



# Zero Project Report 2019

## **Independent Living and Political Participation**

66 Innovative Practices, 10 Innovative Policies,  
from 41 countries

International study on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights  
of Persons with Disabilities – “For a World without Barriers”

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# “For a world without barriers”

## FOREWORD BY MARTIN ESSL



With this, our seventh thematic report, we are already nearing the end of our second four-year research cycle. Independent living and political participation, the theme of the Zero Project Report 2019, are at the heart of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). And, sadly, both illustrate all too clearly just how necessary it remains to break down the many different barriers for persons with disabilities.

### Our Mission & Our Work

At the time of this writing, the UN CRPD has been signed by 187 countries and ratified by 177. While this is certainly a laudable accomplishment, the pace of implementation remains woefully slow. Through the Zero Project's mission of working “for a world without barriers,” we hope that we can, at the very least, help speed up this process through innovative, impactful, and scalable practices and policies.

Some people still ask why we chose the four research subjects that we did. The answer is simple. We believe that the issues of Independent Living & Political Participation, Accessibility, Education, and Employment are all so intimately connected and mutually supportive that, in reality, it is difficult to have one without any of the others. And in the work we do, very often the most successful Innovative Practices and Policies that we seek to communicate, and with which we hope to inspire greater and more effective implementation of the CRPD, cut across two, or even more, of these themes – especially as their geographical reach spreads.

At the risk of repeating myself year after year, I should like to emphasise once again that the Zero Project is not simply the Essl Foundation or its core team. Rather, it is a network of more than 4,000 experts (of which you, the reader, are more than likely one), both with and without disabilities, from 180 countries. It is these wonderful volunteers who have contributed so much in the past years, and who continue to do so. The Zero Project is a critical combination of partnerships, joint ventures, collaborations, and shared passions, visions, and activities that enables us to work so very hard to break down existing barriers, to innovate, and to change the world.

As we continue to work to improve our processes, to engage more closely with our network, and to communicate our results more efficiently and effectively, I do believe we have achieved a considerable degree of success and “punch.” The feedback from users of both the project's reports and its website, but especially from participants in the annual Zero Project Conference, appears to provide ample evidence of its achievements.

We catalyse innovations, inspire change, foster collaborations, and promote expertise to discover the most outstanding innovations from around the world and to help share them globally. In this regard, I must say that we are especially proud that the recently published UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development 2018 cites the Zero Project Innovative Practices and Policies more than 50 times. Being able to support, in whatever ways we can, the work of the United Nations in the field of disabilities is enormously important and rewarding to us. And we greatly look forward to helping it further, as and when we are able.

### Zero Project Report 2019

As I mentioned above, we are now nearing the end of our second research cycle. Having addressed Employment and Accessibility over the past couple of years, we will turn our attention to Education in 2020, before embarking on our third four-year research cycle.

In June 2018 we launched one of our most extensive (in six languages no less!), and ultimately most successful, Call for Nominations, resulting in some 320 nominations from 41 countries. Since then, we have not only identified 66 outstanding Innovative Practices and 10 Innovative Policies and experts from 41 countries, but 11 of these have also been accepted into the innovative Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme.

### Zero Project–Impact Transfer

The Essl Foundation and Ashoka joined forces in 2017 to initiate the first Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme to internationalize the most innovative disability solutions for a barrier-free world. Now in its second year, we are increasingly excited about the programme, which – building on all the strengths of the Zero Project and Ashoka – is supporting these 11 Practices with the additional means and opportunities to grow and scale-up their outstanding work.

With a unique worldwide network of some 4,000 social entrepreneurs and a proven track record in the field of globalising social innovation, we have been working with Ashoka for almost ten years with great success. Mentors are crucial for the Impact Transfer programme, and I am personally deeply grateful to the numerous experienced consultants, managers, trainers, and entrepreneurs who are so generously participating pro bono to support these social entrepreneurs for a period of six months.

My personal goal, on top of our global approach, is to use our research and innovators to speed up the innovation processes as role models here in the foundation's home country of Austria.



Zero Project Conference 2018: The Zero Project Conference gathered more than 600 innovators, opinion leaders, and policy makers from more than 70 countries in the conference venues of the United Nations in Vienna, focusing on accessibility. In February 2019, the Conference is all about innovative approaches to independent living and political participation.

## Zero Project Research Themes

I think it is important to note that, although we may focus each year on an individual research theme, our work around that theme does not thereafter come to an end. On a continuing basis, we pursue a number of initiatives that address each of our primary topics.

**Employment:** The Essl Foundation has initiated the Zero Project Unternehmensdialoge (in English, essentially, “dialogue with business”). These are series of conferences held in Austrian country states that bring together the business community of a region, or of a particular business activity, to learn from and about international and national Zero Project Innovative Practices.

**Education:** The Essl Foundation is currently running an inclusive vocational education project called the “Inclusive IT Academy.” Based on the curricula and partners of the Cisco Network Academy, this is an extensive and highly-respected training model developed by the IT-multinational Cisco Systems. Jointly with HTL Rennweg (a leading technical high school in Vienna), the Johaneum University, Specialisterne and myAbility (two innovative social businesses), as well as several employers, we are creating and organizing the first inclusive certified training course on cybersecurity. We look forward to presenting the results of these efforts at the Zero Project Conference 2020 and to sharing them with the global community.

**Accessibility:** We are delighted to have initiated a partnership with the city of Graz, supporting its efforts to make the city more accessible – especially a huge new urban development for some 20,000 inhabitants, called Graz Reininghaus, being built on the grounds of the former Reininghaus brewery near the centre of the city.

## Going Forward

Building on more than ten years of experience, we are constantly exploring and evaluating other opportunities to communicate the breadth and depth of the expertise that exists within our network. This year, as another innovation, we are publishing a White Paper on “Conference Accessibility” for the first time.

Accessibility at Zero Project Conferences now encompasses more than 30 measures, covering many different dimensions and abilities. We are developing and evaluating these and further measures jointly with the Zero Project community, and our findings will be published as the White Paper and a handbook, with the clear goal of supporting all other organizers in creating more accessible conferences, congresses, and seminars.

As always, I should like to conclude with my personal thanks to the whole Zero Project team, lead by Michael Fembek. The Zero Project would not be possible without them and the engagement of all members of the global network in our untiring effort to create a world without barriers.

*Martin Essl,*

Founder and Chairman, Essl Foundation, January 2019



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our good friend and colleague **Martin Habacher**. Martin brought so much enthusiasm and character to our social media over the more than five years that he worked with us. He was well known and liked and was a familiar and friendly face to so many at the Zero Project Conferences. He will be greatly missed.



# Executive Summary

## Zero Project

The Zero Project: History, research, network, report, and communication channels.

## Innovative Practices

Overview of the 66 Innovative Practices 2019, country by country patterns and threads identified.

## Impact Transfer

The 21 Zero Project–Impact Transfer participants and their replication strategies.

## This Year's Theme

Theoretical background on independent living, political participation, and related articles of the UN CRPD.

## Innovative Policies

Overview of the 10 Innovative Policies 2019, country by country.

## Life Stories

Personal reports from users and beneficiaries of Innovative Practices and Policies 2019.

# About the Zero Project

The Zero Project was initiated by the Essl Foundation in 2008 with the mission to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and to work for a world without barriers. This section summarizes its current work.

The Zero Project's primary focus is on researching and communicating innovations on behalf of persons with disabilities. Since the project's early beginnings, the Zero Project team has developed a vast global network of experts both with and without disabilities, with more than 4,000 active members from 180 countries.

Working with this network, the team has developed the expertise to identify, select, and communicate Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies worldwide, working with all relevant stakeholder groups, including several UN agencies. The four basic principles of the Zero Project research and selection method are explained on page 8 ff.

## 2018–2019: Independent Living and Political Participation

The Zero Project is based on a four-year research cycle. Independent Living and Political Participation is

the third research topic in this second cycle, following Employment (2015–2016) and Accessibility (2016–2017). Education (2019–2020) will complete the second full cycle, during which approximately 300 Innovative Practices and Policies will have been selected and disseminated.

This year, 66 Innovative Practices and 10 Innovative Policies in Independent Living and Political Participation were selected, all of which are covered in this report as well as online at [www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org), on social media, and at the Zero Project Conference in February 2019, held in Vienna. Also, identifiable patterns of solutions are researched and communicated (see page 22).

## The Zero Project Conference and Awards

The Zero Project Conference is a unique meeting point of people who inspire and want to be inspired. Held annually at UN Headquarters in Vienna, the event brings together some 600 participants from more than 70 countries. At the heart of the conference are presentations of the Innovative Practices and Policies, which also receive the Zero Project Awards, as well as presentations by international decision-makers and opinion leaders from all sectors of society – the Zero Project network and partners.

## The Essl Foundation

The Essl Foundation MGE gemeinnützige Privatstiftung is a charitable foundation established in 2007 by Martin and Gerda Essl in Klosterneuburg, Austria. The foundation initiated and now funds and organizes the Zero Project, with its team based in Vienna. The Essl Foundation also holds observer status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The Zero Project is the core programme of the Essl Foundation, but not its only one. Internationally, the foundation is also taking part in grant-funded projects (currently TOPHOUSE, see pages 132 ff.) and is actively partnering with members of the Zero Project network in conferences, publications, and research cooperation.

### THE ZERO PROJECT REPORT 2019

This Report is composed of five main sections, summarizing the annual research, followed by an Annex:

- Executive Summary, including background information on this year's research topic and the Zero Project methodology
- Innovative Policies and Practices: Fact Sheets and Life Stories
- Description of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme
- Description of EU-grant-funded TOPHOUSE projects
- A summary of this Report in easy language
- An Annex listing all Zero Project network members active in 2018–2019

The Zero Project Report is also available on the Zero Project Website in an accessible pdf format.



## Zero Project–Impact Transfer

The Essl Foundation and Ashoka have joined forces to launch the first Impact Transfer programme, designed to support the internationalization of innovative disability solutions for a barrier-free world. The Zero Project–Impact Transfer is a huge effort of the Zero Project to support those Innovative Practices that have the highest potential to grow or to be replicated, using Ashoka expertise and capacity (see page 26).

With this new international focus on scaling-up Innovative Practices, the Essl Foundation decided to discontinue the Zero Project Social Indicators in 2018–2019. The Social Indicators measured the implementation of the UN CRPD at the country and regional level, and has collected a wealth of data between 2010 and 2018.

## The Essl Foundation and Zero Project in Austria

Within Austria, the Essl Foundation organizes the Zero Project Unternehmensdialoge, which includes a series of regional conferences to promote Innovative Practices in inclusive employment, the publishing of newspaper supplements on accessibility and inclusive employment, and also the organization of local awards for outstanding efforts in creating employment for persons with disabilities.

Using the research and network of the Zero Project, the Essl Foundation also actively advocates decision-makers in both the public and private sectors for inclusive employment, accessibility, and inclusive education. For example, in the city of Graz the foundation has worked to improve the accessibility of the new urban development Graz-Reininghaus.

The Essl Foundation is also actively promoting the philanthropic community in Austria by co-initiating the Association of Charitable Foundations, the House of Philanthropy (a co-working space of foundations), and the Sinnstifter and Sinnbildungstiftung, which are co-investing vehicles to promote social innovations outside the area of disability.



One of the 66 Innovative Practices 2018–19: Keystone Moldova purchases housing for those moving out of institutions who cannot go back to family homes. A maximum of six people live in each house.

“The Zero Project has a key role to play in giving credit to, and disseminating information about, exciting and exemplary innovations from which we can all learn.”

Prof. Anna Lawson, University of Leeds



An Innovative Practice 2018–19 from Plena Inclusion Espana: People with intellectual disabilities tell the deputies of the Congress their claim for the right to vote.

# About the Zero Project research

## HOW THE ZERO PROJECT SELECTS INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND POLICIES

The four pillars of the Zero Project method are: (1) Looking for innovation, impact, and scalability; (2) defining Practices and Policies; (3) using the Zero Project network; and (4) disseminating results to create change.

### 1 Social Innovation

The term "social innovation" was introduced by the Austrian Economist Joseph Schumpeter in 1939 (who also coined the expression "creative destruction"). Recently there have been several attempts to adapt the term [Phills, et al, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2008], emphasizing a holistic approach:

*Novel solutions to a social problem that are more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and from which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals. A social innovation can be a product, production process, or technology (much like innovation in general), but it can also be a principle, an idea, a piece of legislation, a social movement, an intervention, or some combination of these.*

Other authors emphasize the importance of

1. technology
2. learning and collaboration
3. measurement of impact
4. sustainability
5. context and environment
6. government and public administration policies
7. willingness of all stakeholders to adapt

### 1 (Social) Impact

According to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, social impact is the effect an organization's actions have on the well-being of the community. Impact may consist of:

- quality, quantity, availability, and affordability of services provided;
- number of beneficiaries/users served, especially those in underserved and disadvantaged communities;
- sustainability of services and service providers improved;
- changes in policies and regulations achieved;
- changes in attitudes and paradigm shifts achieved;
- scaling to other regions, countries, or contexts.

### 1 Scalability

Scaling can be defined as the process of replicating and/or adapting an innovation across large geographies and populations for transformational impact

(UNHCR and IDIA, "Insights on Measuring the Impact of Innovation," 2017).

Scaling encompasses very different types of growing, replicating, or other forms of expansion, and may even mean Open Source strategies or giving away all expertise for free. The ability to scale may be dependent on a variety of factors related to the innovator, the (potential) funders, and the environment (IDIA, "Matrix of Factors Influencing Scaling and Sustainability"). Looking at the stages of scaling, the classification of UNHCR and IDIA is useful:

1. **"Ideation"**: Analysing the problem and generating potential solutions
2. **Research and Development**: Developing and trying potential solutions
3. **Proof of Concept**: Creating an early, field-tested solution (prototype, pilot)
4. **Transition to Scale**: Developing the growth model and attracting partners
5. **Scaling**: Replicating (growing) and adapting the innovation to larger geographies (with mostly transformational innovation)
6. **Sustainable Scaling**: Growing/replicating with a sustainable income model and within an ecosystem

The Zero Project looks at all types of scaling, but normally focuses on Stages 3, 4, and 5: Proof of Concept, Transition to Scale, and Scaling. Using the network approach, it is not possible for experts to get evidence or even assess projects in Stages 1 and 2, whereas Stage 6 is most often not considered innovative enough anymore.

### 2 Innovative (Public) Policies

Bardach and Patashnik ("A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis") define Policies as the "means of directly accomplishing useful work in a cost-effective manner. It is made up of (1) the latent potential for creating value . . . plus (2) the mechanism for extracting and focusing the potential."

Public policy-making is done on several levels of governance: supranational (e.g., binding international treaties), national, regional, or local/municipal. Public policies can be implemented via laws and all other forms of regulations, by standards and other forms of

## THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE ZERO PROJECT APPROACH

1

### Looking for innovation, impact, and scalability

The power of innovation (defined by innovation itself, but also impact and scalability).

2

### Defining Practices and Policies

Telling the story of Innovative Practices and Policies (which may also be called Good Practice, Smart Practice, or Promising Practice).

3

### Network

Maintaining and engaging with a unique worldwide network of experts with and without disabilities.

4

### Communicating to create change

Innovative Practices and Policies are widely communicated, most importantly by the annual Zero Project Conference in Vienna, to inspire, encourage, and create new networks and collaborations.

legal obligations, by comprehensive action plans, and also by supreme court jurisdiction.

When it comes to the implementation of the UN CRPD, policies may use one of the following instruments based on government and innovation ([www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)).

**Changes in the tax system:** Creating incentives, such as tax benefits, or risk-reduction, such as new forms of insurance; creating or improving institutions; granting more just and appropriate permissions.

**Grant-funding:** Social benefit programmes, social protection programmes.

**Improving regulatory conditions:** Setting mandatory targets and minimum standards for the public and all other stakeholders.

**Democratizing innovation:** Making innovation more accessible to all; improving public participation in policy decision-making.

**Organizational support for nurturing environment and conditions for social innovations:** For example, public venture capital, innovation intermediaries and accelerators, support of professional collaboration, information and exchange IT-platforms.

**Creating evaluation systems:** Including indicators and data collection methods.

## 2 Innovative Practices

According to Wikipedia, the definition of “best practices” is as follows: “A best practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means or because it has become a standard way of doing things, e.g., a standard way of complying with legal or ethical requirements.” Practices in the field of implementation of the

UN CRPD include projects, programmes, products, and services, but also social enterprises and business strategies. They can be organized or employed by civil society organizations, such as NGOs and foundations, but also by private companies and universities. Even the activities of public authorities may be considered as a Practice if it uses only means that are open to civil society or private companies as well.

In real life, (Public) Policies and Practices are not distinct, but they are within one continuum.

## 3 Power of networks, collaboration, crowd-intelligence

The final pillar of the Zero Project is the belief that aggregation of information in groups will result in expertise and decisions that are often better than could have been made by any single member of the group (James Surowiecki, “Wisdom of Crowds,” 2004). According to Surowiecki, four criteria are needed for a crowd to be intelligent (rather than “stupid” as in mass behaviour or a stock exchange panic):

- Diversity of opinion
- independence
- Decentralization
- Aggregation, meaning some mechanism exists for turning private judgments into a collective.

## 4 Dissemination of results and creating change

Innovative Practices and Policies are widely communicated, most importantly by the annual Zero Project Conference in Vienna, to inspire, encourage, and create new networks and collaborations. Results are difficult to measure, but an overwhelming number of members of the Zero Project network have confirmed the huge impact of the project.

# About Independent Living and Political Participation

## THE PRINCIPLES OF ARTICLES 19 AND 29 OF THE UN CRPD

The Zero Project Report 2019 focuses on Article 19 (Living independently and being included in the community) and Article 29 (Participation in political and public life) of the UN CRPD, as well as related topics such as Article 12 (Equal recognition before the law) and Article 13 (Access to justice). This section explains basic principles and guidelines that are relevant for the selection of the 2019 Innovative Practices and Policies.

### Basic principles of Independent Living

Article 19 of the UN CRPD (Living independently and being included in the community) states:

- a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;
- b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community.

The UN CRPD contrasts “living in the community” with “isolation or segregation from the community.” Services and support should provide access to a range of services and offer the individual with choice and control regarding his or her environment. All support given should respect the individual autonomy of persons with disabilities and promote their ability to effectively take part and be included in the community (community living, community support services). This approach is very much in contrast to services that perpetuate segregation and exclusion, because they maintain a parallel system for disabled people away from the mainstream community.

The CRPD Committee (General comments No. 5, 2017) adds even more clarity by stating that *personal autonomy and self-determination is fundamental to independent living, [and is] linked to the development of a person’s identity and personality: where we live, with whom, what we eat, whether we like to sleep in or go to bed late at night, be inside or outdoors, have a tablecloth and candles on the table, have pets or listen to music. Such actions and decisions constitute who we are.*

### A focus on deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization is not specifically mentioned in the UN CRPD. But the CRPD Committee (General comments, 2018) states that eliminating discrimination requires States parties to *repeal or reform policies, laws and practices that prevent persons with disabilities from, for example, choosing their place of residence, securing affordable and accessible housing, renting accommodation or accessing such general mainstream facilities and services as their independence would require.*

A ‘culture of dependency’, as defined by Adolf Ratzka, whereby people with disabilities are perceived as the ‘responsibility’ of their parents or other relatives appears to be persistently pervasive, especially in many Eastern European countries, and is a major reason for lack of progress in developing alternatives to institutional care. (Source: Academic Network of Experts in Disability, ANED)

### Early childhood intervention and deinstitutionalization of children

Growing up in a family environment is essential for the development of the child. Equally, family support is important for disabled children and adults; it can prevent institutionalization and can be essential for disabled people’s participation in the community. Many strategies towards deinstitutionalization and early-childhood intervention are based on reinte-gra-

#### KEY FEATURES OF A SUCCESSFUL DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION PROCESS

- Commitment to effecting deinstitutionalization
- A change in attitudes towards persons with disabilities
- Active cooperation between all people involved
- Availability of guidance and support
- Practical organization

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “From Institutions to Community Living for Persons with Disabilities: Perspectives from the Ground”.

tion of children into their families. However, the lack of other support options and the exclusive reliance on family can have an adverse effect on disabled people's independence and inclusion. (Source: European Network for Independent Living, ENIL)

### Personal assistance

The term 'personal assistance' refers to individualized support for disabled people, which enables them to overcome environmental barriers and to live independently. A key characteristic of genuine personal assistance is that disabled people have maximum choice and control over their support. This requires that:

- people with disabilities are able to choose their own assistant, and are able to decide how, where, and what support is provided to them;
- such provision is based on individual needs and life situation;
- there is access to personal assistance regardless of an individual's impairment or age;
- adequate support is provided to people wishing to manage their assistance, including support to people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

(Source: ENIL)

### Assistive technology:

#### Availability, affordability, eligibility

Assistive technologies are mentioned several times in the UN CRPD (Articles 4, 24, 30, and 32) as necessary tools in the implementation of independent living and political (and many other) rights enshrined in the UN CRPD.

In order to benefit from independent living, disabled people may often need particular forms of assistive equipment related to their impairment, as well as adapted transport and adaptations to their home. (Source: ANED)

Access is not only a matter of the existence of technology but of their availability (including available information and opportunities to purchase), affordability (in many cases related to eligibility of government funding), and the ability to choose and control.

Home automation for persons with disabilities is of key importance when it comes to living independently. Technologies to be considered are:

- **Limited mobility:** For those with limited mobility, lights, blinds, heating, and more can be automated and operated with the touch of a few buttons via an individual's smartphone or tablet computer.
- **Sensory disabilities:** For people with limited hearing, vision, or spatial awareness, voice-operated devices or devices with pre-programmed commands can take the difficulty out of everyday tasks.
- **Intellectual disabilities:** Technologies such as one-touch shower systems and automatic bedding and



One of 66 Innovative Practices 2018–19, Inclov from India created an inclusive partnering platform, which is used by persons with and without disabilities.

cooking systems are giving persons living with an intellectual disability and their caregivers greater independence and freedom.

### Major obstacles on policy level

“The Implementation of Policies Supporting Independent Living for Disabled People in Europe: Synthesis Report” (ANED, 2018) provides illustrations of national policies that violate the independent living principles of the UN CRPD:

- A majority of persons with disabilities still live in institutions, or live outside but are lonely and isolated.
- Many people are on long waiting lists for personal assistance.
- The political focus is still on funding of new institutions or their service providers.
- The absence of regulations, e.g., in housing policies, is a barrier to implementing the rights articulated in the UN CRPD.

### Political Participation

Article 29 of the UN CRPD (Participation in political and public life) notes the following:

- (a) To ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected;
- (i) Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use;
- (ii) Protecting the right of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in elections and public referen-

## ENIL'S RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The European Network for Independent Living's report "The Right to Live Independently and Be Included in the Community" (2018) identifies the following actions, among others, as most important for the implementation of the UN CRPD:

- Ensure common understanding of the key terms (such as independent living, personal assistance, community support services, and deinstitutionalization).
- Adopt a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy.
- Develop support services in the community.
- Make mainstream services and facilities accessible to all.
- Carry out awareness-raising activities.
- Ensure access to social protection.
- Recognize the right to legal capacity.
- Address multiple discrimination.
- Involve disabled people and their organizations.
- Collect data.

dums without intimidation, and to stand for elections, to effectively hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of government, facilitating the use of assistive and new technologies where appropriate;

**(b)** To promote actively an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in public affairs.

According to the FRA ("The Right to Political Participation of Persons with Disabilities," 2014), five issues are of key importance for policy makers in implementing Article 29 of the UN CRPD:

- lifting legal and administrative barriers to political participation;
- making voting procedures, facilities, and election materials more accessible;
- expanding opportunities for participation in political and public life;
- increasing awareness of the right to political participation of persons with disabilities;
- collecting data to measure the political participation of persons with disabilities.

## Voting and election procedures

In "Facilitating an Equal Right to Vote for Persons with Disabilities," Janet E. Lord, Michael Ashley Stein, and Janos Fiala Butora state on the right to vote:

*Emerging practices around the globe nonetheless bear out that persons with disabilities can be successfully incorporated in all phases of an electoral process. Further, they can perform a variety of roles beyond exercising the franchise – as voter educators, election commissioners, observers, monitors and committee members, and as candidates.* Recommended measures include:

- Inclusion in pre-election technical assessments
- Site selection for accessibility
- Voter eligibility and inclusive registration
- Accessible balloting and ballot design
- Inclusive voter education and information
- Integrated training of election officials
- Election observation
- Accessible electoral complaints processes
- Election institution building

## From guardianship to supported decision-making

Article 12 of the UN CRPD (Equal recognition before the law) is also addressed by the Zero Project research this year. It provides that "States Parties shall recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life."

The concept of supported decision-making (replacing substituted decision-making, such as guardianship models) is central to Article 12, by "putting the individual in the core of decision-making, but recognizes that opinions can be expressed in multiple ways." (Source: Dinerstein, American University Washington, 2012)

The Good Practice Project of the Resource Center for People with Mental Disability, ZELDA has defined the following criteria for good practices in supported decision-making:



An Innovative Practice 2018–19 from the United States: IFES has developed a toolkit that enables persons with disabilities to monitor the accessibility of their election (picture: a voter from Myanmar).

- be participatory;
- be based on a person's strengths and skills as well as on their will, preferences, and rights,
- not be limited only to service provision and oriented on it, but be oriented on life in the community;
- include personal stories where possible.

### **Inclusion and rights-based approaches**

According to CBM, a worldwide service provider, a rights-based approach to disability implies that all people are active subjects with legal claims and that persons with disabilities need to participate in all spheres of society on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Maximizing the involvement of disabled people's organizations in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of policies and practices to support independent living is of overall importance.

Some guiding questions for analysing the relevance of the specific human rights core principle in the context of the programme include:

- Are persons with disabilities organized in self-representing groups (disabled persons organizations, DPOs)?
- Are persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups represented in decision-making processes at the community, regional, or national policy level, e.g., in the design of poverty reduction strategies?
- Do persons with disabilities play an active role in government agencies and/or NGOs?
- Do DPOs have the adequate resources, skills, and infrastructure to advocate for their own rights?

(Source: CBM/GIZ, "A Human Rights-based Approach to Disability in Development," 2012)

### **Access to Justice**

Another aspect of the UN CPRD that was also covered in this year's Zero Project research is Article 13 (Access to justice):

1. States Parties shall ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodations, in order to facilitate their effective role as direct and indirect participants, including as witnesses, in all legal proceedings, including at investigative and other preliminary stages.

2. In order to help to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities, States Parties shall promote appropriate training for those working in the field of administration of justice, including police and prison staff.

Lack of training for police and other officials to understand the specific needs of persons with disabilities in accessing justice and how to provide necessary accommodations is considered to be one of the main obstacles. (Source: Human Rights – YES, 2012).

### **DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION: WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES**

- Women are more likely than men to become disabled during their lives, due in part to gender bias in the allocation of scarce resources and in access to services. When ill, girls and women are less likely to receive medical attention than boys and men, particularly in developing countries where medical care may be a considerable distance from home.
- A study in the Asia-Pacific region found that more than 80 per cent of disabled women had no independent means of livelihood, and thus were totally dependent on others. According to the World Health Organization, girls with disabilities may be more readily institutionalized than boys.
- Even where the laws are not discriminatory, disabled women and girls face a host of abuses at the hands of their families, communities, and the state.
- Disabled women's sexual and reproductive rights are grossly abused. They experience forced sterilization; forced abortion due to discriminatory attitudes about their parenting abilities; and denial of information about reproductive health and contraceptives.
- Disabled women also face limitations on their rights to marry and found a family, and often lose custody of their children.

Source: Human Rights Watch

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF EASY LANGUAGE/ PLAIN LANGUAGE**

In 2015, Inclusion International published "My Voice Matters! A Plain-language Guide on Inclusive Civic Engagement," a guide for people with intellectual disabilities on the right to vote and have a say on the laws and policies in their country. The guide explains the entire Article 29 in easy/plain language, and at the same time it serves as a toolbox for creating information in a language that everyone understands. Some examples of the language used:

"Political participation is about having a say on what is important to me and how I want my country to be. This includes my right to vote and have my voice heard on laws and policies that matter to me."

"A law may say that we are not allowed to make big decisions – like voting, opening a bank account, signing a contract, etc. – because we have a disability."

"Our families or others might feel we are not able to make decisions, so they do not let us."

# About Innovative Practice and Policy Research, 2018–2019

## HOW THE 76 INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND POLICIES WERE SELECTED

For 2019 the Zero Project selected 66 Innovative Practices and 10 Innovative Policies from 41 countries that positively impact the rights of persons with disabilities in their ability to live more independently and to take part in political life. In this section the nomination and selection process is described in detail.

In 2018–2019, the selection process was as usual conducted in several steps, beginning with “charting of the territory” to the final selection of the Innovative Practices and Policies.

### Charting Topics and Subtopics

In April, a number of topics relating to this year’s research focus were defined: independent living, self-determination, political participation, early childhood, rights-based approaches, and smart in-home technology. Next, almost 50 experts with and without disabilities from around the globe were contacted to assist in researching and identifying subtopics such as housing, supported decision-making, voting procedures, justice, and participation in civil society (see table below).

## THE TOPICS AND SUBTOPICS OF THE ZERO PROJECT RESEARCH 2018–2019

Self-determination		Political Participation	Early Childhood	Rights-based Approaches
Personal assistance	Housing	Voting policies and procedures	Early childhood intervention	Anti-discrimination and fundamental rights
Parenting and family	Person-centred public services / community-based services	Participation in public and political life	Diagnosis models	Access to justice
Technological assistance	Supported decision-making	Participation in civil society and community		Training in CRPD
Community-based rehabilitation (CBR)	CBR with focus on self-employment and microfinance			Data-based policy making/SDGs

### Call for Nomination

Throughout May and June 2018, more than 4,000 experts from nearly every country in the world were approached to spread the call for and to nominate Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies. The call was circulated by email and across the Zero Project’s social media channels. A nominations video with captioning was also produced and made available through Facebook and YouTube (and was viewed over 2,200 times). Nominations were accepted through an electronic platform available in Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish, or via an accessible Word document.

As a result, an incredible 320 nominations were received from 78 countries (see page 16 for details).

### Internal Review

In July, the Zero Project team began reviewing nominations to decide if they fit the annual topic, and to assess if they each showed a proven impact on the lives of persons with disabilities. Of the 238 nominations that were judged to fit the criteria, 83 showed sufficient quality to proceed directly onto the shortlist, with the remaining 155 identified as requiring further analysis.

### Peer Review and Creating the Shortlist

Nearly 150 experts from around the world took part in this first analysis, providing some 1,000 individual scores across three criteria: innovation, impact, and scalability/replicability. Nominations were ranked based on the voting scores, with 90 projects progressing to a shortlist totalling 173 nominations from 61 countries.

Based on this shortlist, the 11 participants of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer were selected in parallel, jointly with the experts from Ashoka Austria.

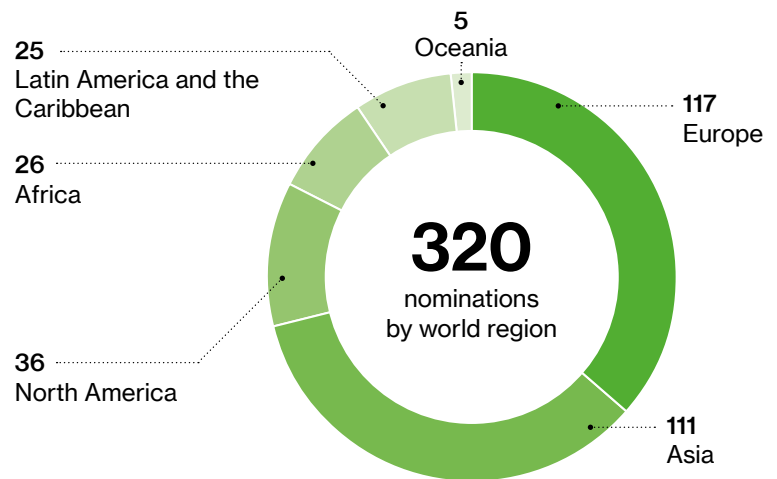
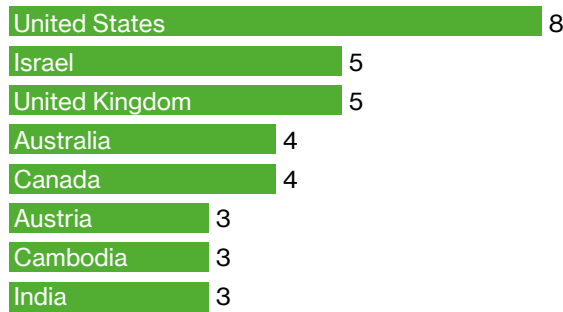
### Voting by the Zero Project Network

In September, over 2,200 experts and leaders in the wider Zero Project network were invited to vote and comment on the shortlisted applications, with each expert being assigned randomly to a group of up to

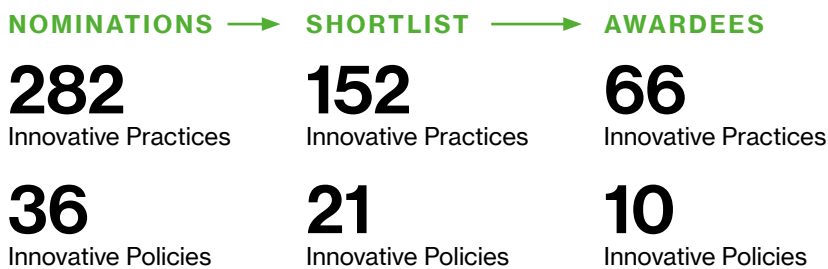


## FACTS AND FIGURES

### Top selected countries by awarded projects



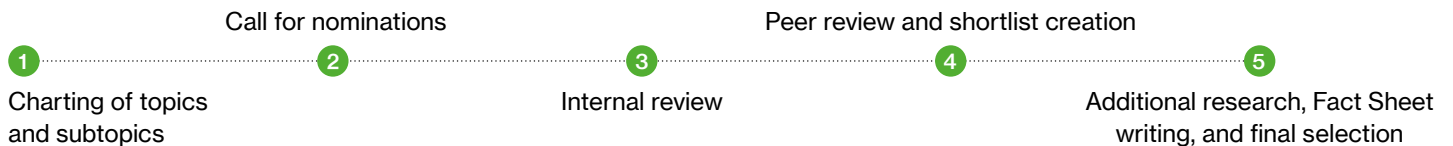
### 2019 research and selection at a glance



### Total active experts



### The five steps of the nomination and selection process



15 projects. Over 1,800 votes plus additional written feedback were received across the month.

### Additional Research, Fact Sheet Writing, and Final Selection

Based on the votes and feedback, and with additional analysis by topic and geographical region to account for bias and country income levels, 66 Innovative Practices and 10 Innovative Policies were ultimately selected for 2019.

In the final step, the Zero Project team conducted additional, thorough research on each project and composed their respective Fact Sheets. Photos and videos of the projects were also requested to support promotion of the Fact Sheets. In addition, personal Life Stories of those who have benefitted from the projects were also composed.

### Report, Website, Social Media & Conference

All Innovative Practices and Policies are published in this report, on [www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org), and on all social

media outlets. In addition, the sponsoring organizations were invited to present their Practice or Policy at the Zero Project Conference in Vienna and to receive their Zero Project Award.

Find all 76 Innovative Practices and Policies on the World Map and Europe Map (page 18 and page 20), and all the Fact Sheets from page 44 to page 117. Life Stories of selected persons who benefitted from these innovations can be found on pages 36, 56, 70, 84, and 98.

The Zero Project Report is also made available as an accessible formatted pdf, which includes alternative text, and each project Fact Sheet is available on the Zero Project website in an accessible Word format.

### Patterns and Solutions

The 25 patterns and solutions identified are an additional piece of research that is also published in this report and is presented on various other occasions as an additional tool to promote Innovative Practices and Policies (see page 22).

# Overview: Innovative Practices/Policies 2019

Country by country from A to Z: 10 Innovative Policies and 66 Innovative Practices of the Zero Project

## INNOVATIVE POLICIES 2019

Country	Headline of the Fact Sheet	Organization/Programme	Page
Bhutan	A nationwide strategy to fight mental health issues	National Mental Health Programme	<a href="#">30</a>
Brazil	An accessibility programme for electoral processes	Superior Electoral Court – Accessibility Programme	<a href="#">31</a>
Canada	Collaborative creation of the ten-year action plan	British Columbia Ministry of Social Development	<a href="#">32</a>
Canada	An accessibility implementation plan for provincial elections	Elections Saskatchewan	<a href="#">33</a>
Ecuador	Co-creating new regulations with local governments	Fundación Discapacidad y Desarrollo	<a href="#">34</a>
Finland	A disability card to support equal access	KVPS – EU Disability Card implementation	<a href="#">35</a>
Georgia	Tactile ballot guides for blind voters	Central Election Commission	<a href="#">38</a>
Mexico	New guidelines are making Mexican elections accessible	Instituto Nacional Electoral	<a href="#">39</a>
Paraguay	Increasing voter accessibility in Paraguay	USAID, Fundación Saraki, Electoral Tribunal	<a href="#">40</a>
United Kingdom	Empowering individuals in their right to vote	ENABLE Scotland – #ENABLEtheVote	<a href="#">41</a>

## INNOVATIVE PRACTICES 2019

Country	Headline of the Fact Sheet	Organization/Programme	Page
Australia	Using technology to increase autonomy	CCA/Jeenee Mobile, “Big Red Button” app	<a href="#">44</a>
Australia	Reviewing and planning individual supported living arrangements	Curtin University – Individual Supported Living	<a href="#">45</a>
Australia	Electoral inclusion campaign for people with intellectual disabilities	Inclusion Melbourne – ICanVote	<a href="#">46</a>
Australia	A web-based platform allowing people with disabilities to vote remotely and on their own	Scytl – iVote programme	<a href="#">47</a>
Austria	Promoting inclusive sports in schools	Basic Initiative for Sport and Inclusion – Inklusion Sport	<a href="#">48</a>
Austria	An inclusive international volunteer programme	Jugend Eine Welt – WeltWegWeiser	<a href="#">49</a>
Austria	Bilingual classes supporting families to learn sign language together	kinderhände	<a href="#">50</a>
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Housing and person-centred support for persons with intellectual disabilities	Union SUMERO	<a href="#">51</a>
Botswana	Affordable hearing aids through solar technology	Solar Ear	<a href="#">52</a>
Brazil	Training young leaders in accessibility and inclusion	Escola de Gente – Accessibility Promotion Agents	<a href="#">53</a>
Cambodia	Training disability representatives to work with local district officials	Light for the World	<a href="#">54</a>
Cambodia	Leadership programme for women with disabilities	Light for the World	<a href="#">55</a>
Cambodia	Introduction of the personal assistance model	PPCIL - Personal Assistant Service System (PASS)	<a href="#">58</a>
Canada	Advice and support service targeted to indigenous populations	BCANDS	<a href="#">59</a>
Canada	Enabling people with disabilities to stay in their homes and communities	March of Dimes – Home and Vehicle Modification Program	<a href="#">60</a>
Colombia	Promoting the sexual/reproductive rights of people with intellectual/ psychosocial disabilities	Profamilia, ASDOWN Colombia, LICA and PAIS	<a href="#">61</a>
Ecuador	Training persons with intellectual disabilities to be self-advocates	FEPAPDEM	<a href="#">62</a>
Egypt	Multiple tailored solutions offer physical and financial independence	Alhassan Foundation	<a href="#">63</a>
Estonia	Service IT-platform available in several european countries	Helpific	<a href="#">64</a>
Germany	Mobile app providing captioning and audio description in cinemas	Greta & Starks - GRETA app	<a href="#">65</a>
Ghana	Five-year plan for mental health care in rural areas	Basic Needs Ghana	<a href="#">66</a>
Honduras	Strengthening the independent living movement through guidance, training, and legal advice	PREPACE – PROPEDIF	<a href="#">67</a>
India	Social platform tailored for people with disabilities	Inclov matchmaking app	<a href="#">68</a>
India	A programme that creates neurodevelopmental profiles and customized education	Mom’s Belief	<a href="#">69</a>

Country	Headline of the Fact Sheet	Organization/Programme	Page
India	Strategic lobbying and engagement with government to push for national disability legislation	NCPEDP and Mphasis	<a href="#">72</a>
Indonesia	Increasing access to health and education services for children	SEHATI Sukoharjo – Inclusion Clubs	<a href="#">73</a>
Ireland	Philanthropy and government combining to create national disability service reform	Genio Trust – Service Reform Fund	<a href="#">74</a>
Israel	Providing meaningful volunteer work for students with disabilities	American Jewish JDC and Ministry Of Education	<a href="#">75</a>
Israel	Demonstrating supported decision-making to change national guardianship laws	Bizchut	<a href="#">76</a>
Israel	Supported housing for women with psychosocial disabilities and sexual trauma	Enosh (Israeli Mental Health Association) – Seeds of Wellness	<a href="#">77</a>
Israel	Pioneering a personal budget model as part of national social services	JDC and Israel Unlimited - Personal budget model	<a href="#">78</a>
Israel	An app for orientation in open and closed spaces	Step-Hear	<a href="#">79</a>
Italy	Therapy IT-platform improves motor function in young people with cerebral palsy	Fightthestroke – Mirrorable	<a href="#">80</a>
Japan	Listening with your eyes - a dedicated tv channel for the hearing impaired	Org. for Broadcasting/Communications for People w. Disabilities	<a href="#">81</a>
Kazakhstan	A home, a café and employment to promote deinstitutionalization	Psychoanalytic Association – SIL Programme	<a href="#">82</a>
Lebanon	Empowerment of youth with disabilities involving their families and communities	Empowerment Through Integration (ETI)	<a href="#">83</a>
Lebanon	Disability-led centres providing a range of services for independent living	Forum for the Handicapped	<a href="#">86</a>
Libya	Capturing and distributing critical election-related sign language	IFES – Electoral Sign Language Lexicon	<a href="#">87</a>
Malawi	Increasing political participation through targeted lobbying on many levels	FEDOMA	<a href="#">88</a>
Mexico	Young volunteers as agents for social inclusion	Unidos Somos Iguales	<a href="#">89</a>
Moldova	Moving children and adults back to their families or community-based homes	Keystone Moldova – Community for All Moldova	<a href="#">90</a>
Moldova	Using theatre in schools to address discrimination against persons with disabilities	Keystone Moldova – Forum Theatre	<a href="#">91</a>
Nepal	Engaging persons with disabilities in all levels of politics	Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre	<a href="#">92</a>
Romania	A biographical graphic novel promoting deinstitutionalization	Ceva de Spus Association – Graphic novel Becoming Eli	<a href="#">93</a>
Romania	Preparing people with psychosocial and mental disabilities to live in their own homes	Pro ACT Suport	<a href="#">94</a>
Serbia	Person-centred assistance and accommodation in communal housing	Elementary and Boarding School “Milan Petrovic”	<a href="#">95</a>
Singapore	Learn, try, and test assistive technology	SG Enable – “Tech Able” showroom	<a href="#">96</a>
South Africa	A sign language app, dictionary, and learning tool	Wigital – FingerTalk	<a href="#">97</a>
Spain	Incorporating Universal Design into home building	Fundación ONCE	<a href="#">100</a>
Spain	Raising awareness on the right to vote	Plena Inclusión España – Mi Voto Cuenta	<a href="#">101</a>
Sweden	Personal ombudsmen enhance self-determination	PO-Skåne – Personal ombudsmen	<a href="#">102</a>
Sweden	Study circles for persons with intellectual disabilities to engage in voting	Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan – My Choice/My Election	<a href="#">103</a>
Turkey	A ballot template for the blind	Boğaziçi University and Association of Barrier Free Access	<a href="#">104</a>
United Kingdom	The first mobile bathroom for people with complex physical disabilities	Disability Pride Belfast & Vehicles for Change – Mobiloo	<a href="#">105</a>
United Kingdom	An identity card supporting brain injury survivors encountering the criminal justice system	Headway – The Justice Project, Brain Injury Identity Card	<a href="#">106</a>
United Kingdom	Announce your visit and special request to stores and public services	Neatebox – “Welcome by Neatebox” app	<a href="#">107</a>
United Kingdom	Changing a whole country's approach on children's institutions	Lumos Foundation	<a href="#">108</a>
United States	Enabling people with disabilities to vote from home and without assistance	Democracy Live – OmniBallot	<a href="#">109</a>
United States	A step-by-step toolkit to monitor voter participation	IFES – Election Access Observation Toolkit	<a href="#">110</a>
United States	Supporting dpos in six countries to bring the un crpd to life	MIUSA / Global Disability RightsNow!	<a href="#">111</a>
United States	Fighting stigma through hollywood and jobs creation	RespectAbility	<a href="#">112</a>
United States	Creating a community of people with paralysis	AbleThrive	<a href="#">113</a>
United States	Bringing dance and artistic expression to people with and without disabilities worldwide	DanceAbility International	<a href="#">114</a>
United States	Improving the criminal justice system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities	The Arc of the United States – NCCJD, Pathways to Justice	<a href="#">115</a>
United States	An airport rehearsal programme for people with disabilities, families, and staff	The Arc of the United States – Wings for Autism	<a href="#">116</a>
Viet Nam	A depression management programme and microloans for women	BasicNeeds Viet Nam	<a href="#">117</a>

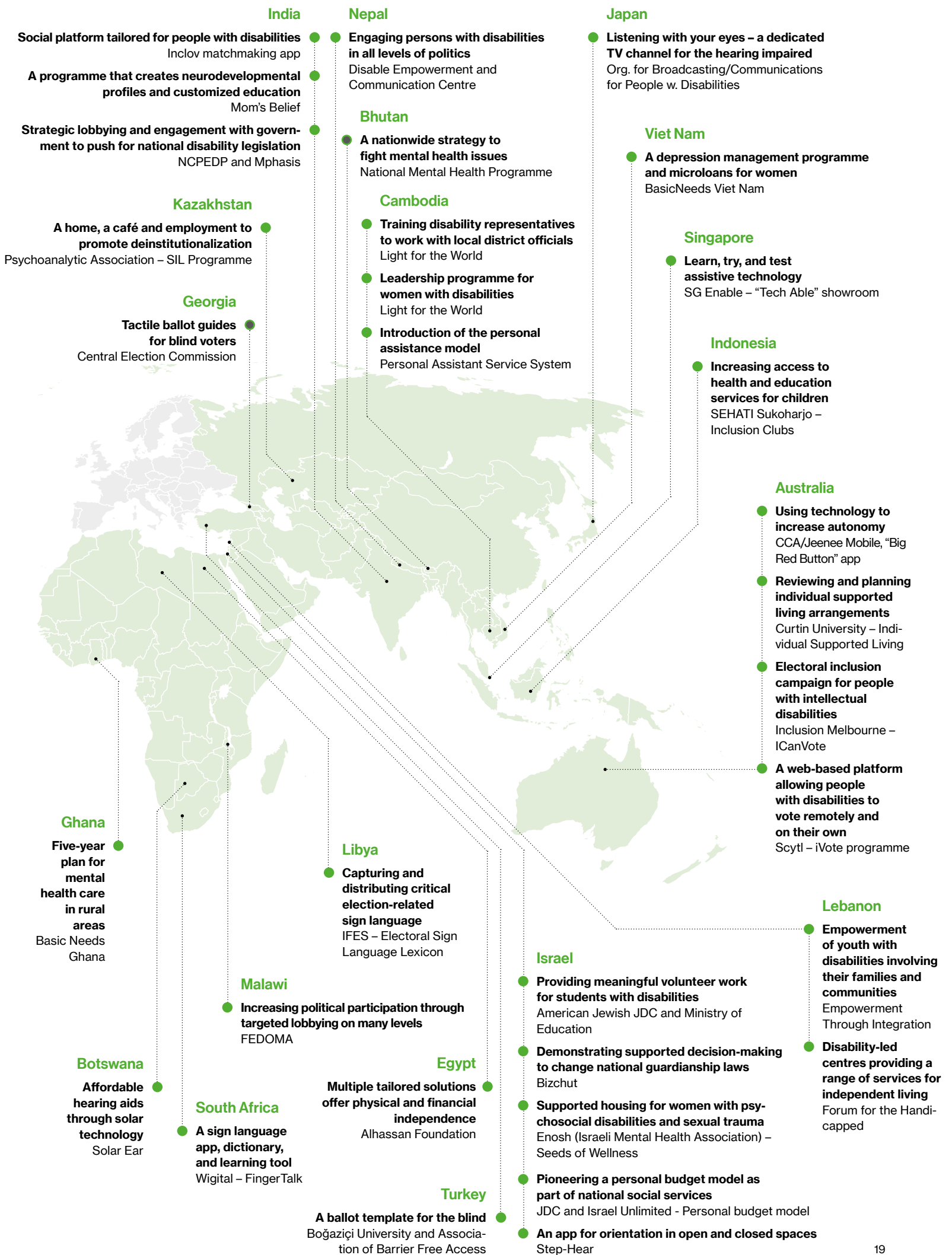
# Innovative Policies and Practices around the world

For Europe see page 20

## ZERO PROJECT 2019

- Innovative Practice
- Innovative Policy





# Innovative Policies and Practices in Europe

## ZERO PROJECT 2019

- Innovative Practice
- Innovative Policy

### Sweden

- **Personal ombudsmen enhance self-determination**  
PO-Skåne – Personal ombudsmen
- **Study circles for persons with intellectual disabilities to engage in voting**  
Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan – My Choice/My Election

### United Kingdom

- **Empowering Individuals in their Right to Vote**  
ENABLE Scotland – #ENABLEtheVote
- **The first mobile bathroom for people with complex physical disabilities**  
Disability Pride Belfast & Vehicles for Change – Mobiloo
- **An identity card supporting brain injury survivors encountering the criminal justice system**  
Headway – The Justice Project, Brain Injury Identity Card
- **Announce your visit and special request to stores and public services**  
Neatebox – “Welcome by Neatebox” app
- **Changing a whole country’s approach on children’s institutions**  
Lumos Foundation

### Ireland

- **Philanthropy and government combining to create national disability service reform**  
Genio Trust – Service Reform Fund

### Germany

- **Mobile app providing captioning and audio description in cinemas**  
Greta & Starks - GRETA app

### Spain

- **Incorporating universal design into home building**  
Fundación ONCE
- **Raising awareness on the right to vote**  
Plena Inclusión España – Mi Voto Cuenta

### Serbia

- **Person-centred assistance and accommodation in communal housing**  
Elementary and Boarding School “Milan Petrovic”

### Bosnia & Herzegovina

- **Housing and person-centred support for persons with intellectual disabilities**  
Union SUMERO

### Italy

- **Therapy IT-platform improves motor function in young people with cerebral palsy**  
Fightthestroke – Mirrorable

### Romania

- **A biographical graphic novel promoting deinstitutionalization**  
Ceva de Spus Association – Graphic novel Becoming Eli
- **Preparing people with psychosocial and mental disabilities to live in their own homes**  
Pro ACT Support

### Moldova

- **Moving children and adults back to their families or community-based homes**  
Keystone Moldova – Community for All Moldova
- **Using theatre in schools to address discrimination against persons with disabilities**  
Keystone Moldova – Forum Theatre

### Finland

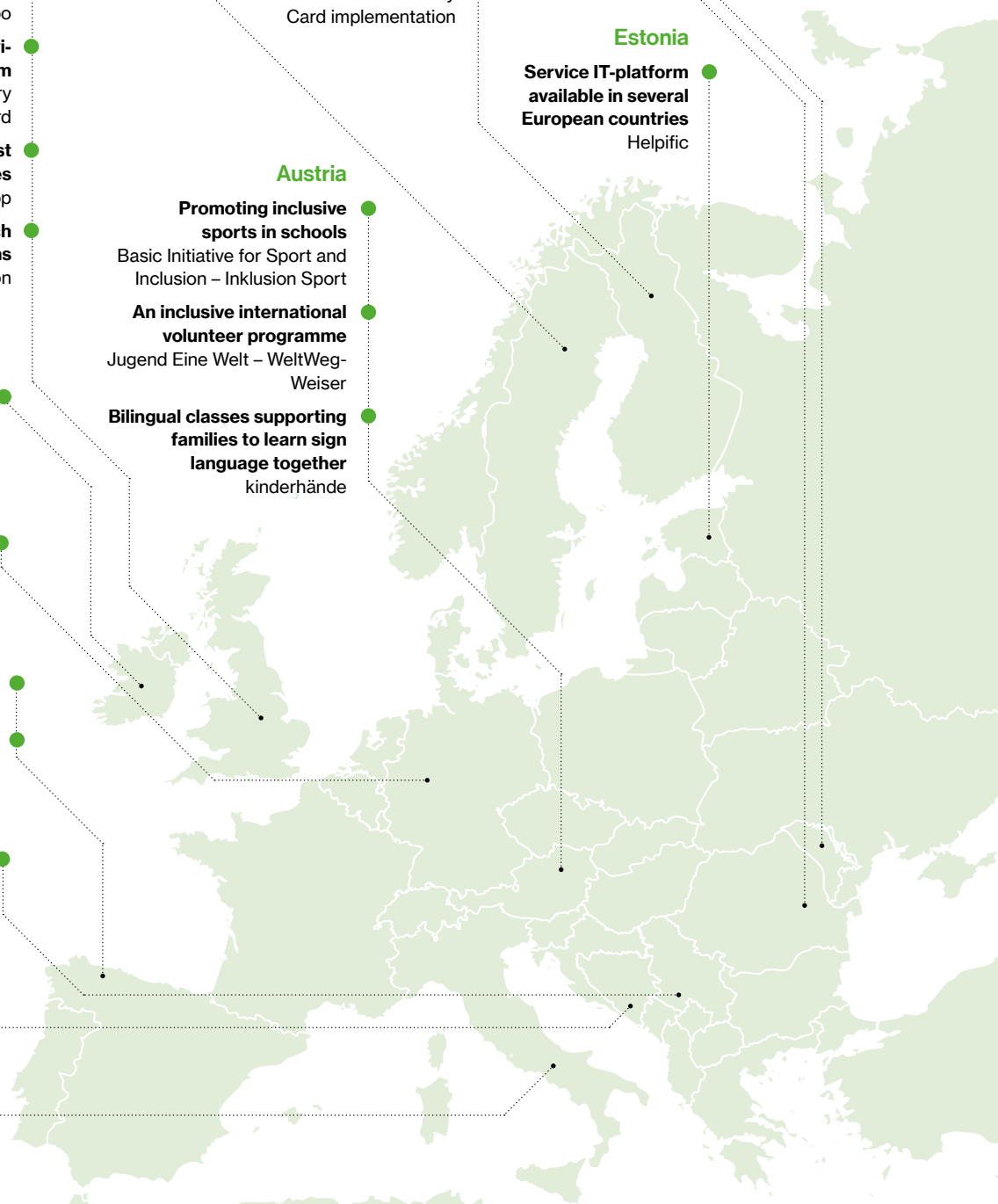
- **A disability card to support equal access**  
KVPS – EU Disability Card implementation

### Austria

- **Promoting inclusive sports in schools**  
Basic Initiative for Sport and Inclusion – Inklusion Sport
- **An inclusive international volunteer programme**  
Jugend Eine Welt – WeltWeg-Weiser
- **Bilingual classes supporting families to learn sign language together**  
kinderhände

### Estonia

- **Service IT-platform available in several European countries**  
Helpific



# A selection of Life Stories

Persons with disabilities from around the world who found employment, work, or at least meaningful vocational training, supported by the Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies 2019.

Find Life Stories on pages 36, 56, 70, 84, 98.



**“Based on our observations, we made recommendations to the government, many of which have been adopted.”**

*Risnawati Utami, an election observer with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Indonesia. See page 71.*



**“I was a girl with speech problems living on the streets, and now I am a happily married woman!”**

*Georgiana P., former beneficiary of the PRO ACT Support Association’s social services, Romania. See page 98.*



**“We are helped, and we help other women with disabilities.”**

*Hun Sreynak, a user of Light for the World’s Leadership Skills for Women with Disabilities programme, Cambodia. See page 56.*



**“My father publicly apologized to me for being so overprotective.”**

*Enya, a beneficiary of the Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation Programme (PREPACE), Tegucigalpa, Honduras. See page 71.*



**“I started writing reviews on my blog of the movies I saw using the GRETA app.”**

*Barbara Fickert, a GRETA user, Germany. See page 71.*

# Patterns and solutions identified

The 76 Innovative Practices and Policies of 2019 can be clustered into groups of solutions based on similarities. Find here 25 of those patterns and solutions that the Zero Project has identified this year.

The Innovative Practices and Policies that were finally selected were grouped according to similarities in the method used to solve the problems identified. The patterns and solutions identified are related to the topics and subtopics that were used to chart this year's research topic, but there also substantial differences.

For example, this year the Innovative Practices and Policies regarding elections and voting/political participation contain a large number of models working on improved accessibility which was one of the subtopics of Political Participation. The Zero Project team then sorted them into the following patterns and solutions (with a minimum of two models per pattern):

- Planning and implementation of accessible elections for all
- Inclusive information for all voters (easy-language approaches)
- Tools and ballots to be used in the election booth
- E-voting

## **Accessible elections**

National and regional electoral bodies and NGO partners introduce wide-ranging measures to increase the accessibility of national and local elections.

## **Being independent at home**

From smart homes promoting Universal Design principles to a home and vehicle modification programme, these innovations are supporting people to live independently and to make decisions about their own living conditions.

## **Early childhood support in low- and middle-income countries**

These projects increase access to support for children with disabilities, particularly those living in rural areas. A key element of these projects is empowering families and communities to play a greater role through training, home-based programmes, and targeted support.

## **High-tech solutions**

Technological innovations, including solar-powered hearing aids that significantly reduce costs and Artificial Intelligence technology supporting the rehabilitation of young people with cerebral palsy.

## **Improving the response of the criminal justice system to people with disabilities**

Persons with disabilities often face additional challenges when interacting with police, the complicated criminal court systems, and lawyers, as their needs are often poorly understood. These projects aim to improve juridical systems and assist people with disabilities to better navigate them.

## **Inclusive voter information**

Information about politics and voting is communicated to meet the particular needs of persons with intellectual disabilities, including easy-read voting guides, study groups, and inclusive communication campaigns, among others.

## **Independence in public spaces**

There are often numerous barriers that prevent independent navigation of public places by persons with disabilities. These innovations address such barriers with the use of beacon technology-based phone apps for improved orientation, airport simulations, and fully



An Innovative Practice 2018–19 from Sweden: Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan has created a programme that assists persons with intellectual disabilities to engage in voting. Small study circle groups learn from easy-read materials and DAISY-formatted audio texts that describe Swedish democracy and the voting process.



accessible mobile toilets, thus allowing people with disabilities to fully enjoy all public spaces.

#### **Making deinstitutionalization work**

These national programmes are designed to move people with disabilities living in institutions into the community. Organizations have developed various models, which include support systems, housing, and training for living in the community.

#### **Making everyday life more inclusive**

These initiatives – including apps, disability cards, and sports programmes – increase access to such everyday activities as leisure, entertainment, and banking for persons with disabilities.

#### **Online voting systems**

Online voting systems have the potential to increase access to elections by allowing people to vote remotely and independently. These technologies allow people to vote on computers, tablets, and smartphones.

#### **Participating in politics in low- and middle-income countries**

NGOs and DPOs have developed programmes to increase political participation of persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries. The successes of these programmes include increased voter registration, more inclusive policies, and greater representation of persons with disabilities in government.

#### **Promoting independent living and inclusion in low- and middle-income countries**

Organizations from low- and middle-income countries have introduced models that promote independence and inclusion. The models look at centres that provide services, advice, products, and support, such as assistive technologies, recreational opportunities, legal advice, and personal assistance.

#### **Providing mental health services in low- and middle-income countries**

These models support persons with cognitive or psychosocial disabilities, as well as their caregivers and professional staff, to help find or deliver appropriate support and services in low- and middle-income countries.

#### **Self-representatives influencing policy-making**

Ensuring that persons with disabilities directly influence policy-making is critical to achieving a barrier-free world. These models use various elements to create such influence, including training programmes for self-representatives, working with policy makers to draft legislation, and collecting and using data effectively.

#### **Sign language solutions**

These models promote and support greater use of

sign language in political, educational, and social contexts. Examples include phone apps, bilingual playgroups, and training programmes.

#### **Strengthening access to legal and human rights**

These Practices and Policies use a variety of approaches to improve access for persons with disabilities to legal and human rights around the world. Models include providing expertise and support to DPOs, and how governments and NGOs can work together to strengthen disability legislation.

#### **Supported decision-making & personal budget models**

These innovative models support people with disabilities to exercise control and choice in making key decisions, both about their care and support and how

## **LIST OF ALL 25 PATTERNS AND SOLUTIONS**

### **Focus on Independent Living**

- Being independent at home
- Independence in public spaces
- Making deinstitutionalization work
- Making everyday life more inclusive
- Promoting independent living and inclusion in low- and middle-income countries
- Strengthening access to legal and human rights
- Supported decision-making and personal budget models
- Supported housing models in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Using technology to connect people
- Youth and volunteering

### **Focus on Political Participation**

- Accessible elections
- Inclusive voter information
- Online voting systems
- Participating in politics in low- and middle-income countries
- Tactile ballots
- Self-representatives influencing policy-making

### **Other focus/more than one focus**

- Early childhood support in low- and middle-income countries
- High-tech solutions
- Improving the response of the criminal justice system to people with disabilities
- Providing mental health services in low- and middle-income countries
- Sign language solutions
- Supporting people facing multiple disadvantages
- Supporting the rights of women with disabilities
- Using the arts to change perceptions
- Using technology to connect people



An Innovative Practice 2018–19 from Cambodia: Light for the World, a global disability and development NGO working in low-income communities, has created a leadership programme for women with disabilities in Cambodia.

### **MORE LESSONS FROM PATTERNS AND SOLUTIONS**

- Several times it was possible to identify clusters that can be clearly connected to a specific region or country income-level, such as mental health approaches designed to influence policy-making in low- and middle-income countries, or deinstitutionalizing models with a clear focus on Central and Eastern Europe.
- It is also interesting to see where not enough models were selected to identify a pattern. For example, the number of selected Practices and Policies working on personal budgets or personal assistant models was much smaller than expected, and much smaller than in the Zero Project research period 2014–2015. Whether this is due to changes on the ground (no real innovations are currently emerging) or to methodical reasons (the Zero Project network did simply not find or nominate them) cannot be easily analysed.

this is funded. Models include training in supported decision-making, user-centred personal assistance models, and personal ombudsmen.

#### **Supported housing models in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Innovative supported housing models play a critical role in supporting persons with disabilities to live in the community, rather than in institutions. Innovative approaches include independent and supervised housing, shared apartments, the use of technology, and person-centred designs.

#### **Supporting people facing multiple disadvantages**

People with disabilities may face additional challenges as a result of being from a particular ethnic group, gender, or age, or from other life circumstances. These models support groups facing multiple disadvantages, including work to support indigenous populations with disabilities and persons with disabilities living in slums or who are homeless.

#### **Supporting the rights of women with disabilities**

This pattern focuses on innovations that strengthen and promote the rights of women with disabilities. Examples include training on sexual and reproductive rights, trauma-informed housing models, and leadership programmes.

#### **Tactile ballots**

Tactile ballots are tools for people who are blind to vote without the assistance of another person and without requiring knowledge of Braille. The key elements are the development and roll-out of these ballots in different geographies.

#### **Using technology to connect people**

Increasingly, apps and other technologies are opening up new ways of communication for people with disabilities. This includes phone apps and websites connecting them to both formal and informal support networks, their peers, as well as advice and information.

#### **Using the arts to change perceptions**

These projects use various forms of art to change the public's perception of people with disabilities and to reduce discrimination. Creative methods include using live theatre, dance, books, art galleries, and literary festivals.

#### **Youth and volunteering**

These organizations support young people with disabilities. Through workshops, social programmes, and school activities, young people with disabilities develop independent life skills and participate in sports, social activities, and volunteer opportunities both at home and abroad.

# About TOPHOUSE and its Promising Practices

The Essl Foundation is part of an EU-funded project that identified 20 exemplary models of integrated housing environments and deinstitutionalization

With generous funding from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, the TOPHOUSE project aims to develop an integrated housing environment by incorporating the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, TOPHOUSE provides practical tools and training resources to enable staff to produce quality housing assessments that also take into account individual support needs by using a person-centred approach. Find more details about the project and results later in this section.

## The Promising Practices of TOPHOUSE

The Promising Practices are part of the TOPHOUSE Report and provide an overview of the existing practices for the allocation of social housing in many European countries, which have also served as a basis for developing the TOPHOUSE training course. The selection of Promising Practices is based on a call for practices that was launched in March 2018 by the Zero Project and disseminated by all TOPHOUSE partners.

## Selection of Promising Practices of TOPHOUSE

- Autism Association - Zagreb
- Center of Rehabilitation Zagreb
- Elementary and Secondary Boarding School "Milan Petrovic"

- Equal Chances Foundation
- European Parliament and Fondazione Cariplo
- Evangelisches Diakoniewerk Gallneukirchen
- Flemish Agency for People with a Disability
- Jugend am Werk
- Kehitysvammaliitto/The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association
- Lebenshilfe Tirol
- Pentru Voi" Foundation
- Portus Praha z.ú.
- Pro ACT Support Association
- Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS)
- Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health
- The Home for All Alliance
- The Thomashuizen
- Union of organizations for support to persons with intellectual disability of the Federation of B&H "SUMERO"

Find more about TOPHOUSE in Section 4 of this report starting at page [129](#). A full report on the Promising Practices and the outcomes of TOPHOUSE will be published in 2019.

# A Summary of the Report in Easy Language

Section 5 of this report is written in easy language. Find the principles and some examples here.

Easy language (the Zero Project makes no distinction between "plain language" and "easy language") is writing designed to ensure the reader understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible. It strives to be easy to read, to understand, and to use. The UN CRPD includes "plain language" as one of the "modes, means and formats of communication" in Article 2.

The principles of writing or speaking in plain language are easy to understand and define, but there are so far no generally accepted standards available. Plain language and easy language may refer to different levels of simplified language, or they may also include elements of graphic facilitation or other non-written communication.

In Section 5 of this report, the findings are summarized in plain language. The Zero Project has collaborat-

ed with the Austrian social business Atempo for several years to produce professional writing in plain language. Atempo offers a variety of services, among them Capito, which offers plain-language translation. Capito has developed methods and standards in plain language, which are also applied in Section 5 (see page 141).

A description of one session at the Zero Project Conference:

## **An example: Making deinstitutionalization work**

This session is on national programmes for people with disabilities who live in institutions. These people should be able to move from an institution into the community. Different organizations talk about support systems, housing, and training for living in the community.

# About the Zero Project– Impact Transfer

## SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE PRACTICES WITH THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL TO GROW OR REPLICATE

The Essl Foundation and Ashoka have joined forces for the first Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme to support the internationalization of innovative disability solutions. The Zero Project–Impact Transfer is a huge effort by the Zero Project to support those Innovative Practices that have the highest potential to grow or to be replicated, using Ashoka’s expertise and capacity (see Section 3, page 119).

Each year, ten initiatives are selected for the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme. Application for the programme is open to projects that have been successfully shortlisted for a Zero Project Award and that have the potential and ambition to scale-up their impact.

Over the course of the programme, the selected initiatives receive training, mentoring, tailored support, networking, and visibility to further replicate their innovation and impact in other geographies, in collaboration with local replication partners. The goal is to make these initiatives ready for replication, to connect them with relevant replication partners, and to further support the replication through our Alumni Community.

### ABOUT ASHOKA AND IMPACT TRANSFER

The Impact Transfer programme is an initiative of Ashoka, the leading global community of social entrepreneurs and change-makers, with 35 years of experience and 3,600+ social innovators in 80 countries.

### The importance of mentors

Strategic mentors are a critical part of the programme, providing a wealth of expertise and extensive networks, and acting as the main ‘sparring partners’ for participants. By offering feedback and an objective perspective on the projects, they help participants identify current gaps and needs, and also work to help them prepare and refine their transfer strategy and ‘pitch’.

### Support for participants and alumni

- Five training webinars on impact modelling, business modelling, replication strategies, social franchising, and financing strategies.
- Tailored mentoring with experts to help clarify their replication strategy.
- Matchmaking with relevant replication partners from the Zero Project and Ashoka communities.
- Visibility and pitching during the Zero Project Conference.
- Implementation follow-up support, in particular for projects that are to be replicated in Austria.
- Alumni community.

### Learnings from the Zero Project – Impact Transfer

In a survey, participants and mentors of the first year of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme agreed on a list of lessons learned for future development:

- **Preliminary work is crucial:** Having a clear Theory of Change (or impact model) and business model is essential prior even to considering the issue of impact transfer or replication.
- **Spreading the idea and impact, not the organization:** Projects should make it as easy as possible for others to be able to replicate their work.
- **Transfer models:** “Social franchising” approaches are chosen by some more mature and well-documented innovations that wish to keep more control over the replication project.

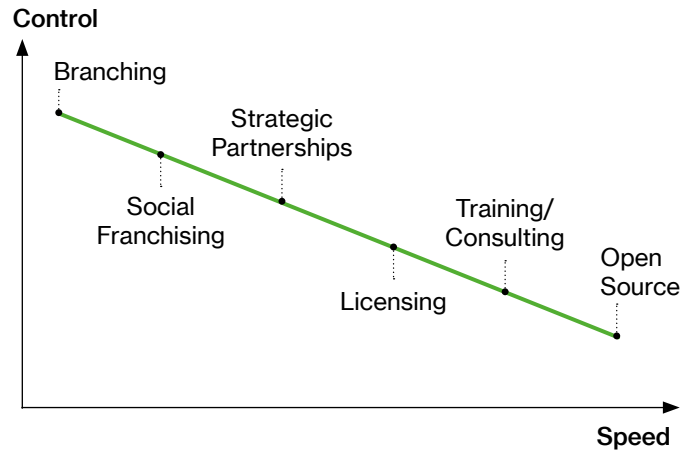


An example of how the Zero Project–Impact Transfer creates impact: The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York trains Austrian museum executives in their accessibility strategy.

- **Financing remains the major challenge:** Financing the impact transfer work is challenging, both in terms of securing funding for the replication project as such but also for the necessary preparation work (documenting the model, establishing contacts and building trust with potential partners, site visits, adapting the model to the local context, etc.).
- **Tech-based projects are easier to transfer:** Tech-based projects seem to be able to transfer more rapidly. Online platforms, for instance, can perhaps go to scale faster.
- **Context-specificity:** Context-specificity needs to be taken into account, as some innovations are strongly linked to gaps in their local context.
- **Local resources:** Having a reliable resource in the transfer location helps to accelerate the replication process.

## CONTROL VERSUS SPEED

Giving up control allows you to potentially spread your impact much faster.



## PARTICIPANTS OF THE ZERO PROJECT-IMPACT TRANSFER PROGRAMME, 2018 & 2019

- **kinderhände**  
Austria, 2019, mentor: Alexander Frech
- **Top Easy, Capito and apa**  
Austria, 2018, mentor: Rainer Reich
- **Solar Ear**  
Botswana, 2019, mentor: Stephan Dertnig
- **Accessibility Promotion Agents, Escola de Gente**  
Brazil, 2019, mentor: Rizwan Tayabali
- **Profamilia, ASDOWN Colombia, LICA, and PAIS**  
Colombia, 2019, mentor: Loic van Cutsem
- **GRETA app, Greta and Starks**  
Germany, 2019, mentor: Holger Dieterich
- **Jaipur Foot**  
India, 2018, mentor: Rizwan Tayabali
- **Enable Vaani, Enable India**  
India, 2018, mentor: Vishal Anand
- **The Suryakanti Foundation Centre**  
Indonesia, 2018, mentors: Karen Schetelig, Dominik Bundschuh, and Shirley Pranato
- **Seeds of Wellness, Enosh – The Israeli Association of Mental Health**  
Israel, 2019, mentor: Franz Haslauer
- **Friendship Parks, Beit Issie Shapiro**  
Israel, 2018, mentor: Loic van Cutsem
- **Mirrorable, Fightthestroke**  
Italy, 2019, mentor: Alexander Ertler
- **Empowerment Through Integration**  
Lebanon, 2019, mentor: Stephan Dertnig
- **Unidos Somos Iguales (Unidos)**  
Mexico, 2019, mentor: Helmut Maukner
- **Inspire2Care, Karuna Foundation**  
Nepal, 2018, mentor: Alexander Ertler
- **DanceAbility International**  
United States, 2019, mentor: Doris Rothauer
- **Flashsonar, World Access for the Blind**  
United States, 2018, mentor: Alexander Kesselring
- **Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)**  
United States, 2018, mentor: Doris Rothauer
- **Pathways to Justice, The Arc of the United States**  
United States, 2019, mentor: Philipp Haydn
- **Understood.org, National Center for Learning Disabilities**  
United States, 2018, mentor: Stephan Dertnig
- **VL2 Storybook Creator, Gallaudet University**  
United States, 2018, mentor: Philipp Haydn



# Innovative Policies 2019

## on Independent Living and Political Participation

### Fact Sheets

One page Fact Sheets from all ten Innovative Policies 2019, ranked by country of origin.

### Life Stories

Persons with disabilities or their peers explain how selected Innovative Policies have changed their life.

# A nationwide strategy to fight mental health issues

## BHUTAN / NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

The National Mental Health Programme was launched in 1997 to provide community-based mental health care services and to educate society about mental health protection, prevention, and possible treatment. With a well-established national primary health care network, Bhutan is now working to train doctors, health care workers, and nurses on mental health treatment skills; to provide appropriate medication; and to integrate mental health into general primary health care services. Between 1997 and 2018, 300 primary health care doctors, 450 primary health care workers, and 400 nurses have been trained.

### Problems Targeted

In Bhutan, lack of awareness, myths, shame, and stigma are still common regarding mental health issues, and consequently many people hide their symptoms and do not access treatment.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Implementation of the National Mental Health Programme starts with visits by a mental health service team to community leaders, local health care personnel (doctors, health care workers, and nurses), as well as to traditional healers to discuss existing practices and to understand their perspectives and gain their cooperation. This is followed by education and training to introduce modern mental health concepts and their advantages. Together with community leaders, local health care personnel, and traditional healers,

“My elder brother was locked inside a room for more than 12 years. Only after I became a medical doctor and later a psychiatrist were we able to provide effective treatment for him.”

Chencho Dorji, psychiatrist

the mental health team identifies potential cases in the community and provides training in basic psychiatric skills, such as diagnosing and treating common mental health issues.

Once the identified cases are interviewed and diagnosed, the team supports the local health workers in creating individual treatment plans, which include consultations with families and gaining their

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of 2018, about 86 per cent of general doctors, 25 per cent of nurses, and 75 cent of primary health care workers have been trained.

involvement in supervising medications and providing emotional support. At the national level, a core team of mental health specialists visits the primary health centres regularly to monitor activities and to provide clinical supervision.


### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Since its founding, the National Mental Health Programme has cost approximately \$40,000 per year and is funded by the government with additional donations from the WHO. In 2017, there were 345 doctors (including specialists), 25 clinical officers, 1,264 nurses, 600 health assistants, and 36 basic health workers. As of 2018, approximately 300 doctors, 400 nurses, and 450 primary health care workers have been trained in all parts of the country.

The plan is to train at least 30 individuals from each category of health professionals per year, especially health care doctors and health workers.



The initial interview is the basis for individual treatment plans.

 **Chencho Dorji**  
[chenchodorji@gmail.com](mailto:chenchodorji@gmail.com)



# An accessibility programme for electoral processes

## BRAZIL / SUPERIOR ELECTORAL COURT - ELECTORAL JUSTICE ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAMME

Brazil's Superior Electoral Court, working with regional Electoral Courts, has developed the Electoral Justice Accessibility Programme to make elections more accessible, such as by placing electoral wards in accessible buildings, providing electoral staff that can communicate in sign-language electronic voting machines accessible for blind voters, and saving the parking spots closer to the voting facilities for persons with disabilities. Approximately 380,000 voters with disabilities benefitted during the 2018 presidential election.

### Problems Targeted

People with disabilities do not have equal access to electoral processes in Brazil, as they experience physical, architectural, communicational, and attitudinal barriers in the buildings and wards where elections take place.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Electoral Justice Accessibility Programme aims to promote broad and unrestricted access to autonomous participation in electoral processes for people with disabilities. The programme implements such measures as placing electoral wards in accessible buildings and providing them with electronic voting machines that have a Braille keyboard and



A person in a wheelchair casting his vote in a recent election.

“The programme is an outstanding example of public policy that aims for social inclusion and the full exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities.”

Justice Rosa Weber, President of the Superior Electoral Court, Brazil

headphones for blind voters, as well as assigning poll workers who can assist people with hearing impairments. To continuously improve the programme, the Superior Electoral Court collects information on the main advances and challenges in accessible electoral processes by sending out surveys to the regional Electoral Courts. Further, by encouraging voters with disabilities or reduced mobility to communicate their restrictions 90 days prior to the election, resources were provided to facilitate the needs of these voters.

In 2018, of the more than 940,000 voters with disabilities in Brazil, over 380,000 benefitted from this policy. In addition, the programme aims to remove the physical and communicational barriers in all 479,000-plus polling stations throughout Brazil; and in so doing, citizens learn about the value of accessibility in their schools and other public places.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The Electoral Justice Accessibility Programme is funded by the government's general budget.

To continually address the barriers to electoral processes, each year the Electoral Courts are required to submit to the Superior Electoral Court a report on the measures taken to meet the programme's goals as stated in Resolution No. 23381/2012.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2018 there were approximately 40,000 accessible polling stations throughout Brazil.
- The number of voters with disabilities who benefitted from the programme rose from 102,777 in 2014 to over 380,132 in 2018.

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# Collaborative creation of the ten-year action plan

## CANADA / BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

In 2014, the British Columbia's Ministry began a ten-year strategy for improving the lives of people with disabilities. Inclusive advisory groups were established to address key barriers, such as financial security, employment, and housing. Their recommendations led to changes in government disability policies, such as simplifying applications and raising the benefit rate. The Canadian Senate has since recommended that one of the advisory groups be implemented by the Canadian Government.

### Problems Targeted

Affluent regions of the world, such as British Columbia (BC), can be expensive places to live for people with disabilities, who often find it difficult to meet costs.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The ten-year strategy aims for a significantly more inclusive province by 2024. The strategy was the result of extensive community consultation, including 23 accessible in-person consultation sessions attended by 1,150 people, resulting in 4,500 suggestions. Advisory groups were then formed – composed of people with disabilities, their families, employers, financial institutions, non-profit organizations, and the technology and business sectors. Two key advisory groups are the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) Action Group and the Presidents Group, a network of CEOs working to increase employment opportunities.

“From the Registered Disability Savings Plan to the Annual Earning Exemption, when Canada looks for innovation within the sector, they look to British Columbia.”

Neil Belanger, Executive Director, British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

The advisory groups share knowledge and make recommendations. The BC Government provides secretariat support, and senior staff and ministers join meetings throughout the year.

Since 2014, many policies have been amended. For example, the limit for asset ownership without losing government assistance has been raised, the benefit application process has been simplified, and a transportation allowance has been introduced.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Persons accessing disability benefits in 2018 reached more than 126,000, up from approximately 111,000 in 2015.
- There have been more than 31,000 Registered Disability Savings Plans opened by the end of 2018.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Some initiatives are funded through the provincial Government of British Columbia where it relates to benefits of persons with disabilities and by the federal Government of Canada in relation to the on-reserve First Nation population (indigenous people in Canada south of the Arctic Circle). Other provinces have begun replicating policies such as the child support benefits exemption, which has been implemented in Ontario. In 2018, the Canadian Senate published a report commending the “innovative model operating in British Columbia” that supports the uptake of the RDSP and recommending that the Canadian Government implement a similar advisory group.



One of the 23 consultation sessions, all of which resulted in some 4,500 suggestions and recommendations.

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# An accessibility implementation plan for provincial elections

## CANADA / ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN

Elections Saskatchewan (ESK) is the independent election management body of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, which established an Accessibility Implementation Plan to address the needs of voters with disabilities. Upon identifying problems through focus groups and consultations in 2013, solutions such as improved polling place accessibility and homebound voting were carried out. More than 500 people with disabilities voted from home in the 2016 election; and other elements of the plan, such as reviewing facilities for accessibility, have been implemented.

### Problems Targeted

According to a 2012 comparative review led by Elections Canada, the province of Saskatchewan lacked measures to address the needs of voters with disabilities, such as providing accessible voting options or appropriate voter education.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Following a 2013 assessment conducted by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS) in collaboration with key stakeholders from the province, the Elections Saskatchewan's Accessibility Implementation Plan was formulated. The plan addresses four problematic areas that had

**“Elections Saskatchewan is committed to the full inclusion of citizens in every electoral process it administers. In doing so, it works to reduce barriers to participation for all voters.”**

Michael Boda, Chief Electoral Officer,  
Province of Saskatchewan

been identified: (i) voting options, (ii) polling place accessibility, (iii) products and services at polling stations, and (iv) voter information and public education. Among the most important measures implemented, voters can now opt to vote from home.

Moreover, ESK has begun to offer sensitivity training to election workers and has produced additional information for election manuals on how election workers can assist voters with disabilities. Finally, voter infor-



Engaging with stakeholders on accessibility and election processes.

mation cards were updated with information on the accessibility status of an individual's assigned election day and advance voting locations, i.e., each card provides information on when, where, and how to vote as well as the accessibility of their assigned advance poll.

All measures were implemented in time for the April 2016 election, when 574 voters voted from home. The initial evaluation bodies – IFES and JSGS – monitored this election, and their feedback and recommendations will be used for further improvements during the next election in 2020.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The policy is entirely funded from the provincial budget. The ESK plan will be continued for future electoral events.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of the 2016 election, voter information cards have been upgraded with information on the accessibility needs of the individual cardholder.
- A post-election review noted that 98.9 per cent of all voting locations in the province met the accessibility criteria.

 **Michael Boda**  
Chief Electoral Officer, Province of Saskatchewan  
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# Co-creating new regulations with local governments

ECUADOR / FUNDACIÓN DISCAPACIDAD Y DESARROLLO

Fundación Discapacidad y Desarrollo is a local non-profit organization in the Loja province of Ecuador that promotes the social inclusion of people with disabilities. The organization worked with local disabled people's organizations and representatives of four municipalities to identify the needs of disabled people and to address these needs through changes in local regulations. For example, between 2015 and 2018, 1,250 people received discounts on their municipal taxes, and eight health centres were made accessible.

## Problems Targeted

Although Ecuador has national laws protecting the rights of people with disabilities, these are often not implemented effectively at the local level, which leads to exclusion.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Fundación Discapacidad y Desarrollo engaged with local disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) across four municipalities in the Loja province, and initial meetings and surveys indicated a need for new local disability legislation. The DPOs particularly highlighted issues regarding accessible buildings and transport, inclusion in health care and education, support to set up small businesses, and discounts on taxes. Fundación Discapacidad y Desarrollo coordinated the whole process and drafted proposed legislation, which was ultimately approved.

“Before the Minka project started, we lived with our eyes closed. The project helped us to see the injustice in which our children with disabilities lived.”

María (61), mother of a person with an intellectual disability

The DPOs continue to disseminate information about the new legislation, monitor its implementation, and support people to access their rights. One result of the legislation is that 480 people with disabilities have now set up small businesses, such as raising pigs, making jams, and producing dairy products.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

This project was part of the broader MINKA programme of the Fundación Discapacidad y Desarrollo,

## FACTS & FIGURES

- Approximately 500 people with disabilities were involved in drafting the legislation across the four municipalities.
- To date, 480 people with disabilities have been able to set up small businesses in the Loja province.


which promotes greater inclusion of persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on health and education services.

Between 2016 and 2018 the project cost \$235,000 – including salaries, training, and meeting costs. Of this, 54 per cent was covered by CBM International, a Christian development organization committed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the world's poorest communities; and the other 46 per cent was provided by three of the four municipalities involved. Once legislation is passed, the costs of implementation are covered by the municipalities.

There is significant potential to replicate the process in other areas in Ecuador, and in 2018 a similar process was initiated in two more municipalities.



Voting on the articles of the local law on disabilities in the municipality of Espíndola.

 **Olmedo Zambrano**  
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# A disability card to support equal access

## FINLAND / KVPS – EU DISABILITY CARD IMPLEMENTATION

The European Union launched an EU Disability Card pilot in eight countries in 2016, which is a universally recognized way for people with disabilities to communicate their needs and access support. Finland is participating in the pilot, and the Finnish Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS) is coordinating implementation of the national trial from 2018 to 2020. KVPS collaborates with the government, NGOs, and other key services, such as the national railway operator. Between June and October 2018, over 4,000 people with disabilities have requested the card in Finland.

### Problems Targeted

Finland had no national disability card, and national disability cards are often not recognized in other countries, making it difficult to get support abroad.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

In 2015, KVPS led Finland's application process to participate in the pilot, and now manages the project's national implementation. KVPS coordinates the national working group of seven NGOs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the National Institute for Health and Welfare. It also works closely with other NGOs, the Finnish Disability Forum, and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland to promote and

“For us it was natural to be an EU Disability Card service provider. Disabled people are an important client group and we have been improving our services in cooperation with NGOs for years already.”

Pia-Mari Sotavalta, Head of Services, VR Group (the Finnish railway company)

implement the card. This leadership by NGOs and disabled people's organizations, and the collaboration with other agencies, has been key to successful implementation.

The EU Disability Card has a photo and Braille text. In Finland, people can choose symbols on the back of the card to indicate the assistance they may require and can also add a QR code. This might link to information about the individual's condition or the 'What Matters to Me' app, developed by the Finnish organization Bestser in partnership with people with disabilities. The app allows people to store informa-



Stickers help service providers to promote the EU Disability Card.

tion about their support needs, which they can then share when necessary.

Participation by services is voluntary; but as of October 2018, 148 partners in Finland had committed to promote accessibility and inclusive customer service. KVPS has also held six events across Finland to promote the card.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The trial period in Finland runs until 2020, during which time the eligibility criteria and other elements will be refined in partnership with people with disabilities and NGOs. The current funding from the Finnish Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organizations, which is itself funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, will continue beyond 2020.

KVPS will evaluate the implementation of the card in partnership with the Finnish Disability Forum in 2019. At the EU level, an evaluation is also planned for 2019 to decide whether the pilot will be extended.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of October 2018, 148 partners in Finland had committed to promote accessibility and inclusive customer service.

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 See corresponding Life Story on page 36.

# Life Stories from Ecuador, Georgia, Finland, Mexico & UK



THE STORY OF PATRICIO, BENEFICIARY OF THE MINKA PROJECT

**“Now I am raising pigs and getting support for it from the municipality.”**

*Espíndola, Ecuador*

My name is Patricio and I am 38 years old. Seven years ago, due to an accident at work, I lost my right leg. For four years I took refuge in alcohol and did not want to leave the house. I separated from my wife and daughters.

The field promoter of the MINKA project visited me a few times in my home to invite me to meetings of the local self-help group. After much reluctance I decided to attend the meetings, and since then I have not stopped. I have also actively participated in meetings for the elaboration of the local disability law in my municipality, and I have defended the ordinance at town hall meetings.

My life has changed radically. I am currently the president of the new association of people with disabilities in the municipality of Espíndola. I have returned to work and have obtained support for the raising of pigs, thanks to compliance with the local law that states that the municipality will support the small businesses of people with disabilities and their families. Now I travel to other towns in the municipality to disseminate and promote compliance with the ordinance. But most importantly, I have regained confidence in myself and have re-established my family.

**i** See corresponding Policy on page 34.

THE STORY OF OSKU TIMONEN, AN EU DISABILITY CARD USER

**“I could enjoy the music on an accessible platform and with a good view.”**

*Finland*



My name is Osku Timonen, and in June 2018 I became one of the very first recipients of an EU Disability Card in Finland. I don't need any assistive devices, but in my daily life I do need some help, for example, while carrying food and drinks.

The card has already proven very useful in several situations. For instance, last summer I had a chance to participate in a number of music festivals, and in each instance the festival staff warmly welcomed me after I showed them my EU Disability Card. As a result, I was able to enjoy the music on an accessible platform and with a very good view of the main stage. The card has also been useful on the Finnish railways, where I have readily found someone to help me to carry my things.

As I'm a very keen traveller, I am hoping that the EU Disability Card will also prove helpful while travelling abroad.

**i** See corresponding Policy on page 35.

## THE STORY OF JOHN CLARKE, MEMBER OF #ENABLETHEVOTE

**“I went to Westminster and spoke in front of Members of Parliament!”**

*Scotland, United Kingdom*



ACE is an Active Community of Empowered People who have learning disabilities, and we meet in communities across Scotland every month. Through ACE, I took part in #ENABLEtheVote. We started #ENABLEtheVote because many ACE members had never voted before and this was something we wanted to change. Our voices matter and they should be heard in local and national elections.

Before #ENABLEtheVote I had voted in an election, but when I did I would just glance at the paper and mark any of them. I never really understood that each choice offered something different, or that my vote would actually have an impact. No one had ever talked to me about voting before. But all that has changed.

As part of #ENABLEtheVote, I went to Westminster and spoke in front of Members of Parliament. I told them that I have a learning disability and that nonetheless I can make a difference. I can say what needs to be said and make things change. They listened, and they took me seriously. They even asked if they could use my speech as evidence in a debate the next day.

**i** See corresponding Policy on page 41.

## THE STORY OF IRMA BARABADZE, USER OF THE TACTILE BALLOT GUIDE OF THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION

**“With the tactile ballot, I can now vote really secretly without anybody’s assistance.”**

*Georgia*



I am Irma Barabadze. I am 44 years old, blind, and have severe disabilities. Nonetheless, I occupy the significant position of Chief Social Worker at the social services of the Union of Blind in Georgia. In the past, at every election I needed the assistance of an accompanier to help me to mark my choices on the ballot paper. At that time it was practically impossible for me to choose an accompanier who I could trust completely, since even I and my family members have fundamentally different political views. Based on the decision of the Central Election Commission, Braille ballots were printed to ensure the

independent participation of blind voters in elections. This seemed to me as major step forward. However, once I entered the polling station I changed my mind and decided to vote with the assistance of an accompanier, since if I was the only blind voter using a Braille ballot at that electoral precinct, my choice would not have been secret! Despite my experience on that one occasion, however, I, as a blind voter, have used the special tactile ballot in every election since 2016 without any assistance.

**i** See corresponding Policy on page 38.

## THE STORY OF SALVADOR HERRERA MOLINA, A BENE-FICIARY OF THE INSTITUTO NACIONAL ELECTORAL

**“I participated as an officer in the elections of 2018, and now I want to run as an independent candidate.”**

*Nuevo Leon, Mexico*

My name is Salvador Herrera Molina, I am 50 years old and I have always liked politics, and my dream was to participate in an election, but I hadn't been able to do so due to my visual impairment.

In 2018, months before the national elections, a woman from the Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE), the government body that organizes elections in Mexico, came to my home to inform me that I had been selected to participate as an elections officer. She explained everything to me, including how I could choose someone I trust to assist me on Election Day. I chose my daughter, Andrea, who served as my secretary that day.

My daughter and I were trained on exactly what we needed to do on Election Day, and weeks later someone from the INE brought to our house the paper ballots that would be used to elect the president, members of Congress, and local public offices. On 1 July we went to the polling station at six in the morning and carried out our duties so that the people from our neighbourhood could cast their vote.

Participating in this way gave me confidence, and that is why come the next elections I am going to seek to run as an independent candidate for Congress from the 25th district in Nuevo Leon, and why I will continue to participate with INE in the elections as often as I am invited.

**i** See corresponding Policy on page 39.

# Tactile ballot guides for blind voters

## GEORGIA / CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION

The Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia, the government body that oversees all Georgian elections, has produced a tactile ballot guide to allow blind voters to vote independently. The ballot uses round cut-outs on the left side of the guide to represent the sequence of the candidates. In addition, an audio guide provides blind voters with the sequence of the candidates, enabling them to cast their vote privately. Usage has increased from 330 voters in 2016 to 527 voters in the presidential election of October 2018.

### Problems Targeted

Despite several projects implemented by the CEC, blind voters living in Georgia were not able to vote independently without the assistance of another person.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

In 2016, the Central Election Commission created a standard ballots for all elections in the country, thus providing the basis for developing a solution to allow blind voters to vote independently. To develop the tactile ballot guide, the CEC looked at international best practices and worked with a number of NGOs, including the Union of the Blind in Georgia. The tactile ballot guide, made of durable paper, has cut-out holes and lines along one side to indicate the sequence of candidates. The ballot is placed under the guide and

“By using the special tactile ballot guide I, as a blind voter, make my own choices independently.”

Irma Barabadze, Chief Social Worker, Social Service of the Union of the Blind in Georgia

an audio recording describes the parties and candidates that correspond to the holes. The guide can be used multiple times and does not require knowledge of Braille.

To promote the guide and explain how it works, the CEC produced videos and partnered with the Union of the Blind to hold information sessions and mock elections; and following the 2016 election the guide was updated and further improved. To make the information about the tactile ballot guide available online to blind voters, the CEC official website was adapted in line with the principle of Universal Design. For the 2018 presidential election, guides were available in all 3,647 election precincts and were used by 527 voters.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of 2018, the CEC has produced 4,400 tactile ballot guides.
- Tactile ballot guides were available in all 3,647 election precincts for the 2018 presidential election.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The policy is fully financed from Georgia's national state budget. The overall cost of the project was \$6,500, with a cost per tactile ballot guide of \$1.45.

The guide is replicable in other countries, as it is inexpensive to produce and can be used in different types of elections. The CEC has already presented its work in international meetings, and it is actively sharing information with election administrations in other countries.

In the 2018 municipal election, Georgia piloted electronic vote counting for the first time in three electoral precincts of one electoral district. As such, different ballot papers were printed and CEC prepared an adapted tactile ballot guide for these papers. This will need to be considered if these electronic pilots are expanded.



During a mock election, a blind voter uses the ballot guide, counting the cutouts to make her selections.

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# New guidelines making elections accessible

## MEXICO / INSTITUTO NACIONAL ELECTORAL

Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE), the government body that organizes elections in Mexico and works to create suitable conditions so that all groups can participate, has instituted a set of mandatory guidelines entitled the “Protocol for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.” The guidelines include requirements for the availability of Braille ballots, improved physical access for people with mobility impairments, and polling stations in hospitals. In the July 2018 elections, approximately 90,000 voters benefitted from the protocol.

### Problems Targeted

People with disabilities in Mexico are not always considered in terms of their right to vote, such as the need to provide accessible electoral facilities and appropriate voter education materials.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

In 2017, INE México passed a mandatory national protocol that includes a range of measures to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in elections. These include guidelines to facilitate access and movement in polling stations, electoral materials that promote Braille ballots, and the setting-up of polling stations in hospitals. Further, they include simulations to increase the effective exercise of the right to vote for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities; promoting communicational accessibility through subtitles in televised messages and the use of sign language at debates and public speaking events; and an accessible website.



In a voting training, two men go to the Guiding Polling Station to get their thumbs marked with indelible ink.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Implementation of the policy is fully funded by INE México and covers all costs, including sensitization and socialisation events, training of staff, and polling station materials.

The INE is looking to improve the protocol further, including increasing awareness of electoral political rights among people with disabilities by encouraging citizen participation. Other actions include requiring political parties to make their materials inclusive, creating a video explaining the handbook for people with disabilities, and promoting affirmative action so that people with disabilities can be nominated as candidates and have access to public office.

All the protocols and guidelines are freely available to any country that might wish to replicate them.

“Participating gave me confidence, and that is why at the next elections I am going to seek to run as an independent candidate for local congressman.”

Salvador Herrera Molina, a INE beneficiary

Three documents have been published to promote the policy:

- a protocol for the inclusion of people with disabilities as officials of the Polling Boards;
- training materials for Polling Board officials to address persons with disabilities correctly; and
- a protocol for the Citizens Attention Modules (list of voting places and guidelines for voting) of the INE.

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### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of 2018, over 320 people and more than 20 civil society organizations were trained in the simulations.
- Some 1.4 million Mexicans have been trained to participate as polling officials.

# Increasing voter accessibility in Paraguay

PARAGUAY / USAID, FUNDACIÓN SARAHI, ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) is the leading development funding agency in the United States. In anticipation of the 2015 municipal elections in Paraguay, USAID worked with the Paraguayan NGO Fundación Sarahi to review the country's legal election framework regarding accessibility and to make recommendations to the Electoral Tribunal about increasing participation of voters with disabilities. These recommendations led to new regulations covering a range of accessibility measures, such as for the first time permitting absentee ballots for people unable to travel to polling stations. As of 2018, around 9,300 people had benefitted from the new regulations.

## Problems Targeted

In Paraguay there is a low level of electoral participation of people with disabilities, mainly due to a lack of a regulatory framework, policies, and procedures to support accessibility measures.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Ahead of the 2015 municipal elections in Paraguay, USAID and Fundación Sarahi reviewed the legal framework around accessibility in elections and made a list of recommendations to the national Electoral Tribunal. Based on these recommendations, the Electoral Tribunal endorsed a number of regulations

## FACTS & FIGURES

- As of 2018, 1,069 people with disabilities had attended workshops and forums on electoral participation.

disabilities had benefitted from the new regulations, and 1,069 had attended forums and workshops on electoral participation.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The policy review was primarily funded by USAID in 2015 and 2016, with funding for 2017 and 2018 coming from the National Endowment for Democracy – a US-based non-profit foundation supporting the strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Private companies have also provided non-financial support, such as broadcasters donating air time for communication campaigns.

USAID has already shared the strategies, actions, lessons learned, and good practices acquired in Paraguay through its national and international networks. The methodology could also be used to improve access to elections for other vulnerable groups.

“The strength of democracy is expressed through citizen participation. I believe in democracy, and I believe in accessible elections for all.”

Mario Marecos, a 2018 candidate for the House of Representatives and a person with a disability


to increase accessibility, such as providing absentee ballots for the first time and making information about voting available in sign language and Braille. Election staff and volunteers were trained on the new regulations, awareness-raising messages were run on national media, and political parties were encouraged to address the needs of persons with disabilities in their campaigns. A guide for promoting inclusive municipalities was also developed.

Notably, the new framework also empowered the first person with a severe physical disability to run for the House of Representatives in the 2018 national election. As of 2018, around 9,300 people with



Credit: Fundacion Sarahi, USAID Paraguay

Election staff and volunteers were trained on the new regulations.

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# Empowering individuals in their right to vote

## UNITED KINGDOM / ENABLE SCOTLAND – #ENABLETHEVOTE

ENABLE Scotland, the largest member-led learning disability organization in Scotland, works alongside the UK Electoral Commission – the independent election standards body – to create easy-read voting guides to support people with learning disabilities to vote. In addition, they produce voting factsheets for family members and support workers, and run voting workshops and accessible hustings (political assemblies, usually prior to an election). Initially for the 2016 parliamentary election and later for the 2017 local council elections, #ENABLEtheVote supported 183 people with disabilities, with 80 per cent exercising their right to vote in 2016 and 91 per cent in 2017.

### Problems Targeted

According to a 2014 survey by Mencap – a UK-wide learning disability organization – 70 per cent of people who have a learning disability want to vote, but more than half find the process too difficult.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

ENABLE Scotland and the UK Electoral Commission have developed co-branded, easy-read voting guides to empower people with learning disabilities to make informed choices in Scottish and UK politics, plus voting factsheets for family members and support workers. In addition, ENABLE Scotland provides interactive voting workshops and accessible hustings



Members of an ACE (Active Community of Empowered People) question candidates to the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in an accessible hustings.

“Through #ENABLEtheVote, ENABLE Scotland seeks to ensure that everyone who has a learning disability has the opportunity to exercise their democratic right to vote with confidence.”

Theresa Shearer, CEO, ENABLE Scotland

in communities across Scotland, where people with a learning disability meet their local politicians. The hustings are designed on a conversation-café model in which political representatives rotate among the various discussion groups.

More than 80 per cent of people with learning disabilities who engaged with #ENABLEtheVote exercised their vote in the Scottish parliamentary election in 2016, and this increased to 91 per cent in the 2017 local council elections. Issues raised by participants have been discussed more than 100 times in the Scottish Parliament, and one participant addressed

the UK Parliament. Four of the five political parties published easy-read manifestos for the first time.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

ENABLE Scotland's activism groups are 50 per cent funded by the Scottish Government, which meets the costs of delivering interactive voting workshops and accessible hustings. The easy-read guides and factsheets are funded through fundraised income, and print costs are covered by the Electoral Commission, which has committed to continuing its partnership on the project.

ENABLE Scotland has also begun to explore how #ENABLEtheVote could be replicated further, including a presentation to the board of Inclusion Europe and by providing support to Plena Inclusion on the right to vote in Spain.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- By the end of 2018, 953 people had accessed easy-read voting factsheets.
- ENABLE Scotland organized 18 accessible hustings in 2017–2018.

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 See corresponding Life Story on page 37.



# Innovative Practices 2019

## on Independent Living & Political Participation

### Fact Sheets

One page Fact Sheets from all Innovative Practices 2019, ranked by country of origin.

### Life Stories

More than 20 personal stories from users and beneficiaries of the Innovative Practices 2019.

# Using technology to increase autonomy

## AUSTRALIA / COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AUSTRALIA – JEENEE MOBILE & “BIG RED BUTTON” APP

Community Connections Australia (CCA) is a disability service provider based in Sydney, NSW. In 2013, CCA established a division called Jeenee Mobile to offer mobile technology to people with all types of disabilities. In case of an emergency or if a special need arises, users can hit the “Big Red Button” app on their Jeenee mobile phone, which puts them in direct contact with the company help centre – staffed by people knowledgeable and trained in disability issues. In 2018, Jeenee Mobile had tens of thousands of customers both with and without disabilities throughout Australia.

### Problems Targeted

There exists a deep societal assumption that people living with disabilities (particularly those with complex problems) are unable to understand or use technology in their everyday lives, including mobile phones, and often they do not have access to the correct equipment to meet their special needs.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

By pressing the Big Red Button, an individual is immediately connected to the Jeenee Mobile help centre, where support staff can use GPS to determine who and where they are. The call centre staff are

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2017, CCA employed more than 25 persons with disabilities in the company help centres.
- Between 2014 and 2018, more than 250 people participated in Tech Hub seminars learning about mobile phone features and apps.

trained in both technical and disability issues, but as a person can also call upon CCA staff for additional support. Moreover, people with disabilities who use this resource often visit the office to solve technical problems or to gain skills in the use of a mobile phone. To better accommodate this need, CAA established special Technology Hubs in 2014 – seminars at which people with disabilities receive technical support, such as how to select an accessible mobile

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Jeenee Mobile is a social enterprise that received start-up funding from CCA and is now generating revenues and a profit as a separate legal entity under the CCA umbrella. Its operation is based on commercial contracts with Australia’s second largest telecommunications company, Optus.

The Big Red Button app is a fee-based subscription service that works on both Android and Apple devices; and since the app was developed in-house, Jeenee Mobile is very flexible and able to modify its operation to suit any requirements. It is also open to licensing the service to operators in other countries.

“As soon as I stepped into the world of Jeenee Mobile it was amazing to discover how smooth and easy it was. They knew how to get around my physical limitations; and when I need help with my phone or my plan, they are just a text away.”

Jess, a professional photographer and designer living with cerebral palsy

trained in both technical and disability issues, but as a person can also call upon CCA staff for additional support. Moreover, people with disabilities who use this resource often visit the office to solve technical problems or to gain skills in the use of a mobile phone. To better accommodate this need, CAA established special Technology Hubs in 2014 – seminars at which people with disabilities receive technical support, such as how to select an accessible mobile



Pressing the Big Red Button connects you directly to the help centre, which is trained in technical and disability issues.

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# Reviewing and planning individual supported living arrangements

## AUSTRALIA / CURTIN UNIVERSITY – INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTED LIVING

In 2007, Curtin University in Perth, Australia, launched the Individual Supported Living (ISL) project for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and in 2011 it produced an ISL manual based on two research phases, providing a framework for reviewing and developing ISL arrangements. During the third phase of the project (2015–2018), which involved two other universities and six partner disability organizations, researchers evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of 130 ISL arrangements across Australia. Based on that research, Curtin University published an updated manual in 2017, extending the evidence base underpinning ISL.

### Problems Targeted

In Australia, there is limited evidence to underpin the development of person-centred individual supported living arrangements for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“We wouldn’t hesitate to participate in relevant industry and research partnerships again. Our staff benefited from increased skills and knowledge... and the results and findings of the project are relevant to service delivery, design, and policy making.”

CEO of a national Australian disability services NGO

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The manual outlines a framework of eight critical themes for successful ISL arrangements, such as Support, Control, and Social Inclusion. Across these eight themes there are 21 attributes that can be reviewed to determine the quality of ISL arrangements, and an accompanying ‘review scoring booklet’ allows people to score ISL arrangements against specific indicators under each attribute. People can use the framework for training and policy development, planning a new ISL arrangement, or to review an existing arrangement.

In this third research phase, 111 researchers trained in using the framework evaluated 130 ISL arrangements across Australia. Working in small teams,

they spoke with the individuals themselves, their families, friends, support services, and other relevant stakeholders. Researchers used these evaluations to update the manual and to confirm the validity of the framework. They also identified a subgroup of participants with very high support needs living in successful ISL arrangements, demonstrating that the severity of support needs should not exclude anyone from individual supported living.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability


This third phase of the project was funded by a Linkage Project grant of \$335,000 from the Australian Research Council. This was matched by in-kind contributions from the partner disability organizations and substantial contributions from the universities.

Future plans for the project include developing training modules on use of the manual for various stakeholder groups, including persons with disabilities, families, and advocates. To date, 211 stakeholders have already been trained in addition to the researchers. Further, the project has not yet addressed people living in their family home or in a group home, so this is a possible future avenue of research.

Curtin University expanded the project from a West Australia pilot to a national study. Moreover, there has been interest in the project internationally.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Curtin University trained 111 researchers in order to undertake the third phase of the evaluations.
- Four different ISL models were evaluated in this phase of the project.

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# Electoral inclusion campaign for people with intellectual disabilities

## AUSTRALIA / INCLUSION MELBOURNE – ICANVOTE

Inclusion Melbourne, a non-profit organization based in the Australian state of Victoria, has developed ICanVote – a campaign to support the right of people with intellectual disabilities to participate in elections. ICanVote focuses on providing three key components: (i) easy language and dual-read content on political citizenship for both voters and their supporters, (ii) online campaign information through web and social media, and (iii) multimedia materials in easy read language. Its work has promoted follow-up activities by the Victorian Electoral Commission and universities.

### Problems Targeted

People with intellectual disabilities experience barriers in accessing electoral processes, such as a lack of accessible information, political awareness, and support models to provide assistance.

“It is really hard to understand what politicians are saying a lot of the time. But the ICanVote website shows me a video of the various candidates, so I can work out who I want to vote for.”

Cameron Bloomfield, a voter with an intellectual disability

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Inclusion Melbourne began its ICanVote project by gathering data and identifying best practices on electoral inclusion globally; partnering with the Human Rights Law Centre at Melbourne Law School; and co-developing a survey with La Trobe University. The project focuses on the preparation of electoral materials, such as descriptions of the electoral processes and introductions to the candidates, and provides these in easy read language. Inclusion Melbourne works closely with political parties to turn their content into an easy language format.

People with disabilities participate in co-designing the campaign projects, such as project planning, publication review, website review and testing, and in advocating for their right to vote. The content on the website is based on the collective work of easy language translators, a local community television station, and web designers.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2017 the dual-read guide “ICanVote: For people with a disability, advocates, and professionals” was published.
- In 2018 there were some 15,000 viewers on the iCanVote social media page, and 2,000 beneficiaries from the website.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

ICanVote is sustained through government and public funders, such as the Collier Charitable Trust and the Transport Accident Commission. It also receives support from the Victorian Electoral Commission and La Trobe University.

Within Australia, Inclusion Melbourne is in conversation with representative bodies in other states to replicate the ICanVote project outside Victoria.

Internationally, the organization has shared its work via other websites that focus on electoral good-practices, such as that of Every Vote Counts (United Kingdom), Disability Matters (Manitoba, Canada), and the Mitt Val campaign (Sweden).



Producing multimedia materials in easy language, often based on interviews with politicians.



Nathan Despott

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# A web-based platform allowing people with disabilities to vote remotely and on their own

## AUSTRALIA / SCYTL - IVOTE PROGRAMME

Scytl is a fast-growing company headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, and selling online and electronic voting services in many countries of the world. In the field of accessibility, Scytl developed the iVote Core Voting System for New South Wales, one of the six states of Australia, funded by the regional Electoral Commission. iVote is a system that allows blind voters and people with disabilities to vote online by using its web-based platform or via a phone using the keypad. Around 286,000 voters within New South Wales used the system in 2015, and it has been replicated in Western Australia as of 2017.

### Problems Targeted

To participate in electoral processes, people who are blind or have other disabilities often must depend on assistance, thus violating the confidentiality of their votes.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The iVote system is a web-based platform whereby voters undergo a three-step process: registration, voting, and verification. At the time of voting, voters are offered two options: to vote either via web or via phone, both of which are accessible using an individualized identification code. By being able to use their computer screen reader tools when accessing the web-based platform or using the keypad on their phone, blind voters are able to vote remotely and on their own. The system is being enhanced to operate in multiple languages.

“For me, iVote is far easier than paper voting could ever be. It means that I can independently cast my vote like everybody else.”

Janelle Schroder, Customer Service Officer, Vision Australia

The iVote system is considered secure for the purpose of collecting votes from voters who would otherwise be deprived of the right to vote, with following features:

- cryptography features that encrypt and digitally sign the voters intentions in their voting device
- security controlled features that allow a voter to confirm their vote is recorded as they intended
- advanced logging to detect hack attempts and insider threats



An electronic receipt by iVote, confirming that the vote has been submitted.

- operational controls to ensure different parts of the system are operated by different groups to reduce risk of collusion.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

iVote is funded by the New South Wales Government via the New South Wales Electoral Commission. The amount of funds has steadily increased over the years and approximately \$4 million has already been budgeted and for the next elections in 2019.

Since the system is provided as a web-based application it can be easily adopted to other countries and regions. The iVote system started in New South Wales in 2011 on a small scale, was extended greatly in 2015, and has been replicated in Western Australia in 2017. Other Australian states are showing interest in the programme as well. Outside Australia, Scytl is applying similar systems in several countries, including Canada, France, and Switzerland.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 50,000 voters in New South Wales used iVote during its first year in 2011.
- In 2017 the programme was used by 2,288 voters in the state of Western Australia.

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# Promoting inclusive sports in schools

## AUSTRIA / BASIC INITIATIVE FOR SPORT AND INCLUSION – INKLUSION SPORT

Basic Initiative for Sport and Inclusion (BISI), an Austrian NGO, started 'Inklusion Sport' in 2004 to provide young people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in sports. BISI works with interested schools to bring together pupils both with and without disabilities for joint trainings and competitions, and to organize inclusive sports events and teacher training. By creating a regional school sports agenda that includes unified sports matches, schools began to arrange these activities for themselves. In 2018, there were over 30 inclusive sport events with more than 2,000 children taking part.

### Problems Targeted

Children and young people with disabilities, in particular intellectual disabilities, are often excluded from school sports.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Working in close cooperation with the Special Olympics Austria, Inklusion Sport empowers youth and educators to promote social inclusion. Begun in 2004, the programme offer unified sport events, education, and training in the Austrian state of Styria. Each year five physical education (PE) teachers receive training to become official advisers on inclusive sport. They are employed by schools as PE assistants to give weekly lessons to children.

A four-year study showed that the project improves the health and fitness of school children with intellectual disabilities, builds self-esteem, and promotes social contact. In addition, involvement of students in the planning phase of the competitions supports self-determination. An unexpected consequence of the programme was an increase in the academic performance of intellectually impaired youth, resulting in better grades.

**“Inclusive sport means sports for all and with all, without excluding anyone because of a physical or intellectual disability.”**

Heinz Tippel, Chairman, BISI

Inklusion Sport has partnered with the Comenius programme (a European Union education project that aims to help young people and educational staff better understand the range of European cultures, languages, and values) to attract inclusive sports teams from Italy, Hungary, and Germany, among others.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2014 there were 4-5 inclusive sport events in Styria. By 2018 there are more than 30 a year.
- Inklusion Sport is currently active in Styria, Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Carinthia.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Special Olympics for Styria has been the primary funder of Inklusion Sport, providing €5,000 a year, and this support will continue for an undetermined time. A total of €20,000 a year for five years is needed to roll-out the project nationally, and these funds will be sought from school administrations and the Austrian Government. Another €10,000 annually is required for international projects, for which BISI will seek EU funding.

Inklusion Sport has already been replicated in Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Carinthia. Education and teacher training in schools, universities, and colleges are key to the programme's dissemination. International activities include a partnership with the University of Giessen in Germany and international unified sports events and teacher-training sessions throughout Europe as well as in Ghana and Kazakhstan.



Inklusive Sport Unified Football team in action.



Heinz Tippel

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# An inclusive international volunteer programme

## AUSTRIA / JUGEND EINE WELT – WELTWEGWEISER

WeltWegWeiser is a service point for international voluntary services. It was founded by Jugend Eine Welt, an Austrian NGO specialized in development aid. In 2017, WeltWegWeiser launched a pilot programme to create a framework for inclusive volunteer assignments in low income countries for people with disabilities. They provide financial support and training to deployment organizations (groups that send volunteers abroad). Between 2017 and 2018, eight Austrians with disabilities volunteered abroad in places such as integrative schools and confidence training for children.

### Problems Targeted

There are few inclusive and accessible overseas volunteering positions for people with disabilities.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

In 2017, WeltWegWeiser launched the pilot programme together with two Austrian deployment organizations, "Grenzenlos" and "Internationale Freiwilligeneinsatze," specializing in matching volunteers from Austria with NGOs in developing countries. WeltWegWeiser does not offer its own volunteer assignments, but rather acts as an independent service point for people with disabilities interested in volunteering abroad. The organization advises interested people on suitable volunteer jobs based



Erwin Buchberger in the classroom where he volunteered.

more accessible, such as the production of easy read materials and websites, workplace adaption, or to cover the additional costs for health care insurance. Those measures are decided on the individual needs of the volunteers.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

WeltWegWeiser is a project of Jugend Eine Welt, funded by the Austrian Development Agency and the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs.

In 2017 the pilot started with two deployment agencies, and by 2018 that number had grown to nine. Eight volunteers were successfully matched in 2018; and by the end of the year there were worldwide 54 volunteer options available in social projects in countries such as Belarus, Honduras, Uganda and Viet Nam.

To encourage further growth and replication, WeltWegWeiser plans to compile and publish a report on the project, including the didactic materials it has already created.

**“Of course, you must cope with unfamiliar everyday life in a new and different environment. I succeeded in doing so, which was very good for my self-confidence.”**

Erwin Buchberger, a former volunteer and now team member of WeltWegWeiser

on their individual skills and personal interests – with respect to their disabilities. A voluntary service takes 3 to 12 months. Tasks include teaching, working with the elderly, administration, peer-to-peer-training, and building websites, among others.

To help solve organizational barriers, WeltWegWeiser provides financial support in two ways. First, it provides a financial contribution of €70 per month to the volunteers to cover costs associated with their foreign assignment. Second, the deployment organizations receive financing to help them become

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Currently, the project is working with nine deployment agencies in Austria.
- In 2018 there were 54 volunteer options available.

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 See corresponding Life Story on page 56.

# Bilingual classes supporting families to learn sign language together

## AUSTRIA / KINDERHÄNDE

kinderhände is a small NGO based in Vienna that teaches Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS) to hearing families of children who are deaf, children with deaf parents, and children with hearing impairments. This is done by offering bilingual playgroups and learning materials, and by promoting the use of ÖGS so that families can develop a common language. It also has an online platform for families to use at home, and has developed teacher-training modules to support ÖGS use in schools. Between 2014 and 2018, kinderhände has gone from supporting five children per semester to over 80.

### Problems Targeted

Over 90 per cent of children who are deaf are born into hearing families, which can mean that a common family language is missing.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Using a bilingual team of one person who is deaf and one who can hear, kinderhände offers bilingual classes in German and ÖGS to children aged six months to 14 years and their families. Through bilingual games, songs, and other tools, children and families learn ÖGS together. In 2017, kinderhände supported 165 children and their families over two school semesters.

Although the primary aim of kinderhände is to support communication in families where a child is deaf, there are other benefits as well. Sign language supports language development in children with cochlear implants, children from migrant backgrounds, and children whose parents are deaf. For

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Every semester kinderhände offers around 15 courses, with a maximum of eight children per course.
- In 2017, kinderhände supported 165 children over two semesters in their playgroups, and supported more families through other offers, such as their parent-child café and learning materials.

“The first deaf person I met was my son. I didn’t know how to communicate with him. kinderhände was a terrific support – I finally met professionals who answered my questions and eased my worries.”

Eva Meißl, mother of a deaf son

the past three years, kinderhände has also offered courses to teachers and other staff to promote ÖGS in schools. The organization has its own publishing facility to produce bilingual learning materials such as song books and card games, and it provides an online platform so families can learn at home.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

As of 2018, kinderhände is financed exclusively through donations and the sale of materials and course income.

The organizational structure, teaching curriculum, and clear philosophy are all ready to be replicated; and as a publisher, kinderhände is able to produce and adapt materials according to demand. Thus, when funding is available, the programme could also be implemented in other countries with other sign languages.



Talking about spiders!



Anna Reiter

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# Housing and person-centred support for persons with intellectual disabilities

## BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA / UNION SUMERO

The Union of Organizations for Support of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Union SUMERO) is a non-profit organization that provides housing and person-centred assistance for people with intellectual disabilities to help them stay in their local communities rather than to move into institutions. A maximum of five people live together in each house with support from assistants for daily activities, such as shopping, cooking, and working. Between 2011 and 2018, 80 users moved into 25 houses across the country.

### Problems Targeted

Following the death of their parents, or when their parents and family are unable to support them, persons with intellectual disabilities often have only one option, and that is to be placed in an institution. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are six institutions, where residents often have little choice in daily life, fostering isolation and an unrewarding existence.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Union SUMERO is supporting persons with intellectual disabilities to live together in shared accommodations with support from assistants who support them to carry out daily tasks, and thus enable them to stay in their



Daily life in one of the houses of Union SUMERO.

**“This model can be replicated to all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also to other regional countries that still haven’t initiated deinstitutionalization process.”**

Haris Haveric, Director, Union SUMERO

local communities. Beneficiaries choose who they want to live with in properties of up to five residents, and are supported in making their own choices in daily life, such as shopping, recreation, and work. They are also educated in their rights and self-advocacy, with the aim of recognizing that they are a key part of society.

Union SUMERO began with just one house in 2011 as a pilot project, and by 2018 it had grown to 25 houses with 80 residents and a sustainable support service. When the project started, the local authorities of only two regions were supportive of the approach, but as of 2018 it was recognized as an official social service in all five regions in which it operates.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The programme is financed 70 per cent by the Ministry for Social Work and regional social work centres, with 30 per cent from foreign funders, including the Open Society Foundation, the US Agency for International Development, the Czech Development Agency, and the Washington-based Institute for Development Impact. Government support covers rent for beneficiaries plus basic life expenses, such as food, clothes and furnishings.

Union SUMERO plans to continue its work by cooperating with more regional social work centres and by increasing the number of people housed in supported accommodation. But it is also suitable for replicating in the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia where similar institutionalization models exist.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Local authorities in five regions have adopted the practice.
- Union SUMERO currently has 35 paid employees providing support to 80 residents.



Haris Haveric

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# Affordable hearing aids through solar technology

## BOTSWANA / SOLAR EAR

Solar Ear is a social business that started in Botswana in 2002. Now headquartered in Canada, the company manufactures low-cost, environmentally-friendly hearing aids and solar-rechargeable batteries. Solar Ear employs and trains people who are deaf to manufacture the hearing aids and to lead the replication of the technology in other countries. The company also runs social programmes, including a holistic hearing-loss detection and education programme. Solar Ear had sales of more than \$15 million in 2017, exports to 60 countries, and entered the Russian market in 2018.

### Problems Targeted

Globally, only 10 per cent of people who need hearing aids have access to them. Key barriers are the cost of the devices and batteries and their lack of availability in rural communities.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The key benefit to Solar Ear hearing aids is that their batteries are rechargeable using solar-powered chargers and last two to three years, compared to the seven to ten days of some single-use batteries on the market. This reduces the environmental impact as well as the cost, making the products affordable to 80 per cent of those who need them. Importantly, in addition to working with their own products, the rechargeable batteries work in 95 per cent of hearing aids on the market.

“Our goal is to lower hearing loss and the burden of hearing loss, helping 160 million people by the year 2022.”

Modesta Nyirenda, Solar Ear

Solar Ear technology has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, the World Health Organization, and the European Union.

All Solar Ear hearing aids and batteries are manufactured by deaf people working in Botswana, Brazil, and China; and a third of the profits from sales are used to run social programmes.

To date, Solar Ear has supported over 50,000 children to receive a low-cost hearing aid, and thus to have the ability to attend school. The company has also developed a programme to fight hearing loss through detection, research, education, equipment, and technology (the DREET programme).

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Between 2002 and 2018, Solar Ear sold more than 50,000 hearing aids, 100,000 solar chargers, and 250,000 rechargeable batteries.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The company is self-sustaining and generates all its income from sales. The hearing aids, sold at 100 per cent gross profit, cost less than \$100, compared to an average starting price of \$1,800. All profits are reinvested in the business or used to support Solar Ear's social mission.

Solar Ear has replicated its initiative in several countries and has plans to enter India in 2019. The technology is not patented, and Solar Ear works with partners who share their mission to replicate. The company also helps local partners to write business plans and raise funds; and once operations are on track, the project is 100 per cent locally owned and operated. Technical training in new countries is led by a team of deaf workers from Botswana.

Further, Solar Ear is developing a franchise model for future growth, based on a 10 per cent fee on sales, and is developing a hearing test using Android software on mobile phones.



Solar powered chargers for the hearing aid batteries are key for availability and affordability.

✉ Modesta Nyirenda  
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# Training young leaders in accessibility and inclusion

## BRAZIL / ESCOLA DE GENTE – ACCESSIBILITY PROMOTION AGENTS

Escola de Gente is a large NGO headquartered in Rio de Janeiro and working across Brazil on issues of inclusion, accessibility, and diversity. Through its Accessibility Promotion Agents (APA) programme, the organization works with young people with and without disabilities, particularly those living in favelas. The certified training gives them the skills to identify and intervene when the rights of people with disabilities have been violated, key skills that also increase their employability. The project has been replicated in four favelas in Rio de Janeiro and has trained 252 young people between 2011 and 2017.

### Problems Targeted

Young people with and without disabilities often do not feel part of the same generation, and these divisions can lead to the exclusion of people with disabilities from the job market, culture participation, and wider society.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The 45-hour training programme has seven modules on inclusion and diversity ethics, rights and employment, accessible communication, physical accessibility, sign language, audio description, and accessible culture. All learning materials and classes are fully accessible, so all young people can participate. The training is administered in cooperation with the Labour Prosecution Service, and all participants receive certificates when they complete the training to help with employability.

“By training young people both with and without disabilities from the perspective of an inclusive society, this initiative reconstructs the logic of the contemporary world, saturated with discrimination and slow to find simultaneously inclusive solutions.”

Claudia Werneck, founder/superintendent of Escola de Gente

Following the training, young people become Accessibility Promotion Agents in their communities, facilitating the social, political, and cultural participation of people with disabilities. Practical examples include accompanying someone who is deaf to a health centre appointment where no sign language interpreter is available, or supporting someone who is blind to attend the theatre.



All learning material is fully accessible, and all young people can participate.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project costs approximately \$150,000 a year and is dependent on fundraising. In 2016 and 2017, the project was funded by Brazilian oil company Petrobras (96.5 per cent) and civil society organization Oi Futuro (3.5 per cent), linked to the telecommunications company Oi.

To date, the APA programme has been replicated in four favelas; and the inclusive workshops, a key element of the training, have been held some 400 times worldwide. Escola de Gente is considering two ways of replicating the practice even further: the team could directly train companies and organizations to transfer the model, or they could systematize the material to create an accessible manual and develop partnerships with other organizations to support implementation. Escola de Gente is also hoping to secure funding to undertake a formal evaluation of the programme.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Escola de Gente works with 18 organizations to deliver the APA programme, and has delivered 758 hours of training.



Pedro Prata

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# Training disability representatives to work with local district officials

## CAMBODIA / LIGHT FOR THE WORLD – CDR AND VDR

Light for the World – a global disability and development NGO – has set up a programme in the Pursat province of Cambodia to create and train Commune and Village Disability Representatives (CDRs and VDRs) to advocate for inclusive policies, in partnership with Cambodian NGO Disability Development Services Program. Local people are trained, meet with and collect data from persons with disabilities, and then go on to represent these individuals in commune and district meetings. As of 2018, 251 persons have been trained and their roles have led to policy changes, including access to free health care and assistive devices.

### Problems Targeted

Cambodia has a decentralized government where issues are first brought up by citizens at the village level and then move up to commune and district meetings. Persons with disabilities often lack the communication and advocacy skills necessary to introduce their issues into the government system.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

VDRs and CDRs are trained on advocacy, disability awareness, and meeting facilitation in order to advocate for inclusive policies and annual budgets. VDRs are residents chosen by a vote from each village community, and CDRs are current staff members of the Commune Councils who are selected to represent persons with disabilities as part of their existing

### FACTS & FIGURES

- To date, 22 Commune Disability Representatives and 229 Village Disability Representatives have been trained.
- Some 2,700 people with disabilities have participated in village planning meetings.

Between 2016 and 2018, 22 CDRs and 229 VDRs were trained, and their input has led to successful policy outcomes, such as access to free health care and free assistive devices for persons with disabilities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project is funded by Light for the World Netherlands and implemented via Disability Development Services Programmes, an NGO located in Cambodia's Pursat province. The cost of the project between 2016 and 2017 was \$29,617 and covered implementation in the 229 target villages and 22 communes.

In 2017, the project hosted a learning visit from organizations working in Laos that are beginning to implement a similar initiative. The simplicity of the project makes for strong replicability potential in the context of similarly decentralized governments.

“Before there was a CDR, there was no information, Now we have a list of persons with disabilities in our community. We also go to the community to talk to people.”

### A Commune Disability Representative

roles. VDRs and CDRs meet with persons with disabilities and their families individually or via village planning sessions (local government meetings where input is sought from residents) to collect information on their needs. They then attend planning meetings at the commune and district level to represent persons with disabilities and to input the collected issues into annual investment plans and budgets.



Collecting data means meeting families is a starting point.



Judith Baart

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See corresponding Life Story on page 57.



# Leadership programme for women with disabilities

## CAMBODIA / LIGHT FOR THE WORLD – WOMEN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Light for the World, a global disability and development NGO working in low-income communities, has created a leadership programme for women with disabilities in Cambodia. The selected participants attend workshops where they learn to self-advocate and empower others, after which they implement and run their own small projects to practice their learnings. To date, 24 women have completed the programme, with 12 having since received formal leadership positions or promotions. A further 470 women with disabilities have been reached via the small projects.

### Problems Targeted

Addressing the unique issues and concerns of women with disabilities requires their participation in political and other venues that affect access to their rights, yet they are often not involved.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Women with disabilities from throughout Cambodia are selected to take part in a leadership training programme consisting of five workshops over a period of two years, whereby all the women are brought together in Phnom Penh to learn about leadership skills and to share their experiences. In addition, participants are assisted in applying for a grant of up to \$1,200 for their own self-designed small projects, which they then run, allowing them to practice the leadership skills they have acquired.



The first group of women has decided to develop a network that aims to register itself as the “Women with Disabilities Leadership and Advocacy Network,” and they will also act as mentors to the next group of 25 women to take the course.

“The programme enables me to speak up to authorities to pay attention to the most vulnerable groups, especially women with disabilities.”

### Leadership programme graduate

Participation is key to the whole programme, for example, participants identify the skills they want to learn, which forms the basis of the workshops. Other participative elements include the small projects designed to support women in the participants’ own communities, and supporting children with intellectual disabilities to go to school.

The first 24 women who were trained through the programme have demonstrated increases in skills, ability to implement projects, recognition as leaders

in their community, and an increase in self-esteem. In addition, 12 of the women have also received formal positions within disability organizations or have been promoted within their current organization.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Light for the World has contributed the majority of the core funding, but in addition the Dutch television programme “EO Metterdaad” “has also supported the programme.” In terms of transferability, Light for the World notes the potential for the practice to be replicated to other countries via a franchise system.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- 24 women with disabilities have been trained in the first course, and 25 were registered for training in 2018.
- Seven self-help groups have been established via the small projects, with 113 women with disabilities taking part.



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See corresponding Life Story on page 56.

# Life Stories from Austria, the United Kingdom and Cambodia



THE STORY OF ERWIN BUCHBERGER,  
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER FOR WELTWEGWEISER

**“Volunteering can be a great experience, especially for people with a physical disability.”**

*Austria and Latvia*

My name is Erwin Buchberger and I am a wheelchair user. I need personal assistance for my daily life. I enjoy travelling and I am always looking for new adventures. As soon as I heard about the possibility to volunteer abroad, I wanted to do it.

With WeltWegWeiser we found an ideal project, working in an integrative school in Latvia, where some pupils are disabled. I especially enjoyed looking after the children and coming up with ideas for after-school activities. These pupils didn't speak much English. Instead, we used creativity and our hands, communicating from heart to heart.

You have to cope with life in an unfamiliar environment. And I succeeded, which was great for my self-confidence. It also changed the way I see the world.

After returning home, I was invited to promote inclusive voluntary services on behalf of WeltWegWeiser. Volunteering can be a great experience, especially for people with a physical disability, who often have to fight to be included in society. Getting involved in social projects abroad is a chance to show that you can give something back and change society's perception of people with disabilities.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 49.

THE STORY OF HUN SREYNAK, A USER  
OF THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR WOMEN  
WITH DISABILITIES PROGRAMME

**“We are helped,  
and we help other women  
with disabilities.”**

*Cambodia*

My name is Hun Sreynak and I contracted polio at the age of three. I was not able to walk, and when I wanted to start attending school my par-



ents told me I could not do so because of my disability. So I spent a whole year teaching myself to walk so I could attend school.

I faced discrimination in many ways during my school years, and especially at university where

I had to crawl up the stairs to class on the third and fifth floors. This is the situation for many people with disabilities in Cambodia – they face discrimination in all stages of life, especially women. In 2016, I applied and got accepted to Light for the World's Leadership Skills for Women with Disabilities programme. Here I met many women with different types of disabilities, and I learned that I was not alone! We all had good times together and enjoyed the training. We are helped, and we help other women with disabilities through setting up our own projects. In 2017, my new leadership skills were acknowledged as I formally joined Light for the World as a Programme Liaison Officer; and in 2018, I received a scholarship for a Master's programme in Disability Studies in Kuala Lumpur.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 55.

THE STORY OF PHILIPPA-ANNE DEWHIRST, USER OF HEADWAY'S BRAIN INJURY IDENTITY CARD

**“Now I have a way to explain what most people see as bad behaviour.”**

*England, United Kingdom*



At the age of 24, I sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car crash. This left my memory severely impaired and resulted in co-ordination difficulties when tired as well as aphasia – which is a communication disorder. In January 2018, I was helping my sister with my 13-year-old nephew. He has ADHD and ODD and can get out of control and become extremely strong and difficult to manage.

On this day he tried to attack both me and my sister. This led to me safely pinning him to the floor until he calmed down. Once he appeared settled we thought the episode was over, but he phoned his social worker and accused me of trying to harm him. The police arrived and explained that I would have to give a statement.

I contacted the number on my Headway ID card and spoke to a solicitor about what had happened, and he offered to attend the police station with me. I also presented my ID card to the police officers so they understood that I might struggle to answer their questions and so they would be prepared to give me time to find the right words. They investigated and found no evidence of any form of wrong doing, and I was cleared of the charge against me.

It makes me feel secure knowing that thanks to the Headway ID card I have a way to explain what most people see as unsettling, bad, or bizarre behaviour.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 106.



THE STORY OF PRUM SARUM AND VEN CHOUEN, LANDMINE VICTIMS AND CDR BENEFICIARIES

**“We now run a noodle shop and have started a new motorcycle repair shop.”**

*Pursat Province, Cambodia*

My name is Prum Saroum and I live with my wife, Ven Chouen, in Srelvea village, which is located in Pursat province, near the Thai border. Our two school-aged daughters and their grandmother also live with us. Both my wife and I are missing one leg due to landmines.

My wife and I did not have any regular income to support our family, so sometimes our oldest daughter had to help us earn money. This meant she could not attend school regularly. When there was no food, the children got sick and we had to borrow money from our neighbour. From time to time the loan increased and we didn't have the money to repay it.

Our local Commune Disability Representative (CDR) met with our family during a community meeting, and then visited us at home. The CDR discussed our case at the commune council office and worked with us to develop a business plan. The CDR then proposed and advocated for this plan during commune, district, and provincial meetings. Authorities subsequently visited our family, and they provided funding for our small business.

We now run a noodle shop, which earns us between 20,000 and 40,000 Riel a day (\$5–10). Being able to save some money, we started another small business repairing and cleaning motorcycles, which earns us an additional 30,000 Riel a day. We paid back our outstanding loans and, more importantly, our daughters can now attend school regularly.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 54.

# Introduction of the personal assistance model

## CAMBODIA / PPCIL – PERSONAL ASSISTANT SERVICE SYSTEM (PASS)

In 2016 the Phnom Penh Centre for Independent Living (PPCIL), an NGO, began to introduce personal assistance services for people with severe disabilities in several Phnom Penh communities. The programme provides awareness training for local decision-makers on disability, independent living, and the development of accessibility guidelines, among other topics. It is the first introduction of the personal assistance model in Cambodia, and PPCIL is currently negotiating with the federal government to adapt the model as a national policy.

### Problems Targeted

In Cambodia, the capacity for delivering services such as personal assistants, health care, and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities is very limited.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

PPCIL seeks to provide greater independence to persons with severe disabilities through its Personal Assistant Service System (PASS), which provides awareness training for local decision-makers on disability, independent living, and the development of accessibility guidelines, among other topics. PPCIL has adopted PASS from Japan, where it has been actively and effectively implemented throughout the country. To that end, PPCIL has organized trainings and awareness campaigns to implement PASS at the community level and to ensure proper budget allocations.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- PASS has implemented in 15 communes in five districts of Phnom Penh.
- Between 2016 and 2018, more than 300 people with disabilities in 15 communities have benefitted from the PPCIL programme.

“The personal assistant makes me become more self-confident and sees my abilities, not only my disability.”

Horn Heang, a PPCIL Role Model of Independent Living

Other actions have included the installing of accessible ramps and toilets in community offices and homes of people with disabilities, and the training of relevant stakeholders in disability laws. Further, PPCIL is in negotiations with government authorities to make PASS a nationwide policy.

To date, PASS has been supported by 30 personal assistants, most of whom have been university students working as volunteers.

In continuation of the PASS model, PPCIL is promoting an Independent Living Model of Persons with Severe Disabilities (ILDLP), which has just begun.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

PASS has been implemented in 15 communes in five districts in Phnom Penh. In order to convince the government to further scale-up the system, PPCIL has provided trainings and organized advocacy campaigns to win the support of local decision-makers. In addition, PPCIL implemented accessibility modifications for 90 people with severe disabilities to serve as role models for the programme. To date, the government remains undecided on how and when to roll-out the personal assistance service on a nationwide basis.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and UNICEF have funded the introduction of PASS in Cambodia with more than \$90,000. The Human Care Association supports the ILDP project with \$38,000.



Training of personal assistants at PPCIL.

 **Samith Mey**  
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# Advice and support service targeted to indigenous populations

## CANADA / BCANDS

The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS), an NGO based in the city of Victoria, works to advance the disability and health priorities of indigenous persons across the province of British Columbia and Canada. BCANDS provides free advice and support to any person with a disability-related query, but with a focus on the unique needs of indigenous populations. The organization acts as a liaison among service agencies to help persons with disabilities to access mobility equipment, adaptive technology, state benefits, housing, and more. In 2017, BCANDS supported over 1,700 people in accessing local or national services.

### Problems Targeted

Indigenous Canadians with disabilities may find themselves marginalized and isolated, with limited access to disability-related services.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

BCANDS helps persons with disabilities and their families identify additional supports that they may be entitled to or ones that they were unaware of. The organization then takes the lead role in coordinating with service providers to complete applications and to access various services and benefits. BCANDS targets indigenous populations, but makes no restriction on age, gender, identification, indigenous ancestry, disability, or location within the province. Most of



Promotion activities of BCANDS.

**“BCANDS has raised the priority of indigenous disability in Canada to a level not seen prior.”**

Grand Chief Edward John (Akile Ch'oh),  
First Nations Summit Task Group

its cases are state benefit applications, but it also provides disability case management and supports large numbers of clients in taking advantage of the government Registered Disability Savings Plan, which helps Canadians with disabilities save for the future.

The number of clients has doubled between 2015–2016 and 2017–2018, with over 1,700 people now being assisted annually. BCANDS's role has also expanded, having taken an advisory role with government bodies on many new disability initiatives, including efforts to increase benefits and to streamline the benefit process for indigenous populations in British Columbia.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Due to the growth in demand for services, BCANDS is currently hiring new case managers and support staff; and it is in the early stages of replication across Canada, with proposals for services in the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario.

The project relies on federal (44 per cent), provincial (13 per cent), and foundation (43 per cent) funding to carry out its services, with a budget of \$663,000 for the 2018–2019 fiscal year. In addition, it has submitted further funding proposals relating to indigenous disability.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- BCANDS assisted 1,767 clients in 2017–2018, up from 852 in 2015–2016.
- With BCANDS assistance, 646 people with disabilities are now participating in the government Registered Disability Savings Plans.



Neil Belanger

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# Enabling people with disabilities to stay in their homes and communities

## CANADA / MARCH OF DIMES – HOME AND VEHICLE MODIFICATION PROGRAM

March of Dimes Canada is a community-based rehabilitation and advocacy charity for people with physical disabilities in Ontario. It runs a Home and Vehicle Modification Program, designed to modify homes and vehicles to make daily life easier and safer, and ultimately to allow people with disabilities to remain in their own homes and communities. The programme is fully funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and implements around 650 modifications each year.

### Problems Targeted

Persons with acquired or deteriorating physical disabilities may become isolated or even forced to leave their homes and communities when their own properties become too difficult to manage and/or they are unable to drive.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Home and Vehicle Modification Program provides funding for conversions or adaptations of existing homes and vehicles for persons with physical disabilities that are expected to last more than one year. Individuals apply for funding of up to CAN\$15,000 (US\$11,500) for home and vehicle adaptations, which are then reviewed by the March of Dimes Canada

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As a result of home modifications, 91 per cent of recipients reported they were able to do things they were previously unable to.
- Some 75 per cent of recipients were able remain at home for the long term.

provides around 650 home modifications and 200 vehicle modifications per year, with 91 per cent of recipients reporting they could now do things they were previously unable to.

“We are providing increased mobility, independence, and practical support to individuals and families every day.”

Lonnie Mcinnis, National Manager, Home and Vehicle Modification Program

Service. If approved, the applicant or someone appointed on his/her behalf can hire a contractor to carry out the work. Examples of home adaptations include accessible bathrooms, ramps to home entrances, and stair-lifts. Vehicle adaptations include lowered floor ramps, lifts, hand controls, reduced effort steering, scooter lifts, and mobility trailers.

March of Dimes Canada also offers barrier-free consultants who review home plans and suggest modifications, prepare plans if the homeowner cannot, offer guidance, review contractor proposals, and pay the appointed contractors. The programme

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Programme funding is provided by the Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, and is available to people who currently receive income support or who have family income of under CAN\$65,000 (US\$50,000) annually. In fiscal year 2016–2017 the programme delivered CAN\$9.2 million (US\$7 million) in services, with operating and administrative costs representing 13 per cent of this amount.

The organization is willing to share its practices, including all forms and procedures, with other provinces and countries wishing to replicate.



An adapted home entrance for wheelchair users.

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# Promoting sexual and reproductive rights of all young people

COLOMBIA / PROFAMILIA, ASDOWN COLOMBIA, LICA AND PAIIS

Four organizations in Colombia are working together to promote and safeguard the sexual and reproductive rights of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. They have developed training and information for health professionals, judges, and young people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and their families. Between 2012 and 2018 they have trained over 3,000 people and influenced new health legislation introduced in 2017, with a current focus on sexual violence towards persons with disabilities.

## Problems Targeted

In Colombia there is low awareness of the sexual and reproductive rights of persons with disabilities, and sexual violence rates are particularly high against women with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The four organizations (Profamilia, ASDOWN Colombia, LICA, and PAIIS) have developed the first training in Colombia on sexual and reproductive rights for people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. They have created information cards for judges, health professionals, and persons with disabilities and their families. Profamilia trained all staff in its 30 sexual health clinics across Colombia. In addition 209 young people with intellectual disabilities attended



Young people are trained in interactive and inclusive sessions.

“Whenever I get information about sexual and reproductive rights, I know I am taking care of my future, so I can make all my dreams come true.”

Laura Ximena González Varela, young leader who was trained

training sessions to develop skills to self-advocate and share information through their social networks. These accessible sessions included easy read materials and inclusive interactive approaches.

The “Support in Decision Making in Sexual and Reproductive Health” guide supports people to make decisions about issues like contraception and abortion. This tool was validated with the input of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, and it is now being shared with other health providers in Colombia. In 2017, the four organizations supported the drafting

of the Colombian Ministry of Health’s Resolution 1904, which guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to receive adequate information to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, and prohibits the sterilization of people with disabilities without their consent. The project’s decision-making assessment tool was used as an example for creating the legal standard.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project is funded by a grant from the Open Society Foundation until April 2019. The four organizations will also hold the first medical congress about good practices in sexual and reproductive health in Colombia in 2019.

NGOs and health services in other countries could use the training and learning materials. Through their work with Handicap International and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the four partners have shared their materials with international partners, and there has been interest from organizations in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and Uruguay.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- 209 young people (aged 15–21) with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities have attended training.



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# Training persons with intellectual disabilities to be self-advocates

## ECUADOR / FEPAPDEM

FEPAPDEM – an Ecuadorian NGO that promotes inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities – has created a self-representation training programme. Facilitators learn to support and train self-advocates and leaders with intellectual disabilities on rights, participation, supported decision-making, and development of expression. To date, some 400 self-advocates have been trained and have together created a conference on good practices, carried out public advocacy, and expressed their needs to the government.

### Problems Targeted

Persons with intellectual disabilities often have decisions made for them by family members or professionals, meaning their own voices are not heard in public or political life.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

FEPAPDEM provides a six-month training programme for facilitators and support professionals to prepare them to teach persons with intellectual disabilities to be self-advocates. The self-advocates receive guidance on how to express their own opinions in areas that are important to them in public and political life. Self-advocacy candidates are identified via initial training sessions with partners of FEPAPDEM. Those who stand out are selected to receive further training.

“Recovering the voice and the direct representation of the person with intellectual disability has allowed the community of self-advocates of Ecuador to be heard.”

Daniel Salas, FEPAPDEM Technical Coordinator

Training of self-advocates takes an average of ten months and covers human rights, participation mechanisms, supported decision-making, and development of expressive ability, with the help of manuals and group teaching. Over 400 persons with intellectual disabilities and 100 facilitators undertook the training between 2014 and 2018. In 2015 the first group of trained self-advocates organized a conference on good practices, which included 50 self-advocates and speakers from Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, Chile,

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 400 self-advocates and 100 facilitators were trained between 2014 and 2018.

Mexico, and the United States. These self-advocates also created a national association of self-advocates in which all members, including the board of directors, are persons with intellectual disabilities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project is funded largely by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion at a cost of \$120,000 between 2014 and 2017, and FEPAPDEM has contributed \$12,000 per year.

Initially, the training was provided only to professionals and persons with intellectual disabilities who belonged to member associations of FEPAPDEM. As of 2018, however, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion is planning to implement the training through its day-care, home-care, and community-care services.

The project has been presented at several international forums, and its replication in other countries would be relatively simple given the established virtual training modules and guides, though translation from Spanish may be necessary



Participants proudly display their training certificates.

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# Multiple tailored solutions offer physical and financial independence

## EGYPT / ALHASSAN FOUNDATION

The Alhassan Foundation for Differently Abled Inclusion is a non-profit organization active in all 27 provinces of Egypt that aims for the physical and financial independence of wheelchair users. The Foundation provides a range of services to facilitate independent living, such as customized wheelchairs and motorcycles, sport and dance opportunities, plus funding for self-employment projects. From 2013 to 2017 some 3,500 wheelchair users received services, including 520 customized wheelchairs.

### Problems Targeted

Physical and financial independence for wheelchair users can be a challenge in Egypt.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Alhassan Foundation is a disabled people's organization where more than 50 per cent of board members and 80 per cent of employees are wheelchair users. The foundation aims for wheelchair users to reach higher levels of inclusion and integration in Egyptian society in all aspects of life, including education, employment, and sports. Its focus is on both physical and financial independence by providing a range of services throughout Egypt.

Physical independence is promoted by the provision of tailor-made wheelchairs, specially equipped motorcycles, sporting opportunities, videos that teach basic wheelchair skills, and more. Financial independence activities include funding for small self-employment projects, raising social awareness regarding people with disabilities, and promoting greater inclusion in employment.

**“Even though I am in a wheelchair, I am performing most of my daily activities with almost zero external aid.”**

Safy ElDien Araby, a Foundation beneficiary and employee

Between 2013 and 2017, the foundation served 3,500 wheelchair users; measured and sourced more than 520 customized wheelchairs; produced 27 episodes of wheelchair basic training skills on YouTube, with over 1,500 views; and provided more than 70 accessible motorcycles. Moreover, it has enabled 250



The programme enables children in wheelchairs to take part in all different kind of sports.

children with disabilities to take part in sports, such as table tennis, weightlifting, and karate.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

As of 2017, the Foundation is serving an additional 90 to 100 members each month. Long-term plans include expanding services for persons with all kinds of physical disabilities as well as new projects targeting issues of housing and schools. Further, starting in 2020 the Foundation will address barrier-free tourism for those living in Egypt and visitors from abroad.

Some services such as sports and arts training are provided for free. Members who are assessed as financially able contribute towards other services, such as customized wheelchairs, where they pay between 10 and 15 per cent of the cost. Other costs are paid by partnerships with major corporations, such as the National Bank of Egypt, donations from individuals and entities, plus crowdfunding campaigns.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Between 2013 to 2017 the foundation provided funding for 120 small employment projects.



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# Service IT-platform available in several european countries

## ESTONIA / HELPIFIC

Based in Tallinn, Estonia, Helpific is a combination start-up company and NGO. In 2015, Helpific started a web-based IT-platform that connects people who need assistance in independent living to local volunteers and paid support. The IT-platform enables people to post requests as well as offers of support in a variety of categories, such as personal assistance, transportation, and household work. In 2018, Helpific had more than 6,200 registered members, and had gone international already.

### Problems Targeted

People with disabilities face challenges when they try to establish an independent life in their community because they are often short of capital and support.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Helpific was developed in 2014 at a social 'hackathon event' in Tallinn, Estonia, by developers, marketers, designers, people with disabilities, and social workers. The Helpific team consists of IT developers and designers from Estonia, Turkey, and Russia; social workers from Hungary and Estonia; and lawyers and disability activists from Estonia. Helpific is both a search platform and a market place. After registration, people either post their need for help or their offer of support in such areas as personal assistance, transportation, and household tasks.

“Thank you to the founders of this platform and to all my dear helpers. I received help to all my requests so far.”

Eva, a registered member and returning user of Helpific from Budapest, Hungary

The platform enables registrants to get directly in contact with each other and to agree on the time and details of the requested service. Postings for both the requests and offers are free, while service offers can be either free or paid, with approximately 41 per cent of all users preferring to pay for the services they receive. Even if they cannot pay the market rate, they are generally ready and willing to pay something, as the concept of receiving help for free is sometimes humiliating. In the summer of 2018, for example, Helpific had 600 requests and support offers posted.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The IT-platform was launched in 2015, and in summer of 2018 there were approximately 600 support requests and offers posted.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability


Helpific relies on grants from private and public organizations. In the long term, however, it intends to reach sustainability by applying a 10 per cent commission on the income derived from the platform, such as from professional help services.

Helpific Estonia has an international development strategy, supporting local professionals to launch the platform in their own country. Every Helpific partner is continuously supported but has the freedom to adapt the concept to local circumstances. In addition, Helpific plans to introduce a transportation app that will offer peer-to-peer solutions between small villages in remote areas.

In 2018, Helpific started a pilot project in Croatia paid by service providers and municipalities, and it planned to launch in Romania by late 2018.



The team that won the Hackathon Event in Tallinn in 2014, and started Helpific.

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# Mobile app providing captioning and audio description in cinemas

## GERMANY / GRETA & STARKS – GRETA APP

Greta & Starks, a social business in Berlin, Germany, has developed the GRETA mobile app to make cinema screenings more accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments. Film distributors provide Greta & Starks with an audio description and subtitles for films. The company uploads these to the mobile app, which people can then use in cinemas without needing special equipment. By 2018 over 30,000 people had used the app, and 80 to 100 films are added each year.

### Problems Targeted

Accessibility in cinemas is often limited to specific barrier-free screenings, significantly reducing choice and access for people with visual or hearing impairments.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Using GRETA, cinemagoers download the free app to their own smartphone and choose which films they want to see. They then select whether they want to use the audio description or the subtitles feature. Once in the cinema, the app uses the phone's microphone to automatically synchronize with the start of the film's soundtrack. No additional equipment is needed. Users use their own headphones for audio description and can adjust the size of the text for subtitles on their smartphone screen. The app also works in open-air cinemas and with DVDs, video on demand services, etc.

**“GRETA worked flawlessly, I am an absolute fan! I was not born blind, and for the first time I did not miss my eyes.”**

Paul, a blind moviegoer

Greta & Starks works directly with film distributors, from large international distributors such as Disney and Warner Bros., to smaller, independent companies. They have also worked with film festivals to facilitate accessible screenings.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Greta & Starks was initially grant-funded and is currently commissioned by film distributors, with a turnover of €170,000 in 2017. The distributors pay a fee per film that includes the provision of both the



The choice is completely yours!

audio description and the captioning for three years. The accessible content is therefore available for all distribution formats, including cinema release, DVD and Blu-ray. As a social business, Greta & Starks reinvests any profit in further development, for example, of headsets and easy language services.

Greta & Starks is currently developing a social franchise model to offer its innovative audio synchronization technology, updates, and training for a small license fee. As the GRETA app is software-based and uses a phone's own microphone, it is easy to transfer.

The company has had interest from organizations in Israel and South Korea. Moreover, it is keen to support disabled people's organizations to take on the franchise themselves.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Over 400 films are currently available on the GRETA app, and 80 to 100 films are added each year.
- Started in Germany in 2014, the app is now also available in Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland.

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 See corresponding Life Story on page 70.

# Five-year plan for mental health care in rural areas

## GHANA / BASIC NEEDS GHANA

BasicNeeds is an international development organization with headquarters in the United Kingdom. In 2002, the BasicNeeds branch in Ghana launched a five-year plan to support government efforts in providing community mental health care for the poor and marginalized living in rural areas. BasicNeeds Ghana capacitates physicians and health workers about mental health issues, how to treat them, and how to gain knowledge about appropriate medication. Since its founding, the programme has benefited more than 19,000 people with mental health issues or epilepsy.

### Problems Targeted

There is only limited access to community-based mental health care services for persons who are living in remote, hard to reach locations of Ghana.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development has provided approximately £4.3 million (\$5.9 million) to BasicNeeds Ghana and five other local NGOs and community-based organizations to enhance community mental health care services. The five-year plan seeks to reduce stigma and human rights abuse and to enhance participation of people affected by mental health issues or epilepsy.

Using a training team of psychiatrists, psychologists, experienced nurses, and social development workers from the Ghana Health Service and BasicNeeds Ghana, the organization facilitates the training of general physicians and nurses on basic psychiatry, common mental illnesses, epilepsy, and other neuro-psychiatric disorders, their signs and symptoms, as well as their management, which includes diagnoses and the prescribing of common medications. At the same time, public awareness campaigns have improved family relations and have brought mental health care needs into a wider public discussion.

More than 500 peer-support groups give further support to promoting a positive attitude towards mental health issues.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The organization's initial grant was set to expire in 2018, but it has since been extended. BasicNeeds Ghana is currently active in 155 of the country's 216 districts, and it plans to spread the programme to another 20 districts in the coming years. The trainings are

### FACTS & FIGURES

- BasicNeeds Ghana is currently active in 155 of the country's 216 districts, and there are plans to expand to another 20 districts in the near future.
- As of 2018, the programme had 569 local peer support groups.

provided in workshop style, usually lasting two or three days, with periodic refresher training workshop(s) held every six months or annually. In addition, BasicNeeds Ghana works on the integration of mental health topics into families, civil society, and state agencies.

The model has been scaled-up in Ghana and can be replicated internationally. It has influenced national public health policies and has contributed to the development and approval of Ghana's five-year National Mental Health Strategy.



Ms. Abigail Bafowaa, a user of the Basic Needs programme, had a remarkable recovery from psychosis.

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# Strengthening the independent living movement through training and free legal advice

## HONDURAS / PREPACE – PROPEDIF

Programa de Rehabilitación de Parálisis Cerebral (Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation Programme, PRE-PACE) is a Honduran NGO that provides care and rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. PREPACE has led the establishment of the Protection for Persons with Disabilities and Their Family (PROPEDIF) programme so people with disabilities and their families can make their own decisions and access justice. By the end of 2018, 192 people with disabilities will have received rights training, attended camps on independent living, and have received legal guidance.

### Problems Targeted

Even though Honduras has policies and laws protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, many people find themselves unable to claim their rights and live independently without advice, support, and training.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The PROPEDIF programme is directed by four women with disabilities and is made up of three services: Promotion of Rights, Orientation and Judicial Assistance, and the Honduran Independent Living Movement (MOVIH). PROPEDIF provides guidance and free legal support to persons with disabilities in cases of discrimination, abuse, or mistreatment. It also promotes personal assistance with the government with the aim of recognising it as a right in legislation, and runs camps and retreats for families to learn the importance of personal choice and independence for their children with disabilities.

**“PROPEDIF promotes the rights, orientation, self-determination, and legal assistance of people with disabilities, as well as the Honduran Independent Living Movement.”**

Hadizabel Burgos, PREPACE Technical Director

By the end of 2018, 50 people (volunteers, students, authorities, and professionals) have been trained to support people with disabilities via forums, discussion groups, retreats, and lifestyle courses. In addition, 192 people with disabilities have received training on their



A look into the office of PREPACE.

rights and have attended camps on independent living and personal and legal guidance.

PROPEDIF has also worked with the Honduran Government to shape and implement the national Safeguarding and Protection Policy and influenced reform to the Law of Equality and Integral Development for Persons with Disability.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Funding is provided largely by the Ministry of Education, with additional support having been received from the European Union and Cuso International. The MOVIH office is funded by the Agency of International Japanese Cooperation. In 2017 and 2018 the project cost around \$11,500.

PROPEDIF has arranged to train two disabled persons organizations on its model. Additionally, USAID has shown interest in funding a project to support those who wish to make complaints of disability discrimination to public bodies.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- An average of five people visits the PROPEDIF office per day to gain advice and support.

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i See corresponding Life Story on page 71.

# Social platform tailored for people with disabilities

## INDIA / INCLOV MATCHMAKING APP

Inclov, a private limited company founded in 2016 in New Delhi, has created a matchmaking app for people with and without disabilities to make friends and connections. The company, whose name is short for “inclusive love,” is based on a subscription model that makes it self-sustainable. Inclov uses filters and common algorithms that determine best suitable matches for the user profile with the help of Artificial Intelligence. In 2018, Inclov had some 50,000 subscribers throughout India, and the company plans to launch its service in Australia and Singapore in 2019.

### Problems Targeted

People with disabilities often find it difficult to use social media platforms due to services not accessible and the lack of tailor-made solutions.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Inclov app is available both on Android and IOS systems. Once downloaded, users – both with and without disabilities – are asked to upload their photo and to create a profile. One of the profile items asks about disabilities, if any, including the level of dependency. Once the profile is complete, the stated e-mail address and phone number are verified. As a last step, new users can set their preferences, such as age, location, gender, etc. Inclov then reviews the application and, if approved, members can see up to five new profiles per day. If interested, a person can send a request to connect; and if the request is accepted, a chat window allows for a private conversation.

“From being able to access places within my city, such as hotels, pubs, and restaurants, to meeting amazing people, I have had a wonderful journey with Inclov.”

Manish Raj, an Inclov user

Inclov members without disabilities are usually people who have had a curable or temporary disability or who have a personal relationship with someone with a disability. They come to the Inclov platform rather than to an alternative because the Inclov algorithm ensures that they will view people with and without disabilities in a balanced proportion.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2018, Inclov facilitated more than 20,000 matches nationwide.
- Among them, 30 per cent of all matches brought together people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Inclov is a for-profit company and its initial phase was crowdfunded. As of 2018, financial investors held 20 per cent of the company, and its founders and management held 80 per cent. Inclov charges a minimum of \$10 per user per month and has partnered with companies such as Microsoft and Cox n Kings, a travel agency, for advertising and additional funds to sustain the platform.

Inclov is available all over India and intends to grow internationally soon. The company uses Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to grow and improve the platform as well as filters and algorithms that determine the best suitable matches for user profiles.



Inclov is not only an online platforms, but also organizes “speed datings” for personal meetings.

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# A programme that creates neurodevelopmental profiles and customized education

## INDIA / MOM'S BELIEF

Headquartered in Singapore, Mom's Belief is a social enterprise that offers a home-based therapy and education programme for parents of children with developmental disabilities in India. The service operates on a monthly subscription basis and can also support caregivers and professionals working in the field. Users connect with their assigned child psychologist through video and email to create development goals and individualized education plans. Supporting resources are sent to the client's home. Mom's Belief began operating in 2017 and in the first year more than 400 families benefitted from its services.

### Problems Targeted

Parents in India often face challenges when it comes to addressing the needs of children with developmental disabilities due to the lack of professional medical services and individualized support.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Mom's Belief home programme focuses on children with autism spectrum and communication disorders, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, and Down syndrome and learning disabilities. Once a parent has subscribed to the programme, Mom's Belief assigns a psychologist to the child's case. After completing a neurodevelopmental profile, the psychologist writes an interpretive report, creates an individualized education plan (IEP), and customizes teaching tools



A Mom's Belief child psychologist demonstrates the "Wear Your Emotions" training tool.

**"We firmly believe that a mother knows her child best and there's nothing more powerful than her belief in her child."**

Nitin Bindlish, Founder & CEO, Mom's Belief

and techniques to support the child's IEP. The tools are then delivered to the family's home where parents are trained in weekly one-hour sessions. Training can also be taken at the organization's research centre or by video call.

Since its introduction in July 2017 the programme has provided support to more than 800 families. Additionally, the organization has partnered with a chain of 63 pre-schools and has supported seven special-needs schools to provide Inclusive Education using professional guidance and resources.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

During the development and start-up phase the programme received \$1 million in funding from private donors. Monthly user fees vary, but a typical six-month subscription is \$500 per month. The company aims to be self-sustaining in the future.

Over the coming 30 months, Mom's Belief intends to hire more than 600 professionals to support some 10,000 families. Families in the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States have signed up to the existing Indian version are already using the service despite no marketing in these areas, and plans are underway for formal replication through new clinical teams and country-specific resources.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Partnerships are being established to formally expand Mom's Belief to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, with plans for Oman shortly thereafter, over the next 15 to 18 months. In addition, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam have also been identified for possible replication.



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# Life Stories from Germany, Honduras, Israel, and Indonesia

## THE STORY OF DANA, A BENEFICIARY OF THE BIZCHUT PROGRAMME

**“I was the first person with a disability in Israel to have my guardian removed.”**

*Haifa, Israel*



My name is Dana, and I am a 42-year-old resident of Haifa who was born with cerebral palsy. After my parents died I lived by myself, during which time I spent too much

money and got into financial trouble. As a result, my brother was appointed my guardian, and then I was transferred to a large guardianship agency that had full control over all my finances.

I wanted to take the university entrance exams, to get a dog, to learn to drive. My guardian said no to all of these things because it was “a waste of money.” Then I met Yotam from Bizchut, who agreed to help me replace my guardian with someone who would let me make decisions on my own and would give me the support I really need. That’s when we found Yehuda, an accountant. The court cancelled my guardian and appointed Yehuda instead. Now I talk to him before I make decisions about money. We have made a financial plan, and I even have a savings account. What’s more, I have taken the university entrance exams, I now have a dog, and I am going to start learning to drive!

Life is completely different without others making decisions for me. I am proud to be the first person with a disability in Israel to have my guardian removed and to be given a decision-making supporter.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 76.



## THE STORY OF BARBARA FICKERT, A GRETA USER

**“I started writing reviews on my blog of the movies I saw using the GRETA app.”**

*Germany*

My name is Barbara, and I am a 59-year-old advocate of accessible cinema in Germany. I was born with a 7 per cent sight capacity, which is now just 2 per cent. Growing up, I would go to the movies regularly. What I love about the cinema is how much fun it is to sit in a dark hall focused on what is happening on the screen, laughing with the other moviegoers and being carried away by the sounds. I love all sorts of movies: art-house independent films, blockbusters, comedies. Funny scenes, moving stories, and beautiful dialogue are what I enjoy most.

Since using the GRETA app, going to the movies is now 100 per cent more fun! I am fully autonomous, meaning I can easily understand everything happening on the screen with my smartphone. I just check which movies have been added to the GRETA platform, download the free audio description of the film I want to see, and go to any cinema that is showing it. It is as simple as it sounds!

Being fully included in the cinema world has been life-changing. I have started writing reviews on my blog of the movies I have seen, and I have become a strong advocate for accessible cinema through the organization that I founded, Kinoblindgänger (“blind moviegoer”).

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 65.



## THE STORY OF ENYA, A BENEFICIARY OF THE CEREBRAL PALSY REHABILITATION PROGRAMME (PREPACE)

**“My father publicly apologized to me for being so overprotective.”**

*Tegucigalpa, Honduras*



My name is Enya. I was born in a home with three brothers in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Being the only girl and living with cerebral palsy, I had all the affection but also the overprotection of my family, and so grew up as a shy child. I graduated from high school with the support of the PREPACE Inclusive Education Programme, but I could not go to university due to economic and accessibility difficulties.

This harsh reality motivated me to participate as a founder of the Honduran Independent Living Movement (MOVIH), and I was selected to travel to Osaka, Japan, to take the course on Independent Living at the Mainstream Independent Living Centre. I had to persuade myself that I could do it, and I had to persuade my parents to give me permission.

I returned with a positive attitude, surer of myself and of what I wanted from life. I travelled the country convening conferences, but my family still put obstacles in my way. My father attended a training conducted by MOVIH on the role of parents in the lives of people with disabilities. As a result, he publicly apologized to me for being so overprotective and for having limited me by deciding for me. From that moment on, he promised to respect my decisions, and he has complied.

 See corresponding Practice on page 67.

## THE STORY OF RISNAWATI UTAMI, AN ELECTION OBSERVER WITH THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

**“Based on our observations, we made recommendations to the government, many of which have been adopted.”**


*Solo, Indonesia*

I am Risnawati Utami, from Indonesia. I am 45 years old and have had a physical disability since I was four. In 1999, Indonesia experienced its first election after Suharto, who served as president for 31 years, stepped down. To ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the election process, I decided to be an observer in my hometown of Solo, in Central Java. As a result, I found that persons with disabilities who lived in rehabilitation centres were not registered to vote. However, at that time I did not use any standardized tools to observe the election.

When I served as an observer in the presidential election of 2014, it was much more accessible and organized than in 1999. This time I worked with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and together we developed a comprehensive tool to assess the accessibility of elections. This included recruiting 150 people with disabilities to serve as observers. Based on these observations, we made recommendations to the government on how to make the elections more accessible, many of which have been adopted.

In 2018, I was elected to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee. One of my commitments as a new member of the committee is to develop a General Comment on Article 29, which sets out the framework for the participation of persons with disabilities in political life. Of course, to draft the comment I plan to use my personal experience serving as an election observer.



 See corresponding Practice on page 110.

# Strategic engagement with government to push for national disability legislation

## INDIA / NCPEDP – MPHASIS PARTNERSHIP

Mphasis – a large Indian IT services provider – has been funding the Indian non-profit National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) to conduct strong, systematic, and sustained advocacy and monitoring to encourage the Government of India to draft and implement national disability legislation. Through stakeholder meetings, media campaigns and monitoring, NCPEDP brought together people with disabilities and government representatives, resulting in the passage of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2016.

### Problems Targeted

Many countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but ensuring national governments translate those commitments into practical laws and policies is a complex and challenging process.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Mphasis supported the NCPEDP to develop a new programme with the purpose of advocating for a national disability policy. The programme carried out an intensive, multifaceted drive, which included meeting with and lobbying key stakeholders in government, along with the orchestration of media campaigns, consultations, and protests to push for the bill's passage through Parliament.

“The NCPEDP-Mphasis partnership has led to groundbreaking policy changes. It highlights that advocacy can, in a single stroke, impact the entire community.”

Arman Ali, NCPEDP Executive Director

The NCPEDP intensively monitored the progress of the bill and gave inputs throughout, such as identifying the absence of persons with disabilities in the drafting committee and successfully advocating for their inclusion.

The efforts of the campaign were rewarded in 2016, when the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act was passed unanimously by both Houses of Parliament. It recognizes several new disabilities, including intellectual and psychosocial disabilities for the first

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act increases the number of recognized disabilities from seven to 21, including intellectual and psychosocial disabilities for the first time.

time, mandates the private sector to develop equal opportunity policies, designates special district courts for fast-tracking cases of disability discrimination, and sets requirements for representation of persons with disabilities in new government bodies.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Mphasis fully funded the NCPEDP project, which cost \$400,000 between 2015 and 2018, and will continue funding until at least 2021. Activities during this extension will focus on lobbying and monitoring implementation at the state level, including bringing state laws in line with the national law.

The rules of the Act came into force in June 2017 and several discrimination cases have already been successfully challenged through the new court system., and more cases are expected to follow.



Bringing organizations together to campaign for national disability legislation.

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# Increasing access to health and education services for children

## INDONESIA / SEHATI SUKOHARJO – INCLUSION CLUBS

SEHATI Sukoharjo, an NGO in the Sukoharjo district of Java, Indonesia, has developed an Inclusion Club model that uses existing local resources to support children with disabilities in rural villages. Inclusion Clubs bring together village officials, health and education professionals, and children with disabilities and their families to build local capacity and exchange skills, such as simple therapies and education exercises, so families can support their children at home. Between 2011 and 2018, SEHATI replicated the Inclusion Clubs in eight areas of Sukoharjo and had 224 children with disabilities enrolled.

### Problems Targeted

Children with disabilities living in Indonesia's rural villages have limited access to health and education services, as these are usually expensive and based in cities.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Before establishing an Inclusion Club, SEHATI carries out village data collection exercises with key local stakeholders to understand the needs of local children with disabilities. It then invites these children and their families together with local government, health, and education representatives as well as members of the community to discuss the data. Together, they develop local family disability forums, which meet monthly to build family confidence and increase family knowledge around child disability.

**“We attract families who will fight to improve things for children with disabilities, but we also work with the community and government as well. That makes us excited to continue.”**

Listri Sedyaningsih, Manager of the Permata Hati Inclusion Clubs

These forums decide the activity of the weekly Inclusion Clubs, where local resources are mobilized to build capacity and develop skills in the community. Families are trained in early detection of disability and in simple therapies and educational exercises they can perform at home. Volunteer teachers and health professionals, such as physiotherapists and speech therapists, run training sessions and return to the Inclusion Clubs periodically to check in with families



Committed learning and mobility training in the Inclusion Club.

and monitor their progress. Each child has a record book to track the therapies he or she has received, to list any actions needed, and to record developments. The result has been improved health outcomes for children with disabilities, such as a reduction in seizures, improved speech, and increased mobility, as well as improved literacy levels.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The Inclusion Clubs are mainly funded through individual donors in the community and some support from local businesses, with additional support from village government. Families attending the Inclusion Clubs also pay a membership fee of Rp 5,000 (\$0.35) per month.

SEHATI has replicated the Inclusion Club model in eight subdistricts in Sukoharjo. Key elements needed to replicate the programme are the collection of disability data in the area and the establishment of the local family disability forums.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The number of Inclusion Clubs has grown from two in 2011 to ten in 2018.
- The number of children in each of the Inclusion Clubs ranges from 13 to 37.

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 See corresponding Life Story on 85.

# Philanthropy and government combining to create national disability service reform

## IRELAND / GENIO TRUST – SERVICE REFORM FUND

Genio Trust, an Irish NGO, specialises in transforming social services through strong partnerships with philanthropy and government, with whom they established the Service Reform Fund (SRF). The SRF Awards gives grant funding for projects that support persons with disabilities to move out of institutions and away from segregated day services into a community-based environment. From 2016 to 2018, 16 grants totalling €7.9 million were awarded, and 179 people moved into homes of their own.

### Problems Targeted

In Ireland, approximately 2,300 people with disabilities still live in institutions and 20,000 adults attend day services segregated from the community. The government faces a significant challenge in transforming services, but – as in most countries – funding is focused towards service providing and not innovation.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The SRF awards funding across Ireland to projects that support people to move out of large institutions and into self-directed community-based services, using €45 million of combined funding from the Department of Health; Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government; the Health Service Executive (HSE, the national health service); local authorities; and the Atlantic Philanthropies (a philanthropic fund that completed grant-making in 2016).

“Like everybody else, you aspire to a better life, and we certainly believe he has a better life as a result of this move.”

Gerard Kearney, twin brother of John Kearney who moved into his own home after 50 years in an institution

Non-profit organizations apply for funding and undergo assessment against criteria such as self-direction, family and community support, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness. A multi-level grant review process includes key stakeholders, such as individuals who use services, family members, the HSE, Atlantic Philanthropies, and Genio Trust.

Investment focuses on improving the quality of care and the level of community participation, as well as planning for residents to move into the community.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The Genio Trust has targeted ten institutions for closure by 2020, moving 310 people into their own homes.

Grants are issued with detailed six-monthly delivery targets, which are assessed by on-site visits.

This innovative alliance between philanthropy and government refocuses public spending to produce more cost-effective outcomes. As of 2018, 16 grants totalling €7.9 million were issued and 179 people were moved from institutions into homes of their own.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Most of the funding has been provided by the HSE (€28 million), the Atlantic Philanthropies (€15 million), and the Department of Housing (€2 million). By specifically targeting projects in ten large institutions, 310 people will have moved into their own homes by December 2020. In addition, more than 500 individuals will be supported to move from institutional settings or receive other community-based services.

The model is suitable to other countries where the government has a mandate and responsibility for delivering social services.



John with his father John in his new home in the community – after almost 30 years in an institution.

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# Providing meaningful volunteer work for students with disabilities

## ISRAEL / JDC AND ISRAELI MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – VOLUNTEERING FOR A CHANGE

“Volunteering for a Change” is a partnership of Israel’s Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Social Services, and the NGO Israel Elwyn, run by the Israeli branch of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The programme provides a supportive framework for high school students with disabilities to engage in meaningful volunteer work. By 2018, Volunteering for a Change had trained some 200 students and 500 professionals.

### Problems Targeted

All students in Israel are required to complete 60 hours of volunteer service in order to graduate. However, Israeli youth with disabilities often miss out on this experience or have few meaningful opportunities.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Volunteering for a Change works to widen the possibilities for students with disabilities to participate in volunteer activities. The model and tools developed by the practice will be shared with all Israeli schools by 2019, which is when the pilot will be completed in six test cities. The programme developed questionnaires to help students determine their personal volunteer preferences; and it provides a database of volunteer opportunities, such as working on a therapeutic farm for children, caring for animals, and working in a community garden, where youth with and without disabilities work together. All materials are available on the Ministry of Education’s website.

“When I first started volunteering, I was unsure of myself, confused. Within a few days, however, I was transformed. I hope I inspire these teenagers to believe in themselves. They have so much to give.”

Orr, National Service volunteer and member of Volunteering for a Change’s Steering Committee

In addition, manuals address all aspects of volunteering – whether working as part of a group, volunteering independently, or participating with youths without disabilities. Volunteering for a Change has



Volunteers carry bags for the elderly in the marketplace every Friday.

also developed a virtual reality app to train young people without disabilities to volunteer alongside youths with disabilities. In 2018, between two and eight schools in each of the six test cities were using the tools developed by Volunteering for a Change.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The Israeli Ministry of Education supported Volunteering for a Change’s four-year pilot at a total cost of \$165,000. In addition, the JDC provided \$445,000 for development resources, such as project coordinators and professional tools.

In order to scale Volunteering for a Change nationwide, the Ministry for Education has agreed to fund trainings of professionals in the area of volunteering, while the Ministry of Social Welfare and Social Services will support local authorities in widening volunteering for excluded groups.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2018 the pilot programme was running in six cities throughout Israel. Approximately 150 youth volunteered and 100 professionals attended trainings and a conference.

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# Demonstrating supported decision-making to change national guardianship laws

## ISRAEL / BIZCHUT

Bizchut – the Israel Human Rights Centre for People with Disabilities – is a non-profit organization based in Jerusalem that supports people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities as well as autism to retain control over important life decisions, with the assistance of trained professionals and volunteers. From 2014 to 2018, approximately 2,300 individuals have received training and 50 have received supported decision-making services. Based on the experiences of this model, the Government of Israel has since amended national guardianship laws and is carrying out two replication pilots.

### Problems Targeted

People with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities as well as those with autism often are prevented from having control over important decisions that affect their lives, particularly when decisions are made by appointed guardians.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Bizchut began by training decision-making supporters, volunteers, and paid staff to support individuals with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities in making their own decisions, but also represented participants in court proceedings to change or cancel guardianship arrangements.

“Now I’m making very good decisions. It makes me feel good that I’m making decisions and no-one else can decide for me.”

Debbie, participant in Bizchut’s supported decision-making pilot

Bizchut’s model has demonstrated how supported decision-making can work and has provided an example for the government, which has adopted a similar service. In 2016, supported decision-making was written into the Israeli Guardianship Law as the preferential option for those who would have previously been deemed by the courts as needing a guardian.

As of 2018, the government is implementing two pilots that replicate the Bizchut model. In addition, the Disability Rights Commission is piloting training courses for decision-making supporters based on Bizchut’s courses. Government Legal Aid lawyers are

### FACTS & FIGURES

- 32 training workshops for 810 persons with disabilities, 42 for 1,455 professionals.
- 10 successful court decisions with less restrictive arrangements for independent decision-making.

supporting the practice, with over 40 court decisions having appointed decision-making supporters rather than guardians.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Project materials have been translated into English and are available for replication, with information having been shared with organizations in Bulgaria, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Kenya, and the United States.

The demonstration phase of the project between 2014 and 2016 was funded by a grant of €244,000 from the European Union. The continued advisory and information sharing work is supported with an annual grant of €50,000 from the Open Society Foundation.



Matanel with his supported decision-making supporter, Michael.

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 See corresponding Life Story on 70.

# Supported housing for women with psychosocial disabilities and sexual trauma

## ISRAEL / ENOSH (THE ISRAELI MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION) – SEEDS OF WELLNESS

Enosh (the Israeli Mental Health Association) is an NGO and the largest provider of community mental health services in Israel. Enosh has developed training on trauma and a trauma-informed housing model to support women with psychosocial disabilities who live with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of sexual abuse. The four shared apartments offer a safe environment with support from staff who have received training in sexual trauma and dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT). Most Enosh staff members will have received the trauma training by the end of 2018.

### Problems Targeted

Research suggests more than half of all women with psychosocial disabilities have been sexually assaulted. Yet many mental health and supported housing services cannot support women with experiences of sexual trauma and complex PTSD.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

In the 'Seeds of Wellness' programme, each of the apartments accommodates three or four women aged 18 to 35, and each woman has her own bedroom and access to a shared community space. A female social worker and rehabilitation counselor, both trained in sexual trauma and DBT, visit the apartment daily. The service offers personal meetings, group therapy, and peer support. Staff members work with the women to develop individualized support plans.

**“In the apartment I regained hope, and now understand that no matter what is happening – feelings, internal storms – I need to go with these feelings and know things will be all right”**

Yuval, participant in the Beer Sheba apartment

To deliver a specialist trauma-informed service, and to increase trauma awareness across the organization, Enosh also developed the 'Seeds of Change' training toolkit. Enosh has worked with the Association of Rape Crisis Centres in Israel to promote trauma-informed mental health services and adding this subject to the professional training of medical and psychiatric staff.



Seeds of Wellness-participants in their community space.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Eighty per cent of the programme costs are met from government funding available for community mental health services. The additional costs for training are covered by Enosh and private donors.

In 2019, Enosh will open apartments in two more regions, one of which will be for men who have experienced sexual trauma. All Enosh's beneficiaries in the apartment will have sexual trauma programmes to promote awareness and peer support that will hopefully lead to self-advocacy.

The training is easy to replicate and could be used internationally, with local partners making changes to reflect cultural sensitivities.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Women in the apartments have lower rates of re-hospitalization, fewer suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, strengthened communications skills, and more trusting relationships with peers and professionals.



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# Pioneering a personal budget model as part of national social services

## ISRAEL / JDC AND ISRAEL UNLIMITED – PERSONAL BUDGET MODEL

In 2015, Israel Unlimited, a partnership of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Government of Israel, and the Ruderman Family Foundation, started a personal budget model for people with disabilities by organizing workshops. Although the concept of a personal budget is an established practice in the United States and parts of Europe, it is new for Israel. Between 2016 and 2018, some 200 professionals have been extensively trained and 50 people with a variety of disabilities have benefitted. In 2019, another 300 beneficiaries will join the programme.

### Problems Targeted

In Israel, the current social system is determined by the type of disability and is focused on the service provider, not on the person's needs and desires.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Personal budgeting is a shift from a disability-orientated medical model towards a holistic person-centred model. It is based on the principle that people with disabilities understand their needs better than anyone else and that they have the right and the ability to make decisions regarding their own lives. In 2015 the JDC organized meetings with Israeli social policy makers and professionals from abroad to lay the groundwork for a personal budgeting programme in Israel. After demonstrating that a personal budget could also achieve some cost savings, authorities agreed on a pilot project.

“By perfectly matching Naama’s needs, she took a giant leap forward and started reading words and short sentences.”

Renana, mother of Naama, a client in the pilot

The programme provides a care coordinator for each participant, who engages in a direct and respectful discussion with the participant about his/her needs, goals, dreams, concerns, and opportunities for growth. Once they have established care goals together, the participant is provided with a flexible and individualized basket of services based on a personal budget allocation. In 2017 and 2018, 200 professionals have been trained and the first group of beneficiaries has enjoyed their personal budgets.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- During the pre-pilot phase the model operated in ten locations throughout Israel.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The total cost for 2018 was \$439,477 and was split between Israel Unlimited (a partnership of the JDC, the government of Israel, and the Ruderman Family Foundation) and the Ted Arison Family Foundation.

After the initial international workshops, the JDC created a professional manual on how to implement the model. In 2018 the pre-pilot phase was completed with 50 participants. The next step of the test phase is to raise the number of participants to 300 in 2019. The JDC is working in close cooperation with the government and planning a step-by-step expansion.

The model is designed to be replicated, but the JDC is aware that a full implementation will take time. The organization expects that after a successful completion of the pilot phase the programme will be expanded throughout the country and will become a standard social service.



You can do this!

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# An app for orientation in open and closed spaces

## ISRAEL / STEP-HEAR

In 2011 the Israeli start-up company Step-Hear launched an app that provides orientation and audio messaging for people who are blind or visually impaired and for people with physical disabilities. Installed on a smart phone, it enables users to find their way in public surroundings using Audio-signs (radio signals) and pre-placed Beacons (radio transmitters that send Bluetooth signals). Users can call for help in an emergency and they can communicate with public transport personnel. As of 2018, Step-Hear has placed more than 3,500 Audio signs throughout Israel.

### Problems Targeted

People with visual impairments often have difficulty finding their way in new surroundings, such as a shopping mall or a museum.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Step-Hear develops and markets assistive technologies designed to provide orientation and audio messaging for the blind and visually impaired in open and closed spaces. More than 3,500 Audio-signs have been placed throughout Israel, primarily in universities, hospitals, and parks. In addition, Step-Hear has signed up more than 1,500 locations (such as public transport vehicles, municipalities, public beaches, and banks) where pre-positioned Beacons communicate with the user's smartphone. When the user comes close to a Step-Hear device and receives a signal, her/his smartphone vibrates, and the user can decide whether to receive information about the location via the smartphone as a voice message or from the Audio sign.

**“I certainly call this moment – the initial operation of the Step-Hear system on buses – the dawn of a new day!”**

Amit Unger, The House of Wheels Association

With the same app, users can be informed about the approach of a public bus or send a message to the bus driver that he or she wants to get off at the next stop. Step-Hear is available in English, Hebrew, Turkish, and French among other languages, and has already expanded to Australia, Sweden, the United States, and elsewhere. In addition, Step-Hear has developed “Call-Hear” – a call-for-help system that signals when an individual on a company's premises needs assistance or service.



Step Hear has already placed more than 3,000 Audio signs all over Israel.

The Step-Hear app can be downloaded free of charge and had some 3,000 users in 2018.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Step-Hear generates income from service providers that are interested in implementing the app and want to provide improved accessibility features for their customers/clients with disabilities. To finance expansion, the company received a loan from the Innovation Authority, a government institute.

Starting in 2018, Step-Hear is running a pilot project for an accessible public transportation system in Israel involving 70 buses and 170 bus stops. Step-Hear envisions that it will eventually offer an accessible “Waze for disabilities.” Waze is a GPS navigation software that works on smartphones and tablets with GPS support. It includes all accessible and inaccessible places and preferred access routes for people with various disabilities, including visual and intellectual. Moreover, Step-Hear will continue to expand its usage in other countries.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Step-Hear has signed up approximately 1,500 partners, including municipalities, shops, and banks (ATMs).



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# Therapy IT-platform improves motor function in young people with cerebral palsy

ITALY / FIGHTTHESTROKE – MIRRORABLE

Fightthestroke, an Italian social enterprise founded in 2014, has developed an online platform called 'Mirrorable' to support rehabilitation of young stroke survivors. Mirrorable is a home-based therapy programme based on Action Observation Treatment, which states that by observing and imitating the actions of others we trigger specific neurons in our own brain. Young stroke survivors are paired via a video platform and undertake tasks together to improve motor skills. A clinical trial has demonstrated an improvement in hand motor function, along with high levels of adherence and engagement.

## Problems Targeted

There are few effective and accessible evidence-based solutions to help rehabilitate motor skills in the estimated 17 million children with cerebral palsy worldwide, including young stroke survivors.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Mirrorable platform uses the scenario of learning to become a magician to encourage young stroke survivors to practice motor skills every day for a month. Children in the Mirrorable's clinical trial received a toolkit with a computer, a 3D camera, and selection of booklets and magic tricks. They used these to imitate the magician in videos on a cloud-based platform. They were also matched with peers via video link to practice together and learn from each other.

**“MaVi discovered herself for the first time. The project touches the heart and, if there is a mirror heart, it touches it too!”**

Valentina, mother of MaVi, who took part in the Mirrorable pilot

The IT-platform uses an algorithm to ensure the best possible match in terms of motor skills, cognitive abilities, etc. to support reciprocal teaching and rehabilitation. The gaming approach of Mirrorable increases the appeal for children and encourages them to practice. In the market version, the 3D camera has been replaced by Artificial Intelligence technology, which tracks and records the child's movements and emotions so that progress can be measured by the child, family members, and health professionals. Results of a clinical trial, presented in 2018, showed a 26 per cent improvement in motor function, increased

## FACTS & FIGURES

- A recent clinical trial demonstrated that users realized a 26 per cent improvement in motor function.

family engagement, and 100 per cent adherence to the daily exercises.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Support developing Mirrorable and the clinical trial came from corporate fundraising (60 per cent), grants (20 per cent), and private donors (20 per cent). Following the trial Mirrorable is now developing a business model to bring the product to a wider market, while keeping prices as low as possible for families of young stroke survivors.

Mirrorable's cloud-based technology is easily transferable, and the operating system is already available in Italian, Spanish, and English. Fightthestroke is exploring whether the programme might be appropriate for other target groups, such as adult stroke survivors or people with Parkinson's disease.



A child being assessed by a neurologist.

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# A dedicated TV channel for the hearing impaired

## JAPAN / ORGANIZATION FOR BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES – LISTENING WITH YOUR EYES

In 1998 the Organization for Broadcasting and Communications for People with Disabilities, a Japanese certified non-profit organization, launched a service to make emergency information more accessible to the hearing impaired. In 2017 they revised it to meet international standards. Internet Protocol Television set-top boxes add closed captioning and signing to TV content in real-time. The service is provided through a dedicated channel called “Listening With Your Eyes,” and based on its success the Japanese government is looking to expand the programme.

### Problems Targeted

It became apparent after the Great Kobe Earthquake in 1995 and other catastrophes that people with a hearing disability need accessible emergency information.

“The aim of this project is to deliver a service that allows for the full participation and equality of people with a hearing disability.”

Kazuki Shigeta, Director,  
Listening With Your Eyes

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Broadcasting of the Listening with Your Eyes channel began in 2017 using a terminal set-top box, which is a hardware device connected to the Internet and built according to the international standards of the International Telecommunications Union (a specialized agency of the United Nations). The channel provides closed signing and captioning that can be delivered to televisions. The size and position of the captioning and sign on the display can be determined by the viewer using a remote control and receiver called an “Eye Dragon.” This is especially useful for sign language because the signer on the TV screen can be displayed outside the main programme image.

Listening With Your Eyes allows conventional programmes to provide closed captioning and sign displayed in text over the original content. It covers news programmes every Wednesday and Thursday and all emergency broadcasting related to major dis-

asters. The Eye Dragon synthesizes TV programmes with sign and captioning, easing the burden of regular TV content providers to have additional hardware equipment for accessibility features. In 2018 there were some 10,000 viewers receiving the service.


### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Listening With Your Eyes is the first standard-based accessible broadcast service in Japan specifically for people with a hearing disability. The Japanese Government subsidizes 90 per cent of the purchase of the set-top box, and the total cost of the operation is covered by individual subscription at approximately €4 per month.

The service is being promoted nationally by the Organization for Broadcasting and Communications for People with Disabilities and by the Japanese Federation for the Deaf. As a response to the project's growth, the Japanese Government set up a committee to discuss how to extend the service to more channels, including the national broadcaster. Because it is based on an international standard, manufacturers anywhere can produce the set-top box; and Ecuador and Mongolia are already in talks with the Organization for Broadcasting and Communications for People with Disabilities to replicate Listening With Your Eyes.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Ecuador and Mongolia are currently in talks with Organization for Broadcasting and Communications for People with Disabilities to replicate the Listening With Your Eyes service.
- Cost of the subscription is €4 euro a month.

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# A home, a café, and employment to promote deinstitutionalization

## KAZAKHSTAN / PSYCHOANALYTIC ASSOCIATION – SIL PROGRAMME

In 2016 the Psychoanalytic Association, a Kazakhstan NGO, began a supportive independent living (SIL) programme in the Almaty region to help people with intellectual disabilities move out of closed institutions. To this end, the organization set up a Training Café, employing ten people with psychosocial disabilities who had been living in closed institutions. As of 2018, the Psychoanalytic Association oversees six group homes, two cafés, and 20 employed beneficiaries, all of whom now live on their own. In addition, three women and two men were returned their legal rights.

### Problems Targeted

The Kazakhstan laws provide no alternative to residential institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. Further, psychiatry-based facilities have inadequate rules and standards, as well as few trained professionals to implement supportive independent living.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

For Kazakhstan, supportive independent living is a new concept. In 2012 the government began to implement a plan of deinstitutionalization, and the Psychoanalytic Association is one of two NGOs providing SIL for Kazakhstanis living in closed institutions – the result of a policy change within the Department of Employment and Social Services. The pilot project aims to move 60 people with intellectual disabilities out of closed institutions, provide them with employment, and teach them such life skills as how to buy groceries, pay utilities, and save money.

“We give our beneficiaries security and a safe place to treat their wings, and then we teach them to fly.”

Khudiyarov Bakytzhan, CEO,  
Psychoanalytic Association

Beneficiaries include 20 people who have left psychiatric institutions to be part of the pilot, while more than 230 people still in institutions are receiving training and legal support as a preparatory step to SIL. The first Training Café began with ten employees with psychosocial disabilities while still living in institutions. In 2018, the NGO was overseeing six group

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The SIL programme aims to move 60 people with intellectual disabilities out of closed institutions and provide them with employment and life skills.
- To date, some 450 mental health professionals have received SIL training.

homes, two cafés and 20 employees – ten of whom cover most of their own expenses.


### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The initial pilot project was supported by the Soros–Kazakhstan Foundation. Starting in 2017, the Department of Employment and Social Services agreed to finance the programme until it becomes a fully government-based social services provision.

The programme is currently operational in the cities of Almaty and Astana, and is partially self-sustaining, with social entrepreneurship in the training cafés helping the beneficiaries to earn a living. The organization also gets income from selling services to mental health professionals, such as training in SIL and supportive employment techniques.



Gulya Arman and Zina at their weekly grocery shopping, all by themselves!

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# Empowerment of youth with disabilities involving their families and communities

## LEBANON / EMPOWERMENT THROUGH INTEGRATION

Empowerment Through Integration (ETI) is an NGO working with young people with disabilities and their families across Lebanon. Founded in 2011, ETI primarily focuses on young people with visual impairments, offering life-skills training in group and one-to-one settings, parent workshops, and other community activities to promote social inclusion. ETI also works with relief agencies to ensure that young refugees with disabilities can also access its programmes. The number of participants in its activities has increased ten-fold from 39 in 2011 to 381 in 2018, and ETI has also been piloted in Nicaragua.

### Problems Targeted

Young people with disabilities in Lebanon experience social and academic exclusion, and this is intensified by geographic isolation and poverty.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

ETI runs five programmes across Lebanon, the primary one being the Life Skills Intensive Programme – a two-week training on orientation, mobility, and independent living for young people who are blind or are otherwise visually impaired. A follow-up Life Skills Extension Programme offers one-to-one training in the young person's home and community for up to ten months. Parent workshops ensure that the skills acquired in the trainings are maintained within family and community settings. ETI also runs a volunteer training programme and a community service project for people with and without disabilities.

ETI is the only organization in Lebanon offering this kind of life-skills training to young people who are

**“ETI’s Empowerment Programmes promote authentic inclusion one child, family, and community at a time.”**

Sara Minkara, Founder, ETI

blind and visually impaired. Between 2016 and 2018 it has supported over 1,000 young people and trained over 300 volunteers. ETI recruits Lebanese participants through its partnership with local schools and the Ministry of Social Affairs, and Syrian and Palestinian refugees with the assistance of international bodies, such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The organization is also working with the Ministry



A life skills-trainer shows the usage of the white cane.

of Education to incorporate its approach into the mainstream school system.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

ETI does not charge for its activities in Lebanon, relying on private donors and grants. It receives funding from UNHCR for its work with refugees.

As part of its replication plan, ETI is considering charging a service fee to external agencies. For example, in 2018 the organization facilitated staff training at the Ministry of Social Affairs, and this may become a future source of income.

ETI wants to develop a regional hub in another part of the world to replicate its impact, and piloted a programme in Nicaragua from 2013 to 2015.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- ETI supported over 1,000 young people and trained more than 300 volunteers between 2016 and 2018.
- The organization receives specific funding from UNHCR for its work with refugees.



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See corresponding Life Story on page 85.

# Life Stories from Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lebanon & Sweden

## THE STORY OF ANNA HILDINGSSON, AN ATTENDEE OF MY CHOICE/MY ELECTION

**“I found that people listened to me, and that I could speak for myself and others, and enjoyed doing so.”**

*Lidköping, Sweden*



My name is Anna Hildingsson. I am 52 years old, live in a small rural town called Lidköping, and have an intellectual disability.

I have voted before, but before attending My Choice/My Election I always voted like my mother and father. Not because they told me to, but because that's how I decided what to vote upon. However, after attending My Choice/My Election in 2014, several things changed.

First of all, I voted for three different parties in the elections for city, county, and national parliaments. I made my decisions based upon the general ideas of each party's policies for that political level.

I also found the easy-to-understand pre-election discussion especially helpful. Some of the party representatives acted and responded like they had really listened to us. I also found the practice of asking about and arguing my positions really helpful. I discovered that people listened to me, and that I could speak for myself and others, and enjoyed doing so.

I am now the national chairperson of Inner Circle, a branch of the FUB (an organization for people with intellectual disabilities) where people with disabilities are in charge and push their own agenda. I now speak for people with intellectual disabilities in all of Sweden.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 103.

## THE STORY OF GULNAR, A SUPPORTIVE INDEPENDENT LIVING BENEFICIARY

**“I have my own place to live, I have work, and I am independent.”**

*Kazakhstan*

My name is Gulnar. I graduated from university and became a nurse, but one day a little patient of mine died. That was when I had a breakdown and was put into a psychiatric hospital. Then my sisters deprived me of my legal capacity, and I was placed in an institution for many years. I couldn't work, could not choose what to eat or buy, could not even go out. I felt like a prisoner.

One day I got an offer from my legal guardian: “Hey, would you like to be part of a project that would allow you to be out

and independent all day?” Well, of course I said “Yes!” After a short training I started to work as a waitress. Then I became a chef. In 2016 the NGO Psychoanalytic Association said, “We are planning to take ten people from the institution and provide them with living accommodations. We don't know how and when we will do it, but we need your support.” I like the way the NGO staff worked with us: Nothing about us without us! Since 2017, I have had my own place to live, I have work, and I am finally feeling free and independent.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 82.



**THE STORY OF  
SADEK MANSOUR,  
AN ETI PROGRAMME  
TRAINEE**

**“Even simple things like how to lace my shoes make a big difference to me.”**

*Lebanon*

My name is Sadek and I am a 23-year-old university student studying accounting. Since I started the ETI programme I have learned many things, and the programme has helped me to gain more independence and self-confidence. I am very motivated by the programme, especially by the music classes and the social literacy. I’ve learned how to interact more with others and how to communicate better. Even such simple things as how to lace my shoes has made a difference in my life.

I am grateful for the ETI staff, who are providing all of these experiences, including the chance to meet new people and to make new friends. For me, they represent a family working together for the same goal – to promote the social integration of young people and children with disabilities.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 83.

**THE STORY OF MUSLIKAH, MOTHER OF SEPTIANA AND A MEMBER OF THE PERMATA HATI INCLUSION CLUB**

**“The volunteer therapists have taught Septiana to sit, walk, colour, write, draw, and play with other children.”**

*Sukoharjo, Indonesia*

My name is Muslikah and I live in the village of Mranggen, located in the Polokarto subdistrict of Sukoharjo, Java. My daughter, Septiana, was born prematurely and had a delay in her motor development. I went to the hospital several times to get a therapist service, and one day I was invited to the Permata Hati Inclusion Club in Polokarto. At that time Septiana was three years old, but she could only sit up and still needed help.

Every Saturday, Septiana practices and studies at the Inclusion Club. The volunteer therapists have taught her to sit, crawl, stand, and walk. She also practices colouring, writing, reading, and drawing, and she plays with the other children. In addition, the club volunteers have taught me how to practice with her at home. Now Septiana is five and she can walk 100 metres independently and even attends kindergarten.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 73.

# Disability-led centres providing a range of services for independent living

## LEBANON / FORUM FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Lebanon Forum of the Handicapped (FOH) – a disability-led independent-living centre with branches in the cities of Tripoli, Dinneyeh, Koura, and Akkar – provides a range of services to support persons with a variety of disabilities. The centres provide home alterations, accessible transportation, assistive equipment, and training, and they also coordinate additional services that they do not provide themselves. In 2017, 47 homes were adapted, 223 people were provided with transport, 120 people took part in sport or the arts, and 2,435 assistive devices were provided.

### Problems Targeted

People in Lebanon with a physical disability or visual impairment may find it difficult to live independently due to a lack of accessible infrastructure, assistive equipment, and a support system.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

FOH is run entirely by people with disabilities and aims to offer comprehensive services for such people in their home and throughout their daily lives. The organization's four independent living centres offer home alteration, accessible transportation, and a volunteer assistance programme. The centres also offer a health and equipment programme, providing supportive technology such as wheelchairs and Braille machines, along with repairs and training, plus health services in the client's home. FOH also coordinates additional services, such as health or education, which are provided by other organizations.

The centres act as a model of integration and inclusion by providing the infrastructure to enable

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2016 and 2017, some 6,000 persons in total benefitted from FOH's health-related services.
- FOH provided vocational training for approximately 400 people in 2017, up from 150 in 2016.

self-sufficiency. In 2017, transport was provided to 223 people, 2,435 pieces of assistive equipment were provided, and 25 homes were adapted with accessibility features. FOH offers an alternative to institutionalisation for people who are blind or have a physical disability, and this has led the Tripoli authorities to introduce accessibility measures for public spaces, including buildings, pavements, and parks. All projects implemented by the Tripoli municipality must now include accessibility measures.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

FOH has grown from a group of volunteers in a small apartment in 1986 to four centres across Lebanon in 2018, and it is currently planning to open additional offices in Beirut and the Bequa Valley. In 2017, the project cost \$1 million across all the sites, with over 50 per cent coming from central government ministries and the rest from a mixture of UN projects and donations.

Replication is further possible by training other organizations in the model, but to be successful it is important for organizations to engage fully with the local community and local government. Another important replication feature is that any new centre must be led and directed by persons with disabilities themselves.

“I went to the Forum for the Handicapped to get psychosocial therapy, and at that moment my life totally changed because now I had a world of my own to belong to.”

Fida Ahmad Shehadeh, FOH client

 Nawaf Kabbara  
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# Capturing and distributing critical election-related sign language

## LIBYA / IFES – ELECTORAL SIGN LANGUAGE LEXICON

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a non-profit organization working in over 30 countries to support citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. The IFES's Electoral Sign Language Lexicon captures critical election-related sign language vocabulary and distributes materials explaining these signs throughout Libya, using the Internet, their own app, and printed materials. Over 300 books teaching electoral sign-language have been distributed and the app has been downloaded over 500 times, allowing many deaf persons to discuss and participate in political life for the first time. The model was also initiated in Morocco in 2016.

### Problems Targeted

Sign language dictionaries often include only basic vocabulary relating to elections. Thus, deaf communities cannot effectively participate in political discussions during election periods.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Electoral Sign Language Lexicon captures critical vocabulary that can be used by deaf communities to participate in political life in Libya and Morocco. The lexicon is developed in collaboration with local deaf communities by working with deaf leaders and local sign language experts. Printed materials are distributed at schools for the deaf and in training sessions where Deaf persons use the lexicon and provide feedback. IFES also uses train-the-trainer workshops in which deaf advocates are encouraged to share the



Video teaching of political-related signs

the IFES mobile phone application “My Vote, My Right” – which has been downloaded over 500 times. In 2016, the model was replicated in Morocco.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

IFES activities in Libya are funded through its Libya Elections and Governance Support project, which is supported by the US Agency for International Development. The lexicon took around one year to develop and cost approximately \$35,000.

Once the lexicon is developed, IFES relies on partnerships with organizations in that country to continue promotion. For example, the Election Access Working Group in Libya is continuing to implement the practice and to engage the disability communities.

“Every Libyan has the right to this information, and all Libyans have the right to raise their voices, even if they are deaf.”

### A user of the Libyan Sign Language Lexicon

lexicon with their communities. By using the lexicon, deaf citizens and other sign language users can engage in the electoral process alongside their peers, and in doing so increase the awareness of the right of deaf communities to participate in politics.

The project began in 2015, and since then over 300 examples of Libyan sign language have been captured, recorded, and distributed via books, PDF, YouTube, and

### FACTS & FIGURES

- IFES has provided direct training to 21 sign language instructors and experts in Libya.
- Over 300 examples of Libyan sign language have been captured and recorded.



Rebecca Aaberg

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# Increasing political participation through targeted lobbying on many levels

## MALAWI / FEDOMA

The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA), an umbrella organization of 12 disabled people's organizations, is carrying out a multiple method approach in four districts to improve respect for and the participation of persons with disabilities in Malawian politics. Measures focus on engaging with election stakeholders, but also holding public debates and promoting media coverage. Since the start of the programme there have been several successes, such as the Electoral Commission engaging with people with disabilities in the development of its strategies and the use of tactile ballots.

### Problems Targeted

Malawian voters with disabilities often find themselves excluded from participating in political matters due to a lack of accessible political information and inaccessible voting materials.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

FEDOMA targets stakeholders involved in electoral processes, such as the Malawi Law Commission, the Malawi Electoral Commission, and the Parliamentary Committee on Social and Community Affairs; and it meets, consults, and encourages these organizations to make voter participation more accessible by lifting legal and administrative barriers. FEDOMA also identifies and encourages potential candidates with disabilities to stand for council and parliamentary elections, carries out media campaigns to raise awareness, and monitors electoral processes.

**“The FEDOMA meetings have increased my confidence in public speaking and improved my management of resources.”**

Brighton Baluwa, Mayor of Luchenza.

The project is run at both the national and community level, but it specifically targets the four districts of Lilongwe, Machinga, Balaka, and Mulanje. FEDOMA's consulting and awareness campaigns have contributed to implementation of new measures in voting practices, such as the use of tactile ballots and the provision of sign language interpreters for electoral information on national television. In addition, the Electoral Commission now regularly involves persons with disabilities in the development of its voting strat-

### FACTS & FIGURES

- To date, 24 persons with disabilities have expressed interested in running for office.
- The project has directly engaged with 40 ward councillors and 18 members of Parliament.

egies and has enlisted FEDOMA to carry out civic education on elections for persons with disabilities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Between 2014 and 2016, FEDOMA's campaigns were funded with \$140,000 from USAID and \$50,000 from the Finish Government. From 2016 to 2017, USAID contributed \$40,000, and the Norwegian Association of the Disabled an additional \$10,000 each year.

As of 2018, FEDOMA continues to work with the Malawi Government and is advising the Electoral Commission on the 2019 election. It is also assisting in drafting a bill that would ensure several seats for persons with disabilities as members of Parliament. Replication of the practice is readily possible through the transferring of existing knowledge, the documenting and sharing of methods used, and face-to-face meetings.



A blind person from the northern region of Malawi practicing in a mock election.



Action Amos

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# Young volunteers as agents for social inclusion

## MEXICO / UNIDOS SOMOS IGUALES

Unidos Somos Iguales (“Together We Are All Equal”) is an NGO based in Monterrey, Mexico, that runs social inclusion programmes for people with and without disabilities. Unidos trains young volunteers (called “allies”), increasing their disability awareness. Allies then accompany people with disabilities to participate in Unidos’ integrated social programmes like weekend trips or summer camps. Unidos has written a programme manual to aid replication and, through social franchising, has rolled-out the programme to six cities across the country, supporting 1,877 people with disabilities in 2017.

### Problems Targeted

National surveys have shown that people with disabilities in Mexico experience high levels of discrimination and exclusion and a lack of recognition of their rights.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Unidos runs programmes six times a year and has four key programmes of different durations that bring people together in social settings. These include weekend trips within Mexico for participants aged 16 and over, summer camp activities for children and young people of various ages, and regular evening activities for smaller groups. The Allies, who are volunteers aged 15 to 25, support all these activities and attend disability awareness training prior to participating in the programmes. Training addresses such issues as empathy, disability awareness, and methods of communicating with people with sensory, physical, and intellectual disabilities.



Real allies!

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Approximately half of Unidos’ revenue comes from services and workshops, for which participants pay a fee determined by their economic circumstances. Corporate and private funding accounts for 35 per cent, and the rest comes from state and federal government. The six local Unidos teams raise their own funds and pay a fee back to Unidos Nacional, which covers training, human resources, and other functions.

Unidos has developed a standardized programme manual to support replication through a social franchise model. The national Unidos team shares best practice among the local teams and offers supervision to support compliance with the organization’s standards and philosophy. In addition, Unidos has replicated the model in Chile through the Teletón Foundation, and is currently considering ways to make the replication process more efficient.

“Unidos is the place where I learned to look beyond appearances and came to understand the real meaning of acceptance and how we can complement each other because of our diversity.”

Lula Almazán, a Unidos ally who became Operative Director

Unidos supports over 1,500 people with disabilities each year across six locations in Mexico. In its ongoing evaluations, it has found that parents of young people with disabilities who participate in the programmes say their children are more independent, have greater self-esteem, and enjoy a better sense of security. Volunteers without disabilities who attend the training and the social programmes also benefit, like becoming more empathic as a result.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The number of participants with disabilities grew from 1,551 in 2015 to 1,877 in 2017.
- Unidos supports over 1,500 people with disabilities each year across six locations in Mexico.



Liliana Cano

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# Moving children and adults back to their families or community-based homes

## MOLDOVA / KEYSTONE MOLDOVA – COMMUNITY FOR ALL MOLDOVA

Keystone Moldova is a non-governmental subsidiary organization of Keystone Human Services International USA that supports and empowers adults and children. Keystone Moldova's "Community for All" programme partners with the central government and NGOs to transfers children and adults with intellectual disabilities from institutions back to their families or into community-based homes, and offers services such as education, health care, and social care to support them. From 2015 to 2018, some 2,000 people benefitted from the programme's community-based services.

### Problems Targeted

The lack of social services, limited capacities, and scarce financial resources force persons with intellectual disabilities to remain in residential institutions.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Community for All Moldova programme, together with the government at the local and national level, takes a holistic approach to enabling people with intellectual disabilities to live in the community. In addition to supporting those moving out of institutions, the programme also offers comprehensive services to people at risk of institutionalisation. Keystone Moldova purchases from donor funds housing for those moving out of institutions who cannot go back to family homes. A maximum of six people live in each house.

**“Community for All Moldova breaking down the stereotypes about the rights to live independent and have a family”.**

Prascovia Munteanu, Program Director for Deinstitutionalization and Community Development, Keystone Moldova

Keystone Moldova works with the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Social Protection to evaluate the needs of children, adults, and their families. Together, they map existing social services while setting up new ones, such as personal assistance, respite care, inclusive education, community homes, mobile teams, supported employment, and self-determination training. Progress of beneficiaries is then monitored, and adjustments are made as necessary. As of 2018, 100 people had moved out of institutions, with 40 living in seven houses provided by the project.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 2,000 people are benefitting from new community-based services each year, and 2,625 have been trained in self-determination, including about 2,000 still living in institutions.


### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

In 2017 the project cost around €1,768,000, with half coming from the government to cover support services and associated salaries. The remaining half is provided by the European Union (20 per cent), the Soros Foundation Moldova (25 per cent), and Keystone Human Services International USA (5 per cent) for property purchasing, renovation, endowment, capacity-building activities, and advocacy

The model has been developed in Moldova and has since been presented to NGOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan, India, Romania, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Keystone Moldova has worked with NGOs in Ukraine and Romania to develop similar concepts in both these countries, with funding proposals submitted to the European Union.



The satisfaction of cooking for yourself, in your own home.

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# Using theatre in schools to address discrimination against persons with disabilities

## MOLDOVA / KEYSTONE MOLDOVA – FORUM THEATRE

Keystone Moldova was founded in 2004 with support from the US-based organization Keystone Human Services International. Keystone Moldova works with public authorities, donors, and civil society organizations to develop community services for people with disabilities leaving institutions, and to advocate for their right to live in the community. Since 2012, Keystone Moldova has developed four social theatre troupes that perform the Forum Theatre method in schools and kindergartens. Over 5,000 students and 700 teachers have been involved in performances as of 2018.

### Problems Targeted

Discrimination against people with disabilities is a significant problem in Moldova, often linked to a lack of information about disability and people not recognising discriminatory behaviour.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Keystone Moldova uses the Forum Theatre method in schools and kindergartens to increase awareness of discrimination and its impact. Theatre practitioner Augusto Boal developed Forum Theatre in Brazil in the 1970s in which scenes portray incidents of social injustice that are relevant to the audience.

“Thanks to Forum Theatre, we know how to advocate for ourselves and for our rights. We understand how to stop discrimination.”

### Student after a Forum Theatre performance

The character of The Joker interacts directly with the audience, encouraging them to develop alternative solutions to the situations presented. The audience can also interrupt and replace the performers to act out these solutions. All the actors are trained volunteers, both with and without disabilities. Performances help audiences understand various forms of discrimination and how to address them.

Forum Theatre follows up with the schools and kindergartens after the performances to measure the impact. This has included changes to school accessibility policies and teachers using Forum Theatre methods in their classes to address discrimination. People with disabilities report that the performances



A Forum Theatre performance for teachers and parents.

have led to greater support from peers, teachers, and parents to advocate for their rights.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Keystone Moldova has funded the Forum Theatre programme through external grants from 2012 to 2018. The main expenditure is training volunteers, which costs about €3,000 for 12 volunteers, and for play development. A single performance with 12 participants costs approximately €300.

Keystone Moldova started its first social theatre troupe, 'Alternativ', in 2012 and has added three regional troupes since then.

Since its development in Brazil nearly a half-century ago, the Forum Theatre method has been used in many different countries worldwide.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Between 2012 and 2018, nearly 5,500 students and 800 parents were involved in Forum Theatre performances.
- Troupes in Moldova have performed over 150 times in schools and kindergartens.

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i See corresponding Life Story on page 99.

# Engaging persons with disabilities in all levels of politics

## NEPAL / DISABLE EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION CENTRE

Disable Empowerment and Communication Centre–Nepal (DEC–N), an NGO working to empower persons with disabilities, is undertaking a multi-method programme for inclusion in policy-making and to increase their representation in Parliament. DEC-N conducts regular dialogue with political parties and local public and non-government bodies to encourage inclusive policies, and an organizational task-force supports voter registering and participation. Since 2012, some 200 people with disabilities have participated, 1,055 have registered to vote, and seven have moved into federal Parliament positions.

### Problems Targeted

Local policies are often ineffective in enabling independent living due to the exclusion of people with disabilities in local planning processes and elections.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

DEC–N conducts ongoing dialogues and advocacy efforts with civil society, political parties, and government bodies to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the development of policies that affect their lives and to increase their political representation. In 2017 it set up a specialized taskforce with responsibility to push for the accommodation of people with disabilities in voting processes, such as promoting voter registration and advocating for accessible voting booths.

“The project has particularly supported the right of social and political participation – which became possible by the engagement of rights-holders themselves.”

Devidatta Acharya, Executive Director, DEC–N

DEC–N successfully advocated for people with disabilities to take part in local planning committees, including those for government bodies responsible for the implementation of local development plans, such as the Integrated Planning Committee and the Social Security Recommendation Committee.

As a result, 1,055 have registered to vote since 2012, seven now hold seats in the federal Parliament, and five are members of their provincial Parliament.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- 62 persons with disabilities have been enlisted as community disability mobilizers, whose duties include facilitating the obtaining of disability ID cards, promoting voter registration, and advocating for voter rights.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project began in 2012 with an annual grant of \$25,000 from the Open Society Foundation. This contribution has increased with support from Humanity & Inclusion Nepal and CBM, with annual project funding totalling \$175,000 in 2018.

The project was initially undertaken in the rural municipality of Banke, but has since been replicated in Dang District in the same province, with a focus on the capacity-building of rights holders and project personnel for increasing political participation.

DEC–N will continue to work with the government and other bodies to create change in local planning processes, as well as to support community disability mobilizers to create change in their own communities.



Pushing, rocking, and rolling for political participation!

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# A biographical graphic novel promoting deinstitutionalization

## ROMANIA / CEVA DE SPUS ASSOCIATION – GRAPHIC NOVEL BECOMING ELI

Ceva de Spus, an association of Romanian self-advocates, supported the creation of *Becoming Eli* – the first graphic novel to address institutional abuse suffered by children and adults. Based on a true story, it is centred on the character of Eli, a young girl left in state care because of her family’s poverty. While portraying the deprivation faced by people in institutions, the book shows that with the right support independence is possible. In May 2018, *Becoming Eli* was presented at the International World Congress on Inclusion and awarded a White Raven by the German International Youth Library.

### Problems Targeted

In March 2017 there were still over 19,000 children and 18,000 adults with disabilities in residential institutions under state protection in Romania, and deinstitutionalization remains an ongoing challenge.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Published in 2017, *Becoming Eli* is the work of Dan Ungureanu, an internationally recognized children’s book author and illustrator.

Through the voice of Eli, based on the actual Elisabeta Moldovan, the reader follows her journey from institutionalization to inclusion and self-determination. Every chapter is based on the author’s interviews with Eli, following key moments of her life. The Romanian NGO Asociatia Ceva de Spus supported the creation, publication, and dissemination of the book.

The project raises awareness of the abuses permitted within the so-called protective system, while showing alternatives to state-run institutions. One organization that supported Eli’s transition to



Elisabeta Moldovan became Eli in the graphic novel. Today, Elisabeta is a trauma survivor who is able to live by herself.

and emotional guidance as well as support in her day-to-day activities, such as shopping and cooking.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project was co-funded by the National Cultural Fund Administration and the Open Society Foundation, and proceeds from book sales support Ceva de Spus’s deinstitutionalization activities. There are versions in Romanian and English, and a Kindle edition is now also available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). With the help of international DPOs, Ceva de Spus hopes to translate the book into additional languages.

It also plans to launch a deinstitutionalization project in 2019, providing community-based housing, vocational training, employment, and other support for people currently in institutions.

“Working on *Becoming Eli* taught me about empathy, courage, and dedication to a cause.”

Dan Ungureanu, author

independence was Pentru Voi, a community service provider for adults with intellectual disabilities (a Zero Project Awardee of 2017).

Elisabeta Moldovan lived in one of Pentru Voi’s shared apartments, received occupational therapy, and participated in activities, eventually becoming employed as a janitor. At the centre she received social

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 550 copies in Romanian and English have been sold to date.
- Inclusion Europe’s 2018 #30yearsofinclusion campaign celebrated someone for their work in inclusion each month and Elisabeta Moldovan was named January’s “Heroine.”



Elisabeta Moldovan

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# Preparing people with psychosocial and mental disabilities to live in their own homes

## ROMANIA / PRO ACT SUPORT

Pro ACT Suport is an NGO based in Bucharest that provides accommodation and support as a step between institutionalization and living independently in the community. Persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities live in one of 11 “Preparation for Independent Living Centres” in Bucharest and the surrounding countryside. Residents are provided with personalised professional support, counselling, and training to prepare them for living independently. As of 2018, 50 people had received support services and 16 had successfully moved on to their own independent lives and accommodations.

### Problems Targeted

People with disabilities who have spent most of their lives in residential institutions often lack the skills that enable them to live independently in the community.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

To promote the social inclusion of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, the Pro ACT Suport Association has developed Preparation for Independent Living Centres – a programme designed to support individuals to develop their independent living skills through a personalized approach. Pro ACT integrates residents into common houses in the community by evaluating their skills and providing a customized programme for development implemented by professionals (social workers, psychologists, vocational counsellors, psychotherapists, etc.). Examples of daily activities include: preparing meals, personal hygiene, managing medications, completing household chores, coordinating transportation, continuing or enrolling in education, administering personal finances, and finding employment.

“I am now living independently, and since this year I am a happily newly married woman!”

Georgiana P., former user of Pro ACT Suport services

As of 2018, the organization runs 11 Preparation for Independent Living Centres – seven in rented apartments in Bucharest and four in houses outside the city. Currently, there are 50 people aged 18 to 55 enrolled in the programme. Between 2012 and 2018, 16 people successfully moved on to independent lives,

### FACTS & FIGURES

- From 2012 to 2018, the number of Preparation for Independent Living Centres grew from one to 11.

for example, by getting married, finding employment, or moving into rented accommodations.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The programme costs approximately \$800,000 per year and is mostly funded through service contracts with local authorities, which Pro ACT Suport bids for, and through a grant from the Open Society Foundation.

Pro ACT Suport is committed to changing the public mind-set towards persons with disabilities by providing technical assistance and training on deinstitutionalization to countries that are in the process of closing their institutions. Between 2012 and 2018, 130 people with disabilities were trained to develop life skills and to start a new life within the community.

The programme was designed based on Romania's specific situation, but the organization's tools and methodology can be readily adapted to different countries.



Emilia and Georgiana gardening in their community home.

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# Person-centred assistance and accommodation in communal housing

## SERBIA / ELEMENTARY AND BOARDING SCHOOL “MILAN PETROVIC”

Milan Petrovic, an inclusive elementary and secondary boarding school based in Novi Sad, Serbia, has initiated “Supported Living in the Community” – a programme that helps adults with intellectual disabilities to live in the community with tailored assistance. The aim is to move people out of institutions and prevent others from moving in by giving people a choice of who to live with and what support they want to receive – all in communally shared apartments. From 2008 to 2018, 39 adults moved into 12 apartments across the city and began receiving personalised support.

### Problems Targeted

Traditionally, there have been few alternatives to institutions in Serbia. Persons with intellectual disabilities may have little choice in their accommodation and care, leading to isolation and segregation.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Supported Living in the Community places people with intellectual disabilities in shared apartments and provides them with individualized support. The programme uses rented apartments, apartments provided by the city of Novi Sad, or those owned by users or their families, and it allows people to choose with whom they want to live. Users of the service fully participate in the creation of their own individual support plans by expressing of their personal preferences and wishes, and at a later stage by providing an evaluation. Services in the plan include health, formal education, vocational training, and assistance with finding employment, with the overall aim of improving their abilities and skills in daily activities.

“Life in the institution is terrible. I would never return there. This is my home.”

A project beneficiary

Following a pilot between 2005 and 2008, which supported a three-member family with disabilities to live together, the programme has since grown to a permanent project with 39 adults housed in 12 apartments across the city. Nine of the 39 had previously resided in institutions and now live with choice and freedom in the community.

✉ **Mirjana Lazor**  
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Left: Dragica preparing dinner in her shared apartment after years in an institution. Right: Ovan works as a baker and lives in a shared apartment after years in an institution.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The project is funded by the city of Novi Sad, although users also contribute, making up around 10 per cent of the overall project funding. Past support has also been provided by the Open Society Foundation, which supported the first eight people in moving from institutions.

Milan Petrovic plans to establish two new households in 2018, accommodating an additional six users. Further, the organization has been taking part in public campaigns and news conferences; and it has been welcoming study visits in order to share its model in the hope that other organizations will replicate it, particularly in areas that have a similar history of institutionalization.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Of the 39 people currently housed in 12 apartments, nine moved out of institutions.
- In 2018, Milan Petrovic plans to establish two new households for an additional six users.

# Learn, try, and test assistive technology

## SINGAPORE / SG ENABLE – “TECH ABLE” SHOWROOM

SG Enable is a Singapore-based NGO that in 2015 started the Enabling Village to support persons with disabilities. As part of the space, “Tech Able” was set up to let visitors experience assistive technologies (AT) and to encourage innovators, manufacturers, and marketers to collaborate on projects. Tech Able also houses a communications lab where persons with disabilities try out computers equipped with assistive technologies. Partnering with another NGO, SPD, to provide assessment and training, more than 800 people with disabilities have benefitted from Tech Able between 2015 and 2018.

### Problems Targeted

There is a lack of awareness about assistive technology among persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and various stakeholders who work with them, such as therapists and educators.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Tech Able is a centre providing assistive device assessment services, showcasing innovations, and offering training. Visitors can experience AT related to their home and work, and they can receive support to help them make informed decisions about what best addresses their individual needs. Moreover, persons with disabilities can attend various trainings and learn about computers that are equipped with assistive peripheral technologies, such as refreshable Braille displays and assistive listening devices. Tech Able also recommends suitable projects to the Tote Board Enabling Lives Initiative grant (a local grant that supports local innovations), administered by SG Enable, for further development.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- More than 8,000 people visited Tech Able in 2017.
- In 2017, 300 people with disabilities were trained on various assistive technology devices.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Tech Able is funded by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Infocomm Media Development Authority, a government entity, as well as through private donors. The centre does not generate revenue.

A team of four SG Enable staff members and nine therapists work in the Tech Able showroom. Tech Able plans to grow organically by increasing its outreach to the disability community and by intensifying collaboration with relevant stakeholders. It also actively supports local innovators through mentorship and recommends relevant funding support, where possible, to boost the development of new local assistive technology like the Tote Board Enabling Lives Initiative grant.

Tech Able believes that the model can be replicated in other countries, but there have been no concrete inquiries to date.

“With greater mobility and independence, I am better able to meet the challenges at work and enjoy a more independent lifestyle.”

Alister Ong Tjoe, beneficiary of Tech Able

Tech Able cooperates with government agencies to encourage them to integrate the use of AT in public services, thereby improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. In 2017, Tech Able had more than 8,000 visitors and trained some 300 people with various disabilities.



Testing the refreshable Braille notetaker.



Alvin Tan

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# A sign language app, dictionary, and learning tool

## SOUTH AFRICA / WIGITAL – FINGERTALK

In 2015 FingerTalk, a South African start-up company, launched a free app that enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing to learn and communicate in sign language. Moreover, the company has digitalized the South African Sign Language (SASL) dictionary and provides interactive learning tools such as quizzes to test the knowledge of their users. Another feature allows users to share SASL signs via social media and the messenger service WhatsApp. As of mid-2018, more than 4,000 users have downloaded the app.

### Problems Targeted

Learning sign language is very expensive in South Africa, and there are no free learning resources available online. Moreover, many people who are deaf or hard of hearing miss job opportunities due to existing communication gaps.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

FingerTalk is a free sign language app and an online sign language dictionary for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The app is designed as a self-learning tool where the lessons learned are tested through quizzes to determine individual progress. It is the first time the South African sign language dictionary has been digitalized and made available for free.

In addition to the self-learning tool, the app features a notice board where events and news of the commu-

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Finger Talk is use at two South African Universities.
- On average, FingerTalk attracts six new users per day.

nity of persons with hearing impairments are exchanged and where users are encouraged to stay in touch with one another. FingerTalk also allows users to share SASL signs via social media and Whatsapp. The app works with a combination of images and animated sequences. It is based on South African sign language but incorporates some local dialects as well.

In 2018, FingerTalk had more than 4,000 users and is used at two South African universities as part of their syllabus and as a quick reference guide.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

FingerTalk is funded by the SAB Foundation (South African Brewery is an international beverage conglomerate). The app is free of charge and allows advertisers to promote events and products via the app's noticeboard. FingerTalk aims for sustainability through these advertising revenues.

FingerTalk intends to further increase the use of the app within South Africa before going international. The company has secured the publishing and distribution rights of the dictionary, which gives it a competitive advantage over possible new entrants.

The South African Government has recently approved sign language as the country's 12th official language, which is expected to further increase the usage and coverage of sign language.

“You have enabled me to communicate with my 12-year-old deaf daughter for the first time ever. Thank you!”

Martin, father of a beneficiary



Nick de la Hunt

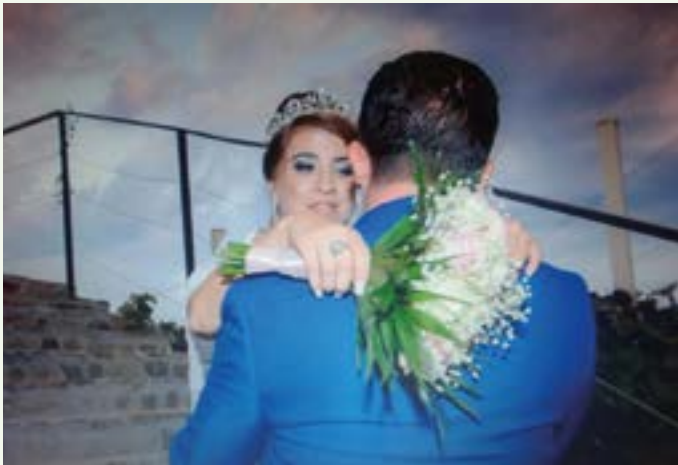
info@wigital.co.za – www.fingertalkapp.co.za

# Life Stories from Moldova, Romania, and Serbia

THE STORY OF GEORGIANA P., FORMER BENEFICIARY OF THE PRO ACT SUPPORT ASSOCIATION'S SOCIAL SERVICES

**“I was a girl with speech problems living on the streets, and now I am a happily married woman!”**

*Joita, Romania*



My family was very poor. At the age of 13, I was not yet registered in school. After my mother passed away, my father couldn't face all the responsibilities of raising me and my siblings and I was forced to live on the streets and beg for food. I was taken from the streets by the child protection services and spent ten years in different residential institutions for children, where at least I had food, clothes, and a chance to be registered in a special school.

I have encountered many difficulties due to my slow thinking and speech defect. When I was 18, I was moved to an institution for adults with intellectual disabilities and I thought that this will now be my life – I will be stuck there, without any chance for a better, normal life.

One day, however, I learned about the services of the Pro ACT Support Association. The people from Pro ACT came several times to meet me and finally they took me to visit the house in Joita, a commune in Giurgiu County, 30 minutes driving from Bucharest. This was my chance, and I took it! As the name of the new house suggests (“Metamorfoze”), I became a different, new, person. I flourished. I discovered myself. I understood life, especially my life! I lived there with four other girls, and we were taught, helped, understood, and guided as I would have wanted my parents to do during my childhood.

I received speech therapy and dental treatments; I have learned to cook, to sew, and to care for myself. I followed a vocational course and I soon found a job. And there I met my husband. We fell in love almost at first sight. I felt like a character from the Indian movies I like to watch. The social worker and psychologist from Pro ACT taught me what a relationship means. Soon my boyfriend invited me to meet his parents and I had the occasion to see what a real family looks like . . . and I got parents!

They loved me and I loved them instantly. Soon after my boyfriend proposed to me all the Pro ACT employees started to organize my big day, my wedding! They have been my family. They helped me to get the wedding dress I wanted, they prepared the house and all the traditions for a Romanian wedding, they cried with me in the church and then danced with me at the wedding party. Yes, my life has changed, and I am so grateful for the support I received. The people from Pro ACT Support will always be in my soul!

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 94.



**THE STORY OF MARIA IVAȘCU,  
MEMBER OF THE ALTERNATIV THEATRE TROUPE**

**“Since I began acting,  
I have learned that I don’t have  
to be afraid anymore.”**

*Moldova*

Fear. Fear kept me home. Fear wouldn't let me talk to people. Fear prevents many people with disabilities from participating in society.

I am Maria Ivașcu and I am 20 years old. I am in the Alternativ theatre troupe and I support other people with disabilities to overcome fear and integrate into society. I always dreamt that one day I would perform, but never imagined that I would fulfil my dream. I never imagined that I would speak to so many people and explain that I can do the same things they can. I don't have to stay home just because I use a wheelchair. Since I began acting, I have learned that I don't have to be afraid anymore. I am a person and I have equal rights.

My life has changed, and the lives of people with disabilities in the communities where we perform have changed as well. Our performances are designed to stop and prevent discrimination against people with disabilities in schools and kindergartens. We show audiences the reality of the situation in their community. We then invite spectators to the stage and they offer solutions to help stop discrimination. Audiences learn that they don't have to avoid people with disabilities, because we are all the same. We can all learn from each other.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 91.

**THE STORY OF JOVAN SLAVNIĆ, A  
SUPPORTED “LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY”  
BENEFICIARY**

**“I am free and happy here.  
I would never return to an  
institution!”**

*Novi Sad, Serbia*



My name is Jovan Slavnić. I am 35 years old and I have lived in a small home community in Novi Sad, Serbia, since 2009. Before I came to Novi Sad I lived in a few institutions, where I ran away several times because everything there was terrible. For example, I was not allowed to spend time with people outside the institution. Every day was the same. I had nothing to do and nothing of my own. When I met Dragica, I fell in love and stopped running away. Instead, I dreamed that I would somehow get out of the institution, go to school, find a job, and marry Dragica. Thanks to the community living programme supported by Milan Petrovic, we are now living together in an apartment with two friends.

As soon as I left the institution, I started going to school. In June 2018, I became a baker and got a job in a bakery. I go to work by bus. I love to spend my free time playing with my dog and having fun with my friends. I also enjoy watching football matches at a nearby coffee shop, because I can cheer loudly. When I receive my salary, I take out Dragica and my friends to eat cakes.

**i** See corresponding Practice on page 95.

# Incorporating Universal Design into home building

## SPAIN / FUNDACIÓN ONCE - LA CASA ACCESSIBLE

Fundación ONCE, a leading Spanish foundation with a focus on disabilities, has created a smart, accessible, and sustainable house-prototype to demonstrate the possibilities of constructing and equipping a home that meets a variety of disability needs. The house, which can be towed by a lorry, was designed to address issues of accessibility, security, energy, and communications. In 2016–2017 the house, along with a team of demonstrators, travelled some 20,000 kilometres throughout Spain. More than 70,000 people visited the house on its national journey.

### Problems Targeted

Architecture and design professionals often do not take account of Universal Design when creating homes because this is not normally incorporated into standard training.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The project consists of a specially-designed extendable trailer that mimics a family home, with an internal area of 140 square metre that is accessible for people with a variety of disabilities or reduced mobility. The home, which includes a kitchen, bedroom, living room, and bathroom, incorporates a range of intelligent devices and technologies that solve accessibility problems throughout. Features include touch lamps, fall detectors, adjustable-height wash basins, and automated blinds.

A team of demonstrators provide guided tours and answer questions, and additional solutions are displayed via screens. The home targets professionals in the public and administration sector and those responsible for developing policies on accessibility, security, and sustainability.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The 140 square metre home includes a kitchen, bedroom, living room, and bathroom, and incorporates a range of intelligent devices and technologies that solve accessibility problems throughout.
- During its 2016–2017 tour, the home travelled to 36 cities and towns throughout Spain.

project costing €550,000 over two years, including build and touring costs.

The accessible home is no longer touring, but variations of the technology and model continue to be exhibited as example rooms at fairs in Spain, such as the Salón Inmobiliario Internacional de Madrid (Spanish Real Estate Exhibition) and the Barcelona Building Construmat.

The model has proven to be influential across Spain and therefore has strong potential for replication in other European cities and towns. Notably, during the initial tour several cities requested the home to be brought to their locations.

“People with disabilities want to experience the same things as all people, but they don’t want products designed specifically for them.”

Jesús Hernández Galán, Director of Universal Accessibility and Innovation, Fundación ONCE

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Funding was provided by Real Patronato de la Discapacidad (the Royal Board on Disability), with the



The bathroom in La Casa Accesible.

✉ Sonia García-Fraile Cámara  
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# Raising awareness on the right to vote

## SPAIN / PLENA INCLUSIÓN ESPAÑA – MI VOTO CUENTA

Plena Inclusión España is a Spanish national NGO that supports people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. It established Mi Voto Cuenta (“My Vote Counts”), a campaign that focuses on raising awareness about the right to vote and to have access to electoral proceedings. Mi Voto Cuenta aims to bring the demands of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities to the attention of all political parties and Spain’s central election committee. As of 2018, more than 1,000 people with disabilities have participated in election campaigns.

### Problems Targeted

According to the central election committee, there are around 100,000 people in Spain who were deprived of their right to vote during the last general election in 2016.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Mi Voto Cuenta was developed for the first time as a campaign in the 2011 Spanish general election. Plena Inclusión España wanted to sensitize society and empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families about the right to participate in political and public life, and specifically the right to vote and stand for election.

The Mi Voto Cuenta campaign raises awareness by informing people with disabilities about electoral processes and about how to regain their right to vote.

“With Mi Voto Cuenta we have managed to change the law in Spain to ensure that all people with disabilities can vote.”

Cristina Paredero, member, Plena Inclusión España Board of Directors, and a person with an intellectual disability

The campaign also reaches out to political parties and the legal system to arrange meetings with political groups in all communities of Spain. Further, it conveys the requirements of people with disabilities so as to participate in electoral processes, such as providing easy language political statements, accessible information on how the electoral process works, etc.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Since Mi Voto Cuenta started campaigning during the 2014 European Parliament election, the practice is being applied in all electoral processes in Spain,



Members of the Project Mi Voto Cuenta discussing their requests with politicians.

both at the regional and national level. In addition, the Congress of Deputies, the lower house of Spain’s legislature, successfully supported reform of the existing election law to ensure the vote for people with disabilities.

The campaign mechanism is being used in other European countries as is the adaptation of electoral programmes of various parties into easy language. Finally, Plena Inclusion and other Spanish NGOs lobbied successfully for reform of the national Electoral Law so that some 100,000 people with disabilities can vote in the next European, regional and local elections, in 2019.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 100,000 people who were formerly deprived of their political rights in Spain will be able to vote in the next European, regional and local elections, in 2019.
- Since the European Parliament election in 2014, the Mi Voto Cuenta campaign has been extended to all local and national elections in Spain.



Fermin Núñez

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# Personal ombudsmen enhance self-determination

## SWEDEN / PO-SKÅNE – PERSONAL OMBUDSMEN

Since 1995, PO-Skåne – an NGO based in the Skåne province of Sweden – has been working as a contractor for local governments as well as in rural areas to provide personal ombudsmen and a self-determination coordinator for people with psychosocial disabilities. A personal ombudsman (PO) assists individuals in taking control of their own situation, identifies their care needs, and ensures that they receive the help they need. In 2017 the organization employed a self-determination coordinator (referred to as a BISAM) charged with working alongside POs in group homes; and in that year the POs served more than 600 people.

### Problems Targeted

Persons with psychosocial disabilities in Sweden usually live in the community, either in apartments of their own or in group-homes, mostly with restricted self-determination.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

For more than 20 years, PO-Skåne has been providing support in decision-making for persons with mental health issues or psychosocial disabilities. Key to this support is the use of full-time personal ombudsmen (POs), who are highly skilled persons – much like lawyers and social workers – who do outreach work and establish trusting relationships with individuals in need of support.

“This is revolutionary!  
This is earth-shaking!”

One elderly facilitator, who became so enthusiastic on hearing about the PO-Skåne Personal Ombudsman

In 2017, PO-Skåne introduced a new service provision called BISAM (a self-determination coordinator), assigned to the southern city of Lund. Whereas a PO works exclusively on behalf of their individual clients, the BISAM is charged with supporting all the tenants in a particular group home on a full-time basis. POs and the BISAM reach people with psychosocial disabilities step-by-step by making contact, developing communications, establishing a relationship, and initiating a dialogue. Importantly, the PO and the BISAM do not act according to what they think is in their client's best interest, but rather only carry out what their client asks them to do.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of 2018, the PO service was offered in 14 municipalities in the province of Skåne.
- PO-Skåne currently employs 20 POs and one self-determination coordinator.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Contracts with the municipalities are usually for two years. Some are extended automatically, others must be negotiated for a new period. The personal ombudsmen and the self-determination coordinator work full-time and are paid by PO-Skåne; in turn, the local government pays PO-Skåne according to the contract a sum that covers salaries, expenses, in-service training, and overhead costs.

PO-Skåne started with two POs working in three municipalities and is now serving half of the 33 municipalities in the province. The PO system has been replicated elsewhere in Sweden, and PO-Skåne is working on transferring the programme to other countries. The organization currently offers training to interested organizations and will start to support PO-Kiev, in the Ukraine, in 2019.



Japanese study visit to PO-Skåne.

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# Study circles for persons with intellectual disabilities to engage in voting

SWEDEN / STUDIEFÖRBUNDET VUXENSKOLAN – MY CHOICE/MY ELECTION

Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan, a Swedish NGO with branches nationwide, has created a programme that assists persons with intellectual disabilities to engage in voting. Small study circle groups learn from easy-read materials and DAISY-formatted audio texts that describe Swedish democracy and the voting process. A group leader arranges discussions with politicians trained in easyread. For the 2018 election there were 109 study circles, totalling some 650 people in 80 municipalities.

## Problems Targeted

Many people with intellectual disabilities do not vote in elections, as they may find it difficult to understand what the vote is about and/or how to vote due to inaccessible information and complex political language.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Persons with intellectual disabilities meet in small study circles where everyone is active and the participants themselves decide on the topics for discussion. The circles are complemented with easy-read study materials and DAISY-formatted texts (an international technical standard for digital audiobooks). A leader teaches voting practices and Swedish democracy and supports the participants to find answers to questions by gathering information from parties and the media. The leader also arranges discussions with active politicians, who are trained in easy language before entering the conversation.

“The very politics have to be made accessible.”

Kjell Stjernholm, My Choice/My Election coordinator

The study circles were first used for the 2014 elections, in which 300 participants took part across 50 groups, with 80 per cent voting. In the 2018 elections, 650 participants took part in 109 study circles, and 2,470 people with disabilities took part in 49 discussions with politicians. After receiving feedback from My choice/My election, the Swedish Democracy Commission began adding party logos to ballot papers next to the party names, thus enabling easier recognition of their party affiliation. Additionally, the mayor of Jönköping commissioned a video to explain the City Council's most important decisions in easy language.



Participants making decisions in a study group.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability


Starting in 2018, the project has been offering online education via videos and exercises for politicians to learn how to write easy read. Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan is also looking to offer further democracy information between election years via existing study circles that discuss empowerment in everyday life.

The basic model is replicable and there is a willingness to share the method with other organizations, with a presentation having taken place with Inclusion International.

My choice/My election was funded by the National Inheritance Fund in 2014 with €400,000, after which it was incorporated into Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan's largely state-funded popular education programme.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- 80 per cent of participants exercised their right to vote in 2014.
- 2,470 people with disabilities participated in 49 discussions with politicians in 2018.

 **Kjell Stjernholm**  
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 See corresponding Life Story on page 84.

# A ballot template for the blind

## TURKEY / BOGAZIÇI UNIVERSITY AND THE ASSOCIATION OF BARRIER FREE ACCESS

Bogaziçi University, located in Istanbul, has partnered with the non-profit Association of Barrier Free Access (ABFA) to create a ballot template for the blind that can be used both by those who can read Braille and those who cannot. As a result of this pilot project, people who are blind can cast their vote without assistance, thus ensuring their confidentiality. In 2018, some 3,000 people used the new ballots in the presidential and parliamentary elections across all 87 election regions of the country.

### Problems Targeted

Because blind people in Turkey can only vote with assistance, thus violating their confidentiality, most choose not to vote at all.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The ballot template is made of durable and thick paper that is placed over the actual paper ballot and that allows voters to identify the candidates through tactile round cut-outs in the template, representing the candidates and parties. The template can be adapted to the specific candidates of a region, thus allowing blind voters to participate nationwide. Moreover, to identify which cut-out represents which candidate, the Audio Description Association provides information about all candidates in the various regions and prepares videos to provide information prior to the elections. The videos are made accessible with audio descriptions, subtitles, and sign language for voters who are blind or deaf. The information is based on the data provided on the website of the Supreme Electoral Council, the highest electoral authority in the country.

“When I had to be assisted in voting, I had to be content with imagining what a ballot paper or ballot box looked like. But when I cast my ballot on my own, I experience the procedure in person.”

A ballot template user

Five thousand templates were first piloted in the 2017 Turkish Constitution referendum, and in response several organizations for the blind requested that the template be available for the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2017, 5,000 templates were piloted during the Turkish Constitution referendum.
- The template can be adapted to the specific candidates of a region, thereby allowing blind voters to participate nationwide.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

To date, Bogaziçi University has been the sole funder of the design and manufacturing of the ballot templates. Currently, the university and the ABFA are in contact with the Supreme Electoral Council to find a way to adapt and apply the templates during the municipality elections in March 2019. One proposal is to charge \$1 per template to cover production costs. For the 2018 election, Bogaziçi University covered the template costs and ABFA covered the delivery expenses.

As a consequence of the template's successful introduction, the Supreme Electoral Council has agreed to permit the use of the templates upon request from blind voters in the future.

The concept of a ballot template can be used in every country. To replicate these specific ballot templates, an expert printing house and the support of organizations for people with disabilities are needed for their design, production, and dissemination.



The ballot template for Parliamentary Elections.



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# The first mobile bathroom for people with complex physical disabilities

UNITED KINGDOM / DISABILITY PRIDE BELFAST & VEHICLES FOR CHANGE – MOBILOO

Mobiloo – a Northern Irish social enterprise active throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom – has created the first mobile bathroom for people with complex physical disabilities. Until now, outdoor events provided only traditional “portaloos,” which are small and generally unhygienic. In addition to a clean toilet, Mobiloo bathrooms provide changing tables, hoists, and adequate space for large wheelchairs and/or a personal assistant. In the first months of 2018, Mobiloo’s facilities were utilized by some 3,000 event-goers with disabilities.

## Problems Targeted

Toilet facilities for persons with disabilities at outdoor events are usually too small for people needing larger wheelchairs or those requiring the support of a personal assistant.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

A group of individuals from Northern Ireland with various disabilities felt that a product was needed to fill the gap in sanitary facilities at outdoor events. Collaborating with various organizations for research and development, Mobiloo’s founders produced an accessible mobile bathroom suitable for everyone. The result was a social enterprise providing a service that allows people with disabilities to attend concerts, markets, and festivals, or even go to the beach.

“Mobiloo is game changing when it comes to events. It’s the difference between us having a life over staying at home constantly.”

Aisling McNiffe, parent and caretaker to 13-year-old Jack

Mobiloo’s are versatile mobile bathrooms with heating for cold weather, electric ceiling hoists for those who may need to be lifted, changing tables with a variable height adjustment, hot and cold running water, and even a shower. In addition, each mobile bathroom is staffed by an attendant who cleans the facility after every use. Currently, there are four operational units; and the number of people benefitting from them has risen from 314 in 2016 to over 5,000 in the summer of 2018.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

In 2016, private funds were used to establish Mobiloo



Mobiloo bathrooms allow people with disabilities to attend concerts, markets, and festivals, or even go to the beach.

at an initial cost of €100,000. Income that first year was €128,514, it rose to €289,997 in 2017, and Mobiloo estimates the figure will be more than €400,000 by the end of 2018. The business is self-sustaining, covering all employment costs of three full-time and two part-time employees.

The Irish Government has hired Mobiloo to cover its open-air events, as has the city of Belfast and the South Dublin City Council along with the BBC, the English Premier League and The National Trust. Due to high demand throughout the United Kingdom as well as requests from other countries such as Australia and the United States, a franchise model is being developed. Mobiloo is also working on further products to make outdoor events even more accessible.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2018 there were 12 operational Mobiloo mobile bathrooms, each with a full-time attendant.
- The Irish Government has hired Mobiloo to cover its open-air events, as has the city of Belfast and the South Dublin City Council.

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# An identity card to promote fair treatment for brain injury survivors

UNITED KINGDOM / HEADWAY – THE JUSTICE PROJECT, BRAIN INJURY IDENTITY CARD

Headway, a charity with 125 branches across the United Kingdom, provides information, support, and services to brain injury survivors and their families. Headway’s Justice Project has produced a free nationally-recognized Brain Injury Identity Card, which assists with fairer and more appropriate treatment and support when encountering the criminal justice system. The card also provides the user with access to criminal legal advice and representation via a 24-hour assistance number displayed on the card. As of November 2018, over 4,500 cards had been issued.

## Problems Targeted

Brain injury, sometimes known as a hidden disability, may affect a person’s control of their emotions, memory, and ability to communicate effectively. Those encountering the criminal justice system may not have their injury taken into account.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Justice Project was developed to raise awareness of brain injury within the police and court systems and to ensure fair treatment for persons encountering these systems. A credit card-sized card is issued to persons who have been diagnosed by a clinical profession or a Headway group or branch as having sustained a brain injury.

The user can show the card to professionals in the criminal justice system, which explains the individual user’s circumstances as a result of the injury (e.g., “I have speech difficulties” or “I have memory loss”). As well as showing the Headway logo, in England, Wales, and Scotland the card displays a police logo (either that of the National Police Chief’s Council or Police Scotland), giving added credibility, especially when shown to a police officer. The card contains a 24-hour phone number for a specialist criminal legal advice and representation firm.

Headway involved brain injury survivors in the development process when piloting the card at 17 Headway branches, and the card has since been made available across the United Kingdom. By November 2018 over 4,500 cards had been issued, with a survey revealing that 97 per cent of respondents find their card “helpful” or “very helpful” when used. Headway has also partnered with key agencies working in the UK criminal justice system, and has provided training to the Crown Prosecution Service.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- Some 4,500 cards are projected to be issued in 2018, compared to 367 in 2016.
- Training of 130 justice system professionals is planned for 2018, compared to 30 in 2017.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The Justice Project is fully funded by Headway as the cards are provided for free, with the practice costing around £45,000 in 2018.

In 2019, Headway will hold a public launch of the initiative in Wales and expects 6,500 cards to be issued across the United Kingdom in 2019. As a result of the success of the initiative, a UK charity called the Child Brain Injury Trust has produced a card for survivors aged between 11 and 18 years old. Headway is open to sharing its model and providing advice to organizations wishing to replicate it in their own countries.

As a result of raising awareness, the National Appropriate Adult Network has included information about brain injury in its guidance for appropriate adults, and the Crown Prosecution Service is amending its guidelines for prosecutors to include a section on brain injury.



A Brain Injury Identity Card.



Liz Partridge

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# Announce your visit and special request to stores and public services

## UNITED KINGDOM / NEATEBOX – “WELCOME BY NEATEBOX” APP

Neatebox is a UK Social Good business, which is a for-profit operation with a strong focus on social impact, based in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 2017, Neatebox launched their “Welcome by Neatebox” platform. Using iBeacon and other technologies and accessibility features of regular smartphones, people with disabilities can announce in advance their visit to a store, a public office, or a service company. Users can specify their service need, such as a barrier-free entry or support and guidance, and recipients can prepare for the visit. From July 2017 to June 2018 some 1,000 people downloaded the app.

### Problems Targeted

Research shows that a high percentage of people with disabilities leave a shop unsatisfied or are unhappy with the service they received. Although staff training is available, service performance for people with disabilities remains low.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

“Welcome by Neatebox” improves the communication and service between visitors (customers, clients, etc.) and staff by providing staff with essential information on how to interact with people with a disability and by giving users the confidence that their needs will be met upon arrival.

Pre-placed Geofences (a virtual perimeter for a real-world geographic area) and iBeacons commu-



Neatebox user being supported at an airport check-in.

“Neatebox is empowering for users to know they can go places without having to worry.”

Judith, Concierge at Jenner’s House of Fraser, a Neatebox client

nicate with the customer’s smartphone. At the same time, it alerts staff at a store or public service that someone with a disability is approaching and exactly what needs this individual has. Requirements might include barrier-free access, sign language availability, or a defined support service such as at an airport check-in.

The app empowers users to communicate their needs to customer service teams in a discrete manner, and enables them to enjoy greater independence when conducting every-day activities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Neatebox has extended its reach across the UK and Ireland and is planning to expand internationally. Key sectors are aviation, transport, tourism, leisure, hotels, retail, banking, and public services. By partnering with large organizations in each one of these industries, Neatebox seeks to improve customer service in venues that users with a disability frequently visit.

The “Welcome by Neatebox” app can be used across various types of venues and, with some minor alterations, can be implemented internationally.

The Scottish Edge Fund and private investors provided initial funding of €350,000. Neatebox is already realizing some revenue, but further funding will be needed to implement the company’s expansion plans.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of November 2018, approximately 600 persons with disabilities made visits to participating businesses.
- By November 2018, Neatebox has signed up 35 venues across the UK.



Gavin Neate

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# Changing a whole country's approach on children's institutions

## UNITED KINGDOM / LUMOS FOUNDATION

The Lumos Foundation is a UK-based child-focussed non-profit that operates in several countries, including Moldova. Together with the Moldovan Government, Lumos has promoted an integrated policy and programme of deinstitutionalisation and Inclusive Education for children with disabilities. This allows children return to their families and communities while receiving education in mainstream schools. Since launching the programme in 2007, the number of children in institutions has dropped by 86 per cent. Since 2010, more than 6,000 children have been admitted to mainstream schools.

### Problems Targeted

Moldovan children with disabilities often live in residential special schools, separated from other children and their families.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The Lumos Foundation works with Moldovan local authorities to change safeguarding policies and to implement community-based social services, such as health and welfare services, thus making it possible for children with disabilities who are in institutions to go home to their families or to be placed in foster care. The programme also develops inclusive mainstream schools for these children to be educated alongside their peers.

At the national level, the programme assisted the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education to implement a law that ensures that government funds that had been going to institutions to support children with disabilities are transferred to children in community social services and inclusive schools – for example, to provide additional support to teachers and make adaptations to buildings. Since the start of the programme in 2007, the number of children in institutions in Moldova has decreased from 11,554 to 1,972; and since 2010, over 6,000 children have been placed in inclusive mainstream schools. Due to the organization's extensive advocacy, research, and training, Lumos was also able to take the lead on the development of a national strategy of Inclusive Education.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Lumos funds the creation of new social services that support families of children with disabilities, but from that point onwards the day-to-day costs of these services are funded by the Moldovan Government. In the long term, Lumos aims for government funds in all countries to be ring-fenced such that all funds previously spent on institutions are redirected towards community care services.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The number of children with disabilities educated in inclusive mainstream schools increased from 1,253 in 2010 to 10,393 in 2016.
- The number of children in institutions has declined from 11,544 in 2007 to 1,972 by the end of 2017.

Lumos applies a similar model in Bulgaria, Colombia, Czech Republic, Haiti, Kenya, and Ukraine, and going forward it plans to roll-out the programme in several additional regions of the world. In each region, the model is adapted to the context and needs of the respective country; and each project advances Lumos's overall mission of ending the institutionalisation of children by 2050 worldwide.



Author J. K. Rowling, founder and President of Lumos, meets 14-year-old Dumitrița (with glasses), who lived for five years in an institution in Moldova. With Lumos support, Dumitrita was reunited with her family and enrolled in a mainstream school, and is now an active promoter of inclusive education for all children.

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# Enabling people with disabilities to vote from home and without assistance

## UNITED STATES / DEMOCRACY LIVE – OMNIBALLOT

Democracy Live, Inc. – a company based in Seattle, Washington – provides accessible online voting technology for elections. In partnership with Amazon and Microsoft, Democracy Live developed OmniBallot, an accessible online voting system available via computer, tablet, or smartphone, thus enabling people with disabilities to vote from home and to do so independent of support. Since its launch in 2015, over 1 million voters with disabilities have used the system.

### Problems Targeted

Due to intellectual or physical disabilities as well as limited transportation to and from voting locations, voters with disabilities lack equal access to participating in elections.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

OmniBallot is a software tool whereby people are given an online ballot that can be delivered via a tablet, a mobile device, or through the Amazon cloud. The ballots use accessible navigation tools, such as headphones, a key pad, a sip-and-puff joystick (a computer mouse-like device that allows the user to move the cursor), Braille, or any other accessible computer navigation tool. As additional support, OmniBallot offers video guides and an accessible sample ballot to inform and guide voters. Once the ballot has been filled in, voters are directed to print out the ballot and send it to a designated address via regular mail.

Between 2015 and 2018, the system has been applied in over 100 elections in the United States, and it has been used by over 1 million voters with disabilities in 96 countries worldwide.



Using the touch screen of Democracy Live!

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Democracy Live is a privately-held company that contracts with state and local governments, and has received funding from the United States Elections Assistance Commission and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for their accessible voting solutions. Contracts are typically annual and are based on the number of voters in a state or jurisdiction.

The OmniBallot system started in 2015 with one county in California, and as of 2018 has been applied in almost half of all counties in California. Beyond California, Democracy Live accessible voting technologies have been deployed in over 400 election jurisdictions around the U.S.

In addition to its expansion within the United States, the OmniBallot system is available in over 70 languages.

“The work of Democracy Live demonstrates that compliance with international standards on accessibility is readily achievable in the elections and voting space.”

Janet Lord, Harvard Law School Project on Disability



Bryan Finney

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### FACTS & FIGURES

- OmniBallot was first deployed in 2015 in one county in California.
- In 2018 the system was deployed in over 400 election jurisdictions around the US.

# A step-by-step toolkit to monitor voter participation

## UNITED STATES / IFES – ELECTION ACCESS OBSERVATION TOOLKIT

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), headquartered in Washington, D.C., works to support the participation of people with disabilities in political life. To that end, it developed an election access observation methodology whereby people with disabilities and their organizations are trained as official observers and use checklists to collect data on access to the electoral process. As of 2018, 13 countries had employed the IFES’s methodology, resulting in the formation of a free-to-download Election Access Observation Toolkit.

### Problems Targeted

Election commissions and other government stakeholders often lack information on the barriers to political rights encountered by voters with disabilities, as well as evidence-based data to evaluate the accessibility of elections.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

IFES developed an election access observation methodology that assists in specifically collecting data to address barriers to political access for people with disabilities. Based on lessons learned from implementing access observations, IFES developed its Election Access Observation Toolkit. The toolkit provides step-by-step instructions for organizing an election access observation, including how to contextualize observation checklists. In addition, the toolkit aims to involve people with disabilities themselves in the process by training them to conduct the targeted observations, thus empowering them to serve in a political leadership role and self-advocate with policy makers.

“Members of the election commissions realize that voting from home is not the only alternative way to vote.”

Iryna Tverdokhlib, observer in the Ukraine

Between the start of the practice in 2011 and the online publication of the toolkit in 2018, nearly 1,600 people with disabilities have benefitted, and IFES has trained 87 long-term and more than 1,500 short-term observers.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- The first election access observation was conducted in Indonesia in 2011.
- Between 2011 and 2018, IFES has trained 87 long-term and more than 1,500 short-term observers.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Election access observations have been funded by the governments of Australia, Canada, and the United States. Costs vary by country context, but a typical observation costs approximately \$25,000, which includes training people with disabilities as observers.

As of 2018, the methodology has been applied in 13 countries. Based on recommendations collected through observations, countries have adapted their electoral processes accordingly. For example, the Election Commission of Nepal committed to making 1,000 polling stations accessible in their strategic plan.

Using the toolkit, election access observations can be replicated by disabled people’s organizations around the world.



The finger is stained with election ink, proving that he was voting, and also voted only once - important in countries where voters’ registration is not reliable.

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 See corresponding Life Story on page 71.



# Supporting DPOs in six countries to bring the UN CRPD to life

UNITED STATES / MIUSA / GLOBAL DISABILITY RIGHTS NOW!

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) is an American non-profit led by persons with disabilities, headquartered in Oregon, working to advance disability rights globally. MIUSA's Global Disability RightsNow! (RN!) project partners disability organizations and legal experts in the US with DPOs in six countries to assist enforcing national law in line with the UN CRPD. Experts provide technical assistance and mentorship to support DPOs in coordinating in-country plans to strengthen legislation and increase political participation. Between 2015 and 2018, over 250 DPOs received trainings and consultations.

## Problems Targeted

Many countries have enacted national disability rights laws, but they may have limited effect at mitigating discrimination if there are few or no implementation measures, such as policies, detailed standards, and political advocacy training for DPOs.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

RN! identifies DPOs that are trying to enforce national law in line with the UN CRPD, and works in Armenia, Kenya, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Viet Nam. The project provides technical assistance and mentorship in person and via video, phone, and email to DPO leaders. Assistance includes policy advocacy strategy, engaging political candidates, training lawyers, using the media, and providing advice on how to file disability discrimination complaints.



U.S. experts providing direct consultation in Armenia.

“The best thing we have done with RightsNow! is to involve the government.”

A participating DPO in Mexico

Workplans are adapted to the local political and legal contexts and may focus on comprehensive disability rights or on specific laws, such as those addressing health care, deinstitutionalization, and justice issues. DPOs also have access to an accessible online resource offering practical, innovative tools in four languages and international sign.

Between 2015 and 2018, 250 DPOs across six countries received trainings and consultations, and over 1,000 individuals with disabilities received technical training. This has led to greater influence of public policy, for example, enabling the first successful

disability discrimination prosecution in Guatemala and incorporating recommendations into the final five-year National Accessibility Plan in Peru.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Mobility International USA leads the project, in collaboration with the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and the U.S. International Council on Disabilities, and has a full project budget of \$3,167,216 from 2014 to 2018.

RN! is encouraging participating DPOs to explore additional opportunities for national and international networking to further share best practices and lessons learned. In addition, it is seeking further funding to provide more targeted assistance.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- RN! Engaged with 205 government agency or ministry representatives in 2018, up from just 16 two years earlier.
- In 2017, 552 people were trained and nearly 20,000 used the organization's online resources.



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# Fighting stigma through Hollywood and job creation

## UNITED STATES / RESPECTABILITY

The US non-profit RespectAbility, based in the state of Maryland, fights stigma and advances opportunities for people with disabilities through the Hollywood entertainment industry and by promoting employment opportunities. The organization collaborates with Hollywood writers to promote positive, accurate, and diverse portrayals of disability. It has created the Hollywood Disability Inclusion Toolkit and the Emmy Award-winning TV show “Born This Way,” starring people with Down syndrome. At the political level, RespectAbility focuses on employment by publishing reports on best practices.

### Problems Targeted

While up to one in five people have a disability, fewer than 2 per cent of scripted TV characters have a disability.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

To improve cultural understanding of disability, RespectAbility has created the Hollywood Disability Inclusion Toolkit to help directors and writers accurately portray disability issues. The Toolkit provides facts, resources, and contacts related to disability to make programming authentic. The organization also provides information on disability etiquette as well as updates on the disability lexicon to ensure that scripts are culturally sensitive. For the TV show “Born This Way,” RespectAbility helped to create entertaining content and identify new talent. The show became a national hit, winning three Emmys, including best reality show.

“RespectAbility is about positive representation in the media, encouraging best practices in employment, and training young leaders with disabilities.”

RespectAbility Chairman Steve Bartlett

RespectAbility simultaneously focuses on policy change. Working with local and state officials, the organization helps to align public policies with proven best practices; issues reports, such as its annual Best and Worst States Report; and testifies on employment and disability issues, such as its Illinois Employment First Plan Testimony.

In addition, as co-chair of the Employment & Training Task Force of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities, RespectAbility helps set the agenda for over 100 disability groups, thus affecting the workforce planning in more than ten states.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- RespectAbility has trained more than 1,000 workforce professionals, community leaders, employers, and others to expand employment for people with disabilities.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Funded through civil society grants, RespectAbility's successes are attracting new funders, permitting the organization to grow rapidly. In 2017, it had revenues of \$1,538,530, up from \$554,684 in 2016.

The organization's promotion of disability inclusion has led to more US funders adding disability issues to their portfolios, something that will help other disabled people's organizations to raise funds for their own work. It also trains 25 to 30 young professionals a year, with and without disabilities, to become future leaders of the disability movement. To date, graduates of its National Leadership Program have gone on to work in the World Bank, the US Government, and top universities, to name a few. In recognition of its expertise, RespectAbility has been sought out by the United States, United Kingdom, and several South American governments to advise on disability employment.



The cast of Born This Way on stage, having won the 2016 Emmy Award for Outstanding Unstructured Reality Show.

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# Creating a community of people with paralysis

## UNITED STATES / ABLETHRIVE

AbleThrive, a U.S. non-profit organization, has created a website for people with paralysis and their families that delivers information on life skills, relationships, parenting, activities, and travel. Users easily filter and find articles, videos, and products customized to their needs and interests. Additionally, the organization hosts events and campaigns to foster its community and promote inclusion in society. From 2015 to 2018, AbleThrive has built a network of more than 240 partner organizations worldwide.

### Problems Targeted

Persons with paralysis struggle to find the information they need to adapt their daily lives. Without proper support, they are at risk of secondary health conditions.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

AbleThrive runs a webpage that categorizes and delivers a wide variety of information from the Internet that helps people with paralysis or other mobility disabilities (spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, MS, post-polio, etc.) worldwide. The team gathers, writes, and links to articles and videos from a network of more than 240 partner organizations and companies. By signing up to an account, people with disabilities are provided with information on topics such as sports, travel, relationships, care giving, and parenting, as well as such fundamentals skills as living with emotional problems, getting your life back in order when you are first touched by a disability, and learning basic skills. To mobilize and change mind-sets, the organization regularly arranges digital, in-person, and global campaigns.



An Ablethrive user surfing the internet.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

AbleThrive is funded through donations, corporate sponsorship, and the marketing of products featured on its website.

The project has already expanded in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States. AbleThrive plans to expand it further by translating the content into other languages and subsequently replicating the model for other types of disabilities.

To become a partner, organizations must be aligned with AbleThrive's mission to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families. By contributing content to the AbleThrive network, partners open the door for collaborations and supporting each other's work. The membership is free of charge for both, users and partners.

**“I have been having a hard time accepting his limitations. To know there is such a community that understands your frustrations is encouraging.”**

Mother of a beneficiary

The information provided by AbleThrive is currently used in 16 spinal cord injury rehabilitation hospitals in the Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States. The organization's website has over 10,000 unique views per month, and to date it has had more than 2.5 million video views and 12,000 shares across social media.



**Brittany Dejean**

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### FACTS & FIGURES

- AbleThrive website receives some 10,000 unique visitors each month and to date it has had more than 2.5 million video views and 12,000 shares across social media.
- [AbleThrive.com](http://AbleThrive.com) is currently used in 16 hospitals in four countries specializing in spinal cord injuries.

# Bringing dance and artistic expression to people with and without disabilities worldwide

## UNITED STATES / DANCEABILITY INTERNATIONAL

DanceAbility International is an NGO based in Oregon, USA, with affiliate organizations around the world. DanceAbility offers classes, workshops, and performances providing integrated experiences of dance and artistic expression for people with and without disabilities. DanceAbility International runs two to three training courses a year for dance teachers, choreographers, therapists, and others who want to incorporate inclusive dance and movement into their work. As of October 2018, over 500 people with and without disabilities have been certified in the DanceAbility method in 35 countries.

### Problems Targeted

People with and without disabilities are often separated from each other and there is limited access to activities that support artistic expression and physical activity in integrated settings.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

The DanceAbility method uses improvisational dance to promote artistic expression in mixed ability settings. Since 1996, the organization has run a four-week teacher certification course once or twice a year, covering choreography for mixed ability groups, physicality, and the core DanceAbility exercises. Five-day intensive workshops are also available to provide a grounding in the methodology.

DanceAbility International has developed a Masters-level certification, first offered in 2015 and again in 2017, to scale-up the method further. This training was open to certified DanceAbility teachers so they

“DanceAbility erases the assumed distinction between able/disabled. For a time the separation is dissolved.”

Steve Paxton, choreographer, dancer and founder of Contact Improvisation

could run the five-day intensive workshops. There are now 21 teachers from 12 countries who are Certified Master Teachers of the DanceAbility method.

Through the training, dance practitioners' self-esteem and their exposure to people with different abilities increases. The curriculum supports mutual learning regardless of ability or disability and aims to cultivate cultural and artistic diversity through performance, collaboration, and education.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2017, some 23,000 people participated in or watched mixed abilities dance, up from 14,000 in 2014.
- As of 2018, there are 21 teachers from 12 countries who are Certified Master Teachers of the DanceAbility method.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

The next development is a third level of certification so that Master Teachers can teach the four-week certification course and support further replication. There are detailed manuals of the three training programmes (intensive, teacher certification, and Masters level), including exercises and teaching techniques, designed to support wider distribution and replication.

Approximately half of all funding comes from tuition fees, performance contract fees, tickets sales, licensing, and merchandise. A five-day workshop costs \$400 and the four-week certification course costs \$1,650. The remaining funding comes from donations, foundations, and grants.



A choreography for mixed ability groups.



Alito Alessi

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# Improving the criminal justice system for people with intellectual disabilities

UNITED STATES / THE ARC OF THE UNITED STATES – NCCJD, PATHWAYS TO JUSTICE®

Since 2013 The Arc of the United States, a nationwide advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has run the National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability (NCCJD). NCCJD's Pathways to Justice programme aims to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims, witnesses, defendants, and prisoners. The programme offers specialist training to develop local multidisciplinary Disability Response Teams, including self-advocates, to improve local systems. NCCJD trained nearly 1,000 people in 12 areas between 2015 and 2018.

## Problems Targeted

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities face significant discrimination within the American criminal justice system and are over-represented both as victims and inmates.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Pathways to Justice is designed and delivered in partnership with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It uses a multidisciplinary approach involving law enforcement, legal professionals, and victim advocates. It is unique in addressing the needs of both victims and suspects, defendants, and inmates with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Follow-

“Pathways to Justice is a holistic movement, motivating communities to work together to seek inclusive justice.”

Leigh Ann Davis, Director of Criminal Justice Initiatives, The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability

ing an initial local 'kick-off' training event, there is ongoing work to develop and sustain Disability Response Teams. These multidisciplinary teams identify systemic problems in their local communities and use their different perspectives to develop practical solutions.

Examples include developing new local policing protocols and reviewing local police training curricula to improve interactions with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some areas have developed lists of local organizations that can provide expert advice to criminal justice professionals or defendants or victims with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At a national level, NCCJD is in a



The Arc of Pikes Peak Disability Response Team.

consortium working to build a National Training and Technical Assistance Center on mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities, supported by the Bureau of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

NCCJD is grant-funded, with the largest contribution coming from the U.S. Department of Justice. In communities where agencies can cover training costs NCCJD charges a fee, but otherwise the training is offered for free.

Pathways to Justice was piloted in five sites across the US and has now been replicated in an additional seven locations, including California, Illinois, and Texas. In 2018, NCCJD created a train-the-trainer version to scale more efficiently, and this has been delivered to 30 trainers as of October 2018.

The U.S. Department of Justice is promoting the Pathways to Justice training on its website.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- NCCJD has supported over 10,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since it started in 2013.



Leigh Ann Davis

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# An airport rehearsal programme for people with disabilities, families, and staff

UNITED STATES / THE ARC OF THE UNITED STATES – WINGS FOR AUTISM

The Arc of the United States – a national NGO supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities – has developed Wings for Autism, an airport ‘rehearsal’ programme that allows people with autism and with intellectual or developmental disabilities, as well as their families, to practice all the steps involved in travelling by plane, and to do so in a safe and controlled environment. From 2014 to 2018, Wings for Autism has trained approximately 13,500 people with various disabilities, their family members, as well as airport and airline personnel.

## Problems Targeted

People with autism or intellectual disabilities and their families may be afraid to fly because they fear it will be unsuccessful. Furthermore, airport and aviation personnel lack the training and knowledge to address the needs of these families.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Wings for Autism was created by a local chapter of The Arc in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2011. As an airport ‘rehearsal’ programme, Wings for Autism provides vital support and assistance for families who have a child with autism or an intellectual or developmental disability when travelling by plane. Participants of the programme have the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtaining boarding passes, going through security, and boarding a plane. In addition to supporting families, the programme provides training on disability competency to airport, airline, and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) personnel. Wings for Autism has also created informational resources for the TSA, such as videos, for further awareness and education.

“The Wings event was such a great experience. My son feels very confident now.

Parent of a child with Autism from Indiana

From 2014 to 2018, Wings for Autism has held over 130 trainings in almost 60 airports throughout the United States, including in cities such as Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, and Washington, DC. To date, the programme has supported more than 13,000 people with autism or an intellectual or developmental disability as well

## FACTS & FIGURES

- To date, Wings for Autism has held over 130 events in close to 60 airports.
- The programme has trained some 1,800 aviation professionals in disability competency and inclusion.

as their families, and has trained some 1,800 aviation professionals in disability competency and inclusion.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

Each chapter of The Arc that aims to replicate the programme is charged a licensing fee, which includes the coordinator guide, logo, online registration, and technical assistance. In addition to collecting licensing fees, The Arc received a grant of \$111,000 from an anonymous foundation. Additional programme costs are covered by The Arc’s general operating budget.

Originating in Boston in 2011, Wings for Autism expanded nationally in 2014. The programme is applicable to both small and large airports, and therefore can be replicated globally. As of 2018, Wings for Autism is looking into expanding outside the United States into Canada.



Participants watch as flight attendants run through the safety procedures on the plane



Kerry Mauger

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# A depression management programme and microloans for women

## VIET NAM / BASICNEEDS VIET NAM

BasicNeeds is an international development NGO with headquarters in the United Kingdom. In 2014, the BasicNeeds branch in Viet Nam started a depression management programme for women in Da Nang city and later in the Thua Thien Hue province, offering group and individual psychotherapy. Moreover, BasicNeeds Viet Nam (BNVN) provides social livelihood training, like-skills training, and self-management courses. BNVN works with the public health care system and the Women's Union, a local network, at the community level. From 2014 to 2018, more than 350 women have benefitted from the programme.

### Problems Targeted

In Viet Nam more than 75 per cent of people with mental health issues receive little or no treatment because of the associated stigma with mental health and the limited capacity of the health system.

### Solution, Innovation, and Impact

Starting in 2014, BasicNeeds Viet Nam has been working to build the capacity of the health care system – from the grassroots level up to the national level – to enable health professionals to detect and treat depression. In addition, it offers training, social support, and livelihood preparation for women with depression in rural areas. Trainings are conducted in group therapy sessions and consist of learning about healthy activities, how to fight stressful situations, how to improve bad moods and tempers, and how to overcome barriers in order to lead a healthy life. There are 12 sessions and a “graduation” in the end.

“My husband understands my condition, doesn't blame me anymore, and he reminds me to go to the group every week.”

Mrs. Vuon, direct beneficiary of the project, Thuy Duong commune, Huong Thuy district, Thua Thien Hue province

Social support includes connections with existing local social networks, such as Women Union's groups, in which women with depression can share their problems and take the first steps toward becoming integrated into social networks. Livelihood preparation is mostly about microfinancing. After a basic training on how to manage their own household finances, BasicNeeds Viet Nam gives out small loans of \$150



BasicNeeds training on animation for facilitators.

to \$250 enable women to run their own business activities, such as establishing a street food shop or rearing livestock. Between 2014 and 2018, more than 350 women have benefitted from the programme.

### Funding, Outlook, and Transferability

BasicNeeds Viet Nam started with a grant of \$90,000 from the National Institute of Mental Health to initiate the project in Da Nang city. New funding in 2016 of \$760,000 enabled the organization to further develop the intervention model and to scale it to the Thua Thien Hue province. Two provincial mental hospitals, four district health centres, ten commune health stations, and several branches of the Women's Union act as partners and apply the intervention model.

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2017, 80 women successfully paid back their BasicNeeds loan.
- In 2018, BNVN has expanded to four new communes in Da Nang city and four new communes in Thua Thien Hue province.



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SECTION 3:

# Zero Project- Impact Transfer

A summary of the activities of the scaling and replication programme that Zero Project has developed jointly with Ashoka

## Scaling Innovations

How participants are selected, trained and supported.

## Twenty-one participants

The 21 participants of 2018 and 2019, and the impact that is being created.

# A unique global community and programme to replicate solutions for a barrier-free world

## ZERO PROJECT-IMPACT TRANSFER

While great business ideas tend to go global quickly to serve clients and customers around the world, important social innovations all too often remain local or national. Many of the ideas and the entrepreneurs behind them have the potential for global expansion, but the social sector lacks a process for transferring these innovations successfully.

This is where the Zero Project meets Ashoka – the leading global organization promoting social entrepreneurship and supporting over 3,600 social entrepreneurs in 80 countries. The Essl Foundation has enjoyed a long relationship with Ashoka, and in particular with Ashoka Austria. Ashoka Austria's Impact Transfer initiative focuses on supporting the international replication of proven social innovations where they are in demand by local stakeholders.

The Essl Foundation and Ashoka have combined their respective expertise and have initiated the first Impact Transfer programme to support the internationalization of innovative disability solutions for a barrier-free world. Each year, ten initiatives are selected for the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme. Application for the programme is open to projects that have been successfully shortlisted for a Zero Project Award and that have the potential and ambition to scale-up their impact.

**“It is very exciting for Ashoka to be working with the Zero Project, bringing together some of the world’s strongest social entrepreneurs for disability and spreading their ideas globally – thus further empowering those who are differently able to be real change-makers!”**

Bill Drayton, Founder and CEO, Ashoka

Over the course of the programme the selected initiatives receive training, mentoring, tailored support, networking, and visibility to further replicate their innovation and impact in other geographies, in collaboration with local replication partners. The goal is to make these initiatives ready for replication, to connect them with relevant replication partners, and to further support the replication through our Alumni Community.



Zero Project-Impact Transfer participants at the 2018 Conference.

### ABOUT ASHOKA

- The Impact Transfer programme is an initiative of Ashoka, the leading global community of social entrepreneurs and change-makers, with 35 years of experience and 3,600+ social innovators in 80 countries.
- We believe that innovative, system-changing solutions with a proven impact and business model are valuable worldwide.
- We enable the cross-border transfer of solutions that generate a strong social impact.
- We make these solutions available wherever they are needed and are in demand by local stakeholders.

[www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org) / [www.impact-transfer.org](http://www.impact-transfer.org)

# Lessons learned in the first year

## RESULTS FROM A SURVEY OF PROJECTS AND MENTORS IN 2018

Following the Zero Project Conference 2018, the first year of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme has been evaluated by Ashoka Austria, using questionnaire feedback from project leaders as well as mentors. Find here what the participants have identified as the most relevant lessons learned.

### Preliminary work is crucial

Most projects have developed opportunistically, and consequently the individuals involved have rarely taken the time to reflect on and to document their work clearly, particularly their outcomes and business model. Having a clear Theory of Change (or impact model) and business model is essential prior even to considering the issue of impact transfer or replication.

### Spreading the idea and impact, not the organization

Supported projects are focused on spreading their idea and impact, rather than their organization. To do so, projects should make it as easy as possible for others to be able to replicate their work.

### Transfer models

Most innovations tend to opt for a “train the trainer” or “consultancy” approach, providing capacity-building and training support to help replicators adapt and adopt the innovation in their context. “Social franchising” approaches are chosen by some more mature and well documented innovations that wish to keep more control over the replication project.

**“This programme came at the right time to help our navigation of impact transfer models, to show us how to assess our own programme’s strengths and weaknesses, and to indicate where to go next.”**

Zero Project–Impact Transfer 2018 participant

### Financing

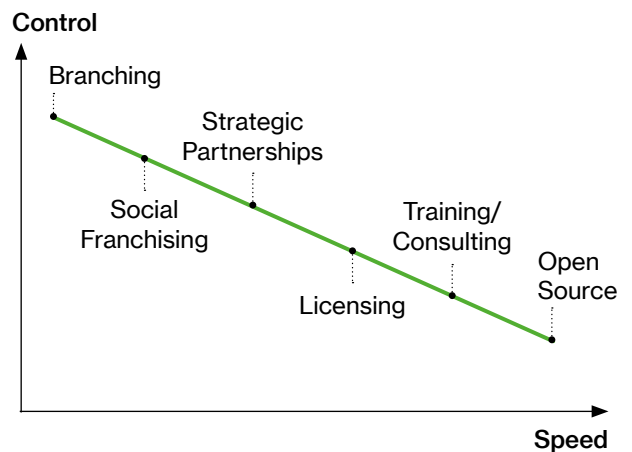
Financing the impact transfer work is challenging, both in terms of securing funding for the replication project itself but also for the necessary preparation work (documenting the model, establishing contacts and building trust with potential partners, site visits, adapting the model to the local context, etc.). Most of the supported innovations operate as non-profits and are heavily dependent on grants. Few projects have a social business model allowing them to receive commercial financing, such as bank loans.

### Tech-based projects

Tech-based projects seem to be able to transfer more

## CONTROL VERSUS SPEED

Giving up control allows you to potentially spread your impact much faster.



rapidly. Online platforms, for instance, can perhaps go to scale faster.

### Context-specificity

Context-specificity needs to be taken into account, as some innovations are strongly linked to gaps in their local context.

### Local resources

It has been proven that having a reliable resource in the transfer location helps to accelerate the replication process.

## FACTS & FIGURES

- 96% of participants would highly recommend this programme to others.
- All participants confirm the programme has been very useful for improving their internal capacity and expertise.
- 80% of participants believe it is extremely likely that they will be able to replicate their innovation and impact in another region.

# From selection to follow-up in five steps

## THE PROCESS OF THE ZERO PROJECT-IMPACT TRANSFER PROGRAMME

The Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme is based on a clearly defined process. It guides participants through a series of key questions designed to help them clarify and shape their transfer strategy. Participants are then matched with potential replication partners and promoted during the annual Zero Project Conference. It concludes with follow-up support and the creation of a permanent ecosystem of exchange and support for all alumni.

**“I am grateful for the experience of the Impact Transfer programme. It allowed me to examine my project; and by introducing me to different transfer models, it helped me define our collective work in a way that others can best replicate and transfer to their communities. The process was extremely helpful, especially to share this with a cohort of like-minded people with a passion for social impact.”**

Zero Project-Impact Transfer 2018 participant

### 1 Selection phase

*August-September*

Potential Zero Project-Impact Transfer participants are selected from the Zero Project shortlist, which is developed based on expert input from the worldwide Zero Project network. Potential participants complete a short application outlining any previous replication experience and giving more detail about their plans. Following an initial review of the applications, a team of experts arrange follow-up calls with the project organizers and make a final selection.

### 2 Clarifying the core

*October-November*

Key questions for participants: What is your Theory of Change (or impact model)? What is your core? What is your unique value proposition?

Participants are matched with a strategic mentor who works with them over the course of the programme. Prior to the first training webinar, participants work with their mentor to complete a transfer readiness check, helping them to assess their current readiness and to identify initial areas of focus.

The programme's five training webinars introduce participants to the key building blocks of a transfer strategy, with additional input from mentors, peers, expert guest speakers, and programme alumni. Participants then use the webinars and other tools to develop their impact model, business model, and replication plan.

### 3 Developing a transfer strategy

*December-January*

Key questions for participants: What do you want to replicate? How do you want to replicate? Where do you want to replicate? How will your replication be financed?

Once participants have worked through the key building blocks separately, they bring them together to start developing their complete replication strategy. They have an opportunity to share their early thinking with peers and mentors so as to receive feedback and suggestions to help them further clarify their strategy. This is an iterative process and continues up to the Zero Project Conference and beyond as participants continue to receive feedback from partners.

August      September      October      November      December

## 4 Identifying partners

January

Key question for participants: Which types of partners are needed for replication? Who can you connect with to validate your assumptions and/or explore collaboration opportunities?

Having the right partners – whether they are implementation partners, funders, or others helping you develop your network – is vital for successful replication. Once participants are clear on the components of their replication strategy, they can start thinking about the profile of their ideal implementation partners.

One of the strengths of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme is that it brings together the global networks of both Ashoka and the Zero Project. Once a partner profile has been developed, targeting matchmaking takes place with relevant partners across these networks ahead of, during, and after the Zero Project Conference. These partners can also help projects validate the assumptions underpinning their transfer strategies.

## 5 Sharpening the storyline

February

Ahead of the Zero Project Conference, participants spend two days together at an acceleration camp in Vienna. Through this camp, they can further refine their transfer strategy ahead of their session at the conference. The Zero Project Conference provides a dedicated session during which the Impact Transfer participants pitch their projects to conference delegates in an effort to identify potential partners. Delegates can make initial pledges to outline the type of support they might be able to offer the participants, such as funding, contacts, or implementation support.

### Alumni and implementation support

March onwards

Following the conference, participants continue to build on the contacts made through the programme and to explore transfer opportunities. There are regular calls with alumni to check on their progress and to offer any ongoing support needed to further refine their models or to put them in contact with new partners. Updates on some of the alumni from the 2017–2018 programme can be found on page 126.

### SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS

1. Five training webinars on impact modelling, business modelling, replication strategies, social franchising, and financing strategies.
2. Tailored mentoring with experts to help clarify their replication strategy.
3. Matchmaking with relevant replication partners from the Zero Project and Ashoka communities.
4. Visibility and pitching during the Zero Project Conference.
5. Implementation follow-up support, in particular for projects that are to be replicated in Austria.
6. Alumni community.

“Our amazing mentor provided us with wonderful out-of-the-box ideas for scaling and funding that we hadn’t considered beforehand, and which we are exploring now.”

Zero Project–Impact Transfer  
2018 participant

### WHAT IS STRATEGIC MENTORING?

The strategic mentors are a critical part of the programme. They provide a wealth of expertise and extensive networks, and act as the main ‘sparring partners’ for participants. By offering feedback and an objective perspective on the projects, they help participants identify current gaps and needs, and also work to help them prepare and refine their transfer strategy and pitch. All our mentors are listed in the project overviews on page 124.

January

February

March

# Overview of the 21 participants in 2018 and 2019

## PARTICIPANTS, COUNTRIES, SUMMARIES, AND MENTORS AT A GLANCE

In the programme's first years, 21 participants were selected from North America, South America, Europe, Middle East/North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Find here an overview of project summaries, countries of origin, and the mentors involved.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2018 | Mentor: Doris Rothauer  
MoMA offers a variety of programmes and services to ensure the accessibility of the museum and its collection, and has developed training to support other cultural institutions to improve their programming for people with disabilities.

#### DanceAbility International

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2019 | Mentor: Doris Rothauer  
DanceAbility International offers classes, workshops, and performances providing integrated experiences of dance and artistic expression for people with and without disabilities. It also runs training for dance teachers, choreographers, and others wanting to incorporate inclusive dance and movement into their work (see also p. 114).



DanceAbility International offers classes, workshops, and performances providing integrated experiences of dance and artistic expression for people with and without disabilities.

#### Pathways to Justice®, The National Center for Criminal Justice and Disability, The Arc of the United States

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2019 | Mentor: Philipp Haydn  
The Pathways to Justice® programme aims to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims, witnesses, defendants, and prisoners with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The programme offers specialist training to develop local multidisciplinary Disability Response Teams to improve local systems (see also page 115).

#### Flashsonar, World Access for the Blind

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2018 | Mentor: Alexander Kesselring  
Flashsonar is a technique that helps the visually impaired to use their own 'human sonar' to perceive their surroundings by using a clicking-of-tongue technique.

#### Understood.org, National Center for Learning Disabilities

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2018 | Mentor: Stephan Dertnig  
Understood.org is a free comprehensive website resource for parents of children aged 3–20+ with learning and attention issues. It offers more than 2,500 pieces of expert-vetted content, five interactive tools, daily access to experts, and an on-site/social media community of parents and experts.

#### VL2 Storybook Creator, Gallaudet University

Country of origin: United States  
Year: 2018 | Mentor: Philipp Haydn  
The VL2 Storybook Creator is an IT-platform and app that provides a bilingual reading experience in written and sign language, and allows anyone to create his or her own bilingual storybook.

### SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

#### Unidos Somos Iguales (Unidos)

Country of origin: Mexico  
Year: 2019 | Mentor: Helmut Maukner  
Unidos runs social programmes for people with and without disabilities. It trains young people as volunteers (called "allies"), thus increasing their disability awareness and empowering them to accompany people with disabilities to participate in Unidos's integrated social programmes (see also page 89).

#### Profamilia, ASDOWN Colombia, LICA, and PAIIS

Country of origin: Colombia  
Year: 2019 | Mentor: Loic van Cutsem  
These four organizations work together to promote and safeguard the sexual and reproductive rights of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. They have developed training and information for health professionals, judges, young people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, and their families (see also page 61).

#### Accessibility Promotion Agents, Escola de Gente

Country of origin: Brazil  
Year: 2019 | Mentor: Rizwan Tayabali  
The Accessibility Promotion Agents programme supports young people with and without disabilities to promote the rights of people with disabilities. The certified training gives these young people the skills to identify and intervene when the rights of people with disabilities have been violated – key skills that also increase their employability.

## EUROPE

### **GRETA app, Greta and Starks**

Country of origin: Germany

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Holger Dieterich

The GRETA app provides captioning and audio description for films shown in cinemas on users' smartphones, giving people with visual and hearing impairments more choice about when and where they watch films (see also page 65).

### **Mirrorable, Fightthestroke**

Country of origin: Italy

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Alexander Ertler

Mirrorable is a home-based, online therapy platform that uses the science of mirror neurones to improve motor function in young people with cerebral palsy (see also page 80).

### **Top Easy, Capito and the Austrian Press Agency**

Country of origin: Austria

Year: 2018 | Mentor: Rainer Reich

Top Easy is a cooperation between Capito and the Austrian Press Agency to produce a daily news service in easy language.

### **kinderhände**

Country of origin: Austria

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Alexander Frech

kinderhände offers bilingual playgroups and learning materials to support hearing families of children who are deaf, children with deaf parents, and children with hearing impairments to learn sign language together (see also page 50).

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

### **Solar Ear**

Country of origin: Botswana

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Stephan Dertnig

Solar Ear manufactures low-cost, environmentally-friendly hearing aids and solar-rechargeable batteries. The company employs and trains people who are deaf to manufacture the hearing aids and to lead the replication of the technology in other countries (see also page 52).

## MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

### **Seeds of Wellness, Enosh – The Israeli Association of Mental Health**

Country of origin: Israel

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Franz Haslauer

Enosh has developed training on trauma and a trauma-informed housing model to support women with psychosocial disabilities who live with post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of sexual abuse (see also p. 77).

### **Empowerment Through Integration (ETI)**

Country of origin: Lebanon

Year: 2019 | Mentor: Stephan Dertnig

ETI works with young people with visual impairments, offering life-skills training in group and one-to-one settings, parent workshops, and other community activities to promote social inclusion (see also page 83).

### **Friendship Parks, Beit Issie Shapiro**

Country of origin: Israel

Year: 2018 | Mentor: Loic van Cutsem

Friendship Park is an accessible and inclusive playground, and Beit Issie Shapiro has developed a methodology to replicate it all over Israel.

## ASIA

### **Enable Vaani, Enable India**

Country of origin: India

Year: 2018 | Mentor: Vishal Anand

Enable Vaani is a mobile phone-based information sharing service that allows users to listen and respond to recorded voice messages from the disability community regarding education and employment opportunities, workplace solutions, enhanced life skills, and more.

### **Jaipur Foot**

Country of origin: India

Year: 2018 | Mentor: Rizwan Tayabali

Jaipur Foot provides artificial limbs, calipers, wheelchairs, tricycles, and even economic assistance to amputees and people with limited mobility, particularly in rural areas.



kinderhände offers bilingual playgroups and learning materials to learn sign language together.

**“Overwhelming, very professionally coordinated programme ... I learned a lot from my mentee, and this experience opened my eyes and heart to the disability movement.”**

*A mentor of the programme*

### **Inspire2Care, Karuna Foundation**

Country of origin: Nepal

Year: 2018 | Mentor: Alexander Ertler

The Inspire2Care model creates disability-inclusive communities in rural areas. The programme focuses on the prevention of childhood disability, developing community-based rehabilitation services, and strengthening community systems to continue the work.

### **The Suryakanti Foundation Centre**

Country of origin: Indonesia

Year: 2018 | Mentors: Karin Schetelig,

Dominik Bundschuh, and Shirley Pranato

The Suryakanti Foundation Centre provides clinical services and education for young children with disabilities as well as parental instruction on how to care for children with a disability. The centre has also developed innovative tools for early detection and intervention, particularly in rural areas.

# The impact that is created by Impact Transfer

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF THE IMPACT TRANSFER PROGRAMME, 2017–2018

Since the 2018 Zero Project Conference, the first cohort of Impact Transfer participants have been busy working with potential partners to replicate their impact in a new local context. Here are just some of the stories from the first year of the project showcasing how alumni are scaling-up their impact across international borders one year on.

### Capito grows its impact within Austria and explores expansion to Brazil



Capito works in partnership with the Austrian Press Agency to deliver an easy-language news service, called Top Easy. Following the Impact Transfer programme, Capito's initial focus was on replication and scaling-up its impact within Austria. Key to this has been continued work with the Austrian Press Agency, with additional support from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Consumer Protection. Further, as a result of working with the ORF teletext service (Austria's national broadcaster), Capito has seen an increase from 40,000 people using the service monthly in 2017 to 100,000 per month in 2018. In February 2019, Capito will be holding a workshop with Escola de Gente (a 2019 Zero Project–Impact Transfer participant) to discuss possible replication opportunities in Brazil.

*“Top Easy is an innovative initiative. It complements communications accessibility features, such as sign language and audio description, and as such we are looking for ways to bring the project to Brazil and Latin America.”*

Claudia Werneck, journalist and founder, Escola de Gente

### Enable India is building partnerships in Ethiopia

Enable India is a non-profit organization that developed a mobile phone-based information sharing service called Enable Vaani. Users from the disability community listen and respond to recorded voice messages regarding education, employment, social opportunities, and more. Enable India is currently focused on replicating their impact in Ethiopia, working with a local partner, the Ethiopian Centre for Disability and Development, and with Ethio Telecom, Ethiopia's major telecommunications corporation. As of December 2018, the organization was working to secure local funding partners to cover the initial costs. Currently, Enable India is also in conversation with further potential partners in Bangladesh, Mauritius, Nepal, and Paraguay, and has used lessons learned from its experience in Ethiopia to further refine its strategy.

*“We are excited and optimistic with the possibility of bringing the social impact of our Enable Vaani project to Ethiopia and beyond. We believe our model and platform has the potential to change lives by bringing together people with disabilities and sharing challenges and triumphs.”*

Julian Tarbox, Programme Manager, Enable India

### World Access for the Blind brings its echolocation navigation to Austria

World Access for the Blind (WAFTB) is a US-based NGO, founded by Ashoka Fellow Daniel Kish. Totally blind, Daniel learned a new way to see and navigate freely, using FlashSonar (click of tongue) echolocation. Daniel and his trainers teach advanced orientation and mobility skills using their 'perceptual navigation' approach. Following some initial work in Austria in 2015, and with support from Ashoka and seed funding from a foundation following the Impact Transfer programme, WAFTB now wants to reach out to a broader public in Austria. To achieve this, WAFTB is organizing a series of events in 2019 together with local partners. These events are expected to contribute to changing the Austrian public's perception of blind people and to inspire blind people to make full use of their possibilities.

*“For me the most invigorating and motivating aspect of the Impact Transfer programme has been the affirmation that our work is meaningful, that it is worth supporting, that it is worth expanding and furthering, and that it can and deserves to grow to meet the urgent needs of blind people and many others throughout the world.”*

Daniel Kish, Ashoka Fellow and Founder-CEO, World Access for the Blind



## Beit Issie Shapiro to build internationally on successful replication in Israel



A Beit Issie Shapiro accessible playground.

Beit Issie Shapiro is a non-profit organization based in Israel that developed Friendship Park, the country's first accessible and inclusive playground. As of 2018, the model has been replicated in 30 areas throughout Israel. To support replication, Beit Issie Shapiro has developed training workshops tailored to the needs of communities interested in having an accessible playground in their area, and it offers ongoing support throughout implementation. Following the 2018 Zero Project Conference, Beit Issie Shapiro was invited to Graz, Austria, to present its accessible playground model and to continue discussions with Austrian organizations. It is also exploring the use of Sesame St. Jordan materials for the development of a playground for Arabic-speaking children in Israel, which they hope will be scalable to Arabic-speaking countries.

*“Beit Issie Shapiro was honoured to take part in the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme. We found it helped us conceptualize in a new way the work that we have been doing in Israel for the past 12 years, with international transference in mind. With the help of our wonderful mentor, we were able to focus on which aspects of the model to transfer and to build a clear and flexible transference model. We also acquired knowledge and tools that we are applying to our other international activities.”*

Sharon Yehekel-Oron, Global Professional Development Manager,  
Beit Issie Shapiro

## Museum of Modern Art in New York runs first training session in Germany

MoMA, the largest museum of modern and contemporary art in the United States, offers a variety of programmes to ensure the accessibility of the museum and its collection. Its Community and Access Programs serve over 18,000 individuals per year; and through the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme, the MoMA team was able to develop a five-year plan to train cultural institutions around the world to design and initiate activities for people with disabilities.

Following the 2018 Zero Project Conference, and with the ongoing support of MoMA mentor Doris Rothauer, MoMA pursued leads in Germany and Austria. In November 2018, the team delivered its first training sessions since the launch of the new Impact Transfer programme, attended by the German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Relating to Persons with Disabilities as well as the Austrian National Committee of the International Council of Museums. Representatives from over 20 museums in the region also attended the MoMA workshops and lectures, held in Berlin and Vienna; and Rotraut Krall of Vienna's famed Kunsthistorisches Museum noted that the presentation was “wonderful, enthusiastically performed, and with great empathy.”



Jürgen Dusel, German Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Relating to Persons with Disabilities, and Carrie McGee, Assistant Director, Community and Access Programs, MoMA.

*“I strongly believe in the change-making power of art and creativity, contributing to a more inclusive society. Being a regular mentor for the Zero Project gives me the opportunity to support and foster the impact that art organizations and initiatives have, by making it more visible, effective, and scalable. It has been a fantastic experience so far, and a win-win situation: I learn from my mentees, they learn from me, and together we contribute to breaking down barriers between people with and without disabilities.”*

Doris Rothauer, Mentor for MoMA



# The TOPHOUSE Project

A summary of the current research and results of the TOPHOUSE project about promising practices in person-centred housing in Europe

## About TOPHOUSE

What the TOPHOUSE project on self-centred housing is about.

## Promising Practices

20 Promising Practices on person-centred housing in Europe.

# Towards Person-Centred Housing Services in Europe

## METHOD AND RESULTS OF THE TOPHOUSE PROJECT

With funding from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, the TOPHOUSE project aims to develop an integrated housing environment by incorporating the principles of the UN CRPD. In addition, TOPHOUSE provides practical tools and training resources to enable staff to produce quality housing assessments that also take into account individual support needs by using a person-centred approach. Find a summary of TOPHOUSE and preliminary results in this section of the Report.

TOPHOUSE reaches out to a wide range of audiences within the housing sector, but with a special focus on allocation officers, housing officers, housing options staff, and support workers.

### The TOPHOUSE approach, step-by-step

In the first step of TOPHOUSE, all partners (see list) used findings from existing research and current practices to develop a common understanding of the challenges faced by users of social housing and their staff. A person-centred approach and UN CRPD principles were integrated into the findings. In the second step, the partners developed practical tools for four key areas:

- needs assessment
- housing allocation
- support provision
- cross-sectoral co-operation

In the next step, the essential elements of each tool were identified and 'learning outcomes' were defined by all partners. For example, Homeless Link, one of the partners, developed a universal staff training programme supported by related materials, tools, and a formal curriculum. At the same time, a Train-the-Trainer Course was designed to increase training capacity and delivery within and beyond the TOPHOUSE partnership.

As of January 2019, the final phase has begun, focusing primarily on the training, localization, testing, and showcasing of the TOPHOUSE tools. In the coming months all delivering partner will consult with national stakeholders and then localize, pilot, and revise the TOPHOUSE products.

The TOPHOUSE training programme will be launched at the national and international level. A number of launch events – including the Zero Project Conference 2019 on Independent Living and Political Participation – will help build awareness and acceptance of TOPHOUSE products, develop locally supported housing partnerships, and establish avenues to different levels of formal recognition and/or accreditation, as circumstances may allow, using local training institutions, employers, and awarding bodies.

### About the TOPHOUSE Promising Practices

The Promising Practices are part of the TOPHOUSE Report and provide an overview of the existing practices for the allocation of social housing in many European countries, which have also served as a basis for developing the TOPHOUSE training course. The selection of the Promising Practices is based on a call for practices that was launched in March 2018 by the Zero Project and disseminated by all TOPHOUSE partners.

### WHAT IS ERASMUS+?

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad from 2013 to 2020.

### TOPHOUSE OUTCOMES & DELIVERABLES

- TOPHOUSE Report – A Study on Promising Practices in Integrated Housing & Support (EASPD, Brussels and Essl Foundation, Austria)
- Pack on Assessment of Needs & Rights (Aspa Foundation, FI)
- Pack on Needs and Allocation of Housing (ICSH, Ireland)
- Pack on Support Needs Assessment (Support Girona, Spain)
- Pack on Developing Cross-sectoral Cooperation (Jugend am Werk, Austria)
- TOPHOUSE Training Course (Homeless Link, United Kingdom)



## SEVEN TOPHOUSE PARTNERS FROM SIX COUNTRIES

### Aspa Foundation/Finland

The Aspa foundation's mission is to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities and people recovering from mental health problems to live an independent and autonomous life. The organization develops individually-tailored, high-quality, and safe living solutions in ordinary residential environments. Additionally, Aspa strives to influence the design and construction of housing and local communities so as to treat the needs of all members of society equally.

Website: [www.aspa.fi/en](http://www.aspa.fi/en)

Contact person: *Maarit ALTO*

### EASPD/Belgium

The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit umbrella organization that represents approximately 16,000 support service providers for persons with disabilities. The main objective of EASPD is to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems.

Website: [www.easpd.eu/en](http://www.easpd.eu/en)

Contact person: Carmen *ARROYO DE SANDE*

### Essl Foundation (Zero Project)/Austria

The Essl Foundation MGE gemeinnützige Privatstiftung is a private, not-for-profit foundation established in 2007 by Martin and Gerda Essl and their children for social purposes. The organization seeks to support social innovation and social entrepreneurship and focuses on the rights of persons with disabilities globally. Additionally, the foundation's mission is to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to work for a world without barriers.

Website: [www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org)

Contact person: *Seema MUNDACKAL*

### Homeless Link/United Kingdom (England)

Homeless Link is a national membership charity for organizations working directly with people who become homeless in England. The organization works with providers, commis-

sioners, and experts to improve services and to campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

Website: [www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)

Contact person: *Wendy GREEN*

### Irish Council for Social Housing/Ireland

The Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) is a national social housing federation representing over 300 housing associations across Ireland. As a representative organization, the ICSH works with statutory and other voluntary organizations to identify and streamline mechanisms to promote social housing through policy development and analysis.

Website: [www.icsh.ie](http://www.icsh.ie)

Contact person: *Catherine McGILLYCUDDY*

### Jugend am Werk/Austria

Jugend am Werk (JaW, literally "Youth at Work") is a registered non-profit organization in Vienna that runs two limited liability companies: the "Jugend am Werk Berufsausbildung für Jugendliche GmbH" and the "Jugend am Werk Begleitung von Menschen mit Behinderung GmbH." The overall objective of JaW and its limited liability companies is to provide a wide range of high-quality services so as to empower disadvantaged persons to live independent and autonomous lives and to ensure their inclusion in society.

Website: [www.jaw.at](http://www.jaw.at)

Contact person: *Daniela ERBER*

### SUPPORT/Spain (Catalunya)

SUPPORT is an independent, non-profit foundation established in 2003 whose main objective is to defend, promote, and develop the human rights of people with disabilities (psychosocial disabilities, cognitive impairment related to the ageing process, and intellectual disabilities) while enabling individuals to pursue their well-being, ensure their dignity, and preserve their autonomy through legal protection and social support.

Website: [www.supportgirona.cat](http://www.supportgirona.cat)

Contact person: *Ferrán BLANCO ROS*

The selection criteria for the Promising Practices focused on four core areas:

- Assessment of housing needs of persons with disabilities.
- Inclusive allocation models of social housing for persons with disabilities.
- Support and assistance models in community living and community-based rehabilitation, including the access to affordable and accessible housing.
- Cooperation models with stakeholders, community

developers, or local social planners that improve allocation, affordability, and accessibility of social housing for persons with disabilities.

Forty-six applications were received, evaluated, and shortlisted by an expert jury composed of one representative per TOPHOUSE project partner organization. Finally, in a two-phase evaluation process, 27 Promising Practices from 18 countries were selected. Find short summaries of 20 of them on the following pages.

# Twenty Promising Practices of TOPHOUSE

Innovations in independent living in the community, housing models, assisted housing, etc.

## PROMISING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE SELF-CENTRED HOUSING IN EUROPE

Country	The practice in a nutshell	Name of Organization	Name of Project	Page
Austria	Helping people with disabilities live inclusively in a house together in Austria	Jugend am Werk		<a href="#">133</a>
Austria	Creating intergenerational, barrier-free inclusive housing in Austria	Evangelisches Diakoniewerk Gallneukirchen	LeNa	<a href="#">133</a>
Austria	Promoting and operating innovative, inclusive housing projects in Tirol, Austria	Lebenshilfe Tirol		<a href="#">133</a>
Belgium	Creating innovative neighborhood centres that safeguard the inclusion of people with disabilities in Flanders	Flemish Agency for People with a Disability	Zewopa	<a href="#">134</a>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities and their communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Union of organizations for support to persons with intellectual disability of the Federation of B&H "SUMERO"	Life in Local Community	<a href="#">135</a>
Croatia	Helping improve the quality of life for individuals with autism in Croatia	Autism Association - Zagreb	Autism Independent	<a href="#">134</a>
Croatia	Using "person-centred" planning to help deinstitutionalize individuals in Croatia	Centre of Rehabilitation Zagreb		<a href="#">134</a>
Czech Republic	Providing supported housing and employment opportunities to persons with intellectual disabilities	Portus Praha z.ú.	Portus Praha	<a href="#">135</a>
Denmark	Helping homeless Danish young adults work towards independence, education, and employment	The Home for All Alliance	The Home for All Alliance	<a href="#">135</a>
Finland	Supporting quality of life through co-production and collaboration with staff and families	Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS)	CO for GOOD	<a href="#">135</a>
Finland	Training caregivers, families, and patients to help smooth transitions while moving	Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS)	Training For Moving	<a href="#">136</a>
Finland	Training individuals with disabilities and their families to become more autonomous in Finland	Kehitysvammaliitto/The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities		<a href="#">136</a>
Greece	Helping individuals with mental health problems develop the personal and social skills for independent living	Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health	The Protected Apartments	<a href="#">137</a>
Hungary	Providing assistive services in housing for individuals with disabilities in Hungary	Equal Chances Foundation (ECF)	The Integrated House I	<a href="#">138</a>
Italy	Developing wide-scale social housing through philanthropy in Italy	European Parliament and Fondazione Cariplo	Fondazione Housing Sociale	<a href="#">137</a>
Moldova	Promoting social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities through accessible housing in Moldova	Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association	Community for All Moldova Program	<a href="#">136</a>
Netherlands	Supporting assisted living in an individual home – privately run and privately financed	The Thomashuizen	Thomashuis	<a href="#">138</a>
Romania	Developing a "preparation for independent living centres" programme in Romania	Pro ACT Suport Association		<a href="#">137</a>
Romania	Administering two types of "protected homes" in Romania	Pentru Voi" Foundation		<a href="#">139</a>
Serbia	Helping deinstitutionalize individuals with intellectual disabilities in Serbia through personalized support	Elementary and Secondary Boarding School "Milan Petrovic"		<a href="#">139</a>



Marianne, happy in her new home.

## Helping people with disabilities live inclusively in a house together in Austria

**Austria / Jugend am Werk**

Jugend am Werk Steiermark is a non-governmental organization offering support for people with disabilities, children and young people, and families as well as refugees. It also provides assistance to people looking for education, training, and work.

The organization works in 80 facilities throughout the province of Styria, Austria, and most of the services for people with disabilities are financed by the Styria regional government.

✉ Gabriele Perissutti – [gabriele.perissutti@jaw.or.at](mailto:gabriele.perissutti@jaw.or.at)



Doing your laundry yourself, finally.

## Promoting and operating innovative, inclusive housing projects in Tirol, Austria

**Austria / Lebenshilfe Tirol**

Lebenshilfe Tirol is a non-profit organization that spiritedly accompanies people with disabilities on their way to a fully accessible, self-determined, and fulfilling life, mostly financed by the regional government of Tyrol, an Austrian province.

✉ Tabea Ebel  
[t.ebel@tirol.lebenshilfe.at](mailto:t.ebel@tirol.lebenshilfe.at)



Enjoying an intergenerational walk.

## Creating intergenerational, barrier-free inclusive housing in Austria

**Austria / Evangelisches Diakoniewerk Gallneukirchen – LeNa**

Diakoniewerk is an Austrian non-governmental organization that runs approximately 150 institutions and develops numerous projects and offerings, addressing people with disabilities, elderly people, refugees, as well as health or education related services in general. Further, Diakoniewerk addresses the issue of affordable and assisted living for elderly people by conceptualizing cross-generation housing models that already have been put in place in different regions in Austria (rural areas as well as city centres). Diakoniewerk is a strong partner among politicians, local authorities, architects, and property developers for conceptualizing the social aspects of such projects and for supporting the concept in its operational process of implementing and developing a supporting structure and network among tenants and neighbours.

Diakoniewerk's LeNa-project (LeNa is the abbreviation of the German expression "Lebendige Nachbarschaft," or living neighbourhood) is a concept of intergenerational neighbourhood-branding and inclusive social housing. The concept aims to support all tenants to live a self-determined life in their own homes as long as possible.

✉ Daniel Palk – [d.palk@diakoniewerk.at](mailto:d.palk@diakoniewerk.at)



Summer amusement on the porch of Community Center Nieuweland in Zwijndrecht.

## Creating innovative neighbourhood centres that safeguard the inclusion of people with disabilities in Flanders

**Belgium / Flemish Agency for People with a Disability – Zewopa**

Zewopa is a non-governmental organization offering a wide range of integrated support (nursing, domestic help, individual and collective guidance, transport, personal assistance, and occupational therapy) for people with disabilities, mostly financed by the regional government of Flanders. It also organizes inclusive living and social housing for people with disabilities, with 90 per cent of clients fully supported by Zewopa.

Zewopa is the abbreviation of the Dutch “Zelfstandig wonen met persoonlijke assistentie,” or “living independently with the support of personal assistance.” The organization has been recognized and subsidized for many years by the Flemish Agency for People with a Disability as a service provider specialized in supporting people with disabilities in their daily activities.

✉ Rudi Kennes – [Rudi.kennes@vaph.be](mailto:Rudi.kennes@vaph.be)

## Improving the quality of life for individuals with autism in Croatia

**Croatia / Autism Association - Zagreb – Autism Independent: Development of Community-Based Supported Housing Services for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders**

The mission of the Autism Association Zagreb (AAZ), a non-governmental organization, is to protect and promote the rights and improve the quality of life of persons with autism living in the city of Zagreb and in Zagrebacka county, Croatia.

The organization helps provide community-based social services, with an emphasis on organized housing and support for adults with autism in their local community. The AAZ is a humanitarian and non-profit organization established in 1997 by parents of persons with autism spectrum disorders.

✉ Slavica Dujmović  
[uaz.zagreb@gmail.com](mailto:uaz.zagreb@gmail.com)



Sports competition at the Center of Rehabilitation in Zagreb.

## Using “person-centred” planning to help deinstitutionalize individuals in Croatia

**Croatia / Centre of Rehabilitation Zagreb**

Supported-living housing is a social service that provides support to one or more persons with intellectual disabilities at home and/or in the community by providing them their basic needs and also the ability to actively participate in social, vocational, cultural, educational, and recreational activities.

Established in 2013, the Centre for Rehabilitation Zagreb provides social services in accordance with the principles of person-centred planning and active support

✉ Marija Borovec – [marija.borovec385@gmail.com](mailto:marija.borovec385@gmail.com)





Where job opportunities go hand in hand with supported housing.

## Providing supported housing and employment opportunities to persons with intellectual disabilities

**Czech Republic / Portus Praha z.ú.**

Portus Praha is a non-governmental organization that provides sheltered and supported housing as well as employment opportunities to persons with intellectual disabilities. It is financed from a number of sources, including state and regional subsidies, contributions from service users, and proceeds from fundraising.

✉ Lucie Šišková – [siskova@portus.cz](mailto:siskova@portus.cz)

## Supporting quality of life through co-production and collaboration with staff and families

**Finland / Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability – CO for GOOD**

The Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS) is a national service provider and developer with roots in parent-led governance. The foundation supports people with intellectual disabilities and other special requirements, as well as their families. The foundation is committed to developing new innovations that can make a difference in the lives of people with an intellectual disability and their families, and by doing so to improve the quality of life for all concerned. It engages in models of service provision that are person-centred, practical, and of high-quality standards.

KVPS is also the founder and owner organization of the KVPS Tukena Ltd., which provides and develops housing and support services all over Finland.

✉ Petra Rantamäki  
[petra.rantamaki@kvps.fi](mailto:petra.rantamaki@kvps.fi)

## Empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities and their communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Bosnia and Herzegovina / Union of organizations for support to persons with intellectual disability of the Federation of B&H “SUMERO”**

*See Innovative Practice on page 51.*

## Helping homeless Danish young adults work towards independence, education, and employment

**Denmark / The Home for All Alliance**

The Home for All Alliance is a non-governmental organization representing 14 partners from the public and private sectors and civil society, including municipalities, foundations, social housing NGOs, businesses, and educational institutions. It works with over 50 organizations focusing on social innovation projects for ending homelessness among young adults. The organization helps to provide permanent housing, strengthen social networks, and offer solid and integrated social support.

✉ Vibe Klarup – [vibe@hjemtilalle.dk](mailto:vibe@hjemtilalle.dk)



An alternative way to get to know the floor plan of your new home.

## Training caregivers, families, and patients to help smooth transitions while moving

### Finland / Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability – Training For Moving

Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS) is a national service provider and developer, with roots in parent-led governance. The foundation supports people with an intellectual disability and others with special needs as well as their families, and is committed to developing innovations that can improve the quality of life for all those concerned. The foundation engages in models of service provision that are person-centred, practical, and of high standards. KVPS is also the founder and owner organization of the KVPS Tukena Ltd., which provides and develops housing and support services all over Finland. KVPS's Training for Moving programme is designed to provide support to people with special requirements who are about to move from their childhood home to independent or supported housing, as well as those moving from institutional to community-based services.

✉ Katja Marjamäki – [katja.marjamaki@kvps.fi](mailto:katja.marjamaki@kvps.fi)

## Training individuals with disabilities and their families to become more autonomous in Finland

### Finland / Kehitysvammaliitto / The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAIDD) works with a number of institutions, such as:

- SAVAS, a non-governmental organization offering housing and support for people with disabilities living in Savo, Finland, financed by service revenues and grants;
- South Karelia Social and Health Care District, a regional administrative body offering public health and social services for all persons living in the area;
- Setlementtiasunnot (the Finnish Federation of Settlement Houses), a non-governmental organization offering social housing for persons with and without disabilities.

FAIDD's project has three employees and works with around 60 individuals with disabilities as well as their families, support workers, and municipalities. The programme is implemented in five municipalities, varying in size and service structure.

✉ Susanna Rieppo – [susanna.rieppo@kvl.fi](mailto:susanna.rieppo@kvl.fi)



Beneficiaries participating at the Porukoissa Hackathon.

## Promoting social inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities through accessible housing in Moldova

### Moldova / Keystone Human Services International Moldova Association – Community for All Moldova Programme

See *Innovative Practice* on page 90.



Harvest time at the Independent Living Centre.

## Developing a “preparation for independent living centers” programme in Romania

Romania / Pro ACT Support Association

See *Innovative Practice* on page 94.



An accessible building by Fondazione Housing Sociale.

## Developing wide-scale social housing through philanthropy in Italy

Italy / European Parliament and Fondazione Cariplo – Fondazione Housing Sociale

Fondazione Cariplo is a grant-making foundation with its origins in banking and based in Milan. Fondazione Housing Sociale was established by Fondazione Cariplo with the participation and support of the Lombardy Region and ANCI Lombardy (the regional branch of the Italian Association of Municipalities) to develop its programmes on social housing

✉ Patricia Frias – [PatriciaFrias@FondazioneCariplo.it](mailto:PatriciaFrias@FondazioneCariplo.it)



Preparations for the World Mental Health Day!

## Supporting individuals with mental health problems in developing the personal and social skills for independent living

Greece / Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health – The Protected Apartments

The Protected Apartments project of the Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health (EKP&PSY) seeks to promote independent community life, equal participation, and active citizenship, as well as occupational (re)integration into the community.

Beneficiaries living in protected apartments are people with mental health disabilities who cannot live independently alone or with family due to unfavourable health, social, residential, or family conditions. The programme of protected apartments is either the next step of the rehabilitation and inclusion process after residential housing or the transitional solution for people with disabilities who are not yet able to live completely independently

✉ Athina Fragkouli – [ekpsath@otenet.gr](mailto:ekpsath@otenet.gr)



Feeding pigs at the Thomashuis.

## Assisted living in an individual home – privately run and financed

### Netherlands / The Thomashuizen – Thomashuis

A Thomashuis is a home in which eight to nine adults with intellectual disabilities live together with two caregivers, who run the privately financed house as self-employed entrepreneurs. The franchise concept was launched in the Netherlands in 2008, and today there are already 118 Thomashuizen in some 100 communities throughout the country.

The Thomashuis concept is owned by the franchise company De Drie Notenboomen, based in Gouda, which also consults with the Ministry of Health and Care as well as politicians and other stakeholders.

✉ Edwin de Vos – [Edwin.devos@upcmail.nl](mailto:Edwin.devos@upcmail.nl)

## Providing assistive services in housing for individuals with disabilities in Hungary

### Hungary / Equal Chances! Foundation – The Integrated House I

Equal Chances! Foundation (ECF) provides integrated housing support for persons with disabilities and their families. The idea to develop such a methodology and to build houses with 15 accessible flats was a response to a clear demand: How can families with an adult member with a disability or elderly parents with an adult child with a disability access a complex mix of services close to a rehabilitation centre offering employment opportunities, health care, a peer community, and social integration? There are some families who want to stay together, or for whom it is unthinkable to live separately from their disabled family member. The essence of the ECF programme is that there is a social centre nearby, everyone has his/her own residence, and everyone can live a safe and independent life. The project won the Essl Social Prize in 2009.

✉ Erzsébet Szekeres – [info@egyenloeselyekert.hu](mailto:info@egyenloeselyekert.hu)



Cooking at Milan Petrovic...

## Helping deinstitutionalize individuals with intellectual disabilities in Serbia through personalized support

Serbia / Elementary and Secondary Boarding School “Milan Petrovic”

See *Innovative Practice* on page 95.



... and at Pentru Voi.

## Administering two types of “protected homes” in Romania

Romania / Pentru Voi Foundation

The Pentru Voi Foundation is a private non-governmental organization that runs a protected homes initiative as well as other social programmes, such as day centres, for people with developmental disabilities. The foundation is the largest in the western part of Romania providing support for people with intellectual disabilities, with 78 employees and almost 200 service users.

The programme, which began in 1999, now includes six protected community homes in the community, housing 27 adults who are supported by 17 employees. The purpose of the programme is to provide people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to live in the community, to participate in the social life of the city, and to have leisure time. Another essential aspect is to offer people with intellectual disabilities, even those with profound and multiple disabilities, the opportunity to make decisions regarding their own lives, such as what to eat, what to wear, and how to spend their leisure time. Furthermore, beneficiaries should also have the opportunity to maintain relationships in the community with friends and neighbours.

✉ Laila Dana Onu – [laila.onu@pentruvoi.ro](mailto:laila.onu@pentruvoi.ro)



# Summary in Easy Language

A summary of this Report, simplified

# About the Zero Project

The Essl Foundation started the Zero Project in 2008.  
The mission was to work for a world without barriers.

To do this, the Zero Project relies on the UN CRPD.

**UN CRPD** is short for

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

The United Nations is an international organization.

The UN CRPD is a treaty

that was signed by *almost every country* around the world.

The treaty should protect

the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

The Zero Project provides information about innovations  
for persons with disabilities in many different countries.

An innovation is something no one has done before.

It can also be an idea no one has had before.

Things or ideas are called “innovative”

if they are new and creative.

## 2018–2019: Independent Living and Political Participation

This year the topics of the Zero Project is

Independent Living and Political Participation

Political participation means that people with disabilities  
can have a say in important decisions or laws.

This is especially important

when these decisions or laws concern themselves.

This year, 66 Innovative Practices

and 10 Innovative Policies have been selected

for the Zero Project Award.

The Awards are presented at the Zero Project Conference  
in February 2019 in Vienna.



# About Independent Living and Political Participation

## The principles of Articles 19 and 29 of the UN CRPD

**UN CRPD** is short for

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

The Zero Project Report 2019 focuses on different Articles of the UN CRPD.

An Article is one of the many topics that the UN CRPD addresses.

- **Article 19** is about independent living and being included in the community.
- **Article 29** is about participation in political and public life.
- **Article 12** is about equal treatment before the law.
- **Article 13** is about access to the justice system.

## Basic principles of Independent Living

Article 19 of the UN CRPD is about independent living and being included in the community.

It says that persons with disabilities may choose their home and where and with whom they live.

Persons with disabilities cannot be forced to live in a particular way.

Support services help persons with disabilities to participate in the community.

## Personal assistance

Personal assistance helps persons with disabilities to overcome barriers and to live independently.

Assistive technologies are also important tools for independent living.

These technologies make everyday life easier for persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

## **Political Participation**

Article 29 of the UN CRPD is about participation in political and public life.

It says that it is important that persons with disabilities can participate in political and public life like persons without disabilities. For this to happen it is important to have an accessible and inclusive election process.

This includes the ability to register to vote, to have the necessary information about the election and the candidates, and to have access to the election building and materials. People with disabilities must also have the right to be elected and to take over a specific task or political office.

## **From guardianship to supported decision-making**

Article 12 of the UN CRPD says that everyone has a right to legal capacity. This means, for example, that a person can make his or her own decisions and access the civil and court systems.

Some people need help with these things. Then we speak of 'supported decision-making'. But it is important that the decision is still made by the person herself or himself.

## **Access to justice**

Article 13 of the UN CRPD is about access to justice for people with disabilities.

It says that persons with disabilities can participate directly or indirectly in the justice system. For example, as a witness in a lawsuit.

Those working in the administration of justice need appropriate training.

This could be, for example, police officers or prison staff.

They need to learn how to support people with disabilities to deal with the justice system.

## **The Zero Project Conference 2019**

For this year's conference, the Zero Project has identified 76 Innovative Practices and Policies.

Practices and Policies that are similar to each other are grouped together.

We call this 'patterns of solutions'.

### **Independent Living**

It is very important that people with disabilities can live just as independently as people without disabilities.

Therefore, one of the main topics at the Zero Project Conference is independent living.

There are many new technologies and ideas that can help people with disabilities make their everyday life more inclusive.

Some of these technologies are:

- Phone apps to connect devices at home with the Internet so they are easier to use
- Phone apps for easier orientation in public spaces
- Phone apps and websites that help people with disabilities to communicate with each other and with support networks

Many organizations support people with disabilities so they can live in their own homes.

This will be possible through special training, technologies, and housing models.

Other organizations support people with disabilities so they can strengthen their rights and get legal advice. Or so they can take part in activities, like sports events or voluntary work.

In poorer countries, it is even harder for people with disabilities to live independently. Therefore, organizations from poorer countries also present their solutions to support people with disabilities.

For example, through:

- assistive technologies
- free-time activities
- legal advice and
- personal assistance

Innovative policies can support independent living.

For example:

- national programmes to support people to move from an institution into the community
- supported decision-making and
- personal budget

## **Political Participation**

Another important topic for people with disabilities is political participation.

Political participation means that people with disabilities can have a say in important decisions or laws.

This is especially important when these decisions or laws concern themselves.

Often people with disabilities cannot take part in elections. There are several ideas and technologies that can make voting easier.

People with intellectual disabilities can get information on politics and voting through easy-to-read voting guides, study groups, and inclusive communication campaigns.

Online voting systems allow people with disabilities to vote on computers, tablets, and smartphones. Blind people can use tactile ballots to vote on their own without assistance and without knowing Braille.

It is not only important that people with disabilities can vote. There are also other ways how people with disabilities can take part in politics. For example, through:

- training programmes for people with disabilities who represent people with disabilities
- working with people who make laws and
- collecting and using important data

## **Further topics**

Families in the rural areas of poorer countries especially need support. They get it through home-based programmes in their early childhood.

Young people with disabilities need opportunities to connect. These can be events and workshops, where young people with disabilities can join in sports, social activities, and voluntary work.

Another way to connect people is the use of technologies. Today, there are many phone apps and websites that help people with disabilities to communicate with their peers.

Sometimes people with disabilities have difficulties not only because of their disability but also because of their gender, age, home country, religion, or because of poverty. These people need programmes and activities to fight against discrimination.

There are many different ways to fight against discrimination. For example, art – such as films, plays, and pictures – can change the way the public looks at people with disabilities.

Another topic against discrimination is to support the use of sign language in politics, schools, and other situations.

It is often difficult for persons with disabilities to interact with police. Therefore, we need projects to improve the criminal justice system and to help people with disabilities deal with the system.

Finally, there are many exciting technological innovations for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

# The Headlines of all the Practices and Policies

## 10 Innovative Policies

- New ways to fight mental health problems in Bhutan
- Making elections more accessible for people with disabilities in Brazil
- Making elections more accessible for people with disabilities in Canada
- A ten-year plan to improve the lives of people with disabilities in British Columbia, Canada
- Cooperation for new regulations for people with disabilities in Ecuador
- A disability card to support equal access for people with disabilities in the European Union
- Special ballots for blind voters in Georgia
- New guidelines to make elections in Mexico accessible for people with disabilities
- Making elections more accessible for people with disabilities in Paraguay
- Easy-read voting guides for people with disabilities in Scotland

## 66 Innovative Practices

- Australia: New technologies for people with disabilities to increase independence
- Australia: Supported living for people with disabilities
- Australia: Making elections more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities
- Australia: An online voting system for blind people and people with other disabilities
- Austria: Inclusive sports in schools for children with and without disabilities
- Austria: Supporting people with disabilities to do voluntary work
- Austria: Sign language classes for families
- Bosnia & Herzegovina: Housing support and personal support for people with intellectual disabilities
- Botswana: Cheaper hearing aids with solar-rechargeable batteries
- Brazil: Training for young people with and without disabilities to promote their rights
- Cambodia: Training people to represent people with disabilities in the community

- Cambodia: Training for women with disabilities in leading positions
- Cambodia: Personal assistance for people with disabilities in Cambodia
- Canada: Supporting native people with disabilities
- Canada: Adapting homes and cars for people with disabilities
- Colombia: Promoting sexual rights of people with disabilities
- Ecuador: Training people with intellectual disabilities to be self-advocates
- Egypt: Providing greater independence for people in wheelchairs
- Estonia: A website to help people with disabilities find support and assistance
- Germany: A mobile app providing the subtitles and audio description of films in cinemas
- Ghana: Supporting mental health in the poor and rural regions of Ghana
- Honduras: Training and support for a more independent life
- India: An Internet platform for people with and without disabilities
- India: Therapy and education for parents of children with disabilities
- India: Encouraging the government to improve rights and laws for people with disabilities
- Indonesia: Better access to health and education services for children
- Ireland: Funding for deinstitutionalization
- Israel: Supporting high school students with disabilities to do voluntary work
- Israel: Improving guardianship laws for people with disabilities
- Israel: Supported housing for women with disabilities who experienced sexual violence
- Israel: Person-centred support for people with disabilities in Israel
- Israel: An app to help people with disabilities find their way around in public places
- Italy: Supporting the rehabilitation of children who have survived a stroke
- Japan: A special TV channel for people with hearing disabilities
- Kazakhstan: Strategies for deinstitutionalization
- Lebanon: Supporting young people with disabilities in Lebanon
- Lebanon: Support centres for people with disabilities in Lebanon
- Libya: Promoting sign language regarding elections
- Malawi: Increasing political participation in Malawi
- Mexico: Promoting young volunteers to work for social inclusion



- Moldova: Deinstitutionalization of children and adults with disabilities
- Moldova: Using theatre in schools to fight discrimination against people with disabilities
- Nepal: Supporting people with disabilities to take part in politics
- Romania: A book to promote deinstitutionalization
- Romania: Preparing people with mental disabilities to live independently in their homes
- Serbia: Shared apartments and personal support for people with intellectual disabilities
- Singapore: Learn, try, and test assistive technology
- South Africa: A sign language app with a dictionary and a learning tool
- Spain: A special house to support people with disabilities
- Spain: Raising awareness that people with disabilities have the right to vote
- Sweden: Personal support for more independency
- Sweden: Study groups for people with intellectual disabilities to engage them to vote
- Turkey: Special ballots for blind voters in Turkey
- United Kingdom: A mobile bathroom for outdoor events for people with physical disabilities
- United Kingdom: A special identity card for people with a brain injury
- United Kingdom: An app to announce your visit and special request to stores and public services
- United Kingdom: Deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities in Moldova
- United States: A website to support and connect people with paralysis
- United States: Using dance and art to bring together people with and without disabilities
- United States: Voting from home without assistance
- United States: A tool to watch voter participation
- United States: Strengthening disability laws with the UN CRPD
- United States: Correctly showing disabilities in movies and TV and creating jobs for people with disabilities in the entertainment industry
- United States: Improving the justice system for people with disabilities
- United States: Air travel training for people with mental disabilities
- Viet Nam: Therapy and financial support for women with mental health problems

# Annex

## Network

The Zero Project Network 2018–2019

## Acronyms

List of often used acronyms in this report

# Acknowledgements

The Zero Project would not have been possible without the broad and continuous support of many individuals and organizations over the last five years. It is difficult to highlight only a few individuals out of a network of more than 4,000, but some have been of particular help to us over the years.

We are especially grateful to the following individuals for their contributions to the nomination, shortlisting, and selection process of this year's Innovative Policies and Practices: Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero, Judy Heumann, Tom Shakespeare, Virginia Atkinson, Antonio Martinez-Pujalte, Ines Bulic, Venus Ilagan, Katharina Pförtner, Martin Morandell, David Banes, Birgit Rothenberg, Julinda Beqiraj, Kathy Guernsey, Josh Goldstein, Susan Scott-Parker, Chris Underhill, Lindsay Lee, and all our partners at Light-for-the World, Lebenshilfe, PIKSL, Q8, Beit Issie Shapiro, GAATES, and Gallaudet University.

In addition, Nora Wolloch and Kordian Bruck provided incredible support in establishing the IT-platform for the nomination and selection processes.

For contributing to a successful Zero Project Conference 2018, we extend special thanks to the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN in Vienna; to the United Nations Organization of Vienna, which served as an excellent host; and to Yuri Fedotov, Dennis Thatchaichawalit, and Linto Thanikkel from the United Nations Office in Vienna.

We are, from our very early beginnings, indebted to Caroline Casey, as always, for her incredible energy and inspiration as Conference moderator. Claudia Werneck and her team of Escola de Gente evaluated the accessibility of #zerocon18, which was enormously helpful to us.

We are proud that we could establish permanent relations with various organizations from all parts of society and their leaders, such as Daniela Bas, Akiko Ito, Eric Zhang (and everyone else from UN DESA/ DSPD), and we are grateful for the opportunities to present Zero Project research at the Conference of State Parties in New York. Inclusion International and Inclusion Europe, EASPD, ITU, ILO, Johannes Kepler University of Linz, G3ICT, Harkin Summit, Access Israel, European Disability Forum, Microsoft, and EVPA all invited us to share our research at their meetings and conferences – a big support in accomplishing the mission of the Zero Project. It is an honour to be

part of the Disability Thematic Network of the EFC, and to work with all its members.

In Austria we are grateful to our growing network and all partners of Unternehmensdialoge (business dialogues with leading Austrian companies), the "Accessible-IT Academy" project, the supplements in Die Presse, and other activities. Special thanks to Gregor Demblin, Michael Aumann, and Wolfgang Kowatsch from myAbility; Walburga Fröhlich and Klaus Candussi (atempo); Klaus Höckner (Hilfsgemeinschaft); Rudolf Schwarz and his team from Die Presse; and all our friends from the philanthropic community in "House of Philanthropy" in Vienna and of "Sinnstifter."

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# The Zero Project Research Network 2018–19

List by country of all nominators, evaluators, questionnaire respondents, and conference participants

Country/First Name	Last Name	Organization
<b>Afghanistan</b>		
Abdul Khaliq	ZAZAI	Accessibility Organization for the Afghan Disabled
Bashir Ahmad	WALI	Afghan Disabled Rehabilitation Association ADRA
Frozan	IRFAN	PATH-O
<b>Albania</b>		
Flavia	SHEHU	DSA – Down Syndrome Albania Foundation & Achievement and Development Centre
Emanuela	ZAIMI	DSA – Down Syndrome Albania Foundation & Achievement and Development Centre
<b>Argentina</b>		
Carlos	VENINI	Andar
Silvana	CONTEPOMI	Argentine Assistive Technology Association
Maria José	GUEMBE	Defensoría del Público de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual (DPSCA)
<b>Armenia</b>		
Iren	SARGSYAN	Save the Children Armenia
Karine	GRIGORYAN	USAID
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## The Zero Project Research Network 2018–19 (continued)

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# List of Acronyms

®	Registered Trademark	ISL	International Sign Language
£	British Pound	ISO	International Organization for Standardization
€	Euro	IT	Information & Technology
\$	US Dollars	ITU	International Telecommunication Union
¥	Yen	LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
24/7	all the time, everyday	Ltd.	Limited (registered company)
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	MEP	Member of the European Parliament
ANED	Academic Network of European Disability	MP	Member of Parliament
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	N/A	Not available or not answered
ASL	American Sign Language	NFC	Near-Field-Communication
CBM	Christoffle Blind Mission	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CBR	Community-based rehabilitation	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
CIS	Countries of the former Soviet Union	ONLUS	Organizzazione Non Lucrativa Di Utilità Sociale (Non-Profit Organization, Italy)
CRPD	see UN CRPD	p.	Page
CV	Curriculum Vitae, resumé	pp.	Pages
DAISY	Digital Accessible Information System	PWD	Person with Disability
DPI	Disabled Peoples` International	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
DPO	Disabled People Organization	SLP	Speech-language pathologist
e.V.	eingetragener Verein (registered Association)	TM	Trademark, Brandname protected
EAA	European Accessibility Act	TU	Technical University, Technische Universitaet
EASPD	European Association of Service Providers	TVET	Technical, vocational, and educational training
EC	European Commission (part of the EU)	UAE	United Arab Emirates
EFC	European Foundation Centre	UD	Universal Design
ENAT	European Network of Accessible Tourism	UK	United Kingdom
ENIL	European Network for Independent Living	UN	United Nations
EU	European Union	UN CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EU SILC	European Union Statistics in Income and Living	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
f., ff.	Following page, following pages	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
G3ICT	Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
FRA	Federal Rights Agency (of the EU)	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GAATES	Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
GPS	Global Positioning System	US, USA	United States of America
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
H.E.	Her/His Excellency	VET	Vocational and educational training
HR	Human Resources	W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
HTML	Hypertext Marker Language (Computer language used for websites)	WBU	World Blind Union
ICT	Information and communication technologies	WCAG 2.0	Accessibility Standard for Web applications
IDA	International Disability Alliance	WFC	World Future Council
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems	WFD	World Federation of the Deaf
ILO	International Labour Organization	WHO	World Health Organization
Inc.	Incorporated (For-Profit Organization, US, UK and other countries)		
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies		
iPad	Tablet Computer, Trademark of Apple Computers		

**For a world  
without barriers.**



## QUOTES FROM THIS REPORT

**“I found that people listened to me, and that I could speak for myself and others, and enjoyed doing so.”**

*Anna Hildingsson, an attendee of My Choice/My Election, Lidköping, Sweden, page 103*

**“Since I began acting, I have learned that I don’t have to be afraid anymore.”**

*Maria Ivaşcu, member of the Alternativ theatre troupe, Moldova, page 91*

**“I could enjoy the music on an accessible platform and with a good view.”**

*Osku Timonen, an EU Disability Card user, Finland, page 35*

**“Even simple things like how to lace my shoes make a big difference to me.”**

*Sadek Mansour, an ETI Programme trainee, Lebanon, page 83*

**“I was a girl with speech problems living on the streets, and now I am a happily married woman!”**

*Georgiana P., former beneficiary of the PRO ACT Support Association’s social services, Joita, Romania, page 94*

**“I have my own place to live, I have work, and I am independent.”**

*Gulnar, a Supportive Independent Living beneficiary, Kazakhstan, page 83*

**“Volunteering can be a great experience, especially for people with a physical disability.”**

*Erwin Buchberger, international volunteer for WeltWegWeiser, Austria and Latvia, page 49*

**“We now run a noodle shop and have started a new motorcycle repair shop.”**

*Prum Sarum and Ven Chouen, landmine victims and CDR beneficiaries, Pursat Province, Cambodia, page 54*

## Facts & Figures

More than 4,000 experts from all sectors of society are part of the Zero Project Network.

More than 500 Innovative Policies and Practices have been awarded from 2013 to 2019.

More than 3,500 people have participated in Zero Project Conferences since 2012.

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