Zero Project Report 2015

Focus: Independent Living and Political Participation

International study on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
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For more information on the report, to download versions, and for further analysis of the Zero Project, visit www.zeroproject.org

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“For a World without Barriers”

FOREWORD BY MARTIN ESSL
Founder, Essl Foundation

I can hardly believe that it has been eight years since my wife, Gerda, and I started the Essl Foundation. It seems both a lifetime ago and yet only yesterday.

And so much has happened in just the year since I wrote the Foreword to the Zero Project Report 2014.

The Zero Project itself has grown by leaps and bounds. The Zero Project Conference is just one example. In February last year we held our first ever conference at the headquarters of the United Nations here in Vienna. At the three-day event, focusing on accessibility, we were honoured to welcome 360 delegates from 50 countries around the world. This year, again at the UN, over 400 experts and other concerned individuals joined us from 60 countries to focus on “Independent Living and Political Participation,” and to discuss the newest set of Innovative Policies and Innovative Practices for persons with disabilities.

This is a special year for the Zero Project for another reason: co-funding by the PROGRESS program of the European Union enables us for the first time to carry the Zero Project to local decision-makers in Austria, the project’s home country. Over the coming months we will organize nine Zero Project Austria conferences throughout the country, will produce a separate report that is targeted towards the Austrian situation, and will create a website dedicated exclusively to the Austrian context.

Next year we will complete our first circle of research. After researching Employment (2013), Accessibility (2014) and Independent Living and Political Participation (2015), in 2016 the focus of our research will be Education. After that, we will re-visit Employment, giving us also the opportunity to analyse change and change processes for the first time. With the Social Indicators that we have been researching since the beginning of the Zero Project, we have the right tools at hand.

None of the work we do would be possible without our global network of experts. Whereas last year these numbered in excess of 2,000 men and women around the world, we are now in a position to benefit from the expertise and knowledge freely shared with us by more than 3,000 disability experts in over 150 countries. To all of them I convey, as always, my heartfelt thanks.

We continue to see our mission as promoting change – change that will both improve the lives of person with disabilities and, by helping advance the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, enable them to take their rightful place in the world.

Our aim remains and will always be for a world without barriers.

Martin Essl
Founder, Essl Foundation | January 2015
Executive Summary

The Zero Project
The Zero Project, its organization and its vision of a world without barriers.

Innovative Policies
11 laws and regulations by governments that have an outstanding impact on Independent Living and Political Participation

Social Indicators
Measuring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 150 countries

Innovative Practices
39 projects, programs or social enterprises that have an outstanding impact on Independent Living and Political Participation
About the Zero Project

The Zero Project was initiated by the Essl Foundation in 2010, and has run in partnership with the World Future Council (WFC) since 2011 and with the European Foundation Centre (EFC) since 2013. The mission of the Zero Project is to work for a world without barriers, according to the principles and Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Innovative Practices and Policies

The project advances its mission by researching Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies worldwide that help to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, as well as by researching social indicators that measure the implementation of the UN CRPD and the current situation in all countries of the world. The most successful and most readily replicated practices and policies are then presented in the project’s annual report, with specific guidance as to how and why it is done. The project’s work comes from a huge network of disability experts from around the world. Every year the research focuses on a specific topic. In 2012–2013 it was Employment; in 2013–2014 it was Accessibility; in 2014–2015 it is Independent Living and Political Participation, and in 2015–2016 it will be Education.

Zero Project conference, report, and website

The Zero Project team organizes the annual Zero Project Conference in Vienna every February. It publishes an annual report, updates the Zero Project Website, and presents its results in leading conferences and congresses around the world.

Zero Project Austria

In 2014–2015 the Zero Project also conducted research on Innovative Practices and Policies that have special relevance to Austria – the country of the Zero Project headquarters. In a separate research process, all shortlisted nominations were selected exclusively by Austrian experts in order to identify those that are most relevant for the Austrian context.

The results of the “Zero Project Austria” are published in a separate report and on its own website (in German). They will also be presented at a series of conferences, one of which is held nationally – as part of the international Zero Project Conference in Vienna – as well as another nine conferences to be held in the nine capital cities of the Austrian provinces. The Zero Project Austria 2014–2015 is co-funded by the PROGRESS program of the European Union.

Independent Living includes the opportunity to make choices and decisions regarding where to live, with whom to live, and how to live.

European Network of Independent Living

The Zero Project research for 2014–2015 is Independent Living and Political Participation.

Independent Living

Article 19 of the UN CRPD “sets out a right to live independently and be included in the community, recognising that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” (“Choice and control: The right to independent living,” a report published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2012).

Two related articles of the UN CRPD should also be taken into consideration when approaching the concept of Independent Living, as these address many aspects of people’s lives:

• Article 12: right to equal recognition before the law.
• Article 28: right to an adequate standard of living and social protection.

These jointly create a framework for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community.

According to the European Network of Independent Living, this means in practice that:

Independent Living is the daily demonstration of human rights-based disability policies. Independent Living is possible through the combination of various environmental and individual factors that allow disabled people to control over their own lives. This includes the opportunity to make choices and decisions regarding where to live, with whom to live, and how to live. Services must be accessible to all and provided on the basis of equal opportunity, allowing disabled people flexibility in our daily life. Independent Living requires that the built environment and transport are accessible, that there is availability of technical aids, access to personal assistance, and/or community-based services. It is necessary to point out that Independent Living is for all disabled persons, regardless of the level of their support needs.

Political Participation

As noted in a 2014 report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 1

Given an accessible and enabling environment, persons with disabilities are active citizens keen to be engaged in the political life of their communities. As well as voting in elections, persons with disabili-


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The Zero Project engages its network of experts, including a high percentage of persons with disabilities, in the nomination, research, and selection processes of Innovative Policies and Innovative Practices as well as in its Social Indicator research, which is based on a questionnaire sent out to the expert network. Participating in a kind of “crowd intelligence” system, these experts contribute their knowledge and expertise to the identification of outstanding examples and replicable models—what is called “solutions that are particularly innovative and effective in advancing the implementation on the UN CRPD, compared to other practices and policies that are in use.”

This approach is in line with many scholars who work in the area of justice and human rights. Amartya Sen, for example, states in his book *The Idea of Justice* that “Justice-enhancing changes or reforms demand comparative assessments, not simply an immaculate identification of ‘the just society’ (or ‘the just institutions’).”

In 2014 more than 2,000 persons and organizations from almost every country of the world were approached to join in the research process, and more than 800 were requested to fill in the questionnaire of the Social Indicators. A total of 650 experts from more than 150 countries participated in this year’s research (see Annex, Zero Project network).

During the research process, 231 nominations were made by experts from 58 countries. Hundreds more were included in the selection process by commenting, evaluating, and voting, based on such criteria as innovation, impact, scalability, and professional approach. Ultimately, 39 Innovative Practices and 11 Innovative Policies—all of them addressing Independent Living and Political Participation—were selected.

During the period September–November 2014, 275 experts from 150 countries answered the Social Indicators questionnaire. Almost half of these experts (134) belong to the Disabled People’s International network, and the Zero Project is especially grateful for its continuing support.

Key findings of the Social Indicators

The Zero Project Indicators 2015 consist of 30 questions that can be split in two groups:

- 16 questions cover a range of key UN CRPD Articles, and have been surveyed in a consistent manner since 2011. These questions ask for details on the implementation of the UN CRPD regarding general issues, and specifically regarding built environment, transport, emergencies, education, data collection, employment, independent living/political participation, and CRPD implementation and monitoring.

- 14 questions are adapted to the annual theme of research. This year’s theme is “Independent Living and Political Participation.” Thus, the usual questions in these areas were augmented to include:

  a. Independent Living (10 questions)
     - Equal recognition before the law
     - Personal rights
     - Community-based service and alternatives to institutions
     - Legal and social protection
     - Assistance and support

  b. Political Participation (4 questions)
     - Access to justice
     - Access to information
     - Political rights
     - Access to voting procedures

Main results of quantitative analysis of all Social Indicators

- The question with the most “Yes” responses (green lights): 52 percent of all respondents worldwide claim that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against in their right to marry and have children.
- At the bottom end of the table, only 3 percent of respondents believe that the public transport system in the main capital is accessible for all.
- Only 6 percent of respondents state that there is available data on the number of university graduates with disabilities.
- Only 6 percent of the emergency alarm systems in use are accessible to everyone.
- 93 percent of respondents believe that no satisfactory system of personal assistance services is available in their country.
- Within the group of indicators related to Independent Living, the “best score” is given to the availability of services and technologies, but still only with 20 percent of respondents answering “Yes.”
- Within the group of indicators related to political participation, availability of accessibility is “worst”—with only 16 percent of respondents answering “Yes.”

### What is an Institution?

An institution is any residential care facility where:

- Residents are isolated from the broader community and/or compelled to live together;
- Residents do not have sufficient control over their lives and over decisions that affect them; and
- The requirements of the institution itself tend to take precedence over the residents’ individual needs.

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**Question 21 of the Social Indicators asks:** If forms of residential care exists in your country, are there any alternatives to institutions and do people with disabilities have choice and control over the services they use? This world map is taken from the Zero Project website. Red indicates that the answer is “no,” orange indicates “Yes with qualifications,” and green indicates “Yes.” The websites give you other opportunities for research as well, like searching for names and explanations of respondents.

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Main results of qualitative analysis of the Social Indicators on Independent Living

Institutions still as predominant forms of care
In many countries, especially in Eastern Europe and in the states of the former Soviet Union, institutions still exist and people do not have an option but to live there, since the government does not have the capacity to provide services to the community, as explained by a respondent from Ukraine.

Community-based services and alternatives to institutions
In some countries from the Global South, especially in Africa, institutions do not exist, and it is mostly family members who provide care (mentioned in Belize, Benin, Ghana, Suriname). In countries where institutions are present, alternatives might exist (as experts state in the case of Ethiopia), but these are not considered preferable. In both cases implementation of the UN CRPD is still far from a reality.

Poor monitoring of institutions
In general, monitoring seems to be more common in European countries as well as in other countries with greater financial capability. But respondents from the United States point out loopholes in the U.S. with greater financial capability. But respondents in European countries as well as in other countries preferable. In both cases implementation of the UN CRPD is still far from a reality.

Results of qualitative analysis of the Social Indicators on Political Participation

Restricted voting rights
Comments showed that in many countries there are restrictions regarding the right to vote by secret ballot in elections, especially for blind people or persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, who need to vote through their assistant. These situations clearly violate their right to confidentiality (Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zimbabwe).

In many countries, intellectual disability is a criterion that can affect an individual’s eligibility to vote, which is defined sometimes as “limited capacity to vote” (Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Tanzania, Turkmenistan, Estonia and Finland). Furthermore, in developing countries illiteracy – especially among people with disabilities (for example, 96 percent in the Ivory Coast) – is a determinant barrier that prevents people with disabilities to vote.

In regards to the right to be elected, especially in developing countries, people with disabilities experience cultural stigma within their society. Thus, despite the absence of a specific legal framework that denies them this right, they generally do not dare to present themselves for elections. In most countries, constitutional texts clearly define “sound of mind” as a condition for a person to be elected, thus preventing people with intellectual disabilities to stand for most government positions (Ireland, United States). According to experts, Iraq law prohibits people with intellectual disabilities to hold government or elected positions. In Pakistan, for example, persons with disabilities other than intellectual disabilities have the right to be elected, but some posts are restricted, such as Prime Minister or President. The legal framework differs from reality, however, where normally no person with a disability is in Parliament.

Analysing data via the Zero Project website and Open Source Data
The Annex includes two tables on the Zero Project Indicators. A breakdown of all 242 analysed questionnaires and all 30 questions, and a summary of the quantitative research.

All data, including the names and organizations of respondents, countries, and comments, can be best viewed on the Zero Project website in the Indicators section. Every answer can be viewed via world maps. The complete open source data is also freely available for download on the website, enabling everyone to conduct their own research.

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Innovative Practices from the United States: The three-week Women’s Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD) program of Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has trained more than 200 women with disabilities from over 80 countries on strategies for improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities.

Key findings of Innovative Practices

Assistance and Budget

Several Innovative Practices have developed models on how to organize and finance personal assistance, and how to organize personal budget models, where financial support is given to persons with disabilities themselves and not to service providers. In the “employer model,” for example, the person with a disability is the employer of her or his assistant(s), and an organization hired by that individual then provides all the services that are needed.

Community Living

Another group of Innovative Practices has developed models of community living, where persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual and multiple disabilities, have a real possibility to choose where to live and with whom, which is a prerequisite for deinstitutionalization and a clear requirement of the UN CRPD. Some of these Innovative Practices, for example, use apartment sharing, “Microboards,” and create affordable and efficient support systems for families and care givers.

Peer support

Some practices work especially on peer support, using the capabilities of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties. Their first-hand experience and knowledge of many societal issues enables them to be experts in their field. Peer support includes training and teaching models, and it also creates jobs and new professions.

Self-empowerment

A group of Innovative Practices concentrate on the empowerment of persons with disabilities, training them in communication, literacy, etc. Others initiate and support groups of self-representatives and/or work on self-representation and access to justice. Quite outstanding work is done by those Innovative Practices that support groups of persons with disabilities that are even more vulnerable, e.g., deaf women in male dominated societies or victims of sexual abuse.

Participation in public and political life

Combining issues of Independent Living and Political Participation, several Innovative Practices train persons with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties, in self-representation towards administrations, service providers, etc. Such Practices often include political participation so that the voices of persons with disabilities are heard in the media, in political consultations, in public speeches, and/or in consultation processes for new policies. Some even work towards preparing persons with disabilities to run for political office.

Accessible elections

A very distinct group works on the accessibility of elections for all, which includes election tools (e.g., Braille ballots and election materials), training for election staff, physical accessibility of polling stations, access to information on elections, etc.

DEFINITION OF AN INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

Innovative Practices of the Zero Project are projects, programmes, social enterprises, etc. that:

- are creative, professional, successful, and scalable
- can be transferred or copied to other countries/regions/contexts and have a measurable impact
- speed up the process of implementing the UN CRPD

THE STORY OF DUMITRIȚA

“My name is Dumitrița, and I am a 14-year-old girl with disabilities and learning difficulties. Support services did not exist where I lived, and the mainstream school would not accept me. My family could not afford the education and care I needed, so I was placed in an institution for children with disabilities. This place was far from home, which made family visits very difficult. In the institution I missed very much the love and care of my parents and sister.

Being reunited with my family – thanks to support from Lumos – was a dream come true! For two years now I have been studying at the mainstream school close to my home. Today, I feel like part of the community. I am very happy living with my family, all of whom love and support me. I also like my new school, where I am doing well and where my friends and teachers understand me. I am a strong advocate for inclusive education in our school's discussion group, and I speak out wherever I can. My dream is that all children with disabilities in Moldova can live with their families. I want to help other children to return home and give them confidence and hope for a better future.

Innovative Practice from the United Kingdom: Together with the Moldovan Government, the Lumos Foundation has promoted an integrated policy and programme of deinstitutionalisation and inclusive education for children with disabilities. This allows them to leave residential care and to return to their families and communities while receiving education in a mainstream school.
For different government levels and bodies
Innovative Policies 2015 are established at all levels of government, from the local/municipal level (Sweden’s Personal Ombudsmen) to the regional level (Upper Austria and Flanders) up to the national level (Sweden, United Kingdom, etc.). Some policies concern exclusively the most important legislative body at the national level, e.g., the Parliament (South Africa, Japan, etc.). Others concern the mandate and operation of an independent agency organizing and overseeing elections; e.g., the Electoral Commission (New Zealand, etc.). In order to ensure the full implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities, it is crucial to mainstream their rights at all levels of policy-making.

For persons with all types of disabilities
Many existing policies include their own, restrictive definition of disability or refer to a definition found in another law, often the country’s antidiscrimination law. However, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons

DEFINITION
OF AN INNOVATIVE POLICY
Innovative Policies have achieved identifiable improvements on the ground, and have demonstrated a positive dynamic of change that can be easily replicated in many countries to advance the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Like all innovation, some policies may be incomplete or dependent on other developments to maximize their impact. Some policies, no matter how positive, may also contain elements of old thinking. Since the implementation of the UN CRPD is a work in progress, no matter how positive, may also contain elements of old thinking. Since the implementation of the UN CRPD is a work in progress, for all countries, these elements are taken into account in the overall assessment of innovation.

Innovative Policies does not include a definition of disability, and states explicitly in its Article 1 that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. Policies should be reformed accordingly. The overall goal should be to avoid spelling out an unavoidably restrictive definition of disability and instead to implement steps relevant for all “regardless of disability,” as stated, for example, by New Zealand’s strategy for electoral access.

Including the most excluded groups
There are persons with certain types of disabilities that are more severely affected than others. These include persons with extensive disabilities who need daily assistance in order to be able to live independently in their family’s or their own home. Sweden is one of the few countries that have established a right to a personal assistance budget.

Among the most neglected groups are also persons with severe mental and psychosocial problems. In such cases, the Personal Ombudsmen in Sweden have proven to be true “change makers” in the lives of many disabled persons. Similarly, in Upper Austria persons with disabilities who have psychiatric experience can become qualified peer counsellors who can then help other disabled persons currently in psychiatric care.

Persons who are placed under guardianship often lose their legal rights, including their right to vote. A spectacular 2013 court ruling in Japan established that provisions that deprive persons under guardianship of their voting rights are unconstitutional, and the repeal of such provisions led to the enfranchisement of more than 136,000 people.

Also, easy language users are another group that is often neglected by policy-makers. An exception is this year’s Innovative Policy that comes from New Zealand, where the national strategy aims for electoral accessibility for all, including people with learning and intellectual disabilities.

Key findings of Innovative Policies

Question 30 of the Social Indicators: Is the official electorate information produced by the election management body accessible to all?

This world map is taken from the Zero Project website: red indicates that the answer is “No,” orange indicates “Yes with qualifications,” and green indicates “Yes.” Using www.zeroproject.org allows various kinds of in-depth analysis.

THE STORY OF ADOLF RATZKA

“My assistants enable me to work”

My assistants enable me to work. One of their most important functions is to accompany me on trips as head of the Independent Living Institute. Since my wife has her own work – she is an occupational therapist – we only travel together on vacations. And then, too, I take an assistant along, since I want to have the same role within my family that I would have had without my disability. Money for the costs of the accompanying assistant’s airline tickets, hotel room, meals, etc. is part of the monthly payment from the Social Insurance Fund. Thus, I do not have to apply and fight for such expenses every time I travel.

Dr. Adolf Ratzka encountered his disability as a result of contracting polio at the age of 17, and he has had to rely on personal assistance ever since. He imported the Independent Living movement to Sweden from the United States and founded the Stockholm Cooperative for Independent Living, which was behind the introduction of the Swedish law that established the right to a personal assistance budget.
**Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies**

**Zero Project 2015**

- Innovative Practice
- Innovative Policy

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**United States (and worldwide)**

- Women’s Institute on Leadership and Disability Mobility International USA
- Strengthening electoral systems to be inclusive and accessible
  - International Foundation for Electoral Systems
  - Digicel Foundation Jamaica
- Offering individualised support and sharing lessons learned
  - National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disabilities

**Canada**

- Microboards: Small non-profits for supported decision-making
  - Vela Microboard Association

**United Kingdom**

- Funding for running for an elected office, 2012
  - Funding Agreement (Political Participation); Country Level
- Helping and platform on personalised care
  - Disability Rights UK
- Cheap equipment to make PCs accessible
  - Connect to Control (Scope, Beaumont College)
- A “brokerage” for short family vacations
  - Scope and Suffolk County Council
- User-led-organization teaching and inspiring others
  - SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living

**Denmark**

- Study kit about citizenship and personal rights
  - Statsbyen (National Board of Social Services)

**European Union**

- Diverting EU funds towards community-based care
  - European Expert Group

**Luxembourg**

- Funding a national disability information centre, 1993
  - Funding Agreement (Independent Living); Country Level

**Belgium**

- Flemish Personal Assistance Budget, 2000
  - Decree (Independent Living); Country Level
- Freedom School – Training for an active role in society
  - Oostmolen
- Stimulating political participation for persons with an intellectual disability
  - Our New Future
- “Proof of women” – fast access to affordable homes
  - Womeninfl Zennedal

**Ireland**

- Offering individualised support and sharing lessons learned
  - National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disabilities

**Europe**

- Voting and participating in the electoral process, 2007 & 2011
  - Decree (Political Participation); Country Level
- Free personal assistance proves cost-effective
  - ASLVim

**Italy**

- Deinstitutionalisation and community living since 1980
  - Trieste Mental Health Department & WHOCC

**Kenya**

- Creating careers from disabilities
  - The Living Link

**Jamaica**

- A business approach to sustainable community living
  - Digicel Foundation Jamaica

**Argentina and (and others)**

- Regional network to promote legal capacity of people with psychosocial disabilities
  - The Trust for the Americas/ Organization of American States

**Spain**

- Voting and participating in the electoral process, 2006 & 2009
  - Decree (Political Participation); Country Level

**Nepal**

- Eliminating barriers to voting and participating in democratic processes
  - Nepal National Disability Federation

**Luxembourg**

- Funding for running for an elected office, 2012
  - Funding Agreement (Political Participation); Country Level

**Belgium**

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  - Decree (Independent Living); Regional Level
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**South Africa**

- Ensuring equal access for Members of Parliament, 2006 & 2009
  - Strategy (Political Participation); Country Level
- Sexual abuse victim empowerment programme
  - Cape Mental Health

**Zimbabwe**

- Enfranchising people with disabilities
  - Jama’s Ari Association

**Rwanda**

- Empowerment through peer-to-peer support
  - National Organization of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry

**Australia**

- Regional network to promote legal capacity of people with psychosocial disabilities
  - School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work, Curtin University
- Voting independently and privately
  - Swift Secure Electronic Voting, S.A.

**New Zealand**

- Improving access to electoral events, 2014
  - Strategy (Political Participation); Country Level

**Nepal**

- Eliminating barriers to voting and participating in democratic processes
  - Nepal National Disability Federation

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Key Findings of the Zero Project Social Indicators

**Worldwide coverage**
Coverage of 150 countries worldwide makes the Zero Project Social Indicators a unique wealth of data.

**Qualitative analysis**
All available data has been analysed quantitatively but also qualitatively by researching comments and explanations.

**30 questions**
Designed to focus on concrete implementations of the most important rights granted by the UN CRPD.

**Website**
The full set of data is available on www.zeroproject.org, best to be seen on interactive world maps.
Key Findings of the Social Indicators

MEASURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CRPD WITH 30 QUESTIONS IN 150 COUNTRIES

The work of the Zero Project (first launched in 2011) is based on Social Indicators designed to measure the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). It was only later that Innovative Practices and Policies were added to the research.

The Zero Project’s Social Indicators are designed to complement the work of national monitoring bodies, federal bureaus of statistics, and international organizations that measure the implementation of the UN CRPD. They are based on questionnaires that are completed by experts who assess the implementation in their own country (or country state). The questions are designed to focus on concrete implementations of the most important rights granted by the UN CRPD, as stated in its Articles.

Experts in all countries of the world are approached, including representatives of grassroots organizations, national umbrella and membership organizations, service providers, academics, consultants, social entrepreneurs, and others. Several organizations support the research by forwarding the questionnaire to its members. Disabled Peoples’ International (DPI) takes a leading role in that respect, encouraging its members from more than 100 countries to participate in the survey.

Experts are selected by the Zero Project team, based on experiences from former years and peer recommendations of other members of the network, and are approached by email. The questionnaire can be answered online in any of four languages (English, French, German, and Spanish), and is also available in accessible MS Word documents in seven languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian, and Spanish) on the Zero Project website. (The full questionnaire appears in English in the Annex.)

2015: The implementation of the UN CRPD with a focus on Independent Living and Political Participation

Since 2013 the Zero Project Indicators have consisted of approximately 30 questions that can be split in two groups:

1. Seventeen questions cover the range of key Articles of the UN CRPD and have been posed in a consistent manner since 2011. These questions ask for details of the implementation of the UN CRPD regarding built environment, transport, emergen-
cies, education, data collection, employment, independent living/political participation, and CRPD implementation and monitoring.

2. All other questions are adapted to the annual theme of research. This year the theme is “Independent Living and Political Participation.” Thus, the usual questions in these areas were augmented to include:

   a. Independent Living
      - Equal recognition before the law
      - Personal rights
      - Community-based service and alternatives to institutions
      - Legal and social protection
      - Assistance and support

   b. Political Participation
      - Access to justice
      - Access to information
      - Political rights
      - Access to voting procedures

The scope of the survey 2015

During the period September–November 2014, 275 experts from exactly 150 countries answered the Zero Project Questionnaire. Almost half of those experts – 134 – came from the DPI network, and the Zero Project is especially grateful for its continuing support.

Coverage of 150 countries worldwide makes the Zero Project Indicators a unique wealth of data and background information on the implementation of the UN CRPD. This is especially true as the number of participating countries has grown dramatically over just five years:

2010: 15 countries
2012: 36 countries
2013: 55 countries
2014: 130 countries
2015: 150 countries

Countries with the highest response rate are the United States (16), Ireland (13), and Belgium (10). Countries still not covered in the survey include Ecuador, Iceland, Iran, Mexico, and South Korea. Only questionnaires where at least 15 questions were answered have been included in the analysis, reducing the number from 275 to 242. Regional breakdown:

- Europe: 79 replies from 36 countries
- Asia & Pacific (including central Asia and Middle East): 52 replies from 37 countries
- Northern Africa: 4 replies from 6 countries
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 44 replies from 32 countries
- Latin and Central America & the Caribbean: 34 replies from 26 countries
- North America: 16 replies from 2 countries
- Oceania: 13 replies from 11 countries

How data has been analysed

For this report, quantitative and qualitative analysis based on both the responses (“traffic lights”) and the comments of the experts has been made. The research team focused on clear patterns of responses that were supported by the comments of the experts as well. The answers provided by the experts are purely based on their experiences and perspectives. Due to this limitation of the quality of data, the research team did not use more than a basic set of averaging, ranking, etc.

Using the Zero Project Indicators

Zero Project website: All data, including the names and organization of respondents, countries, and comments, can be best viewed on the Zero Project website in the Indicators section. Every single question can be analysed via world maps. The maps can be zoomed in and out. When clicking on a symbol, the name of the respondent and additional remarks, if available, are shown, making it easy to access and compare data.

Open source data: The complete open source data is also freely available for download on the website, enabling everyone to conduct their own research.

The Austrian Barometer of Inclusion

In 2014 the Zero Project has, for the first time, conducted a survey together with Lebenshilfe Österreich (Inclusion Austria) to analyse differences in Independent Living among the nine Austrian country states. The results will be published in the Zero Project Report: Austria 2015 and on the Zero Project Austria website (starting April 2015).
The Annex includes two tables on the Zero Project Indicators: A breakdown of all 242 analysed questionnaires and all 30 questions, and a summary of the “traffic light” answers that were given.

Find some outstanding facts here:

- The question with the most “Yes” responses (green lights): 52 percent of all respondents worldwide claim that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against in their right to marry and have children.
- At the bottom end of the table, only 3 percent of respondents believe that the public transport system in the main capital is accessible for all.
- Only 6 percent of respondents state that there is available data on the number of university graduates with disabilities.
- The same percentage claims that emergency alarm systems that are in use are accessible to everyone.
- A meagre 7 percent believe that a satisfactory system of personal assistance services is available in their country.
- Within the group of those indicators that are related to Independent Living, the “best score” is given to the availability of services and technologies, but still only with 20 percent of respondents answering “Yes.”
- Within the group of indicators related to political participation, availability of accessibility is “worst” with only 18 percent of respondents answering “Yes,” whereas 50 percent of all respondents see no discrimination in the basic right to vote and in the right to be elected (see further analysis on page 111).
Facts, comments, and quotes from around the world

The qualitative analysis of the Social Indicators is based on a wealth of information on the situation in more than 100 countries of the world. Find a selection of interesting facts and comments here.

... ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
(Questions 1 and 2)

Many governments – especially in the EU – have adopted measures and time frames of up to five years on average for existing buildings to be made accessible. Conflict with heritage protection legislation is often used as an excuse for not improving building accessibility (as mentioned for Estonia, Portugal, and South Africa).

“All buildings built before 2002 also are under the scope of the Building Act. It is advised to renovate them as accessible as possible unless the cost is too much and unsound or if heritage protection rules forbid it.” (Estonia)

“The law applies fully to all buildings open to the public, except when the means required to implement accessibility are disproportionately difficult, or require disproportionate economic and financial means, or when they significantly affect cultural or historical heritage. Moreover, the law is not enforced, mainly by Portuguese state.” (Portugal)

Raising awareness is considered of utmost importance: “It is only now with the ratification of the CRPD and through awareness raising sessions often organized by DPOs and organizations for people with disabilities and animated by CRPD experts that the issue of accessibility has begun in a small way to integrate into the discussions on disability.” (Brunn)

... ON TRANSPORT
(Question 3)

From the questionnaire responses, the current situation is particularly critical, with only 3 percent of “Yes” responses. But respondents also highlight that metros in Greece are 100 percent accessible. Buses in The Netherlands are fully accessible, while trains only partly. It is commonly observed that either only new means of transport or only certain types of transportation are accessible. These are mainly found in urban areas, whereas suburbs, rural areas, and also smaller islands lack accessible transportation services. Alternative means of transport (for example, private vans and taxis) are not always available or are too expensive for people with disabilities.

The lack of staff training was one of the major issues reported by respondents, followed by the lack of autonomous ability to use public transport: “The Road Transport Authority has no indicator or criteria in their exam system to know the knowledge on disability of drivers.” (Salma Mahbub, Prothboni Nagarkhan Shangathaner Parishad, Bangladesh)

... ON DISASTER & EMERGENCY RISK REDUCTION
(Question 4)

Respondents emphasized that warning systems are often only present in public buildings, some hotels, or government buildings (such as in Iraq). Many comments also identified a lack of training in emergency service staff. Still, there are some good and promising practices as well, including:

Micronesia: “Just this year the first ever Federated States of Micronesia came together to develop a Platform for Disaster Risk Management to Enhancing Safety and Resilience from Disaster and Climate Change Risks.” (Neilbert Perez, President, Pohnpeian Consumer Organization, Micronesia)

Barbados: The department of emergency management and the district emergency organizations work directly with DPOs and PWDs to include them in disaster and early warning system preparedness.

Belgium: The Federal Public Service Interior site system uses a network to send alert messages to the public in a crisis situation at a nuclear or chemical site. Its new Be-Alert allows you to receive an SMS when the sirens are activated.

WHERE INFRASTRUCTURE IS ACCESSIBLE

Lahore, Pakistan: “Lahore has recently launched a new BRT system that is completely accessible with tactile surfacing, Braille signage, ramps and spaces allocated for wheelchair users, and LCD screens for people with hearing impairments. The same system is to be introduced in 2015 to the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.” (Rees Khan, Network of Organizations Working with People with Disabilities, Pakistan)

Budapest, Hungary: “On the city’s 270 bus lines there are only wheelchair-accessible buses, arriving every 30–40 minutes, which is indicated on the timetable for each bus stop. The new metro is fully accessible, as are trams Number 4 and 6, including all stops. There are also many low-floor buses with a ramp in the countryside – in towns and between towns and villages – but there should be more. The ramps, however, are not electric but are mechanical, which means the driver must get out, open the ramp, and help the person in a wheelchair to get into and from the bus.” (Eva Caesar, National Federation of Disabled Persons’ Associations, Hungary)

Solo City, Indonesia: “To enforce the national and local regulation on accessibility, many local governments set up a road map and annual budget plan to make urban/ public transports accessible for all persons with disabilities, including speech, hearing, and intellectual disabilities.” (Sunarman Sukamoto, Director, CBR Development and Training Centre, Solo, Indonesia)

One of the major issues reported by many countries are the restrictions within legal frameworks in taking actions to provide reasonable accommodation for employees. For example, in Germany the provision of reasonable accommodation is mostly applicable only to existing employees who become disabled while on the job.

Some promising practices that are reported include early retirement (Bangladesh), employment support schemes and legal provisions applying to existing and new employees (Ireland, Norway, Peru, Philippines), or reimbursements for necessary measures taken by employees (e.g., The Netherlands provides no legal right for children with disabilities to attend mainstream schooling. Singapore exempts obligatory education for children with disabilities).

In most countries children with disabilities cannot be legally refused an education, but they are generally directed to separate specialised schools. As a consequence, a huge proportion of children with disabilities, in particular children with other than physical disabilities, are still not integrated into the mainstream education system (e.g., The Netherlands provides no legal right for children with disabilities to attend mainstream schooling. Singapore exempts obligatory education for children with disabilities). Some of the reasons for failing to integrate these children into mainstream education are related to the lack of resources, such as specialised training for teachers and staff. In some countries, such as Estonia, experts have pointed out examples where teachers are not prepared or trained to socially integrate children with disabilities, and thus are instead send to specialized schools in order to spare the children from episodes of discrimination, inaccessibility of buildings, lack of funding and resources, non-adapt- able school curriculums, or lack of representation on school committees.

But there are promising practices mentioned by the experts as well: “For the first time, ‘Education Policy 2010’ has acknowledged the right to education of persons with disabilities in mainstream schools in addition to special schools...” (Salma Mahbub, Bangladesh)

The possibility of alternative testing methods for persons with disabilities in university is generally available, such as “technology, software, allowing testing in Braille, and training of staff” (Thailand) and “special college programmes adapted to a student’s needs” (Philippines).

... ON EMPLOYMENT
(Questions 10, 11 and 12)

The general situation related to employment issues does not show a very promising picture, with 45.2 percent of respondents giving a ‘red light’.

The dire situation, especially in Europe, is often attributed to the economic crisis of recent years and the relative limited employment available for persons with disabilities. Budget cuts and high unemployment rates have a direct consequence on the lack of adaptations and the ethical recruitment of people with disabilities made by employers (mentioned by Portugal and Greece).
Social Indicators on Independent Living

Community-based services and residential care, legal and social protection, assistance and support – find the most outstanding results of the Zero Project Social Indicators on Independent Living in this section.

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES AND RESIDENTIAL CARE

Question 21: If forms of residential care exist in your country, are there any alternatives to institutions, and do people with disabilities have choice and control over the services they use?

In the poorest countries, institutions mostly do not exist and it is only family members who provide care (mentioned in Belize, Benin, Ghana, Suriname). Alternatives might exist (as experts state for Ethiopia), but in such states most persons with disabilities still prefer to stay in institutions, which guarantees a better standard of living than home care, and also provides more protection against discrimination.

In other countries, especially in Eastern Europe and in the states of the former Soviet Union, many institutions exist and people do not have an option but to live there, since the government does not have the capacity to provide services to the community, as explained by a respondent from Ukraine.

Budget cuts on the provision of care givers and social workers have limited the opportunity for other types of care, and as a result most respondents noted that the trend in their country is actually away from the UN CRPD and community living, and that activities sometimes are cut back to the most basic needs, such as cleaning.

Private alternatives are often available but not affordable by persons with disabilities, as governments (and private insurance schemes as well) often do not fund them (e.g., personal care assistance) or such services are not readily available: “In Flanders the personal assistance budget offers a better alternative for institutional care, but due to waiting lists there is no free choice.” (Peter Lambreghts, Policy Officer and Regional Coordinator, Onafhankelijk Leven vzw/ENIL (European Network for Independent Living), Belgium – see also section on Innovative Policies).

In Estonia some people with disabilities avoid being institutionalized by sharing bigger apartments with persons that are not disabled and who are paid in return for their services. Often parents/family are full-time care givers, living only on € 19 per month since care-giving prevents them from taking jobs that are paid for. (Iivan Kõllamets, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia – see also several innovative Practices mentioned in this report).

Another model exists in France, where if a person with disability wishes to live autonomously, he or she can request accommodation by landlords and is “among the priority groups for the allocation of social housing. Alternatively, persons with disabilities can choose to live with host families, which are licensed professionals and controlled by the General Council (see www.seine-saint-denis.fr)."

LEGAL & SOCIAL PROTECTION

Question 25: Are facilities and programs designed to serve persons with disabilities effectively monitored by independent authorities?

In almost all countries, monitoring procedures seem not to be reliable or effective. Sunarman Sukamto, Director at CBR Development and Training Centre in Indonesia explains: “There is a national scheme for social protection with financial support of US$ 30 per month per person, but only for persons with severe disabilities. However, the budget is too small compared to the number of persons with disabilities in Indonesia.”

In general, monitoring seems to be more common in European countries as well as in other countries with greater financial capability. Respondents from the United States point out loopholes in the legislative framework, especially regarding institutions related to health (such as psychiatric hospitals) where monitoring can only be done by health bodies that are not independent (reported as well in The Netherlands and Peru).

ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

Question 26: Are measures and safeguards exist to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing?

In many countries, however, the assistance and support is only available for certain types of disabilities (Mauritius, Moldova, Uruguay). Very often, persons with disabilities must rely on their own ability to pay for their personal assistance and assistive devices (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nepal, Zimbabwe).

In most countries personal assistance is limited by the availability of public funding. In Italy, for instance, “the projects that can be implemented are in fact self-managed or are indirect assistance projects, but they are always bound by available funds. It is therefore not rights based. The financial support of these projects is constantly put at risk because the funds made available are not specifically dedicated to independent living and can be absorbed by public or private structures, mainly for the elderly” (Maria Vincenza Ferrarrese, President, Disabled People’s International, Italy).

In Canada individualized funding is available, but there are restrictions that include a strict assessment of people’s needs. As a consequence, “a quarter of families of children with an intellectual disability report financial difficulties in meeting household and disability-related expenses. Further, 37 percent of parents report that the services they lack are not available locally” (Tara Brinston, Canadian Association for Community Living).

Budget cuts or lack of financial resources prevent the provision of personal assistance in many countries (Brazil, Serbia, Singapore, and Slovenia have all highlighted this issue). Some comments also refer to complex administrative processes and long waiting lists lasting up to a year (Estonia, Ghana, Portugal, Senegal).

Often, new and efficient technology is not provided by government funding, but is instead provided by the private sector or by private health insurers (Austria, Germany, Hungary, United States). “A wheelchair may be available but a motorized wheelchair may not, unless the person can prove absolute inability to operate a standard wheelchair. Rarely are laptops or communication devices provided. Hearing aids and glasses may have such a high co-pay to render them inaccessible” (Frances Pundy, Director, Family Support Professional Association, United States).

In some instances assistive devices and personal assistance are only available for those living in institutions (such as South Africa). In some other cases personal assistance is limited and given only to people employed by the state (as in Ghana). Where there is no state-sponsored assistance, civil society plays an essential role. In many developing countries assistive device provision relies heavily on NGOs, volunteering, social welfare, and grassroots organizations (Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Cook Islands, Honduras, Moldova, Nigeria, Liberia).
Social Indicators on Political Participation

Political rights and access to voting procedures – find summaries of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Social Indicators in this section.

**POLITICAL RIGHTS**

**Question 27:** Do persons with disabilities have the right to vote by secret ballot in elections?

**Question 28:** Do persons with disabilities have the right to stand for elections, to effectively hold office, and to perform all public functions at all levels of government?

Comments showed that in many countries there are restrictions regarding the right to vote by secret ballot in elections, especially for blind people or persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, who need to vote through their assistant – which violates their right to confidentiality (Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnias Herzegovina, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Spain, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zimbabwe).

In some countries intellectual disability is a criterion that can affect an individual's eligibility to vote (Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Tanzania, Turkmenistan). Other comments highlight that, due to stigmatisation, a person with a disability is considered unable to make decisions and, as a consequence, will have their voting rights denied (Nigeria, South Sudan).

In some countries, such as Estonia and Finland, people with an intellectual disability or limited capacity to vote (by definition, referring to people who do not understand the voting criteria) are excluded from voting, including in the United States. “The U.S. has not lifted legal restrictions on the right to vote of people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. In a majority of U.S. states, if you are under guardianship, you cannot vote. Also, in many states judges are able to take the right to vote away” (Virginia Atkinson, Access and Inclusion Specialist, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, United States).

**Legal Barriers for people with intellectual disabilities also remain in Canada, India, Iraq, Ghana, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Serbia, South Africa, and Yemen, and in many other countries mentioning “sound of mind” in their constitution. Iraqi law prohibits people with disabilities to hold government positions. In Pakistan only posts such as prime minister and president are not open for people with disabilities to be elected.**

There are several examples of restrictions of condition and eligibility criteria regarding the right to be elected: “For example, art. 44 of the Beninese Constitution of 11 December 1990 provides that ‘no person may be a candidate for the office of President of the Republic if he [...] does not enjoy a state of complete physical and mental well-being noted a panel of three sworn physicians appointed by the Constitutional Court’” (Géronime Tokpo, Fédération des Associations de Personnes Handicapées du Bénin, and Member, Disabled People’s International, Benin).

Also, illiteracy of persons with disabilities harshly limits the capacity of persons with disabilities to vote. This is particularly so for persons with disabilities standing for elections who, in addition, are often stigmatised (Ivory Coast, Somalia).

**ACCESS TO VOTING PROCEDURES**

**Question 29:** Are reasonable accommodations available to assist voters with disabilities in voting on their own and in secret in polling stations and public spaces?

**Question 30:** Is the official electorate information produced by the election management body accessible to all, including those with disabilities?

**Barriers related to the reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities who wish to exercise their right to vote still exist in many countries, and according to the comments they refer especially to:**

- Technology: No available Braille ballots or sound system in electronic voting machines (Bangladesh). The technology is not always working properly (Belgium). In the Netherlands and Nigeria accommodation for blind and deaf people is limited to the use of personal assistants, thus violating the secrecy of the ballot; there are no easy-to-read or Braille ballots.
- Reasonable accommodations for blind people: Many countries have reported that blind voting accommodations are limited to the use of personal assistants.
- Inaccessible infrastructures of polling centres. Polling centre are inaccessible for wheelchairs users; they often have multiple floors (Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zimbabwe).
- Training. Voting officers lack training to assist people with disabilities (Bangladesh). Voting is often only available in paper ballots despite the legal duty to provide alternatives, and this is obviously inaccessible to visually impaired people.

**In some cases when the government does not provide accessible information, civil society organizes itself to meet this need, as in the case of Indonesia:**

The election bodies organize volunteer groups to support people with disabilities to get information about elections, the procedures, the candidates, etc., and also to monitor and make notes and reports about the possible barriers faced by people with disabilities during the election. Then they conducted an evaluation and provided recommendation for the next election such that people with disabilities will get better support and accommodation (Sunarman Sukamo, Director, CBR Development and Training Center, Solo, Indonesia).

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## PROMISING PRACTICES OF ALTERNATIVE & ASSISTED VOTING

Among the reasonable accommodations and alternatives suggested to assist voters with disabilities to vote in secret are:

- Postal vote applications (Australia, Luxembourg, and most other countries)
- Availability of a special phone number (Australia)
- Home voting (Azerbaijan, Estonia, Serbia)
- Mobile voting booths (Bhutan, Cook Islands, Czech Republic)
- Electronic voting (Estonia, Finland)
- Provision of wheelchair accessible ramps (Estonia, Mauritius, Netherlands)
- Possibility of voting at hospital or other institutions (Ireland)
- Assistants who are allowed to help blind voters (Bangladesh, Finland, Iraq, Mauritius, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan)
- Training for election officials (Austria)
- Electorate information regularly available in audio versions (Armenia)
- TV broadcasts sometimes have sign language (Estonia)
- Inaccessible infrastructures of polling centres. Polling centre are inaccessible for wheelchair users; they often have multiple floors (Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zimbabwe).
- Training: Voting officers lack training to assist people with disabilities (Bangladesh). Voting is often only available in paper ballots despite the legal duty to provide alternatives, and this is obviously inaccessible to visually impaired people.

## SOCIAL INDICATORS ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: WORLDWIDE AVERAGES

**Table:**

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<th>Q No.</th>
<th>Access to justice (Q25)</th>
<th>Access to voting procedures (Q29/Q30)</th>
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**P = Question-Number of the Zero Project Questionnaire (see Annex)**

**WHAT “ELECTION CANADA” DOES TO MAKE ELECTIONS MORE ACCESSIBLE**

Elections Canada offers information, education, and accessibility services to persons with special needs, seniors, and those with limited reading and writing skills. Material is available in multiple formats: large print, Braille, DVD, and CD. Services and products include:

- A polling site accessibility feedback process and special ballot (vote by mail) registration form
- A toll-free information line for those with a hearing impairment
- Documents written specifically for persons with disabilities and/or low literacy
- A sign-language DVD with open- and closed-captioning for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- A voting template and large-print list of candidates for those with a visual impairment
- Language or sign-language interpreter services on request
- Transfer certificates on election day to permit persons who use wheelchairs or who have other physical disabilities to vote at facilities that provide level access...
- Assistance, at the voter’s request, with registration and marking the ballot at the advance polls, the polling station, or the local Elections Canada office
- Transportation of the ballot box from room to room to facilitate voting in hospitals and certain residential institutions
- Mobile polling stations for certain institutions where seniors or persons with disabilities reside
- Voting at home in the presence of an electoral officer and a witness, for electors who are registered
Innovative Practices 2015 – Selection and Key Findings

Key findings
How Innovatives Practices were researched and selected, summaries and analysis

Fact Sheets
Factsheets from all Innovative Practices 2015, ranked by country of origin
Key Findings of Innovative Practices

ZERO PROJECT 2015

This year the Zero Project selected 39 Innovative Practices that positively impact the rights of persons with disabilities to live independently and/or support their political rights. The Zero Project uses a clear definition of “Innovative Practice” (and “Innovative Policy” as well, as noted in the next chapter), and has developed a unique approach involving hundreds of experts worldwide in a kind of “crowd intelligence” methodology.

The Best Practice/Innovative Practice approach

According to wikipedia.org, a “Best Practice” is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark. Eugen Bardach, in A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, notes the criteria that define Best Practices, saying that they:

- Identify clear and concrete behaviour
- Solve a problem or achieve a goal
- Are cost-efficient

The “Best” in “Best Practices,” however, connotes that those practices (projects, methods, techniques, models, social enterprises, etc.) are “as good as it can get.” Taking into account that the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is still in its early stages and that in ongoing processes that continue many years, the Zero Project has chosen instead to use the term “Innovative Practice” (and “Innovative Policy”).

Innovative Practices are very hard to find and identify, but they are among the most important tools to accelerate the innovation process that is necessary for the implementation of the UN CRPD. Governments in more than 150 countries that have now ratified the CRPD, as well as service providers and all other stakeholders, are constantly on the lookout for “models that work.”

The Zero Project’s goal is precisely to identify those working models. It has developed a system whereby experts, including a high percentage of persons with disabilities themselves, decide on what is (or would be) a better practice, based on their personal knowledge and experience. This approach is in line with many scholars who work in the area of justice and human rights. Amartya Sen, for example, states in The Idea of Justice that “Justice-enhancing changes or reforms demand comparative assessments, not simply an immaculate identification of ‘the just society’ (or ‘the just institutions’).”

Crowd intelligence: Engaging a worldwide network

The Zero Project has developed its own unique way to identify Innovative Practices. It engages its full network of experts in the nomination, evaluation, and selection process. In 2014 more than 2,000 persons and organizations from almost every country of the world were approached to nominate practices, projects, models, social enterprises, etc. In the following steps, specific experts were engaged in commenting on and evaluating the nominated practices, with more than 100 taking part in the final selection process. The Zero Project, thus, can also be considered a system of “crowd intelligence,” whereby hundreds of experts worldwide contribute pieces (“Legos® like”) to jointly create the set of Innovative Practices. In this way, all experts are global leaders in implementing the UN CRPD, and particularly in the area of this year’s Project theme: “Independent Living and Political Participation.”

Using its methodology, the Zero Project research also takes into consideration the fact that Innovative Practices are highly dependent on context. What is outstanding in Sweden may be very relevant to other countries of the European Union, but may not be useful in South Asia. An Innovative Practice of Rwanda may be highly relevant to many other sub-Saharan countries, but not to other parts of the world. By engaging experts from all over the world, and by obtaining a quota of at least a third of experts and selected Practices from the global South, a variety of Innovative Practices with worldwide relevance has been produced.

The nomination and selection process

- In May–June 2014 a call for nominations was made to more than 2,000 experts and organizations of the Zero Project network, using a nomination form that was available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish (all nominations are also available on the Zero Project website). The nomination forms in English and German were also available in plain language versions.
- Everyone was entitled to nominate every project that in their opinion fit the criteria, including one’s own projects.
- Several organizations that themselves have a large membership or network of experts where encouraged to forward the nomination forms within their networks. We are thankful in this respect to, among several others, DPI, RADIS, QATES, Ashoka, Light for the World, Lebenshilfe (Inclusión Internacional), Diaconie, Caritas, ENIL, Human Rights Watch, and IFES.
- 251 nominations from 58 countries were received in June and July 2014.
- Initially, the Innovative Practices and Innovative Policies were separated, and the latter were researched by the World Future Council subgroup, using a similar and parallel procedure (see next chapter).

WHAT ARE INNOVATIVE PRACTICES?

Innovative Practices of the Zero Project are projects, programmes, social enterprises, etc. that:

- are creative, professional, successful, and scalable
- can be transferred or copied to other countries/regions/contexts and have a measurable impact
- speed up the process of implementing the UN CRPD

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE AND INNOVATIVE POLICY

The Zero Project draws a clear line in its research process between “Innovative Practices” and “Innovative Policies,” based on the belief that they represent two very different approaches, but that both have the ability to create change:

- Innovative Practices: Operational projects or organizations, mostly started by civil society or businesses. The research of Innovative Practices is inspired by the “Ashoka – Innovators for the Public” approach (www.ashoka.org) for searching social entrepreneurs that have already proven their ability to create change. The Zero Project approach and criteria were developed together with the Ashoka organization.
- Innovative Policies: A law, regulation, standard, action plan, programme, etc., issued by government, parliament, or public administration at any governance level. The research of Innovative Policies is inspired and undertaken by the World Future Council’s “Future Just Lawmaking Methodology.”

In a first step of the shortlisting process those nominations were discarded that did not meet the formal criteria, e.g., projects that did not work on Independent Living or Political Participation issues or that could not give any evidence of their work or impact.

In a second stage of shortlisting, a key expert group was asked to comment on all the remaining nominations, especially on their potential impact, on their innovation factor, and on their conformity with the UN CRPD.

- Based on these comments, 84 nominations were shortlisted as Innovative Practices, considering also a minimum quota for nominations from the global South.
- All shortlisted nominations where, in a third step, clustered into three groups, including one group on global South-only practices. Fact sheets were sent out to a total of 600 experts, who were asked to vote for the “better 50 percent” of practices, according to their own experience and knowledge, again taking into account a quota for experts from the global South.
- A total of 102 experts worldwide voted within the three groups, and based on the “Better 50 percent” principle a list of 42 Innovative Practices was established. The Zero Project analysts contacted their representatives, did further research, and produced the fact sheets that are published in this report and on the Project website.
Regional network to promote legal capacity of persons with psychosocial disabilities

ARGENTINA (AND OTHERS) / THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

Funded by the Open Society Institute, the project seeks to establish a network of five countries to promote and raise awareness of the legal capacities of persons with psychosocial disabilities through workshops and monitoring.

Problems targeted
Persons with psychosocial disabilities are systematically denied their right to recognition as persons before the law and their right to legal capacity by their own countries’ civil codes. The Trust for the Americas works to raise awareness about the obligation to provide for Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which recognizes those rights.

The project raises awareness about the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities to be recognized as persons before the law and their right to legal capacity, which leads to greater self-empowerment.

Felipe RAMOS, Technical Coordinator,
The Trust for the Americas

Solution & Methodology
The project was launched in two phases. The first phase (January-April 2012) focused on mapping the state of affairs of the Legal Capacity of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities in six countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru. During the second phase (November 2012-December 2013) a series of workshops was held in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru to provide participants with a solid understanding of disability paradigms, the CRPD, and specific situations identified during the mapping.

Outlook & Transferability
To ensure the continued impact and legacy of the project, a Network of Organizations and Individuals with Psychosocial Disabilities was created to monitor the legal and practical aspects of the implementation of CRPD, and to advocate for the rights of the people with psychosocial disabilities. The project can also be transferred and replicated in other countries, following the guidelines found in the Trust’s Legal Capacity Advocacy Toolbox.

FACTS & FIGURES
• 10 multisector, knowledge-sharing, and strategy-planning workshops were held in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.
• 5 workshops were directed to members of the justice sector and 5 to civil society leaders from organizations of persons with psychosocial disabilities.
• A total of 355 key stakeholders were trained during the workshops.
Individual Supported Living in Australia

AUSTRALIA / SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND SOCIAL WORK

From the outset, this research project closely involved all key stakeholders, including people with disabilities, family members, policy makers, and service providers. Their knowledge and experiences developed the guidelines that will provide the opportunity for many people to deepen their understanding of “Individual supported living” (ISL). The project focused on adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities, but the guidelines adopted principles with universal application to the provision of supported living to other vulnerable groups, including other expressions of disability, elderly people, and people with mental illness.

**Problems targeted**

Australian policy and practice support people with disabilities to live in their own home in the community, but a substantial proportion live in large, formal, congregate care settings. In 2011-2012, 63 percent of people with disabilities who received government funding lived in private residences, frequently with an ageing parent, thus foreshadowing substantial demand for supported living - the highest growth area of government-funded services.

**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.**

**Article 19 of the UN CRPD Optional Protocol**

**Solution & Methodology**

The research project uses the term “individual supported living” (ISL) to define a situation in which a person with a disability is provided with support necessary for him/her to live in their own home of their own choosing. Consistent with Article 19 of the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the project is based on the assumptions that all people with the right supports can live in an ISL arrangement, they do not have to live alone or be “fully independent,” and they do not have to live with other people with disabilities unless it is their choice. Beginning in 2008, using qualitative methods that involved key stakeholders including people with disabilities, the first two stages of this project have developed a descriptive framework of ISL and then operationalized that framework into a set of guidelines to evaluate the quality of ISL arrangements. The third stage of the project, which began in November 2014, has now been funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant, and will explore how high quality ISL arrangements contribute to social and economic participation and relationships. It will also gather information on formal and informal costs of ISL options and on decision pathways that led to their adoption.

**Outlook & Transferability**

In Australia and several other countries services have developed in recent years that focus primarily or even entirely on ISL alternatives. The emphasis of ISL is cost-effectiveness in providing alternatives that support rights and choice and reflect fidelity to an explicit set of underpinning principles. The project has particular relevance in Australia, which has begun to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Based on a model of social insurance, the Scheme provides direct funding to people with disabilities and their families based on choice and control, which undoubtedly will accelerate the take-up of ISL options.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

- The third stage of the project incorporates a partnership of three Australian universities and more than 10 NGOs. It will evaluate the quality of 150 ISL arrangements across three states and provide training for over 500 project participants.
- Outcomes of the project will be disseminated through NGOs, disability advocacy groups, and government agencies across Australia.

Voting independently and privately

AUSTRALIA / SCYTL SECURE ELECTRONIC VOTING, S.A.

eVoting improves voter access for the visually impaired as well as for the illiterate, those who cannot read English, and citizens living abroad. Voters with visual impairments have the option of using an audio device at an election kiosk or casting their votes by phone.

**Problems targeted**

Prior to this project visually impaired voters were unable to vote in private, as they required the assistance of a sighted person.

**This project was a trial of an eVoting solution to bring the privacy and security of voting to visually impaired voters.**

**Solution & Methodology**

The Victorian Electoral Commission implemented measures to allow visually impaired citizens to vote on an equal basis with their peers: independently, privately, and with the highest security standards. The voting software was customized to support 12 languages, and included several zoom and contrasting options on the kiosk screen and an audio interface. It also offered such additional features as headphones and a specially selected keyboard. In addition to the technology, Scytl Secure Electronic Voting, S.A. customized the voting system, provided training materials for poll workers and election officials, and completed the on-site support during the election.

**Outlook & Transferability**

In cooperation with Scytl and Hewlett Packard Australia, the voting system was expanded in terms of functionality, voting channels (including phone voting), and geographical reach (including Victorian citizens residing in the UK or in other Australian states). The state of New South Wales (Australia) and the state of Gujarat (India) have already contracted Scytl to implement the system. The Victorian project was run as trials and supported by legislation. Moving beyond the trial status is expected to increase awareness of the solution via media outreach.

**FACTS & FIGURES**

- In the 2006 trial, the first of its kind in Victoria, 6 voting ‘super centres’ set up to host 36 electronic voting terminals.
- In 2010 the system was enhanced to support the use of 12 languages and deployed to 101 early voting centres.
- For the 2010 state election the Victorian Electoral Commission set up over 250 internet-linked phones at 101 locations.
Competition among students for innovative devices and software

AUSTRIA / UNIKATE

UNIKATE is a competition among a wide variety of students to solve every-day problems of persons with disabilities and the elderly. UNIKATE’s mission is to use the creative potential of these students to invent tools and devices that support the specific needs of these persons, with the goal of constructing prototypes of the most promising ideas.

Problems targeted
Technical innovations play a decisive role in supporting persons with disabilities to lead a full and independent life, but unfortunately persons with disabilities are seldom the target group of technology and software development. Thus, there is an urgent need for awareness-raising and innovation in this area.

UNIKATE brings together the individual needs of disabled persons and the creativity of university students to find solutions to specific personal problems.

Irmgard BAUER, Project Coordinator

Solution & Methodology
The idea is to combine the innovation, creativity, and technical knowhow of university students with the individual needs of people with disabilities and the elderly, thereby creating a win-win situation for everyone involved. Students are supported by their teachers up to the implementation stage. The submitted ideas are evaluated by a body of experts and nominated for support in the form of prize money, which is paid out in two parts: the first part as recognition for the idea, the second after a successful implementation. School and university students receive support for awareness-raising and innovation in this area.

Zentrum für Angewandte Assistierende Technologien (AAT); and UNIQA Insurance Group.

Outlook & Transferability
The concept of organizing student competitions can be developed in several different ways and in virtually any institution, and it can be done in a cost-effective manner with the help of outside support.

FACTS & FIGURES
- In 2014 the third annual UNIKATE competition was held.
- A total of 16 projects have been nominated over the three competitions.
- 5 prizes have been awarded for the reduction of prototypes, none of which were already on the market.

“Proefwonen” – fast access to affordable homes

BELGIUM (FLANDERS) / WOONWINKEL ZENNEVALLEI

Through Proefwonen, housing and social service providers collaborate to facilitate rental access for people with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health problems. Rather than having to register for housing on the regular social-service waiting list, Proefwonen allows these clients to apply for faster access to an affordable home. A steering group matches available housing with the candidate-tenants through a consensus process. The project has also resulted in a number of adaptations to the legal framework in Flanders, lifting legal barriers for intersectional collaboration.

Problems targeted
Proefwonen aims to address several difficulties that hinder successful cooperation between welfare and social rental services:
- the unpredictable timing associated with the waiting lists of social housing services can hinder the smooth transition of a person with intellectual and/or psychological problems from an institutional setting to an independent life with support;
- there are few options to ‘try out’ independent living and to take a step back, if necessary – two conditions for de-institutionalization;
- housing providers are faced with vulnerable clients, but do not have the means to support them. In some cases, this may lead to eviction.

Inclusion of persons with intellectual disability and/or mental health needs in rented housing can only be accomplished by adopting a multilateral consultation model between care and housing providers. To match a certain individual with a certain house requires careful consideration.

Solution & Methodology
The social housing provider informs the welfare partners when a house is available for the project, sharing information on the characteristics of the home and the living environment. After a process of exploring the housing and support needs of a client, a care provider can register the client for the project. The matching process is performed in consensus by a local, intersectoral steering committee. Accepting support is a condition of participation in this program. One of the key features of the project is the possibility it offers to people with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities/learning difficulties and/or mental health problems to move from residential care to independent living.

Outlook & Transferability
Following a positive evaluation of the project in the city of Halle, the regional Flemish government is developing a legal framework for its structural implementation. This legal framework also encourages other cities throughout Flanders to take similar initiatives. Because the homes available for the project were part of the existing housing capacity of the social housing providers, project costs were limited to additional administrative time (internal staff costs) and facilitation of the experimental procedures (paid for by a grant from the Flemish government).
Training for an active role in society

BELGIUM (FLANDERS) / ONAFHANKELIJK LEVEN VZW

Freedom School is a five-day training course for people with disabilities. This interactive summer course with 18 disabled participants (plus personal assistants) focused on developing talents and skills for self-advocacy and implementing personal projects that can contribute to the better participation and self-determination of people with disabilities. The aims of this training are to strengthen the independent Living movement by attracting more volunteers/activists, to improve the skills and capacities of current volunteers, and to create future leaders.

Problems targeted
Because people with disabilities often do not get the same opportunities as others, the focus of the training course is on learning about and discovering the talents of the disabled, and developing these talents. Following the training, participants play an active role in public life and have the skills to organize their own projects independently, creating a positive impact and greater societal awareness regarding the needs and abilities of disabled people.

After five days of Freedom School I am so full of energy and ready to go home for action! The group feeling was great and the support we got from Onafhankelijk Leven was amazing.

Project participant

Solution & Methodology
The philosophy behind the Freedom School training course is to let the participants see that they can make a real difference in their community. Building confidence and experiencing personal success with self-chosen projects is facilitated, such that the trainees come to see themselves not just as participants, volunteers, or clients but as real experts and future leaders.

Outlook & Transferability
The Freedom School concept can easily be copied and adjusted to local differences and preferences (e.g. the specific expectations and knowledge level of participants). Costs depend mostly on the availability of accessible accommodation and external trainers. Cost efficiency: The training gives social return in improving inclusion, strengthening the IL movement and delivering future leaders.

Stimulating political participation for persons with an intellectual disability

BELGIUM (FLANDERS) – OUR NEW FUTURE

Self-advocates of Our New Future explore the possibilities and barriers to participating in local and regional political meetings. They identify existing barriers to their political participation. Self-advocates and advisors work both on accessibility of the intellectually disabled in the political process and on tools to support the councils, policy bodies, and advisors to better provide support for their participation.

Problems targeted
Research showed that no people with an ID were participating politically in Flanders, and there was a profound interest in addressing this shortcoming. The Flemish governmental organization for equal opportunities wanted to involve people with an ID in decisions concerning their lives and their environment, and they did ONT to do something with the results of their research. ONT then identified 10 people with an ID who had a powerful desire to participate in the policy of their own city. During the first year, however, it became clear that there was a mismatch between the desires of the persons and the expectations of participation (vocabulary, long hours that would undermine their focus, the need for a lot of preparation, difficult subject matter, etc.), and that more had to be done.

We want to make decisions or to participate in making those decisions. In that way we keep control over our own life. We find it important that people listen to us as well.

Stan, program participant

FACTS & FIGURES

• Whereas there were no persons with an ID participating in policy making in Flanders four years ago, today there are 11.
• Much effort has been put into awareness-raising through the concrete documentation of the various political trajectories of people with ID: booklets, a film, a game, and other public materials
• 117 participants attended a day-long meeting to review the ONT results for 2013.

Solution & Methodology
Our New Future (ONT), a self-advocacy movement for people with an intellectual disability (ID), set out to evaluate the proper level of support for people with an ID. Where did they want to participate? How could they enter the process? What was necessary in order for them to follow the meetings? Once entered into the process, it was very important to follow them to see how their participation could be improved. ONT collected stories of people with an ID in order to dispel prejudices and stereotypes concerning their political participation. At the same time, self-advocates identified the thresholds that people with an ID encounter. ONT offers concrete tools and information addressing both the strengths and weaknesses of political participation for people with an ID, for policy makers, and for professionals and organizations who work with people with intellectual disabilities.

Outlook & Transferability
People with an intellectual disability who have participated in the project have grown in confidence and have developed a stronger self-image. This at first appeared to be a slow and challenging process, but – taking into account the strength that people with an intellectual disability have demonstrated – effective and long-term development is in sight. It has also been noticed that political participation is an individual process, different for each person. The whole process demands personalized support for every person with an intellectual disability from his or her ONT advisor and from the councils or policy bodies where they participate.
Microboards: Small non-profits for supported decision-making

Canada/BrItish Columbia / Vela Microboard Association

A Microboard is a small group of family and friends who join a person with disabilities to create a non-profit organization so as to support the person to create the life he or she envisions. The network enhances supports that may previously have been solely the responsibility of parents or other relatives.

Problems targeted
In the late 1980s British Columbia was a leader for deinstitutionalization in Canada. However, a sizable number of people with complex disabilities remained in institutions, as it was widely believed they could not live successfully within a community setting. This did not deter their families and friends from advocating for their return to community living.

Microboards are ensuring that persons with disabilities can lead a good and fulfilling life.

Linda Perry, Executive Director, Vela Canada

Solution & Methodology
Vela created a process for their agency to engage with and assist disabled individuals, their families, and Microboards. Some assisted people cannot use speech to communicate, and Microboard members commit to helping them to communicate their needs and wishes to the community. Microboards meet together to learn with and from each other, discuss their respective processes, and support one another. If Microboard members provide services for a fee, they work with funders to do so.

Outlook & Transferability
The concept of the Microboard has proven to be very remote. It is easily transferable due to a clear philosophy, the media, and Platform 112 – Croatia’s largest civil society network.

Voting without legal capacity

Croatia / Association for Self Advocacy

Human Rights Advocacy through Learning by Doing is a successful advocacy project for legislature change that promotes the right to vote for persons deprived of their legal capacity. Project activities were carried out using a networking advocacy approach, which included wide cooperation with other self-advocate groups, members of the Croatian self-advocacy network, relevant state institutions, the academic community, the media, and Platform 112 – Croatia’s largest civil society network.

Problems targeted
According to data from the national Disability Ombudsman, there are more than 19,000 persons deprived of legal capacity in Croatia, of whom some 11,000 are completely deprived of their legal capacity. Other targeted problems that have impeded the active participation of persons with intellectual disabilities in political and public life are the lack of accessible, easy-to-read information on election procedures and candidates’ programs, and public prejudice that views people with intellectual disability as incapable of participation in democratic processes.

By the end of 2012 the combined efforts of the Association for Self-Advocacy, the organization GONG, and Platform 112 resulted in a change in the Voters Register Act making it possible for more than 16,000 Croatian citizens who are fully deprived of their legal capacity to realize their active voting right.

Mr. Damjan JANUŠEVIĆ, Association for Self Advocacy

Solution & Methodology
The main objectives realized by the project were making changes to the Voters Register Act, which now provides persons with intellectual disabilities with the right to vote, and raising public awareness. The project brought together self-advocates and a variety of civil society organizations to raise public awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities among the general population and to provide workshops on democratic and voting procedures for self-advocates in local communities.

Outlook & Transferability
The project provides an innovative and successful example of inclusive practice in advocating for legislature changes and the public promotion of the right to vote for persons with intellectual disabilities. As such, the project methodologies, expertise, and experience gained – and the principle of inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in carrying out the advocacy activities – is fully transferable and applicable to any other social or societal contexts. The project of course incurred implementation costs, but it imposed no additional costs for the state or any other institution or organization.

FACTS & FIGURES
• As of September 2014 more than 900 active Microboards were set up in British Columbia.
• There are currently over 4,500 voluntary Microboard members.
• Over the past 15 years Vela has supported Microboard development in 3 other provinces of Canada and 4 other countries.
• Velaboards have also been implemented in Australia, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States.

FACTS & FIGURES
• Since the new Voters Register Act came into effect, persons with intellectual disabilities have successfully voted on local and regional elections and two state referendums.
• Self-advocacy groups from 14 local communities that are members of the Croatian self-advocacy network as well as people in two residential institutions were educated on their democratic rights, including their right to vote, and were provided with the necessary knowledge to participate in political and public life. More than 600 persons have received training on voting procedures and participation in public and political life.
• Public awareness on the right to vote for persons deprived of their legal capacity was raised via a broad public TV and radio campaign.

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Living alone with individualized support

CROATIA (ZAGREB) / ASSOCIATION FOR PROMOTING INCLUSION (API)

The Association for Promoting Inclusion (API) is a non-governmental organization established in 1997 in Zagreb, Croatia. Its mission is to promote the development of a society in which people with intellectual disabilities have equal opportunities, their contributions are valued, and their human rights are respected. The focus of API’s work has been to develop models of community-based services, such as supported housing and specialized foster family care, to enable children and adults with intellectual disabilities to move from large residential institutions to a life in the community.

Our mission is to promote the development of a society in which people with intellectual disabilities have equal opportunities, their contributions are valued, and their human rights are respected.

Prof. Borka TEODOROVIC, President, API

Solution & Methodology
API offers supported housing services to persons with intellectual disabilities in rented apartments. In 2000, API negotiated the recognition of supported housing as a social welfare service for persons with intellectual disabilities, and identified a loophole in the Social Welfare Law that enabled it to register its program as a residential institution offering services in the community. In 2003 the law was amended, and ‘organized housing’ was introduced as a new type of service. In 2008 the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth developed the regulatory mechanism for organized housing, and API has continued to provide services, including employment and volunteering activities.

Example from the study kit

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Study kit about citizenship and personal rights

DENMARK / NATIONAL BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES (SOCIALSTYRELSEN)

The study kit is an educational program for people with cognitive disabilities to acquire knowledge about citizenship and personal rights. The objective of the program is to develop and test methods, tools, and information materials that provide people within the target group with knowledge of their personal rights, and to give the target group concrete tools for practicing these rights.

Our study kit contributes to giving people with cognitive disabilities the opportunity to acquire knowledge of citizenship and personal rights, as well as concrete tools for exercising citizenship by participating in society and democracy.

Socialstyrelsen

Solution & Methodology
The program takes into account the specific cognitive educational needs of the individual and provides educators with the tools for teaching the target group. Exercises are based on activities, pictures, role-playing, and visits, making the themes recognizable and part of the participants’ daily life. The aim is to provide participants with increased knowledge as well as an opportunity to practice the use of this knowledge. The colors red, yellow, and green are used to mark and illustrate different levels of decision-making.

Example from the study kit
Diverting EU funds towards community-based care

EUROPEAN UNION / EUROPEAN EXPERT GROUP (EEG)

The European Expert Group (EEG) includes a wide range of stakeholders, providing training, guidance, and tools to EU officials, political representatives, and governments to inform them about the need of community-based care and the risks of institutional care for persons with disabilities. It has been initiated jointly by Lumos Foundation, European Disability Forum (EDF), Eurochild, Mental Health Europe, Inclusion Europe, UNHCHR, UNICEF, European Network for Independent Living (ENIL), European Social Network, and Coface.

Problems targeted
More than 1 million children and adults live in institutions in the European Union. Evidence shows that institutional care leads to social exclusion, segregation, and can negatively affect brain development in very young children. The EU plays an important role in shaping social policy within Europe through the provision of several funds, which need to be diverted from institutional care to community/family-based services.

Outlook & Transferability
The success achieved in the EU has initiated a process of review by the United States, World Bank, and other international donors to explore how they can ensure that their own funds are used appropriately with regard to institutionalisation. The EEG guidelines and toolkit provide a model for other types of donors related to the eradication of institutional care. Currently, the EEG is exploring with the European Foundation Centre and others if revised versions tailored to private trusts and other grant-giving bodies would be useful.

Ms. Georgette MULHEIR, Chief Executive, Lumos Foundation

Solution & Methodology
The EEG was established to support the EU in promoting care reform across Europe. It provides guidance and tools, raising awareness and lobbying for the regulation of the EU’s €367 million structural and investment funds in order to divert them away from institutions and towards family-based care. The Expert Group consists of organizations representing children, families, persons with disabilities, persons with mental health problems, public and non-profit service providers, public authorities, and international non-governmental organizations. EEG activities have resulted in more people with disabilities accessing basic and universal services in their own communities, and in EU officials and governments of EU members being more aware of the vulnerabilities of people with disabilities.

Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care

FACTS & FIGURES

• The program was established in 2009 by the then Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Vander Spidla.
• A program report published in 2009 highlighted the problem of institutional care.
• Guidelines and a toolkit were created in 2012, providing practical advice on promoting the transition from institutional to community-based care.
• Materials have been translated into 14 languages and disseminated in every EU country and in Brussels.

Providing accessible candidate lists for visually impaired persons

FINLAND / FINNISH FEDERATION OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED (FFVI)

During the Finnish parliamentary elections in 2011 the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired (FFVI), for the first time financed the production of accessible candidate lists for visually impaired persons, including audio and Braille. The Ministry also funded the production of other accessible election-related materials, such as information on voting procedures. The FFVI was responsible for the production and distribution of all accessible materials.

Problems targeted
Prior to 2011 the list of candidate in Finnish elections were not accessible to everyone, as they were only published in print or on the Internet.

The voting experience should be independent, from beginning to end.

Maria FINSTROM, Organization Secretary, Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired

Solution & Methodology
The practice of producing candidate lists in audio and Braille formats is a simple way to significantly enhance the political participation of visually impaired people. The visually impaired have been directly involved in both the planning and implementation of the project, as the FFVI has been responsible for the project’s practical work.

Outlook & Transferability
Depending on the election system, the practice is easily transferable to other countries. Notably, the Finnish Ministry of Justice deems this a cost-efficient practice.

FACTS & FIGURES

• In 2014 the Ministry produced 13,500 lists in audio format and 250 in Braille.
• Since 2011 these visual aids have been available in every election on all levels in Finland.

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Credit: Juha Tuomi/kuvatoimisto Rodeo
Guidelines for accessible elections in Europe

FRANCE/ČESKÁ REPUBLIK/UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTLAND) – INCLUSION EUROPE

The Accommodating Diversity for Active Participation in European Elections (ADAP) project tries to overcome the voting obstacles faced by people with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level. The project outcomes include developing recommendations for accessible elections in Europe – in both regular and easy-to-read versions in 21 languages – covering legislation on legal capacity, accessible information, training, support for decision-making in voting, and access to the voting process.

Problems targeted
People with intellectual, sensory, or physical disabilities as well as older people are often excluded from voting processes due to a lack of accessibility. Moreover, through targeted questionnaires, Inclusion Europe discovered that this is a problem, of which many European politicians are unaware, and thus take no steps in addressing. Furthermore, these groups lacked the knowledge and means to advocate for their voting rights, or did not understand the value of political participation.

For us, persons with intellectual disabilities, exercising the right to vote means that we belong to our country, that we have access to the political process, and that our voices are heard. For some persons this is a reality, for others it remains a dream. However, it is important to us to have the opportunity of being heard and to be engaged in political processes.

Solution & Methodology
A first phase analysed the situation within EU member states, focusing specifically on the European elections of June 2009. A second phase provided information, good practices, and civic education to politicians, NGOs, and people with disabilities or older persons in order to break down the barriers to their participation in the election processes. Project partners identified three target groups when looking for people who want to assist in their households and that are available in the area where they work. Project partners informed these people about the project, how it works, and what it offers. The ADAP project aimed to overcome the voting obstacles faced by people with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level. The project outcomes include developing recommendations for accessible elections in Europe – in both regular and easy-to-read versions in 21 languages – covering legislation on legal capacity, accessible information, training, support for decision-making in voting, and access to the voting process.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Three publications have been developed and widely disseminated (in 21 languages) as well as a collection of good practices for accessible elections from 27 European countries (in 3 languages).
- Partners have met with 11 members of Parliament as well as several national-level politicians in France, Scotland, and the Czech Republic. They have also participated in EU-level conferences and cooperated with intergovernmental bodies.

Outlook & Transferability
The ADAP project has been followed-up by both Inclusion Europe and several national partners. They have held meetings with politicians, in particular in France, Scotland, and the Czech Republic. They have also participated in EU-level conferences and cooperated with intergovernmental bodies.

Czech Republic
- 10% of voters with disabilities exercised the right to vote as a result of measures for improved accessibility.
- Voting obstacles were overcome for persons with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level.

France
- 90% of voters with disabilities exercised the right to vote as a result of measures for improved accessibility.
- Voting obstacles were overcome for persons with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level.

England
- 80% of voters with disabilities exercised the right to vote as a result of measures for improved accessibility.
- Voting obstacles were overcome for persons with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level.

Persons with disabilities employing their assistants

GERMANY / VBA – INDEPENDENT LIVING E.V.

The association’s work is focused on counselling persons with disabilities in planning and leading an independent life and supporting them in self-employment. It offers a payroll accounting service for employers with disabilities, an internet-based platform for assistance, and a travelling service for wheelchair users.

Problems targeted
Living an independent life is based on, among other things, self-representation towards government and social security authorities as well as service providers and/or providers of health insurance. It includes paying taxes and getting tax benefits, applying for subsidies, gaining employment, etc. People with disabilities are often afraid of managing an independent life because they do not know how to begin and where to get support to manage complex tasks.

Solution & Methodology
The VbA’s methodology is based on peer support, whereby councillors who are themselves persons with disabilities accompany and support their peers. The councillors’ skills include psychology, empathy, patience, and expertise in diverse fields of work. In the employer model, all decisions are made by the persons with disabilities. They look by themselves for people who want to assist in their households and they conduct the job interviews. Assistants work under the instructions of the employer. VbA provides the employer with payroll services and/or a job exchange internet platform listing vacant posts.

Outlook & Transferability
Already several independent living centres exist in Germany, which are primarily funded by the government and donations. The counselling is free of charge. The organization is continuing to grow due to the many requests and needs of people with disabilities.

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Credit: VbA – Independent Living e.V.)

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Outlook & Transferability
Already several independent living centres exist in Germany, which are primarily funded by the government and donations. The counselling is free of charge. The organization is continuing to grow due to the many requests and needs of people with disabilities.

“Nothing about us without us” is the ultimate goal of our work.

Andreas VEGA, Project Coordinator

FACTS & FIGURES

- Approximately 750 consultations have taken place over the last 2 years.
- Over 140 new entries are added to the assistant database each month.
- 65 percent of entries are successful match- es between the employer and assistant.

Personal assistance allows people with disabilities to discover new possibilities!
MOBILE, an all-round support program

MOBILE is building a network of support and assistance for persons with disabilities living out of institutions, including their parents, allowing them to lead an independent life.

Equal rights, equal opportunities, equal chances, and equal duties – that’s the heart of independent living.

Dr. Birgit ROTHENBERG, Executive Member
MOBILE Honorary Steering Committee

Solution & Methodology

Originating in the Independent Living movement, MOBILE allows persons with disabilities to analyse their own living situation and conditions, partly using the skills of trained pedagogics. They themselves define their needs for support and develop perspectives on how to live independently in the future. MOBILE informs persons with disabilities about their rights, improves their self-confidence, and assists in the transition process. Depending on the individual needs, pedagogical support, peer counselling, and other low-threshold support is provided.

Outlook & Transferability

The public funding that is available for the employer model of personal assistance (described by MOBILE) is constantly increasing in response to the improved quality of life of persons who use assisted living or other MOBILE services. MOBILE is also offering a training program for organizations interested in implementing this model in their own services.

FACTS & FIGURES

- MOBILE began to support persons with disabilities in 1983, to provide a service of assisted living in 1992, to support parents with disabilities in 2005, and to provide personal assistance to people with disabilities in 2009.
- Costs for assisted living are in most cases now covered by the Westfalen-Lippe authorities, and according to official figures 1,829 persons are now using this service in this area.
- MOBILE currently supports 195 people, including 13 families with parents who have intellectual disabilities and their 25 children.

The ‘employer model’ in personal assistance

MOBILE Honorary Steering Committee

This project offers case management support for persons with disabilities who use personal assistants, and encourages them to organize these assistants themselves – even to being their ‘employer’.

Problems targeted

Many people with disabilities who are dependent on personal support are still living in institutions against their will, or they are dependent on help from their families (parents, partners, etc.), with little control over their own lives.

Solution & Methodology

Counselling and support are offered by a team of experts (psychologists, social education workers, lawyers, business administrator, and entrepreneurs) who have many years of experience dealing with the ‘employer model’. Advice is given in all relevant areas, including personal budget counselling, cost calculations/monitoring, finding and hiring assistants, organizing work schedules, managing assistants, and mediation in cases of employer/assistant conflict.

Outlook & Transferability

The financial incentive for the government to provide personal assistance using the employer model is that it reduces costs both for persons currently living in as well as out of institutions. The model requires no administration costs or additional investments.

FACTS & FIGURES

- After a certain period of time, the level of experience and self-confidence becomes strong enough for the “new employers” to continue managing their assistants on their own.
- The project oversees more than 200 consultations per year.
- Many new projects are being initiated in 2015, including online course for managing assistants.

The story of Stephanie

I have cerebral palsy. As a regular school was deemed impossible for me due to my physical disability, I had to spend most of my life in special institutions. After my apprenticeship I went back to my parents’ home, hoping to find a job. Unfortunately, it did not really work out – neither finding a job nor living with my parents.

That’s when I decided to ask my municipality how I could live independently. In my small town there was only a very traditional organization for people with disabilities. They offered me a one-room apartment and a couple of hours of service for my personal hygiene, but they could not provide me with the kind of assistance that I really needed. After a while I became depressed because I could not leave the house or meet my friends. The local state-appointed social worker sent me to a psychologist because he thought I just couldn’t come to terms with my disability and that I was too demanding.

It was in summer 2013 that I first heard about a new organization, Rhein-Main Inklusiv (RMI), that helped people with disabilities to organize their personal assistance on their own. Corina Zolle from RMI was completely outraged about the situation I was in. We applied for a personal budget so that the money from the municipality would be sent directly to me – as the employer of my personal assistants – rather than to the traditional service provider. By organizing everything on my own and with a little help from RMI, I got many more hours of assistance with the same amount of money than before. Finally, I could leave the house, see my friends, go shopping, and do household tasks – all with the support of my personal assistants. A few weeks later I started going to the local university. Today I am in my third year at the university and I have moved to an apartment in the city where I am studying. Also, with the help of a lawyer I finally succeeded in having assistance around the clock. Now I am already thinking about what might happen to me after finishing my studies and finding a job as a social worker!
Offering individualised support and sharing lessons learned

IRELAND / NATIONAL FEDERATION OF VOLUNTARY BODIES

Members of the Next Steps project provide individualized support to people with intellectual disabilities so that they can live a life of their choosing. Notably, the project supports people to move from congregated settings into community-based settings.

Problems targeted
National policy recommends that people with intellectual disabilities are fully included in their communities, and individualised support enables such people to live full lives as equal citizens. However, this requires the provision of a flexible range of support services that are tailored to the needs of the individual, and that are primarily determined by the disabled person him/herself.

I have found the Next Steps meetings excellent for learning and reflection, and I look forward to 2015.

Project participant, November 2014

Solution & Methodology
Next steps aims to identify both supports and barriers to the progress as service providers move to offer more individualised assistance so that the people they support can live a life of their choosing. Through the project the National Federation has developed a community of learning, connecting the member organisations and key stakeholders with each other and enabling cooperation as they develop more innovative community-based support. One of the first actions of the Next Steps project was for the participating organizations to agree on a vision for individualised support, and this vision remains at the centre of the initiatives that the members are continually working towards.

Outlook & Transferability
Each of the participating organizations is working with one or more persons on an individual basis, developing new types of support in line with the agreed vision. Initiatives are monitored regularly, and every two months the participants come together to share the lessons learned with all key stakeholders. The Next Steps Community of Learning is currently reviewing progress to date in order to inform the work plan for 2015 and to continue developing and sharing what is learned. Organizations have shared information through study visits, case study presentations, and two major national conferences. The findings of the project may be relevant for other countries, and the National Federation already collaborates at a European level on shared learning through the European Association for Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (www.EASPD.eu).

FAC T S & FIG U R E S

- Currently, 23 organizations are participating in the project.
- 242 individuals with intellectual disabilities have participated to date.
- The project works across all four health service regions in the Republic of Ireland.

Supportive Housing: Helping young adults to live independently

ISRAEL (WESTERN GALILEE) / ISRAEL UNLIMITED

The Supported Housing program initiated by Israel Unlimited – the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee’s strategic partnership with the Israeli Government and the Ruderman Family Foundation – assists young adults with intellectual disabilities to become involved in community and social activities. Once they are transitioned into their own apartments, they are also provided with a care coordinator and a mentor who teach them to live independently and who are continuously involved in their overall well-being.

Problems targeted
Today there are approximately 1 million people of working age (18-65) with disabilities in Israel, many who suffer from more than one disability. Given the lack of government support for independent living, Israel still has long way to go to allow disabled people to live with dignity, but we are starting with supported housing. We need to work with the families to make them believe in the project.

Shira RUDERMAN, Israel Director, Ruderman Family Foundation

Outlook & Transferability
Israel Unlimited, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee’s strategic partnership with the Israeli Government and the Ruderman Family Foundation works in partnership with the government, and therefore programs are only piloted with the consent of the government and the agreement that they will be implemented on a national level once deemed successful. Moreover, Israel Unlimited works closely with the Ministry of Welfare to make the program sustainable and to eventually become part of the formal service system in Israel.

FAC T S & FIG U R E S

- There are currently three regions that have implemented the program, and to date more than 40 young adults with disabilities have received assistance, support, and guidance and are now living independently within the community.
- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (UDC) will be quadrupling the scope of Supported Housing, with nine new locations already identified.

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242 individuals with intellectual disabilities received assistance, support, and guidance and are now living independently within the community.

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De-institutionalisation and community living since 1980

ITALY / TRIESTE MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT & WHOCC

Since 1980 the city of Trieste has closed psychiatric hospitals and set up a network of 24-hour community mental health centres capable of dealing with the most severe conditions and of supporting clients in their daily life, with a view towards recovery and social inclusion.

Problems targeted
Persons with mental health issues used to be held, treated, and categorized as inmates, kept in a locked institution, and excluded from families and community.

As a result of the community mental health centres, deep changes have also occurred in the attitude of communities towards mental health issues.

Roberto MEZZINA, Director, MH Dept / WHOCC of Trieste

Solution & Methodology
As a result of the Italian Mental Health Reform Law (1978), psychiatric total institutions (e.g., asylums, large psychiatric hospitals) were closed and replaced by regional Mental Health Departments over a period of two decades. These offer a wide range of services, such as community mental health centres, small units in general hospitals, day-care centres, and community residential solutions for supported housing. Inpatient beds were closed and patients discharged to their original families, to independent living, or to group-homes. The Trieste Mental Health Department represents the pioneer and most successful example of this reform effort. Beneficiaries can now use services without losing any rights, such as community membership, employment, and the full respect of their human rights.

Outlook & Transferability
The practice was recognised as an experimental pilot area of mental health de-institutionalisation by the World Health Organization in 1974, became a WHO Collaborating Centre in 1987 and is reconfirmed as such until 2018. This means assisting WHO in guiding other countries in de-institutionalisation and development of integrated and comprehensive Community Mental Health services, contributing to WHO work on person-centred care and supporting WHO in strengthening Human Resources for Mental Health.

Because de-institutionalisation was so successful in Trieste, the community-based approach has been implemented in the whole Friuli Venezia Giulia region and is acting as inspiring model for services, organisations and countries in more than 30 countries - so far particularly in Europe, Asia, South America, Australia and New Zealand.

A business approach to sustainable community living

JAMAICA / DIGICEL FOUNDATION JAMAICA

Mustard Seed Communities, a project of the Digicel Foundation Jamaica, facilitates the development of minimum assisted-living communities and provides employment for persons with disabilities by offering housing solutions and economic viability via skills training and equipment. The skills training provided in craft and furniture-making increases the employability of people with disabilities, while the provision of fishery, egg, and chicken materials increases the self-reliance of their assisted living facilities via enterprise development.

Problems targeted
An estimated 60 percent of Jamaican population with disabilities are between 18 and 65 years old, and the majority of these adults are unable to find gainful employment. Furthermore, despite the existence of a national strategy, the transition from institutional care to services that allow persons with disabilities to live within his or her own community and/or family environment is still not a reality in Jamaica.

Our goal is to build an ICT-enabled and sustainable community to support independent living for persons with special needs.

Samantha CHANTRELLE, CEO, Digicel Jamaica

Solution & Methodology
The project focuses on the development of a minimum assisted-living community for adults with mental and physical disabilities, the sustainability of which is achieved through the development of social enterprise initiatives and the construction of a formal skills-training facility. The project is based on two pillars: housing is constructed for those living with special needs, and the self-sufficiency of these individuals is ensured through the provision of the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and training.

Outlook & Transferability
Mustard Seed Communities has thirteen properties catering to vulnerable children and adults, some of which have sufficient land to scale-up the enterprise development via food security initiatives that are currently underway. Through the MSC Business Unit, increased technical assistance will be provided to ensure that a business model is created to further reduce monthly operational expenses by growing the food materials to raise chickens and fish. Linkages are being created between the ICT training facility and other Special Needs Centres of Excellence in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and other territories. The strategy has proven successful and can easily be adapted and used in other educational institutions across the country.

FACTS & FIGURES

• Mustard Seed Communities (MSC) is an international organization with 12 residential centres throughout Jamaica catering to some 400 abandoned children and adults with disabilities.
• MSC employs nearly 400 local workers, including many with disabilities.
• The Digicel Jamaica Foundation has invested $247,000 in the program to date.

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The production and sale of unique handicrafts by the residents provides income for both the community and the individuals involved.
Returning children to their families and an inclusive environment

MOLDOVA / LUMOS: DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION AND DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Together with the Moldovan Government, Lumos has promoted an integrated policy and program of de-institutionalisation and inclusive education for children with disabilities. This allows them to leave residential care and to return to their families and communities while receiving education in a mainstream school.

Problems targeted
In 2007 approximately half of all children in institutions were those with disabilities living in residential special schools, separated from their families because the only education for such children was provided in segregated schools. When the government initially started a deinstitutionalisation program, it mainly focused on children without disabilities.

Five years in an institution seemed like an eternity. Now I live with my parents and sister, and I want to be here forever!

Dumitrita, 14, child from Moldova
read Dumitrita's story on page 15

Solution & Methodology
Lumos, in cooperation with local authorities, put in place community-based social services making it possible for children with disabilities in institutions to go home to their families or be placed in foster care. Simultaneously, it developed inclusive schools to make it possible for these children to be educated in mainstream schools, alongside their peers. The program also assisted the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education to put in place a law that ensures that government funds that had been going to institutions to support disabled children are transferred with the children to community social services and inclusive schools (for additional support teachers, adaptations to buildings, etc.). To strengthen the capacity of teachers and stakeholders, training and awareness-raising was held for 15,000 professionals. Lumos is also monitoring and evaluating the impact of the transition.

Outlook & Transferrability
The project is completely scalable within Moldova because it has been proven in a number of regions and because the legislation frees up funding from institutions to finance community-based services. The project has demonstrated that it is considerably cheaper per child to support them in a family context and to have them receive an inclusive education in their own community than it is to keep them in an institution. It has also been shown that the increase in developmental and educational outcomes of children living at home with their families is significant.

FACTS & FIGURES
- The number of children in institutions has been reduced from more than 11,500 to less than 4,000 during the period of 2007-2013.
- The number of children with disabilities in inclusive schools reached nearly 4,500 in 2013.

Training to actively engage in civic rights

NEPAL / INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

The project advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities to actively participate in the electoral and political process through training and awareness-raising campaigns. Persons with disabilities are empowered to participate in community groups, such as women’s groups, school management committees, youth clubs, cooperatives, etc.

Problems targeted
Persons with disabilities are isolated and excluded from mainstream civic, political, and electoral activities in rural areas of Nepal, where disability is taken as a health issue. Consequently, the political participation of those with disabilities is seldom considered at the decision-making level. In addition, there are still legal restrictions preventing “persons of unsound mind” from voting.

Reaching out to grassroots communities not only provides persons with disabilities with new opportunities but it creates a spirit of engagement and compassion among all involved.

Elizabeth COTE, Country Director, International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Solution & Methodology
In this project the civic, political, and electoral participation of persons with disabilities is not just the responsibility of self-help groups but includes other community groups as well. Working together, persons with disabilities and community groups jointly identify issues, create advocacy plans, and execute them. This has boosted the confidence of persons with disabilities and has encouraged community members to take on disability issues as their own.

Outlook & Transferrability
The project can be easily and inexpensively replicated in other parts of Nepal and even other countries. With Lumos support, Dumitrita was reunited with her family and enrolled in a mainstream school, and is now an active promoter of inclusive education for all children.

FACTS & FIGURES
- 1 national and 6 district-level disabled people’s organizations as well as 120 disability inclusive groups received training, and are now actively promoting civic, political, and electoral rights.
- Approximately 1,200 persons with disabilities are members of ward citizen forums, and thus participate in local decision-making processes.
- More than 1,050 persons with various disabilities are now registered through the regular voter registration process.
Personal assistance is custom-designed

NORWAY / ULOBA

Uloba, Independent Living Norway, is a cross-disability organization that has developed the concept of ‘personal assistance’ based on the Independent Living ideology. Five disabled entrepreneurs founded the organization in 1991 with the goal of achieving equality for disabled people by providing them with personal assistance and the opportunity to live independently and join the workforce on an equal basis with others. Uloba is organized as a cooperative society owned by its members – all disabled.

Problems targeted
Disabled people in Norway have been at the mercy of institutions, home care services, and various measures based on the medical model of disability. They have not been considered as a discriminated group with the same right as others to enjoy human rights and participate in society, nor have they viewed themselves in such a perspective. The medical approach to disability is still strong in the health care and assistant service sectors.

Solution & Methodology
Since Uloba was founded disabled people have come to believe that personal assistance (PA) is the best way to achieve participation in society and full human rights. Under the PA scheme, disabled people learn to supervise their own assistance. They are given responsibility and freedom of choice, and they learn how to use it. Uloba has also developed the “assisted work leader” scheme to give people who cannot lead their assistance without support access to user-controlled personal assistance. This was mainly developed to give children and people with social or intellectual impairment the same access to Independent Living as everybody else who needs assistance.

Outlook & Transferability
The Uloba concept has great transfer value for countries where disabled people are fighting for equality and an independent life. Notably, this form of assistance involves no additional expense, but is simply a matter of shifting funds from institutions and home-care services to personal assistants and to teaching and facilitating people to work. Our system also entails savings in public administration costs relating to counselling, training, and work supervision.

FACTS & FIGURES
- Half of Uloba’s administrative staff consists of disabled people.
- Some 2,300 disabled people in 150 Norwegian municipalities currently make use of personal assistance.
- There are 1100 members and 5,700 assistants on the Uloba payroll.
- Uloba played a key role in implementing a new law making personal assistance a legal right for individuals who need assistance for more than 25 hours a week and are under the age of 67.

Inclusion of children and youths with hearing impairments

PAPUA NEW GUINEA / CALLAN SERVICES FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Since 2008, Callan Services for Disabled Persons has provided nationwide educational and vocational training to children and youths with hearing impairments, as well as capacity-building to school teachers on a local level to facilitate the inclusion of these young people in general education institutions.

Problems targeted
Child deafness, often a consequence of malaria or other infection, is widely spread in Papua New Guinea. Approximately 67 percent of all children have ear and hearing problems, and up to 48 percent suffer hearing loss. This ‘hidden disability’ is a leading cause of school drop-out, exclusion, and malnutrition, thus contributing to the cycle of child poverty.

Solution & Methodology
Children and youths in all provinces are regularly screened on ear and hearing problems in local institutions. In cases of severe problems, referral to further medical support is facilitated. These children are then prepared for and included in the regular education system through the development of individual education plans. Children and youth with hearing impairments are included in community initiatives and events to give them an opportunity to illustrate their skills and gain acceptance in society.

FACTS & FIGURES
- Since the beginning of the project Callan Services has reached over 100,000 children and adults.
- The project currently has 20 people directly employed by Callan Services.
- Nationwide, a minimum of 60 additional teachers employed by the Department of Education are directly linked to the project.

Outlook & Transferability
Several manuals have been distributed, and Callan Services is currently working with Light for the World on a lessons learned guide for similar approaches to national hearing health and education projects in other countries.

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Screening for hearing impairment is conducted in an elementary school in Ningerum.
Empowerment through peer-to-peer support

RWANDA / NOUSPR

Through the collection of personal stories, the project aims at giving a voice to persons with psychosocial disabilities at the community, national, and international level. Peer-to-peer support, economic empowerment, and advocacy lead to their full participation in political and public life and enable self-determination and independent living.

We advocate and provide persons with psychosocial disabilities with a platform for a unified voice to enable them to access all necessary services and opportunities.

Sam BADEGE, World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry

Solution & Methodology

Through peer-to-peer support, beneficiaries can better manage and address their individual needs, and families are trained to accommodate persons with disabilities. Income-generating activities increase their standard of living and enable them to contribute financially to their families and communities, which in turn leads to their being recognised as valuable members of society. Such activities also address feelings of low self-esteem and demonstrate to local officials that, given the right support and encouragement, people with disabilities can contribute positively to their community.

Problems targeted

Persons with intellectual disabilities face a lack of social support from the state, limited education and employment opportunities, and the absence of sustainable livelihoods. In addition, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse are commonly experienced in institutional settings.

We take delivery of a new sewing machine, which will enable this self-help group to start and run a small-scale tailoring business.

FACTS & FIGURES

- The Rwanda office is composed of 4 paid staff and 2 international volunteers, operating since 2009.
- The program currently has some 1,200 members, 79 per cent of whom are persons who have themselves experienced mental health challenges.
- 14 self-help groups are actively leading an independent life.

Online platform on community-based services

SERBIA / YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES FORUM

Through an online database the project brings together – and shares information among – existing and new community-based service providers for young people with disabilities in three areas: education, employment, and social protection. Networking among individuals and organizations on the local level helps to improve the quality of their services and to better assist the target group.

The final users are directly involved in making future plans, which is one of the most important aspects of the program’s sustainability.

Sladjana LEVICH, Project Coordinator

The project initiated cooperation among local stakeholders, which will enable continuous ongoing consultation to improve the lives of persons with disabilities at the local level. The programs developed for capacity-building will be implemented in other projects, in other cities and local communities, since the need for such training programs was seen during the project implementation.

Outlook & Transferability

The project’s web portal is visited by up to 1,000 persons per month.

- To date, 109 final users – young persons with disabilities and their families – have benefitted from the service’s implementation.

FACTS & FIGURES

- 59 questionnaires were completed in 4 local governments to collect information on service provider’s capacities, accessibility, human resources, type of service provider (civil, public, private), sources of finance, frequency and quality of services, and type and number of beneficiaries.
- According to research results, 21 new and 38 existing service providers were identified. More than 40 service providers entered their profiles on the project’s online database.
- The project’s web portal is visited by up to 1,000 persons per month.
- To date, 109 final users – young persons with disabilities and their families – have benefitted from the service’s implementation.
The Living Link: Creating Abilities from Disabilities

SOUTH AFRICA / THE LIVING LINK

The Living Link was founded in 2000 and aims to improve the lives of intellectually disabled adults by developing and enhancing their true potential. This development happens through a one-year Adult Integration Programme, which consists of (1) Teaching the essential work readiness and life-skills needed for intellectually disabled adults to become independent and integrated members of society (five months); (2) Providing work training and experience that enables these adults to be employable in the open labour market (five and a half months); and (3) Attending a five-day ‘Independent Living tour’, (five months); (2) Providing work training and experience that enables these adults to be employable in the open labour market (five and a half months); and (3) Attending a five-day ‘Independent Living tour’, during which newly learned skills are applied and assessed.

Problems targeted
Due to the lack of life and work skills, there are negative stereotypes of people living with disabilities, leading to their disempowerment and exclusion from society. As such, the program strives to provide them with independence, work readiness skills, social acceptance and integration, a better quality of life, and employment.

Every child is gifted, they just unwrap their packages at different times.

Anonymous

Solution & Methodology
The program uses the independent living principles found in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the United States as adapted to the South African context. Further, The Living Link has developed its own methodology of helping people living with intellectual disabilities to become employed, and if the possibility exists, to live independently. Basic capabilities are developed through work readiness and life-skills training, which then lead to job sampling in order to get experience and participation in the open labour market. With the independent living tour comes a final assessment to understand the individual’s growth and capabilities of newfound skills and competencies. This approach is slowly breaking down long-standing stereotypes and barriers that exist for people with intellectual disabilities, and the South African work environment is now slowly embracing the concept of employment of people with disabilities.

FACTS & FIGURES
- Over 400 students improved their skills since the start of the programme.
- Over 250 intellectually disabled adults have been placed within the South African labour market in the fields of mining, retail, hospitality, garden services, medical, IT, administration, logistics, manufacturing, and many other industries.

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An affordable tool to make ballot papers accessible to the blind

SOUTH AFRICA / ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Universal Ballot Template (UBT) is a voting aid made of hard black plastic into which a ballot paper is inserted. The right front of the template has a flap that has cut-out windows numbered in Braille and in large, raised white print. When the ballot paper is inserted into the template, each window aligns to a particular candidate or party, and the voter is free to mark his or her secret and independent mark accurately. This can be used by blind and partially-sighted people, low-vision users, people who are dyslexic, the elderly, people with low literacy, and people with motor and nervous conditions that do not allow for a steady hand.

Problems targeted
The aim of the UBT is to assist voters with disabilities to vote independently without the assistance of another person. Every person should have the right to vote secretly, and this is only possible with the use of the UBT.

The UBT is one of the best examples of collaboration and partnering in the pursuit of making voting and elections easy and accessible to all our people, especially the disadvantaged, the sick, and those living with disabilities.

Mosotho MOEPYA, Chief Electoral Officer

Solution & Methodology
The UBT is aligned with the ballot such that each candidate/party’s voting block is aligned to a specific hole on the template. In this way the voter can simply look (through counting or reading) for the space of their preferred candidate, thus minimizing the risk of spoiling the ballot paper through human error. Importantly, the UBT also removes the need for assistance by another person, thereby preserving the individual’s right to a secret ballot.

The UBT has been continuously used in by-elections since June 2011, and since then over 1,268 by-elections have been held almost every month.

In 2014, UBT was used in national and provincial elections in which more than 18.6 million voters had the option available to them.

FACTS & FIGURES
- The UBT has been continuously used in by-elections since June 2011, and since then over 1,268 by-elections have been held almost every month.
- In 2014, UBT was used in national and provincial elections in which more than 18.6 million voters had the option available to them.

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Each party/candidate is aligned to a specific hole on the template, reducing the risk of error and the need for assistance.

Outlook & Transferability
The concept can be easily copied and used by any and all election management bodies. The most important design consideration is alignment with the ballot design. The rest is a matter of training and familiarization as well as logistic considerations. Costs are relative, and will depend on volume and manufacture. In South Africa the UBT was manufactured at approximately $1 for the cardboard unit and $2 for the plastic one.
Carol BOSCH, Project Manager, Cape Mental Health

Cape Mental Health runs a unique Sexual Abuse Victim Empowerment (SAVE) program that empowers intellectually disabled victims of sexual abuse and provides them with access to justice. The program helps survivors prepare for court proceedings and helps the legal system to understand their special needs. Clinical psychologists administer psychometric tests to determine the complainant’s level of intellectual functioning and ability to consent to sexual intercourse. They also assess the competence of the complainant to act as witness and then make recommendations in a court report.

Problems targeted
People with intellectual disabilities are easy prey for sexual predators, and cases of sexual abuse are common.

The SAVE program attempts to offer people with intellectual disabilities who are victims of sexual abuse the same access to justice as the general population and to ensure conviction of the perpetrators.

Carol BOSCH, Project Manager, Cape Mental Health

Solution & Methodology
• Provide psychological assessments of a victim’s level of functioning, competence to act as a witness, and ability to consent to sexual intercourse.
• Provide court preparation, support, counselling, and sex education and sexuality awareness for complainants and their families.
• Provide expert witness by clinical psychologists as required and act as a liaison with all relevant agencies, in particular the South African Police Services and Justice Department.
• Raise awareness among public prosecutors and police when dealing with complainants with intellectual disability by training them in appropriate interviewing skills.

Outlook & Transferability
In 2013–2014, SAVE was able to extend support services to some 100 survivors on an annual budget of SAR694,676 (approximately $87,000), which testifies to its affordability. In April 2013 the Cabinet of South Africa recommended that the SAVE model be integrated into the public sector gender-based violence intervention system and rolled-out across the country.

FACTS & FIGURES
• SAVE achieved a 28.1 percent conviction rate, greater than the 25 percent conviction rate indicated by the Law Commission for cases from the general population.
• From just a few cases beginning in 1990, the Department of Justice currently refers more than 100 cases per annum to SAVE for psychometric assessment, court preparation, case planning, and assistance.
• In February 2007, SAVE received a Silver Award from the Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust for its pioneering work, and in 2010 it received an award from the South African Federation for Mental Health for “Innovative Program in the Field of Intellectual Disability.”

• Provide training and ongoing technical support to mental health societies, clinical psychologists, and related professionals across South Africa in order to extend the program nationally.

The Oficina de Vida Independiente (OVI Madrid) is a project run by the NGO ASpayM-Madrid to provide free personal assistance services (PAS) to disabled people within the Madrid region. The project has been funded by the Madrid local government since its founding in July 2006, and since September 2013 it has been co-funded by the European Social Fund. The services provided are designed to be sufficient to fully support all areas of the participants’ lives, covering self-care, household care, study, work, mobility, leisure, travel, etc. on a 365-days-a-year basis.

Problems targeted
Currently, personal assistant budgets are just 0.02 percent of total government services and budgets provided by law, and personal assistance is still widely unknown in Spain. The Madrid regional government and ASpayM-Madrid together launched the OVI Madrid project in order to test how personal assistance works in real life. Initially, it was designed as a pilot project for 35 people, but it soon showed its potential and was increased to 60. The primary objective of the project is to provide sufficient personal assistance services to disabled people within the Madrid region to allow them to live fully productive and participatory lives.

With enough and self-managed personal assistance, we all can live our lives our own way.

An OVI Madrid participant

Solution & Methodology
Following the Independent Living philosophy, each participant is in charge of his/her PAS. In order to determine the number of hours of services needed, each participant must complete a document known as the PWI (the Spanish acronym for Individual Plan for Independent Living). This document gathers all the activities for which personal assistance is needed as well as the amount of time involved. Currently, not all demand can be met, and there is a waiting list of 21 people.

Outlook & Transferability
OVI Madrid is the first project of this kind in Spain and is regularly consulted by other projects that are currently being established in the country. It follows the Independent Living philosophy by allowing people to take control of their own lives by using the ‘human tool’ called personal assistance. The demand for personal assistance has been an issue all over Spain for a long time. Although the current project is limited to the Madrid region, it can be expanded easily elsewhere. The collaboration between public administration (providing the funds) and an NGO (providing the management of the project) results in a considerable reduction in costs (at OVI Madrid, 98 percent of the investment goes to direct costs).

FACTS & FIGURES
• 137,000 hours of PAS were provided and paid for during 2013.
• As a result, 59 people have been living their own lives, wherever they choose, and all of them are working, studying, and/or participating in social activities.
• A social return of investment study conducted by an external consulting firm showed that for every €100 of public funds invested €91.64 is returned to the government via work and taxes.

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An OVI Madrid participant

Outlook & Transferability
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Using mainstream lower-cost home automation

UNITED KINGDOM / CONNECT TO CONTROL (SCOPE, BEAUMONT COLLEGE)

The British Telecom (BT) and Scope Beaumont College technology project “Connect to Control/Mind the Gap” centres on the use of Environmental Control Systems (ECS) and how equipment from the mainstream home automation market can be used and made accessible and affordable to students/service users with disabilities. A key factor that adds value to the BT partnership is that colleagues in services, policy, and fundraising have genuinely collaborated on project outcomes.

We have now built a prototype system that is based on mainstream equipment to provide a proof of concept.

Rohan SLAUGHTER, Assistant Principal Scope Beaumont College

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Problems targeted
The main barrier is that “normal” equipment from the smart home market is not accessible to people with complex needs due to poor interface design. Therefore, the following criteria have been set:
1. to make a mainstream, off-the-shelf communication and environmental control system accessible to disabled people;
2. to reduce the price of enabling technology;
3. to increase the functionality and range of technologies available to disabled people;
4. to explore why mainstream technology does not meet the needs of disabled people; and
5. to influence the development plans of environmental control suppliers.

Solution & Methodology
A working prototype (based on the Vera 2 ‘Z-Wave’ hub) has been demonstrated to a number of age and disability focused ECS companies, which has in some cases influenced their development plans as a result. The prototype’s method of using mainstream equipment and standards has been commercialized in the SmartHub product. A co-designed report that makes a number of recommendations to improve the design of products and services for the disabled has been produced, and this has value to the assistive technology and mainstream markets as well as to the technology product and service development communities that build such products. To date, 23 ECS systems have been installed, with 23 students directly using and benefitting from such. Note that students were able to choose the ECS elements that they were most interested in using at the start of the process. This is a person-centred model that focuses on choice, empowerment, and control. For example one student at the college decided to prioritise the control of her music and access to her door, windows, blinds, and lights, so these elements were addressed first.

Outlook & Transferability
The barrier to be overcome is how such ECS systems are specified and installed. To meet this, Scope has developed an internal pilot of a regional assistive technology service which, if successful, Scope will develop to bring to scale.

FACTS & FIGURES
• 23 ECS systems have been installed over the life of the project: 19 at Beaumont College and 4 in community living houses.
• A report (“Enabling Technology”) has been published and the whole project has had wide exposure presented at two conferences, one journal paper, and one public lecture at the Royal Society, London.
• The approaches taken in the prototype system have now been developed into a commercial product called SmartHub, produced by Therapy Box (www.therapy-box.co.uk).

User-led organization teaching and inspiring others

UNITED KINGDOM / SPECTRUM CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

The SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living is an established user-led organization (ULO) run by persons with disabilities. It peer-supports the development of new ULOs through the sharing of experiences and information, offering a platform for lessons learned, and providing advice and mentoring.

Problems targeted
UK Government policy requires all local authorities to support and encourage user-led organizations to develop new services through user involvement. Often, local policies are hostile to ULO development; and while local authorities may want to support ULOs, they do not know how to go about doing so. Likewise, new ULOs often do not know where to go for guidance.

We believe that all organizations promoting empowerment and social change should be peer based, and should be fully accountable to and representative of the community they work in.

Ian LOYNES, Chief Executive
SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living

Solution & Methodology
Sharing experiences and success stories of existing ULOs and providing peer-based mentoring to new ULOs helps them to develop more quickly and to avoid making the same mistakes. SPECTRUM CIL collects existing good practices in ULO development and user involvement and makes these resources available to a wide audience. Lack of such information is often the reason new ULOs fail in their development.

Outlook & Transferability
SPECTRUM CIL has developed a legacy strategy to ensure that the toolkit, resources, support networks, and facilities that it has developed will remain available to new ULOs even after the project concludes. All findings and resources are transferable to any developing user-led organization supporting any disadvantaged group (e.g., older people, gays and lesbians, immigration groups, etc.).

Participants gather at the SPECTRUM CIL “Hate Crime” seminar held in October 2014 for ULOs and other organizations that are concerned about hate crimes in the United Kingdom.

FACTS & FIGURES
• Developed 3 new ULOs in Hampshire, 1 in Portsmouth, and 1 in Southampton. Engaged, trained, and supported 95 persons with disabilities to be involved in co-production with local authorities or to develop a new ULO.
• In cooperation with the local authorities of Hampshire, SPECTRUM CIL organized a ‘home care competition’ whereby small ULOs could propose an innovative new way of providing independent living services. As a result, two ULOs received £4,000 each to develop their ideas and to actually provide these services.

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A “brokerage” service to provide short breaks

Activities Unlimited (AU) has collaborated with Scope to create this unique service delivering short-break activities for disabled children and young people (DCYP) aged 0 to 25 in Suffolk, UK. Built on the ‘pick and choose’ model of a travel agency, it is aimed at tackling barriers faced by parents/caregivers who are seeking activities for their disabled children that are safe, fun, and appropriate, while simultaneously giving parents and other caregivers regular breaks from their caring roles.

Problems targeted
Parents of DCYP require regular short breaks to enable them to continue to provide their children with the care they need, but it has proven difficult for families to find and arrange suitable activities for their disabled children during such times. Traditional ‘respite’ models lacked choice. The focus was primarily on caring for the child, and was available only to those with the highest needs. Further, long waiting lists did not always consider the best outcomes of the child.

The team at Activities Unlimited works incredibly hard to support families who have children with additional needs and to ensure that these young people have access to a whole host of fantastic opportunities and activities to enhance their social and life skills.

Cheryl SHARLAND, Head of Inclusive Services, Suffolk County Council

Solution & Methodology
The AU model provides leisure activities for the DCYP and short breaks for their parents/caregivers based on need, taking into account the voice of children, young people, and their families, and using fair, understandable, and transparent eligibility criteria so services are not just restricted to those in crisis situations. Families complete an online self-assessment via the AU website. This identifies the level of offer they receive, which could be an individual budget that can be used to purchase activities, equipment, or 1-to-1 support. Registered families are able to access a range of suitable activities overseen by the brokerage (Scope), which is responsible for matching the needs and aspirations of disabled young people by developing the market and creating a wide range of short-break leisure and recreation opportunities. Providers of short-break leisure and recreation opportunities wishing to register as AU providers and to promote their services must do so through the brokerage, which has developed a robust quality-control mechanism. The brokerage service gathers feedback from users about the types of activities they would like, and the brokerage proactively approaches specialist and mainstream providers to see how the local market could respond to meet these needs.

Outlook & Transferability
AU offers a model that is responsive to a personalised agenda and is easy both to scale-up and replicate. Grant funding, alongside government support and a set of quality standards, is also available on a time-limited basis for providers who want to develop or improve their offer to disabled children and young people. Scope has adopted the AU model to establish two similar projects in Leeds and Blackpool.

Helpline and platform on personalised care

The project provides advice and information to disabled people on receiving community-care direct payments, creating an individual budget, securing social service funding in relation to care needs, and getting general advice on employing personal assistants. A free download area on the project website (www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/helplines/independent-living-advice-line) and a bi-monthly newsletter share personal stories and Q&A sections with a broad audience.

Problems targeted
Financial cuts to local and national services mean there are gaps not only in knowledge of community-care direct payments, personal budgets, etc. but also in where to find information and support on how to apply for such personalised service assistance.

We deliver a knowledge-sharing platform on personalised care to allow disabled people to access the same rights and opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

Michael PAUL, Advice Services Manager, Disability Rights UK

Solution & Methodology
Factsheets are provided free via the website, giving detailed information on community care, possible funding for non-residential accommodation, community care direct payments, and for complaining about local authority decisions. In addition, personal advice and information is offered by telephone or email, and Q&A examples are shared in bi-monthly newsletters. Approximately 25 percent of recipients are advisers from member organizations, which have a wide reach themselves. Disability Rights UK also writes the Independent Living sections of the Disability Rights Handbook – the benefits bible – which sells more than 13,000 copies per annum. In the near future, online forums will be introduced to further enhance communication and information sharing.

Outlook & Transferability
Since the service is quite simply set up, it can be easily replicated; and use of online services means information is easily updated and shared. New issues are highlighted through the Q&A sections of the newsletter and website, helping disabled people and their networks to be proactive.

FACTS & FIGURES

• Family outcomes based on user evaluations: “We are able to go out as a family more often” (46%); “Family outings and events are now more enjoyable” (46%); “There are more places/events for the family to get out together” (39%).
• Parent outcomes: ‘It allows us more quality time with our children’ (60%); ‘We feel better able to cope’ (45%); ‘We have more time to ourselves and for having a social life’ (27%).

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Strengthening electoral systems to be inclusive and accessible

USA (WORLDWIDE) / INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS (IFES)

The Election Access Program of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) promotes opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the election process by providing specific recommendations to officials regarding election services and the voting environment, such that voter registration becomes more accessible, assistive devices such as tactile ballot guides are created, and transportation to the polls is readily available. Training and advocacy also empowers persons with disabilities to actively participate in the election process.

Problems targeted
Elected officials are unlikely to address the concerns of people with disabilities, such as inclusive education or accessible transportation, if people with disabilities do not have a voice in the political process. Such participation provides the basis for mainstreaming their inclusion in all aspects of society by breaking down social stigmas and increasing the accountability of elected representatives.

Solution & Methodology
The Election Access Program trains individuals and advocates governments in order to include people with disabilities in the political process. It also lays strong emphasis on women, having developed and distributed voter education materials specifically aimed at women – with and without disabilities – in readily accessible locations, such as marketplaces. It has also conducted leadership training to teach women and other people with disabilities the skills required to participate as leaders in political life. The program has had a strong impact at the national and regional level worldwide, such as successfully advancing electoral inclusion in the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and ensuring that people with intellectual disabilities have political access in Council of Europe member states.

Outlook & Transferability
IFES’s Election Access Working Group shares lessons learned across regional teams and develops reference documents, such as how to interact with employers and partners with auditory disabilities and how to include persons with disabilities in elections and political processes, can readily serve as a guideline and starting point for other regions, cities, and countries that seek to make their elections more accessible and include persons with disabilities in political leadership.

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FACTS & FIGURES
• Lead author of the first manual, Equal Access, that provides government and civil society with guidance on how to ensure that persons with disabilities have a voice in political life.
• Developed an election access observation checklist and trained over 700 people in 7 countries to be access observers.
• Received the 2011 InterAction Disability Inclusion Award.

“Infiltration strategy” for women and girls with disabilities

USA (ACTIVE IN 80 COUNTRIES) / MOBILITY INTERNATIONAL USA (MIUSA)

The three-week Women’s Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD) program of Mobility International USA (MIUSA) has trained more than 200 women with disabilities from over 80 countries on strategies to improve the lives of women and girls with disabilities. Utilizing the innovative WILD strategy to move from exclusion to “infiltration,” they have formed partnerships with development organizations and governments.

Problems targeted
Founded in 1981, MIUSA is a disability-led non-profit organization headquartered in Eugene, Oregon, working to advance the rights of people with disabilities globally. By implementing innovative programs, MIUSA is building bridges to create a new era in which people with disabilities will take their rightful place in the world community. Women with disabilities are one of the most marginalized, under-served populations in the world, yet they offer tremendous potential for leadership and the ability to transform communities.

WILD has succeeded in raising strong and dynamic women who are assertive enough to engage their community leaders to promote the issues of women and girls with disabilities in their countries. I am such an example; my level of confidence has tripled since WILD.

Ekaete UMOH, WILD alumna from Nigeria

Solution & Methodology
Creating a unique space for rights-based leadership training specifically for women and girls with disabilities, this is a place to gain confidence and pride, and to build the skills needed to be a force for change. Promoting the strategy of infiltration for both disabled women activists and international development organizations. Disabled women activists must proactively become involved in existing mainstream development programs. International development organizations and women leaders with disabilities must build partnerships to make such inclusion sustainable.

Outlook & Transferability
Utilizing these strategies, disabled women activists and the development community can break the strong links between poverty and disability – championing the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities as beneficiaries and leaders in the many life-enhancing and life-saving development programs that are changing their communities.

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FACTS & FIGURES
• The 200-plus disabled women activists are followed and measured in terms of their impact and accomplishments.
• Within 6 months of attending WILD: 72% of WILD alumni received funding or in-kind support from sources they acquired through WILD.
• 92% of international development organization staff report that they had made changes to their organization’s policies, programs and practices to be more inclusive as a result of their participation in WILD.
Employment and inclusion of rural girls with hearing impairments

YEMEN / AL SAEEDA ASSOCIATION

Women with hearing disabilities from rural areas receive training and education to ensure their participation in the job market. Informing families and communities about the needs and issues of these women leads to greater understanding and inclusion, which in turn helps to empower them economically and socially.

Problems targeted
Girls with hearing impairments do not have access to an education that would ensure them a dignified life, and often they do not have the right to learn unified Yemeni sign language. Thus, they cannot communicate with others or express their needs and opinions.

The peer-to-peer approach of our organization empowers women with hearing impairments to actively participate in society and encourages them through outstanding role models.

Manal AL ASHWAL, President, Al Saeeda Association

Solution & Methodology
Women are trained and educated to generate a steady income in such careers as hairdressing, engraving, handicrafts, knitting, and sewing. In addition to capacity-building, Al Saeeda Association advocates with local decision-makers to highlight the issues of persons with hearing impairments and to actively promote schools that integrate them. The project is executed by women who themselves have a hearing impairment, and this peer-to-peer support offers positive role models for young girls. Even the sign language classes are taught by the hearing impaired.

Outlook & Transferability
There is a great demand and need for sign language training and the teaching of professional careers. Currently, the project faces several obstacles to its growth, including a lack of sewing machines, insufficient transportation for trainees, a poor supply of electricity, and too little space, among others.

FACTS & FIGURES
• To date, 30 girls aged 15–34 have participated in the programme.
• 5 teachers and women trainers are learning sign language to become trainers of the deaf.
• Currently, 9 girls with hearing impairments and 4 interpreters from Al Saeeda Association work on this project.

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Enfranchising people with disabilities in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE / JAIROS JIRI ASSOCIATION

The five-year program has sought to secure the inclusion of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe’s governance systems by advocating for their accessibility to polling stations and thus enhancing their ability to vote secretely and independently. The program also aimed at ensuring proportional representation of people with disabilities in Parliament and other decision-making bodies, a quota system in employment, lobbying for the creation of a disability ministry, and the enactment and implementation of disability legislation.

Problems targeted
The rights of people with disabilities were not explicitly defined in the constitution of Zimbabwe and most sectors of society had no policies that were inclusive of disability. This is because disability, in most sectors of the society, is regarded as a charity issue rather than a development or human rights issue. The Disability Act of 1992, reviewed in 1996, falls short in terms of adequately addressing these rights. The participation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes has been hindered by some restrictions imposed by both physical and attitudinal barriers, including inaccessible buildings and the lack of access to useful information.

Solution & Methodology
The project aimed at increasing the number of people with disabilities contributed greatly to their increased participation in governance systems and other development activities, as well as increased recognition and acceptance of people with disabilities in their communities.

W. N. RIVERE, National Executive Director, JJA

Outlook & Transferability
Community involvement was key to the success of the program and led to the establishment of local disability committees. These committees, which were trained by Jairos Jiri Association, have a crucial role to play, as they are part of the organization’s phase out and sustainability strategies.

FACTS & FIGURES
• Several voter education exercises covered all 29 wards in Mutoko district and the 18 wards in Mudzi district, reaching 2,617 people with disabilities, 750 caregivers, and 200 community leaders in Mutoko, and similar numbers in Mudzi.
• A 2009 baseline survey revealed that only 0.01 percent of voters in the 2008 elections were people with disabilities, whereas the number climbed to 1.6 percent in the 31 July 2013 harmonised elections – a significant improvement resulting from this governance program.

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Education campaigns as well as information, education materials.

Overall, the use of the multi-stakeholder innovation with a focus on the rights of people with disabilities contributed greatly to their increased participation in governance systems and other development activities, as well as increased recognition and acceptance of people with disabilities in their communities.

W. N. RIVERE, National Executive Director, JJA

Solution & Methodology
The project aimed at increasing the number of people with disabilities who (1) participate as election observers, and 4 interpreters from Al Saeeda Association work on this project.
Success stories of Innovative Practices 2014

The Zero Project awards Innovative Practices since 2013, using its current research and selection procedure and with a thematic focus. In this section of the Zero Project Report, Innovative Practices of the year 2014 were “re-visited”. Find selected news stories here.

**ACCEO, FRANCE**

Acceo offers telephone services to enable conversations between persons with hearing impairments and hearing persons. Registered companies, organisations and public institutions can provide a new dimension in customer service by enabling communication with the hearing impaired. Since September 2014, the town of Metz has made its single telephone number “Hello Mayor” accessible for persons with hearing impairments. Metz is the first city of over 100,000 inhabitants which is made accessible thanks to the services of ACCEO.

**ACCESSIBLE MUSEUMS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

Training museum professionals in the Western Balkans to improve access to their buildings, collections and activities for persons with disabilities and enabling positive participation while challenging negative stereotypes. In October 2014 the first ever Balkan Museums without Barriers conference took place, organized by the Balkan Museum Network and funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Over 50 participants from across the western Balkans gathered in Sarajevo to share their experiences, challenges, knowledge and commitment to making museums and heritage more accessible to disabled people. Many NGOs also attended. Delegates voted the ‘Museum in a Suitcase’ from the National Museum of Bosnia Herzegovina as the best project for access and innovation.

**COLORADD, PORTUGAL**

End of 2014 the Vodafone Foundation announced the four winners of the 2013 Mobile for Good Europe Awards. In the accessibility category, the price went to ColorADD, an application that enables colour-blind users to understand colours through a simple coding system. The award is organised every year by the Vodafone Foundation in collaboration with the European Disability Forum and AGE Platform Europe.

**CHANGING PLACES, UNITED KINGDOM**

A Changing Places toilet provides equipment, space and facilities (including hoist and adult-sized changing bench) for persons with disabilities who need assistance and cannot use standard accessible toilets. Changing Places toilets should be provided in addition to standard accessible toilets. After working to support the development of the Changing Places campaign in Australia over the past three years, the Victoria Coalition Government decided in 2014 to invest $750,000 to build six Changing Places in popular public spaces and to provide a mobile facility to give people with a disability greater independence and to better support their families and carers.

**CETRAM, CHILE**

CETRAM is a community-based organisation which helps to find personalised solutions for individual needs in regard to wellness and health. It offers technical aids and assistive technology at low cost at home. In 2016 CETRAM is taking its activities one step further - in cooperation with the Ministerio De Desarrollo Social (Ministry for Social Development) and the Servicio Nacional de la Discapacidad (SENADIS) CETRAM offers training courses in 2015 to further enhance independent living and empower persons with disabilities in leading the life they wish to.

**CHANGING PLACES, UNITED KINGDOM**

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**OPEN THE WINDOWS, MACEDONIA**

In June 2014 Open the Windows delivered trainings on assistive technology use in two mainstream secondary schools: Orde Copela in Prilep and Brakja Miladinovci in Skopje. This was undertaken as part of the USAID Project for e-Accessible Education. The trainings were largely interactive: practical exercises and simulations enabled participants to experience the potential benefit that assistive technology brings for students with disabilities. Over 40 teachers and school staff attended, who will be able to use new teaching and working methods in their work with students.

**VERBAVOICE, GERMANY**

Verbavoice offers an innovative online interpreting technology as well as full services for deaf and hard of hearing people: enabling students to equally participate in class; accessible events with captions, interpreting and live stream. In October 2014 Verbavoice was recognized as the regional winner of Bavaria within the competition ‘Start-up Champion 2014’ of KfW Group (German government-owned development bank). The prize was awarded during the German start-up and entrepreneurs days (ideGUT). The award ceremony was held at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in Berlin.

**COLORADD, PORTUGAL**

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Innovative Policies 2015 – Selection and Key Findings

Key findings
How Innovatives Policies were researched and selected, summaries and analysis

Policies of 2014
News and development from Innovative Policies of former research periods

Fact Sheets
Factsheets from all Innovative Policies 2015, ranked by country of origin

Life Stories
Persons with disabilities explain how selected Innovative Practices have changed their life for the better
Innovative Policies have achieved identifiable improvements on the ground, and have demonstrated a positive dynamic of change that can be easily replicated in many countries to advance the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).
Peer counselling as an approved profession

AUSTRIA / UPPER AUSTRIA, DIRECTORATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Acknowledging that peer counselling is crucial to empower persons with disabilities, Upper Austria established – for the first time worldwide – peer counselling as an official social profession, approving people with physical, psychosocial, and intellectual disabilities as skilled professionals in their field.

In brief

A peer counsellor has intimate knowledge of disabilities, is empathic towards similarly affected people, and is uniquely able to provide guidance and assistance to help others take greater control of their lives – in their homes, their communities, and their workplace. With the help of the regional Independent Living Centre, Upper Austria introduced peer counselling as a social profession in 2008, and it remains the only region to do so worldwide. In addition, nowhere else is peer counselling based on such comprehensive qualifications, or places such value on the experience of disabilities.

Innovative aspects

Disability as an asset: As a role model, a peer counsellor has intimate knowledge of disabilities. He/She can serve as a critical link between the person with disabilities and the service providers and/or the family. Peer counsellors have achieved a better salary grade. Peer counsellors have achieved a better salary grade. A professional association of peer counsellors has been established.

Professionalism: Establishment of peer counselling as a social profession provides for a high standard of qualification, the formalization of rights under collective agreements, and professionalization.

Empowerment: A peer counsellor does not solve problems for others, but rather provides the necessary support to help a person with disability to find the right solutions on her or his own.

Context

When persons with disabilities first began to attend the University of California at Berkeley, they made use of peer counselling. This proved crucial for the development of the Independent Living Movement, which demanded equal opportunities. In the 1980s the concept of peer counselling was further developed, with courses generally offered by centers for independent living, and since the 1990s most health institutions have increasingly requested such a qualification. This was the case in Upper Austria, where peer counselling was formalized under the state’s Social Professions Act to complement and augment the other services offered under the state’s Equal Opportunities Act.

Key features

A peer counsellor is one who has personal disability-related experiences, who is a good listener, and who has been trained in a variety of problem-solving techniques in order to provide support and guidance to similarly affected people. They can serve as a critical link between the person with disabilities and the service providers and/or the family. Since 2009 four qualification courses designed for various disability experiences, such as physical, intellectual, and psychosocial, have been offered by FAB Organos – the responsible training organization – at the regional Empowerment-Centre of the Upper Austrian Independent Living Initiative. The qualification process, which is financed by the region, is comprised of 240 teaching units and 80 hours of internship. Accommodations are provided. The curriculum addresses knowledge for communication, counselling on independent living, and disability-related laws and services in Upper Austria.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

• Upper Austria facilitated job opportunities, and now service providers employ 72 peer counsellors.
• Peer counsellors have achieved a better salary grade.
• A professional association of peer counsellors has been established.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

To date, no other region or country has developed, implemented, and/or recognized disability-specific peer counselling. However, other Austrian regions (e.g., Styria and Salzburg) as well as European countries (e.g., Sweden and Bosnia) are planning to introduce a similar policy.

FACTS & FIGURES

• Since 2009 disability-specific qualification courses (psychosocial, physical, intellectual, etc.) have certified more than 70 professionals.
• In 2014, 76 peer counsellors offered up to 1,320 hours of service per week, tailored to various types of disability.
• Counsellors are active in a variety of organizations.

As a peer counsellor with psychiatric experience, I would like to encourage people with psychiatric problems to engage openly with their problems and to accompany them with compassion.

Gerda Stöllnberger, certified peer counsellor with psychiatric experience

“I would like to encourage people with psychiatric problems to engage openly.”

Recently, Gerda Stöllnberger concluded Upper Austria’s peer counsellor qualification course, becoming a professional peer counsellor with psychiatric experience. “With the peer counselling qualification, I have become more confident and I have learned to better delimit myself,” says Ms. Stöllnberger. “During the qualification course I got to know many interesting people. As a peer counsellor with psychiatric experience, I would like to encourage people with psychiatric problems to engage openly with their problems, and I want to accompany them with compassion. Ideally, I hope to exercise my skills as a peer counsellor on a full-time basis.”

Wolfgang GLASER

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Amendment of the Social Professions Act

Upper Austria, Directorate Health and Social Affairs, Austria

Nominated by Ms. Ingrid HEINDORF, World Future Council, Switzerland

Sources: Upper Austria’s Social Professions Act, 2008 (in German): http://bit.ly/1y43MA

THE STORY OF GERDA STÖLLNBERGER

Credit: © Empowerment Center
Flanders’ Personal Assistance Budget

BELGIUM / FLANDERS, MINISTRY FOR WELFARE & AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The support that persons with disabilities receive is often based on the charity model and not on human rights. In Flanders persons with disabilities can chose to receive a Personal Assistance Budget, which allows them to fully control the support they receive.

In brief
In 2000, the Belgian Flemish Region approved Personal Assistance Budgets (PAB). Similar to Swedish law, the most important feature of a PAB is that the person with disabilities (or their representatives) controls both the assistance and the assistance budget, not the assistance provider. The budget holder decides who works as an assistant, for which assignments, at what time, and where and how the assistance will take place.

Innovative aspects
An alternative to institutionalization: Personal Assistance Budgets provide an alternative to the institutionalization of children and adults with disabilities and enable these individuals and their families to live and participate in the community, as set out in article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Self-determination: Since PAB users are free to determine and organize their own assistance and care corresponding to their needs and preferences, the budget enables them to make their own life choices and to develop their personal talents.

Context
In general, the Flemish Government funds licensed service providers for the number of persons with disabilities they assist, treat, and care for. Service users have no influence or control over the support and its organization. If the service user wants to leave the service, he or she loses funding and support, and is put on a waiting list. In 1987 some Flemish pioneers with disabilities founded Independent Living Flanders, which raised awareness about the abilities of individuals with disabilities and their need for personal assistance. In 1997 the first pilot Personal Assistance Budget project was started in Flanders with 15 persons with disabilities. As a result, in 2000 the Flemish Parliament approved the PAB decree.

Key Features
The Flemish Agency for People with a Disability (VAPH) administers the Personal Assistance Budget, which is financed by the Flemish Ministry for Welfare. Unlike Sweden, the application for a PAB is open to all persons with disabilities below the age of 65 who are on file at the VAPH. However, the yearly budget allocated by the Ministry limits the total number of PAB users. A multi-disciplinary team assesses and decides the yearly budget each user receives, depending on his or her support needs. Reassessments are possible once a year. The person concerned has freedom of choice in whom and how to employ assistants, in respect to relevant laws and regulations. The VAPH monitors correct spending of the PAB and has the power to inspect the use of the budget.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial Year: 2000
- In July 2014 there were 2,481 PAB users in Flanders.
- Due to a limited macro-budget, about 6,000 people are waiting for a PAB.
- Each PAB is based on support needs, and is between €9,643 and €45,000 for a total of approximately €90 million.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness
- The PAB has greater cost-effectiveness and a better impact on quality of life compared with care-in-kind, according to existing research.
- 6,000 people are currently on the PAB waiting list.
- Parliament recently approved a decree whereby financing follows the service user, which expands the self-determination of the PAB to all people with disabilities, including those receiving care-in-kind.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency
The PAB is transferable to all countries. It has been successfully used by persons with a variety of disabilities, with support from disability organizations. Similarly to Sweden, existing research indicates that the PAB has a greater cost-efficiency than supply-driven support.

Flemish Government Decree on the Procedures for Grants (Personal Assistance Budget) to Persons with Disabilities

Flinders, Ministry for Welfare & Agency for People with a Disability, Belgium

Only thanks to my personal assistance budget am I able to keep on doing what I do now: going to work and being a father and a husband.

Peter, a PAB user


Nominated by Mr. Peter LAMBREGHTS, Onafhankelijk Leven vzw, Belgium

Els WINTERS
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Enfranchising people under guardianship

JAPAN / PARLIAMENT, TOKYO DISTRICT COURT

Around the world, restrictions of voting rights based on intellectual disabilities and the lack of legal capacity deprive people of their political rights. Court cases are key to repealing such discriminatory provisions. In 2013 a prominent court case in Japan led to the enfranchisement of more than 136,000 persons.

In brief

Until recently, Japan’s Election Law deprived people under adult guardianship of their right to vote and to stand for elections. In a spectacular court case in 2013, the Tokyo District Court judged this relevant article unconstitutional. As a result, the Parliament swiftly – in only 74 days after the ruling – repealed the discriminatory article, which led to the enfranchisement of more than 136,000 persons under guardianship.

FACTS & FIGURES

• Initial Year: 2013
• The non-governmental organization Inclusion Japan collected 410,000 signatures in support of the court case.
• The court found the provisions depriving persons under guardianship of their voting rights unconstitutional.
• Parliament promptly revised the Election Law accordingly.

Successful court case: This is the first time that a court in Japan has ruled that it is unconstitutional for the Election Law to deprive persons under guardianship of their right to vote.

Voting regardless guardianship: The ruling promotes the right to vote regardless of guardianship – a milestone in recognizing the legal capacity and political rights of persons with disabilities, as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 5 (non-discrimination), Article 12 (equal recognition and participation in political and public life).

Speedy revision by Parliament: Wide public support in favour of this ruling pressured members of Parliament, both ruling and opposition, to revise the Election Law in only 74 days after the ruling.

Context

Each year in Japan about 24,000 people are placed under “Koken” – the most restrictive category of adult guardianship – which deprives persons with disabilities, among others, of their right to vote. One such person was Ms. Takumi Nagoya, a 52-year-old woman with Down syndrome, who voted in every election since she turned 20 until her father was appointed as her legal guardian. Encouraged and represented by her father, Mr. Seikichi Nagoya, she sued the Japanese Government in February 2011, asking the court to restore her voting right for the coming elections. The public widely supported her case, and on 14 March 2013 the Tokyo District Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for the Election Law to deprive persons under Koken guardianship of their right to vote. On 27 May 2013 the Parliament unanimously revised the Law by deleting the relevant article.

Key Features

The presiding judge, the Hon. Jozuka Makoto, ruled that the right to vote and to run for elections is a fundamental right and is guaranteed in different articles of the Constitution. The restriction of this right can be admitted only in exceptional cases when unavoidable circumstances require it. Otherwise, the restriction is unconstitutional. On 27 May 2013 the Japanese Parliament unanimously revised the Election Law, deleting Article 11.1.1, which deprived people under adult guardianship of their right to vote and right to stand for elections.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

• More than 136,000 people under Koken guardianship gained voting rights.
• The results of a data collection on how to make the rights of those with restored voting rights become reality were shared with the media and government.
• Local governments organized political debates, offered mock voting, or provided more personal assistants for persons with disabilities at the polling stations.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

Inclusion International and International Disability Alliance are promoting the case to the governments of other nations. To date, Austria, Canada, France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have reduced or eliminated the restriction of voting rights based on intellectual disabilities and the lack of capacity.

I cannot die while my daughter’s voting rights are being denied.

Mr. Seikichi Nagoya

Revision of Election Law

Parliament, Tokyo District Court, Japan

Nominated by: Mr. Nagase OSAMU
Ritsumeikan University, Japan


THE STORY OF TAKUMI NAGOYA

“Please use your political rights and take part in society.”

Ms. Takumi Nagoya with her parents at Tokyo District Ruling on 14 March 2013

Ms. Takumi Nagoya is a 52-year-old woman with Down syndrome. She consistently voted into her early twenties, until she was deprived of her right to vote because of the appointment of her father as her legal guardian. She went to court in order to regain her right to vote, with the strong support of her father who dramatically declared that he could not die while his daughter was deprived of her voting rights. In 2013, when delivering the ruling that re-established Ms. Nagoya’s basic right to vote, Judge Makoto Jozuka concluded his decision with the encouraging words: “Please use your political rights and take part in society. Be proud and lead a good life.”
Funding a national disability information centre

LUXEMBOURG / MINISTRY OF FAMILY AFFAIRS, INTEGRATION, & FOR THE GREATER REGION

Because policies targeting people with disabilities are often not coordinated, people have difficulty finding their way through the bureaucracy. A national disability information centre is a classic win-win solution; it assists people with their administrative procedures and helps policy makers to shape inclusive policies.

In brief

Info-Handicap is a national disability information and meeting centre, founded in 1993 by 16 disability organizations. While the idea for such a centre came from the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration, and for the Greater Region, which also financially supports it, Info-Handicap is under the full control of its disability member organizations. The centre assists people with disabilities to find their way through complex administrative procedures and competences. Additionally, Info-Handicap has become a driver of inclusive policies as well as the main contact on any disability-related questions.

Innovative aspects

A driver for inclusive policies: One of the major challenges in the implementation of inclusive policies is to organize the dialogue between decision makers and civil society. Info-Handicap’s unique position allows it to receive and dispatch input from and to all levels, and thereby to function as a hub that facilitates such a dialogue smoothly and on a permanent basis.

Identification of challenges and solutions: This leads firstly to improved identification and understanding of the existing challenges and, secondly, to increased opportunities for developing adequate solutions.

Concrete help: Info-Handicap offers information and guidance for persons with disabilities, for members of their family and social circle, as well as for others who are interested. This includes a legal information service.

Info-Handicap has developed guidance books and has influenced laws and practices in Luxembourg and beyond.

Since 2005 the centre has held the accessibility competition “A municipality for everybody.”

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial Year 1993
- Info-Handicap now has 55 member organizations in Luxembourg.
- In 2013, 2,271 persons asked for advice and 597 used the centre’s legal information service.
- Info-Handicap has developed guidance books and has influenced laws and practices in Luxembourg and beyond.
- Since 2005 the centre has held the accessibility competition “A municipality for everybody.”

Context

In 1989 the Government of Luxembourg decided that policies targeting people with disabilities should be coordinated. The Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration, and for the Greater Region was entrusted with the project of a national disability information centre financially supported by the government, but managed under the control of national disability organizations. In April 1993, 15 disability organizations, which together formed the National Disability Council, founded Info-Handicap and signed a funding agreement with the government. Since then, Info-Handicap has constantly sought to carry out its mandate, including initiatives that have an impact beyond Luxembourg’s borders. Recently, Info-Handicap assisted in elaborating a strategy for setting up a national disability action plan, and functions as a resource centre in this area.

Key Features

Info-Handicap offers information and guidance for persons with disabilities, for members of their family and social environment, as well as for others who are interested in the field of disability. Staff assists persons with disabilities to fill in forms or write letters, and to address the correct contact points in the most direct way. In addition, they organize legal assistance and, in cases of discrimination, there is the possibility to meet with a lawyer free of charge. They undertake activities for supporting independent living, offer training, organize awareness-raising events, and promote accessibility. Importantly, they encourage their members to insist on the right to inclusion and not to accept exclusive mechanisms. The work of Info-Handicap is continually monitored by the Ministry and member organizations.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

- Info-Handicap’s experience has led to its reputation reaching all of Europe.
- Info-Handicap regularly represents the European Disability Forum at official events and has been the partner or coordinator of projects funded by the European Commission.
- Since 1999, Info-Handicap has also coordinated the European Concept for Accessibility Network.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

The idea of a national disability information centre is perfectly transferable to other countries, regions, or even to local levels. Info-Handicap’s yearly costs are around €600,000, including the salaries of 6.7 staff members – three with disabilities.

Info-Handicap plays an important role in empowering persons with disabilities as well as in involving civil society in decision-making. I highly recommend other countries to follow a similar path.

Mrs. Corinne Cahen, Minister of Family Affairs, Integration, and for the Greater Region


Nominated by Mr. Silvio SAGRAMOLA, Info-Handicap – National Disability Information and Meeting Centre

Necessary information

Funding Agreement for a National Disability Information and Meeting Centre between Info-Handicap and the Government Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration, and for the Greater Region, Luxembourg

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Conference on legal capacity of persons with disabilities
Improving access to electoral events

NEW ZEALAND / ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Persons with disabilities may encounter a number of barriers when enrolling and voting at elections. To ensure that all aspects of the electoral process are accessible to these persons, New Zealand’s Electoral Commission has implemented a comprehensive strategy, in close cooperation with civil society.

In brief

In 2014, New Zealand’s Electoral Commission finalized its Access 2020 Disability Strategy. This strategy takes the improvements made over the past three electoral cycles and embeds them into a longer-term framework, through which the Commission aims to reduce barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter when enrolling and voting at elections. In addition, it provides information in accessible formats and maintains strong relationships with the disability sector.

Innovative aspects

Telephone dictation voting: In 2012 electoral regulations for the first time enabled anyone who is blind, partially blind, or has another physical disability that prevents them from marking their paper ballot without assistance to cast a secret ballot from home via telephone dictation.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial Year 2014
- The Commission offers a wide range of information and resources in accessible formats.
- Some 1,500 videos, 8,000 large brochures, 15,000 Plain English Guides, and 11,000 posters have been produced.
- Web content also appears in New Zealand sign language.
- 11,500 videos explaining telephone dictation voting have been distributed.

Accessibility: Access 2020 recognizes the need to ensure that materials about enrolling and voting are appropriate, accessible, and easy to understand.

Strong relationship with disability sector: Public consultations on the draft strategy brought together representatives from a range of disabled peoples organizations (DPO), including people with physical, hearing, vision, learning, and intellectual impairments. The Commission has worked with a number of DPOs and service providers to deliver on its goals, and continued all existing accessibility initiatives for the 2014 general election.

Having a say on Election Day is the right of all New Zealanders. In close cooperation with the disability sector, Access 2020 shows how this can become a reality.

Robert Peden, Chief Electoral Officer, Electoral Commission

Access 2020 Disability Strategy

Electoral Commission, New Zealand

Nominated by Ms. Cherish WILKINSON, Electoral Commission, New Zealand

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

The last survey held, following the 2011 general election, showed a high level of awareness and approval of the measures that the Electoral Commission has undertaken to make the voting process more accessible.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

The Commission hosts a small group of international electoral officials in the few days preceding a general election. These officials have indicated a specific interest in New Zealand’s accessibility initiatives, particularly telephone dictation voting.

Context

Since 2005 the Electoral Commission has been working to improve access to electoral events for New Zealanders with disabilities. In consultation with the disability sector, action plans were developed and implemented for the 2005, 2008, and 2011 elections that detailed initiatives to improve accessibility of venues and information. Access 2020 takes the improvements made over the past three electoral cycles and embeds them into a longer-term framework. When preparing Access 2020, the Electoral Commission first published a consultation document in a range of accessible formats and wherever submissions could be made – in writing, verbally, in sign language, and online. The Commission then prepared a draft strategy for the second phase of consultation, in which it invited a range of disabled peoples organizations as well as the country’s Human Rights Commission. Their feedback helped the Commission to refine the accessibility initiatives proposed in the strategy.

Key Features

Existing accessibility initiatives of the Electoral Commission include that every enrolled voter is sent an EasyVote information pack; that election officials assess all voting places against access criteria; and that anyone can ask a friend, family member, or electoral official for help. Access 2020 goes beyond these efforts and aims foremost to enable voters with disabilities to cast a secret ballot. Telephone dictation voting was introduced in 2014 for those who are visually impaired or have another disability. Access 2020 focuses on making more information available in accessible formats so that everyone can access the Electoral Commission’s services in ways that meet their needs. In addition, Access 2020 recognizes the crucial relationship with the disability sector so that continuous consultations on improvement are carried out.

Access 2020 Disability Strategy

Electoral Commission, New Zealand

Nominated by Ms. Cherish WILKINSON, Electoral Commission, New Zealand


Mr. Richard THORNTON

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Phone: +64 4 806 3515 – richard.thornton@elections.govt.nz

www.elections.org.nz

An electoral official assists a voter in a wheelchair to cast their vote at New Zealand’s 2014 general election

Credit: © Electoral Commission, New Zealand
Ensuring equal access for Members of Parliament

SOUTH AFRICA / NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

Persons with disabilities rarely become Members of Parliament, and if they do, they need equal access to all parliamentary facilities. South Africa has implemented steps that ensure the inclusiveness of its Parliament and that allow all Members with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others.

In brief
In 2006 and 2009, South Africa’s Parliament introduced policies that contain extensive support measures for Members of Parliament and employees with disabilities. The provision of reasonable accommodation has led to measures that go beyond individual support and that benefit the whole Parliament. These include the establishment of institutionalised sign language interpreter services, a braille production unit, electronic text announcements, and more.

Innovative aspects
Covering costs for reasonable accommodation: Both policies cover the costs for ‘reasonable accommodation’, which means to appropriately modify and adjust so as to enable persons with disabilities to work as effectively as others. This concept is a core element of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Systematic removal of barriers: The provision of reasonable accommodation has led to measures that go beyond individual support and that include the establishment of institutionalised sign language interpreter services, a braille production unit, electronic text announcements, as well as additional travel benefits for Members of Parliament with disabilities or who have disabled family members.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial years: 2006 and 2009
- Currently, 3 of the 11 Members of Parliament (MP) with disabilities and 10 employees receive support, as so MPs who have children with disabilities.
- Parliament has purchased assistive devices for sports, work, and employee’s personal development.
- Parliament is developing a database to collect more information on the reasonable accommodation needs of persons with disabilities.

Context
Before the policies were developed, persons with disabilities were clearly underrepresented in Parliament’s membership and staff. To overcome underrepresentation and to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equal access to all facilities of Parliament, policies were properly researched, drafted, and developed in consultation with MPs, about 950 employees, as well as disabled peoples organizations, such as Disabled People South Africa, in order to be as inclusive as possible. It took about five years to finalize both policies. In 2006 the South African Parliament’s Policy Management Unit approved the Policy on Facilities for Members with Special Needs and subsequently, in 2009, the Policy on Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities. Both policies must be read in conjunction with the 1996 Constitution of South Africa and all relevant legislation, which includes, among others, the Employment Equity Act of 1998.

Key Features
The Parliament’s Policy on Facilities for Members with Special Needs aims to enable Members with disabilities to participate effectively by providing them with the necessary facilities. Members with disabilities must inform the Chief Whip of their party of their needs, who in turn passes the requests to the Secretary of Parliament. The Secretary can provide for several facilities, contribute to the salary of assistants, or pay specialized transportation costs. The implementation is carried out by the Facilities Unit. The Policy on Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities entitles employees to reasonable accommodation and facilities. Employees are responsible for informing their respective managers, and their disability status is kept confidential. While the Human Resource Executive implements this policy, the Policy Management Unit monitors its impact.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness
- By shifting the costs for reasonable accommodation to the Parliament, Members and employees with disabilities can achieve equal results in relation to participation and productivity.
- There is a long-term impact to the policies in terms of the progressive removal of physical barriers and increased access to parliamentary information and communication – e.g., braille documentation and specialized transport services.

Policy on Facilities for Members with Special Needs & Policy on Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities
National Parliament, South Africa

Ms. Buyile Simon BASHE
Organizational Wellness Manager, South African Parliament
+27 (21) 403 8044, +27 79 4394694
bbashe@parliament.gov.za

Nominated by Ms. Lidia PRETORIUS, Department of Social Development, South Africa

Sources: Policy on Facilities for Members with Special Needs, 2006: http://bit.ly/1pVH9Xn; The Policy on Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities, 2009 is only available through the Parliament’s intranet, but can be requested from Ms Bashe.

Transferrability, scalability, and cost-efficiency
Other legislatures and government departments have used both policies as the basis to develop their own policies. Both policies can be easily replicated at the Cabinet, provincial, and local council executive level (public representatives) as well as by departments and other institutions.

The new South Africa should be accessible and open to everyone. We must see that we remove the obstacles. Only then will the rights of disabled persons to equal opportunities become a reality.

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

Sign language service is provided at the Parliament of South Africa.
Voting and participating in the electoral process

SPAIN / MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Citizens with disabilities regularly encounter barriers that prevent them from voting and participating in electoral processes. To assist its citizens, Spain introduced two important regulations that eliminate a number of these barriers.

In brief
With its two regulations of 2007 and 2011, Spain has introduced for the first time a voting procedure for blind electors as well as basic conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities to participate in elections and political life. This latter legislation is a broader policy framework aimed at improving the implementation of participatory rights. It provides, for example, for free sign language interpretation to members of polling stations and establishes that political parties need to ensure that their election materials are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Innovative aspects

Regulating electoral accessibility: While many accessibility measures were already being undertaken based on protocols, their legal regulation constitutes a new step in the process of ensuring the full exercise of the rights of citizens with disabilities.

Cooperating with the disability sector: A range of disability organizations is involved in implementation of the regulations, such as providing for sign language interpretation and accessibility, which originates from the social model of disability and which recognizes people with disabilities as active subjects and citizens with rights. Royal Decree 1612/2007, voters with visual impairments, as well as accessible voting kits must be accessible; and that deaf members of polling stations must receive free sign language interpretation and the like are all accessible. To evaluate the implementation, the Ministry prepares a report after each national election.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

- In 2011 over 200 accessibility improvements of polling stations were carried out (tramps, signage, etc.).
- In 2011 a substantial improvement in ensuring access to the exercise of the fundamental right to vote for persons with disabilities was reported by the Ministry.
- Of the total budget of €124,838,320 available for the Parliamentary Elections of November 2011, €508,415 was spent on accessibility.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

These policies are readily transferrable to other countries. To date, Costa Rica has requested information about both regulations and about their implementation.

Key Features

Under Royal Decree 1612/2007, voters with visual impairments have to inform the Minister of Interior of their special needs. The voter then receives documentation in braille and can use a standardized ballot. The Ministry has also to provide accessible information on candidates. Royal Decree 422/2011 provides that premises of polling stations, websites with electoral information, all institutional information and procedures, as well as spaces of election campaign must be accessible, and that deaf members of polling stations must receive free sign language interpretation. In addition, candidates, political parties, etc. shall ensure that their election campaign activities, election materials, public activities, websites, printed documentation, and the like are all accessible. To evaluate the implementation, the Ministry prepares a report after each national election.

Full participation in political life implies rights and obligations. Persons with disabilities should be assisted to participate in the whole process, including as a member of a polling station.

Ignacio Tremiño, Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality

FACTS & FIGURES

- Initial Year: 2007
- Since 2008 special voting procedures have been in place for blind electors.
- In 2011, 21,434 buildings with polling stations were accessible; 8,726 provided free transport services; and 1,367 accessible voting kits and 81 support measures were provided.

Context

The Spanish legal framework reflects a concept of accessibility, which originates from the social model of disability and which recognizes people with disabilities as active subjects and citizens with rights. Royal Decree 1612/2007, providing for an accessible voting procedure for people with visual disabilities, is the result of a legal mandate included in the amendment of the Electoral Act. Disability organizations were invited to participate in the drafting process by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Health. Royal Decree 422/2011 implements Law No. 51 of 2003, which contained a mandate for the government to establish the basic conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination to be met by environments, products, and services necessary for the participation of people with disabilities in political and electoral processes.


Ministry of Interior, Spain

Nominated by Ms Laura Diego GARCIA, Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality

The right to a personal assistance budget

SWEDEN / SOCIALSTYRELSEN – NATIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH AND WELFARE

Many countries are still far from the goal of enabling persons with extensive disabilities to choose the support that best suits their needs. Sweden stands out in offering citizens a wide range of alternatives and control over the services they need, including the right to a Personal Assistance Budget.

In brief
Sweden is one of the few countries that legally entitles persons with severe disabilities to a personal assistance budget (PAB). This monthly sum from the National Social Insurance covers 100 percent of service costs, and enables individuals themselves to purchase self-directed personal assistance services from public and private entities. The amount of the PAB is independent of the individual’s or the family’s finances. Notably, the policy has created a demand-driven market for personal assistance where providers compete for customers on the basis of service quality.

FACTS & FIGURES

• Initial Year: 1993
• In 2013 some 19,500 people received a personal assistance budget.
• 98 percent of recipients pointed to personal assistance as the most important factor for their quality of life.
• By 2014, 230 local governments and over 800 private entities offered personal assistance services on a competitive basis.

Competition-neutral direct payments: The personal assistance budget goes to the user and is granted in the form of assistance hours, which are based on the individual’s needs, instead of the type of service provider.

Promoting equality in living conditions: Sweden’s citizens with extensive disabilities no longer need to live in institutions to receive services. They are free to choose where and how to live. By choosing their individual solutions, they can make their own plans and

Context
The disability movement was the main force in bringing about the Act Concerning Support and Service to Persons with Certain Functional Impairments and the Assistance Benefit Act, which were enacted by the Swedish Parliament in 1993 as part of a broader disability policy reform. Previously, persons with extensive needs for daily living were deeply dissatisfied with the municipal community-based home-helper or semi-institutional cluster home services, in which they had no influence. Many different, often unfamiliar, workers would come and assist with even the most intimate tasks. The reform, inspired by the Independent Living philosophy, enables individuals to customize services according to their particular needs, with maximum control over everyday life. The need for personal assistance, however, grew faster than expected, and therefore the law and its interpretation have been amended many times.

Key Features
With the provision of ten measures for special support, including the right to a personal assistance budget, Sweden enshrined the right to “good” living conditions for persons with major and permanent physical, mental, and intellectual impairments. The personal assistance budget is granted in the form of assistance hours, which are based on the individual’s needs. The budget can cover up to 24 hours a day/7 days a week, and can even be used for more than one personal assistant, if needed. A monthly sum from the National Social Insurance covers 100 percent of service costs and goes directly to the users who, with maximum self-determination, can contract providers of their choice (municipality, company, or cooperative) or employ assistants by themselves (by starting their own private company). The amount funded for 2013 was SEK275 (about €28) per hour.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness
• Sweden’s citizens with extensive disabilities are free to choose where and how to live. About 90 percent live in ordinary homes, either alone or together with a partner, a housemate, or parents.
• Approximately 80,000 people work as personal assistants – 2 percent of the labour force.
• Taxpayers have saved an estimated €3 billion since 1994, compared to the costs of home-helper services.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency
In several countries similar legislation has either been enacted or is under discussion, including Belgium, Finland, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom. In 2004 the Swedish law served as the basis for developing a model policy for personal assistance.

Independent Living means having the same range of options and the same degree of self-determination that non-disabled people take for granted.

Dr. Adolf Ratzka, Independent Living Institute

Innovative aspects
Legal rights. The legislation established special support measures, including personal assistance, as legal rights that are independent from state or local government budgets.

Dr. Adolf Ratzka
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Nominated by Ms. Jamie BOLLING, European Network on Independent Living, Sweden

The Act concerning Support and Service to Persons with certain Functional Impairments & the Assistance Benefit Act, Socialstyrelsen
The National Board of Health & Welfare, Sweden

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency
In several countries similar legislation has either been enacted or is under discussion, including Belgium, Finland, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom. In 2004 the Swedish law served as the basis for developing a model policy for personal assistance.
In 2000, Sweden established a nationwide system of Personal Ombudsmen (POs) that provides support in decision-making for persons with severe mental or psychosocial disabilities. The system is known as the PO system. In brief:

- **Initial Year:** 2000
- **In 2014,** 310 POs provided support to more than 6,000 individuals.
- In 2014, 245 municipalities provided POs in their social service system.
- A 2005 study reported that individuals with disabilities who are supported by a PO require less care and that their psychosocial situation improves.

### Key Features

- **POs** hold an independent position in a municipality’s social services system and support individuals who have a complex need of care due to a psychiatric disability.
- The first step of a PO is to establish a trusting relationship, which means he or she must be 100 percent on the side of the individual even if the individual’s interests should run counter to the opinions of other professionals. It is common for the individual to establish contact with a PO, or for the relevant social or psychiatric services to do so, or that it takes place through a user organization. Once trust is established, the PO maps the client needs. As a third step, the PO and the client draw up a joint action plan. Usually, POs work for municipalities; in some places they work for foundations, voluntary or care associations, or even businesses. In general, two or three POs work together, each serving about 15 clients a year.

- **Outcome, impact, and effectiveness**:
  - PO operations reduce costs by approximately €80,000 per assisted person over a five-year period.
  - In 2013 a new regulation included the PO system in the regular welfare system.
  - A 2014 report states that Swedish local governments see the PO system as a natural part of the services that are expected to be offered in a municipality.
  - The National Board of Health and Welfare promotes the PO as a new social profession.

- **Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency**

The project began in Oslo in 2010 and became a regular service in 2014, and it is also operating in Helsinki. Moreover, in 2014 the Czech Republic announced that it will soon provide such services as well.

### Empowerment

- A PO makes contact with persons living in isolation and poverty. As many individuals with severe psychosocial disabilities are very suspicious, the PO has to reach them step-by-step by developing a channel of communication, establishing a relationship, starting a dialogue, and gaining their trust.

### Accessibility

- There is no complicated formal procedure to enlist the support of a PO since many psychiatric patients would back out of the process if they had to sign forms. Instead, they simply need to ask for help.

### Peaceful resolution of conflict

- Prior to having a PO, many individuals are angry about their social environment because of past bad experiences. POs help to solve most conflicts with neighbours, with family, with psychiatry, and with social services.

### Facts & Figures

- Initial Year: 2000
- In 2014, 310 POs provided support to more than 6,000 individuals.
- In 2014, 245 municipalities (84 percent) included POs in their social service system.
- A 2005 study reported that individuals with disabilities who are supported by a PO require less care and that their psychosocial situation improves.

### Context

While the PO scheme has drawn on models found in the United States and the United Kingdom, it differs considerably from these. From 1995 to 1998 the government funded ten pilot projects, of which several were run by municipalities, some were set up by civil society, and one (PO-Skåne) was set up by an organization of persons who formerly used institutional and psychiatric care. As the pilot project evaluation showed both good qualitative and quantitative outcomes, the Parliament decided in 2000 to expand permanently the PO system to the whole country. A 2005 study reported that the scheme is profitable in socioeconomic terms since individuals with PO support require less care and their psychosocial situation improves. As a result, the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) began to promote the PO as a new social profession. In 2013 a new regulation entered into force that established permanent funding for the PO system.
Reserved elected seats for persons with disabilities

UGANDA / PARLIAMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Around the world persons with disabilities are underrepresented in public life, but this is not the case in Uganda. The country legislated that elected political bodies at all levels must reserve a minimum number of seats for representatives of persons with disabilities.

In brief
Uganda’s Constitution of 1995 rules that the State shall ensure fair representation of marginalized groups – including persons with disabilities – on all government bodies. As a result, legislators have passed several acts to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in the public sphere. Parliament has reserved five seats for Members who represent persons with disabilities; and every village, parish, sub-county, and district council has to include at least one man and one woman with a disability. Uganda’s 47,000 representatives with disabilities are easily the largest group of politicians with disabilities in the world.

Innovative aspects
Direct Representation: Only a few countries provide for direct representation of persons with disabilities at all levels of government.

FACTS & FIGURES

- **Initial Years:** 1995, 1996, 1997
- **At each term since 1995 at least five parliamentarians with disabilities from four regions (Central, East, West, North) and one national woman with disability representative have been elected.**
- **In 2011 a total of 12 parliamentarians with disabilities were elected.**
- **Uganda has some 47,000 representatives with disabilities – or some 0.5 percent of the registered electorate – at the local and district level.**

Use of Electoral College: The Electoral College, which ensures a minimum political representation of persons with disabilities in Parliament and local authorities, stretches from the village to the national level and is composed only of persons with disabilities. In addition, there is an emphasis on the principle of gender balance.

Context
For a long time persons with disabilities remained excluded from political decision-making bodies in Uganda, which in turn reinforced their exclusion through the absence of policies favouring them. In 1987 the newly formed National Union of Disabled Persons (NUDIPU) started to challenge the inconsistencies in policy-making. NUDIPU was the key driver for the inclusion of the Hon. Eliphaz Mazima as a representative with disabilities in the Constitution’s drafting committee. Hon. Mazima achieved the inclusion of disability in the Constitution of 1995. Since then many laws have operationalized the constitutional provisions, including the Parliamentary Elections Statute of 1996 and the Local Governments Act of 1997, both of which ensure the representation of persons with disabilities in all political elected bodies. Through this representation mechanism, as well as the National Council for Disability, disabled peoples organizations are directly involved in the development and monitoring of policies.

Key Features
Uganda’s Constitution requires that Parliament shall consist of a number of representatives of persons with disabilities, and the State shall ensure fair representation of marginalized groups on all bodies. As a result, Uganda has enacted the Parliamentary Elections Statute of 1996 that provides for five seats in Parliament for representatives of persons with disabilities, elected by a national Electoral College. This College is composed of district representatives, four from each district. In this way persons with disabilities elect their representatives through an electoral college composed only of persons with disabilities. Uganda has also enacted the Local Governments Act of 1997, which provides for the allocation of a certain number of seats for people with disabilities in elected political bodies at all levels – from village, to parish, to sub-county, to district council.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness
- **In 1996 the State Minister for the Elderly and Disability Affairs was created.**
- **Since 2008 parliamentarians with disabilities have also been elected through the mainstream electoral process.**
- **Members of Parliament with disabilities have been successful in ensuring that their concerns were addressed in several major laws, including the Children’s Statute of 1996.**

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency
A number of delegations from other countries, including Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, and Switzerland, have visited Uganda to learn about its reserved seats for persons with disabilities. Kenya adopted a similar provision in 2011, but there the party chooses the representatives with disabilities.

Uganda’s special system of directly elected representatives with disabilities is the reason why parliamentarians with disabilities are now also elected via the mainstream electoral system.

Hon. Ndezi ALEX, Member of Parliament for Persons with Disabilities – Central Region

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Nominated by Mr. Martin Babu MWESIGWA, CRPD Committee & National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda

Source(s):
Funding for running for an elected office

UNITED KINGDOM / GOVERNMENT EQUALITIES OFFICE, ADMINISTERED BY CONVEY

In most countries people with disabilities are underrepresented in public life because they face substantial barriers to putting themselves forward for election. In the United Kingdom grants are available to help meet the additional costs associated with running for election that candidates with disabilities can face.

In brief

The Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund, established in 2012, offers individual grants of between £250 and (only in exceptional circumstances) £40,000 to persons with disabilities who wish to put themselves forward as a candidate or for running their election campaign, but who incur additional costs associated with their disability. While the Fund was initially set to run until March 2014, the government decided to extend it until March 2015 and to fully evaluate it by summer 2015.

Context

In 2010 a House of Commons Conference on parliamentary representation stated that there is considerable evidence that the financial barriers facing candidates with disabilities were particularly high; that the necessary extra spending has to be borne by candidates who are often poorer than other candidates, and that social care funding packages limit the area in which persons with disabilities can be candidates. While assistance to Members of Parliament can be provided through the Access to Work programme (Innovative aspects Co-operation with civil society: The fund is an excellent example of a government working with civil society to develop an evidence-informed approach to removing barriers to the political participation of persons with disabilities. Testing cost-effectiveness: Launched as a three-year pilot project, the Fund is the first of its kind, and its effectiveness will be evaluated in June 2015.

Key Features

The Fund offers individual grants of between £250 and, only in exceptional circumstances, £40,000 to candidates with disabilities. Grants can cover, for example, the cost of using private taxis if public transport is not accessible, the cost of accessible meeting rooms, or the cost of a sign language interpreter. In order to be eligible, the person with a disability needs to demonstrate that the nature of their condition creates a barrier to standing for election and to provide evidence of their involvement in community activities. The Fund is administered by Convey, which is independent of the government and assesses all applications and pays grants. Convey is advised by an advisory panel, which consists of members – including four with a disability – who have expertise in a range of disability and electoral issues. The monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the Government Equalities Office.

Outcome, impact, and effectiveness

• The Fund was initially set to run until March 2014, but the government decided to extend it until March 2015, and to evaluate it by summer 2015.
• 35 applicants have stood for election to date, mainly in Local Authority elections.
• The Fund has received considerable media coverage, and has been promoted through political networks and disability charities to raise awareness of the support it can provide.

Transferability, scalability, and cost-efficiency

Depending on the outcome of the pilot period of the Fund, it could, in principle, be replicated in other countries, depending on their laws regarding limits on electoral expenses for candidates. Start-up costs were approximately £300,000 (£38,000).

FACTS & FIGURES

• Initial Year: 2012
• The Fund’s website is fully accessible and contains guidance for applicants and others.
• A publication of case stories of disabled people who are active in politics has been produced.
• As of 2014 the Fund had supported 50 persons with disabilities to put themselves forward as a candidate.
• The average value of claims has been £4,289 (£3,390).

The Access to Elected Office Fund was a lifeline to me as it enabled me to fund a support worker to accompany me when I went out canvassing and met residents and community groups.

Alison HANSFORD, former Local Council candidate

“As a blind person, there are many barriers put up to stop me from participating in society.”

Kirsten Hearns, who is partially sighted and who was able to run for elections thanks to the Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund, is an elected Councillor at the Haringey Council. For her it is clear that “as a blind person, there are many barriers put up to stop me from participating in society. This is reflected in how political parties organize and how would-be politicians campaign. Canvassing on the doorsteps and streets is expected of candidates, but this is not easy to do if you are disabled. In order to run a good campaign, I must keep abreast of local issues and research policy areas so I can say what I will do when I am elected. This is hard when information is very inaccessible. If I am to have an equal chance of being nominated and of participating as a candidate, this is the kind of support I need.”
Success stories of Innovative Policies 2014

Since 2013 the Zero Project has celebrated Innovative Policies from around the world – nominating, researching, and selecting the “best of the best” with an annual thematic focus. Below, we briefly “revisit” some of the Innovative Policies of 2014, which focused on the theme “accessibility” and provide updates on their progress and success.

Berlin’s mandatory barrier free construction (Germany)

Berlin’s administration has published comprehensive handbooks on barrier-free construction, which have been developed in consultation with civil society and are mandatory for all Berlin state construction projects. They aim to be simple and intuitive, give orientation for the planning process, and provide concrete assistance to update existing construction codes. On 17 March 2014, Berlin’s general instruction for the preparation and execution of construction measures (Abbau) was revised and entered into force. Abbau describes the processes from the initial needs assessment, to the planning stage, to the ultimate execution of construction. A newly developed “Concept Accessible” guide will ensure that the principles of Design For All will be translated into the whole planning process for new construction, alterations, and extensions as well as for modernizations. Read more at [barrierefreies_bauen/download/Konzept_Barrierefrei_en.pdf](http://barrierefreies_bauen/download/Konzept_Barrierefrei_en.pdf).

Kuala Lumpur’s implementation framework for its accessibility standards, Malaysia

The City of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has set up an implementation framework for its accessibility standards for all newly built environments, including a comprehensive monitoring and enforcement system from design to post-construction. Throughout the last year, Kuala Lumpur City Hall staff members have continued to work with the national standard-setting body to finalize the guidelines for “Using Universal Design in the Built Environment.” On 1 December 2014 the Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation, Dr. Ewon Ebin, launched the revised national Universal Design and Accessibility Standards became a requirement for all construction projects. With the entering into force of the Building Control Act at the end of 2013, the accessibility standards became a requirement for the approval of all construction projects nationwide. Further, in May 2014 the Uganda National Action on Physical Disability officially launched the Accessibility Improvement Project, funded by the Disability Rights Fund. The main aim of this project is to raise awareness about the Building Control Act, which guides the construction industry, and to ensure that the ability to implement accessibility, as its Universal Access Policy is a comprehensive long-term and multi-level effort that includes universal design and attention to the entire journey. At the end of 2013, Cape Town announced the start of a comprehensive three-year universal access audit of all transport facilities in the city, to be undertaken by persons with disabilities. The audit of all major central business districts and 220 public transport interchanges started in February 2014. The transport authority for Cape Town is working to ensure that all transport operators provide universal access and that this will be included in the list of requirements for operators applying for licenses. Transport for Cape Town will also regulate operator compliance. Read more at [http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/TransportCapeTown/Pages/Dialataire.aspx](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/TransportCapeTown/Pages/Dialataire.aspx).

Australia’s Development for All: Towards a Disability-inclusive Australian Aid Program

Australia is one of the few countries that have mainstreamed disability into their development programming. Its Development for All: Towards a Disability-inclusive Australian Aid Program is about improving the reach and effectiveness of development assistance by ensuring that people with disabilities are included in, contribute to, and benefit equally from development efforts. The Australian government, elected in 2013, announced on 3 December 2013 its intention to develop a new strategy for disability-inclusive development for 2015 and beyond, building on the successes of the previous strategy. The new disability strategy is being developed in consultation with key stakeholders in partner countries and in Australia. Read more at [http://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/disability-inclusive-development/Pages/disability-inclusive-development.aspx](http://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/disability-inclusive-development/Pages/disability-inclusive-development.aspx).

The Universal Access Policy of Cape Town’s MyCiTi bus system (South Africa)

Cape Town’s MyCiTi system is, along with Johannesburg’s Rea Vaya, among the first South African Bus Rapid Transit systems. Cape Town, however, clearly stands out for its commitment and ability to implement accessibility, as its Universal Access Policy is a comprehensive long-term and multi-level effort that includes universal design and attention to the entire journey. At the end of 2013, Cape Town announced the start of a comprehensive three-year universal access audit of all transport facilities in the city, to be undertaken by persons with disabilities. The audit of all major central business districts and 220 public transport interchanges started in February 2014. The transport authority for Cape Town is working to ensure that all transport operators provide universal access and that this will be included in the list of requirements for operators applying for licenses. Transport for Cape Town will also regulate operator compliance. Read more at [https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/TransportCapeTown/Pages/Dialarie.aspx](https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/TransportCapeTown/Pages/Dialarie.aspx).

Accessibility Policy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (UK)

The Olympics and Paralympics are among the world’s most spectacular sporting events and represent a massive opportunity to spread a message to a vast audience. London 2012 approached the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the first time as one event with exemplary accessibility as a key theme and set a high standard for all events to come. Currently, its best practices are being transferred, as far as possible. One of the key experts behind London 2012 Accessibility Policy was Mark Todd, who currently works as Accessibility Expert to the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games and the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and who also advises the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and the Spanish Paralympic Committee. For more, see [http://theaossarenta.com](http://theaossarenta.com).
Social Indicators of the Zero Project - the full questionnaire

1. NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS
   Are all newly constructed buildings, to which there is public access, required to be accessible to all persons with disabilities?

   Accessibility should be based on widely known and respected sets of criteria. This ensures both that it meets the interest of all persons with disabilities, and that it conforms to the highest standard. And it ensures not only to the test environment itself but also to signage. If there is no legislation in place, what is the timeframe for all existing buildings to be accessible to all persons with disabilities? If there is no timeframe set by legislation, is it planned?

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 4 (Accessibility)
   • Legislation is in place and covers both new and existing buildings. From now on, all public accessible buildings cover all disabilities.
   • Yes, with qualifications. There is legislation for certain newly constructed buildings. Or the low costs only cover certain disabilities.
   • No. There is no such legislation.

2. TIME FRAME FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS
   Is there a legal time frame for all existing buildings, to which there is public access, to become accessible to all persons with disabilities?

   Accessibility should be based on widely known and respected sets of criteria. This ensures both that it meets the interest of all persons with disabilities, and that it conforms to the highest standard. And it ensures not only to the test environment itself but also to signage. If there is no legislation in place, what is the timeframe for all existing buildings to be accessible to all persons with disabilities? If there is no timeframe set by legislation, is it planned?

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 4 (Accessibility)
   • Yes. There is a legal time frame for all existing buildings, to which there is public access, to become fully accessible to all persons with disabilities.
   • Yes, with qualifications. All buildings are included. Or the low costs only apply to the courts or public administration buildings. Or the covers only certain disabilities.
   • No. There is no timeframe set by legislation.

3. URBAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM
   Are all urban public transport (bus, tram, train) accessible to all persons with disabilities?

   Accessibility must, however, include both blind persons and those persons with mental or intellectual disabilities. A very important issue here is that drivers (especially bus drivers) and conductors are not accessible to all persons with disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities if they are available only certain newly constructed buildings. Or the low costs only cover certain disabilities.

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 4 (Accessibility)
   • All urban public transports are accessible to all persons with disabilities.
   • Yes, with qualifications. Some urban public transports are not accessible to all persons with disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities if they are available only certain newly constructed buildings.
   • No. Urban public transports are not accessible to persons with disabilities.

4. EMERGENCY EARLY WARNING SYSTEM
   Is a system in place to warn the public at an early stage of the occurrence of natural disasters?

   Systems that could be in place include city lights, SMS-servers, emergency services, etc. But any existing system should not be limited to either radio or public address systems/alarms - in line with the two-nineteen principle. “Situation of risk” includes situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 10 (Protection from risk and humanitarian emergencies)
   • Yes, with qualifications. The early warning system is accessible to all persons with disabilities.
   • No. The early warning system has not been designed to be accessible to all persons with disabilities.

5. SIGN LANGUAGE RECOGNITION
   Is sign language an officially recognized language in the country?

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 13 (Access to justice)
   • Yes. Sign language is an official language of the courts and persons with a hearing impairment have the right to a translator paid for by the state.
   • Yes, with qualifications. Sign language is only officially recognized in some courts. Or those with a hearing impairment do not have the right to a translator. Or the right is not paid for by the state. Or only certain courts.
   • No. Sign language is not officially recognized in the courts. Those with a hearing impairment have the right to a translator, or for any translator to be paid for by the state and translators are only set up by courts, neither made available nor paid for by the state.

6. PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITES
   Is there a legal requirement for public sector bodies to ensure that all websites are web-accessible to all persons with disabilities?

   “Web-accessible” means a website or web-based service designed or modified to enable individuals with disabilities to access, interact with and use safely, securely, independently, and with a reasonable degree of accessibility, the public sector body’s information and services that are accessible to members of the general public. It includes websites, online applications, and digital content.

   Relates to UN CRPD article No. 11 (Situations of risk and emergency) and UN CRPD article No. 19 (Statistics and data collection)
   • Yes. Legal provisions and enforcements/sanctions are recognized in some courts. Or those with a hearing problem have the right to a translator.
   • Yes. The state’s early warning system is accessible to all persons with disabilities.
   • No. The warning systems are restricted only to certain locations.

7. DATA ON UNIVERSITY GRADUATES
   Are official statistics published covering the number of persons with disabilities who graduate from university (and when)?

   Please describe, if possible, how identification of such students has been made or, for example, many students with invisible disabilities choose not to self identify at university level:

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 24 (Education)
   • No. Figures are not published officially annually within the year.
   • Yes, with qualifications. These figures are published, but not regularly, or annually, or within the year.
   • Yes. Such statistics are officially published. Or are available within the year.

8. ALTERNATIVE TESTING METHODS FOR STUDENTS
   Are university students with disabilities guaranteed access to alternative testing methods?

   This question refers only to university students. In the US, for example, some universities offer courses that require students to sit exams - their performance is measured by, for example, coursework, assignments etc. Please describe what measures, if any, are being taken to provide alternative testing methods to those with disabilities?

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 24 (Education)
   • Yes. At all universities, students with disabilities have access to alternative testing methods.
   • Yes, with qualifications. There is access only at some universities. Or the choice of alternative testing methods is restricted to persons only with certain disabilities.
   • No. At no university is there access to alternative testing methods.

9. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION
   Are the public and persons with disabilities provided public access to information?

   "Public sector bodies" means the State, regional or local authorities, bodies or associations governed by public law. “Public sector services” means goods and services provided by public sector bodies. “Public sector websites” includes any website used to deliver a service made available to the public. For instance, educational establishments, leisure services, employment services, health care, mutual services, etc. “Web-accessible” means a website or web-based service designed or modified to enable individuals with disabilities to access, interact with and use safely, securely, independently, and with a reasonable degree of accessibility, the public sector body’s information and services that are accessible to members of the general public.

   Relates to UN CRPD article No. 13 (Access to justice)
   • Yes. All necessary support must be provided to ensure full and effective inclusion. This question refers to children and employees, etc.
   • Yes. Access to information is available for example, through “Freedom of Information Acts”. Or certain exceptions qualify for ‘Yes – with Qualifications’.
   • No. Access to information is restricted.

10. ADMISSION TO THE WORKPLACE
   Do employees with disabilities have access to any form of financial assistance and career promotion?

   This question refers to the level at which the person with a disability is employed in the workplace. It includes, for example, the required salary level, the required years of experience, the required qualifications, the required education level and the required employment status. For example, certain newly constructed buildings. Or the low costs only cover certain disabilities.

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 27 (Work and Employment)
   • Yes. Employers are obliged to take the necessary actions on accommodations made in the workplace for all employees with disabilities.
   • Yes, with qualifications. The action that needs to be taken is restricted only to certain groups of employees, for example, for a certain number of disabled employees, etc.
   • No. Such obligation exists.

11. INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
   Does a person with disability have the right to receive free and compulsory primary and secondary education within the mainstream educational system?

   Persons with disabilities must not be excluded from mainstream education - whether primary or secondary. Mainstream education must be both inclusive and of quality. A very important issue here is that drivers (especially bus drivers) and conductors are not accessible to all persons with disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities. Or they are accessible only to persons with certain disabilities if they are available only certain newly constructed buildings.

   Related to UN CRPD article No. 26 (Education)
   • Yes. Every child with a disability has the right to receive free and compulsory primary and secondary education within the mainstream educational system.
   • Yes, with qualifications. The action that needs to be taken is restricted only to certain groups of students, for example, for a certain number of disabled students, etc.
   • No. Such obligation exists.

Survey
The full questionnaire, analysis per question and a list of all answers

Policies
List of all 39 Innovative Policies, and brief description, listed by country

Practices
List of all 39 Innovative Practices, listed by country

Network
The Research Network and acknowledgments to all contributors

Annex

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10. **DATA ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Are official statistics about the education and employment of persons with disabilities available? If so, please provide the figure, a source and, if possible, an explanation.

**COMMENT**: If the answer is either ‘No’ or ‘Yes’ – with qualifications – please provide an explanation.

**No**. Figures are not published annually, or are over five years old. Figures are not available on an official state website, or not in all official languages, or are published irregularly.

**Yes**. Figures are available on an official state website, or are available in all official languages of the country. They are published regularly.

Are official statistics about the education and employment of persons with disabilities published at least every five years? Yes.

Are official statistics published annually covering, at the very least, the number of persons with disabilities employed by the designated ‘focal points’ within government to address matters related to education and employment? No. State parties have not yet designated one focal point designated by supported decision-making regime.

If forms of residential care exist in your country, is the number of persons with disabilities living in residential care increasing accordingly to official data? Yes. All facilities and programmes, including residential care, are monitored and reported. Facilities and programmes are monitored and reported at all levels: national, regional, state parties.

**COMMENT**: Please comment on your answer indicating what types of community support services the local authorities have introduced for persons with disability to facilitate their daily life.

23. **PROTECTION AND MONITORING**

Are programmes designed and implemented to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the CRPD? Yes. Every voter with a disability has the right to vote by available and/or the government funds them partly or fully.

Could persons with disabilities have access to the necessary accessible devices for voting, such as voting booths, voting cards, voting machines, visual and auditory information and communication technologies? Yes, with qualifications. There is a legal duty to provide reasonable accommodations only for persons with a disability, or not all public functions or not at all levels of government. 

**COMMENT**: Please indicate which kind of reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities. If a person with a disability is unable to exercise the right to vote: who can effectively violate this right.

28. **AVAILABILITY OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES**

Is public funding available to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the necessary assistive devices? Yes. Every voter with a disability has the right to vote by available and/or the government funds them partly or fully.

Are there appropriate and effective safeguards for all persons with disabilities living in residential care? Yes, with qualifications. If forms of residential care exist in your country, is the number of persons with disabilities living in residential care increasing accordingly to official data? Yes. All facilities and programmes, including residential care, are monitored and reported at all levels: national, regional, state parties.

**COMMENT**: Please comment on your answer indicating what types of community support services the local authorities have introduced for persons with disability to facilitate their daily life.

Focus on Independent Living

17. **SUPPORTED-DECISION-MAKING ALTERNATIVES**

Are supported decision-making alternatives available to persons with disabilities? Yes. Supported decision-making regime comprises various support options which give priority to persons and preferences and respect human rights. If there should be a need for another person to make decisions on behalf of the individual, that individual must be consulted and their involvement is necessary to have the decision made on behalf of the individual.

**COMMENT**: Please comment on your answer indicating what types of community support services the local authorities have introduced for persons with disability to facilitate their daily life.

24. **ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

Do measures and safeguards exist to ensure the right of persons who are blind or partially sighted to have adequate income, or to stand for elections or hold office and perform public functions on an equal basis with others.

**COMMENT**: Please indicate which kind of reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities. If a person with a disability is unable to exercise the right to vote: who can effectively violate this right.

29. **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN VOTING**

Are there any reasonable accommodations only for persons with a disability, or not all public functions or not at all levels of government. 

**COMMENT**: Please indicate which kind of reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities. If a person with a disability is unable to exercise the right to vote: who can effectively violate this right.

30. **ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION ON ELECTIONS**

Does the official electorate information is neither accessible to screen-readers, audio, braille, text-to-speech, large print, tactile, and other formats. 

**COMMENT**: Please indicate which kind of reasonable accommodation is available to persons with disabilities. If a person with a disability is unable to exercise the right to vote: who can effectively violate this right.
## Social indicators: Analysis of questions

### All answers by question

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### All answers by question and summarized by topic

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Average calculated with: *Yes=1; Yes with qualification=0.5; No=0; N/A= not available

**P.P.** = related to Independent Living, **IL** = related to Political Participation

* = Yes with Qualification, **Na** = Not available
All answers to all questions (continued)
All answers to all questions (continued)

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Acknowledgements

The Zero Project would not have been possible without the broad and continuous support of many individuals and organizations over the last four years.

Above all, we are particularly grateful to Javed Abidi and the entire network of Disabled People’s International, who are the most important contributors to the research of Social Indicators.

We also greatly appreciate the help given by:
- Assembly of European Regions (AER)
- Business Disability-Forum
- Disabled People’s International (DPI)
- European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL)
- European Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care (EES)
- European Network for Independent Living (ENIL)
- European Network for CSR and Disability (CSR-D)
- Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATees)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW), Independent Living Institute (ILI)
- International Disability Alliance (IDA)
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS)
- Light for the World.

Additionally, we are very grateful to the following individuals for their contributions to the shortlisting and selection process of this year’s Innovative Policies & Practices: Mona Abdeljawad, Virgina Atkinson, Kimberley Ayton, Orosola Bartha, Jose Batanero, Jamie Bolling, Dorothée Brozek, Susanne Bruyere, Ines Bulko, Ingrid Burman, Miguel Angel Cabra de Luna, Alex Camacho Vasconez, Shubab Chakrani, Francisco Chavez, Ba Coubma, Vladimir Cuk, Betty Dixon, Georgio Dominik, Romain Gaasch, Jesus Hernandez Galan, Don Galdall, Christine Gordon, Martin Gould, Giampaolo Guidi, Tomoko Hikuma, Yoshikazu Ikera (Sluigara), Marjana Jankovic, Mathis Jepserson, Rudi Kennes, Magdalena Kern, Sylvia Lakkis, Paul Lappalainen Peter Lehmann, Michalna Lietzentsch, Janet E. Lord, Phil Madden, Antonio Martinez-Pujol, Katharina Mechenitsch, Tina Minkowitz, Marica Miric, Lenir Moreno, Apollo Mukasa, Martin Naughton, Annika Nyström Karlsson, Krista Orama, Nagase Osamu, Sue O’Shea, Marnie Peters, Lidia Pretorius, Beatriz Rabadan, Silvio Sagramola, Xenina Serpa, Dorodi Sharma, Michael Ashley Stein, Martha Stickings, Damjan Totic, Borika Teodorovic, Bert Veghem, and Luk Zelderto.

For contributing to a successful Zero Project Conference 2015, we are most thankful to the United Nations Organization of Vienna (UNOV), which served as an excellent host, and we extend special appreciation to Lars Larsen and LINTO Thannkilei; to the Unicredit Bank Austria, which supports the Zero Project financially and has generously invited us to a Special Evening Event “Alles Walser”, co-organized by Light for the World. And to Caroline Casey for her enormous energy as moderator of the Conference.

In Austria, the home country of the Zero Project, we are proud of the support that we continue to receive from many sources. In particular, the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs, Rudolf Hundstorfer, supported the Zero Project right from its beginnings. We are also indebted to Albert Brandstätter (Lebenshilfe Österreich), Walburga Fröhlich (atempo), Katharina Mechenitsch (Diakonie Österreich), Christine Meierschitz (ÖAR), Erwin Buchinger (Behindertennachsorge), Herbert Pichler (Chancen-Nutzent-Büro), Max Rubisch, Hamajog Hofer and Andreas Reinhalter (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz), Monika Vyskouzil and Michael Moser (Fachhochschule St. Pölten), Caritas, Hilfsgemeinschaft, OZIV Blindenverband, Selbstbestimmt Leben Österreich, Career Moves, Ashoka Austria, as well as many others. Special thanks also goes to Michael Meyer, University of Economics of Vienna, who arranged for an evaluation of the Zero Project Conference.

The Austrian Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs has supported the Zero Project in many different ways, both in Austria and abroad. For example, for (co-)sponsoring our side events at the UN Conferences, we very much wish to acknowledge the help provide by H. E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Johannes Strasser, and Caroline Wörgötter (Geneva & Maputo), as well as Julia Thallinger and Nadia Kalb (New York). We are also enormously indebted to the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN in Vienna, and specifically to H. E. Christine Stix Hackl and Martin Krämer.

Finally, we would like to point out one person without whom the Zero Project would not be what it is today: Thomas Butcher, who helped to launch the Zero Project, and who continues to support the Project team to this day.
### All 39 Innovative Practices 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional network to promote legal capacity of people with psychosocial disabilities</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>The Trust for the Americas (OAS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting independently and privately</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Scoy Secure Electronic Voting, S.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Supported Living</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>School of Occupational Therapy and Social Work, Curtin University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition among students for innovative devices and software</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>UNIKATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Postmodern” – fast access to affordable homes</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Woontwerel Zenevallei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom School – Training for an active role in society</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Onafhankelijk Leven zsw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulating political participation for persons with an intellectual disability</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Our New Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microboards: Small non-profits for supported decision-making</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Vela Microboard Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living alone with individualized support</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Udigrde za samozastupanje (Association for Self Advocacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting without legal capacity</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Udigrde za samozastupanje (Association for Self Advocacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study kit about citizenship and personal rights</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>National Board of Social Services (Socialstyrelsen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diverting EU funds towards community-based care</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Expert Group (EES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing accessible candidate lists and other election-related material for visually impaired persons</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired (FFV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidelines for accessibility in Europe</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Inclusion Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities employing their assistants</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>VaA – Independent Living e.V.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ‘employer model in personal assistance</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Rhein Main Inklasse</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOBILE, an all-round support program</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>MOBILE – Selbstbestimmtes Leben Behinderter e.V. for independent living</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering individualized support and sharing lessons learned</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive Housing: Helping young adults to live independently</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Israel Unlimitied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triste: De-Institutionalisation and Community living since 1980</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Triste Mental Health Department &amp; WHOCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>A business approach to sustainable community living</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Digical Foundation Jamaica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returning children to their families and an inclusive environment in Moldova</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Lemos – De-instituionalisering en volwassenheid</td>
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<td>Training to actively engage in civic rights</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>National Foundation for Electoral Systems</td>
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<td>Personal assistance is custom-designed</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Utba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion of children and youths with hearing impairments</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>Callians Services for Disabled Persons</td>
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<td>Empowerment through peer-to-peer support in Rwanda</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>National Organization of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (NOUSPR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online platform on community based services</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Youth with Disabilities Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living Link: Creating careers from disabilities</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>The Living Link</td>
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<td>Cheap tool to make ballot papers accessible to the blind</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Universal Ballot Template</td>
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<td>Social Awareness: Empowerment Program</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Cape Peninsula Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free personal assistance programme</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>ASPPW/M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect to Control: Cheap equipment to make PCs accessible</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Connect to Control (Scope, Beaumont College)</td>
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<td>A “Brokerage” for short family vacations</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Scope and Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>HelpLine and platform on personalised care</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Disability Rights UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>User-led organization teaching and inspiring others</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living (CIL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability (WILD)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Mobility International USA (MILUSA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening electoral systems to be inclusive and accessible</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment and inclusion of rural girls with hearing impairments</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Al Saedaa Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enfranchising People with Disabilities</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Jiers Ji Association</td>
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### All 11 Innovative Policies 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Brief Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer counselling as an approved profession, 2008</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>The region of Upper Austria is first to acknowledge Peer Counselling as an official social profession. Since 2008 disability-specific qualification courses (psychosocial, physical, intellectual, etc.) have certified more than 70 professionals. In 2014, peer counsellors offered up to 1300 hours of service per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flander’s Personal Assistance Budget, 2000</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>In the Flemish region of Belgium the person with disabilities (or their representative) controls both the assistance and the personal assistance budget (PAB). As of 2012 there were 2122 PAB users in Flanders. About 6000 people are currently on a waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfranchising people under guardianship, 2013</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Following a ruling from the Tokyo District Court, Japan’s Parliament swiftly revised the Election Law, leading to the enfranchisement of 136,000 persons under guardianship and restoring their right to vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding a national disability information centre, 1993</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Luxembourg’s disability information centre, which is under the full control of its member organizations, receives the Ministry’s financial support. In 2013, 2,271 persons asked for advice and 967 used the centre’s legal information service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving access to electoral events, 2014</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>The strategy of New Zealand’s Electoral Commission reduces barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter when enroling and voting at elections. The Commission offers a wide range of information and resources in accessible formats. Some 8,000 large brochures, 15,000 Plain English Guides, and 11,000 posters have been produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring equal access for Members of Parliament, 2006 &amp; 2009</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>South Africa has implemented two policies to ensure the inclusiveness of its Parliament and to support all Members and employees with disabilities. Currently, 3 Members of Parliament with disabilities and 10 employees receive support, as do MPs who have children with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to a personal assistance budget, 1993</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sweden is one of the few countries that entitles persons with disabilities to a personal assistance budget, independent from state and local government budgets. In 2013 some 19,500 people received a personal assistance budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Ombudsmen, 2000</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Personal Ombudsmen (POs) provide support in decision-making for persons with severe mental or psychosocial disabilities in 245 Swedish municipalities (84 percent). In 2014, 310 POs provided support to more than 6,000 individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral quota for persons with disabilities, 1995 &amp; 1997</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Uganda legislated that elected political bodies at all levels must reserve a minimum number of seats for representatives of persons with disabilities. The country has some 47,000 representatives with disabilities – 0.5% of the registered electorate – at the local and district level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for running for an elected office, 2012</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Government grants help meet the additional costs associated with running for election that candidates with disabilities can face. As of 2014 the Fund had supported 50 persons with disabilities to put themselves forward as a candidate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Department of Social Affairs and Health of the European Commission


List of all persons who have contributed to the research on Independent Living and Political Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karin HOLZMANN</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
List of all persons that have contributed to the research on Independent Living and Political Participation

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- Noelle DALY Spinal Injuries
- Gerald CRADDOCK Centre for Excellence in Universal Design
- J Patrick CLARKE Down Syndrome International
- Caroline CASEY Kanchi Ireland
- Christian DONN International Federation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- Sam TARAPOREVALA St. Xavier's Resource Center for the Visually Challenged
- Dorodi SHARMA NCPEDP
- Shraddha Soni
- Kanika JINDAL EMBARQ India
- Raja BAGGA
- Javed ABIDI DPI - Disabled Peoples' International India
- Erzsébet SZEKERES Foundation for equal rights
- Erzsébet FÖLDESI Budapest Association of People with Physical D.
- Raluca BUNEA Open Society Foundations
- Konstantinos PAPANIKOLAOU IEA
- Akaterini NOMIDOU SOFPSI N.SERRON
- Sefakor KOMABU-POMEYIE Enlightening and Empowering People with Disabilities
- Dorcas ABA ANAN Accra-GuestHouse
- Hilke SCHÜRMANN Sennheiser Streaming Technologies GmbH
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- Elisabeth KOMP Diözesan-Caritasverband für das Erzbistum Köln
- Mathias KNIGGE grauwert
- Marina KIRCHMAYR Verba Voice GmbH
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- Zafar RASOOL King's College London
- Patrick REMMINS University of the Witwatersrand
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- Laila ONU Pentru Voi Foundation
- Maria VLACHOU Acesso Cultura
- Joanne WOJTYNSKA Polish Disability Forum
- May Gladys BUTOY International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- Marit NYSTROM KARLSSON HSO - The Swedish Disability Federation
- Marta NARCISO Fundación ONCE
- Francisco PRIETO-LÓPEZ Victorian Centre for Disability Studies
- Claire ROBARTES The Living Link
- Michelle ROYER Equal Rights International
- Elisa M. ROYER Equal Rights International
- Sarah ROYER Carrie Leadership Center
- Arlene RØYAL University of Copenhagen
- Akinwumi ROYER University of Johns Hopkins
- Klaudija POROPAT YHD
- Thomas ROYER Equal Rights International
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- Zaheer ROYER University of Johns Hopkins
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<tr>
<td>Graciela RUMI CEJAS</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel MURRAY</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgette MULHEIR</td>
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<td>Ruth MARVEL</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ian LOYNES</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael GIBSON</td>
<td>Disability Rights UK</td>
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<td>John EVANS</td>
<td>ENIL - European Network on Independent Living</td>
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<td>Jane CUMMING</td>
<td>Penumbra</td>
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<td>Paula BENNEWORTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo ANDREWS</td>
<td>IHRFN - International Human Rights Funders Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levgen POBEREZHNYI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anastasiia NEKRASOVA</td>
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<td>Central Election Commission of Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anastasya GERETS</td>
<td>Kharkiv NGO of Blind Lawyers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lydia KIWUMULO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin BABU MWESIGWA</td>
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<td>Dimitri MARYASSIN</td>
<td>UNDP - United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>Rana KOTAN</td>
<td>Sabanci Foundation</td>
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<td>Cimen GULDOKER</td>
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<td>Linda &quot;UMBAYEMAKE LUMBAY6</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
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<td>Catherine TOWNSEND</td>
<td>Wellspring Advisors, LLC</td>
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<td>Michael Ashley STEIN</td>
<td>University of Harvard, Harvard Disability Project</td>
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<td>Rinkle SHAH</td>
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<td>Alekzandra POSARAC</td>
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<td>Christopher WORMAN</td>
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<td>Leonor BARBOSA</td>
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<td>Roland M. JOHNSON</td>
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<td>Alphonso PAYNE</td>
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<td>Adanna O'BRIEN</td>
<td>CIBER CERCA, University of Barcelona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sumit GARGI CHOWDHURY</td>
<td>Indian Statistical Institute of Economics</td>
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<td>D. Sridhar</td>
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<td>Joseph O. Fitsos</td>
<td>University of Colorado, Colorado</td>
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<td>A. Mani</td>
<td>VAsian American University</td>
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<td>Yume Chang</td>
<td>CIBER of Medical School, University of Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaolin ZHANG</td>
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<td>Jie-jie HE</td>
<td>Tianjin University, China</td>
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<td>Guangzhen GUO</td>
<td>Yunnan University, China</td>
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Uloba puts the vision of Independent Living ideology into practice.

The Scytl - eVoting solution brings the privacy and security of voting to visually impaired voters.

Sam CAMPBELL, Operations Manager, Asia Pacific, Scytl (Australia)
For us, persons with intellectual disabilities, exercising the right to vote means that we are citizens, that we belong to our country, and that we can express our opinions on who runs the country and what they should do.

Corinne CLERMONT, Vice President, Nous Aussi (France)

My level of confidence has tripled since WILD.

Ekaete UMOH, WILD alumna (Nigeria)

The Personal Ombudsman does not act according to what he or she thinks is for his client’s own good. The PO only carries out what the client tells him or her to do.

Maths JESPERSON, PO-Skåne (Sweden)

Only thanks to my personal assistance budget (PAB) am I able to keep on doing what I do now: going to work and being a father and a husband.

Peter, a PAB user (Belgium)

The SAVE program attempts to offer people with intellectual disabilities who are victims of sexual abuse the same access to justice as the general population and to ensure conviction of the perpetrators.

Carol BOSCH, Project Manager, Cape Mental Health (South Africa)

Join the Zero Project Network!

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