

Zero Project– Impact Transfer

**Scaling and replicating
innovations in Inclusive Education**

10 participants

Which 10 participants have been selected
in 2019–2020

Examples of success

Which participants of 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 are already
growing and scaling

The Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme

A PARTNERSHIP OF THE ESSL FOUNDATION, FUNDACIÓN DESCÚBREME, AND ASHOKA

From the hundreds of nominations for the annual Zero Project Awards, the most replicable initiatives are selected to participate in the Impact Transfer programme. Previously, 21 projects have been supported, with ten new ones joining this high-potential programme this year.

“We want to enable the Zero Project Innovators to transfer the most impactful innovations to new places,” notes Martin Essl, Founder and Chairman of the Essl Foundation. And that sums up the goal of the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme.

In 2017 the Essl Foundation joined forces with Ashoka to initiate the programme to internationalize the most innovative disability solutions for a barrier-free world. Last year Fundación Descubréme, from Chile, also joined this partnership.

How to join the programme

Since 2018, every year ten (in 2019 there were 11) projects are selected from among the many nominations for the Zero Project Awards that have a proven impact model and the potential to scale their impact internationally. A premise, therefore, is that the project is an innovation that can be transferred to other regions, countries, or perhaps adapted for other disabilities. The organization must also be willing and able to do so, that is, replication must be part of its strategy.

“We want to enable the Zero Project Innovators to transfer the most impactful innovations to new places.”

Martin Essl, Founder and Chairman of the Essl Foundation

If these requirements are met, the selected projects go through a structured six-month programme to prepare for international replication, with five online webinar training sessions on: social entrepreneurship, impact modelling, business modelling, replication strategies, and financing strategies. In addition, a ‘mentor’ is assigned to each project to help clarify the strategy for replication, to develop a replication plan, and to provide external expert input.

Selected projects also benefit from matchmaking opportunities with potential replication partners from across the Zero Project, Fundación Descubréme, and Ashoka communities. For example, participants have the opportunity to present their projects in a dedicated session during the forthcoming Zero Project Conference in Vienna (19–21 February 2020). Additional opportunities are also provided at the Zero Project Latin America Conference in partnership with Fundación Descubréme in Santiago, Chile (June 2020). After the programme, follow-up support will help to implement the replication strategy, and the programme’s alumni community offers further options for networking and cooperation.

Ashoka as Impact Transfer experts

Impact Transfer is an initiative of Ashoka, the leading global community of social entrepreneurs and change makers. Worldwide, 3,700 social entrepreneurs in over 80 countries receive financial and non-financial support to replicate their impact in new geographies, in new contexts, in different ways, and through different types of programmes.

The Impact Transfer initiative facilitates the cross-border transfer of solutions that generate social impacts and makes them available where they are needed and demanded by local stakeholders.



The 2019 Zero Project–Impact Transfer participants at the Zero Project Conference.

Fundación Descúbreme as a new partner

Last year the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme welcomed Fundación Descúbreme as a new partner. The non-profit organization was founded in 2010 to promote the full integration of people with cognitive disabilities in all areas of human development. On a national level, the foundation is one of the main organizations that fosters the construction of an inclusive culture in Chile.

Internationally, Fundación Descúbreme has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council on disability issues, is a member of the Association of People Supporting Employment First, the Spanish Association for Supported Employment, and Inclusion International. In 2017, Fundación Descúbreme was awarded by Zero Project as an Innovative Practice in inclusive employment.

According to Fundación Descúbreme, the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme is very appropriate for the current needs of its region. Maria Ignacia Rodriguez Espinoza is coordinator for strategic projects and a consultant to Fundación Descúbreme. As she notes, “We are not yet on the level of the developed countries, but the connections and access to information that this programme has provided has helped us to implement what is necessary, and thus transform Chile into an inclusive country.”

“Facing the digital changes brought about by Big Data is of particular interest to Descúbreme, as it offers many opportunities to overcome barriers,” adds Rodriguez Espinoza. “Although this technology is already being used in some European countries, it is not yet being transferred to the rest of the world.”

“The connections and access to information that this programme has provided has helped us.”

**Maria Ignacia Rodriguez Espinoza,
Fundación Descúbreme**

To her, innovations such as Livox, which is participating in this year’s Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme, are a clear example of how information can be collected and used to improve people’s lives, especially those of people with disabilities. In June 2020, participants in the programme from Latin America, and other invited participants, will have the opportunity to present their projects at a conference in Chile.

“We hope that all those who take part will benefit from the opportunity to share their project,” says Rodriguez Espinoza, “and that they will also be able to develop networks to grow and replicate the innovations that help people with disabilities.”

The potential of the 10 participants

This year's participants in the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme offer inspiring ideas to make education more inclusive worldwide. Improving access to assistive technology through computer labs in schools, a father creating an app to give his daughter a voice, a university diploma for students with intellectual disabilities. At the end of each description, the Impact Transfer-team summarizes the potential that it sees for this participant (in green).

Association for Shared Learning ELA:

The One School for All programme

One School for All is the first whole school approach to Inclusive Education in Bulgaria. Set up by the Association of Shared Learning ELA, an education-focused NGO based in Sofia, the two-year programme offers schools a structured and systemic approach in four key areas: school leadership, teaching practices, partnership with parents, and child safety.

The programme costs a school in Bulgaria around €5,200, which covers eight training sessions, mentorship support, and printed materials. Not included are travel expenses for trainers and mentors, which in Bulgaria amount to €1,300. One School for All has begun to be extended to another three countries – Romania, Greece, and Portugal – as part of an Erasmus+ project funded by the European Commission. The project includes a training for trainers as well as the translation and adaptation of a free e-learning course “Introduction to IE,” which was developed in the model programme. In addition, ELA is looking for new possibilities to cooperate with potential partners in other countries and is also seeking new funding opportunities to do so.

The project's existing scaling expertise and its potential application across the mainstream education system in many different countries are just some of the reasons it was selected for this year's programme.



Amar Seva Sangam:

Early intervention through an app

In the Indian province of Tamil Nadu the NGO Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA) runs an Early Intervention Centre providing special education, physiotherapy, and other services to children below six years free of cost. To make this service available in more distant regions, ASSA developed a training programme for community rehabilitation workers (CRWs) and an app to provide them with ongoing support – the Mobile Village Based Rehabilitation Initiative.

Following an initial assessment of the child by a rehabilitation specialist, treatment is then provided by a CRW. In addition to providing connectivity between the CRW and the specialist, the initiative serves to document the therapy and to track progress using standardized developmental tools embedded in the app. Ideally, the frequency of visits by the specialist is reduced to once a month.

Improvements in the quality of support have been confirmed. Of the more than 1,700 caregivers who have been supported to date, 74 per cent report reduced stress and 62 per cent report improved interaction with their children. There are now plans to extend the programme to other districts of Tamil Nadu as well as to other states of India.

The Zero Project–Impact Transfer selection panel felt this programme was a great example of using technology to scale effectively and increase access to much needed services in rural areas.

Nayi Disha Resource Centre:

Educating caregivers online and offline



Based in Hyderabad, India, the Nayi Disha Resource Centre is an NGO that supports families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its free online platform offers a directory of verified services and information as well as an online peer support community.

To also support caregivers with limited digital understanding, Nayi Disha has established a programme that uses common tools such as WhatsApp. And for people with no digital skills or no access to the Internet, the NGO has set up an offline programme, including workshops, support groups, and family events.

The online-platform receives between 600 and 800 visits a day, mainly from parents across India. To support its expansion, Nayi Disha has started translating content into Telugu and Hindi. To replicate the offline model, the organization is working closely with parent support groups; and it has extended its programme to other cities, including Bangalore, Mumbai, and most recently Chennai. Furthermore, it aims to replicate the model in other developing countries that are positioned similarly to India.

The selection panel were particularly impressed with the different approaches taken to ensure that families with and without digital literacy and access could still get support. They felt this could be replicable in many different contexts.

Interview with Loic van Cutsem

“There are a lot of proven social innovations out there!”

Social innovations are said to be more difficult to replicate than business ideas. Why?

Van Cutsem: One factor is that these entrepreneurs very often want to tackle local problems and do not necessarily intend to go global. And if they are willing, not all of them are equipped to do so. On the other hand, there is also a lack of infrastructure. Traditional enterprises benefit from business agencies, etc. We do not yet have a similar infrastructure for social innovation and we hope that the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme will fill this gap. And then funding is definitely one of the key problems.

What are barriers for replication?

Van Cutsem: Not everything is replicable, and this is part of our work – to find out what can be replicated. In the inclusion and disability sector there are definitely what we call framework conditions, which differ from one country to another. But generally there are a lot of proven social innovations out there. And many of them can be efficiently adapted and adopted in a new context.

So what are your criteria for transferable social innovation?

Van Cutsem: The first is that there should really be enough evidence in the country of origin that it is a proven model and that it works both in terms of impact and business. Second, it should be sufficiently standardised or documented so that partners in other countries can take it up. And third, there must of course be local demand and local partners who are prepared to replicate it.

And what is your advice for successful replication?

Van Cutsem: One, don't replicate too soon. Also in our process, the first step is to make sure that they are ready, and if not, to identify where the gaps are and work on them before going any further. Two is that there exists a real mandate and the strategic willingness of the organization to pursue this strategy. Three is definitely about finding the right replication partners. Make sure that you define your criteria and that they fit well. And four is the question of funding. Ensure that there are enough financial resources available. It takes months or years to prepare, pilot, and then really replicate.



Loic van Cutsem, from Ashoka Austria, directs the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme, so he knows very well what social innovations need to become replicable.

Livox:

An alternative way to communicate

Due to a medical error, Clarinha Pereira was born with cerebral palsy. As a consequence, she cannot walk and communicate verbally. To enable Clarinha to articulate her wishes and feelings, her father, Carlos, developed an app: Livox.

People who use the Livox app select virtual cards with pictures of objects, places, and even emotions and illustrated short phrases, which can be shown to others or read aloud. To adapt to individual needs, Livox uses intelligent algorithms and machine learning and can even be operated with the eyes by blinking. To allow others to talk to the user, Livox can be voice-activated, using artificial intelligence technology to help the user to answer. Livox also features a content creator that enables users to add communication cards with videos, pictures, and music. In this way, Livox can also be used by teachers to educate students with learning difficulties.

Livox has already been distributed in the Middle East and has been piloted in many countries. Currently, the app has more than 25,000 users in 11 countries, is compatible with 25 languages, and is looking to expand to other geographies.

Livox's existing international connections and the potential for making the software available in other languages meant the selection panel felt it had a strong base for further replication.



InABLE:

Technology labs for blind students

In Kenya, the US-based NGO inABLE has made it its goal to increase access to assistive technology for students who are blind or have low vision.

inABLE equips specialist schools with all the necessary infrastructure, as well as with instructors to run the programme. Once installed, the computer assistive technology lab supports students to develop technological skills, from such basics as typing to more sophisticated qualifications such as Java programming. The NGO has also developed an assistive technology computer curriculum for blind students aged 6–20 years.

Since 2009, inABLE has established eight computer assistive technology labs in six schools in Kenya. The plan is to replicate this model across Kenya's 16 special schools for the blind as well as across other disabilities and developing countries.

The selection panel particularly highlighted the value of increasing access to technology, and the comprehensive support offered by inABLE when establishing the assistive technology labs in schools.

Universidad Andrés Bello:

Vocational training at university



In Chile, Universidad Andrés Bello (UAB) has developed a social and labour training programme for students with intellectual disabilities, which is fully hosted on the university campus. The Diploma in Working Skills is a three-year programme for the development of employment skills in specific industries and also supports students in their transition to work.

UAB started the programme in 2006 with 35 students in Santiago, and since then it has been extended to the university's other campuses in Concepción and Viña del Mar. In addition, UAB has supported other universities to replicate the programme in Argentina, Mexico, and Spain, and it is looking to expand this replication further.

The selection panel were struck by the project's clear impact, with a large numbers of graduates and a high employment rate after the programme, thus demonstrating its effectiveness.



Humanity & Inclusion Senegal:

Modelling full participation in education

To make mainstream schools more accessible, Humanity & Inclusion Senegal has created “Agir pour la Pleine Participation des enfants par handicapés l’education” (Promoting the Full Participation of Children with Disabilities in Education) – APPEHL for short. The programme works at multiple levels with individual children and families, with teachers and schools, and also in influencing policy regarding Inclusive Education. For children and parents, APPEHL includes awareness-raising measures and training in how to deal with the impairment. For schools, learning materials are adapted and mainstream teachers are trained using the expertise of teachers in the specialist school system.

To date, more than 1,500 children have received assistance and 224 parents have been trained in deafness and sign language. In addition, 45 schools have been supported and the Inclusive Education training sessions have been delivered to over 2,000 teachers. As an international organization, Humanity & Inclusion intervenes in various countries, with the goal of expanding the programme to other countries through a ‘train the trainers’ solution. As Humanity & Inclusion at an international level is present in many countries, the aim is to expand the programme in other countries as a train the trainer solution.

The project’s impact on both Inclusive Education policy and practice and its commitment to co-creation of the programme with people with disabilities contributed to its selection.

KVPS:

On the Verge of Adulthood

During the life phase from 13 to 25 years new issues become especially relevant, such as study, leisure time, social interaction, and employment. To support young people with intellectual disabilities and their families during this transitional phase, the Finnish Service Foundation for People with an Intellectual Disability (KVPS), based in Tampere, has developed the On the Verge of Adulthood programme.

The main goal of the programme is to create a personal action plan on such key topics as work, housing, relationships, social activity, and further study. In a second step, On the Verge of Adulthood provides the necessary support to carry out the transition. This involves not only the young people and their parents but also local municipalities, schools, and others. Thus, KVPS establishes a steering group in which all relevant stakeholders are represented. Families receive support at regular meetings as well as from peers and other service providers. Since its launch in 2013, On the Verge of Adulthood has been replicated in 35 municipalities.



To support further replication, KVPS intends to train more professionals to follow the model and will further formalize its processes. KVPS’s existing documentation of the tools used in the programme and the clear structure meant that the selection panel felt there was good potential for scaling their methodology.



capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern:

Inclusive ways to experience art

Information in museums is seldom accessible to people with disabilities, and so capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, an Austrian-German NGO, together with the Staatliches Museum Schwerin (State Museum of the City of Schwerin) developed a training course for people with disabilities to conduct art tours. The training not only teaches art history but also teaches skills in communicating with different visitors and in handling difficult situations.

Since the project started in 2017, ten training workshops have taken place and seven trainees have been qualified as museum guides. More than 500 people have taken part in one of their 25 guided tours. In October 2019, relevant institutions in Germany agreed on a job description and training profile for people with disabilities as museum guides, and other countries and other museums have expressed great interest in the project. Capito MV therefore wants to expand the offer of training materials, especially in Easy Language formats and a read aloud function. In addition, the materials will be translated into additional languages to support replication in other countries.

The selection panel were impressed with the approach to making education inclusive in the cultural sector, where it could easily be implemented in other museums, galleries, etc.

Manzil Center:

Inclusive Education and job readiness

Supporting children and young people with disabilities on their way to an independent and self-determined life is also the aim of the Manzil Center, based in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Focused on Inclusive Education and employment, the NGO has developed the PRIDE programme. PRIDE stands for “People Receiving Independence and Dignity through Empowerment” and offers a wide range of services, including educational programmes, vocational training, integrative employment, and post-employment support.

The training programmes range from pre-education for children aged 4 and up to vocational training for students aged 14 and over. The employment programme ranges from job assessment and job placement to accompanying the onboarding process. Participants in the PRIDE programme can either attend the Manzil Educational Center on a full-time basis or take individual programmes on a part-time basis. The fee for full-time students is approximately \$10,000 per year.

Manzil intends to further develop the PRIDE programme and to replicate elements of the programme both inside and outside the UAE.

The comprehensive programme offered by Manzil, and the diverse and effective partnerships they have developed to deliver it, made it a strong candidate for the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme.



Creating social impact globally

RECENT SUCCESS STORIES OF THE ZERO PROJECT-IMPACT TRANSFER PROGRAMME

Many social innovations have the potential for global replication, and the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme supports its participants to do so. A number of success stories already have been reported, and new ones are being added continuously.

With the ten new participants selected this year, there are now 31 projects from around the world that, as alumni of the Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme, are working to make their social innovations accessible in other parts of the globe. And a number of them have already been successful. For example, last year we reported that capito Austria was working with Escola de Gente to establish their easy-language news service, called Top Easy, in Brazil. Another example is Enable India, which is already replicating its mobile phone-based information sharing service, Enable Vaani, in other countries.

“The VL2 Storybook Creator of Gallaudet University, a Zero Project Awardee of 2018, is now cooperating with Boğaziçi University in Turkey.”

Gallaudet University is partnering in Turkey

Started as a school in Washington, DC, in 1857 and founded in 1864 by an Act of the US Congress, Gallaudet University is still the only university in the world in which all programmes and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students.

In 2018, Gallaudet University was awarded at the Zero Project Conference and also took part in the Impact Transfer programme with a storybook application that provides a bilingual reading experience through high-quality storytelling in both sign language and printed text. Known as the VL2 Storybook Creator, it has been expanded to a number of partners in the United States as well as in other countries.

Currently, Gallaudet is cooperating with Boğaziçi University in Turkey, where two bilingual children's stories in Turkish and Turkish sign language are being prepared. Also, sample lesson plans are being created so that teachers can use the stories in their classrooms.

FlashSonar reaches out to new countries

For Daniel Kish, an Ashoka Fellow, the Impact Transfer programme has been sustainably worth it. Blind since he was 13 months old, Daniel has learned to 'see' using a form of echolocation. Kish calls his technique FlashSonar, and he founded World Access for the Blind (WAFTB) to teach it to others. WAFTB is a non-profit organization based in the United States and that operates entirely on donations. In 2018, WAFTB was awarded at the Zero Project Conference and participated in the Impact Transfer programme. In order to export the FlashSonar technique worldwide, "Visioneers" was founded as a division of WAFTB. Two offshoots have already been founded in Austria and Norway by and with the support of local partners. Furthermore, the project has expanded internationally through a training-of-trainers model, so that Visioneers are currently providing their services in more than 40 countries.



“Visioneers” was founded as a division of FlashSonar, and is already active in two countries: Austria and Norway.



Credit: (c) Sozialhelden e.v.

Based in Berlin, Greta & Starks has developed the free GRETA mobile app to make cinema screenings more accessible to people with visual and hearing disabilities. In 2019, Greta & Starks participated in the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme. As a result, the company attracted social impact investor Joachim Schoss as a funder for future scaling.

The project is made possible by the Sabanci Foundation, which provides the necessary funding via the Association of People with Hearing Impairment of Turkey.

Founded in 1974, Sabanci is one of the largest family foundations in Turkey, contributing in many ways to the educational, cultural, and social development of the country. Each year four types of scholarships, including for students with disabilities, are given to 400 new students and a total of nearly 1,500 students. Inclusion is therefore a major goal of Sabanci, which the foundation tries to achieve through scholarships, joint partnership programmes, seminars, and other activities. “As Sabanci Foundation we are glad to be a partner of this systematic matchmaking process through the Impact Transfer Programme. We are expecting to connect the initiatives chosen as a part of the Impact Transfer Program with local actors in Turkey, and to support the replication of the solution

throughout the country”, says Nevgül Bilsel Safkan, General Manager of Sabanci Foundation.

Greta & Starks finds funding from Joachim Schoss

Based in Berlin, Greta & Starks is a technology-based social business that has developed the free GRETA mobile app to make cinema screenings more accessible to people with visual and hearing disabilities. To do so, film distributors provide Greta & Starks with an audio description and subtitles for films that are currently showing in cinemas. The company uploads these to the mobile app, which people can then use in cinemas without needing special equipment. Users use their own headphones for the audio description and can adjust the size of the subtitle text on their smartphone screen. The app also works in open-air cinemas and with DVDs, video-on-demand services, etc.

In 2019, Greta & Starks was awarded at the Zero Project Conference and participated in the Zero Project–Impact Transfer programme. As a result, the company attracted the well-known social impact investor Joachim Schoss, founder of the Scout24 group and MyHandicap Foundation. Going forward, Schoss will support the company in implementing and promoting its social franchise model to make the innovative technology available in even more countries and languages.

IMPACT TRANSFER ONLINE

To find out more about all these projects, please visit:
<http://impact-transfer.org/zero-project/>

“There was only a lack of money for a faster scaling up ...”

In general, what is more convincing to you as an investor, an idea or a team?

Schoss: The younger an enterprise is, the more important the team is. A mediocre team will have little success with the best idea, while an excellent team can turn the worst idea into a good one quickly.

And what was it at Greta & Stark that convinced you to become involved?

Schoss: Seneit Debes (CEO and founder of Greta & Starks) is a highly motivated person, a down-to-earth entrepreneur in the best sense of the word. Her social enterprise is already running well in Germany and improves the quality of life of many people with disabilities. There was only a lack of money for a faster scaling up.

Are you just an investor or also a mentor and consultant for Greta & Stark?

Schoss: Before my commitment, I intensively studied the existing business. Of course, this also gives rise to new ideas and opportunities to contribute in terms of content. For example, together we have developed a new, more tailor-made way of financing than the one originally envisaged by Greta & Starks.

What would you consider the social equivalent of a business angel?

Schoss: A term that comes to my mind would be Active Impact Investor, that is, someone who gives money not only to achieve a financial but also a social goal and

who also personally contributes, in a moderate way, to support the achievement of these goals.

Financing is the biggest barrier when it comes to expanding social innovation. How can this be made more attractive for private investors?

Schoss: One possibility would be public support through direct financial funding or through appropriate legislation, either in favour of the social enterprise or in favour of the investor. Unfortunately, in my experience this is rather unrealistic, especially for social innovations. Small, positive exceptions are Social Impact Bonds. A modern approach would be impact point trading.

How does "impact point trading" work?

Schoss: There is a growing expectation on the part of companies not only to generate a return in money but also achieve a positive impact. If the company does not manage to do this out of its own business model, it could buy Impact Points from a social enterprise or a foundation and adorn itself with its impact. In return, the social enterprise gains access to a new capital market. For social enterprises this would also lead to a stronger focus on actual impact.



Joachim Schoss, founder of Scout24 Group and MyHandicap Foundation, supports Greta & Starks, an alumnus of the 2019 Zero Project-Impact Transfer programme, both financially with a Social Impact Credit and as a mentor.

ALL PARTICIPANTS 2018 – 2020

Country	Participants 2018	Country	Participants 2019	Country	Participants 2020
Austria	Top Easy, Capito and apa	Austria	kinderhände	Brazil	Livox
India	Eanble Vaani, Enable India	Botswana	Solar Ear	Bulgaria	Association for Shared Learning ELA
India	Jaipur Foot	Brazil	Accessibility Promotion Agents, Escola de Gente	Chile	Universidad Andrés Bello
Indonesia	The Suryakanti Foundation Centre	Colombia	Profamilia, ASDOWN Colombia, LICA, and PAIIS	Finland	KVPS
Israel	Friendship Parks, Beit Issie Shapiro	Germany	GRETA app, Greta & Starks	Germany	Capito Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Nepal	Inspire2Care, Karuna Foundation	Israel	Seeds of Wellness, Enosh – The Israeli Association of Mental Health	India	Amar Seva Sangam
USA	Flashsonar, World Access for the Blind	Italy	Mirrorable, Fightthestroke	India	Nayi Disha Resource Centre
USA	Museum of Modern Art	Lebanon	Empowerment Through Integration	Kenya	InABLE
USA	Understood.org, National Center for Learning Disabilities	Mexico	Unidos Somos Iguales (Unidos)	Senegal	Humanity & Inclusion Senegal
USA	VL2 Storybook Creator, Gallaudet University	USA	DanceAbility International	UAE	Manzil Center
		USA	Pathways to Justice, The Arc of the United States		

