



Zero Project Conference 2026 highlights innovations for Accessibility, ICT, and Crisis Response

The Zero Project Conference 2026 brings together experts from every corner of the world to share and implement innovative solutions for disability inclusion.

Vienna, Austria, February 12, 2026: From February 18-20, the annual Zero Project Conference will focus on sharing innovative solutions relating to Accessibility, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Crisis Response. The conference serves as a unique global platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning, bringing together more than 1,000 participants – policymakers, business leaders, academics, practitioners, and other experts – from around the world at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

Innovation, impact, and scalability

The innovations that are presented at the conference have been selected in an extensive, multi-step process that involved peer-review by more than 400 experts from across all sectors of society.

Through a collective effort with a global expert network, the Zero Project received 586 nominations from 93 countries. Ultimately, 75 innovations from 51 countries have been selected for a Zero Project Award 2026, based on their innovation, impact, and scalability. In addition, seven inclusive arts initiatives have been selected for an inaugural cohort of Zero Project Arts Awardees.

Innovations range from user-led and local cooperatives to a strong presence of multinational companies. AI-driven approaches have also gained momentum and are now embedded in several solutions. Crisis Response is a new focus, featuring frameworks and technology-based innovations in emergency preparedness, among other solutions.

Global and cross-sectoral collaboration

The Zero Project Conference 2026 builds on this research process. The conference agenda centers on innovative solutions that remove barriers for persons with disabilities and can be replicated. It is complemented by contributions from experts from all sectors of society. In total, the agenda features more than 300 speakers from 50 countries in 100 sessions across three conference days.

"The annual Zero Project Conference is a unique space for global disability innovation, bringing together over 1,000 participants from all sectors. This year, we spotlight innovators selected through a rigorous process, focusing on Accessibility, ICT, and Crisis Response. The innovations address the foundations of inclusion, cutting-edge technology, and the realities of a world in crisis – where persons with disabilities are among the most at risk. What makes this conference truly special is the strong spirit of collaboration, demonstrating that working together is the most effective way to scale solutions that already exist and ensure they reach more people.", says Michael Fembek, CEO of the Zero Project.



The Award Ceremony will recognize Zero Project Awardees and highlight the collective effort of this global network to advance the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Martin Essl, Founder and Chairman of the Board of the Essl Foundation said: “Innovation and collaboration are key for disability inclusion. The year 2026 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the CRPD, and while significant progress has been made, there is still a lot to be done. The Zero Project Network grows stronger every year and, across all research cycles, has identified 1,035 Awardees, continuously proving that collaboration is the most effective way to remove barriers. The Zero Project Network and its Awardees demonstrate that solutions exist around the world, and that there is a shared responsibility, effort, and benefit for society in ensuring that every person can fully participate.”

Live and accessible broadcast for all

The Opening and Award Ceremonies, as well as partner-led sessions by the AccessibleEU initiative, and the Fireside Chats will be broadcast live and free of charge with English captioning and International Sign interpretation. Additional sessions will become available on demand on YouTube after the conference. The conference agenda and livestream links are available on <https://zerocon26.zeroproject.org>

About the Essl Foundation

The Essl Foundation MGE gemeinnützige Privatstiftung is an Austrian Foundation established in 2007 by Martin and Gerda Essl, and their children, for social purposes and scientific research. Its mission is to support social innovation, social entrepreneurship and persons with disabilities.

About the Zero Project

The Zero Project's mission is working for a world with zero barriers. Worldwide, the Zero Project finds and shares solutions that improve the daily lives and legal rights of all persons with disabilities, as intended and encouraged by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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