pilot Advocacy Training Programme, possible next steps included **advanced training, mentoring and opportunities to take on more active roles within the Community.**

For new members, the focus was on **identifying accessible first steps** and ensuring they felt supported in exploring opportunities aligned with their interests, skills and availability.

TURNING LEARNING INTO ACTION

To conclude the Summit, participants took part in a **personal action-planning session** with Marian Brennan.

Building on the knowledge, experiences and discussions from the weekend, members were encouraged to **identify a practical advocacy goal** and consider the **steps needed to achieve it**. The exercise focused on translating **intentions into specific actions,** including what participants wanted to do, when they could take their next step, what barriers they might encounter and how these could be addressed.

Whether through sharing their personal story, raising awareness, connecting with a national diabetes association or contributing to an advocacy initiative, the session encouraged participants to **consider how they could apply their learning in ways meaningful to them.**

CELEBRATING THE FIRST T2GETHER ADVOCACY TRAINING GRADUATES

The 2026 Summit marked the completion of the pilot T2GETHER Advocacy Training Programme, representing an **important step forward in the Community's development.** Co-designed by the T2GETHER Community, the programme provided existing T2GETHER members with an opportunity to **strengthen their involvement in diabetes advocacy**. It combined **five online modules with a final in-person component during the Summit.**

Through **interactive presentations with guest speakers**, participants explored topics including the foundations of diabetes advocacy, the use of storytelling and data, the integrated cardio-renal-metabolic approach to diabetes care, and stigma and language. Each module was followed by a **short quiz** to help participants reflect on and consolidate their learning, check their understanding of key concepts and identify **areas where further guidance or support might be helpful.**

The final in-person module allowed participants to put their **learning into practice through interactive exercises, collaboration and peer exchange.**

Fourteen participants completed the pilot programme, becoming the first cohort of graduates and receiving the title of **'T2GETHER Community Advocates',** in recognition of their commitment to developing their advocacy knowledge and skills. Their participation also contributed to the wider Summit experience, providing opportunities for newer members to **learn from peers who had already begun developing their advocacy skills** and exploring opportunities for involvement.

The **completion of the pilot** represents an important foundation for future T2GETHER training activities. An **evaluation of the pilot programme** was conducted to assess participants' experiences and identify opportunities for improvement. These findings will be complemented by **follow-up focus group discussions with graduates** to gather more in-depth feedback, explore their needs and preferences for continued learning, and inform the **refinement of the programme and development of future training opportunities.**

REFLECTIONS & KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Throughout the weekend, participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences, share what they had learnt and identify what they would take away from the Summit.

Several themes emerged from these reflections.

THE VALUE OF SHARED EXPERIENCES & CONNECTION

Despite differences in personal backgrounds and healthcare systems, participants recognised **many shared experiences of living with T2D.** Hearing the stories of others provided opportunities for understanding, mutual encouragement and connection.

" I'm not alone, [and value] the sense of community."
- T2GETHER participant

For some, the Summit offered **reassurance and renewed motivation**. For others, it provided confidence to **begin exploring advocacy for the first time**.

LIVED EXPERIENCE IS A VALUABLE FORM OF EXPERTISE

Discussions throughout the weekend reinforced that people living with diabetes should be **meaningfully involved in decisions affecting their care and lives,** rather than consulted only after decisions have been made.

"Sharing lived experience is priceless"
- T2GETHER participant

ADVOCACY BEGINS WITH LISTENING AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Participants highlighted the **importance of listening to others**, understanding different perspectives and learning how to **communicate their experiences** in ways that are relevant to different audiences.

STIGMA & MISCONCEPTIONS REMAIN IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

The need to **challenge assumptions about T2D** and promote a more **informed, respectful understanding of the condition** was a recurring theme across the workshops and group discussions.

EVERY CONTRIBUTION TO ADVOCACY MATTERS

The Summit reinforced that **advocacy can take many forms.** Members do not need extensive experience or formal positions to contribute. Sharing an experience, supporting others, participating in research or speaking up about an issue can all be **meaningful starting points.**

EVALUATION

At the close of the Summit, participants were invited to **share their feedback through an evaluation survey**. The key questions and responses are summarised below:

NEW T2GETHER MEMBERS WERE ASKED, TO WHAT EXTENT THEY AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

I feel more connected to the T2GETHER community

79% of new members 'strongly agree' and 21% 'agree' that they feel more connected to the community.

I feel more confident using my lived experience in advocacy

74% of new members 'strongly agree' and 21% 'agree' that they feel more confident using their lived experience in advocacy.

I feel more confident communicating and collaborating with different stakeholders

63% of new members 'strongly agree' and 16% 'agree' that they feel more confident communicating and collaborating with different stakeholders. A further 21% were neutral.

I feel better able to assess diabetes information and identify trustworthy sources

47% of new members 'strongly agree' and 32% 'agree' that they feel better able to assess diabetes information and identify trustworthy sources. A further 21% were neutral.

I better understand how lived experience can contribute to wider diabetes advocacy

74% of new members 'strongly agree' and 11% 'agree' that they better understand how lived experience can contribute to sider diabetes advocacy. A further 16% were neutral.

I have a clearer idea of practical opportunities & next steps for getting involved in advocacy and the wider T2GETHER community

58% of new members 'strongly agree' and 37% 'agree' that they have a clearer idea of practical opportunities and next steps.

ALL 31 PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED THE FOLLOWING:

Overall, how satisfied were you with the T2GETHER Summit?

93% of participants indicated that they were 'very satisfied'. The remaining 7% were 'satisfied'.

To what extent do you agree that the sessions were relevant and useful to me?

55% of participants 'strongly agreed' and 41% 'agreed' with this statement. The remaining 4% were 'neutral'.

How did you find the level of interaction during the Summit?

96% of participants found the level of interaction to be 'about the right amount', while the remaining 4% found it 'too much'.

How satisfied were you with the opportunities to connect and exchange with other participants?

All participants were either 'very satisfied' (66%) or 'satisfied' (34%) with the opportunities to connect and exchange with other participants.

Are you interested in becoming more involved in T2GETHER Community or in other IDF Europe activities?

95% of new members said they were 'very interested' in becoming more involved in the T2GETHER Community or in other IDF Europe activities.

Which types of activities would you be interested in participating in?

Participants reported interest across a broad range of activities including speaking at events and conferences; sharing lived experience and testimonials; participating in meetings with policymakers, research projects and advisory panels; participating in IDF Europe focus groups; and reviewing materials and campaigns.

Are you interested in becoming more involved in T2GETHER Community or in other IDF Europe activities?

The T2GETHER Summit achieved an excellent NPS of +84, based on 19 responses. Of these, 84.2% were classified as Promoters, 15.8% as Passives and none as Detractors. This reflects a very high level of participant satisfaction and willingness to recommend the Summit to others.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the T2GETHER Community continues to grow, **IDF Europe remains committed to creating opportunities for people living with T2D to connect,** develop their skills and contribute to advocacy at national and European levels.

The completion of the first Advocacy Training Programme provides a **foundation for more structured learning and continued development,** while the perspectives of new and experienced members will **help shape future activities and priorities.**

Building on the Summit, **IDF Europe will continue working with members** to explore further training, peer support and opportunities for meaningful involvement in projects and initiatives.

Above all, the 2026 Summit reaffirmed that the strength of T2GETHER lies in its members: **their diverse experiences, willingness to support one another and shared commitment to improving the lives of people living with T2D across Europe.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IDF Europe warmly thanks **all T2GETHER members who participated in the 2026 Summit**, sharing their experiences, ideas and perspectives so openly.

Special congratulations go to the **14 members who completed the first T2GETHER Advocacy Training Programme**. IDF Europe also extends a **warm welcome to the 17 new Community members** and **sincere thanks to the two experienced members** who supported their peers throughout the weekend.

Special thanks to **Tara Humphrey** for moderating and facilitating the interactive discussions, and to **all speakers, panellists and contributors** who shared their knowledge, experience and perspectives.

Finally, IDF Europe thanks **everyone involved in organising and supporting the Summit** and looks forward to continuing to work with the growing T2GETHER Community.

IDF Europe would also like to express its sincere appreciation to its partners **Lilly, Novo, Roche and Bayer** for their valuable support of the T2GETHER initiative and the 2026 Summit.