



JUST INCLUDE ME

*A review of Save the Children's work to
promote the rights of children with disabilities*



Save the Children
Norway

In this leaflet we have summarised the main findings of the review of Save the Children's work with children with disabilities, and then identified our commitments and how we as Save the Children Norway want to take this forward.

Researcher and author:

This leaflet is based on a review of the work of Save the Children to promote the rights of children with disabilities. The review includes an extensive desk review and case studies of Zimbabwe, Nepal and Somaliland. It focuses to a large degree on Save the Children Norway's work and includes some analysis of the wider work of Save the Children International.

The review was commissioned by Save the Children Norway and written by Ingrid Lewis, with Duncan Little, Diane Mills and Hayley Nicholls from the Enabling Education Network. The review was funded by Norad.

The views and opinions expressed in this leaflet do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Save the Children Norway. For more information, please contact Christine Rackwitz on christine.rackwitz@reddebarna.no.

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PHOTO: INGE LIE/SAVE THE CHILDREN



This is Sunil. He is one of 225 children with special needs who were assessed in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu after the earthquakes in spring 2015. Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable in natural disasters such as earthquakes, and most of them were in trauma and had psychosocial problems. Slowly, their everyday lives are returning to normal.



FOREWORD

Dear colleagues and friends,

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalised and discriminated against children in the world. They are last in line, and are often invisible. The findings from the review are clear; we are not doing enough to secure the rights of children with disabilities.

This leaflet is important and I urge you to read it. It will help us to understand where we are at, and what we need to do – and to truly be able to make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities.

Many of us have reported that we lack knowledge to work with children with disabilities; and we will therefore invest in capacity building on inclusion. But we need to start to tear down the barriers now and ensure that children with disabilities become visible. I encourage all of us to reflect upon – what can we do in our work to include children with disabilities?

I am committed – are you?

Handwritten signature of Tove R. Wang.

Tove R. Wang
General Secretary
Save the Children Norway



In the following pages (page 4-19) we present findings from the review “Rights of children with disabilities: Current practice, future direction. A Mapping and Analysis of Save the Children’s work to promote the rights of children with disabilities”.

SAVE THE CHILDREN’S WORK

Throughout its history, Save the Children has had pockets of successful, and at times quite well-known, disability work. This map shows five examples of our work.

Disability is a cross-cutting issue in Save the Children’s long-term and humanitarian work. Save the Children has disability-related work in several of the organisation’s thematic areas – education, child protection, child rights governance and health.

Education has traditionally been the sector where Save the Children has had the strongest focus on disability issues, especially through its inclusive education programmes.

Save the Children Norway should build and expand on this experience to be able to reach even more children with disabilities all around the world.



EDUCATION IN NICARAGUA

Save the Children ensured that 460 school-aged children with disabilities continued to attend early education centres.



ADVOCACY IN ZIMBABWE

Save the Children worked in partnership with Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe Trust (LCDZT) to advocate and raise awareness at various levels and in 2014 we trained 289 teachers.



CHILD RIGHTS GOVERNANCE IN PALESTINE

Save the Children has worked to establish a coordination system for inclusive service delivery for children with disabilities. Also, 300 children have received home-based rehabilitation and 26 homes have been adapted.





EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Save the Children gave 1,329 children with disabilities scholarships and material support, including wheelchairs. Save the Children, with the contribution from children with disabilities themselves, also initiated and supported the Ministry of Health to develop a 'Reaching the Unreached' health strategy.



CHILD PROTECTION IN ETHIOPIA

Save the Children has a multi-sectoral approach to community-based rehabilitation. Save the Children is working to protect children with disabilities from all forms of abuse, improve their access to rehabilitation services and promote inclusive education.

-  Countries with Save the Children activity
-  Countries with no Save the Children activity

WHAT: KEY FACTORS TO ACHIEVE INCLUSION

ADVOCACY: Develop strong advocacy messages and campaign for better practices and policies to fulfil the rights of children with disabilities.

COMPETENCY: Increase knowledge and build capacity at all levels to reach and include children with disabilities.

PARTNERSHIP: Improve and increase partnership with children with disabilities, their families, civil society organisations, disabled people's organisations, communities, governments and the private sector.



COMMITMENT: Commit and take responsibility to protect and fulfil the rights of children with disabilities. Improve and revise programme models and approaches to include children with disabilities.

CHILDREN'S VOICE: Include children with disabilities by encouraging and letting them speak up. Listen to their voice so they get equal opportunity to take part in and influence decisions that affect their life.

EVIDENCE AND LEARNING: Test, document and share programme models and approaches that provide tangible and immediate results for children with disabilities and their families.

HOW: THE TWIN-TRACK APPROACH

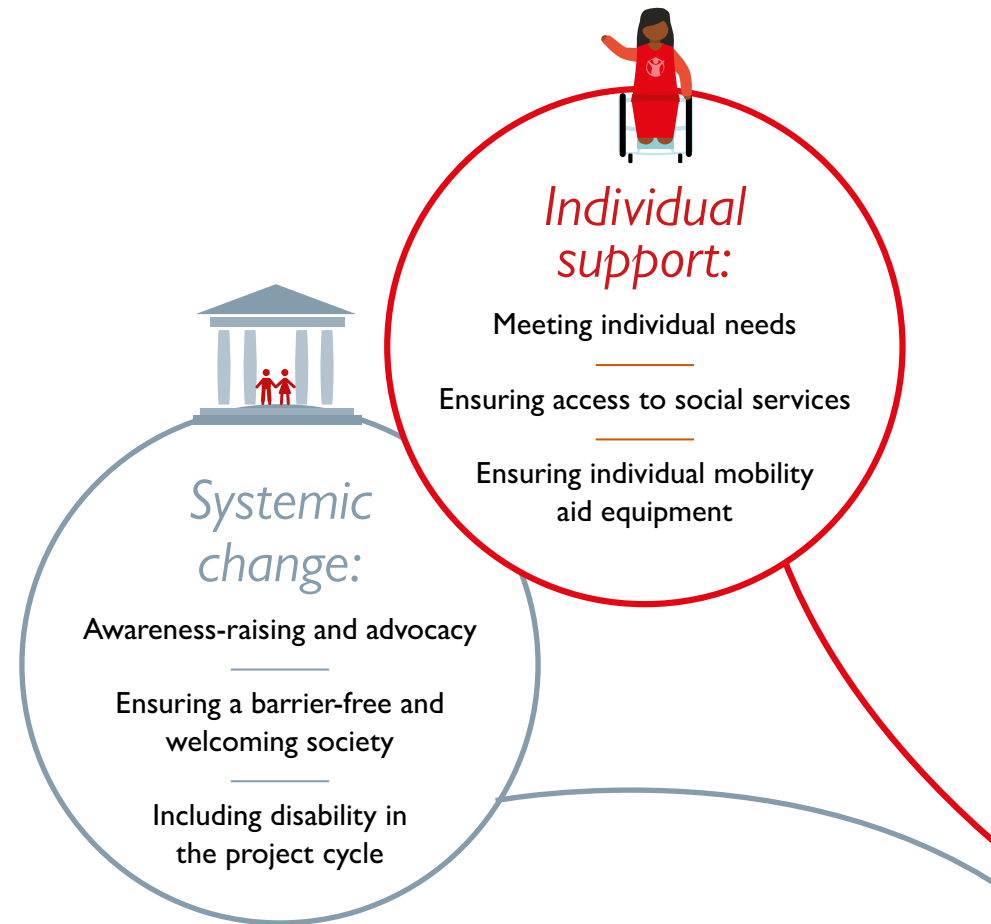
The review recommends Save the Children to work with partners to adopt a twin-track approach.

This means that Save the Children and partners should 1) deliver individual support to children with disabilities, and 2) mainstream disability to make societies more inclusive and adaptive.

1) Every child has a unique need or interest to be met. This need requires individual support, varying from access to services such as health care and education, to mobility aid equipment such as wheelchairs and crutches. Ensuring individual support empowers children with disabilities so they can get maximum benefit of existing infrastructure and systems. Providing adequate individual support often requires the competence of disability-specialists, non-governmental organisations specialising in disability and/or disabled people's organisations.

2) Mainstreaming disability is important to create a more welcoming system and a barrier-free environment for children with disabilities. Mainstreaming means working with wider systemic changes or advocating to 'change the system' and promoting the rights of children with disabilities. Also, it entails creating awareness about the value of participation of children with disabilities and ensuring their empowerment.

The review found that Save the Children, in some programmes, is already working through a twin-track approach to disability. When doing so, Save the Children works through partnership with disability organisations to ensure individual and technical support, while Save the Children adds its child-focused voice to advocacy work around disability rights.





COMMITMENT

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

The review of Save the Children's work with disabled children found that there is an increasing strategic commitment to promote the rights of children with disabilities across Save the Children at both management and operational level.

Save the Children International has taken the step of making disability one of three cross-cutting issues for the 2016-2018 global strategy. The organisation envisages that the rights of children with disabilities will be mainstreamed across programmes from 2018 onwards. It recognizes that the organisation may lack capacity on disabil-

ity, and has decided that 2016-2018 is a disability capacity building period for the organisation.

This is also a period with new strategic commitments from Save the Children Norway and the organisation explicitly mentions disability in its 2014-2018 strategy. One of the six priorities in the strategy is that Save the Children Norway will "strive to meet the particular rights of girls and boys, children with disabilities and other marginalised children in relation to the context".

The review revealed that Save the Children staff are largely aware of the commitment and support the principle of upholding the rights of children with disabilities, but seem to lack clarity about key disability concepts. Most review respondents felt there should be a disability policy to guide the 2016-2018 commitment to disability as a cross-cutting issue.

Save the Children staff call for practical advice and support to turn theoretical commitments into effective actions on the ground.

REVIEW FINDING



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- **Develop a brief policy on disability outlining concepts and long-term commitments.** Include guidance for implementation, discuss conceptual issues, address myths and misunderstandings. The policy could be the basis for mandatory disability capacity building within Save the Children.
- **Be clear on long-term commitment.** Clarify that Save the Children Norway's 2014-2018 strategy commitments to children with disabilities are the start of a much longer commitment that is not just tied to the current Norad funding period.
- **Give practical advice and support to turn theoretical commitments into effective actions on the ground.**
- **Start implementation and build on existing disability expertise and programmes.** Emphasize that Save the Children International's disability capacity building period does not mean that disability-related work cannot happen in 2016-2018.
- **Engage with donors on disability rights issues.** This will increase awareness of the rights of children with disabilities and make them more willing to fund disability-related work after 2018.
- **Gather and share learning about disability with donors, whether in the form of basic information sharing or more vigorous advocacy.** Save the Children Norway could take a lead on this through its relationship with Norad.
- **Document how Save the Children Norway takes forward the disability elements of its new strategy.** Use the lessons learned in lobbying for other Save the Children members and informing Save the Children International during the 2016-2018 disability capacity building period.



COMPETENCY

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

The review revealed that Save the Children staff is largely aware of the increasing strategic commitment to promote the rights of children with disabilities across the organisation. Also, staff largely support the principle of upholding the rights of children with disabilities.

The theoretical commitments made at management and operational levels, however, are not always matched with ‘practical know-how’. This means that staff do not always feel they have the capacity and confidence to take action towards including children with disabilities in their programmes and advocacy work.

The review illustrated that the level of understanding of disability among staff varied from seeing disability mainstreaming as be-

ing about making small, achievable adaptations, to fears that it requires a high degree of medical or technical expertise and large-scale specialist interventions. Thoughts mostly focused on the need to work out whether and to what extent SC should take a direct approach (e.g. taking action itself), or take action in collaboration with disability-expert partners, or lobby for others, especially governments to take forward certain actions.

A number of respondents raised the importance of more effective and extensive use of specialist partners to build SC country-level capacity. This was seen as a more cost-effective option than, for instance, trying to recruit a disability adviser for every country.

Among most respondents there was a sense that including children with disabilities

would be possible, if SC had more expertise or provided staff with more practical advice or tools. Also, calls for more training were expressed by the majority of review respondents. Competency around disability at the moment appears to be dependent on individuals rather than institutionalised as a key element of certain posts in the organisation. Had disability been institutionalised in the posts then the level of disability focus would probably have remained constant, despite staff turn-over.

Various respondents noted the need for a “massive disability awareness campaign” within SC to improve staff and partner awareness. The review revealed limited use of informal information sharing as a way to embed disability rights messages.



“We have no problem regarding policy and strategy regarding education of children with disabilities... However, we lack capacity and resource to fully implement policies and strategies.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT FROM ETHIOPIA

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- **Make sure Save the Children Norway disability capacity building is a clear priority in terms of time, budget and staff areas of responsibility.** Expectations should be monitored from the top to ensure structure and commitment.
- **Spell out clearly that disability capacity building is important and mandatory.**
- **Offer members and countries practical advice and support for doing disability capacity building work as early as possible in the strategy period.** This should be done even while Save the Children International still builds its own capacity.
- **Facilitate learning from experience** by encouraging creative ways of documenting and sharing project activities and successes.
- **Take the lead in developing an internal campaign to raise awareness among staff and country programmes** about how and why Save the Children Norway and Save the Children International commit to children with disabilities. Examples from experience can help to illustrate the arguments and show that supporting children with disabilities is achievable for SC programmes.
- **Cooperate more comprehensively with disability-specialist partners across Save the Children International’s programme portfolio.** Disability-specialist partners have the potential to fill technical and/or implementation gaps, and build Save the Children International staff capacity and confidence around working with children with disabilities.
- **Assign a disability focal person to ‘champion’ disability within the work of Save the Children International working groups.** The focal persons of each working group could come together to share experiences and provide mutual support.
- **Revise inductions and trainings at Save the Children International, member and country level to incorporate disability equality and rights issues.** Integrate commitments to disability rights into job descriptions and professional development.



PARTNERSHIP

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

A common issue raised by almost all review respondents in Nepal, Somaliland and Zimbabwe was the need for Save the Children to move forward from stating that disability should be on the organisation's agenda and explanations of *why* (i.e. policy), towards discussions about *how* to deliver a commitment to supporting children with disabilities (i.e. practical guidance and support).

A wide variety of opinions were collected during the review in relation to the question of *how* Save the Children could move forward with disability rights issues. This ranged from a small number of staff who felt that SC is not capable or positioned to work on disability and should therefore not attempt it; to a similarly small number who believed extensive disability-specific action

should be taken. Perhaps the most common type of opinion in relation to how was that SC needs to find some “small strategies for action” to support children with disabilities within its existing work, rather than going “all out” for large, separate disability-focused projects.

The review found that SC has ongoing cooperation with disability organisations. At global level, SC has collaborated with Handicap International, both with research and publications. In some programmes at country level, SC's capacity is already being successfully supplemented and raised through partnerships with disability organisations; either non-governmental organisations specialising in disability, or disabled people's organisations. Review respondents

indicated that partnering with disability organisations tends to be ad hoc and related to specific project activities, rather than strategically planned as a way to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities or to support capacity building within SC on disability.

Several review respondents highlighted that partnerships could build SC confidence and capacity. Also, one respondent indicated that it would be useful to have strategic partners to support disability mainstreaming in SC. These would not just be partners that help SC with implementing a specific, time-bound project, but partners who can act as expert advisers and provide longer-term support across a range of SC projects and advocacy initiatives.

“A large organisation like SC, with projects targeting large numbers, is not always well placed to address the individual needs of children with disabilities. SC needs to seek partnerships with specialised organisations equipped with tools and approaches to address specific disabilities.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT FROM SAVE THE CHILDREN AUSTRALIA

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- **Apply twin-track thinking as a framework for SC’s approach to supporting the rights of children with disabilities.**

While SC could use its advocacy and lobbying skills to promoting the rights and needs of children with disabilities, disability-specialist partners could complement this by providing the individual and technical support.

- **Improve and increase relationships and partnerships with disability NGOs and disabled people’s organisations at both local, regional and international level.**

The cooperation can fill SC’s disability-related capacity gaps and build SC’s internal disability capacity and confidence.





CHILDREN'S VOICE

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

Child participation has become an increasingly important focus in Save the Children in the last couple of decades. During the review respondents reported that there have been conscious efforts to hear the voices of children with disabilities. For instance, in Kenya and India children with disabilities were facilitated to give inputs into Save the Children International's global strategy.

Nonetheless, the disability review documented that child participation and child voice among children with disabilities remains limited. Some respondents highlighted that child participation in SC is still considered a working principle rather than an objective or expected result. Respondents stated that it is

not always seen as compulsory or embedded across all work, as there are no indicators making it obligatory.

The review also revealed that children with disabilities are not routinely included in project consultation processes, though there are some positive examples. Data on participation is not routinely disaggregated, and it is therefore not evident how many children with disabilities are included in participatory or child voice activities.

Some review respondents indicated that while there is increasing focus on consulting children, it is often not clear if or to what extent these processes have facilitated partic-

ipation of children with disabilities. A Save the Children Norway respondent noted that child participation guidance materials for SC staff and partners do not routinely include disability issues or advice on how to facilitate the participation and voice of children with disabilities.

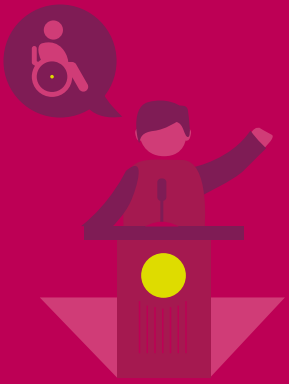
Save the Children should make efforts to consult children with disabilities as routine as Save the Children's efforts to consult both girls and boys.

REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- **Involve children and elicit simple, low cost ideas from children themselves, their parents and families, or other people with disabilities.** Solutions that are needed to enable children with disabilities to be included are not necessarily complex or technical.
- **Make efforts to consult children with disabilities as routine as Save the Children's efforts to consult both girls and boys.**
- **Engage and collaborate with disability-specific organisations** to give Save the Children International programmes more support with finding and engaging children with disabilities within inclusive consultation processes.
- **Revise Save the Children's advice and guidance on child participation to offer more support to include children with disabilities.** Engage with disability-specific partners or disabled people's organisations to get inputs and advice on how to reach and support children with disabilities to participate.
- **Gradually update and re-issue generic advice or guidance documents on child participation and consultation** to ensure they include practical tips for facilitating diverse child participation.





ADVOCACY

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

The consensus view among review respondents seemed to be that there are pockets of disability advocacy activity within country programmes, but this is on a project-by-project basis without an overall organisational approach or message.

The majority of programme and advocacy work around disability takes place within the education sector, and within the education sector children with disabilities are considered mostly within inclusive education programmes.

The review found that there is extensive international disability advocacy which is relevant to Save the Children's work, but SC is not always well linked in with these advocacy debates and movements.

Although Save the Children International members have a degree of freedom to develop their own advocacy focus, advocacy efforts across SC are to some extent governed by Save the Children International. The review found however that there is no clear organisational direction or message for advocacy relating to children with disabilities. Also,

Save the Children International's advocacy has no clear guide for representing children with disabilities in advocacy outputs.

The review found that programme staff often expressed that they have enough expertise to advocate on disability, even if they are not implementing experts. SC advocacy staff in Nepal, for example, noted that they are not disability experts, but feeling they could still advocate confidently on issues that affect children with disabilities, such as out-of-school children.

*“No one listened to the individual organisations
but together we are stronger”*

RESPONDENT FROM SOMALILAND CHILD RIGHTS FORUM



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- **Collaborate with disability NGOs and use Save the Children International’s strength and expertise on advocacy to change systems.** By working together with partners to deliver both the twin tracks, generalist NGOs (like SC) and specialists could make significant achievements in realising the rights of children with disabilities.
- **Promote the respect of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD).** Save the Children Norway should encourage its use within SC as a framework for planning and monitoring programme interventions or advocacy around the rights for children with disabilities. This could be a starting point for Save the Children International developing an external advocacy campaign, based around a key piece of research and its own growing experience.



EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

The review noted that Save the Children has had some successful, and at times quite well-known, disability work. Disability-focused work continues today, but Save the Children International, SC members and country programmes are not systematically documenting, analysing or reflecting on their efforts to uphold the rights of children with disabilities. This means promising practices around disability inclusion are not always known about, shared or learned from.

Lack of a global steer (and lack of donor expectation) on disability-focused indicators and data collection means that country programmes mostly decide for themselves how much or little information they record. The review found that this can vary between

projects within a country as well as between countries.

There has been increasing interest in developing mechanisms for gathering data on people with disabilities. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents agreed that there is no systematic disaggregation of data according to disability within Save the Children. Some respondents felt that it should be compulsory to disaggregate, like it is for gender. Others felt data collection focused on disability would be impossible, or at best very challenging.

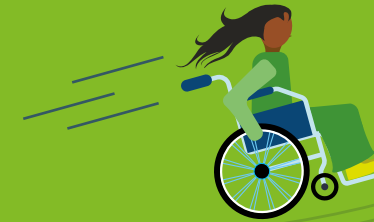
Review of annual plans and reports revealed a lack of clear disability-related indicators. Within the latest Norad funding propos-

al, however, ten countries, over half of the countries within Save the Children Norway's programme portfolio, include one or more indicators linked to children with disabilities. Some respondents reported that Save the Children Norway and other SC members advise or encourage the use of disability indicators and disaggregation within project and monitoring and evaluation plans (e.g. disaggregating enrolment figures), but that this is not compulsory and no guidance or tools are provided on how to do it.

Other respondents pointed out that SC needs to do more than just count the number of children with disabilities, and instead needs to become stronger at using qualitative measures of progress for this group.

Save the Children should document and share information about existing disability expertise and programmes.

REVIEW RECOMMENDATION



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

SC Staff in Nepal expressed the view that existing monitoring and evaluation tools could not be used to look at disability issues. They felt new tools would need to be developed if SC were to expect all projects to monitor/measure disability indicators.

- **Document and share information about existing disability expertise or programmes by setting up properly mandated and funded mechanisms as soon as possible.** Learning and capacity building around disability will require not just publications and guides to be shared, there also needs to be a system for documenting and sharing up-to-date experiences.
- **Capitalise and document the start Save the Children Norway has made in its strategy by developing clear guidance on how the disability commitments will be measured and reviewed.** Use this in lobbying for other members to do similar work, and for informing Save the Children International during the 2016-2018 disability capacity building period.
- **Take a lead in using the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** as a ready-made framework for developing a set of simple qualitative and quantitative indicators and monitoring and evaluation tools. Save the Children Norway could pilot its use in one or a few new project, document the process and experience and use it to encourage or advise wider roll-out.
- **Require country programmes to meet some basic standards with regard to disability indicators and data collection,** also in relation to periodic reporting and mid/end-term evaluations.

THE WAY FORWARD: OUR COMMITMENT TOWARDS 2030

Save the Children Norway is committed to increasing our focus and ability to fulfil the rights of the most marginalised children.

This review has given us important findings and recommendations on how to ensure the inclusion of children disabilities and it is our responsibility towards children to make sure we follow this up and that no child is left behind.

Save the Children International has in the coming strategy period 2016-2018 committed to a vision and mission that inspires three breakthroughs - that children survive, learn and are safe. Our goal is that by 2030:

- No child dies from preventable causes before their fifth birthday
- All children learn from a quality basic education
- Violence against children is no longer tolerated

Save the Children International has committed the

next three years to building capacity in the organisation and increasing the focus on inclusion of children with disabilities in programming, participatory activities, advocacy and partnerships.

Save the Children Norway will equally strive to increase our reach to these children by working with disability as a cross-cutting theme in development and humanitarian settings and in all thematic areas – education, child rights governance, health and nutrition, and child protection.

We are not starting at zero, we are already building capacity and knowledge. We are also learning from our experience on disability to ensure and improve inclusive education as well as increased protection of the rights of children with disabilities. We will continue to build on this experience and make sure we work with country offices to improve our ability

to reach the most deprived children and ensure that children with disabilities are included.

The Sustainable Development goals have illustrated clear commitment to ensure substantial change for children with disabilities at a global level. The commitment is a window of opportunity we cannot afford to ignore. Every child has the right to be an equal part of the society, to receive quality education, get a safe job, live a healthy life, and experience economic growth and development.

By 2030, disabled children have to be included in our society and we must remove unnecessary barriers and obstacles. By doing so, we can build prosperous and sustainable societies where every one of us contributes to the community.

By 2030, disabled children have to be included in our society and we must remove unnecessary barriers and obstacles.



Save the Children Norway has identified the following actions in line with the recommendations of the review:



We will confirm our **COMMITMENT** and collaborate with Save the Children International to develop a joint Inclusion Policy and guidelines to facilitate inclusion.



We will build **COMPETENCY** and strengthen staff capacity.



We will strive to routinely consult children with disabilities and make sure their opinions are part of the **CHILDREN'S VOICE** that we help advocate and communicate.



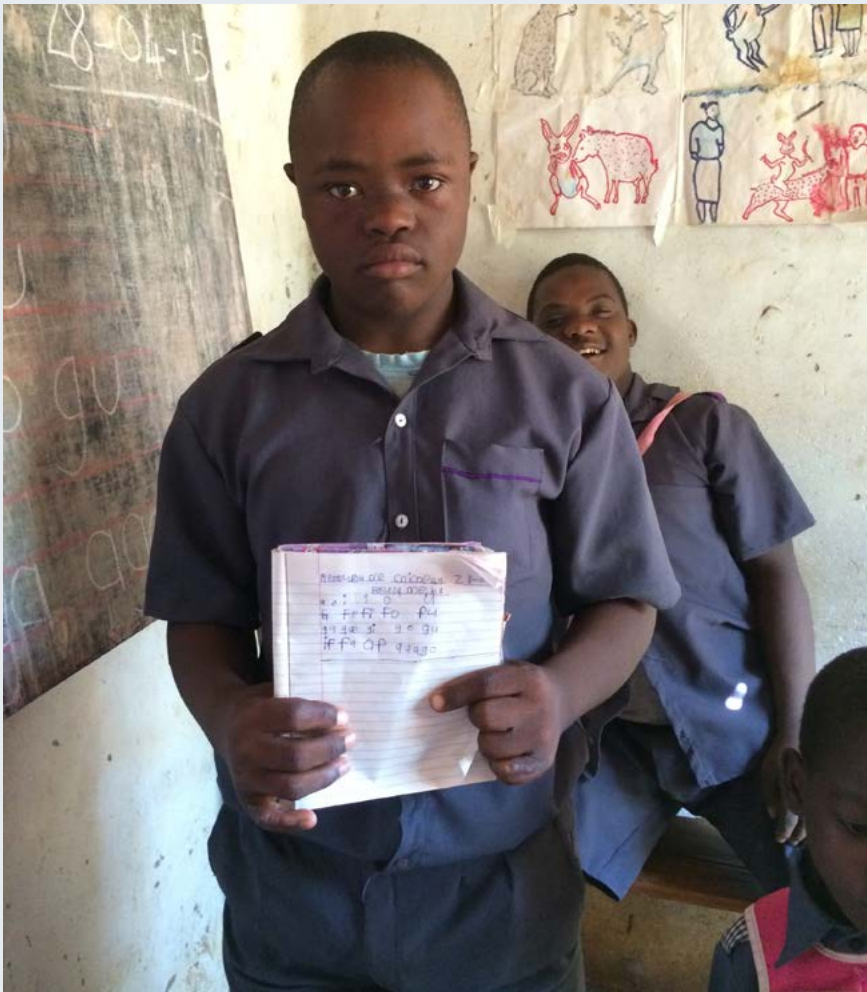
We will strive to adapt a twin-track approach to disability. Also, we will strive for system-level changes and provide individual and technical support through **PARTNERSHIPS** with organisations with specific competencies on disabilities.



We will include key disability awareness messages in our community awareness raising activities and **ADVOCACY** campaigns.



We will work to ensure better **EVIDENCE AND LEARNING** by gathering statistically reliable data about children with disabilities. We will include disability data in baselines and include qualitative and quantitative disability indicators.



In Malawi Save the Children is working with Resource Centers attached to the schools that offer education for children with developmental and other disabilities. The inclusive education programme in Malawi is implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education at central and district level, as well the Teacher Training Institutes and the Network of Disabled People's Organisations (Fedoma).

Kelvin is proud to show us that he has learnt to read in the resource center in Kaliyaka school in urban Lilongwe.



Save the Children in Somaliland supports community welfare committees through trainings and awareness-raising sessions. This enables the committees to engage with families and community members that need support. Also, the committees can identify children that are particularly vulnerable, such as children with disabilities, and help them get the support they need. This community welfare committee is located in an Internally Displaced Person camp in Hargeisa. The members have, on their own initiative, created a small fund which they use as an emergency buffer for when they might detect families who need help urgently.



Surya Bhakta Prajapati is the director of the Resource Centre for Rehabilitation and Development (RCRD), a long-time partner organisation to Save the Children in Nepal. Prajapati is from Pottery Square in Bhaktapur, which was badly damaged by the earthquakes. 12-year-old Sunil comes from the same square. Sunil has Down syndrome and was taken special care of by the RCRD director.

”After the earthquake he kept quiet and he was very traumatized, but now you can see how he is enjoying... He has been in all these therapeutic healing classes”, says Mr. Prajapati.

PHOTO: INGE LIE/SAVE THE CHILDREN

