



# Zero Project Report 2023

For a world with zero barriers

## **Independent Living & Political Participation, and ICT**

71 Innovative Solutions from 42 countries

An international study on solutions supporting the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):  
The Zero Project Research, Network, and Impact.

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# “Leaving no one behind”

FOREWORD BY MARTIN ESSL, FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ESSL FOUNDATION



The post-pandemic world, continues to pose unique challenges to persons with disabilities around the world. From evacuation of persons with disabilities during times of war to enabling independent living for all. As a result, it has been a challenging, yet, productive year for the Zero Project, as we continue to expand our global outreach and identify the latest innovative solutions from around the world together with our network of global experts.

Allow me to share with you just how the Zero Project is doing this.

## The Zero Project Conference 2023

This year the Zero Project Conference (#ZeroCon23) returns once again in-person on the grounds of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Austria. Independent Living and Political Participation, and ICT, are the themes of #ZeroCon23, highlighting solutions focused on topics ranging from voter education to deinstitutionalization. While we rejoice in gathering our global network together in person, we also continue the hybrid format, allowing people around the world to listen in and discover through an accessible live broadcast. In 2023 there are 71 Zero Project Awardees from 42 countries, and we are eager to honour for the first time solutions implemented in Djibouti.

There are several fantastic new opportunities at #ZeroCon23. To accelerate the growth of innovative disability technology, we are launching the first-ever Zero Project Technology Forum, an all-day event dedicated to helping disability inclusion innovators scale their products and services. Moreover, the first Zero Project Youth Delegation includes 19 participants from four continents, encouraging its members throughout the week to use various media formats to express themselves and, in the process, to capture the global essence of #ZeroCon23.

Finally, the Zero Project Policymaker Forum convenes policy makers from around the world to address good practices through constructive dialogue on how legislation can empower persons with disabilities.

## Ten years of collaboration with the United Nations

It is on this momentous occasion that the Zero Project and the United Nations are proud to celebrate ten years of collaboration, this year being the ninth ZeroCon to be held at the United Nations Office in Vienna in addition to one held online during the

Covid-19 lockdown. The Zero Project was founded on the premise of supporting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially Article 32, which focuses on cooperation in international research and the sharing of information, experiences, and good practices.

The United Nations has recognized the Essl Foundation's initiative in creating the Zero Project by granting the foundation consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2014, with access to the various UN human rights mechanisms, including special events with the President of the General Assembly. Since 2012 the Zero Project has organized 'side events' at the annual Conference of State Parties of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs at UN Headquarters in New York, as well as at meetings of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. The Zero Project is also in constant cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and with the International Labour Organization's Global Business and Disability Network, and has contributed to United Nations publications, including the "UN Flagship Report on Disability and Sustainable Development Goals."

We especially want to thank Ms. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for the excellent working relations that we have developed over the past decade. We are proud and thankful to highlight disability solutions and initiatives once again on the grounds of the United Nations.

## Spanish-speaking success

Through our outstanding partnership with Fundación Descúbreme (see President Catalina Saieh's Foreword for more details), this year's Zero Project Conference for the Spanish-speaking communities of the world will occur jointly with the Zero Project Conference 2023 at the United Nations Office in Vienna. Two days of Spanish-speaking forums, sessions, and panels will be broadcast globally as we welcome a host of Awardees and special ambassadors to make international connections.

## Innovation and India

Similarly, the Zero Project turns towards India, where there is substantial growth in disability innovations that are both unique and globally scalable. In 2023 the Zero Project will bolster our partnership with the

We especially want to thank Ms. Ghada Waly, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for the excellent working relations that we have developed over the past decade.



Indian ecosystem, working on a Zero Project India Conference with Youth4Jobs as well as an Innovation Hub with Enable India and supported by ADA.

In 2022, Enable India officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Zero Project for the launch of the Discovery Awards, focused on disability innovators who are invited to the Zero Project Conference 2023. I greatly look forward to seeing the amazing developments that emerge from nascent Zero Project India.

### **Zero Project Austria**

While we focus our efforts to expand our regional partnerships in Latin America and India, we also nurture inclusive solutions locally through Zero Project Austria. The Zero Project Business Dialogues – some 50 organized since 2017 – highlight inclusive employment practices, connecting partnerships across the corporate sector, public sector, and service organizations. Zero Project Austria co-sponsors with Die Presse – a leading daily newspaper – the annual Austrian Leading Companies Award, honouring outstanding leadership in inclusive employment in each of the nine Austrian country states.

This year the Zero Project will celebrate its kick-off event in the newly renovated barrier-free halls of the Austrian Parliament. Several Parliament members will select from the innovative solutions presented by Zero Project Awardees and will pledge to support their introduction in Austria. I would like to personally thank Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the Austrian National Council, who continues to support the Zero Project and our mission so enthusiastically.

### **First inclusive Museum Guide in Austria**

Those who know the Essl family understand the importance of art, even more so in times of crisis, to bring together communities and inspire innovation.

In 2023, Vienna-based publisher Medianet and art expert/consultant Doris Rothauer published the first Austrian Inclusive Museum Guide, supported by the Essl Foundation. It provides clear and easy access to art from 130 museums, available in both paper form and as a downloadable app. As the world begins to open its doors to the public in this post-pandemic time, we seek to inspire museums globally by demonstrating innovative approaches towards accessibility and inclusion.

Digitalization is quintessential to broadly disseminating innovation and inspiring true change. With this, I invite you to explore the Zero Project Database – an accessible, user-friendly, free search portal of over 800 Zero Project Awardees – to discover innovative solutions and make new connections to the Zero Project Network.

### **Supporting the Purple Vest**

This past year has also witnessed war again on the European continent, as the war on Ukraine continues to pose especially difficult situations for persons with disabilities.

The Zero Project is thus particularly proud to celebrate the Purple Vest Mission at the Zero Project Conference. This Purple Vest Mission was conceptualized by Access Israel and funded by the Nippon Foundation, demonstrating, how contingency plans for people with disabilities and the elderly can be scaled in times of crises, enabling, evacuation protocols and global cooperation.

Finally, I would like to end by extending my immense gratitude to all members of the Zero Project Network and the Zero Project Team for their researching, selecting, awarding, and connecting the most innovative, impactful, and scalable solutions towards a world with zero barriers.

# “A partnership for a world with zero barriers”

FOREWORD BY CATALINA SAIEH, PRESIDENT OF FUNDACIÓN DESCÚBREME



This is the fourth year that Fundación Descúbreme has partnered with the Essl Foundation to promote the Zero Project in Spanish-speaking countries around the world, during which time we have sought innovative solutions to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from living independently, from exercising their civil and political rights, and from having access to supportive information, communication, and technology.

As we all readjust to the current pandemic scenario, it is crucial that this group has all the tools and support necessary to develop their full potential and to implement their life projects according to their own interests, motivations, and convictions. The continuous search for solutions that allow for the inclusion of people with disabilities in a changing and uncertain context, together with the removal of mobility and capacity restrictions, have created new opportunities for this group to participate on equal terms within their communities.

We at Fundación Descúbreme know that in order to make progress in guaranteeing the independent life and full political participation of persons with disabilities, it is essential to learn about the practical experiences and advances that have been realized in response to the principles of the UN CRPD. In this sense, we would like to highlight the contribution made by the Zero Project in Latin America and in the global Spanish-speaking community.

## Call for nominations

We have provided opportunities and materials to disseminate the Zero Project's mission and experience in Spanish-speaking countries around the world. This work has allowed us to considerably increase the number of initiatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, which has not only made it possible to replicate these good practices in similar contexts but also opens up opportunities for collaboration and scalability.

## Zero Project Conference for Latin America and the Spanish-speaking community worldwide

Since 2020 we have held three regional conferences, addressing the areas of Inclusive Education, Work and Employment, and Accessibility. These

conferences have allowed us to disseminate the Zero Project's mission and to create a growing community around social innovation for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

This year our annual conference will focus on Independent Living, Political Participation, and ICT, where representatives from every segment of society will have the chance to participate, discuss, reflect, and create new realities around these issues.

## Zero Project Impact Transfer

We are very proud to be able to bring a regional vision to the Impact Transfer programme, which seeks to support the replication, scalability, and internationalization of the various key initiatives. We have achieved this by providing knowledge, tools, and opportunities for collaboration among the Zero Project, Ashoka, and Fundación Descúbreme.

## Production of content in Spanish language

Another way in which the development and promotion of innovative policies and practices are promoted in the region is by producing materials in Spanish, such as the Zero Project's Annual Report, which can be easily shared and disseminated among the many actors that promote the elimination of barriers. Also important are the events and webinars that Fundación Descúbreme hosts throughout the year focused on the Zero Project's annual topics.

The road we have travelled has allowed us to lay the groundwork to address the topics corresponding to this annual cycle, i.e., Independent Living, Political Participation, and ICT. During 2020 we disseminated policies and practices regarding Inclusive Education; in 2021 we addressed Work and Employment; and in 2022 we dealt with Accessibility.

The fulfilment of each of these rights is a necessary precondition for people with disabilities to be able to choose where and with whom to live, to access support services in their communities, to fully exercise their political and civil will, and to make use – on equal terms – of all the digital technologies currently available. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure that this group can develop their own life projects, which, from our perspective, should be the compass of all actions that promote social inclusion.

# Executive Summary

## About

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About Independent Living and Political Participation, and ICT

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# About the Zero Project

## THE MISSION OF THE ESSL FOUNDATION AND THE ZERO PROJECT

The Zero Project's mission is to work towards a world with zero barriers by supporting the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Worldwide, the Zero Project finds and shares solutions that improve the daily lives and legal rights of persons with disabilities.

### The Essl Foundation

In 2008 the Essl Foundation MGE gemeinnützige Privatstiftung – an Austrian charitable foundation that focuses on scientific research and charitable giving – initiated the Zero Project to identify, curate, and share inclusive solutions, as intended and encouraged by Article 32 of the CRPD.

The original impetus for what would later become the Zero Project occurred in 2008, when the Essl Foundation carried out a preliminary study on existing data related to persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. Since then, it has evolved into what is now known as the Zero Project. A dedicated team developed the original idea into a renowned research-driven initiative that engages with more than 10,000 experts from around the world.

Over 800 Zero Project Solutions have been identified to date, all of which share the key criteria of innovation, impact, and scalability to improve the lives and legal rights of persons with disabilities.

**800+ Zero Project Solutions, all sharing the key criteria of innovation, impact, and scalability to improve the lives and legal rights of persons with disabilities.**

### An international team

The Zero Project is managed out of its headquarters at the Haus der Philanthropie in Vienna. An international team connects with representatives of all sectors of society, conducts research based on an annual theme, and organizes local as well as global events – such as the annual Zero Project Conference in the UN headquarters in Vienna.

Since 2018 the team of Fundación Descúbreme in Chile has joined the Zero Project also in the nomination and selection process, focusing on the Spanish speaking communities.

### A global network

The Zero Project is proud of its global network of partners, experts, decision-makers, opinion leaders, and other changemakers. By fostering close collaboration among all parts of this vast network, the impact of proven solutions can be amplified and replicated elsewhere.

The Zero Project believes that the diversity of relationships is a strongpoint, and continues to deepen trusted partnerships, such as our official cooperation with Chile's Fundación Descúbreme, which is Zero Project's Latin American arm since 2019. In this manner, the Zero Project aspires to launch "Zero Project India" in 2023 with trusted partners from India.

### Finding and sharing solutions

All network activities are based on the Zero Project's unique research method, with its three pillars of (1) selecting solutions based on their innovativeness, impact, and potential to scale; (2) engaging with thousands of Zero Project Network members as part of the selection process; and (3) supporting the selected solutions in order to increase their impact.

Based on a revolving four-year cycle, the research concentrates on one of the following four themes each year: Employment, Education, Independent Living/Political Participation, and Accessibility. In 2022–2023 the research has been centred on improving Independent Living and Political Participation for all. Due to the increasing importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), this topic is covered every year in its relation to the main research theme.

### Zero Project Database

Digitalization plays an important role in making proven solutions known, and in facilitating knowledge transfer internationally. The Zero Project Database is an accessible, user-friendly tool to allow anyone to conduct keyword-based searches in the Zero Project's vast database of more than 800 proven solutions. It is available free of charge at [zeroproject.org](https://zeroproject.org).



# The Zero Project methodology

## A UNIQUE RESEARCH-DRIVEN APPROACH AND SOLUTIONS THAT ARE PROVEN TO WORK

The Zero Project has created a unique approach to identifying solutions across all sectors of society by leveraging the expertise of thousands of people and organizations worldwide. The methodology also comprises the promotion of these solutions across a multitude of formats, both online and offline.

### Necessity and impact of sharing solutions

As outlined in Article 32 of the CRPD, the “sharing and promotion of best practices” is important for the realization of the CRPD’s goals. The Zero Project’s methodology works to apply this principle on all levels – local, regional, and international – and with a cross-sectoral approach.

The Zero Project engages with autonomous associations independent of the state in order to identify grassroots approaches that are inclusive, accessible, and remove barriers for all. While the role of civil society is critical to achieving these goals, the Zero Project focuses on identifying the potential power of start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, and corporations, as well as the political backing of public institutions and services. Information and communication technologies (ICT) and their application to all kinds of technologies for the civil, public, and business sectors must become inclusive, as they are now all-pervasive.

### Extensive peer-reviewed research process

Every year in May the ‘ZeroCall’ for nomination marks the beginning of the research process. Criteria for selection are published, and the Zero Project Network of more than 10,000 experts both with and without disabilities – from all continents and all sectors of society – are invited to nominate organizations that have applied good practices in removing barriers. While the global network collectively determines the selection, the Zero Project provides a framework for this process. Solutions that are shortlisted, and those ultimately awarded all reflect the three main criteria of (1) innovation, (2) impact, and (3) scalability.

### Innovation

Any practice or policy will have demonstrated an innovative and effective solution in support of removing barriers in one of the five areas of the Zero Project’s research focus. The research takes into account the local context, geographies, and groups of beneficiaries.

### Impact

The impact of a particular solution could refer to the number of beneficiaries or people using a service, the solution’s growth rate, or the influence on improved public services, among others. Any selected solution must have been deployed and have already had an impact; the selection process does not consider projects or products at a concept stage.

### Scalability

All nominations are reviewed for their potential in replicating and expanding to new geographies or growing in another way that allows a maximum number of persons with disabilities to benefit from the innovation. Among the 800+ solutions that have been selected since 2013, scalability has been indeed multifaceted, ranging from open-source applications to the replication of effective policies, to the expansion of inclusive start-up solutions to new countries.

### From finding to sharing solutions

The solutions that the Zero Project supports through its global network beyond the research itself aim to bring them to all sectors, to positively impact a maximum number of persons with disabilities, and to grow and expand wherever possible.

#### THE FOUR SECTORS

1. Civil Society
2. Public Sector
3. Business Sector
4. ICT (across all sectors)

#### THE THREE CRITERIA

1. Innovation
2. Impact
3. Scalability

#### THE FIVE THEMES

1. Employment (last in 2020–2021)
2. Accessibility (last in 2021–2022)
3. Independent Living and Political Participation (this year)
4. Education (next in 2023–2024)
5. ICT (every year)

# About this year's research topic

## INDEPENDENT LIVING & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, AND ICT IN THE CRPD

The Zero Project Report 2023 focuses on Article 19 (Independent Living) and Articles 21 and 29 (Political Participation) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This page explains the relationship between the CRPD and the Zero Project's research of the past year.

### Independent Living

Independent living is a dynamic process of creating freedom of choice for persons with disabilities and eliminating artificial barriers towards full and equal participation in society. This includes having control over where and with whom to live and how to productively contribute to one's community. For this to be realized, information, financial resources, and peer-group support systems must be readily available, rather than letting those with disabilities depend on institutions to support their needs.

**Article 19 of the CRPD** addresses the issue of Independent Living and defines the following rights, to be recognized by all States Parties that have ratified the Convention:

*To the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:*

#### RESEARCH AREAS IN INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Deinstitutionalization
- Supported living
- Early childhood intervention
- Assistive technology
- Personal assistance
- Self-employment and micro finance
- Moving away from sheltered employment
- From guardianship to supported decision-making
- Inclusion and rights-based approaches

- 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;*
- c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.*

### Political Participation

Political participation refers to the capacity of a person to make a stand on issues that affect them through voting processes, consultations, dialogues, or demonstrations. Articles 21 and 29 of the CRPD stipulate that persons with disabilities have the right to express their opinions and participate in political and public life. This includes both their right to vote and be voted for during elections as well as the protection of their votes and their identity as voters.

**Article 21 of the CRPD** is on freedom of expression and opinion:

- States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, as defined in Article 2 of the present Convention, including by:*
- a) Providing information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost;*
  - b) Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative*

communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions;

- c) Urging private entities that provide services to the general public, including through the Internet, to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities;
- d) Encouraging the mass media, including providers of information through the Internet, to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities;
- e) Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.

**Article 29 of the CRPD** focuses on participation in political and public life:

- 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, *inter alia*, by:
  - 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 referendums 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;
  - iii. Guaranteeing the free expression of the will of persons with disabilities as electors and to this end, where necessary, at their request, allowing assistance in voting by a person of their own choice;
- 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, including:
  - i. Participation in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country, and in the activities and administration of political parties;
  - ii. Forming and joining organizations of persons with disabilities to represent persons with disabilities at international, national, regional and local levels.

## RESEARCH AREAS IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Voting policies and procedures
- Voter and civic education
- Participation in public life
- Political leadership/Self-representation
- Access to justice

## ICT

**Article 9 of the CRPD** focuses on accessibility and mentions ICT (information and communication services) specifically in section h:

*h) To promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.*

Because of its importance and influence on all solutions, the Zero Project has decided to include this topic in each call for nominations, on equal terms with the main research topic of the year. For further research, the Zero Project team also used several publications and reports as a baseline for designing the call for nominations, the selection criteria, and the selection process, including those from the ITU, G3ICT, and the EASPD.

## RESEARCH AREAS IN ICT

- Translation/Conversation tools
- Orientation systems
- Community and knowledge platforms
- Digital libraries
- Computer steering technologies
- Mobile services and smartphone apps
- Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things
- Social media
- 3D printing
- Gaming solutions
- Robotics and automated machinery

# Emerging topics and trends

## FROM SELF-ADVOCACY TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FROM ARTS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The 71 Innovative Solutions of 2023 present a variety of important themes, reflecting current trends in innovation. Find here a synthesis of themes and solutions that the Zero Project has identified this year.

Finding patterns (trends, clusters) of solutions is a powerful tool to promote innovation and system change. Clusters of solutions that have been proven successful effectively demonstrate to opinion leaders and decision makers a clear path forward. Such trends can be used as guidance towards ever more promising future innovations. In this section, you find a list of those trends that emerged from analysis of the 71 Awardees this year.

### Accessible political processes

Many NGOs and DPOs have developed programmes to increase political participation of persons with disabilities, a large number coming from sub-Saharan Africa. This includes enabling secret and independent voting for persons with disabilities, developing civic engagement on all levels of election administration, and ensuring representation in elected offices.

### Self-advocacy

One notable area of increased interest globally is self-advocacy for persons with disabilities. These models use various tools to promote self-advocacy, including training programmes for self-representatives on rights and policy, working with policy makers

to draft legislation, and collecting and using data effectively. This reflects the power of the global statement “nothing about us without us.”

### Disaster risk management

A timely trend that straddles political participation and independent living are solutions around disaster management response and recovery, such as a handbook designed for persons with disabilities as guidance in emergency situations. Preparing for situations such food insecurity, emergency evacuations, and sustainable solutions for the ultra-impooverished are in high focus now.

### Supported housing

Innovative supported housing models play a critical role in supporting persons with disabilities to live in the community, rather than in institutions. A significant series of solutions this year support deinstitutionalization, through person-centred supported housing, smart home technology, and housing and life-skills training programmes. Of particular importance this year is the focus on providing personal assistance to people with disabilities so they can decide for themselves how, where, when, and with whom to live.

#### HOW EMERGING TOPICS RELATE TO THIS YEAR'S RESEARCH THEME

- **Independent Living:** A broad set of barriers stand between persons with disabilities and independent living, including, but not limited to, institutionalization, lack of personal assistance, skills training and employment knowledge, and safety for women with disabilities.
- **Political Participation:** Ensuring that persons with disabilities directly influence political participation and policy-making is critical to achieving a barrier-free world. Political participation covers a range of topics, from voting to election to public office.

#### LIST OF EMERGING TOPICS

- Accessible political processes
- Self-advocacy
- Disaster risk management
- Supported housing
- Early childhood intervention and parental support
- Entrepreneurship and job platforms
- Women, safety, and reproductive health
- Youth with disabilities
- Experiencing art and culture
- Apps for greater learning and connection

## **Early childhood intervention and parental support**

Notably this year, both those parenting children with disabilities and parents with disabilities have targeted access to support. 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.

## **Entrepreneurship and job platforms**

This year there are several solutions directed to entrepreneurs with disabilities, including business coaching, digital marketing, social media training, and legal counseling. Specifically, there is an increase in solutions pivoting persons with disabilities out of sheltered workshops, where they may lack remuneration, support, and training. Instead, many job platforms, knowledge platforms for impoverished areas, and remote training offer opportunities to greater autonomy for persons with disabilities.

## **Women, safety, and reproductive health**

Again, there is a strong focus on innovations that strengthen and promote the rights of women with disabilities. Examples include training on sexual and reproductive rights, education on sexual assault and reporting processes, and sexual education for youth with disabilities. This is a crucial demographic that continues to need attention and support.

## **Youth with disabilities**

This year's solutions support young people with disabilities in a myriad of ways. These range from educating youth on electoral processes, leadership training workshops, and reproductive and sexual health education to programmes for social recreation and self-advocacy. Many technology solutions support children as well, including a classroom avatar for out-of-school children and video learning courses focusing on early childhood intervention.

## **Experiencing art and culture**

This year finds a fantastic focus on the lighter side of life, supporting persons with disabilities becoming ever more deeply involved in art, music, and theatre. Opportunities such as summer music workshops and theatre programmes for youth with disabilities foster a more holistic, rounded sense of truly independent living.

## **Apps for greater learning and connection**

Technology plays a role in the solutions for both independent living and political participation, such as a government database for personal assistance and assistive technology distribution and gaming solutions to learn banking and online shopping. However, ICT

### **SEARCH FOR TOPICS AND MORE IN THE ZERO PROJECT DATABASE**

The solutions and themes discussed here are also the foundation for the organization of the sessions at the Zero Project Conference 2023. These are only the broadest of themes that emerged during the intense research, voting, and selection process of deciding the Zero Project Awardees 2023. To find out more in detail about the solutions discussed here, as well as all Zero Project Awardees past and present, please visit our website, where you can find the Zero Project Database of solutions.

has become ever more significant across all disabilities and situations.

Technological innovation this year includes solutions such as haptic technology for mobile devices, visual descriptions apps, and inclusivity training for online learning. Increasingly, apps and other technologies are opening new means of communication for people with disabilities, including an alphabet for colour, a smart keyboard that operates mobile devices, and on-demand sign language translation for services and businesses.

### **TOPICS AND SOLUTIONS WILL BE SEEN AT THE ZERO PROJECT CONFERENCE 2023**

ZeroCon sessions offer each Awardee the opportunity to present their solution in the context of those similar, leading to conversations, partnership, and greater innovations during the Conference. You will find all the presentations of this year's Awardees on our YouTube Channel, where the Conference is livestreamed and all sessions are then available for on-demand viewing.

# The Selection of the Awardees

## NOMINATION – PEER-REVIEW/SHORTLISTING – VOTING – FACTSHEETS/FINAL SELECTION

For 2022–2023 the Zero Project selected and awarded 71 solutions from 42 countries, with 45 originating in Civil Society, six in the Public Sector, one in the Business Sector, and 19 mainly ICT-based approaches. In this section the nomination and selection processes are described in detail.

### 1. Call for Nomination

Starting from 1 May and ending by 30 June, more than 10,000 experts from nearly every country in the world were approached to spread the call for and to nominate solutions that create or improve independent living and political participation.

Nominations were accepted through the Zero Project nominations platform, which is available in Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish, or via an accessible Word document in all these languages. By 30 June, 320 nominations from 78 countries were received.

### 2. Peer-review and Shortlist

In July the Zero Project team – which included members of Fundación Descúbreme – began an internal peer-review process, determining if the nominations addressed the annual topic and if each demonstrated an already proven impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, with innovation and scalability.

Of those that were judged to fit all the criteria, a small number of nominations proceeded directly onto the Shortlist, with more identified as requiring further analysis, as part of the ‘external peer-review’ by members of the Zero Project Network. More than 20 peer-reviews were conducted, with each 5–8 nominations presented and discussed with expert groups of

about six persons both with and without disabilities. Each peer-reviewer was asked to rate the nomination based on the three selection criteria: innovation, impact, and scalability. On that basis a Shortlist of 156 nominations was compiled.

### 3. Voting

In August 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 – also randomly assigned – nominations. Within this group, each voter was encouraged to give a vote to those solutions that they consider more relevant than the others, along with the three criteria of the Zero Project. A total of 1.556 votes was collected.

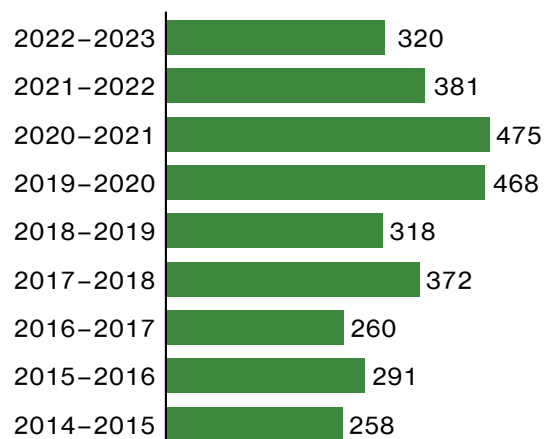
### 4. Factsheets

In the final step of composing a Factsheet on each of the selected nominations, the Zero Project team conducted thorough fact-checking and requested additional photos and videos to complete the dataset of each Awardee. This also is to ensure that Awardees are willing to share their expertise and to connect with the Zero Project Network. In the end, 71 nominations were selected to be Zero Project Awardees of 2022–2023.

2022–2023 research by sectors and countries

Category	Nominations	→ Shortlist	→ Awardees
Civil Society	191	100	45
Public Sector	20	11	6
Business Sector	22	5	1
ICT	87	40	19
Countries represented	78	66	42

Total number of nominations since 2014



# The Zero Project Impact Transfer Programme 2022–2023

ESSL FOUNDATION, FUNDACIÓN DESCÚBREME, ASHOKA, ATOS, AND GIZ

Once again the Essl Foundation, Fundación Descúbreme, and Ashoka have joined forces to promote the internationalization of innovative disability solutions. For the first time, GIZ and Atos joined the Zero Project Impact Transfer Programme with winners of their ICT4Inclusion Challenge from India.

Through the Zero Project Impact Transfer 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: (1) develop a replication strategy; (2) connect them with relevant replication partners; and (3) further support the replication through the Zero Project network.

In 2022–2023 the Impact Transfer Programme began running a series of free webinars for the general public that introduced ideas about scaling, replicating, and innovating within the disability sector, which created a great deal of interest: over 400 people from across the globe joined one or more of the webinars.

Based on a selection process that analyses the potential to scale across borders, nine initiatives have been selected for the Zero Project Impact Transfer Programme 2022–2023. This year the Zero Project also had the honour of being joined by GIZ, the leading development funding agency of Germany, and Atos, a leading global IT-consultancy, as partners of the programme to expand its reach and expertise.

Through their ICT4Inclusion Challenge, which finds and supports local digital innovations to accelerate disability inclusion in 2022, GIZ and Atos selected three winning technologies, which were added to the Impact Transfer Programme. Each focuses on digital solutions that mitigate the impact of climate change on persons with disabilities and the elderly in India.

## ZERO PROJECT IMPACT TRANSFER FELLOWS 2022–2023

- **Bolivia:** Asociacion De Personas Con Discapacidad Fisica 'Nueva Esperanza' – Programa Vida Independiente
- **Brazil:** Instituto Jô Clemente – Self-Defence Project
- **Chile:** Fundación Vida Independiente – RED – Emprendedores con Discapacidad
- **Chile:** Municipalidad de Cerro Navia – Plan 80
- **India:** Bapu Trust For Research on Mind & Discourse – Seher Urban Community Mental Health and Inclusion programme
- **Ireland:** Saint John of God Liffey Service – Co-Design Toolkit
- **Israel:** Enosh – MAOF entrepreneurship programme
- **Uganda:** Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative – Support My Choice programme
- **Viet Nam:** Liliane Fonds – BodyTalk programme

## ZERO PROJECT IMPACT TRANSFER FELLOWS 2022–2023 FROM THE ICT4INCLUSION CHALLENGE

- **India:** An ICT-based system that identifies persons with disabilities in high-risk geographies, Child React Foundation – DRMS
- **India:** A conversational AI platform that shares customised information on climate change and disaster management processes, Convegenius – Swiftchat AI
- **India:** An ICT solution for persons with disabilities to receive customised climate change related information, Tattva Foundation and GEAG – Shelter

# All Innovative Solutions of 2022–2023

Country by country, from A to Z: All 71 Solutions on Independent Living & Political Participation, and ICT.

Sectors: ● Business Sector ● Civil Society ● Public Sector ● ICT ■ Zero Project Impact Transfer

Country of Origin	Headline of the Factsheet	Organization/Solution	Sector
Australia	NGO developing young people with disabilities for leadership positions	Youth Disability Advocacy YACViv Service/ Youth Affairs Council Victoria	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Austria	Home-based children using a robot in classroom to learn and socialize	die Berater Unternehmensberatungs GmbH	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>
Austria	Hotel employment and training for persons with psychosocial disabilities	Pro mente Upper Austria	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Austria	Facilitating personal assistance service provision to persons with disabilities	WAG Assistenzgenossenschaft	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Austria	A leading concert hall offering a free and inclusive musical workshop week	Wiener Konzerthaus	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Bolivia	Advanced life-skills training for wheelchair users	Asociacion De Personas Con Discapacidad Fisica Nueva Esperanza	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Brazil	Self-advocacy group of persons with intellectual disabilities	Instituto Jô Clemente	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Burkina Faso	An Inclusive Election Guide developed in a Sub-Saharan Country	Light for the World	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Cameroon	Support programme for women with disabilities against sexual violence	Lilian Dibo Association	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Canada	Teaching inclusivity for digital designers through customized video courses	Fable Tech Labs	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>
Chile	Support programme for entrepreneurs with disabilities	Fundación Vida Independiente	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Chile	Providing personalized municipal care support for persons over the age of 80	Municipalidad de Cerro Navia	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Chile	Sign language video support for the electoral participation of people with hearing disabilities	National Electoral Service	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
China	Haptic technology to improve mobile app accessibility	Tencent Technology Co., Ltd	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>
Colombia	Easy-to-use method for connecting communities, service providers, and the government	World Vision United States	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Costa Rica	Moving from the guardianship to the social autonomy model of disability	Morpho Independent Living Center	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
Djibouti	Government-led database for improved distribution of assistive technologies	Agence National Des Personnes Handicapées, National Agency for People with Disabilities	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>
France	Teaching skills to children with autism using animated video	Signes de sens	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Germany	People with intellectual disabilities as editors, experts, and political representatives	Capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Germany	At-home support for parents with intellectual disabilities	MOBILE – Selbstbestimmtes Leben Behinderter e.V.	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
India	Providing assistive technology for children in rural Asia	Amar Seva Sangam	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
India	Community-based support services to persons with psychosocial disabilities	Bapu Trust For Research on Mind & Discourse	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Indonesia	Sexual and reproductive education for youth with leprosy and other disabilities	NLR Indonesia	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Ireland	People with intellectual disabilities co-designing digital innovations	Saint John of God Liffey Service	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Persons with intellectual disabilities becoming self-advocates in politics	Beit Issie Shapiro	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Entrepreneurship support for persons with psychosocial disabilities	Enosh	<span style="color: green;">■</span> <span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Transferring persons with intellectual disabilities out of sheltered workshops	Israel Elwyn	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Comprehensive support for young people with disabilities after their school education	Krembo Wings	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Smartphone app that provides audio descriptions of surroundings	RightHear	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>
Israel	Social and recreational activities for persons with disabilities and their families	Shekulo Tov Group	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	A museum in an ancient citadel as a role model for accessible sights	Tower of David Museum	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Israel	Supported housing for persons with complex disabilities	JDC Israel	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
Japan	Free mobile app and glasses that sync audio description and captions to movies	Evixar Inc.	<span style="color: purple;">●</span>

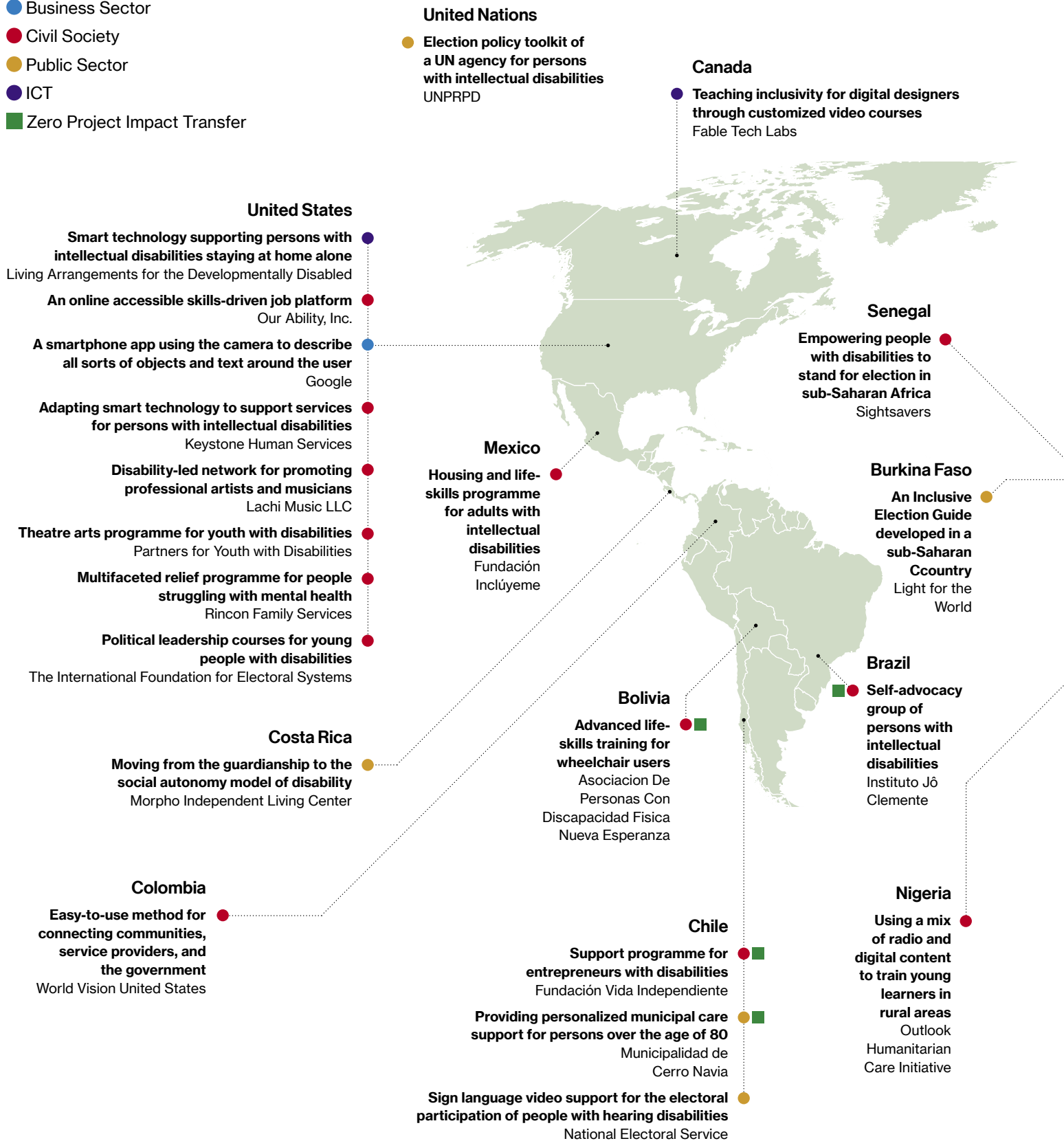


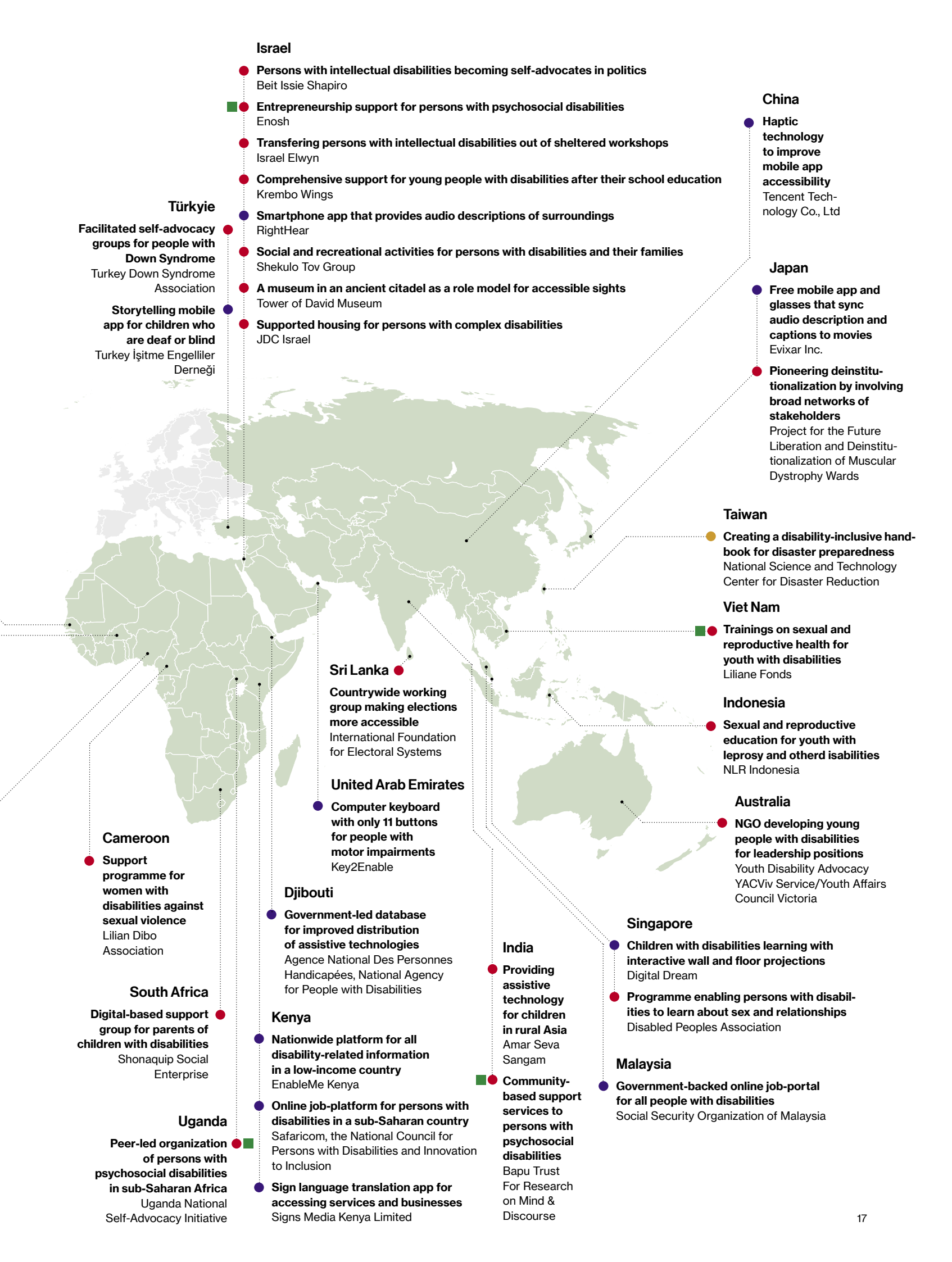
Country of Origin	Headline of the Factsheet	Organization/Solution	Sector
Japan	Pioneering deinstitutionalization by involving broad networks of stakeholders	Project for the Future Liberation and Deinstitutionalization of Muscular Dystrophy Wards	●
Kenya	Nationwide platform for all disability-related information in a low-income country	EnableMe Kenya	●
Kenya	Online job-platform for persons with disabilities in a sub-Saharan country	Safaricom, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and Innovation to Inclusion	●
Kenya	Sign language translation app for accessing services and businesses	Signs Media Kenya Limited	●
Malaysia	Government-backed online job-portal for all people with disabilities	Social Security Organization of Malaysia	●
Mexico	Housing and life-skills programme for adults with intellectual disabilities	Fundación Inclúyeme	●
Nigeria	Using a mix of radio and digital content to train young learners in rural areas	Outlook Humanitarian Care Initiative	●
North Macedonia	Jobs in digital marketing and social media for people with physical disabilities	Brand Solution	●
Norway	App to support persons with speech and language difficulties to communicate	Milla Says	●
Portugal	Independent and secret voting for all	Federation of Portuguese Cerebral Palsy Associations	●
Romania	Promoting the use of the Scripor alphabet, tactile representations of colour	Asociatia Alfabetul Scripor	●
Senegal	Empowering people with disabilities to stand up in elections in Sub-Saharan Africa	Sightsavers	●
Serbia	Music workshops and an orchestra for youth with disabilities	Primary and Secondary Boarding School Milan Petrović	●
Singapore	Children with disabilities learning with interactive wall and floor projections	Digital Dream	●
Singapore	Programme enabling persons with disabilities to learn about sex and relationships	Disabled Peoples Association	●
South Africa	Digital-based support group for parents of children with disabilities	Shonaquip Social Enterprise	●
Spain	System to use any Android device without touching the screen	Mouse4All	●
Spain	Facility supporting the social integration of people with psychosocial disabilities	Support Girona	●
Spain	People-centred housing services for persons with psychosocial disabilities	Support Girona	●
Sri Lanka	Countrywide working group making elections more accessible	International Foundation for Electoral Systems	●
Sweden	Online game for practicing shopping and making payments online	Funka	●
Sweden	Study circles supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in political processes	Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan	●
Taiwan	Creating a disability-inclusive handbook for disaster preparedness	National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction	●
Türkiye	Facilitated self-advocacy groups for people with Down Syndrome	Turkey Down Syndrome Association	●
Türkiye	Storytelling mobile app for children who are deaf or blind	Turkey İşitme Engelliler Derneği	●
Uganda	Peer-led organization of persons with psychosocial disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative	■ ●
Ukraine	QR Codes used to inform voters who are blind or deaf about voting procedures	International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the Central Election Commission of Ukraine	●
United Arab Emirates	Computer keyboard with only 11 buttons for people with motor impairments	Key2Enable	●
United States	Smart technology supporting persons with intellectual disabilities staying at home alone	Living Arrangements for the Developmentally Disabled	●
United States	An online accessible skills-driven job platform	Our Ability, Inc.	●
United States	A smartphone app using the camera to describe all sorts of objects and text around the user	Google	●
United States	Adapting smart technology to support services for persons with intellectual disabilities	Keystone Human Services	●
United States	Disability-led network for promoting professional artists and musicians	Lachi Music LLC	●
United States	Theatre arts programme for youth with disabilities	Partners for Youth with Disabilities	●
United States	Multifaceted relief programme for people struggling with mental health	Rincon Family Services	●
United States	Political leadership courses for young people with disabilities	The International Foundation for Electoral Systems	●
Viet Nam	Trainings on sexual and reproductive health for youth with disabilities	Liliane Fonds	■ ●
United Nations	Election policy toolkit of a UN agency for persons with intellectual disabilities	UNPRPD	●

# Innovative Solutions of 2022–2023 worldwide

For Europe see page 18

- Business Sector
- Civil Society
- Public Sector
- ICT
- Zero Project Impact Transfer





**Israel**

- **Persons with intellectual disabilities becoming self-advocates in politics**  
Beit Issie Shapiro
- ● **Entrepreneurship support for persons with psychosocial disabilities**  
Enosh
- **Transferring persons with intellectual disabilities out of sheltered workshops**  
Israel Elwyn
- **Comprehensive support for young people with disabilities after their school education**  
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- **Smartphone app that provides audio descriptions of surroundings**  
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- **Social and recreational activities for persons with disabilities and their families**  
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- **A museum in an ancient citadel as a role model for accessible sights**  
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- **Supported housing for persons with complex disabilities**  
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Agence National Des Personnes Handicapées, National Agency for People with Disabilities

**Kenya**

- **Nationwide platform for all disability-related information in a low-income country**  
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- **Sign language translation app for accessing services and businesses**  
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**India**

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- ● **Community-based support services to persons with psychosocial disabilities**  
Bapu Trust For Research on Mind & Discourse

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- **Children with disabilities learning with interactive wall and floor projections**  
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- **Programme enabling persons with disabilities to learn about sex and relationships**  
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- **Government-backed online job-portal for all people with disabilities**  
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- **Support programme for women with disabilities against sexual violence**  
Lilian Dibo Association

**South Africa**

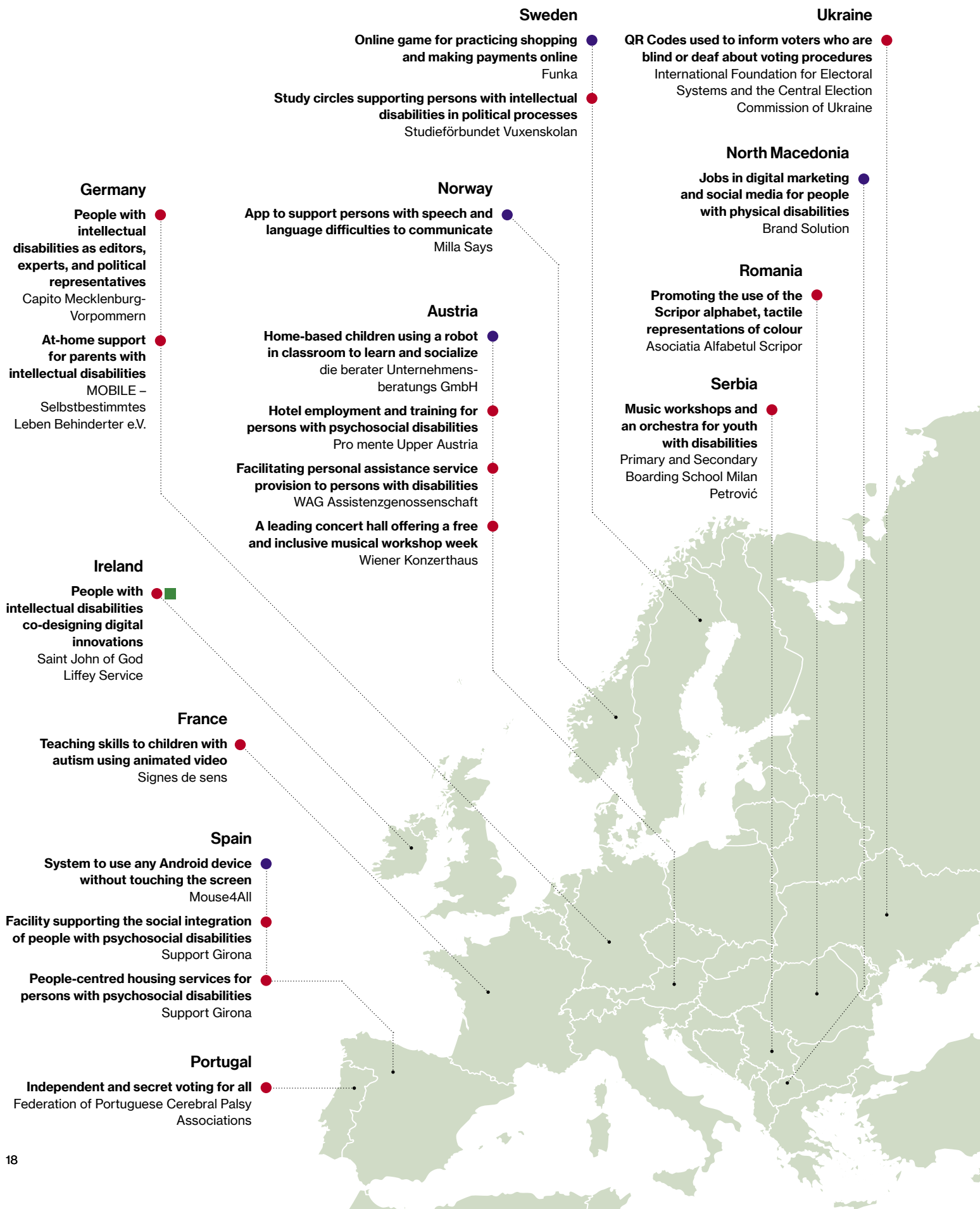
- **Digital-based support group for parents of children with disabilities**  
Shonaquip Social Enterprise

**Uganda**

- ● **Peer-led organization of persons with psychosocial disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa**  
Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative

# Innovative Solutions 2022–2023 in Europe

● Business Sector ● Civil Society ● Public Sector ● ICT ● Zero Project Impact Transfer



# The 71 Awardees

## 71 Factsheets

Factsheets from all 71 Solutions 2022–2023  
listed by country

## Six Life Stories

Persons with disabilities or their peers explain how  
Zero Project Awardees have changed their lives

# NGO developing young people with disabilities for leadership positions

## AUSTRALIA / YOUTH DISABILITY ADVOCACY SERVICE AND YACVIV – YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAMME

Youth Disability Advocacy Service is a local NGO based in the state of Victoria, Australia. In 2019 it secured public funding and developed a leadership programme targeted at young persons aged 14 to 25. The participants develop such soft-skills as self-awareness, communication, and teamwork through online and in-person workshops. Between 2019 and 2022 more than 120 young persons have graduated, and most of them have joined boards, committees, and groups, or found an employment.

### Problem targeted

Young people with disabilities often miss out on positions of power in society due to a lack of opportunities to gain leadership skills in an accessible environment.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Young Leaders Programme was co-designed with young people with disabilities and incorporates knowledge from over 30 experts in youth work, leadership, and lived disability experience. Participants join online and in-person workshops led by youth workers and guest speakers with a disability. Initially piloted with ages 14 to 19, the programme has since opened to groups aged 20 to 25. Roughly half of all

“I was able to meet people who wouldn’t judge me and I was able to become more confident.”

Jasmine, Young Leader, Youth Disability Advocacy Service

participants are from urban settings and half from rural settings. The programme covers a wide range of disabilities, including mental health. Approximately 75 graduates have gained paid employment since completing the course, with another 75 entering study or training. Thirty-four graduates have taken leadership roles in their communities, and 48 have joined advisory boards, groups, or committees.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The 2019 pilot was funded with \$168,000 from the Information, Linkages, and Capacity Building (ILC)



By 2022 the leadership programme of Youth Disability Advocacy Service and the Youth Affairs Council Victoria had 120 graduates.

fund of the Australian Government’s National Disability Insurance Agency. An additional \$627,000 was successfully applied for in the next round of ILC funding, which covers growth between 2020 and 2023. The project generates a small amount of income from private workshops and training. The programme has been licenced to two other organizations, based in Victoria and South Australia, and covers operating manuals and participant workbooks. This has enabled six local governments in South Australia to start Young Leaders workshops.

The project aims to grow in the coming years, including further licencing and supporting transition programmes from education to employment.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- From 2019 to mid of 2022, out of 120 graduates 75 have gained jobs or paid engagements.
- 48 have taken on volunteer or leadership roles in their communities.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

✉ Mr. Simon Green  
Sgreen@ydas.org.au – [www.ydas.org.au](http://www.ydas.org.au)

# Home-based children using a robot in classroom to learn and socialize

## AUSTRIA / DIE BERATER – INTERACTION AVATAR

die Berater Unternehmensberatungs GmbH, a consulting company focused on vocational training, is based in Vienna, Austria. In 2020 the company started to offer education with the help of physical robots, called avatars. Target audiences are children with and without disabilities who cannot attend school. The avatars are placed in the classroom and can be personalized. One of the goals is to facilitate reintegration into regular schools. By mid-2022 the avatars were offered to more than 95 children.

### Problem targeted

There are 18,000 children in Austria who cannot attend school regularly due to illness, chronic disease, or disability.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The robots are placed in real-world settings, most often in classrooms. For example, they can be placed on a table among classmates while the child at home connects remotely via an app on their tablet. The child controls movements and line of sight, as well as communicate with their surroundings, such as with classmates, thanks to LED lights and cameras. Children can personalize the avatar through colours and stickers. The avatars are available in all federal



Personalized avatars are used to support children who cannot go to school.

“The avatar project gives children and adolescents with chronic illnesses the chance to take part in social life.”

Martin Röhsner, CEO & founder, die Berater

states of Austria and at all school levels. Die Berater has created a support network with Med Uni Wien, which is responsible for psychological support, and Heilstättenschule Wien, which coordinates communication with all participating schools. Other partners such as SK Rapid Wien (Rapid Vienna Football Club) offer opportunities to connect to sport settings. The project is part of a research study with MedUni Vienna, with initial indications showing the avatars reduce social isolation and support participation in social life.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Norwegian company No Isolation has developed the avatars (robot and software) and die Berater is using it based on a licence model. The service is provided for free to all users. As a social project, the financing is partly provided by die Berater as part of its CSR strategy. Other financing is sought from local charitable partners that work with young people with illness and disability. Between 2020 and 2022, €90,000 has been raised. The aim is to offer the service to more children in the coming years, and to do more research for better improved services in the future. Other goals include improving interaction for children with physical impairments, for example, by implementing an eye-tracking function.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between 2020 and 2022 children and young people have used 95 avatars.
- 48 children using avatars were able to reintegrate into regular schools so far.
- *A project related to ICT.*

 Mr. Philipp Röhsner  
avatar@dieberater.com – [www.dieberater.com](http://www.dieberater.com)

# Hotel employment and training for persons with psychosocial disabilities

## AUSTRIA – PRO MENTE UPPER AUSTRIA – WESENUFER HOTEL

Pro mente, an NGO based in Upper Austria, opened the Wesenufer Hotel & Seminarkultur an der Donau in 2008. Wesenufer Hotel is a medium-sized seminar hotel that employs persons with psychosocial disabilities and trains and supports them in a multi-professional manner, often leading to full employment. Due to the expansion of the hotel, the number of employees with a psychosocial disability has grown from 20 to 54 by September 2022. The project has received multiple awards in Austria.

### Problem targeted

Persons with psychosocial disabilities in rural areas often lack support structures and opportunities for training and employment.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Wesenufer Hotel offers seven work models to persons with psychosocial disabilities, including vocational trainings apprenticeships and temporary or permanent jobs. Employees work in all aspects of the establishment's hotel, restaurant, and conference services, during which time they develop their professional and social skills. An interdisciplinary team of social workers, pedagogues, and personal coaches support them, all of whom also offer life-skills train-



The Wesenufer Seminarhotel employs and trains people with psychosocial impairments.

“Every person should be given the opportunity for meaningful employment according to their individual potential.”

Margarete Durstberger, Manager, Wesenufer Hotel & Seminarkultur an der Donau, pro mente OÖ

ings, such as personal hygiene. Temporary workers and apprentices often go on to be hired as permanent employees. In 2019 the hotel expanded its capacity to 96 beds. Along with its five conference rooms and restaurant, this expansion allowed the hotel to more than double its number of employees with disabilities, from 20 to 54. The Wesenufer Hotel is the first and only hotel in Austria that offers this model of employment, skills development, and support to persons with psychosocial disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Wesenufer Hotel is 75 per cent self-financed by revenues from the hotel and restaurant. The remaining 25 per cent is covered by public-sector clients, such as the State of Upper Austria and the Public Employment Service of Austria, for the purchase of services, as the training courses within the different employment models are called. The hotel aims to further promote the employment of persons with psychosocial disabilities in decent service industry jobs and to raise awareness of its model. The project can be replicated in other locations in Austria and abroad, as long as it is adapted to the local context and provides specialist support.

✉ Ms. Claudia Pauzenberger  
[claudia.pauzenberger@hotel-wesenufer.at](mailto:claudia.pauzenberger@hotel-wesenufer.at)  
[www.hotel-wesenufer.at](http://www.hotel-wesenufer.at)

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2008

- In September 2022 there were 54 employees with psychosocial disabilities, including four young apprentices.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



# Facilitating personal assistance service provision to persons with disabilities

## AUSTRIA / WAG ASSISTENZGENOSSENSCHAFT – COOPERATIVE PERSONAL ASSISTANCE

In 2002 WAG Assistenzgenossenschaft, a Vienna-based non-profit cooperative constituted by persons with disabilities, developed a personal assistance (PA) service model that enables beneficiaries to choose how, where, when, and by whom the service is provided. WAG supports the matchmaking process and acts as employer of the assistants. In 2021 some 401,552 hours of PA were purchased by persons with disabilities. Between 2021 and 2022 the number of PA employed by WAG has grown from 656 to 685.

### Problem targeted

It can be complicated and time-consuming for persons with disabilities to find, employ, and manage a personal assistant.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

WAG connects persons with disabilities with individuals offering personal assistance services and manages all aspects of their employment. By becoming the personal assistant's legal employer, WAG reduces the administrative burden for the service user. The 100 per cent disability-led cooperative takes care of tasks such as drawing up the employment contract and handling payroll. WAG also steps in to support the service user in case of conflict with the assistant.



WAG, a non-profit cooperative, offers a flexible service model for personal assistance.

“People with disabilities run the WAG competently. This is how we have made personal assistance a model for success.”

Jasna Puskaric, Executive Director,  
WAG Assistenzgenossenschaft

WAG peer counsellors, who are all persons with disabilities, are also available to provide service users with advice on all aspects of PA, such as what amount of support they might need and how to finance it. In 2021 service users benefitted from more than 400,000 hours of PA through WAG, even during the height of the COVID pandemic. As of August 2022, a total of 685 personal assistants have been employed by WAG.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Individual service users pay WAG directly for the PA services, either using private funds or financial assistance provided by the government. In contrast to PA in everyday life, services provided by the programmes PA at the Workplace (PAA) and PA for Educational Institutions (PAB) are covered directly by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs or provincial education departments.

WAG plans to step up its efforts to lobby the federal government to implement a country-wide framework for the needs-based financing of PA services, as each federal state in Austria applies its own policies.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2002

- WAG is active in the states of Burgenland, Lower Austria, and Vienna.
- As of August 2022 a total of 685 personal assistants have been employed by WAG.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

✉ Ms. Michaela Mallinger  
m.mallinger@wag.or.at – [www.wag.or.at](http://www.wag.or.at)

# A leading concert hall offering a free and inclusive musical workshop week

## AUSTRIA – VIENNA / WIENER KONZERTHAUS – INCLUSIVE MUSIC SUMMER

The Wiener Konzerthaus (Viennese Concert House) is one of the largest concert halls in Vienna, Austria, run by a private association. In 2019 the Wiener Konzerthaus launched an inclusive summer music workshop – the SommerMusikWoche (SMW) – at which professional educators sing and play with a fully inclusive group of participants for a whole week. Entrance is free of charge and the project was designed in cooperation with many local disabled peoples organizations (DPOs). In 2022 (post-COVID) the programme ran at full capacity, with 80 participants.

### Problem targeted

Inflated costs paired with physical barriers often hinder the elderly and people with disabilities from fully enjoying cultural events.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Wiener Konzerthaus is a historic cultural building and institution dating back to 1913. Following a renovation and the installation of many accessibility features, it launched the SommerMusikWoche (SMW) programme, a week of musical workshops run by professional musicians. The first SMW course was hosted in 2019 and was designed in close collaboration with several Austrian DPOs as well as educational institutions. Each year it enables 80 participants

“Together they become one big, wonderful unit, and also grow beyond themselves through the music.”

Susanne Luzia Kuster, Music Mediator, Wiener Konzerthaus

with and without disabilities to take part in mixed age/ mixed ability musical workshops. The motto of “music connects” is aimed at all music enthusiasts regardless of their origin, language, age, type of disability, or musical skill. All musical genres are celebrated, and most sessions consist of playing together with professional musicians and teachers. Participants acquire independence and social skills through their group interactions, along with strengthening their listening and musical skills.



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The inclusive workshops of the Wiener Konzerthaus have up to 80 participants each year.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Wiener Konzerthausgesellschaft is a private, non-profit organization that is 88 per cent self-financed. In order to offer SMW free of charge, the project needs funding by a third party. Until 2022 it was a grant by a charitable foundation (Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne, Switzerland). A major aim of the programme is to strengthen teaching capacity and to encourage (musical) dialogue between generations. Current collaborating organizations and special interest groups include Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne and the Austrian Disability Council (Der Österreichische Behindertenrat). The project is readily transferable to other venues within Austria or abroad.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- SMW hosts up to 80 participants annually.
- Participants are aged between 8 and 82.
- SMW is free of charge to all.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Advanced life-skills training for wheelchair users

## BOLIVIA – SUCRE / APCDF – PROGRAMA VIDA INDEPENDIENTE

In 2012 the Association of People with Physical Disability “New Hope” (APCDF), a Bolivian NGO, launched an independent living programme in the city of Sucre. The programme provides personal assistance, peer support, and skills training, ranging from reading exercises and personal accounting to rights and decision-making. The practice has been recognized nationally and became part of a new labour law in 2017. Between 2012 and 2022, 25 persons with disabilities were transferred to independent and community living.

### Problem targeted

People in Bolivia with physical disabilities often find it challenging to live independently due to the lack of support systems.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

APCDF started an independent living programme that teaches persons with physical disabilities, mostly wheelchair users, life skills such as how to manage their accounts, how to do shopping, and how to become informed about their rights, duties, and responsibilities. APCDF started with wheelchair users and plans to extend the services to persons with visual impairments. Since some of the participants from rural areas lack basic educational skills, APCDF also offers reading and writing courses.

“Now that I know the philosophy of independent living, I think that I am lucky!”

Fidelia Feliza Ali Ramos, Founder, Association of People with Physical Disabilities “New Hope”

To qualify for this assistance, a person with a disability has to complete a form explaining what kind of support he/she needs, such as bathing, housekeeping, cooking, etc. An assigned assistant is then in charge of supporting the persons in these activities. The assistants, who are mostly university students, keep a diary of the service hours and the activities they have provided. The personal assistance hub manages individual plans, hours of assistants, and monthly reports.

The programme also identifies people with disabilities to train them as activists and leaders. Between 2012 and 2022, Programa Vida Independiente has supported more than 500 people with disabilities.

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Assigned assistants, mostly students, are in charge of providing individualized support.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The independent living programme is supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency via in-kind services, such as scholarships for the courses. The organization also regularly conducts fundraising activities such as Christmas campaigns. The programme has already been shared with the NGO Centro Morpho in Costa Rica, and also plans to start more independent living centres in provincial cities of Bolivia. In 2021, APCDF started to lobby for better legislation on independent living.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2012

- Between 2012 and 2022, 25 people with disabilities started to live independently with the support of the programme.
- In 2022 ten people have received permanent assistance, while others have received temporary support.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Self-advocacy group of persons with intellectual disabilities

## BRAZIL – SÃO PAULO / INSTITUTO JÔ CLEMENTE (IJC) – SELF-DEFENCE PROJECT

In 2011 the Instituto Jô Clemente (IJC), an NGO based in São Paulo, Brazil, initiated the Self-Defence project to empower people with intellectual disabilities to become autonomous self-advocates. IJC helps them to organize and select their own agenda, as well as to debate about their rights and how to use them. Starting in 2015 the group of self-advocates has had a seat representing persons with disabilities before the City of São Paulo. Between 2011 and 2022 the number of participants has grown from 11 to 30.

### Problem targeted

People with intellectual disabilities often lack knowledge about their rights, leading to families or organizations taking over their decisions.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Self-Defence project aims to work with people with intellectual disabilities, who have traditionally been denied their voting rights or their rights to higher education. Self-Defence advocate groups meet monthly to discuss topics related to intellectual disability, such as the Brazilian Inclusion Law or the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The self-advocates plan, organize, decide, and carry out activities, including selecting and training new self-advocates. Along with the rights of people with disabilities, the group also discusses civic duties and responsibilities.

**“The Self-Defence Project strengthens the independence and autonomy of people with intellectual disabilities.”**

Daniela Machado Mendes, CEO, Instituto Jô Clemente

Meetings include a person who plays the role of a supporter who works with people with disabilities to eliminate barriers, such as creating accessible publishing materials in easy language or using sign language. Moreover, the group produces printed materials such as a self-advocacy guide on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities, in addition to autonomously creating and maintaining a blog about the developments of the entire project.

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“Self-Defence” gives a strong voice to people with intellectual disabilities in São Paulo.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

IJC receives both public and private funding for the Self-Defence project. In 2022 the organization received \$7,000 from the Helena Florisbal Institute and \$10,000 from the Secretaria Municipal da Pessoa com Deficiência (Municipal Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities) of São Paulo.

In early 2023, IJC aims to launch a self-advocacy methodology document that can easily be replicated by other organizations and translated into a national self-defence movement.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2011

- The project started in 2011 with 11 participants and has grown to 30 self-defence advocates by 2022.
- The work of the IJC inspired the creation of a Working Group on Legal Capacity at the São Paulo State Secretariat for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# An Inclusive Election Guide developed in a sub-Saharan country

## BURKINA FASO – OUAGADOUGOU / LIGHT FOR THE WORLD – INCLUSIVE ELECTION GUIDE

Light for the World is an international disability and development NGO headquartered in Austria. Ahead of the 2015 National Elections in Burkina Faso it facilitated, monitored, documented, and implemented solutions that removed barriers for persons with disabilities regarding political participation. Among others, ballot papers were printed in Braille and legislative bodies hired persons with disabilities to ensure equitable. These good practices have further been shared with various West African stakeholders.

### Problem targeted

Few people with disabilities are registered to vote or have access to related messaging or voting systems.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Organizations of persons with disabilities in Burkina Faso, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and the Independent National Electoral Commission, developed an Inclusive Electoral Guide, identifying the obstacles to the participation of people with disabilities in national elections. Built upon evidence from post-presidential election workshops in 2015, the guide proposes actions and recommendations that facilitate participation for persons with disability in national elections. The guide has initiated



In 2015 accessibility to polling stations in Burkina Faso was significantly improved.

“Thanks to the adaptation of polling stations I am able to participate in political governance by voting.”

Clarrisse Nikiema, person with physical impairment

the production of ballot papers in Braille and the provision of access measures at all 18,910 polling stations in Burkino Faso. PSNCP, a national umbrella organization, collects data on voter participation, and political parties have committed to developing an inclusive programme. One blind person was elected into the past transitional parliament, which is set to be renewed again. Furthermore, a blind lawyer has been elected to the transnational legislative assembly due to the political mainstreaming work of the project.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Inclusion Guide has been embedded into the

electoral system, with funding provided entirely by the state and its financial partners. The Independent National Electoral Commission implements the inclusion policy, and organizations of persons with disabilities monitor the participation with support from the PSNCP. Stakeholders continue to advocate for the guidelines, to provide training, and to monitor, evaluate, and collect data. Replication of the Inclusion Guide has begun via Light for the World, and a workshop has been held with various West African country representatives such as Fédération Ouest Africaine des Associations pour Personnes Handicapées.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- The Inclusive Electoral Guide is the first guidance document on inclusive elections adopted in Burkina Faso.
- Over 18,000 election booths were made accessible thanks to the new electoral guide.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*



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# Support programme for women with disabilities against sexual violence

## CAMEROON – KUMBA / LILIAN DIBO ASSOCIATION (LDA) – DISABILITY VOICES AGAINST RAPE

In 1990 the Lilian Dibo Association (LDA), a women-led disability organization based in Kumba, Cameroon, founded the Disability Voices Against Rape (DIVAR) programme. DIVAR raises awareness on unreported sexual crimes committed against women with disabilities using an infotainment campaign on local radio and TV stations, as well social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook. In 2022, DIVAR has some 1,000 direct beneficiaries.

### Problem targeted

Cases of sexual violence against women and girls with disabilities often go underreported in Cameroon.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

DIVAR works directly with women and girls with disabilities in Kumba, Cameroon, who have been affected by rape and other forms of sexual violence. The programme has three key components: (1) training, (2) focused group discussions, and (3) therapy sessions facilitated through storytelling. The DIVAR training is conducted by experts who raise topics such as body safety rules, safe and unsafe touches, breaking the silence, safety network, and referral pathways for survivors of rape. It is only after these educative lectures that some of the participants even realize

“I want to thank you so much for what you have done in my life and that of the others. This is a blessing I never expected.”

Ms. Kopea Mariana, Cameroon Network of Women with Disability

that they were actually raped or sexually assaulted. The focus group discussions have helped persons with disabilities to develop strategies on how to curb sexual violence and rape perpetrated on women and girls in their respective communities. This direct work with women is complemented by a larger awareness-raising campaign that includes infotainment content, which is disseminated through radio, television,



DIVAR helps women with disabilities who have been affected by sexual violence.

and social media. All content is created exclusively by an editorial team made up of women and girls with disabilities who engage in all aspects of DIVAR.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

DIVAR is funded with a grant from Rescue Women – Cameroon, a women-focused NGO also based in Kumba. LDA aims to expand DIVAR to other parts of the country to reach more beneficiaries. Moreover, the organization plans to build a centre for women and girls with disabilities who have survived sexual violence and other forms of abuse, which will offer crisis accommodation, rehabilitation services, and skills-development training.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 1990

- On average, some 2,000 women and girls listen to DIVAR's radio content.
- Approximately 10,000 people have received vital information on how to build resilient communities devoid of sexual violence.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Teaching inclusivity for digital designers through customized video courses

## CANADA AND OTHER COUNTRIES / FABLE TECH LABS – FABLE UPSKILL

Fable Tech Labs is a technology start-up that provides digital accessibility services, delivered on- or offline by persons with disabilities. Based in Toronto, Canada, in 2021 the company started Fable Upskill, which provides video-based online training that is tailor-made for each customer and that provides key digital accessibility knowledge to companies on how to build inclusive design to make products and services accessible for persons with disabilities. As of 2022, Fable is working with 80 companies.

### Problem targeted

Many products and services are not accessible due to designers and product teams not having the knowledge and skills to build truly inclusive products.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Fable Upskill is a video-based course designed by Fable accessibility experts on how to make web products and services accessible. It is targeted towards product designers in different companies, enabling them to apply their new skills immediately. The courses are led by Fable Upskill's team of testers, which is entirely comprised of people with disabilities. The training helps developers to understand such issues as how their navigation menus work for screen reader users. Additionally, Fable Upskill teaches quality assurance analysts to develop workflows as to how and when it is best to use accessibility testing tools. Design teams can then have more confidence when building accessible forms and navigation menus; using inclusive fonts, colours, and images; and testing websites and apps with assistive technologies.

**“We built Fable Upskill to give digital teams the accessibility training needed to serve people in a meaningful way”**

Alwar Pillai, Fable Co-founder and CEO

As of mid-2022, Fable Upskill is processing around 260 requests per month and is onboarding around 10 new testers each month. It is also working with some of the world's largest tech companies, such as Meta and Microsoft.



Mr. George Mason

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Fable Tech Labs offers digital accessibility services performed by people with disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Fable Upskill uses a 'software as a service' business model whereby organizations pay an annual subscription to access customized video courses. The long-term funding strategy is based on venture-capital funding. The start-up has recently raised \$10.5 million via Five Elms Capital, including from John Ruffolo, a prominent Canadian investor in disability technology. Fable Upskill aims to continue growing in the coming years, with the goal of making inclusive product development a standard practice.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- Fable Upskill's testing team has around 200 testers.
- The start-up currently supports around 80 companies.
- Approximately 260 requests for support are processed per month.
- *A project related to ICT.*

# Support programme for entrepreneurs with disabilities

## CHILE / FUNDACIÓN VIDA INDEPENDIENTE – RED-EMPREENDEDORES CON DISCAPACIDAD

In 2020 Fundación Vida Independiente, an NGO based in Santiago de Chile, developed RED, a comprehensive support programme for entrepreneurs with disabilities and their families. RED provides accessibility training, personalized consulting, graphic material, and an online sales platform, initially working with entrepreneurs who have suffered financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2020 and 2022, RED has grown from 100 to 180 registrations and has achieved nationwide reach.

### Problem targeted

There is a general lack of support systems and training for entrepreneurs with disabilities in Chile.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The RED programme includes a support system for generating income for people with disabilities, their families, and organizations of and for people with disabilities.

The programme has four components: (1)

Training: This includes digital workshops on entrepreneurship in accessible formats (e.g., sign language, subtitles, and audio description) on topics such as creating business models, digital marketing, social media, etc. (2) Personalized advice: The project

“Economic empowerment is a path to autonomy and independent living.”

Jimena Luna, Founder, Fundación Vida Independiente, Chile

delivers individualized tools to entrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses. (3) Online store: RED includes an online sales platform offering products and services by entrepreneurs with disabilities. (4) Resources: The project provides materials on entrepreneurship in various accessible formats such as Braille, easy-to-read documents, and audio-visual formats. The participating entrepreneurs range from product vendors for stationery and office items to repair services for wheelchairs. RED was launched in 2020 with a pilot in the metropolitan region and 100 sign-ups, and in 2022 it was expanded nationwide with 180 participants.



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RED is a Chilean programme to support entrepreneurs with disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The project is primarily funded by public funds. The Ministry of Social Development, through the Chile Compromiso de Todos Fund, has financed \$75,000. The SERCOTEC Technical Cooperation Service funded the project with \$16,000, and the National Disability Service with \$23,000.

By 2025 the foundation hopes to collaborate with other countries to replicate the project. It also expects to add new entrepreneurs with disabilities within its network as well as to enter into partnerships with companies to acquire products created by entrepreneurs with disabilities and to fund the programme's operations.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between 2020 and 2022 the programme has held 28 workshops with more than 100 participants.
- The RED programme is comprised of 70 per cent women, both with and without disabilities.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



# Life Stories from Nigeria and Uganda



THE STORY OF ABRAHAM VICTOR CHIDIEBUEBE, A USER OF THE OUTLOOK HUMANITARIAN CARE INITIATIVE RADIO PROGRAMME

**“I was able to study online through the radio.”**

*Aba Abia State, Nigeria*

My Name is Abraham Victor Chidiebuebe and I am a 14-year-old student at Osusu Community Secondary School in Aba Abia State, Nigeria. I have been living with disabilities from childhood, and I am one of the students from the school who has benefited from the Outlook Humanitarian Care Initiative (OHCI) radio programme.

OHCI gave me a small transistor radio, which was especially useful during the peak of COVID-19, when lockdowns restricted movement. I was able to study online through the radio. Learning became more accessible to me and others like me who need education most, living in low-income rural areas. The radio programmes not only addressed issues of education but also touched on topics such as empowerment and gender equality training. I could study in English and local languages, guided by an instructor. This mobilized the community to listen to the radio as well, encouraging us to come together informally to share ideas on issues affecting us all.

OHCI provided very accessible and affordable tools for young learners like me to understand real-world constraints, both inside and outside the classroom.

**i** See also Factsheet on page 62.

THE STORY OF EMMANUEL MWEBEZE, A BENEFICIARY OF THE UGANDA NATIONAL SELF-ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

**“I was the first teacher in Mukono District to initiate a Special Needs department at my school.”**

*Uganda, Kayunga District, Buyobe village*

My name is Emmanuel Mwebaze. During my teacher training, at the age of 20, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I had great challenges beginning my career as a teacher, experiencing inadequate accommodations and frequent mental health relapses. I was institutionalized numerous times in abhorrent conditions.

In 2007 the Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative (UNSAI), at the time a peer support group, approached Habitat for Humanity Uganda, with the support of Stanbic Bank, to build houses for four survivors of psychiatric institutions. I was a beneficiary. Ever since then I have lived independently in the community, becoming a teacher and contributing back in meaningful ways, such as farming and being a spiritual leader.

With the support of UNSAI, I and others have advocated for inclusive education for persons with disabilities. I was the first teacher in Mukono District to initiate a Special Needs department at my school. I have assisted with the registration of 20 learners with disabilities and supported them to access the necessary accommodations to sit for their final examinations on an equal basis with others.

I have a wife and children now, and I live as an equal member of my community.

**i** See also Factsheet on page 82.

# Providing personalized municipal care support for persons over the age of 80

CHILE - REGIÓN METROPOLITANA / MUNICIPALIDAD DE CERRO NAVIA - PLAN 80

In 2020 the Municipality of Cerro Navia, located in Chile's capital region of Santiago, created Plan 80, a person-centred monitoring and accompaniment model. The programme is targeted at persons both with and without disabilities over the age of 80. Through individual follow-up consultations, Plan 80 identifies the needs of its beneficiaries, ranging from assistive devices to such basic needs as health services, medicines, hygiene, and food, which are then delivered to the homes of the elderly. In 2021 the programme had over 3,700 beneficiaries.

## Problem targeted

Elderly people with disabilities often must depend on their families for care and support regarding their daily activities, such as eating and hygiene.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

Plan 80 is a monitoring, follow-up, and support programme for persons over the age of 80 with disabilities developed at the local level by the city administration of Cerro Navia. The programme offers a variety of municipal services, such as social, health, and assistive support, all of which are provided in an inclusive and accessible fashion. City officials make weekly calls to assess the individual's needs and they conduct regular follow-up consultations with the most vulnerable. The officials are paired and assigned to certain beneficiaries, enabling the creation of a personal bond with the beneficiaries as well as with their families and caretakers. All activities are carried out by city personnel without help from service providers.

**"I like Plan 80 because they help me. Every week they call me to ask about me and support me."**

Juan Espinoza, President and beneficiary, Plan 80

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

Plan 80 has an annual budget of \$100,000 for the cost of personnel (call centre and coordinator), which is fully covered by the city administration of Cerro Navia as part of its social services portfolio. The other resources for the programme such as hygiene kits, nappies, food, visits by medical specialists, etc. are funded from the general municipal budget for health



"Plan 80" is a person-centred support model for people over the age of 80 in Chile.

and social programmes. The simplicity of the model has allowed for it to be replicated in two additional municipalities in Chile: in Macul for people over 75 years and in Santa Juana for people over 80 years. Plan 80 is currently being supplemented with a parallel programme called Plan (In)Dependency based on the same model to provide support and care to bedridden people of all ages.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Plan 80 has been replicated in two other municipalities in Chile.
- Over 3,700 beneficiaries were identified and reached in the first year (2020–2021) of operation.
- Plan 80 provided 8,778 home medical care visits, 4,400 kilos of food, and 700 adult diapers between January 2020 and October 2022.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*



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# Sign language video support for the electoral participation of people with hearing disabilities

## CHILE – SANTIAGO / SERVEL – SIGN LANGUAGE VIDEO INTERPRETATION SERVICE

The National Electoral Service (SERVEL) is a public entity in Chile in charge of electoral and voting processes. In 2021, SERVEL introduced a permanent video-interpretation service in Chilean sign language on its website to support the electoral participation of persons with hearing disabilities. It provides guidance on electoral related issues, as well as real-time information during elections, through specially trained sign language interpreters. In 2021, 340 people used the service.

### Problem targeted

Often persons with disabilities are unable to participate in elections due to a lack of voter information and accessible voting methods.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

On the occasion of the Chilean presidential elections in 2021, SERVEL implemented a permanent video-based service providing online Chilean sign language interpretation for the deaf and persons with hearing impairments. The aim of this new digital platform, called Vi-Sor, is to provide personalized sign language support; and there is pre-recorded material such as videos explaining information about voting dates, which authorities are being elected, etc. This

“The sign language interpretation service on our website has a great impact on the deaf community.”

Ricardo Downey, Head, Citizen Attention Unit, SERVEL

material has sign language translation or subtitles. For direct support services users can access SERVEL’s platform through web or mobile devices. They are then connected to a trained interpreter, who is able to answer their questions as well as to provide useful electoral information. The service is enhanced during election days with more interpreters added to the platform and voting centre staff receiving training on how best to support persons with hearing impairments during election day. In 2021 the platform supported 340 persons.



Since 2021, Chile has a permanent video interpreting service in sign language for elections.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The SERVEL platform is hosted by Red Apis, an external service company (and 2021 Zero Project Awardee), which currently operates the programme for an approximate annual cost of \$10,000. For the next three years, given that several elections are fixed in the electoral calendar, the objective is to have more material available for the most vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and women. For non-election periods, SERVEL plans to carry out field activities in isolated places to inform citizens about specific procedures (e.g., change of electoral address) and it hopes to bring the Vi-Sor platform to these areas as well.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- The sign interpretation service has an annual cost of \$10,000.
- There are pre-recorded information videos available that provide guidance on the election process.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*

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# Haptic technology to improve mobile app accessibility

## CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES / TENCENT - MTGPA HAPTICS

Tencent Holdings Ltd. is a multinational technology and entertainment company headquartered in Shenzhen, China. Originating from Tencent's game development, MTGPA (Magic Tencent Game Performance Amelioration) Haptics is transmitting vibro-tactile signals to the user, which support orientation and notification. Typical customers are persons with visual impairments and the elderly. Connected to the Tencent Map app, MTGPA Haptics guides customers indoors and outdoors through long and short vibrations in case of deviations from the planned route.

### Problem targeted

More and more persons with visual impairments rely on technical support for navigation and notification. Thus, precise commands and indoor and outdoor availability are essential.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Initially working with a pilot group of 30 visually impaired users, the company evaluated and verified the vibro-tactile information features. One result was that visually impaired persons outperformed persons without impairment in terms of recognizing vibro-tactile information.

**“MTGPA Haptics will assist the visually impaired users in providing more improved digital service experience.”**

Qitong Liu, General Manager of TOD at Tencent Games CROS

MTGPA Haptics, therefore decided to develop a toolbox that gives vibro-tactile feedback to the user. It works like the vibration function on a smart phone and can be installed on more than 200 models of devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, and is compatible with both iOS and Android. Originally developed as a feature to make games more exciting, its use has been extended to support persons who are blind or visually impaired and the elderly. Moreover, the patterns work in public settings without interfering with the environment, transmitting information only to the user. As a navigation feature, users get different haptic signals, like long and short vibrations, when deviating from their chosen route. No signal means



“MTGPA Haptics” transmits vibro-tactile signals as orientation aids to its users.

that they are right on track. Tencent does not publish actual user numbers, but in 2022 MTGPA Haptics has been installed some 240 million times worldwide.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

In the coming years the company will work on such issues as online learning, information services, employment, living assistance, work assistance, and financial services, and will provide haptic feedback solutions for all users. In cooperation with the Tencent map and Sogou input method team, the company plans to further improve the vibro-tactile features with a redesigned orientation map, making the navigation feature even more accessible and easier to use.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- MTGPA Haptics have been installed in over 240 million smart phones.
- 4,200 visually impaired users of MTGPA Haptics from May to August 2022.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# Easy-to-use method for connecting communities, service providers, and the government

COLOMBIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES / WORLD VISION – CITIZEN, VOICE, AND ACTION (CVA)

World Vision is a global humanitarian organization working in nearly 100 countries around the world. In 2013 it adapted a social accountability model called Citizen, Voice, and Action (CVA), which informs persons with disabilities about their rights, empowers them to evaluate the performance of government and service providers, and encourages them to suggest improvements. By 2022 the model has been implemented in more than 50 countries, including Colombia, El Salvador, India, Kenya, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Romania.

## Problem targeted

It is often hard for persons with disabilities to hold governments accountable for entitled services due to a lack of information and data about necessary improvements.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

Citizen, Voice, and Action (CVA) is an initiative implemented by World Vision to strengthen the dialogue between communities and governments to improve services such as health care and education using a local-level methodology. The practice is developed in three stages: (1) It enables citizen engagement with services providers, and it reviews government

“The project has helped me to think differently, to fight for what I deserve, and to help other people with disabilities.”

David Aviles, 27, Soyopango municipality, El Salvador

documents and policies. (2) CVA organizes a series of meetings with focus groups to assess the quality of services and identify improvements. These focus groups include, among others, persons with disabilities, DPOs, and service providers. (3) CVA creates an action plan that guides persons with disabilities to negotiate with the government and service providers to improve services and monitor implementation. Additionally, World Vision has developed two mobile applications to support data collection and analysis: one for country-wide data collection and another for individuals to rate the rights and services they receive, or lack thereof. The CVA initiative was started in 2005, and consciously expanded its practice in 2013



CVA empowers people with disabilities in dialogue with public institutions (David Aviles, centre).

to include disability inclusion. By 2022 it was active in more than 50 countries. The CVA project in Colombia, for example, has engaged 2,749 persons with disabilities, resulting in 175 actions by service providers.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

The CVA projects are implemented primarily through intensive five-day workshops hosted as a wider community event. These events are normally embedded in local government planning and have an average cost of \$5,000. Looking forward, World Vision aims to continue to expand the use of CVA and is developing a mobile application for collecting data across countries from groups and individuals.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2005

- 2,749 persons with disabilities in Colombia engaged in CVA between 2015 and 2017.
- Between 2015 and 2017 the Ministry of Education in Nicaragua trained 500 teachers in disability inclusion as an impact of the CVA.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Moving from the guardianship to the social autonomy model of disability

## COSTA RICA / MORPHO INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER – PERSONAL AUTONOMY LAW

In 2016, Costa Rica passed a law for the promotion of the personal autonomy of persons with disabilities, a key provision of which is the right to a personal assistant, thus replacing the guardianship model. Assistance is requested through the public disability agency, which conducts an evaluation of how many people require assistance and for how many hours. An annual budget of \$1.5 million enabled over 200 persons with disabilities to receive personalized assistance services in 2022. Furthermore, four independent living centres have been established to implement this new regulation.

### Problem targeted

In Costa Rica people with disabilities are usually cared for by their families or people they know, often lacking adequate support.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

In 2016 Costa Rica passed a law centred on the independent living of persons with disabilities by eliminating guardianships and creating government-funded personal assistants. The law protects the right of persons with disabilities to personal autonomy and to reduced dependency on their family members and carers. The public disability agency manages all requests and assigns the personal assistants. There is a limit of up to 192 service hours per month. More-

“Independent living recognizes each of us as a human being, as a person who has a voice and who counts.”

Ms. Wendy Barrantes Jiménez, a personal assistant beneficiary

over, there are four new disability-led independent living centres like Morpho that complement the public services. They provide support in times of emergency or in non-working hours when the public system does not cover those needs. The person contacts the independent living centre and must publish on a platform how many hours of assistance the state provides and how many hours he/she is without assistance. The support timetable is then adapted to the needs of the person. All centres train their own personal assistants. Centro Morpho, the first of four independent living centres to be built in Costa Rica,



Dependency on families and carers is reduced by the law, and personal assistants are stepping in to provide additional services.

pioneered the training of personal assistants in the country and supported the creation of other centres at the national and international level.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

In 2022, \$1.5 million has been allocated for the implementation of the law. Centro Morpho estimates that there is a much higher demand for personal assistants and is therefore advocating to reform the law and to increase the budget. Centro Morpho has led the creation of the Latin American Independent Living Network and is already replicating the personal assistants training model in other countries, such as Bolivia.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2016

- The Morpho Centre assisted over 200 persons with disabilities in 2022.
- The Costa Rica law has served as a reference for other countries in Latin America.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*

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# Government-led database for improved distribution of assistive technologies

## DJIBOUTI / ANPH – SIGPH MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The National Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ANPH) of Djibouti, created by law in 2018, coordinates state policies for people with disabilities and supports their integration into social life. In 2019 it introduced the Management Information System for Persons with Disabilities (SIGPH) to register them biometrically and to distribute support and benefits via a Mobility Inclusion Card. As a support, the ANPH has established a helpline for telephone registration in 2021. Between 2019 and 2022, 4,466 persons have been registered.

### Problem targeted

Many people with disabilities in Djibouti cannot access resources and support if their needs are not recorded. Furthermore, public services often struggle to collect information on clients.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

People with disabilities in Djibouti can register their details with ANPH either by visiting the office or via a free telephone line. Existing data on people with disabilities from service providers and partners of the ANPH have also been imported into the system, providing a comprehensive overview of the needs and circumstances of the registered users. Information can be easily and safely exchanged between the



With a Mobility Inclusion Card people with disabilities in Djibouti have access to supports.

**“It is not the person that is the problem, it is the social environment.”**

Man Mahamoud, CEO, DOUALEH SAID MAHAMOUD,  
Agence National des Personnes Handicapées

various public services that are needed by the user to access public services or public funding. SIGPH enables users to request equipment and materials to support mobility, such as wheelchairs or canes. Users can also apply for rehabilitation, access to care, and education services. ANPH is handling all requests, and products and services are delivered via dedicated service providers.

By mid-2022 some 2,000 disability cards were distributed and 1,900 assistive devices or materials were provided.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

By mid-2022 only people who have been able to travel and register are included in the system. The ANPH is planning a vast registration programme whereby visits will be conducted to people's homes to register persons who are bedridden or cannot travel due to other reasons. Moreover, a telephone service for registrations has been established in 2021.

ANPH is seeking further funding from the government to continue these efforts, as the initial \$550,000 project budget has been used. The aim is to register all people with disabilities in Djibouti – an estimated 85,000 people. In addition, ANPH plans to ensure that all public services are available on the system, and that the interface with these services is fully developed.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- By mid-2022, 4,466 people with disabilities were registered on the SIGPH system.
- 1,900 assistive devices and materials have been distributed.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# A political leadership course for young people with disabilities

UNITED STATES / THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES) – ENGAGE

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a US-based NGO working globally to build resilient democracies that deliver for all. IFES developed the ENGAGE programme in 2018, a political leadership course for young people with disabilities that builds their skills to be leaders in their communities, combining both theory and direct experience. Implemented initially in the Dominican Republic, by 2022 ENGAGE has been replicated, in coordination with local DPOs and university partners, in five more countries and one autonomous region.

## Problem targeted

Young persons with disabilities often face enormous barriers when engaging in political life.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

ENGAGE is a global political leadership course for young people with disabilities. Developed by IFES, it is implemented with local DPOs and university partners. Through in-person or online courses, it builds the skills of young people with disabilities to be leaders in their communities and provides direct community engagement experience in the form of internships and community action projects. Implemented initially in the Dominican Republic, ENGAGE has grown both in scale and content, and the curriculum has been

“Before the course I didn’t feel the need to be part of any political groups. Now I understand that it is my duty to fight for my rights.”

A course participant, Dominican Republic ENGAGE

adapted and refined for specific country contexts. This can be seen in its implementation in five more countries, working closely with local DPOs. After the ENGAGE training, participants are found to have increased political and civic engagement in the long term. In the Dominican Republic, for example, three alumni were hired by the Central Electoral Board and City Hall. Additionally, the Dominican Republic’s election commission created the first Disability Inclusion Policy in the country, inspired by the programme. In Ukraine, one alumna ran in the 2020 local elections and was elected to the Kyiv Oblast Council.



The ENGAGE political leadership training is already in use in six countries.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

ENGAGE was piloted in the Dominican Republic in 2018 as part of a \$75,000 project funded by IFES and USAID, in collaboration with Disability Alliance for our Rights, a Dominican NGO. IFES provides grants when partnering with DPOs, and in some contexts with universities to conduct the course.

During the COVID-19 pandemic IFES and the Association of Indonesian Disabled Persons adapted ENGAGE into an online curriculum. ENGAGE has shown to be easily adaptable to specific country contexts, implemented as a formal or non-formal civic education course with local partners such as universities and DPOs.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- ENGAGE has been implemented in six countries and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (Papua New Guinea).
- The 2018 pilot programme cost \$75,000.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Teaching skills to children with autism using animated video

## FRANCE AND OTHER COUNTRIES / SIGNES DE SENS – BEN LE KOALA

In 2013 Signes De Sens, an NGO based in Lille, France, in collaboration with the Centre Ressources Autismes Hauts-de-France, created Ben the Koala, an educational animated character for children with disabilities aged two to six years. Activities taught include daily tasks such as brushing teeth and wearing clothes. Ben the Koala is distributed through educational videos, mobile applications, and printed materials. In 2021 the mobile application of Ben the Koala had over 27,000 active users.

### Problem targeted

Young children can find processing verbal instruction difficult, especially children with autism. Daily activities such as hygiene practices and visits to the doctor can be challenging.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Ben the Koala is an animated character teaching young children practical tasks through videos, such as how to brush their teeth or put on their jacket. The free videos are available via a website, Google Play, YouTube, or an app, allowing parents a versatile, non-verbal way to guide their children through a daily task they would otherwise find challenging. Co-designed with families, autism professionals, and



“Ben the Koala” teaches children with autism everyday tasks, such as brushing their teeth.

“Ben helps every child from 3 to 6 to reveal his talents! A wonderful coach for all kids in the spirit of Universal Design.”

Simon Houriez, Founder, Signes de sens

teachers, Ben the Koala’s Universal Design principles allow all young children to access this helpful teaching tool. Ben is featured in more than 30 videos, which are regularly accessed by 27,000 users per month, and via the app, which has had over 2.7 million video views on YouTube. Between 2014 and 2022 the practice has gained the recognition of five major awards for health and education, in addition to support from autism and educational organizations in France.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Public funding along with fundraising from individuals, companies, and foundations supports the organization’s current activities, with additional sponsorship for their latest app coming from the Polish agency, Stepwise. The organization plans to expand Ben the Koala to include kindergarten children and to further promote their skills development, as well as offer special support and guidance for parents. In addition, Signes De Sens plans to expand international access to the videos, to further develop sign language content, and to develop new printed materials.

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### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2013

- The videos have 27,000 regular users each month.
- 30 free educational videos are available.
- There have been some 150,000 app downloads between 2014 and 2022.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# People with intellectual disabilities as editors, experts, and political representatives

## GERMANY / CAPITO MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN – POLITICAL REPRESENTATION PROGRAMME

Capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (capito MV) is a social enterprise and licensee of capito Austria, based in Hagenow, Germany. In 2017 capito MV launched a qualification project for people with intellectual disabilities, enabling them to become political editors, political representatives, and experts in barrier-free information. It is partly financed by Aktion Mensch, a large private funding programme, but also by selling its services to public entities. Between 2017 and 2022 the programme trained approximately 1,000 people with intellectual disabilities.

### Problem targeted

For many people with intellectual disabilities it can be difficult to find information in easy language about politics and political programmes.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Participants in capito MV's training can become qualified political editors, podcasters, and lecturers. In these roles they inform people with intellectual disabilities about the political process and the programmes of the various political parties. In addition, these trained participants encourage people with intellectual disabilities to participate politically in many ways: for example, by voting, becoming a poll worker, or submitting a petition. Capito MV collaborates with



Participants become editors, political representatives, and experts in accessible information.

“Barrier-free access to political information and political diversity strengthens our societies.”

Nils Wöbke, Director, capito MV

several partners, including various political parties, the state chancellery of the federal state Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and the European Integration Center in Rostock, Germany. In collaboration with the latter, capito MV launched a podcast called “Just listen to politics” (“Politik einfach hören”), which features interviews with politicians as well as tips for political participation in easy language. The company also advocates for the political inclusion of persons with disabilities through workshops for elected officials and administrators in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The project is funded by Aktion Mensch, a grant-making non-profit organization based in Germany, and through capito MV's own revenue. The company's clients include the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, political parties, and educational institutions, all of which hire the enterprise to provide translations, digital solutions, and training to produce content in easy language. Capito MV plans to launch the capito mobile application and to develop e-learning courses. The company also hopes to achieve a wider dissemination of their easy-to-understand political information in traditional and digital media.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Approximately 1,000 people with disabilities were trained between 2017 and 2022.
- Some 100,000 people have been reached with easy-to-understand information about politics.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# At-home support for parents with intellectual disabilities

## GERMANY – NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA / MOBILE E.V. – ACCOMPANIED PARENTHOOD

MOBILE – Selbstbestimmtes Leben Behinderter e.V., an NGO based in Dortmund, Germany, developed the Accompanied Parenthood (Begleitete Elternschaft, BE) project in 2006. Working with 8–12 families each year, BE supports parents with intellectual disabilities to raise their children at home, assisted by educators in the areas of life skills, teaching, and childcare. BE is now offered by a second NGO in Dortmund, enabling parents to choose between the two. Moreover, the BE project has contributed to the new Federal Participation Act (BTHG) of Germany.

### Problem targeted

There is a lack of support for parents with intellectual disabilities seeking to raise their children at home. In most cases they receive neither support nor funding.

model. MOBILE started in 2006 by supporting one family; between 2006 and 2011 the NGO ran BE pilot projects; and by 2022 it was able to support up to 12 families per year.

“They then confirmed: Okay, you’re doing well. But you must decide that for yourself”

Mother of programme beneficiary

### Solution, innovation, and impact

MOBILE’s BE project pairs participating parents with an educator or a social worker who provides advice, hands-on assistance, and connects them to other relevant services. This support covers three areas: (1) the upbringing of children, such as looking after their health and education; (2) support in matters related to family life, such as establishing daily routines or navigating a divorce; and (3) support in administrative and other practical tasks, such as budgeting and housekeeping. MOBILE is also an advocate for BE, having contributed to designing a law enshrining the right to accompanied parenthood for parents with intellectual disabilities. The NGO also runs an online portal that provides information about the BE project and guidelines for accompanied parenthood to help other service providers interested in the


### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The first BE pilot project was funded 80 per cent by the National Welfare Foundation and 20 per cent by MOBILE. Now, the NGO is contracted by the local Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) and the national Rehabilitation Agency (LWL) as a specialist BE service provider. MOBILE covers the costs of the information portal. The NGO plans to recruit new educators for its BE project and to continue advocating for accompanied parenthood to become a more widely available service. MOBILE’s BE model has been replicated by another NGO in Dortmund, which means all families who request the service in the city are supported. Similar services have been created in other cities in North Rhine-Westphalia, often with the support of MOBILE.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2006

- In 2022 seven educators supported 12 families in Dortmund.
- The employees of MOBILE e. V. advise other organizations on setting up a support service BE.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Providing assistive technology for children in rural Asia

## INDIA – TAMIL NADU / AMAR SEVA SANGAM – PAEDIATRIC ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

Amar Seva Sangam, an Indian NGO and service provider, is based in the southern province of Tamil Nadu. In 2020 it started the Paediatric Assistive Technology (AT) Provision programme, providing information on adequate AT with a focus on children in rural areas. The programme consists of an initial assessment of needs, a training programme for rehabilitators, AT assessment camps, support in finding sponsors, and advice on accessing government funding. Between 2020 and 2022 there were 24 AT assessment camps held, applying more than 1,500 assistive products.

### Problem targeted

There are many barriers to accessing AT in rural areas of low- and middle-income countries, including physical and social barriers, costs and supply, and limited rehabilitation professionals.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Amar Seva Sangam's Enabling Inclusion Programme developed an institutional-level survey based on the World Health Organization's Priority Assistive Products List and Principles of Assistive Technology access. An action plan and framework have been created, addressing each recommendation from the survey. Actions include capacity-building of rehabilitation staff, AT guidebooks for service providers, and education programmes for service users and families on using assistive products.

**“AT access changes the lives of children with disabilities, enabling development, participation, and inclusion.”**

S. Sankara Raman, Secretary, Amar Seva Sangam

By mid-2022 some 929 assistive products had been delivered to users, with an additional 644 under order; 99 rehabilitation specialists received training in assessment, prescription, and order fit/adaptations; and three therapists have been trained as AT leads to guide, monitor, and evaluate.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The programme is funded and implemented in partnership with Handi-Care International, the Azim Premji Foundation, and other small Canadian



In two years close to 1,000 assistive devices have been provided to children in rural India.

foundations. When families apply, an assessment is conducted to analyse the family's ability to contribute to the purchase. Service providers help families apply for government funding and are also encouraged to find local sponsors. From 2023 to 2026 Amar Seva Sangam aims to support 3,200 additional children by providing AT across Tamil Nadu, while exploring opportunities for other assistive products. Moreover, a collaborative study with the University of Toronto is planned to evaluate the programme's impact and address any gaps. Several other local NGOs have begun using parts of the programme through a licencing model and have indicated that they are interested in replicating the entire programme.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between 2020 and 2022, 24 AT camps have been run in three districts of Tamil Nadu.
- 1,577 assistive products have been prescribed.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Community-based support services to persons with psychosocial disabilities

INDIA – MAHARASHTRA / BAPU TRUST FOR RESEARCH ON MIND & DISCOURSE

In 1999 the Bapu Trust, an NGO based in Pune, India, launched the Seher Urban Community Mental Health and Inclusion (UCMHI) programme to support adults with psychosocial disabilities at risk of institutionalization in low-income urban slum settlements. Measures include family negotiations, supported decision-making, and other community-based services such as housing. Between 2017 and 2022, UCMHI has served 1,012 people, and Bapu Trust has trained other NGOs using the UCMHI model in 57 villages in three Indian states.

## Problem targeted

In India adults with psychosocial disabilities face a considerable risk of institutionalization due to restricted support services, and often suffer trauma from experiences linked to violence and exclusion.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

The UCMHI initiative provides community-based services for persons with psychosocial disabilities, promoting independence in the community to prevent institutionalization, with particular focus on women. In self-care sessions, family meetings, and community meetings areas such as health care, housing, employment, and social protection are discussed. In local sessions on site, the personnel from the initiative provides additional support when required, as in cases of violence, such as police, legal, and peer care services.

“We are providing guidance to decolonize mental health through zero coercion.”

Bhargavi Venkatasubramaniam, Founder Trustee,  
Bapu Trust For Research on Mind and Discourse

Persons from grassroots communities who have used the programme are employed as programme implementers and also hold leadership positions within the organization. The programme stresses family and empowerment negotiation as well as the need of community support networks, and it has created strategies to this end collaborating with peer and volunteer networks, women, and youth groups. From 2017 to mid-2022 more than 1,000 people with psychosocial disabilities have received direct support.



UCMHI promotes the independence of people with psychosocial disabilities in India.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

Funding comes through donations, grant support, and public funding, with an annual budget of €150,000. Major funders include Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives and International Disability Alliance (IDA). Between 2017 and 2022 partnerships with local service providers have increased from under ten to more than 100. To date, the programme has been replicated in three states, 57 villages, and 12 low income urban/semi-urban communities through five long- term training modules and several smaller field programmes.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Between 2017 and 2022, Bapu Trust has undertaken 9,280 actions to prevent institutionalization.
- More than 1,000 people with psychosocial disabilities have received direct support during the same period.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Sexual and reproductive education for youth with leprosy and other disabilities

INDONESIA – NUSA TENGGARA TIMUR / NLR INDONESIA – MY BODY IS MINE (MBIM)

In 2018 NLR Indonesia, an NGO based in Jakarta, developed the My Body Is Mine (MBIM) programme, an inclusive sexual and reproductive health programme for children and youth with disabilities. MBIM ensures that public and private stakeholders can respond to the growing needs of children through a rights-based, gender-sensitive approach using advocacy and knowledge building. In 2022 close to 200 children, 86 public health staff, and 23 caregivers have attended the programme.

## Problem targeted

Children and youth with disabilities often lack information about their sexual and reproductive health due to stigma and the lack of sexual education and services.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

NLR Indonesia has designed the MBIM project to educate children and youth with leprosy and other disabilities aged ten to 18 about their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in schools and health care centres. As part of the project, NLR had produced and developed educational teaching manuals and tools, such as images and videos, which teachers,

“With the MBIM project there is no taboo in giving correct education that can prevent and protect our generations from threats.”

Angga Yanuar, Manager, Inclusion and Disabilities, NLR Indonesia

health care workers, and parents use to address topics of sexual and reproductive health with young people. The project also works closely with teenagers with disabilities who can be role models in promoting sexual health and reproductive rights in schools. In 2020–2021, COVID-19 significantly impacted the project. However, due to the training that had taken place before the pandemic, children and youth were better prepared to maintain personal hygiene and to report to trusted people when experiencing sexual violence. In the four project districts in Indonesia, 182



MBIM is a sexual education programme for youth with disabilities in Indonesia.

children and young people with disabilities received sexual and reproductive rights education between 2019 and 2022.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

NLR Indonesia receives funding for the MBIM project from Liliane Fonds, a Dutch NGO. The total cost for three years of implementation in four districts of Indonesia is €150,000. MBIM has encouraged the involvement of schools, health centres, village governments, and families to provide more comprehensive education about reproductive health and to create a safe environment.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- In 2022 six schools and four health centres in Indonesia are regularly implementing SRHR education for children with disabilities.
- Between 2018 and 2021, NLR Indonesia trained 42 local facilitators (teachers, health workers, parents, and assistants).
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# People with intellectual disabilities co-designing digital innovations

## IRELAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES / SAINT JOHN OF GOD LIFFEY SERVICE (SJOG) – APP TOOLKIT

Saint John of God Liffey Service (SJOG) is an NGO based in Dublin, Ireland, that has developed the Co-Design toolkit. It enables persons with intellectual disabilities to co-produce mobile apps that support their daily interactions. The Co-Design programme follows the principles of inclusive Universal Design. Persons with intellectual disabilities are involved at every stage, from problem definition to shaping the final product. Co-Design is carried out in partnership with Technological University Dublin. Between 2016 and 2022 the programme had 70 participants and developed over 30 apps.

### Problem targeted

The low engagement of people with intellectual disabilities in digital innovation deprives individuals of their right to inclusion and increases the digital divide.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Persons with intellectual disabilities provide project ideas, join the designers in building a technological app, and engage in the design process. The co-designers heavily influence the final product, and consultation is sought during each phase. Moreover, the co-designer's validation of changes is required in the process.

**“I thought that the project was great fun, and the best bit was that the website talked to us!”**

Miley, Participant, Greengables DIT Project, SJOG & TUDublin

An example is the development of a mobile app for daily groceries shopping. The app provides information on how much a product costs and shows images on the right amount of money to give to cashiers. This allows users to be confident in their interactions with store clerks and cashiers. Other apps that have been developed in this partnership include an accessible dating app, an app to access information on the rights of persons with disabilities, and an app that helps to support housing transitions of persons with disabilities. Co-Design practice was run as a trial with 20 co-designers working with 20 students in 2016. This trial partnership has developed into an ongoing yearly module within Technological University Dublin in partnership with SJOG Liffey Services.



SJOG enables people with intellectual disabilities to co-create apps for their everyday lives.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Co-Design partnership has been facilitated through the SJOG Day Service support staff, which is funded by the HSE Health Service Executive, a government agency. In addition, the European Erasmus+ programme funded the project with €130,000. This covered training and development cost. In the next three years the practice will be embedded in two more Erasmus + funded digital inclusion projects, spreading the practice to six other European countries.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2016

- Between 2016 and 2022, 130 persons with intellectual disabilities and 165 students participated.
- Technological University Dublin has adopted inclusive education practices since working with persons with intellectual disabilities on a daily basis.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Persons with intellectual disabilities becoming self-advocates in politics

## ISRAEL / BEIT ISSIE SHAPIRO – ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

In 2011 Beit Issie Shapiro (BIS), a large NGO based in Israel, developed a consulting and training programme together with Israel Elwyn, another Israeli NGO, with the focus on persons with intellectual disabilities. The process involves 12 groups across the country that inform themselves on current issues through facilitators and that practice self- and collective advocacy with local and national policy makers. Between 2011 and 2022 the number of participants has grown from 20 to 150 self-advocates, and the Israeli government regularly requests the input of the programme's self-advocates.

### Problem targeted

There are few opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities to develop self-advocacy skills or to provide input to the legislative processes and policy-making.

### Solution, innovation, and impact


Participants in the Beit Issie Shapiro (BIS) consulting and training programme join a group of fellow self-advocates, all of whom are elected by their peers. Each group has a facilitator who has been trained by BIS, and who presents legal and policy discussions in a way that is easy to understand. The programme is led by a team from BIS and Elwyn Israel, another Israeli NGO.

Due to the national group's activities, in 2016 an amendment to the Legal Capacity and Guardianship Law was passed by the Israeli Parliament's Ministerial Legislative Committee. As the group is working on the formulation of the new law's regulations, it is also in touch with sheltered living agencies to ensure that they are aware of and respect the right of

**“We might have intellectual disabilities, but we still have our own say.”**

Shai Asulin, Self-Advocate

people with intellectual disabilities to make decisions pertaining their own lives. The Government of Israel now regularly requests the input of the programme's self-advocates to their processes, including through the national intra-ministry committee, which acts as a focal point between all Israeli ministries.

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The programme's self-advocates are regularly consulted by the Israeli government.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

In 2019 and 2020 the total budget of the programme was \$105,000, coming from Rehabilitation International as well as private donors. The programme is on a national expansion track seeking to add new members. In order to facilitate this process and encourage replication, BIS has developed courses that assist persons with intellectual disabilities to construct a positive self-identity and to provide them with tools to self-advocate. A handbook is to be published in the near future.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2011

- In 2022 there are 11 local groups and one national group consisting of 150 self-advocates.
- Participants provide input to both local and national legislative and policy-making processes.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



# Entrepreneurship support for persons with psychosocial disabilities

## ISRAEL / ENOSH – MAOF ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME

Enosh, the Israeli Mental Health Association, launched the MAOF entrepreneurship programme in 2008. MAOF (the Hebrew word for vision, courage, and imagination) supports the self-employment of persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. Specific measures include tailored business coaching, legal and financial counselling, peer support, and mental health recovery support. Funded by the Israeli Ministry of Health, the MAOF programme has grown between 2015 and 2022 from 45 to 433 entrepreneurs.

### Problem targeted

People with psychosocial disabilities often face difficulties in starting and running their own business due to a lack of personalized support.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The MAOF programme offers free individual long-term support to entrepreneurs who have already started a business. Candidates undergo an admissions interview and must submit a business and personal recovery plan. During the programme they are expected to continue to run their business, participate in trainings, and attend mentoring sessions. Their participation is reviewed on an annual basis according to their progress and needs. Participants are supported by a team of case managers, rehabilitation coordinators, and business coaches. They also have access to legal and financial counselling, digital networking opportunities, and peer support. Graduates of MAOF report increased revenue and incomes, improved coping skills for mental health, and stronger social connections. Some graduates have also hired other



MAOF generated 433 businesses run by people with intellectual disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

MAOF was launched with financial support from the National Insurance Institute of Israel and has since been funded entirely by the Ministry of Health. In 2021, Enosh received \$2.2 million to run MAOF. Enosh aims to increase the number of MAOF participants annually by 20 per cent. The organization also plans to expand the MAOF business mentor network, and open an Entrepreneurship Hub. The MAOF model has been replicated and adapted by other service providers across Israel. It could also be adapted to support people with other types of disabilities.

“With MAOF, I remembered what my abilities and knowledge are. I could believe in myself again.”

Joyce Suliman, Graphic Designer, owner of Peak Design

people with psychosocial disabilities as employees. MAOF started as a local programme in central Israel in 2008 but expanded nationally during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it started being delivered partially online. The Ministry of Health is using MAOF as a best practice for mental health rehabilitation services.



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### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2008

- MAOF has supported 433 entrepreneurs across Israel.
- 80 per cent of graduates report an increase in revenue; 15 per cent have doubled their income; 95 per cent report increased self-confidence.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Transferring persons with intellectual disabilities out of sheltered workshops

## ISRAEL / ISRAEL ELWYN – TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMES

In 2015 Israel Elwyn (IE), an Israel-based NGO focusing on persons with intellectual disabilities, initiated a model to close sheltered workshops and to transfer its beneficiaries to the open labour market programme, providing accessible training, job placement, and tailored individual or group support. As of 2022, IE supported some 1,200 individuals to find employment in the open labour market, and 800 students through IE’s transitional programmes into employment each year.

### Problem targeted

Historically, persons with disabilities in Israel have been referred to sheltered workshops for employment, where they did not receive remuneration, social benefits, or pensions.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

In cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, Israel Elwyn has developed a model to close sheltered workshops in Israel and to support people with disabilities to transition into the open labour market. To achieve this, IE has created a variety of employment services such as adapted training, job placement, and emotional support. In particular, training is provided with the cooperation of vocational colleges to teach relevant skills and to provide hands-on experience, thus expanding job opportunities for individuals in the community.

“Thanks to my job I am independent. I help customers at the store. I feel strong.”

Yoshi Yehuda, programme participant

IE’s work focuses on high school students with disabilities approaching adult life, as well as persons with disabilities participating in sheltered workshops for many years. Annually, 800 students participate in the IE transitional programme in high schools throughout Israel. Later, these students are referred to follow-up programmes, such as vocational training, employment, and higher education, among others.



Bringing people from sheltered workshops into the regular labour market.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Other Israeli organizations supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are in implementing the model. Several adjustments are necessary to reflect market demand.

IE expects to work with the Ministry of Economy and Industry to provide professional courses and digital skills to support career development for persons with disabilities. IE will continue to recognize businesses employing people with disabilities through its Open-Door Employer Campaign.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2015

- Between 2015 and 2022 some 1,200 individuals found employment.
- In 2022, IE collaborated with 2,850 workplaces to hire persons with disabilities
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Life Stories from Israel and Abu Dhabi



## THE STORY OF MARIAM, USER OF THE KEY-X KEYBOARD

**“I quickly understood how to type and started expressing my thoughts.”**

*Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*

My name is Mariam and I am 8 years old. I was born with cerebral palsy, which for me means that I have great difficulty communicating. I understand what people around me are saying, but I didn't have any ways to communicate back and interact. In my classroom it was hard for the educators to know how much I was learning, and communication was even difficult at home with my caregiver and parents.

That all changed once I found the Key-X keyboard. With the colourful symbols on just 11 buttons, I quickly understood how to type and started expressing my thoughts. I received it while at school, and now I can reply to my teacher using the keyboard and be included in the same classroom among students who don't have a disability.

I am always very excited to go to school and use the Key-X. I also bring it home to play online learning games, and recently I've been learning math with it. I asked for an Arabic keyboard because I want to type in my language, and recently Key2enable gave me one. Now I can communicate not only in one but two languages.

My classmates constantly want to touch the Key-X buttons, which lets us engage and play together!

**i** See also Factsheet on page 84.

## THE STORY OF FAKHRIYA ZAYED, PARTICIPANT IN THE SAME MODEL PROGRAMME

**“Today, I know how to express myself, and I claim my rights without fear.”**

*Israel*

My name is Fakhriya Zayed and I am 37 years old. I have a psychosocial disability and receive services from Sawa, a SAME Model programme designed and adapted for the Arabic-speaking society in Israel. In SAME, I enjoy a wide range of activities. The support I receive is face-to-face and via WhatsApp. SAME also offers Arabic online workshops where I meet people from all over the country and am exposed to different fields of knowledge. Through either of these channels, the main thing is that the coordinator is interested in me and my well-being and cares about me. I prefer those activities that include discussions and self-expression. I feel I am in a safe place for sharing, and it has strengthened my self-confidence. I also enjoy recreation days.

In SAME the amount of support changes according to progress. Today, I no longer need reminders and encouragement because I have found my inner drive. The greatest gift I received from SAME is my life partner, Amer. We met at a social activity, got married, and went on an overnight trip organized by SAME.

I started using the service in 2018. Today, I know how to express myself, my desires, and my opinions, and I claim my rights without fear.

**i** See also Factsheet on page 53.



# Supported housing for persons with complex disabilities

## ISRAEL / JDC ISRAEL – EXPANDED SUPPORTED HOUSING

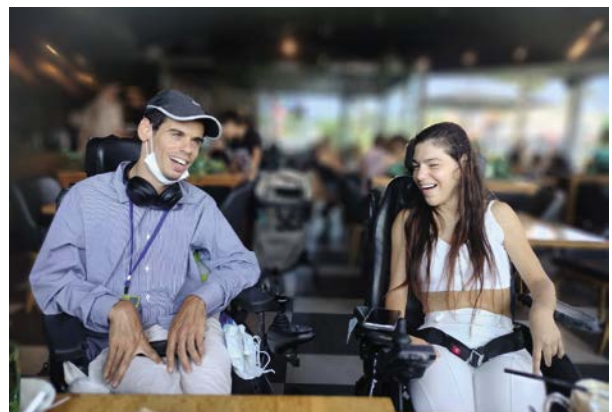
In 2019, JDC Israel Unlimited developed the Expanded Supported Housing programme in partnership with the Israeli Government. The programme supported 16 adults with severe disabilities aged 21–55 to live independently. The services include help finding an apartment, actualizing rights, budgeting, cultivating autonomy, and building independent life skills. Based on the pilot project, JDC is expanding the project, and the Israeli Government will adopt it in the next five years.

### Problem targeted

Many adults in Israel with severe disabilities end up in institutions due to a lack of facilities and supportive housing programmes.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Expanded Supported Housing programme focuses on adults with severe disabilities transitioning to living independently in the community. The programme includes preparing the individual for the move, finding an apartment, and adapting it to the occupant's various needs. JDC also provides ongoing personal mentoring and training in life skills for as long as the adult needs. The model is a continuation of a previous Supported Housing programme by JDC, designed for people with less severe disabilities. Due to the success of this earlier project, many parents and people with disabilities requested more extensive services. In comparison with the previous project, the programme offers extended hours of support, adapted services to take the various disabilities into account, and extended participation of families. In early 2022 the project transitioned from the pilot phase to the actual programme phase in two locations.



The programme prepares the individual adult to move into their own apartment and provides mentoring as well as life skills

Israel. The budget includes costs related to pilot development and training, which amounts to \$4.4 million per year. In June 2022 a new law was passed in Israel to support the transition of people with disabilities from institutions to community living, with a budget of \$500 million for the next five years. There are more than 16,000 persons living in institutions in Israel. It is expected that the Israeli Ministry of Social Services will incorporate the programme entirely, reaching 210 participants by 2025.

“Do I recommend independent living?  
Come with a positive mind-set,  
despite the challenges, and do it!”

Daniel Mizrachi, programme participant

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The programme is funded jointly by the Israeli Government and philanthropic money raised by JDC

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- In 2022 the programme had 16 participants.
- The Israeli Government is funding the project with \$500 million for the next five years.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Comprehensive support for young people with disabilities after their school education

## ISRAEL / KREMBO WINGS – PAVING THE WAY TO INDEPENDENT LIFE

Krembo Wings is an Israeli youth movement and NGO that supports persons with and without disabilities. In 2002 it launched the Paving the Way to Independent Life programme, which organizes activities targeting soft-skills and life-skills development, provides empowerment such as managing a personal budget, and offers tailor-made professional guidance such as CV and application writing. The programme benefits around 250 young graduates every year.

### Problem targeted

At the age of 21, Israeli youth with disabilities no longer receive services from the Ministry of Education, often losing their support networks.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Paving the Way to Independent Life programme seeks to bridge the gap in social support measures when persons with disabilities in Israel move from support from the Ministry of Education to support from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at the age of 21. The programme, which is managed by people with and without disabilities, provides continued guidance and mentoring, such as occupational choices or academic studies, and helps young people

“Krembo Wings gave me the confidence to contribute and share my experiences with other members and the public.”

Tommy Berchenko, Inclusive Instruction Developer

to make informed decisions of their own future. Together with trained staff, the participants continually review personal goals and opportunities, and ensure that their individual needs as well as requests for improvement are discussed in open group meetings. Practical elements are also taught, such as teamwork, public speaking, and administration, thus preparing students to live independently. The programme has over 5,000 graduates, all of whom are supported by the Krembo Wings staff, which includes 11 per cent persons with disabilities.



“Paving the Way to Independent Life” is aimed at beneficiaries after their schooling.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provides Krembo Wings with an annual non-fixed sum, which is complemented by individual and foundation donations from around the world.

Krembo Wings aims to double its number of graduates from 2022 to 2027. In addition, the organization plans to expand its course offerings, integrating interview preparation, digital skills, and managing one’s personal budget, among other areas.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2002

- With 92 branches throughout Israel, Krembo Wings supports over 9,000 individuals.
- Between 2002 and 2022 some 5,000 graduates completed the Paving the Way programme.
- 11 per cent of Krembo Wings employees are persons with disabilities.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Smartphone app that provides audio descriptions of surroundings

## ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES / RIGHTHEAR

RightHear is a start-up company with a social purpose based near Tel Aviv, Israel. Its free RightHear app targets people who are blind, have low-vision, or experience orientation challenges. Using beacon technology, which requires onsite radio transmitters (beacons), customers receive orientation support directly to their earpiece once the app has recognized the location. As of 2022, RightHear has more than 30,000 customers and covers more than 2,100 locations in Australia, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

### Problem targeted

People who are blind or have low vision often have difficulty in navigating the built environment, and many orientation apps require constant signal coverage to operate properly.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

RightHear beacons, which are pocket-size radio transmitters, are installed at selected venues to identify the precise location of the user and send information via Bluetooth to the user's smartphone app. This provides users with an accurate experience of the venue. Beacons do not require GPS or a permanent Internet connection. Venues can pre-programme descriptions through a secure customiz-



RightHear uses beacons (small radio transmitters) as orientation aids.

**“Independence is a necessity to live life to the fullest.”**

Gil Elgrably, RightHear Chief  
Technology Officer and Co-founder

able dashboard, which can include anything from identifying exits and evacuation routes, restrooms, and elevators, to special offers and menus. This can support not only people with visual impairments but also people who have difficulties interpreting signage, such as users with dyslexia, memory loss, or people not fluent in the local language. Starting as a pilot at a university campus, RightHear has international customers like Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Volkswagen, Costa Coffee, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Microsoft, Google, and Ritz Carlton in 2022.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The business model is based on a subscription service to companies using the technology, allowing the app to be free to users. The subscription allows a business to access an admin portal that allows customization of the audio information. Beacons and technical support are available at an additional cost. Between 2019 and 2022, RightHear has been expanding very quickly in Israel and abroad. The company is aiming to grow to 10,000 locations worldwide within three to five years, with a focus of expanding in the US and the UK. The model is available in 26 languages.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2015

- As of mid of 2022 there are more than 30,000 users of the app.
- Over 2,100 locations worldwide have installed the technology.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Social and recreational activities for persons with disabilities and their families

## ISRAEL / SHEKULO TOV GROUP – SAME PROGRAMME

In 2005 the Shekulo Tov Group, a major service provider in Israel, launched SAME (Skills, Activity, Mediation, Environment), a large-scale and government-funded social and recreational programme for persons with disabilities. SAME aims to give its beneficiaries a maximum choice with regards to skills training, activities, support, and the environment they want to be in. Activities are held online and in-person, and they include recreational activities such as movies and shows to skills trainings. In 2021 and 2022, SAME provided services for over 3,000 beneficiaries.

### Problem targeted

In many cases there is a lack of diverse social and recreational activities for persons with disabilities and their families.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

SAME reaches thousands of participants across Israel with activities and services – offered in both Hebrew and Arabic – that consider different disabilities, cultural backgrounds, ages, sexual orientations, and gender identities. Shekulo Tov Group encourages broad participation by offering SAME activities through multiple channels: in-person – through recreational centres across the country, including in remote areas – and online.

“Over 9,000 recreational activities every year promote social inclusion and reduce loneliness.”

Offer Cohen, CEO, Shekulo Tov Group

Events range from movies and theatre shows to skills training, such as how to achieve a healthy lifestyle and digital proficiency. In 2019 Shekulo Tov Group launched MYWAY, a mobile application that allows users to see and filter all the activities available around them. In 2020 the organization developed ALLGOOD, a website offering recreational and educational content such as courses and workshops. Both are in line with the core principles of SAME, ranging from encouraging independence to reducing loneliness.

Service users are involved in designing SAME programme activities and managing the centres



“SAME” is a social and recreational programme for people with disabilities and their families.

where they are provided, thereby contributing to service improvement.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding


The SAME programme is funded by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs (Sababa) and the Ministry of Health (Yalla and Sawa), as well as with funds from the Shekulo Tov Group itself. Over the next five years the programme aims to further expand its offering of social and recreational activities, reach more participants in remote areas of Israel, and cater to new population groups.

The nationwide activities of SAME are managed by the social division of Shekulo Tov and has more than 100 employees.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2005

- In 2021 and 2022, SAME provided services for over 3,000 beneficiaries.
- SAME is available throughout all of Israel.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# A museum in an ancient citadel as a role model for accessible sights

## ISRAEL – JERUSALEM / TOWER OF DAVID MUSEUM – INCLUSION PROGRAMME

In 2017 the Tower of David Museum, an old citadel based in the middle of Jerusalem, Israel, has developed a model to enable persons with disabilities to visit the museum and its shows in an accessible, inclusive, and stress-free way. The model includes special hours to provide a calmer setting and programming activities accessible to persons with various disabilities. It serves as an example that even in buildings that are very old accessibility features such as elevators can be built. The Tower of David is now leading the Museum Accessibility Forum, reaching all museums in Israel.

### Problem targeted

Very often families with children with disabilities feel excluded from cultural institutions as there is little infrastructure to support them.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

After consultations with parents and disabled people's organizations, the Tower of David Museum developed programming appropriate for both children with and without disabilities. Specialist activities were designed for the blind and visually impaired as well as the deaf and hearing impaired, with staff receiving professional training on guiding visitors with sensory impairment or cognitive disabilities, and on Hebrew sign language. Relaxed performances and audio



Visitors to the Tower of David Museum experience Israel's first inclusive museum.

“This is our second time that we have come here, and we really enjoy these special activities.”

Tali, visitor to an inclusive event at the Tower of David Museum

description of shows and accessible tours for adults with various disabilities are also examples of how the practice is integrated into the museum agenda. The creation of a professional Museum Accessibility Forum promoting cultural inclusion now reaches all museums in Israel, sharing best practices, led by the Tower of David. Moreover, the Museum has advised the Israeli Parliament and the National Insurance Institute on accessibility and inclusion.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

In 2017 the project began with a \$50,000 donation

from an anonymous donor, which was the total cost of the programme to date. Funding is now achieved through self-finance and individual donations. In 2018 the Museum was awarded the Accessibility Prize by Access Israel, and the Tower of David Coordinator of Accessibility and Inclusivity continues as a role model and as manager of the Museum Accessibility Forum. The Museum fully reopened after a renewal project at the end of 2022 with added accessibility features, which will continue to be developed. Arabic language events are being planned, and innovative technologies will be adopted to further improve the visitor experience.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Between 2017 and 2019 there were 4,200 participants in inclusive activities.
- The Museum Accessibility Forum has been established to promote accessibility in other museums.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Free mobile app and glasses that sync audio description and captions to movies

## JAPAN / EVIXAR INC. – HELLO! MOVIE APP

In 2020 the Japanese Start-up Evixar Inc. launched the free mobile application HELLO! MOVIE, which enables persons with visual or hearing impairments to access subtitles or audio description for movies via their smartphone or projected onto smart glasses. The features automatically synchronize using only the sound of the movies. Evixar has developed a rental service of Augmented Reality glasses, which has been offered in 85 major movie theatres across Japan. Between 2020 and 2022, HELLO! MOVIE has been downloaded 250,000 times.

### Problem targeted

People with visual or hearing impairments can have difficulty experiencing regular screenings of movies in cinemas, and often have to wait for limited special screenings.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The HELLO! MOVIE mobile application and subtitle glasses rental service provides film subtitles and audio tracks to users without interfering with the enjoyment of others at the screening. This allows users to share the movie experience alongside friends and family who do not have a visual or audio impairment. In the past a limited number of cinemas have displayed subtitles on glasses in selected areas of the cinemas. HELLO! MOVIE automatically synchronises the audio description and subtitles using only the sound of the movie, which has eliminated the need for additional expensive technology. Thus, implementation of the HELLO! MOVIE system does not require any significant investment or editing of the movie itself. The service was launched in February 2020,



Users can access subtitles or audio description of films via their smartphone.

**“I am visually impaired, but I watch a movie once a month.”**

Shunsuke Narisawa, Social Entrepreneur, TED speaker

and as of mid-2022 it has provided audio description and subtitles for around 250 movies.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Movie distributors pay for the cost of registering guide data for films. In order to bring greater flexibility to the business model in the future, Evixar Inc. plans to include additional services that would be charged

directly to users, such as reservation of companion service, audio comments from actors or comments on historical facts for classical films. The aim is to increase both the number of users and the number of movies over the next three years by holding screenings at schools for deaf and blind people throughout Japan. It is expected that as the number of users grows it will become easier for distributors to create guide data for their works, along with providing additional jobs that can be filled by people with disabilities. The service can be transferred to other countries and languages.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between 2020 and 2022: The HELLO! MOVIE application has been downloaded 250,000 times.
- There have been 12,000 rentals of the smart glasses.
- *A project related to ICT.*



Hisaharu Suzuki

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# Pioneering deinstitutionalization by involving broad networks of stakeholders

## JAPAN / DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY WARDS

Launched in 2019, the Project for the Future Liberation and Deinstitutionalization of Muscular Dystrophy Wards is a nationwide NGO initiative in Japan to bring people into community living and has reached approximately 2,000 people in 26 institutions. The project includes online meetings with institutionalized persons, a women's network, and making policy recommendations. The project is one of the few deinstitutionalization efforts in Japan, and between 2019 and 2022 ten people left their institutions and are now living in the community.

### Problem targeted

Many people with Muscular Dystrophy in Japan live away from the community, inside specialized wards in the National Hospital Organization.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The NGO project brings together around 200 individuals, including people with disabilities, researchers, journalists, and lawyers, with the aim of solving the issue of people with disabilities living in institutions. The network shares information and discusses strategies for transitioning people with disabilities into the community via online communication tools such as video calls, messengers, and social media. This enables people in institutions to be included throughout the conversations. In addition, visits are conducted to the wards in order to identify the issues that people with disabilities face.

**“We promote deinstitutionalization in Japan with the principle of ‘Nothing about us, without us’.”**

Mitsutoshi Oyabu, a Founder, Project for the Future Liberation and Deinstitutionalization of Muscular Dystrophy

The project compiles all the collected information and opinions, which are then discussed with the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, with the aim of changing policies and supporting the transition of people with disabilities into the community. A report on the subject published in 2021 received much media and public attention. Between 2019 and 2022 a total of ten people from Muscular Dystrophy wards in Japan have transitioned from the wards and now live in the community.



A project in Japan enables people with muscular dystrophy to live in the community.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The project is funded by the Kirin Welfare Foundation and has an annual budget of \$10,000, which covers visits to wards, online platform fees, and discussions with the government. The project does not cover costs of transition to the community. In Latin America the project reports about its experiences and encourages and teaches while supporting activities of the Latin American Network on Independent Living.

The project aims in the coming years to work with the government to form a clear policy of deinstitutionalization in order for independent living to become a reality for more people with disabilities in Japan.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- The project brings together around 200 individuals, including people with disabilities, researchers, journalists, and lawyers.
- The project is one of the few deinstitutionalization projects in Japan.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Nationwide platform for all disability-related information in a low-income country

## KENYA / ENABLEME KENYA – ENABLEME COMMUNITY PLATFORM

In 2021 EnableMe Kenya, an NGO based in Nairobi, launched an interactive online platform for persons with visible and invisible disabilities. They use expert knowledge, peer-support, and expert advice to support persons with disabilities in Kenya. The focus is on communities that lack access to information on health, education, economic empowerment, and assistive devices. The portal offers information on more than 200 topics and had more than 70,000 visitors between 2021 and 2022.

### Problem targeted

People with disabilities do not always have a safe environment to discuss issues that are important to them as a minority group in society.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

EnableMe Kenya is cooperating with Light for the World and United Disabled Persons of Kenya for the implementation of the project. The online platform provides information to people with disabilities in Kenya on a variety of topics, including inclusive education, family and relationships, assistive technology, economic empowerment, leisure, mobility, and living with a disability. It is targeted towards communities that lack access to information on these important

“I am happy to be part of the EnableMe platform because I believe I will learn more concerning my daughter’s condition.”

Zainer Ochieng, Siaya County, Kenya

topics. Users can not only access information but can also interact by raising questions and having discussions with others who may be facing similar circumstances. Moreover, the organization targets caregivers, parents of persons with disabilities, and experts in disability inclusion. EnableMe Kenya has grown from fewer than 1,000 monthly visitors to the website in 2021 to more than 15,000 by mid-2022. EnableMe Kenya also uses online events to advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities and to support mainstreaming disability, reaching 10,000–20,000 with monthly social media events.

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EnableMe covers more than 200 topics and had more than 70,000 visitors last year.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

EnableMe Kenya is grant funded. Light for the World is responsible for fundraising and for establishing partnerships for further growth. Other partners for supplying funds are SightSavers and CBM Global (both large international NGOs) and the Kilimanjaro Blind Trust.

In the coming years, EnableMe Kenya aims to support more people with disabilities across Kenya, along with their relatives, friends, and others interested in the topic. Other plans include the creation of a community of followers on social media and linking them with online self-help groups.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- There have been over 74,000 unique visitors to the website.
- The website currently offers more than 200 pieces of content, and each year a minimum of 50 are added.
- *A project related to ICT.*

# Online job-platform for persons with disabilities in a sub-Saharan country

## KENYA / SAFARICOM, NCPWD AND I2I – NCPWD CAREER PORTAL

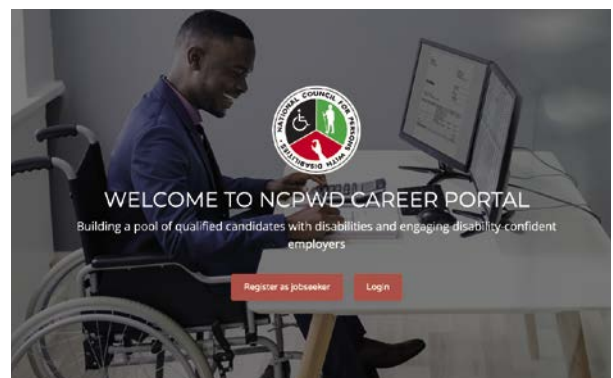
Safaricom is a Kenyan mobile network operator headquartered in Nairobi. As Convener of the Forum for the Global Disability Summit – Kenya Chapter, initiated in 2019, Safaricom supported the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities to start an online job platform in 2020. In addition to matching candidates and employers, the tool offers trainings in areas such as digital literacy and leadership skills to improve the chances of finding suitable employment. Between 2020 and mid-2022, 5,105 candidates and 327 employers used the portal.

### Problem targeted

Although Kenya has a minimum quota system for the employment of persons with disabilities, there are few employment services.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The NCPWD Career Portal offers personalized job recommendations, career guidance, and learning opportunities, such as courses to develop digital and soft skills. Persons with disabilities can register on the portal using their NCPWD-provided disability card, which matches their National Identity card to gain access. Employers who wish to sign up send an email to the career platform provider to request their registration. The concept was developed at the



The NCPWD Career Portal offers personalized job recommendations and career guidance for jobseekers, and search opportunities for employers,

Fund for Persons with Disabilities and the i2i project, funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and delivered through a consortium of partners, led by Leonard Cheshire. Between 2020 and 2022 a total of \$330,000 has been invested. An annual budget of \$80,000 is allocated for IT licences, IT service providers and developers, and operational and administrative costs. The development of offline communication channels (updates via SMS) and the simplification of the job portal access are next steps in the efforts to increase the outreach of the platform.

“Collaboration is the key to unlocking the future for persons with disabilities in the job market and in society at large.”

Tabie Kioko, Senior Manager, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Forum for Global Disability Summit – Kenya Chapter in 2019 in partnership with i2i (Innovation to Inclusion). Safaricom engaged in the design of the platform, the recruiting assessment processes, and the development of online courses. It also played a key role in motivating businesses to register on the job portal. The portal is meant to help public and private sector employers to fill the 5 per cent of jobs they are legally required to reserve for persons with disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The job application portal is implemented through a cooperation between the National Development

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between 2020 and mid-2022 a total of 141 persons with disabilities have found employment via the portal.
- 314 persons with disabilities have been invited for job interviews.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Sign language translation app for accessing services and businesses

**KENYA / SIGNS MEDIA KENYA LIMITED – ASSISTALL**

Signs Media Kenya is a Nairobi-based social enterprise that seeks to educate, inform, and entertain in sign language. In 2022 Signs Media has created the assistAll app, providing on-demand sign language interpretation services to companies, hospitals, public entities, etc. Available 24/7, the service is free of charge for users, with corporate service fees providing most of the funding. The service is available in English and Swahili. In late 2022 assistAll had 7,000 users.

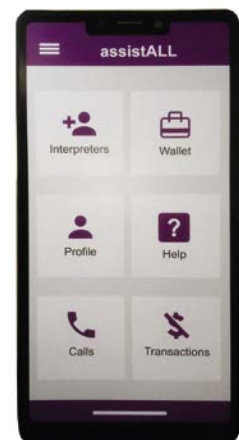
## Problem targeted

People who are deaf or have hearing impairments may have difficulty in conducting day to day activities with businesses and service providers, such as banks and hospitals.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

The free assistAll mobile application was developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic when many deaf people in Kenya were living in isolation. Signs Media, which was already running a news channel in sign language, designed the app to support deaf and hearing-impaired people when using all sorts of services and when conducting business such as banking or getting medical consultations. Some 52 per cent

assistAll connects to a sign language interpreter who can interpret between the service/business and the customer in real time.



**“A sign language interpreter plays a crucial role in the life of a deaf person, aiding in service delivery and acquisition.”**

Luke Muleka, Founder, Signs Media

of all Kenyans subscribe to an Internet services. After installation with each user's mobile device, it connects to a sign language interpreter who can interpret between the service/business and the customer in real time. The sign language interpreters are self-employed and function as independent service providers. They are paid per call. There are 500 sign language interpreters servicing 260,000 persons who are deaf or have a hearing disability. As of mid-2022 the app had almost 2,000 downloads and was chosen to assist deaf people by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission for the August 2022 general elections in Kenya.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

Services and companies such as hospitals and banks pay a subscription fee to use the app, which enables the service to be provided to the customer for free. The aim in the coming years is for all Kenyan corporations and businesses to be using the app. Additionally, there are plans to scale to other countries in Africa, starting with the East African countries such as Tanzania and Uganda. Signs Media Kenya is also designing a 3-way video calling feature that will help on-board customer service departments, allowing the call to accommodate the deaf person, the customer care agent, and also the sign language interpreter.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2022

- As of October 2022 assistAll had 7,000 customers.
- Between April and October 2022 more than 4,000 calls were managed.
- *A project related to ICT.*



Mr. Luke Muleka

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# Government-backed online job-portal for all people with disabilities

## MALAYSIA / SOCIAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION OF MALAYSIA – MYFUTUREJOBS

SOCSO is the Social Security Organization of Malaysia, a government entity. After a successful introduction of a return-to-work programme for persons with disabilities (Zero Project Awardee 2017), SOCSO has developed MYFutureJobs, a programme to increase the employment rate for persons with disabilities. In 2020, SOCSO took MYFutureJobs digital and made registration in the job portal mandatory for employers that want to participate in government sponsored projects. Between 2020 and 2022, SOCSO placed 3,625 persons with disabilities.

### Problem targeted

In Malaysia there are few nationwide job matching services available for persons with disabilities.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

MYFutureJobs is an online portal and one-stop-shop for all employment initiatives implemented by the Government of Malaysia under its Hiring Incentive Policy, which has persons with disabilities as a target group. Jobseekers with disabilities create a profile on the portal, after which they are matched to available jobs based on their skills through an Artificial Intelligence algorithm. MYFutureJobs also encourages jobseekers



The MyFutureJobs portal in Malaysia has placed 3,625 people in two years.

**“MYFutureJobs has successfully assisted me to find employment despite my limitations and age.”**

Kalwant Singh, a person with a physical disability

with disabilities to explore flexible self-employment in the digital gig economy. The portal collects real-time data from employers on available jobs, ensuring jobseekers have access to up-to-date information. SOCSO also organizes in-person interviews and job fairs for registered jobseekers and companies to facilitate the hiring process. Once an employee with disabilities is hired through MYFutureJobs, SOCSO ensures employers pay at least the minimum wage. There are 636 SOCSO employment services officers throughout Malaysia. Between 2020 and 2022, MYFutureJobs has been able to link more than 1,200 persons with disabilities with work opportunities annually.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

As a programme of Malaysia’s Social Security Organization, MYFutureJobs is funded through the mandatory employment insurance contributions of employers and other state funds. The initial investment has been \$1 million, and the yearly maintenance cost is \$400,000. SOCSO aims to improve the placement rates for jobseekers with disabilities through MYFutureJobs by training employers on disability rights and how to access government support to hire employees with disabilities. It is also working on improving the accessibility of the platform and offers personal support in the meantime. In October 2022 there were more than 330,000 job opening for persons with and without disabilities.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- 3,625 persons with disabilities found work placements through MYFutureJobs between 2020 and 2022.
- There are 636 employment services officers throughout Malaysia.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Housing and life-skills programme for adults with intellectual disabilities

MEXICO – MEXICO CITY / FUNDACIÓN INCLÚYEME – INCLÚYEME ADULT LIFE PROGRAMME

In 2008 the Mexico City-based Fundación Inclúyeme developed an adult life programme for persons with intellectual disabilities. The programme provides inclusive housing and support in apartments owned by the foundation, inclusive employment by promoting the hiring of trained persons with disabilities, and it supports people living in the community by organizing recreational activities. Between 2010 and 2022 the housing service had 70 beneficiaries, while between 2012 and 2022 the employment service placed 170 beneficiaries.

## Problem targeted

In Mexico there are around 3 million adults with intellectual disabilities, many of whom lack the skills to live independently in the community.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

The adult life programme developed by Inclúyeme Foundation provides persons with intellectual disabilities the skills they need to live independently and to enter the labour market. The programme offers three mainservices: (1) up to five adults with intellectual disabilities are offered housing in a foundation-owned apartment, which includes a support system to guarantee independent living; (2) it supports employment by training persons with intellectual disabilities for interview preparation and assessing their skills, as well as collaborating with companies on awareness-raising; and (3) the programme offers recreational activities for people with disabilities to participate in community life. In 2022 there are four apartments located in Mexico City and the adjacent metropolitan area, with 18 beneficiaries. One of



Fundación Inclúyeme helps adults with intellectual disabilities to live independently.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

The adult life programme is funded through regular donations from private individuals, companies, and social institutions. In 2022 the foundation started working on a new project to develop a new curriculum to train adults with disabilities with essential life and work skills, along with a training programme for independent living.

“Today I can do many things that I never imagined I could do alone before.”

Sara Romano, Housing programme beneficiary.

these apartments is mixed in which men and women live together. Moreover, there is one with a mixed supervision scheme (remote and face-to-face), thus providing the beneficiaries with greater independence and decision-making. As of 2022, 70 beneficiaries have been supported with housing services and 170 have found jobs.



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## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2008

- 750 persons have attended the inclusive living training programme each year.
- Between 2008 and 2022 some 3,000 persons have benefited from the supported employment model.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Using a mix of radio and digital content to train young learners in rural areas

## NIGERIA – ABIA STATE / OUTLOOK HUMANITARIAN CARE INITIATIVE – INTERACTIVE AUDIO

In 2015 the Outlook Humanitarian Care Initiative (OHCI), an NGO based in Aba, Nigeria, developed Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI), a mix of radio-broadcasting and a digital innovation platform for remote learning. IAI targets vulnerable women, youth, and children both with and without disabilities to provide education and develop skills. IAI encourages interaction between teachers and students, and subjects include digital skills and entrepreneurship. In 2022, IAI had users in all 36 states of Nigeria.

### Problem targeted

Families living in poverty, remote communities, and unstable environments such as conflict zones often have limited access to education and training.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Between 2020 and 2022 the OHCI project has implemented interactive audio instruction (IAI) programmes throughout Nigeria, delivering high-quality education to children through storytelling literature as well as through lessons that provide guidance to teachers and students.

OHCI predominantly uses broadcast radio to convey lessons, though multimedia content is also created in mobile, video, and software formats to increase the ability of teachers, administrators, and parents to offer customized material to students of all ages.

“Making life better is at the core of what we live for, and that includes removing barriers to accessibility.”

Mr. Emmanuel Eze, CEO & National Project Coordinator, Outlook Humanitarian Care Initiative

OHCI focuses its work on vulnerable children, women, and young girls, supporting them to manage the challenges they face regarding violence, sexual and reproductive rights, child marriage, and drug addiction. Moreover, the broadcasts serve as an educational tool in areas where school facilities are not available. OHCI's IAI programmes have reached over 100 million learners and hundreds of thousands of facilitators.

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The IAI broadcasts also serve as an educational tool in areas where school facilities are not available.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

OHCI funding in 2020 was \$60,000 through private donors and other fundraising activities. The organization raises income from the sale of storybooks for children as well. Other support partners include the organizations Girls Not Brides and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Going forward, OHCI plans to scale up and replicate IAI in other countries, with particular focus on supporting children and girls in pursuing careers in the tech sector. This includes six vocational training providers in different parts of Nigeria that will provide ICT training, business development skills, and mentoring. OHCI also plans to work with the government to expand early childhood learning.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2015

- Between 2020 and 2022 the programme had more than 100 million learners.
- IAI has reached all 36 states of Nigeria.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



# Jobs in digital marketing and social media for people with physical disabilities

## NORTH MACEDONIA / BRAND SOLUTION – BEST ONLINE ASSISTANT

In 2021 Brand Solution, a social business start-up in North Macedonia, launched Best Online Assistant – an IT-Platform that offers courses to improve skills in digital marketing and social media. A job platform for persons with physical disabilities in that business sector and a cooperation model with companies as employers was added soon after. By end of 2022, 40 persons had attended the lessons, 10 companies had joined as partners, and Brand Solution had already expanded to Bulgaria.

### Problem targeted

Persons with disabilities often lack the opportunity to improve their skills in order to find jobs in the open labour market.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Best Online Assistant was created by six people, three of whom are persons with disabilities. In 2021 they started to offer the first courses in digital marketing and social media skills, conducted both online and offline, and the certificates earned through these courses have been recognized by the Ministry of Education. In order to implement the skills and to offer them to a wider audience, Best Online Assistant also created a job platform where persons can be hired

“The digital era gives the perfect opportunity for people with disabilities to be fully integrated in the work process.”

Elizabeta Jovanovska, CEO and Founder, Best Online Assistant

for various projects, such as a freelance worker for a social media campaign. In addition, Brand Solution developed a subscription model for companies to get access to persons with disabilities who have a digital skills degree and who are looking for fulltime employment. In the fall of 2021 the organization was able to onboard ten companies in North Macedonia that want to collaborate with persons with disabilities. In 2021, 40 persons attended courses in North Macedonia, and Best Online Assistant expanded to Bulgaria in 2022.



People with disabilities are being trained and placed in digital marketing and social media.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The funding model foresees that companies pay a fee of €2,000 to get access to the database of persons with disabilities. The organization provides advice on how to claim some of this fee back from the state.

Best Online Assistant plans to have 100 students in North Macedonia by the end of 2022. To grow the business further the organization foresees a franchise model and has already opened a branch in Bulgaria in early 2022. Moreover, talks have begun to expand to Croatia, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2022

- In 2022, Best Online Assistant had 40 clients attending courses, and 60 per cent of them have found a part-time or full-time job.
- In 2021 ten companies bought subscriptions to Best Online Assistant, and in 2022 the Macedonian Government started using its services.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# App to support persons with speech and language difficulties to communicate

## NORWAY / MILLA SAYS

Milla Says is a start-up company based in Straume, Norway. Launched in 2018, the company has been developing a sign-to-speech web-based service targeted at children and persons with communication challenges and their support network. The service combines an individually developed vocabulary database of signs, symbols, and words and connects the user with a network of supporters, such as teachers and parents. By 2022 there were 200 end users with 1,400 network members, and more than 56,000 signs and symbols have been created.

### Problem targeted

There are few tools available for persons with speech and language difficulties to learn how to communicate in a way they are comfortable with.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Milla Says enables a supportive learning environment by building a personalized vocabulary database and engaging a network of supporters in communication learning and use. The database contains a standard library of Norwegian sign language and custom vocabulary, which is displayed in text, pictures, symbols, sound, and/or videos. Users can also upload self-recorded videos of their own signs or gestures. A supporter can also develop a new word (sign/symbol)



With Milla Says people with speech difficulties can develop their own signs.

“Vital communication is the key to a good and integrated life as the best versions of ourselves.”

Aleksander Helmersberg, Founder,  
Milla Says/Father of Milla

and share it with the network to be introduced in daily life. A new word added to the database is instantly shared, resulting in ‘push-alerts’ to all supporters so that they are encouraged to introduce it in all domains of their life, e.g., at home, school, and sports. Milla Says was launched in 2018, and in 2021 it became a government-recognized assistive device for communication. By 2022 there were 200 end users and 1,400 network members. Milla Says can also be used for other alternative and supplementary communication systems other than sign language.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Milla Says was developed with grants from the Government of Norway. Sales revenues cover the costs of maintaining the service, customer support, and marketing. The apps are offered for free to approved users by Hjelpemiddelsentralen, a support agency, paying the company €2,500 for a five-year primary user license. Private users may pay monthly licenses. The company aims to develop Milla Says to support additional languages in multiple countries, expand its standard sign library, and add new communication and gamification features.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- 56,000 signs, words, and symbols have been added to 200 personalized databases.
- 1,400 network supporters are connected, with primary users ranging from age seven months to 45 years.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Independent and secret voting for all

## PORTUGAL – PORTO AND VISEU / CEREBRAL PALSY FEDERATION – ACCESSIBLE VOTE SYSTEM

In 2018 the Federation of Portuguese Cerebral Palsy Associations (FAPPC), an NGO located in Lisbon, developed an offline Accessible Vote System that enables independent and secret voting for all, including persons with motor, sensory, and intellectual disabilities. The voting itself takes place through input devices, such as switch buttons, joysticks, headphones, or a touch screen. The system offers explanatory graphics and images and was co-developed with IBM and Softinsa, a local technology company.

### Problem targeted

Lack of accessibility in the election process makes it difficult for people with disabilities to vote without overcoming obstacles, such as inaccessible polling stations and information.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

FAPPC's offline Accessible Vote System enables persons with disabilities to vote in an independent and dignified way, without the help of an assistant, respecting democratic values and human rights. The user has an option of various input devices and navigates through an interface, where the voting options emerge on the screen or are told by voice recording. The user chooses the preferred option through the input device,



A voting system that uses different input devices to enable independent and secret voting.

**“The Accessible Vote System addresses democratic values and rights. It enables voting in a secret and independent way.”**

Rui Coimbra, President, FAPPC

which triggers an automatic print of an encrypted QR code. The interface is configured offline to avoid any manipulation through the Internet. The main objective is to increase the security and accessibility of all processes regarding the voting system, which can be used for various types of elections and opinion polls. The solution was first implemented in July 2019 in Portugal for voting in the participative budget election, in which 112 people with disabilities voted for projects aimed at enhancing the accessibility of their cities. In the 2021 presidential election over 50 voters used the system – a lower turnout compared to 2019 due to the COVID pandemic.


### Outlook, transferability, and funding

FAPPC has self-funded the voting system project, which received in-kind support from its partners IBM and Softinsa, having developed the software with their own resources. Over the next three to five years the Federation hopes other countries will replicate the accessible voting solution since the interface is configured to adapt to any voting process around the globe. FAPPC has set the goal for its system to be used in all recurring national elections in Portugal by 2024.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- Between 2019 and 2021 more than 112 people with disabilities used the Accessible Vote System.
- The user can choose among various input devices when accessing the system.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Promoting the use of the Scripor alphabet, tactile representations of colour

## ROMANIA / ASOCIATIA ALFABETUL SCRIPOR – SCRIPOR ALPHABET

In 2018 the Scripor Alphabet Association (Asociatia Alfabetul Scripor), based in Cluj, Romania, invented the standardization of ten colours in Braille and created the Scripor alphabet. When Scripor labels are added to packaging, for example, the products become more accessible to the blind, the visually impaired, and colour-blind customers. Scripor is currently onboarding with blind associations in various countries. Between 2018 and 2022 it had distributed 1,000 manuals and held more than 150 workshops.

### Problem targeted

In the absence of universal colour standardization for the blind, individuals with visual disabilities continue to face barriers to inclusion.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Using the Scripor cell, people who are blind, visually impaired, or colour-blind can distinguish ten colours, in both light and dark shades, identified through a combination of ten dots within a single cell. The Scripor Alphabet is based on an internationally recognized colour theory: A combination of dots from a single cell is used to represent a colour, and two cells represent shades, tonal saturation, or intensity. Users find tactile labels on everyday items such as food packaging, toys, books, fashion labels, and sports equipment. Additionally, they can be added to the public environment, making art galleries, libraries, and sports venues more accessible.

“Our main goal is to implement the tactile alphabet of colours globally.”

Vlad Pop, Asociatia Alfabetul Scripor

Scripor has also actively lobbied COPA-COGECA (the strongest interest group for European farmers) to promote all European wine producers to use tactile alphabet wine labels. In February 2021 a collaboration agreement was signed between Scripor and the Romanian Ministry of Education that will see the Scripor Alphabet implemented in all seven specialist schools within Romania.



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The Scripor alphabet is the first universal colour standardization in Braille.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Scripor Alphabet is funded thanks to Hidro-electrica SA and Banca Transilvania – two large Romanian corporations that each donated €30,000 in 2021. Additional funding models are currently being developed, including licencing, sponsorships, crowdfunding, and project-based campaigns. The Scripor Alphabet continues to be recognized with international awards, such as the 2019 Gold Medal at the Salon International des Inventions in Geneva, which is indicative of the growth of the organization. In 2018 the organization started with four people and through cooperations within Romania, neighbouring countries, and abroad it had grown to 300 persons collaborating in 2021.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- 10,000 colour tactile labels have been produced and distributed.
- 150 workshops have been held for people with visual impairments.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Empowering people with disabilities to stand up in elections in sub-Saharan Africa

## SENEGAL AND CAMEROON / SIGHTSAVERS – CITIZEN/POLITICAL PARTICIPATION-PROGRAMME

In 2017 Sightsavers, an international NGO based in the United Kingdom, designed a method based on professionally researched guidelines that has led to a massive increase in civic engagement of persons with disabilities in Senegal and Cameroon. In cooperation with two national federations of DPOs, the accessibility of electoral and participation processes in local governance has been improved. By 2022, 128 men and women with disabilities in both countries were formally elected as local councillors or designated as representatives in local decision-making committees.

### Problem targeted

Often people with disabilities are underrepresented in the political system due to a lack of inclusion awareness, processes, and historical discrimination, particularly towards women.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Working with the UK-based NGO Sightsavers, the Senegalese Federation of the Associations of Disabled People and Platform Inclusive Society for Persons with Disabilities in Cameroon co-developed technical guides, training programmes, and evaluation tools to raise awareness among people with disabilities and electoral officials about inclusive governance.

The project provides training on political systems, electoral management, inclusive communications, inclusive local development, and participatory budget making. Both men and women with disabilities are empowered to get involved in local developmental projects, leading to electoral success in council elections, or be advisors in key decision-making institutions. In addition, the Senegalese state signed

“Although much has already been done, we call for even greater integration of people with disabilities.”

Joseph Oye Enyegue, Country Director  
Cameroon, Sightsavers

an agreement identifying the obstacles to inclusive civic participation, making four modifications to the electoral code, and improving access at polling stations. By mid-2022, 409 people with disabilities were members of political parties.

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In Senegal and Cameroon the political presence of people with disabilities has risen sharply.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Starting in 2017, Sightsavers and Irish Aid were providing €2.5 million over six years for the project with local partners providing in-kind contributions. Scale up activity has begun in 2022 in 24 regions following government requests in both countries, using the resources produced for national scale up. In 2023 a project starts in Sierra Leone, with a focus on youth with disabilities citizenship, providing a similar approach for the model in English speaking areas of Africa. Sightsavers can easily replicate the practice in decentralized political systems of Francophone Africa and Asia.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Cameroon saw a rise in registered voters with disabilities from 8,367 in 2011 to 39,028 in 2021.
- 128 people with disabilities were elected as councilors or represented on thematic committees.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

# Music workshops and an orchestra for youth with disabilities

## SERBIA AND HUNGARY / BOARDING SCHOOL MILAN PETROVIĆ – ACCESSIBLE MUSIC

In 2013 Primary and Secondary Boarding School Milan Petrović, a school based in Novi Sad, Serbia, developed music workshops for persons with various kinds of disabilities, such as blindness, autism, or cerebral palsy. Based on a workshop model in a day-care centre that attracted young musicians, the Good People Orchestra was formed in 2016, continuously working with 30 young people and providing them with unique opportunities to learn, socialize, and travel. The model has been replicated in Baja, Hungary, using EU-grant funding.

### Problem targeted

Due to a lack of opportunities and accessibility, people with disabilities often cannot participate in creating and performing music, and thus are excluded from cultural activities.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The music workshop for people with disabilities is a project operating within Milan Petrović, a boarding school and day-care centre for youth with disabilities over 18 years of age. With assistive technologies such as the Soundbeam and MiMU Gloves, participants learn to create and interpret music. These assistive technologies use sensors and ultrasonic and laser



In the music workshop in Novi Sad, Serbia, participants learn to create and interpret music.

“Active participation in creating and performing music improves the social life of youth with disabilities.”

Renata Koler, Co-founder of a music workshop for youth with disabilities

waves to produce sounds that can be registered with the slightest movements of the body, making it usable by people with low mobility as well. After some individual practice sessions they play together as part of an orchestra. In 2016 the workshops led to the creation the Good People Orchestra, and over the years the orchestra has performed at various events, such as the Novi Sad Jazz Festival. In addition to performing live, the group also creates music for documentaries and radio dramas. The initiative has 30 young participants in 2022, compared to 17 in 2017.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The workshops have received funds from the Serbian Ministry of Culture, the City of Novi Sad, and the Serbian organization of music authors (SOKOJ). Additional smaller funding comes from the cities of Novi Sad and Sokoje and cross-border cooperations projects between Serbia and Hungary, the Regional Office for Youth Cooperation of the Western Balkans, and donations from private companies. Milan Petrović has replicated the project in Baja, Hungary, and obtained EU funds for a total of €100,000. By 2025 the organization aims to form a network of music workshops across Serbia while establishing cooperation with partners abroad through the Erasmus framework.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2013

- Between 2013 and 2022 the number of participants in the music workshops has increased from three to 30.
- The Good People Orchestra, formed in 2016, has seven to ten members at any given time.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Life Stories from India and Norway

THE STORY OF ABU BHAKKAR, A CHILD WITH DEVELOPMENT DELAYS SUPPORTED BY AMAR SEVA SANGAM

**“I am now able to go to a playground and play with my friends with my ‘nadai vandi’ (rollator walker).”**

Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, India



Abu Bhakkar Siddiq is a 10-year-old boy with developmental delays who was born in a slum in the Tenkasi district of Tamil Nadu, India. Through home-based therapy services provided by the Enabling Inclusion Programme of Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA), at 8 years old Abu Bhakkar's highest level of function was his ability to sit independently.

Through the Paediatric Assistive Technology Provision Programme, a postural device – a standing frame – was provided to him with funding from Handi-Care International. As a result, Abu Bhakkar's trunk stability and his ability to bear weight through his legs gradually improved, and he was able to pull himself to a standing position with support. At this point an anterior rollator was prescribed, funded, ordered, and obtained through ASSA's AT programme. With training and guidance provided to Abu Bhakkar and his family, he rapidly learned to walk with the use of the rollator, initially within his home and nearby surroundings.

Community and school awareness programmes provided by ASSA have helped to dispel stigma related to disability and the use of assistive technology. Abu Bhakkar now proudly walks to all places with the use of his rollator, travelling independently to school and exploring all the fun that his peers enjoy in their community.

**i** See also Factsheet on page 42.

THE STORY OF LIAM, A CHILD WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME SUPPORTED BY MILLA SAYS AND MAKATON

**“Liam can talk about his day at school, and who he has been spending time with.”**

Norway

Our son, Liam, now 6 years old, has Down's Syndrome, which can come with difficulty in communicating. Liam tried to use Makaton symbols and his own sign language to communicate with us and his caretakers and friends, but it was difficult for everyone to understand what he was trying to say, especially when going to nursery school.

Then we began using Milla Says, a digital platform with a focus on improving the use of signing and Makaton among users with an oral language impairment.

The digital platform is entirely unique and consists of three apps that 'talk' together to allow signers to communicate independently in their language. We saw that Liam quickly took to Milla Says, rapidly becoming interested in it and using it to display and use signs. At home the signs

that had been gone for some time made a return. However, it was not until school started and an enthusiastic class teacher began working with Liam that Milla Says really began to be used properly. Milla Says follows Liam throughout his school day, including after-school care. We now see a clearly more content little boy who has started to communicate in a way that was not possible before. Liam can talk about his day at school, who he has been spending time with, and what he has been up to. He also uses Milla Says at home when we have visitors, getting it out to start to talk about things using both verbal speech and signs.

**i** See also Factsheet on page 64.

# Children with disabilities learning with interactive wall and floor projections

## SINGAPORE / DIGITAL DREAM

Digital Dream is a social enterprise located in Singapore that in 2018 began to provide creative digital solutions for the education of children with disabilities. By using Integrated Immersive Interactive Mixed Reality (IMR), the company digitalizes contents, which can then be projected onto walls or other surfaces. The projection technique allows real life simulations like crossing the street or the projection of cartoon characters to facilitate learning. In 2022, Digital Dream was operating, among others, in three adult learning centres, nine schools, and one intervention centre.

### Problem targeted

Children with disabilities often get left out of experiential learning opportunities due to a lack of accessible options and logistical barriers.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Digital Dream's iCUBE uses projections on walls and floors to create immersive and interactive environments by adding touch points that can reveal information, making it fun to learn. Teachers with no programming skills can also create lessons not just for school-based work but also for life skills, such as crossing the road. Such simulations provide children with disabilities a first-person experience in a safe environment.

**“Digital Dream’s iCUBE offers a new concept for special needs education that is fun and engaging.”**

Mr. Alex Tan CK, Managing Director, Digital Dream

The Digital Dream team is comprised of designers, programmers, and developers. Their clients use the technology for various activities, ranging from education and learning to games and quizzes. The company also provides training on its system's use and how to create original content for interactive activities.

Digital Dream also offers iCUBE mobile units, which can be transported easily and allow experiential learning at various locations without the confines of a dedicated fixed physical space. They often come into use for road shows, exhibitions, events, or seasonal programmes. Digital Dream's initial roll-out was in three schools for children with disabilities in



Digital Dream uses projections to teach children how to behave in real-life situations.

2018, and it has since expanded to pre-schools and learning centres for adults with disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Basic installations generally range from \$25,000 to \$100,000, which includes installation of all equipment, 40 curated contents, ten templates, training, and a content development course. By 2025, Digital Dream aims to have five more schools using the immersive mixed reality system and to expand to the Asia-Pacific region. The company is also researching how to add physical interactions into the virtual space, such as handheld devices, tablets, and smartphones.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- Between 2018 and 2022, Digital Dream was used by 3,000 students.
- In 2022 the mobile units have attracted more than 9,000 users.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# Programme enabling persons with disabilities to learn about sex and relationships

## SINGAPORE / DISABLED PEOPLE`S ASSOCIATION (DPA) – DISORDINARY LOVE

In 2018 the Disabled People`s Association (DPA), a Singapore-based NGO, launched DisOrdinary Love, a programme about sexuality targeted at persons with disabilities. Guided by a trained counsellor, persons with disabilities learn about such topics as online and in-person dating, sexual health, respecting personal boundaries, sexuality, and more. The programme is conducted as a series of quarterly workshops followed by individual counselling sessions, which have been attended by more than 300 people to date.

### Problem targeted

There are few programmes for persons with disabilities to learn how to have safe and fulfilling sexual relationships.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

DisOrdinary Love is a free programme covering topics related to sex, sexuality, and relationships through online workshops and one-on-one counselling sessions led by a qualified sex counsellor. The programme also caters to young people with disabilities and their parents.

DisOrdinary offers online services by putting the recordings from the workshops online and sharing resources on social media, thus reaching people who are not comfortable attending group sessions. The content shared by the programme is checked by an advisory committee, which includes persons with disabilities. Between 2019 and 2022, DisOrdinary Love has held six workshops with 14 to 93 attendees each and has provided one-on-one counselling to 303 people.

“Crafting paper flowers was a great way to meditate and reflect upon the issues surrounding LGBTQ+ and disability.”

DisOrdinary Love workshop attendee

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The budget of DisOrdinary Love is approximately \$21,000 per year, because it is held entirely online, and the counsellor works at a reduced rate. DPA received funding from two foundations for the first



Through in-person counselling and online workshops participants learn about sexuality and relationships.

year of the programme, covering the cost of three staff members, one counsellor, and marketing activities. In 2022 Majurity Trust (80 per cent) and Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (20 per cent) covered the entire budget. The NGO plans to produce more online content and add more topics to their workshops. DPA will also write a policy paper to advocate for changes to the sex education provided in Singapore’s special education schools, which does not cover the social and emotional side of sex and relationships. DPA has been approached by other disability organizations to offer DisOrdinary Love to their members and by the State Courts of Singapore to provide it to offenders with disabilities.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- Between 2019 and 2022, DisOrdinary Love held six workshops with 14 to 93 attendees each.
- The programme is delivered by one qualified sex counsellor and three staff members.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Digital-based support group for parents of children with disabilities

## SOUTH AFRICA / SHONAQUIP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE – PARENT NETWORK

In 2020 Shonaquip Social Enterprise, based in Cape Town, South Africa, launched the Parent Network, a community-based digital support group for parents of children with various disabilities. The network provides peer support, expert knowledge-building, and referrals for health, education, and social services, while monitoring policy implementation locally. It is accessible online from smartphones as well as in person through designated volunteers. Between 2020 and 2022 the Parent Network has grown to more than 1,000 parents.

### Problem targeted

Parents of children with disabilities in low- and middle-income contexts often lack the knowledge to address barriers that are excluding their children from health, education, and social services.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Parents connect to the network on their phones daily, and those without smartphones are reached by other Network Parents who relay information to these households and complete research and monitoring with the families. Network Parents run weekly workshops in their province on topics such as rights, inclusive education, and medical issues. Initially starting on WhatsApp, a dedicated app was launched in 2021, which has been translated into five official South African languages. Parents have successfully referred their children to receive health services, including assistive technology, as well as into early childhood development programmes or schooling. They have also re-activated cases of abuse against their children that had been thrown out of the justice system and have supported each other during COVID-19.



The community-based Parent Network in South Africa has more than 1,000 participants.

models, including a membership fee and donations from community businesses. Their tie to the Uhambo Foundation enables them to offer tax benefits to donors. Training and administration are donated by Shonaquip Social Enterprise. The aim is to be financially self-sustaining while securing funding and tech support for data management, to continue growing nationally, and to increase the number of Network Parents in each district. In addition, the Parent Network intends to step up its lobbying efforts to establish the initiative as a public policy.

“You are your child’s mouthpiece.”

Anita August, Network Parent,  
Shonaquip Social Enterprise

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Parent Network is expanding. Research funding from the Uhambo Foundation enables parents to be upskilled as researchers and to connect via mobile data; and parents are exploring alternative funding

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Over 1,000 parents connect to the network on their phones daily.
- A dedicated app has been translated into an additional five official South African languages.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# System to use any Android device without touching the screen

## SPAIN AND 41 OTHER COUNTRIES / MOUSE4ALL

Mouse4all is a social enterprise based in Madrid, Spain. In 2017 the company introduced a device that allows a user to steer an Android tablet or smartphone without touching the screen. Targeted at persons with a physical disability who are not able to work with a regular mouse or keyboard and cannot use voice or eye commands, it enables the user to navigate the screen with the help of horizontal and vertical cursors as well as icons and pictograms. In May 2022, Mouse4all had users in 41 countries.

### Problem targeted

Using mobile devices can be difficult for people with disabilities who cannot operate a touchscreen with their hands or use voice or eye commands.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Mouse4all consists of a round, movable device that is operated by the user and a connection box, which combines the input device with the screen. Users activate the input device with any part of their body, such as an elbow, knee, or chin. The app then captures the clicks of the input device and translates them into orders to control a cursor on the screen. Mouse4all can also highlight clickable elements on the screen, such as buttons or icons, which the user



Mouse4all uses horizontal and vertical cursors as well as symbols and pictograms for input.

“Mouse4all has changed the social life of our residents, boosting their independence and privacy.”

Teresa Millán, Director, Centro Dato (Madrid, Spain)

can select using the input device. Mouse4all can be personalized to the needs of each user and is also suitable for users with intellectual or visual disabilities. For example, menu icons can be changed or enlarged, and there is an audio feedback function that works in the same way as a screen reader. Although Mouse4all manufactures its own connection box, the system is compatible with boxes and input devices made by other suppliers. This means users only need to download the app to use Mouse4all. In May 2022 there were users in 41 countries that interacted with Mouse4all more than 2 million times.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Mouse4all has several income streams, such as distribution agreements with assistive technology suppliers for the Mouse4all connection box and royalties from new products the company has developed with these suppliers. If users download the Mouse4all app only, they can use it for free for 30 minutes per session or choose to purchase a license to have lifetime access. The license fee is adapted to the per-capita income of each country, ranging from €5 to €100. The company's aim is for Mouse4all to be known and used all over the world. In 2022, Mouse4all is available in Spanish, English, French, and Italian.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Mouse4all works with any Android device.
- In 2022 the app's help and setting screens are available in Spanish, English, French, and Italian.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# Facility supporting the social integration of people with psychosocial disabilities

## SPAIN – CATALUNYA / SUPPORT GIRONA – OPEN SPACE (ESPAI OBERT)

In 2017 Support-Girona, an NGO based in Catalonia, Spain, launched a daytime facility called Open Space (Espai Obert). The facility caters to the basic needs of persons with psychosocial disabilities, often homeless or with a history of substance abuse, with services such as hygiene, nutrition, and socialization. It is jointly run with the Public Mental Health Network (IAS), a public entity, to enhance decision-making and skills development. Between 2017 and 2022 more than 100 people have benefited from the service.

### Problem targeted

People with psychosocial disabilities are often institutionalized due to conflict within their social environment, such as homelessness or lack of family support.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Open Space is a community-based service that aims to support people with psychosocial disabilities to develop independently without the supervision of professionals. This is the only such facility in Girona without strict access rules and that does not require treatment commitment. The facility is a space where people visit voluntarily, with minimal managerial intervention. It has a kitchen, living room, dining room, washing machine, patio, and showers – all designed to guarantee a safe environment for personal hygiene and food.

“Open Space had a huge impact on the lives of persons who can finally enjoy their right to live independently.”

Mrs. Glòria Cerrato, Technical Director,  
Support-Girona Foundation

Staff from Support-Girona and IAS are on-site from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, and for a few hours on the weekend. During these hours those using the facility are invited to participate in the centre's routines, such as preparing meals, doing laundry, or taking care of the garden.

In 2021, Open Space moved to a new location to make it more accessible and adaptable to the needs of its user base. The average service use time is about 10–12 months per user. In 2022, 28 people used the facility, compared to 19 in 2021.



“Espai Obert” is a community-based service but without strict rules.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Support Girona uses its own funds for the space and staff on site, and health care professionals are funded and provided by IAS. In 2021, Open Space received funding from Dipsalut (the Independent Public Health Body of Girona) and €16,000 from the Caixabank Foundation. The relocation and remodelling were done using Support Girona's funds and amounted to €200,000. Annual operating costs are €52,000.

Looking forward, Support Girona aims to work with the health department of the Catalan Government to replicate the model across all of Catalonia.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- In the first half of 2022 more than 3,700 meals were cooked in the Open Space kitchen.
- The average service use time is about 10–12 months per user.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# People-centred housing services for persons with psychosocial disabilities

## SPAIN – CATALUNYA / SUPPORT GIRONA – TOP HOUSE HOUSING COMMISSION

In 2018 Support-Girona, an NGO working for people with disabilities based in Catalunya, Spain, formed a housing commission designed to help people with disabilities to access and maintain housing through a person-centred methodology. The commission bases their support on the individual's self-assessment of his or her support needs and the desire to find a suitable accommodation, while at the same time working with the housing sector and social welfare authorities. Between 2019 and 2022 the commission has accommodated more than 50 people.

### Problem targeted

People with psychosocial disabilities are either institutionalized or have to rely on social services for housing, which does not always meet their support needs.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Top House project was initiated to create a methodology to ensure persons with psychosocial disabilities can choose how and where they want to live. The project aims to avoid institutions and closed settings and instead to provide people with opportunities to access and maintain their own apartments.



A commission in Spain supports people with psychosocial disabilities to access housing.

“TopHouse is a pioneer initiative that includes the person in the decision-making process to design their own support.”

Mr. Josep Maria Solé i Chavero, General Director, Support-Girona Foundation

Using this person-centred methodology, Support Girona assesses the living needs of the individual, specifically using a Top House Support Needs Assessment Tool (THSUNA) that has been developed for this purpose. THSUNA uses a quantitative-based scale to provide an individual assessment of a person's needs, the results of which are then packaged, petitioned, and filed with the housing commission. At that point, the commission is able to find a suitable place and/or roommate for the housing candidate.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The project is self-financed by Support Girona, while funding for the housing itself comes from the public

administration. The assessment methodologies such as THSUNA were developed and co-financed by a consortium of partners, as part of the Erasmus + programme of the European Union from 2017 to 2019. The consortium included the ESSL Foundation (Austria), Jugend am Werk (Austria), EASPD (Belgium), the Irish Council for Social Housing (Ireland), the ASPA Foundation (Finland), the Support-Girona Foundation (Spain), and Homeless Link (United Kingdom). Support Girona wants to expand the number of users living independently and intends to apply for public funding to buy and renovate another building to create more housing opportunities.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- Between 2019 and 2022, 50 people with psychosocial disabilities have found a place to live independently in the community.
- To date the project has made 21 apartments available in the Girona region.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Countrywide working group making elections more accessible

## SRI LANKA / IFES – DISABILITY INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS SRI LANKA (DIESL)

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a US-based NGO working globally for more equal, resilient, and accessible elections for all. In 2017 the Sri Lankan office of IFES developed the Disability Inclusive Elections Sri Lanka (DIESL), a working group where its 20 members conduct voter education programmes for the deaf community and others in Sri Lanka. DIESL members also work with the national election commission and have developed a strategy for the political and electoral inclusion of persons with disabilities.

### Problem targeted

There is a lack of access to secret and independent voting for voters with disabilities in Sri Lanka.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The DIESL working group brings together representatives of disabled persons' organizations, the Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL), election monitoring bodies, and other stakeholders to design and implement initiatives for disability-inclusive elections. These include (1) a voter education programme for the deaf community; (2) a national communications campaign to promote the participation of voters with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities; and (3) an accessibility audit of 68 polling stations. DIESL also



Accessible and inclusive politics is the objective of “Disability Inclusive Elections Sri Lanka.”

“I am holding a ballot paper for the first time in my life. I look forward to voting independently at the next election.”

Blind participant representing a DIESL member organization at the Tactile Ballot Consultation held in Colombo

developed a tactile ballot guide for voters who are blind or have low vision. The working group also advocates for policy and legislative change. For example, together with the ECSL, DIESL developed a strategy for the political and electoral inclusion of persons with disabilities. The group also provided recommendations for the new constitution, which was adopted by the government in 2021.


### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The costs of developing and implementing the DIESL working group's projects and initiatives are shared by IFES and the Election Commission of Sri Lanka. DIESL aims to adapt its tactile ballot guide to suit the ballot structure of each election in Sri Lanka and to implement it nationally in the next local and parliamentary general elections. The group also plans to work with the ECSL to reform electoral laws and regulations to ensure that the tactile ballot guide and other assistive technologies are incorporated into law. The structure of the DIESL working group and the way it operates, which is both simple and cost-effective, could be adapted for use in other countries, as long as there is strong backing from the national election commission or equivalent institution.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- 20 member organizations are involved in DIESL.
- An accessibility audits of 68 polling stations was conducted between 2017 and 2020.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Online game for practicing shopping and making payments online

## SWEDEN / FUNKA – FUNKABUTIKEN

Funka, a leading NGO headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, counts some 80 per cent of Sweden’s public authorities among its clients. In 2021 it started Funkabutiken, an online education game that instructs people with intellectual disabilities and the elderly to shop online and make payments. Easy language, illustrations, and video are some of the accessibility features offered. By mid-2022, Funkabutiken had some 20,000 visits.

### Problem targeted

People with cognitive disabilities, elderly people, and others who are not tech-savvy may have difficulty conducting safe online shopping.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

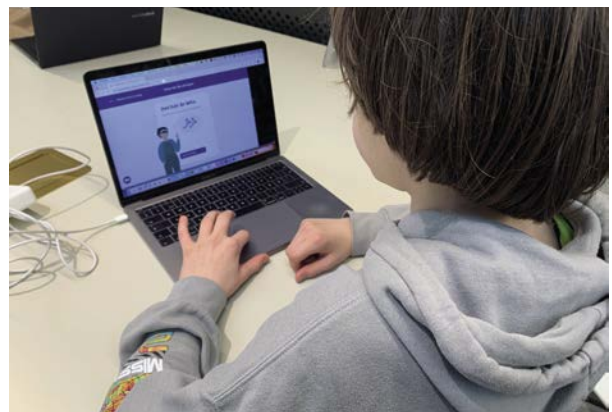
Funkabutiken provides a safe environment for practicing online shopping and making payments. It has three levels of difficulty, and it is possible to go back and try again as many times as the user chooses to. Users are supported through the use of short plain language texts, many illustrations and video clips, as well as text-to-speech technology.

“Funkabutiken is a nice website where you can practice online shopping and payments in peace and quiet.”

Suzanne Branner, SeniorNet, Sweden

Each exercise or part of the game starts with a brief introduction and ends with a follow-up question or summary. There are also tips and tricks to support the user so they do not get stuck, along with a library of information where they can go into greater depth on each topic. Additional materials support teachers and care givers, including ideas for group training.

People with disabilities participated in all stages of the project, including initial research, co-creation, and testing of prototypes. Over 30 organizations are supporting people to use the technology, including day-care centres and organizations for seniors who teach other seniors about ICT.



The online learning game “Funkabutiken” teaches users how to shop and pay online.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Funkabutiken has been developed in a co-creation process and is free for its users. It is immensely popular with day-care centres, organizations for senior citizens who teach other seniors about ICT, and individuals with disabilities – all of whom provide very positive feedback.

The maintenance and further development are conducted by Funka and the County Administrative Board of Skåne in southern Sweden, which jointly conducted the initial project. Funka is also exploring funding opportunities to make the platform international.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- The site received more than 20,000 visits in the first six months of use.
- More than 30 organizations are using the platform.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# Study circles supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in political processes

SWEDEN / STUDIEFÖRBUNDET VUXENSKOLAN – MY CHOICE/MY ELECTION

The Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (SV), a nationwide Swedish NGO focused on adult education, has developed the My Choice/My Election programme, which makes political processes accessible for people with intellectual disabilities. SV develops easy-language material on Swedish politics to ensure that information is accurately represented. Moreover, SV creates a process for voters with disabilities to address questions to national party leaders on issues that matter to them. In 2022 more than 80 municipalities could be reached by My Choice/My Elections.

## Problem targeted

Very often it can be difficult for persons with intellectual disabilities to learn about politics in an easy-to-understand and objective way.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

SV uses a so-called 'study circle' as an educational method, which combines study material in easy language, thus facilitating political discussions. The material covers several topics, such as (1) what democracy is; (2) how national, regional, and local politics work; and (3) how to vote. The study circle is directed by a circle leader, who is trained by SV on adult education and who guides participants to



"Study circles" give people with intellectual disabilities access to political processes.

**"My Choice/My Election gave me the tools to form my OWN opinion. So I felt very confident when election day came!"**

Anna Ringström, 26, Participant,  
My Choice/My Election programme

form their own political opinions using easy-to-read news and information provided by political parties. Close to election day participants have a discussion with politicians, who are also trained by SV in easy language. These discussions are broadcasted over the Internet so that other persons with disabilities can listen in. In 2022, SV introduced digital technology to support learning – such as a game where users match politicians to their party – and to enable study circles to address questions directly to politicians on Facebook. When SV launched My Choice/My Election in 2014 there were 350 study circle participants. This number grew to 500 in 2018 and 950 in 2022.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

The 2022 budget for My Choice/My Election is approximately €250,000. The programme is financed by the National Agency for Youth and Civil Society, SV itself, and with funds from municipalities. In the future, SV plans to recruit more study circle participants through new forms of outreach, such as workshops and showrooms. The NGO also aims to adapt My Choice/My Election to new groups, including people who are new to the Swedish language. The model has already inspired other organizations in Australia, Finland, and Israel because the general outline of the study material, the principles, and the teaching can easily be replicated.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2014

- There were more than 2,000 discussions in easy language in 2022.
- More than 80 per cent of study circle participants vote.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Creating a disability-inclusive handbook for disaster preparedness

## TAIWAN / NCDR – DISASTER PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK

The National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction (NCDR) is an agency under the Taiwanese Ministry of Science and Technology. In 2020 the NCDR published a disaster preparedness handbook designed for people with disabilities to provide reference and guidance in case of emergency situations. The handbook was compiled with the help of various stakeholders, such as DPOs and public emergency experts. In 2021 more than 1,000 copies of the printed handbook were distributed through NGOs, and the digital version had 3,000 downloads in 2022.

### Problem targeted

Despite high disaster risks in Taiwan, government units do not have disaster preparedness guidelines for people with disabilities.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Based on the policy recommendations of the Disaster Prevention and Protection Consultation Committee of Executive Yuan in Taiwan and supported by the CRPD National Report and the Central Disasters Prevention and Protection Council, NCDR developed a disaster preparedness handbook for people with disabilities. NCDR conducted literature reviews, interviews, workshops, and exercises such as wheelchair evacuations while developing the handbook. Once a draft was in place, NGOs and people with disabilities were invited to review.

The process resulted in a handbook designed as a calendar with 31 pages. Each page has information on disaster management and includes topics such as emergency kits, disaster risk maps, evacuation, shelter, power outages, earthquake protection, etc. There are two versions of the handbook: one for people with physical disabilities and the other for deaf persons. The Center used online and offline channels to distribute the book to schools, organizations, and families while using Line, an instant communication service, to disseminate the content digitally. Between 2020 and 2022 over 3,500 families in Taiwan received physical copies of the handbook.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Since 2019, NCDR has received \$60,000 in funding from the Ministry of Science and Technology to



The handbook is designed as a calendar with 31 pages.

develop tools related to the policy. The Ministry reviews the results annually to determine the future course of the grant. Over the next three years the Center aims to develop another handbook for blind people and to distribute it to schools and libraries across Taiwan. It also plans to shift its focus to creating a train-the-trainer programme based on the books.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Between January and April 2022, the digital version of the handbook was downloaded approx. 3,000 times.
- Over 1,700 hard copies of the handbook were distributed in 2020–2021.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*

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# Facilitated self-advocacy groups for people with Down Syndrome

## TÜRKIYE / TURKEY DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION – MY VOICE, MY SOCIETY

In 2017 the Down Syndrome Association of Turkey, an NGO headquartered in Istanbul, launched the self-advocacy group called Voice+1. It is focused on persons with Down Syndrome who meet regularly to discuss topics on which they wish to advocate, supported by facilitators. Between 2017 and 2022 the group has grown to a total of 27 self-advocates in five cities across the country, and Voice+1 has successfully established a Down Syndrome Research Commission in Parliament.

### Problem targeted

Many people with Down Syndrome do not know their rights or what action to take if those rights are violated, and consequently may end up having little say in determining their own lives.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The model was started thanks to training received from Down Syndrome International, an umbrella organization based in the UK, which evidenced the ability to transfer the model to other contexts. The first self-advocacy groups were formed in 2017 with nine participants with Down Syndrome from three cities, before expanding to other regions. The groups have basic training plans, but the content is deter-



“Voice+1” is a self-advocacy group of the Down Syndrome Association of Turkey.

“We are going to defend our rights. We are going to say we are not afraid of anyone. It’s an amazing thing.”

Betim Gizem Erçayan, Voice +1 Self-advocate,  
Turkey Down Syndrome Association

mined by group members who decide on which topics they wish to advocate. Topics range from understanding self-advocacy versus group advocacy to history of the disability movement in Turkey and information about rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, there are trainings respecting other people and how to express opinions.

During a visit to Parliament and a media campaign in parallel, the project has been successful in establishing a Down Syndrome Research Commission in Parliament. Self-representatives from the group have been invited to speak at TedxReset and UN Headquarters for the World Down Syndrome Congress.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Sabanci Foundation, one of the leading family foundations in Turkey, provided initial funding in 2017, which supported the project’s start.

The goal in the coming years is to increase the number of self-advocates, including expansion to further provinces. The Association is also running a project supported by the European Commission for children with disabilities to learn self-advocacy. In particular, facilitators will be trained in 15 provinces to run self-advocacy groups for various disabilities.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- In mid-2022, 27 self-advocates were participating in the project.
- Self-advocacy groups are active in five cities across Turkey: Adıyaman, Ankara, Eskişehir, İzmir, and Tokat.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



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# Storytelling mobile app for children who are deaf or blind

## TÜRKİYE / TURKEY İŞİTME ENGELLİLER DERNEĞİ (TIED) – BILINGUAL STORIES

The Turkish Deaf Association (TIED), an NGO based in Istanbul, introduced an interactive video app in 2019. Focusing on children with hearing impairments, the app functions like an audio-visual library, offering three different segments: watching, reading, and learning. All videos are translated in Turkish sign language. Audio description, which has been introduced in 2022, makes the library also accessible for children with visual impairments. In 2022 the app has been downloaded more than 1,000 times.

### Problem targeted

More than 90 per cent of deaf children in Turkey have hearing families. Young readers do not get much exposure to sign language at home and at school.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

TIED localized and implemented a storybook mobile application in Turkey, previously developed by Gallaudet University for children with a hearing impairment. The application İki-Dilli Öyküler (Bilingual Stories) includes pictures, graphics, and a direct word-to-video translation function from Turkish to Turkish sign language (TİD), targeted at children over four years. Each story in the app has three segments: watching, reading, and learning. The first segment includes visuals and story imagery with sign language. Stories



An interactive video app for children with hearing and/or visual impairments.

**“I attended a workshop and learned about animal experiments. Using the app is very easy.”**

Hüseyin Mahmutçepoğlu, 7-year old project beneficiary

in this segment also include a voice-over and audio descriptions for blind children. The second segment (reading) narrates the story through text and images. Each page consists of highlighted words that, when selected, open up into a box with the sign meaning of the word. The last segment (learning) includes a list of words from the stories that children can learn and understand through signs. As of early 2022 the application has a 900-word TİD-Turkish dictionary.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

TIED has developed the mobile application with grants from the Sabancı Foundation, a Turkish

philanthropic organization. Users do not pay any fees to use the application. The application has been downloaded in countries other than Turkey, such as Azerbaijan, France, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom. TIED hopes to translate stories into additional languages and to cooperate with other countries to produce similar projects in the future. Looking forward, TIED plans to expand the application's library to include 15–20 stories and reach at least 5,000 deaf children by 2027.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- Between 2019 and 2022 the application has had 688 downloads on iOS and 249 on Android.
- The app won the Turkey Accessibility Award in 2020.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# Peer-led organization of persons with psychosocial disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa

## UGANDA / UNSAI – SUPPORT MY CHOICE PROGRAMME

In 2017 the Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative (UNSAI), a peer-led disabled people’s organization based in central Uganda, launched Support My Choice – a programme that works with persons with psychosocial disabilities at risk of being institutionalized or having lived in an institution. The programme uses a targeted approach, such as supporting teachers in retaining their jobs and young people in finding a job, and has assisted 150 persons between 2017 and 2022.

### Problem targeted

People with psychosocial disabilities in Uganda often face anxiety and distress and have little choice over their accommodation.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Support My Choice partners with local organizations, associations, and informal groups working with housing, food, public security, employment, finance, and social protection to support people with psychosocial disabilities to live independently.

These individuals make their own choices as to which community they want to live in and with whom they want to live. UNSAI makes courtesy visits to institutions to meet persons with psychosocial disabilities, and it works with the institution to customize a plan for each individual to transition to more independent living. Moreover, UNSAI has partnered with Transforming Communities for Inclusion, a global organization focusing on the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, to replicate the practice at the regional and international level.

“From Institutionalization to independent and inclusive community living – a Human Right for All.”

Dorothy Nakato, Co-Founder, Uganda National Self-Advocacy Initiative.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

UNSAI receives donations from the community and its partners in the form of food items and clothing as well as free services, such as health care and psychosocial support. Partners include the International Disability Alliance, various government agencies,



“Support My Choice” enables people with psychosocial disabilities to decide in which community to live and with whom to live.

banks, and business owners such as Taata Owen supermarket. In addition, UNSAI has received a grant from Transforming Communities for Inclusion to conduct public consultations on the UN Deinstitutionalization Guidelines; and in 2017 it received a grant of \$3,100 for economic empowerment from the Government of Uganda. By 2027 the programme aims to deinstitutionalize 80 per cent of persons with psychosocial disabilities in Uganda.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- Between 2017 and 2022 UNSAI has worked with 150 people with psychosocial disabilities.
- Over 170 people with psychosocial disabilities and their families have directly benefited from the programme.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# QR Codes used to inform voters who are blind or deaf about voting procedures

## UKRAINE / IFES AND THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION (CEC) OF UKRAINE

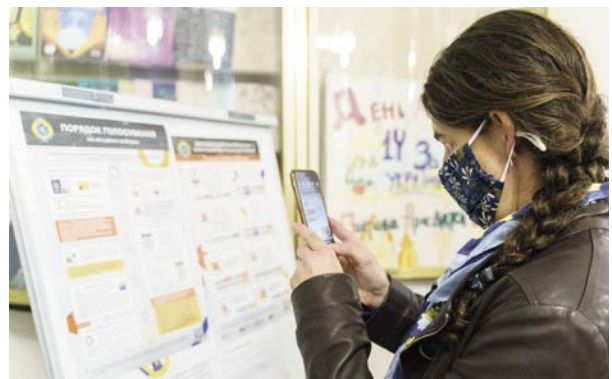
The US-based International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. Ahead of the 2020 local elections in Ukraine, IFES joined forces with the Ukrainian Central Election Commission and developed voter information posters containing QR codes, which linked to corresponding audio and sign language formats. This information was also published in an official voter education portal called CEC Prosvita. Statistics showed that approximately 6,000 persons used the QR codes.

### Problem targeted

A lack of accessible voter education materials in Ukraine can make it difficult for citizens with auditory and visual disabilities to vote.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Voters could scan the QR codes with their mobile devices on election day or in advance to access audio and sign language content that outlined the procedures for voting, which took place on 25 October 2020. On election day posters with QR codes were present at every one of the more than 29,000 polling stations across Ukraine, with the exception of the occupied territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Volunteers



Election information in audio and sign language has been available in Ukraine since 2020.

**“To hear and to see: every voter should have a right for independent electoral participation.”**

Serhii Postiviyi, Commissioner responsible for technological innovations and accessibility of electoral processes, Central Election Commission of Ukraine.

helped visually impaired persons to access the QR codes. The adapted voter education posters were developed as part of a consultative process between the Ukrainian Central Election Commission (CEC) and DPOs that participate in the CEC-led Election Access Working Group. This consultative body was established in December 2019 with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems as a forum for the CEC and DPOs to collaborate on election-related policies, procedures, and regulations, aiming to make them more accessible for voters with all types of disabilities.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The CEC requested budget funds from the Ministry of Finance at the beginning of the 2020 election cycle to cover the costs of election-related processes and procedures, including the posters.

The Commission plans to use the voter education posters with QR codes again as a tool for reasonable accommodation during the next national elections. The use of QR codes has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective way to disseminate accessible voter education information and could therefore easily be replicated in other countries.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Voter education posters with QR codes were printed and present in each of the country's 29,084 polling stations.
- Approximately 6,000 persons downloaded the QR codes during the 2020 local elections.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Computer keyboard with only 11 buttons for people with motor impairments

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES / KEY2ENABLE – KEY-X

Key2enable is an American-Brazilian start-up, also present in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In 2018 the company presented the Key-X keyboard for persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, an accessible multifunctional keyboard with only 11 touch-sensitive buttons that enables users to easily operate any kind of smartphone, tablet, or computer. Between 2018 and 2022, 2,500 Key-X keyboards have been sold across 28 countries. The smart device is used in schools, rehabilitation centres, hospitals, and in homes.

## Problem targeted

Conventional keyboards can be difficult for people with physical or motor impairments due to the number, size, and placing of buttons.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

The Key-X multifunctional smart keyboard uses large, well-spaced, and touch-sensitive keys to allow use of the panel without needing much force, while being robust enough for rough touches. The keyboard makes typing easy through activation of iconographic keys in double sequences, thus allowing the typing of every character available on a conventional keyboard. Key-X also works as a cursor, allowing precision control and all the functions of a regular mouse, such



The Key-X smart keyboard has only eleven touch-sensitive, iconographic keys.

“Key2enable’s solution is not just another technological tool but a catalyst for change”

Esha Khurshid, Chief Visionary Officer, Key2enable Assistive Technology MENA Ltd.

as right and left click and double click. It can be used on different types of devices, such as computers, notebooks, tablets, and smartphones, and needs no additional software to be installed. The company has also developed a range of accessory products, such as A-blinx, an adaptive switch triggered by an eye blink, and X-Queueze, a pneumatic trigger. In 2022 there were over 10,000 users of the Key-X keyboard in some 700 schools and 170 rehabilitation centres as well as in homes. The smart keyboard is available in various languages, including Arabic, Hebrew, and Spanish.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

Key2Enable partners with multinational companies that support the funding of various activities, such as the use of the Key-X keyboard, in private schools and rehabilitation centres. The hardware is sold via a monthly or yearly subscription fee, both by private users and business customers, and can also be rented. By the end of 2024, Key2Enable aims to introduce the Key-X device in all countries of the MENAT (Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey) region by organizing various events with selected partners.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- Some 700 schools were using Key-X keyboards in 2022, and they were in use in 28 countries.
- By mid-2022 approximately 2,500 Key-X keyboards had been sold.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Smart technology supporting persons with intellectual disabilities staying at home alone

## UNITED STATES – OHIO / LADD – SMART LIVING

LADD is a for-profit service provider based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Starting in 2017, LADD has introduced Smart Living, combining a human support system with adequate smart home technologies such as temperature regulations, fully accessible bathrooms, and kitchens using Universal Design appliances. In addition, permanent staff training is a key success factor. The focus is on persons with developmental disabilities with the goal to allow users to stay in their home environment. Between 2017 and 2022, Smart Living has benefited over 50 individuals.

### Problem targeted

Service providers often lack the resources and staff to support persons with developmental disabilities to live independently in their communities.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Smart Living aims to reduce the number of in-person staff required to support people with developmental disabilities to live independently in their own homes. It allows virtual staff to support a person's daily life and to monitor their safety using smart technologies, such as supply dashboards. Home technologies can include beds that alert staff in case of a seizure, and wearables such as a smart watch that ensures the person receives support if they get lost. Nevertheless, there is always a human back-up service in case of emergencies.



"Smart Living" combines personal care with smart home technologies and virtual support.

**"LADD's Smart Living is the future of service delivery for adults with disabilities."**

Brad Wenstrup, US Congressman, Ohio

Staff members use data to customize the system to the individual beneficiary and to anticipate needs. Smart Living can be installed wherever there is an Internet connection and is compatible with many different devices. LADD has built eight smart homes in Cincinnati, Ohio, as part of a Smart Living pilot, which has served over 50 beneficiaries.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

LADD raised 74 per cent of its total revenue (\$9 million) from the state of Ohio and 26 per cent (\$3.17

million) from private capital to build the smart homes that are part of the Smart Living pilot project. The cost of providing support services to the beneficiary are typically covered by Medicaid, a federal and state programme that helps with health care costs.

LADD aims to support 100 individuals in Ohio by the end of 2022 through Smart Living. From 2023 onwards the organization plans to implement the system in other states across the country. The organization will also partner with more technology firms to expand the number of smart devices that work with the system.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2017

- In 2022, LADD had eight smart homes under management.
- The number of necessary staff has been reduced to six from traditionally 16 to serve 24/7 per 12 persons.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# An online accessible skills-driven job platform

## UNITED STATES AND CANADA / OUR ABILITY, INC. – JOBS ABILITY

Our Ability, Inc. is an NGO specializing in disability employment services and supports, headquartered in Albany, New York. In 2018 Our Ability started Jobs Ability, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven job matching service, using algorithms that focus on the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities. Each job seeker creates an individual account with support from an AI-driven chat bot, inserting skills, competencies, and education, which are then matched to existing jobs. Between 2018 and 2022 more than 12,000 connections have been made in the US and Canada.

### Problem targeted

Most job search websites use built-in AI, which filters applications based on what job applicants do not have, rather than the skills they have to offer.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Our Ability's AI-driven tool was developed in cooperation with Syracuse University and Microsoft. The Jobs Ability algorithm begins by matching a jobseeker's key skills, abilities, and location to employer job postings, instead of using work history and experience. The tool uses a public chat bot, a private chat bot, and cognitive services to identify skills and match those skills to existing jobs. The more information that jobseekers add to their profile, the more Jobs Ability learns about them and makes better matches. Businesses can also search based on their hiring needs. Jobs Ability is accessible for multiple disabilities. It allows for use with screen readers, colour contrasts, and font size changes. Other features include an ADHD-friendly mode and an epilepsy-safe mode.

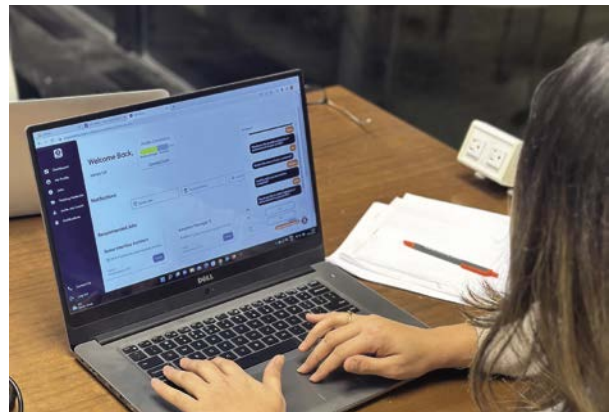
**“Employment is the greatest opportunity to achieve inclusion in society for persons with disabilities.”**

John Robinson, Founder, Our Ability and Jobs Ability

Jobseekers can also interact with Abi, the virtual job coach. Our Ability cannot publish actual hiring figures due to data privacy regulations.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Businesses can subscribe or sponsor their participation on the platform. Annual subscriptions are based on the size of the organization/corporation and range



“Jobs Ability” uses algorithms that focus on skills, not what candidates can't do.

from \$10,000 to \$50,000 in the United States, and from \$1,500 to \$10,000 in Canada. Jobseekers are able to use the website for free.

Our Ability and the Ontario Disability Employment network are contributing funds to cover HR costs, such as development, coding, technical support, public awareness, and education on use of the platform. The goal for the sites is to be self-sustaining to ensure the longevity of the service.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- There are over 2,100 user profiles on the US platform and more than 600 on the Canadian site.
- More than 80,000 jobs have been posted across the sites.
- There is an average of 1,500 unique visitors to the sites each month.
- *A project related to ICT.*



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# A smartphone app using the camera to describe all sorts of objects and text around the user

## UNITED STATES / GOOGLE - LOOKOUT

Google, part of the US multinational technology company Alphabet, introduced Lookout in 2019, an app that uses the smartphone camera to assist people with low vision or blindness. The user takes a picture and gets a text or speech message with a description of objects, printed text, handwriting, and barcode/OR code identification. Google does not publish user numbers, but between 2019 and 2022 there have been more than 100,000 downloads.

### Problem targeted

People with visual impairments can have difficulty completing common tasks such as reading mail, identifying packaged food to cook a meal, or identifying currencies.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

Lookout uses the camera on a person's smartphone to get more information about the world around the user, thus ensuring easy access on all Android devices. The aim is to make daily tasks more efficient, such as sorting mail and putting groceries away. Lookout can understand both printed text and handwriting, and it can recognize products not just by their barcodes or QR-codes but also by their packaging (since barcodes can be hard to find). The app can also provide captions for images, describe any people present, highlight particular details, and read any text in the image. Lookout works on all Android smartphones and has been localized to 24 languages. People with disabilities are involved throughout the research and design process.

“I have tried for many years to find an app that is easy to use and performs the functions that this one does.”

Anonymous user due to data protection issues

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The app is free to download and has no commercial goals for Google. Instead, the aim is to improve



The “Lookout” app provides information on photographed objects, texts, or codes.

Google's understanding of how to apply technology to assistive use cases. This includes both improving technologies such as text recognition and discovering better human-computer interfaces so that all users can easily interact with Lookout. This expertise then trickles through to other Google products. In the coming years Google aims to increase the focus on user needs, such as working in as many languages as possible and building models that are accurate and useful.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- By 2022, Lookout was available in 24 languages.
- From 2019 to 2022, Lookout was downloaded more than 100,000 times from the Google PlayStore.
- *A project related to ICT.*

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# Multifaceted relief programme for people struggling with mental health

## UNITED STATES – ILLINOIS / RINCON FAMILY SERVICES – THE LIVING ROOM

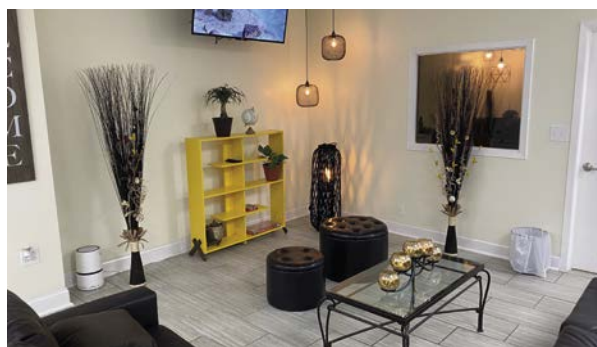
In 2019 Rincon Family Services – an NGO based in Chicago, Illinois – developed The Living Room (TLR), a community relief programme that hosts adults experiencing major mental health struggles. TLR provides recovery support specialists and allows its participants to rest and relax free of charge, to take advantage of facilities such as showers and kitchens, and to participate in activities such as art, yoga, and meditation. The TLR guest count reached 1,000 by mid of 2022, and the model has been replicated all over the state of Illinois.

### Problem targeted

Mental health crises can come at any time of life, and the stigma that surrounds mental health and disability can be a barrier to asking for help before reaching a critical point.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Living Room (TLR) is a non-clinical and non-judgemental safe space, providing respite and recovery support to people experiencing psychological crisis in the most underserved areas of Chicago. Modelled to feel like a home, with comfortable furniture, soft colours and lighting and inspiring wall art, TLR offers both common and private areas to make guests feel welcome and to suit their needs. Rincon



The Living Room is a non-clinical safe space for people in mental health crisis.

**“We are hopeful our guests will feel a sense of calm and tranquillity, peace, and safety.”**

Deborah Al-Waragi, Director of Prevention Services, Rincon Family Services

Family Services employs a bilingual and bicultural team committed to engaging with excluded people, including persons with disabilities, and endeavouring to source assistive devices such as wheelchairs and other technologies so that the optimum care can be given in the form of health, violence prevention, and counselling services. TLR helps their guests to find additional resources through referrals for initiatives such as community service work, job training, and substance abuse treatment. Between 2019 and mid-2022, TLR has welcomed some 1,000 guests to its free facility; and with the guidance of elected officials

in the Northwest and West Sides of Chicago, more individuals and non-profits have been reached.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The Illinois Department of Health, Division of Mental Health, provided initial funding of \$400,000 in 2020 and again in 2021, with an additional sum of \$412,000 being granted for 2023. Senior leadership and board members give additional in-kind support. The Living Room has been replicated across the state of Illinois, with the model varying to reflect the needs of the particular service area. To date, 21 programmes have been created; and the aim is to see these practices grown in more national and international communities, helping to break the stigma of mental health care.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2019

- Between 2019 and 2022, 21 programmes have been created.
- The Living Room had 254 guests in 2019, 332 in 2020, and 412 in 2021.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Adapting smart technology to support services for persons with intellectual disabilities

## UNITED STATES – PENNSYLVANIA / KEYSTONE HUMAN SERVICES – SMART TECHNOLOGY

Keystone Human Services, a large US-based international NGO supporting people with disabilities globally, is based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In 2018 it initiated a support model for persons with intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania by adapting available assistive technologies such as Alexa to their individual needs. The model starts with an assessment and then brings together easily available solutions, with more sophisticated and advanced tools supporting the individuals' everyday lives. In 2022 there were 88 beneficiaries.

### Problem targeted

Many people with intellectual disabilities in the United States can live more independently with the use of easily available technologies.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The practice combines available technologies from Google and Amazon with more specialized independent living tools to design personal independence plans. For example, one participant is now able to use a microwave oven by connecting it with Alexa, while others reported the capability of making a cup of tea and enjoyed greater personal autonomy. Each participant of the model is assessed, and each person sets his or her individual goals – ranging from cooking independently to spending the night without



Mainstream technologies such as Alexa are used to make everyday life easier.

“Assistive technology gives people opportunities to live more independently in the community.”

Greg Wellems, Vice President, Operations, Keystone Human Services

paid staff. The individual plans are adapted over time, recognizing the development and changing needs of the participants. Keystone Human Services also advocates for the use of supportive technology with US state regulators; and in 2021 local policy makers first released guidance on incorporating technology into homes. Between 2018 and 2022 there were 88 beneficiaries, with an estimated 17,000 direct support hours saved annually. An increase in quality of life is reported by those accessing the service.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Between 2018 and 2022, \$240,000 has been used for technologies to support people's independence. This number includes both fundraised dollars and an investment by Keystone Human Services in the future success of the programme. The model has been replicated within Keystone and within the state of Pennsylvania. Using their established model, Keystone aims to see 10 per cent of people using residential services transition into supported living environments, with technology fully incorporated into their service design. Moreover, Keystone has the strategic goal to incorporate technology into 25 per cent of all care programmes within its geographic footprint.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2018

- 17,000 direct support hours saved annually.
- Between 2018 and 2022, \$240,000 has been spent for technologies to support people's independence.
- *A project of Civil Society.*



Mr. Kristopher Weaver

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# Disability-led network for promoting professional artists and musicians

## UNITED STATES / RECORDING ARTISTS AND MUSIC PROFESSIONALS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2021 the American recording artist and songwriter Lachi founded the Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities (RAMPD) global network, which aims to promote disability culture and accessibility in the mainstream music industry. RAMPD offers a variety of services to its members and the broader music community, such as partnerships with music firms and labels, job placement for artists with disabilities, and accessibility consulting for event venues. In 2022, RAMPD had 60 professional members.

### Problem targeted

Recording artists and music professionals with disabilities do not have the same opportunities as their non-disabled counterparts.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

RAMPD is a 100 per cent disability-led network that supports musicians, artists, engineers, composers, and sound and stage technicians who identify as people with disabilities. The founding team called for artists and music professionals to sign up for the pre-launch of RAMPD, to which they received hundreds of responses. The network officially launched in



RAMPD promotes inclusion in the music industry.

“RAMPD is uniquely positioned to lead the charge in amplifying Disability Culture.”

Lachi, Founder/President, RAMPD

January 2022 with a launch party on YouTube. One of RAMPD's goals is to make ramps visible on television during award shows to help normalize disability in the music industry. Other projects include the RAMPD stamp for accessibility compliance in venues. In April 2022, RAMPD played a significant role in making the 64th GRAMMY Awards accessible by making ramps visible and including sign language on the red carpet. In November 2022, RAMPD partnered with Netflix to host a roundtable discussion where RAMPD professional members and Netflix Music leadership spoke on what Netflix Music is looking for and how to get music placed, which ended in a direct submission pipeline to Netflix.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

RAMPD raises funds as an LLC and a sponsored entity by offering paid partnerships, sponsorships, and consultations. It also applies to public funds, awards, and grants. In 2022 it has received \$19,000 from sponsors and award bonuses. RAMPD partnered with the New York WAVY Awards in 2022 to create the first-ever award show to integrate self-description, along with on-stage ASL and an accessible stage, and it intends to look for similar cooperations going forward. Moreover, RAMPD works together with the National Independent Venue Association to further develop the concept of the RAMPD stamp – an accessibility certificate for concert venues, which needs to be renewed every three years.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2022

- RAMPD currently has over 600 community members.
- The network has a social media following of more than 3,000 people.
- *A project of the Business Sector.*

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# Theatre arts programme for youth with disabilities

## UNITED STATES – BOSTON / PYD – ACCESS TO THEATRE

In 1994 Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), an NGO based in Boston, Massachusetts, developed Access to Theatre – an arts programme for youth with and without disabilities. Each year Access to Theatre enables around 65 participants aged 13 to 24 to become theatre artists and, in the process, to develop communication, artistic, and leadership skills, as well as lasting professional and personal friendships.

### Problem targeted

There are few inclusive theatre arts programmes in the US, limiting the possibility of youth with disabilities to build self-confidence and social awareness in a safe environment.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

The Access to Theatre programme is a free and inclusive educational arts programme that aims to help young people develop artistic and communication skills. The programme is led by a teacher with a disability who is also instrumental in designing and running the programme. Access to Theatre is delivered by the PYD's staff and teaching artists trained



"Access to Theatre" is an inclusive arts programme that is free of charge for participants.

**"ATT is a blessing in my life and everyone's life. You can come to the program and just be yourself."**

DaShawn 'DJ' Robinson, Access to Theater alum and mentor

in various art-related topics, such as acting, costume design, and direction. The programme's content and teaching methodology are established according to the participants' learning styles, needs, and interests. It is held over the summer as a four-week theatre camp and throughout the year two days after school each week. By the end of the programme, participants create and produce an entire show – from script writing and acting to lighting and set design. Apart from providing arts exposure and education, the programme also intends to provide young people with disabilities an opportunity to build personal and professional friendships and to explore employment options in the arts industry.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

Access to Theatre receives funding through grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the City of Boston Youth Development Fund, as well as foundations and individuals. The programme's budget for fiscal year 2022 was \$60,000. In the coming years PYD plans to work towards maximizing the capacity of Access to Theatre so more youth with disabilities can reach their full potential. A comprehensive three-year plan will be released in 2023 outlining the strategic goals of the NGO.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 1994

- Access to Theatre had 64 participants in 2018–2019 and 67 in 2019–2020.
- The programme's budget for 2022 was \$60,000.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Trainings on sexual and reproductive health for youth with disabilities

## VIET NAM AND OTHER COUNTRIES / LILIANE FONDS – BODYTALK

Liliane Fonds, a foundation based in the Netherlands, has developed a project called BodyTalk in Viet Nam jointly with Rutgers, a Dutch expert centre on sexuality, and the Research Centre for Inclusion in Viet Nam. Launched in 2019, BodyTalk brings together young people with disabilities, their parents, teachers, communities, and health care providers. They discuss and try to understand the sexual needs of young people, and as a result to break taboos and change attitudes and practices. Between 2019 and 2022 some 600 youth with disabilities have benefitted from the programme.

### Problem targeted

Young persons with disabilities are often unaware of issues of sexual and reproductive health rights due to stigma and the lack of information.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

BodyTalk, a project led by Liliane Fonds together with the Dutch organization Rutgers and the Research Centre for Inclusion in Viet Nam, aims to address barriers that youth with disabilities face in understanding and making sexual and reproductive choices in Viet Nam. The project currently works with youth with sensory, visual, and intellectual disabilities.



“BodyTalk” helps young people with disabilities to understand sexual and reproductive choices in Viet Nam.

“This training gives me the tools, knowledge, and skills to support young people with disabilities better.”

Master Trainer, BodyTalk

The project focuses on how to talk for and with youth with disabilities about sexuality from a rights perspective. To achieve this goal, BodyTalk has a two-staged approach: (1) on an organizational level it trains teachers, non-governmental organizations, and health workers; and (2) on an interpersonal level it works to train families, caregivers, and close community members. Topics include desires and boundaries and how to understand, recognize, express, and respect them – their own and those of others. Between 2021 and 2022 the project trained 35 people to communicate about sexuality, which has benefitted over 600 youth with disabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Health has recognized the importance of BodyTalk and has issued a national action plan for

2020–2025 on sexual and reproductive health care for adolescents and youth.


### Outlook, transferability, and funding

BodyTalk receives funding from Liliane Fonds. The total cost of the three-year project (2021–2023) for implementation and staff is €250,000. The cost for technical advisors and trainers for developing training materials and manuals and for providing the training is €200,000. Liliane Fonds also implements this programme in the Philippines and Indonesia and aims to reach 8,000 youth with disabilities in the three countries. Going forward, it hopes to expand to other countries as well.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2020

- Direct beneficiaries of this project are young people with disabilities aged 12 to 25.
- In 2022 three master trainers trained 25 teachers and health care providers in Viet Nam.
- *A project of Civil Society.*

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# Election policy toolkit of a UN agency for persons with intellectual disabilities

UNITED NATIONS / UNPRPD WITH INCLUSION INT., UNDP – TOOLKIT FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

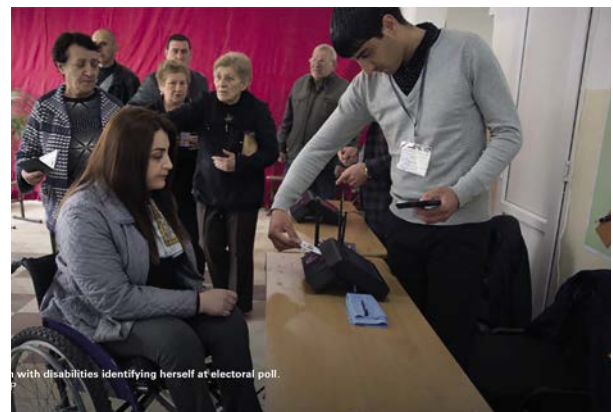
In 2021 the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Inclusion International, an international NGO network, developed a policy guidance toolkit on how to advance the participation of persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities in political and electoral processes. The toolkit was created through a participatory process, and has already been used by UNDP policy advisors and electoral practitioners in more than 30 countries.

## Problem targeted

Persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are often excluded from political processes, denying them the right to voice their opinion on matters that affect their lives.

## Solution, innovation, and impact

This policy toolkit is the first of its kind regarding inclusive political participation for persons with psychosocial disabilities. Its multi-stakeholder approach addresses a highly relevant global challenge in an area where there is an existing knowledge gap. The guide helps inform and shape national policies and practices, and is designed as a practical tool for governments, election management bodies, DPOs,



A toolkit in easy language improves electoral participation in more than 30 countries.

“Meaningful participation is key to achieving Agenda 2030 and its pledge to leave no one behind.”

Dr. Ola Abualghaib, Manager, Technical Secretariat, UNPRPD MPTF

civil society organizations, and electoral assistance providers. The toolkit is available in easy-to-read language and aims to increase knowledge on how best to support national stakeholders on legal capacity reforms, policy and institutional reforms processes, and implementation of supported decision-making arrangements. UNDP has electoral assistance projects in 30 to 40 countries and is piloting the policy tool in a majority of these. The toolkit has already been used by UNDP policy advisors and electoral practitioners in the Pacific Islands, the Arab States, Africa, and Latin America.

## Outlook, transferability, and funding

Pilot projects were implemented by UNDP, UNPRPD MPTF, and Inclusion International. Further funding is required for additional pilots. The project aims in the coming years to support governments, election management bodies, DPOs, and electoral stakeholders in strengthening and increasing the participation of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities in decision-making processes. This will be done by providing technical assistance and building capacities at the country level through, for example, workshops, trainings, advocacy campaigns, and online courses.

## FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- 133 people with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities were consulted in 24 countries.
- Electoral assistance projects are active in 30 to 40 countries at any given time.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*

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# Zero Project Research Network 2022–2023

List by country (and within country by organization) of all peer-reviewers, voters, nominators, juries, and people with active roles in this year's research cycle. More than 600 experts with and without disabilities from approximately 80 countries contributed.

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION
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Silvana	CONTEPOMI	Argentine Assistive Technology Assoc.
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<b>Armenia</b>		
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Sylvia	GOETTINGER	Vienna Business Agency
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## The Zero Project Research Network 2022–2023 (continued)

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## The Zero Project Research Network 2022–2023 (continued)

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Isabel	KAUFMAN	Disability Pride Philadelphia Inc.
Jasmina	KHANNA	Atos Syntel
Christopher	KURZ	Rochester Institute of Technology
Nicholas	LOVE	World Institute on Disability
Robert	LUDKE	Drake University, Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement
Lachi	M	Recording Artists and Music Professionals w. Disabilities (RAMPD)
Fred	MAAHS, JR.	Maahs Travels
Jennifer	MIZRAHI	RespectAbility
Christopher	PATNOE	Google Inc.
Jake	ROSKO	Rincon Family Services
Darren	ROWAN	Eli Lilly
Yulia	SARVIRO	G3ict / IAAP
Kevin	SPENCER	Hocus Focus, Inc.
Kavitha	THIYAGARAJAH	UN Partnership on Persons with Disabilities
Mark	TRIEGLAFF	ACT Services Inc.
Connie	VANDARAKIS	DanceAbility
Kristopher	WEAVER	Keystone Human Services, KAS
Frances	WEST	FrancesWestCo
Edward	WINTER	World Vision United States of America
<b>Uruguay</b>		
Fernando	CAROTTA DERUDDER	Network of Inclusive Companies
<b>Venezuela</b>		
Sybil	CABALLERO	Centro de Aprendizaje y Formación Integral Aprende Más
<b>Viet Nam</b>		
Nguyen Thi	LAN ANH	ACDC – Action to the Community Development Institute
<b>Zambia</b>		
Bright	BWALYA	Seizure Assistant
Arnold	NYENDWA	AFNON

# Zero Project – explained in Easy Language

## What is the Zero Project?

In 2008 the Essl Foundation started the Zero Project.

The goal of the Zero Project is:

A world with no barriers for persons with disabilities.

The basis for this goal is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This Convention is known as the UN CRPD for short.

The UN CRPD protects the rights of persons with disabilities.

Almost every country in the world has signed the Convention and agrees to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

But persons with disabilities are often treated unfairly or do not get the same chances because they are disabled.

However, there are new and useful solutions to make sure everyone has the same opportunities.

The Zero Project focuses on these solutions.

# How does the Zero Project work?

Every year the Zero Project searches for, selects, and shares the best solutions on one of four specific themes.

The themes rotate every year. These are:

- Employment: 2013, 2017, 2021
- Accessibility: 2014, 2018, 2022
- Independent Living & Political Participation: 2015, 2019, 2023
- Education: 2016, 2020, 2024

Every year the Zero Project also looks for solutions in technology, often called ICT (which stands for Information, Communication, and Technology).

Solutions in the arts are also greatly encouraged, so people with disabilities can enjoy museums, films, music, etc.

Each year, the Zero Project shares the best solutions:

- in a report
- at a conference
- and online on our website.

## Theme 2023: Independent Living and Political Participation

In 2023 the Zero Project focuses on Independent Living and Political Participation.

‘Independent Living’ means that people with disabilities choose their home and where and with whom they live.

‘Political Participation’ means that people with disabilities can vote and have access to elections and voting materials.

People with disabilities must also have the right to be elected and to take over a specific task or political office.

## **Zero Project Awardees**

This year the Zero Project got 320 nominations from 78 countries on the topics of Independent Living and Political Participation solutions.

A group of experts then reviewed the nominations and selected the best solutions.

The best solutions must have the following:

- The idea must be new.
- The idea must do something better.
- The idea should work in another area or place.

Each of the best solutions gets a prize.

The prize is called the Zero Project Award.

The best solutions and ideas are called:

Zero Project Awardees.

It is pronounced like this: Siro Prodschekt Ewodis.

In 2023, 71 best solutions from 42 countries won the Zero Project Award.

## **Zero Project Report**

Every year the Zero Project features the Zero Project Awardees in a report.

This report is called the Zero Project Report.

This year the Zero Project Report is about best solutions and ideas for:

- Independent Living, such as supported housing models
- Political Participation, such as election information in easy language
- Assistive technologies, such as inclusive job platforms
- Art, such as barrier-free museums

Each year the Zero Project Report is presented at a big event called the Zero Project Conference.

## **The Zero Project Conference**

The Zero Project organizes a big conference every year.

It is called the Zero Project Conference.



It is pronounced like this: Siro Prodschekt Konfarens.

Professionals with and without disabilities  
from all over the world attend the conference.

They talk about good solutions for  
a barrier-free world and they exchange their experiences.

The conference takes place at the offices of the United Nations in Vienna.

Since 2021 everyone can also join the conference on the Internet.

At the conference in 2023, 71 Zero Project Awardees get the Zero Project Award.

## **Zero Project Database**

The Zero Project places all solutions into a database that looks like Google.

The solution database is called: the Zero Project Database.

In this database you can find all the Zero Project Awardees and  
their solutions since the very first Awardees in 2012.

All information is free and for everyone to use.

You can easily search the solutions using keywords.

You can find the database at: [www.zeroproject.org](http://www.zeroproject.org)

## **Zero Project Impact Transfer**

Together with the US-based non-profit organization Ashoka,  
the Zero Project started the Zero Project Impact Transfer.

So far this programme has supported 10 Zero Project Awardees. It helps them to  
expand their work by providing them with training, advice, and new partners.

This programme helps these solutions to be used all over the world.

## **Zero Project in Austria**


In Austria, the Zero Project focuses on the employment of persons with disabilities.

Companies should experience and understand that  
there are many advantages to employing persons with disabilities.

For this reason, the Zero Project in Austria:

- offers information to companies and organizations;
- produces a magazine with employment suggestions every year  
in the Austrian daily newspaper *Die Presse*;
- gives awards to companies that employ persons with disabilities.

# List of Acronyms

 .....	Contact	INEE.....	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
ADA .....	Americans with Disabilities Act	IOS.....	Operating System of Apple smartphones
ADHD .....	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	IS.....	International Sign (Language)
AI.....	Artificial Intelligence	ISO.....	International Organization for Standardization
Android.....	Operation system of smartphones	IT.....	Information & Technology (see ICT)
ASD .....	Autism Spectrum Disorder	ITU .....	International Telecommunication Union
ASEAN .....	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	LLC.....	Limited Liability Company
ASL .....	American Sign Language	Ltd .....	Limited (registered company)
AT .....	Assistive Technology	MEP .....	Member of the European Parliament
CBM.....	Christoffel Blind Mission	MP .....	Member of Parliament
CBR .....	Community-based rehabilitation	NFC .....	Near-Field Communication (a technology)
CBS .....	Community-based services	NGO.....	Non-governmental organization
CEO.....	Chief Executive Officer	OAS.....	Organization of American States
CRPD.....	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	OECD .....	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CSR .....	Corporate Social Responsibility	OHCHR.....	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
CV.....	Curriculum Vitae (resumé)	ONLUS .....	Organizzazione Non Lucrativa Di Utilità Sociale (Non-Profit Organization, Italy)
DAISY .....	Digital Accessible Information System	QR Code.....	Barcode for Scanning (Quick Response Code)
DPO.....	Disabled people's organization	SDG .....	Sustainable Development Goal
DRC.....	DR Congo, Democratic Republic of Kongo	UAE .....	United Arab Emirates
€ .....	Euro	UD.....	Universal Design
e.V. ....	eingetragener Verein (registered Association)	UK.....	United Kingdom
EAA .....	European Accessibility Act	UN.....	United Nations
EASPD .....	European Association of Service Providers	UN CRPD .....	see CRPD
ECI .....	Early childhood intervention	UN DESA .....	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EDF .....	European Disability Forum	UNDP.....	United Nations Development Programme
ENIL.....	European Network for Independent Living	UNESCO .....	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Erasmus+ .....	EU grant-funding programme	UNHCR.....	United Nations Refugee Agency
ESF .....	European Social Fund	UNICEF .....	United Nations Children's Fund
EU.....	European Union	US.....	United States of America
G3ICT .....	Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs	US\$ .....	US dollar
GIZ .....	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	USAID .....	United States Agency for International Development
GPS .....	Global Positioning System	VAT.....	Value Added Tax
Horizon2020 .....	EU grant-funding programme	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 .....	Accessibility Standard for Web applications
IDA .....	International Disability Alliance	WHO .....	World Health Organization
IL.....	Independent Living	WIPO.....	World Intellectual Property Organization
ILO .....	International Labour Organization		
Inc. ....	Incorporated (for-profit organization in US, UK and other countries)		

**Zero Project –  
for a world with zero barriers.**



NEXT YEAR'S TOPIC

**The next research theme of the Zero Project is Education and ICT.**

**The nomination window opens up in May 2023.**

**Join the Zero Project Network!**



Scan the QR code in order to provide us with your contact details, ensuring that you will receive our official Call for Nominations email.

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