

## 2021 Promising Practices for Disability Inclusion

### ➤ OVERVIEW

Transforming the environments that prevent children with disabilities from experiencing fullness of life is at the heart of World Vision's mission and a key part of our gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) work.

Children with disabilities are some of the most vulnerable children in the world. When our field staff map the most vulnerable children in communities, they intentionally look for children with disabilities. Childhood poverty and disability are inextricably linked. Inadequate nutrition, untreated health conditions, and dangerous work can all cause disability. Disability stigmatizes children and their parents in most cultures. Children with disabilities may be hidden and excluded from participating in their communities. There is only a 10% chance that children with disabilities in developing countries will attend school—and they are three to four times more likely to be victims of violence than other children.

To capture some of the work that World Vision is doing to address these challenges for children with disabilities, we launched a call for promising practices. We received 27 nominations from 23 different countries. Awards for the top three promising practices went to Georgia, Kenya, and India. These practices addressed the five domains of change outlined in World Vision's approach for [GESI](#) by enhancing access to services and opportunities; improving well-being; facilitating participation in education, social, economic and cultural activities; engaging children with disabilities in decision-making; and tackling systems that discriminate against children with disabilities.

By highlighting these promising practices, we hope others are encouraged to replicate their work. After each promising practice, contact information is listed.

For more information on World Vision's work on disability inclusion globally, contact the co-chairs of the disability inclusion leadership team:

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*Annastacia Mutunga, child well-being facilitator from the Mwala area programme in Kenya, plays with Dennis during a home visit.*

### ➤ TOP THREE PROMISING PRACTICES

Listed in alphabetical order

World Vision Georgia's Inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD) approach shows how an education programme focused on ECD can build linkages and partnerships to identify children with disabilities early on and provide holistic interventions to meet their needs. Targeted early childhood development is critical to engage caregivers and other community members and prevent deaths, developmental delays, violence, neglect, and social isolation among children with disabilities.

#### Georgia: Inclusive Early Childhood Development

World Vision Georgia's approach includes the following principles:

##### Every child is valued

Stigma towards children with disabilities was identified as the biggest barrier to accessing early childhood education. The team used World Vision's ["Traveling Together"](#) training manual on disability inclusion and held awareness raising meetings led by local partners to change attitudes towards children with disabilities among parents, teachers, and the broader community.



### Every child is seen and families are empowered

The team uses World Vision's core education program models, [Go Baby Go](#) (for the first 1,000 days) and [Learning Roots](#) (ages 3-6 years), with all children, including those with special needs.

The program trained inclusive preschool education specialists to use developmental markers to identify children who have significant development delays, as this may indicate the child has a disability.

Three-month positive parenting schools empower parents of children with disabilities as direct caregivers and advocates to ensure accessibility, diversity, and quality of services for their children. Parents also receive information on the services that are available.

Children are engaged in quality age and developmentally appropriate activities facilitated by inclusive early childhood educators and paraprofessionals.

### An inclusive learning environment is created

As part of ongoing preschool education staff coaching, World Vision supported the recruitment, funding, training, and coaching of inclusion specialists. These specialists reach out to children with disabilities and provide ongoing consultancy for parents and preschool workers to ensure access, meaningful participation, and smooth transition to preschool (and later to school). As a result, the number of children with disabilities in preschools, including those from ethnic minorities, increases each year. The World Vision team developed a comprehensive guidebook for school readiness programming and a capacity building plan with the Ministry of Education to extend this practice nationally.

### Advocacy for transformative development

Thanks to World Vision and the community's advocacy, an Early Childhood Development and Education Centre was opened in one of the areas where World Vision operates. The centre is run by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) and funded by the government.

World Vision has shared the materials and results from the

program nationally and developed a white paper to encourage the adoption of the program at a national level. This process has catalysed demand from community members for improved services for children with disabilities, resulting in an increase in infrastructure projects to enhance ECD services that are co-funded by governmental entities and other donor organizations.

World Vision is also advising the government as they roll out their national commitment to provide five-year-old children with hearing and visual impairments access to pre-primary education. For more information, watch the video [Inclusive Preschool Education](#).

- **Contact person:** Antje Luedemann-Dundua at [antje\\_luedemann- Dundua@wvi.org](mailto:antje_luedemann- Dundua@wvi.org)
- **GESI domains:** This program focused on enhancing access to education and specialized services for children with disabilities and conducted advocacy to enhance the overall system at local and national levels.

### India: Our Voice

"Nothing about us, without us" has been the mantra of the disability community, demanding that persons with disabilities be integrated within the design and decision-making process of programs. World Vision encourages the participation of children in these types of processes. The Our Voice program shows that when children with disabilities are included in design and decision-making, there are truly transformative results at all levels.

World Vision India has reached around 7,000 children with disabilities through Our Voice workshops. World Vision staff and volunteers identify potential participants with disabilities during home visits. Focus group discussions are held at the local level where children are asked to rate services using a scorecard, given information on rights and services, and have the chance to enjoy talent shows. Former Our Voice champions have continued to advocate for the rights of children with disabilities in their communities. For example, Samir Mondal (West Bengal) has formed 10 groups for persons with disabilities in his area and works for the inclusion of children with disabilities by helping them to get their disability certificate, pension, transport pass, and other services.

At the state level, the program has conducted more than 20 state assemblies for children with disabilities. These assemblies help the children understand each other's challenges, express themselves, display their talents, and discuss their issues and concerns with relevant authorities. Our Voice assemblies are conducted in partnership with organizations of persons with disabilities and other NGOs, working to amplify the voices of children with disabilities and connect them to those with the power to make programming decisions that improve their lives.



**INDIA:** Rekha Kumari, pictured on her way to school, is an Our Voice participant. She convened the National Forum of Children with Disabilities—part of a global movement of children with disabilities—and led an 11 member group to present a children's manifesto at the 68th UN General Assembly in New York.

Champions from Our Voice have truly been "the voice" for children with disabilities, both in India and throughout the world. At the national level in India, meetings are held under the National Forum of Children with Disabilities structures. Internationally, Our Voice champions have participated at the [UN General Assembly](#) and at an event in Bali, advocating for the inclusion of a strong disability component for education in the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Contact:** Yacobu Devabhaktula at Jacob\_Devabhaktula@wvi.org
- **GESI domains:** The program focused on youth participation and decision-making that resulted in changes to systems, access, and well-being.

## Kenya: Lifting up voices of children with disabilities

World Vision's work in Ng'oswet demonstrates how lifting up the voice of children with disabilities can transform their environment in the community. At the start of World Vision's intervention in the area, staff came together to discuss ways to support disability inclusion. Having this intention from the start meant that the needs of children with disabilities were prioritized.

### Identification and referral

World Vision staff worked with the Department of Children Services and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities to identify and map children with disabilities. Once identified, the children were registered under the national insurance fund to help them access health services; 15 children were placed in

learning institutions where their learning needs could be met.

### Supporting participation and decision-making for children with disabilities

Children with disabilities were included in children's transformational groups in schools and participated in children's assemblies, which enabled them to present their ideas to decision-makers and engage in dialogue on issues impacting children with disabilities.

### Enhancing services

Through Citizen Voice and Action, World Vision's [social accountability model](#), communities participated in county budgeting public participation forums to ensure that children with disabilities were able to access government services. As a result, about US\$13,000 was allocated within the 2021-2022 budget period.

In addition, Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teachers were trained on how to identify and support children with disabilities. This helps ensure that children with disabilities participate in learning and receive specialized support when needed.

### Addressing stigma

In addition to engaging with ECDE teachers and community decision-makers, the program used awareness forums to support parents to better meet the needs of their children with disabilities and manage any societal stigma towards their children.

- **Contact:** Jacklyne Kurui at Jacklyne\_kurui@wvi.org
- **GESI domains:** The program focused on enhancing child participation in community decisions around needed services. This resulted in meaningful changes in local government budgeting systems, better access to services, and improvements in the overall well-being for children with disabilities.

