

# Review on the Efforts of Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion in Taksvärkki Finland's Development Cooperation Program



## Final Report

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWD	Child with Disability
CYECE	Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education
ECCA	Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness
EU	European Union
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GEMPE	Girls empowerment for meaningful participation and education
NRCD	National Rehabilitation Centre of the Disabled
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PWD	Person with Disability
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WG-SS	The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose, objectives and scope of the review

The purpose of this assignment was to conduct a review of the disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's development cooperation projects implemented by local partner organizations in Malawi and Nepal, and in Taksvärkki's global citizenship education and communications work carried out in Finland.

The objectives of the review were: 1) To assess the relevance of the activities and the progress made in the disability inclusion in Taksvärkki development cooperation program; 2) To analyze the successes and challenges faced in the disability inclusion work and gather the best practices and lessons learnt, and 3; To produce relevant, action-oriented recommendations so that they can be used for the future development of mainstreaming disability inclusion in all work done by Taksvärkki and its partners

The review was carried out by Veera Pensala and Anja Malm from Consultancy Agency ZULU in December 2023 – May 2024. The survey combined findings from document review with in-person and online interviews and workshops, and with findings from the field trip in Malawi.

## Overview of the disability inclusion at Taksvärkki Development Cooperation Program

Taksvärkki is an exceptionally good example of an organization committed to work for disability inclusion in all of its operations. Its organizational culture actively promotes and fosters the realization of equality and non-discrimination, and the staff is highly committed and motivated to the disability inclusion. Their work is guided by an equity plan, which includes concrete measures to promote accessibility and diversity in Taksvärkki. In all its communication, events and other activities, accessibility is taken into account. In all development cooperation project work, efforts are made to promote disability inclusion. The organization's premises are accessible, with the latest addition being newly constructed accessible sanitary facilities.

Although Taksvärkki's disability inclusion work is in a good state, there is still room for improvement, which is fitting for an organization that actively seeks to develop its activities. Below, the key findings for the review questions are summarised.

**Strategy and Documentation:** Taksvärkki's strategy lacks specific disability inclusion measures, but their equity plan outlines comprehensive actions. Disability inclusion is not consistently addressed in program manual.

**Organisational Practices and Accessibility:** Taksvärkki staff are highly motivated for disability inclusion, guided by an equity plan. In all its communication, events and other activities,

accessibility is taken into account. Premises are accessible, with some staff and volunteers with disabilities.

**Staff Training and Expertise:** Staff have received basic and advanced training on disability issues since 2018, but feel moderate knowledge. Continuous training is needed for deeper expertise and due to turnover and new hires.

**Awareness Raising and Advocacy Efforts:** Disability issues are integrated into global education campaigns since 2021. While not actively advocating to authorities, Taksvärkki promotes disability inclusion in its program work, noted and supported by external stakeholders, including MFA.

**Accessibility of Information:** Having a disability inclusion specialist during campaign 2021-2022 significantly improved accessibility and staff capacity. Taksvärkki excels in providing accessible materials but faces challenges in easy location of Easy Finnish materials on the website.

**School Visits:** Volunteers have general awareness of accessibility but limited ability to ensure meaningful participation due to confidentiality of disability specific data and reliance on teachers' information.

**Monitoring Tools:** Monitoring tools include comprehensively disability inclusion questions, with minor short-comings. Some projects lack extensive data due to limited focus on disability.

**Program Results Report:** Disability data is dispersed throughout the report, lacking a comprehensive overview but integrated across sections.

In this review, two development cooperation projects of Taksvärkki were also examined from the perspective of disability inclusion: the CYECE's project in Malawi and the ECCA's project in Nepal. The following tables present the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for Taksvärkki, CYECE, and ECCA related to the survey questions.

Tables of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for Taksvärkki, CYECE, and ECCA

TAKSVÄRKKI			
Survey questions	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Disability inclusion at the organisational level			
1. How is disability inclusion reflected in Taksvärkki's main organisational documents and intervention design? How is disability inclusion reflected in Taksvärkki's strategy, policies, guidelines, manuals, global program and project documents?	<b>FINDING 1.</b> Taksvärkki's strategy does not specifically address disability inclusion although one of the focus areas for the program period 2022-2025 has been the strengthening of disability inclusion. Instead, organization's equity plan is a comprehensive and concrete plan for promoting disability inclusion in all activities of Taksvärkki. The program manual considers disability inclusion in the program's approach, values, principles and ethical guidelines, but in the sections covering project planning and implementation, disability inclusion is absent for the most part. On the other hand, Taksvärkki is updating the manual and is adding its own section on disability inclusion in project planning and implementation. In Taksvärkki Development Cooperation Program for 2022–2025, the theories of change do not consider disability inclusion, but the three outcomes of development cooperation projects incorporate disability inclusion. Global education and communication address disability only as a matter of material accessibility. The language addressing disability is partially outdated in Taksvärkki's documents.	<b>CONCLUSION 1.</b> Taksvärkki's organizational documents and intervention design do not consistently and systematically take into account disability inclusion – in some documents, the matter is well highlighted, while in others, it is only addressed in certain sections.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 1.</b> If disability inclusion remains a key focus for Taksvärkki in the future, it should be better reflected in the organization's strategy. Consider adding disability aspects into theories of change and in global education. The program manual should be updated to include guidelines for incorporating disability inclusion in project planning and implementation. The language regarding disability should be revised in accordance with current UN guidelines.
2. To what extent are Taksvärkki's organisational practices accessible? How are the strategies and policies put into practice? Are the office premises accessible? Are HR and recruitment practices inclusive? Does Taksvärkki have	<b>FINDING 2.</b> The staff of Taksvärkki is highly committed and motivated to promote disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's operations. Their work is guided by an equity plan, which includes concrete measures to promote accessibility and diversity in Taksvärkki. The organization's premises are accessible, with the latest addition being newly constructed accessible sanitary facilities. Currently,	<b>CONCLUSION 2.</b> Taksvärkki's organizational culture actively promotes and fosters the realization of equality and non-discrimination in all of its operations. The organizational practices are accessible in key areas: Taksvärkki considers physical accessibility when organizing events	<b>RECOMMENDATION.</b> –

board members, employees or volunteers of persons with disabilities?	there are individuals with disabilities among the volunteers and one employee with disability at Globaalikeskus.	and trainings, pays attention to the accessibility of all produced materials, and seeks to increase diversity among its staff and volunteers.	
3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient (in quantity and quality) and sustainable in Taksvärkki? What training and technical support has Taksvärkki staffs received? Is the training and support continuous? Do the staffs have enough confidence, knowledge and skills to promote disability inclusion in their work (including training to duty-bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders)?	<b>FINDING 3.</b> The Taksvärkki staff has received basic training on disability issues as well as advanced training continuously since 2018. Staff members have also learned about disabilities through their work. Although the staff's expertise appears to be at a good level, they feel they only have moderate or satisfactory knowledge of disability issues. There is turnover among volunteers and a continual need for training. Also new employees need basic training on disability inclusion.	<b>CONCLUSION 3.</b> The Taksvärkki staff has the necessary basic knowledge of disability issues, but there is a need for concrete and deeper disability expertise related to their specific job tasks, such monitoring, communication, or facilitating. Volunteers require ongoing training due to turnover. A written plan with minimum standards and checklists could systematize and provide structure for disability inclusion work at Taksvärkki.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 2.</b> Assess the specific training needs of the staff and encourage staff to participate in advanced trainings provided by various service providers. Offer regular basic training on disability issues to volunteers and to new employees. Consider making a written disability inclusion implementation plan with minimum standards and with checklists to systematize the disability inclusion work at Taksvärkki.
7. How has Taksvärkki been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?	<b>FINDING 4.</b> Taksvärkki has raised awareness about disability issues in its global education, especially during the campaign for the school year 2021-2022, when it focused on discrimination against persons with disabilities. The 2023-2024 campaign materials also highlight disability.  <b>FINDING 5.</b> Taksvärkki does not actively advocate on disability inclusion towards authorities or other duty-bearers in Finland. However, Taksvärkki has been actively promoting disability inclusion in its own work since 2018, and for example, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is well aware of this effort and considers it highly important.	<b>CONCLUSION 4.</b> Although Taksvärkki does not engage in active advocacy work on disability issues, advocacy emerges as a result of the organization's long-standing efforts towards disability inclusion in all its work.	<b>RECOMMENDATION.</b> –
Disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's global citizenship education and communications			

<p>8. What lessons have been learnt from the “What is stopping you?” campaign in terms of disability inclusion? What are the lessons learnt and how successful has Taksvärkki been in applying these lessons in practice?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 6.</b> During the campaign time Taksvärkki had a disability inclusion specialist in staff. This had a great impact on the accessibility of the campaign and increased the capacity of all staff to implement disability inclusion. Taksvärkki staff have a lot of knowledge and practical understanding on disability inclusion but they seem not always recognize this themselves.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 5.</b> Taksvärkki knows how to create accessible campaigns and materials. Taksvärkki is strongly committed to accessibility in the production of materials, social media, and websites. The inclusion specialist has left a permanent impact on the working practices in Taksvärkki.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION.</b> –</p>
<p>9. To what extent are Taksvärkki’s communications and global citizenship education activities and materials accessible? How is the accessibility and meaningful participation of persons with different types of disabilities promoted in Challengers’ activities? Are the global citizenship materials accessible? To what extent are Taksvärkki’s webpages and Instagram accessible?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 7.</b> Taksvärkki is an exceptionally good example of an organization committed to accessibility of information. For example all video materials have subtitles in Finnish, Swedish and English, and pictures on web pages and Instagram have alt texts. Both communications materials and global citizenship materials are accessible. Shortcomings are few and only in details. On the Taksvärkki website there is material also in Easy Finnish. However, this material is not easy to locate on the site.</p> <p><b>FINDING 8.</b> Volunteers visiting schools to give global citizenship education are aware of accessibility on a general level. They have limited possibilities to promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities as information about disability is confidential information and they rely on information given by the teachers.</p> <p><b>FINDING 9.</b> The Challengers group has members with different disabilities. They are aware of accessibility of information and some individuals also of physical accessibility. Their understanding of disability and accessibility has come from hobbies and social media, and they pay attention to accessibility e. g. in social media postings. They agreed that Challengers is a safe space where it is easy to come as you are.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 6.</b> Taksvärkki’s understanding of accessibility of information is on a high level and the staff is committed to accessibility. There is an understanding of the importance of Easy Finnish for many different groups of people, e. g. those with learning difficulties and learners of Finnish. All communications materials and global citizenship materials are generally accessible.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION 7.</b> Volunteers visiting schools are aware of accessibility on a general level, but would benefit from a more practical understanding of different disabilities. E.g. how to include a student with a visual impairment or a student using a sign language interpreter.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION 8.</b> Taksvärkki has succeeded in creating a positive atmosphere and an inclusive way of work for the Challengers group.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 3.</b> Conduct an accessibility audit on the web site to reveal possible shortcomings with regard to screen readers. Collect all Easy Finnish texts on one web page, and add Easy Finnish in the header as one language choice. Make a basic check-list on accessibility to help staff and volunteers when choosing a site for an event. Organize a short training based on the list.</p>
<p><b>Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)</b></p>			
<p>11. Do the program’s monitoring and evaluation</p>	<p><b>FINDING 10.</b> Taksvärkki program's monitoring tools extensively request information on disability inclusion,</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 9.</b> Although Taksvärkki’s monitoring tools collect extensively</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 4.</b> In the results framework, give more precise data on</p>

<p>systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion? Are there disability-specific indicators in the results framework? Are indicators feasible and relevant? Is disability disaggregated quantitative data and narrative information and progress on disability inclusion given in mid-term monitoring reports and annual reports / in results framework? Is the data sufficient and relevant?</p>	<p>with minor shortcomings. However, Taksvärkki receives only limited information about disability inclusion in some of its projects, as this aspect of work is not yet extensively undertaken in them.</p> <p><b>FINDING 11.</b> At the program level, within the Program Results Report, disability data is scattered throughout the report and partially gets lost among other information. Data also remains anecdotal and disconnected, lacking a comprehensive overview. On the other hand, it is good that the disability information is cross-cutting throughout the report, rather than being gathered in one chapter.</p>	<p>data and the organisation has significantly promoted disability inclusion in all its operations, a comprehensive overview of the work is not apparent from the annual report.</p>	<p>disability inclusion, e.g. by providing both quantitative and qualitative data against the same indicator. Gather data on number of duty-bearers with disabilities, and on development of partners' organisational documents, practices or accessibility on disability inclusion. Focus on more comprehensive analysis on disability inclusion at the program level, for instance, by providing one-pager infographics on disability inclusion. Align the language to correspond with the recommendations of the United Nations.</p>
<p>12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in the Taksvärkki program? Have the Washington Group questions been used in a meaningful way in the Taksvärkki program? What is their additional value in Taksvärkki's work?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 12.</b> Taksvärkki experimented with the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) questions during the baseline survey at the beginning of the current program period. The questionnaire was not used in Finland. However, the proper use of questions requires expertise and interviewer training, consuming significant resources. Taksvärkki was trained, but at least in one project the data was not utilized as intended. From Taksvärkki's perspective, crucial information regarding disability revolves around how to support those individuals who require assistance to meaningfully participate in Taksvärkki's activities.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 10.</b> Washington Group Short Set on Functioning questions are not relevant to use in Taksvärkki's projects. Taksvärkki is able to obtain the necessary information on disability with less effort, without using this cumbersome set of WG-SS.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 5.</b> Move from WG-SS questionnaire to simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the program.</p>

CYECE (Malawi)			
Survey questions	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Disability inclusion at the organisational level			
1. How is disability inclusion reflected in CYECE's organisational documents; strategy, policies, guidelines, manuals, and intervention design; project documents?	<b>FINDING 1.</b> CYECE's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 highlights persons with disabilities as part of the organization's priority areas and key objectives. Other organizational documents of CYECE do not specifically address disability inclusion. CYECE currently does not have a disability policy. The new forthcoming strategy aims to more strongly integrate disability inclusion into all aspects of the organization's work. Disability inclusion is strongly and comprehensively included in the project documents and intentional design of the GEMPE project.	<b>CONCLUSION 1.</b> In CYECE's strategy and GEMPE project design, disability inclusion has been and will be strongly taken into account. However, in organizational guidelines, disability inclusion is not strongly present.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 1.</b> Create either separate disability policy to support disability mainstreaming in the organisation, or address the disability inclusion clearly in other organisational policy document.
2. To what extent are CYECE's organisational practices accessible: How are the strategies and policies put into practice? Are the office premises accessible? Are HR and recruitment practices inclusive? Do CYECE have board members, employees or volunteers of persons with disabilities?	<b>FINDING 2.</b> The staff is highly motivated and committed to promoting disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's work. CYECE does not have persons with disabilities on its board or staff, but has one volunteer and one SRHR champion with a disability. In job advertisements, CYECE encourages persons with disabilities to apply. CYECE has aimed to make its offices accessible. However, none of the offices have accessible sanitary facilities.	<b>CONCLUSION 2.</b> CYECE's organizational practices are accessible. The offices are still partially inaccessible, as the sanitary facilities are not accessible.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 2.</b> Renovate the sanitary facilities to be accessible at the CYECE offices.
3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient (in quantity and quality) and sustainable in CYECE? What training and technical support have CYECE staffs received? Is the training and support continuous? Do the staffs have enough confidence, knowledge and skills to promote disability	<b>FINDING 3.</b> The CYECE staff has been trained by FEDOMA on disability issues in 2019 and 2021. Additionally, the GEMPE staff has learned about disability issues through their work with disability organizations and within the project. However, there are some capacity gaps, for instance, in monitoring and evaluation, production of accessible materials, knowledge of different types of	<b>CONCLUSION 3.</b> The entire CYECE staff need continuous training on disability inclusion. The project staff at GEMPE have a good understanding of disability inclusion, but there is a need for more in-depth	<b>RECOMMENDATION 3.</b> Provide basic training on disability rights and inclusion for the entire staff at CYECE. The training should be offered on a continuous basis. Also, offer opportunities for more in-depth training on various disability issues for those with advanced knowledge.

inclusion in their work (including training to duty-bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders)?	disabilities and how to inclusively work with various disabilities.	training on various disability issues.	
<b>Disability inclusion in GEMPE project</b>			
<p>4. To what extent are CYECE’s project activities accessible for persons with disabilities: Do persons with different disabilities participate in the CYECE’s project activities? Is the participation meaningful? Are the project materials and sites accessible?</p> <p>10. Are persons with disabilities able to participate in CYECE’s project planning, monitoring and evaluation activities in a meaningful way?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 4.</b> In 2023, 58 youth with disabilities (8,18 % of all youth) participated in youth clubs, girls' corners and girls' clubs in schools. Youth with disabilities participated in 7 (out of 13) youth clubs, 7 (out of 13) girls corners and 11 (out of 11) girls clubs. Two youth with disabilities held decision-making positions in 2 youth clubs, while the rest were regular members. Both district-level youth networks included a person with disability. Adults with disabilities who participated in the project, were involved in the District Disability Network and in 13 Community Disability Forums.</p> <p><b>FINDING 5.</b> The youth activities of the project are mainly carried out in community central locations, such as schools and village squares, where the facilities are quite accessible. Some persons with disabilities are unable to participate in events held further away due to lack of transportation. Participation of the deaf in the project's activities is weak, as sign language interpreters are not available. Adults with disabilities of District Disability Network meet in CYECE’s office in Salima, which is accessible. Materials produced in the project are accessible.</p> <p><b>FINDING 6.</b> Interviewed youth with disabilities felt that they all participate in the planning and implementation of their group's activities. Only one from the interviewed group had participated in monitoring activities. Half of the respondents felt they were very actively involved in activities, and half were somewhat actively involved.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 4.</b> A significant number of youths with disabilities participate in the project's youth structures, although there are only a few in decision-making positions. In their own opinion, they all participate either actively or somewhat actively in the groups. For the most part, the youth activities are accessible, although participation from the deaf community is low. With special measures, it is possible to increase the number of youths with disabilities in the project.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 4.</b> Encourage youth clubs to review their rules to ensure they are non-discriminatory and promote equal and inclusive participation for all. Encourage all youth structures to plan their activities to support the meaningful participation of youth with disabilities, including ensuring that meeting and activity venues are accessible. Encourage youth clubs to give leadership roles for youth with disabilities (consider quotas).</p> <p>Train youth with disabilities to become facilitators and on advocacy to become champions in advocacy. Establish peer support groups for youth with disabilities to be empowered. Cooperate with MANAD to find solutions for the participation of the deaf in the project.</p>

	However, they also reported experiencing discrimination within the groups.		
5. To what extent has CYECE’s collaboration and partnerships with local organisations of persons with disabilities been relevant and meaningful: What kind of collaboration has been carried out and partnerships created with the organisations of persons with disabilities? How have these efforts benefitted the projects in disability inclusion? How have these efforts benefitted the organisations of persons with disabilities?	<b>FINDING 7.</b> The GEMPE project collaborates with disability and mainstream organizations that are part of the District Disability Network established by the project. CYECE has trained the network’s organizations and supports them in meetings. There has been mutual learning and experience sharing vice versa, and local disability organizations have been crucial to the success of disability inclusion in the project. Thanks to the project, local disability organizations have become empowered and strengthened in their work, mainstream organizations have started to mainstream disability in all their work, and both disability and mainstream organizations have started to advocate together for disability inclusion.	<b>CONCLUSION 5.</b> The collaboration between GEMPE project, disability and mainstream organizations has been meaningful in the project. The structure created by the project, District Disability Network, has unified the advocacy efforts; disability and mainstream organizations have begun to advocate together for disability inclusion, demonstrating a unified front in promoting the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in Salima region.	<b>RECOMMENDATION. –</b>
6. How has CYECE collaborated with other stakeholders in disability mainstreaming? How have these efforts benefitted the disability mainstreaming?			
7. How has CYECE been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?	<b>FINDING 8.</b> Raising awareness about inclusive education and disability rights in the communities has been a key activity in GEMPE project. As a result, according to the people interviewed, the attitudes and behaviour towards the persons with disabilities have started to become more positive within the project communities. However, prejudices, discrimination, and misinformation about disability still persist among the wider public in communities. The schools are not accessible, there is a severe shortage of special education teachers and learning materials for children with special needs. Community structures engaged in the project expressed a need for more expertise to promote disability inclusion effectively in their activities.  <b>FINDING 9.</b> As an organization, CYECE is involved in 14 national networks in Malawi. In these networks, CYECE	<b>CONCLUSION 6.</b> The work done by the project to advocate and raise awareness about disability within communities has been important and significant, but more of it is still needed. In this work, various community structures also need additional training on disability inclusion. CYECE, as a mainstream organization, plays a significant and important advocacy role at the national level in Malawi.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 5.</b> Sensitize, raise awareness and build capacities on disability rights and inclusion of all community members and structures in the project. Strengthen cooperation between different community structures, such as Child Protection Committees and Community Disability Forums, and between District Disability Forums and Community Disability Forums. Promote dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers.  Assess the disability inclusion gaps in by-laws, enhance their review and enforcement in communities. Involve

	promotes inclusive education as part of its advocacy work. CYECE plans to expand disability inclusion in the future to include areas such as SRHR. CYECE's advocacy work has contributed to increased awareness of disability and understanding of disability inclusion among various stakeholders.		media for community outreach on disability inclusion.  Advocate for better accessibility, more special education teachers, and for more resources for children with special needs in schools.
<b>Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)</b>			
11. Do the program's monitoring and evaluation systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion? Are indicators feasible and relevant? Is disability disaggregated quantitative data and narrative information and progress on disability inclusion given in mid-term monitoring reports and annual reports? Is the data sufficient and relevant?	<p><b>FINDING 10.</b> The GEMPE project collects diverse and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data on disability according to program requirements. Disability data is disaggregated according to gender requirements, but it is not systematically disaggregated based on age.</p> <p><b>FINDING 11.</b> The project involves youth with disabilities, but the monitoring does not specify how extensively they are involved in different structures. GEMPE staff do not collect data directly from persons with disabilities; instead, they receive this data from individuals without disabilities. There are no markers for disability inclusion within the progress markers to measure the progress of disability inclusion at the moment in the project.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 7.</b> The GEMPE project collects adequately and sufficiently the data on the progress of disability inclusion for the most part. With small improvements in project monitoring, it would be possible to gather more direct and precise information on the progress of disability inclusion.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 6.</b> In addition to youth with disabilities, gather data also on number of duty-bearers with disabilities involved in the project. Set target numbers for the participation of youth with disabilities in youth structures. For example, each structure should include at least one person with a disability. To follow-up, disaggregate the data according to the number of youth structures that include youth with disabilities. Gather data on disability inclusion directly from persons with disabilities, for example, through periodic focus group discussions. Add disability-specific progress markers for community structures.</p>
12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in the Taksvärkki program: Have the Washington Group questions been used in a meaningful way in the Taksvärkki program? What is their additional value in Taksvärkki's work?	<p><b>FINDING 12.</b> The use of WG-SS questions to assess the persons with disabilities in the project was challenging, and the collected data was partly misinterpreted. In a project like GEMPE, the necessary information is the number of persons with disabilities who need support to participate meaningfully in the project's activities, and the type of support these individuals need.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 8.</b> Collecting the needed information on disability does not require a heavy WG-SS questionnaire in GEMPE project.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 7.</b> Move from WG-SS questionnaire to simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the project.</p>

ECCA (Nepal)			
Survey questions	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Disability inclusion at the organisational level			
1. How is disability inclusion reflected in ECCA's organisational documents; strategy, policies, guidelines, manuals, and intervention design; project documents?	<b>FINDING 1.</b> Until now Taksvärkki's guidelines and project manual have guided ECCA in disability inclusion. Earlier inclusion work was connected with gender and ethnic minorities. There is one mention of PWDs in ECCA's information paper in a list of fields of work. However, ECCA is now preparing a document on disability.	<b>CONCLUSION 1.</b> As an organisation ECCA is willing to promote disability inclusion and take concrete actions towards this goal.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 1.</b> ECCA is now preparing a disability document, which is a very positive development. At the same time it is important to mainstream disability in the strategy and other relevant documents and procedures.
2. To what extent are ECCA's organisational practices accessible: How are the strategies and policies put into practice? Are the office premises accessible? Are HR and recruitment practices inclusive? Does ECCA have board members, employees or volunteers of persons with disabilities?	<b>FINDING 2.</b> The staff is motivated to promote disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's work. It is noteworthy that Taksvärkki is the only donor requiring disability inclusion. The head office premises are under renovation to improve accessibility. At the moment the field offices are not accessible. ECCA has persons with disabilities as local counsellors (volunteers). <b>FINDING 3.</b> ECCA's website includes features that support persons with low vision, but it is not accessible for users of screen readers.	<b>CONCLUSION 2.</b> ECCA has a lot of work ahead but the staff is aware of disability inclusion questions and willing to improve the organisational practices. ECCA's other donors appreciate this approach, thus ECCA's action contributes towards disability inclusion in their projects, as well.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 2.</b> ECCA benefits from continued support by Taksvärkki. This support could include administrative and HR practices. When ECCA's disability document is approved, it is important to put it into practice. <b>RECOMMENDATION 3.</b> When ECCA's website is renewed, it is recommended to use an accessible template to create a site that is easy to read with screen readers.
3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient (in quantity and quality) and sustainable in ECCA? What training and technical support have ECCA staff received? Is the training and support continuous? Do the staff have enough confidence, knowledge and skills to promote disability inclusion in their work (including training to duty-bearers, right-holders and other stakeholders)?	<b>FINDING 4.</b> The head office staff have received several trainings through the years, and they are training field staff. Partly the training has remained on a general level. Lately, the staff have acquired a wider understanding of disability, and there is growing interest in learning disabilities and mental health. Nepal's geography and non-accessible buildings are a huge challenge. ECCA staff have confidence to train duty-bearers and other stakeholders.	<b>CONCLUSION 3.</b> The capacity of ECCA staff on disability inclusion is variable. Some staff members have a wide understanding of disability and the human rights of PWDs, others have received less training, and there is a lack of knowhow on how to do disability inclusion in practice.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 4.</b> Continuous training to ECCA staff is recommended. A training scheme covering the main issues would help to systematize the training, and this training would be given to all new staff. Attention should be given to the concrete implementation of disability inclusion.

Disability inclusion in the ECCA project

<p>4. To what extent are ECCA’s project activities accessible for persons with disabilities: Do persons with different disabilities participate in the project activities? Is the participation meaningful? Are the project materials and sites accessible?</p> <p>10. Are persons with disabilities able to participate in ECCA’s project planning, monitoring and evaluation activities in a meaningful way?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 5.</b> Children and youth with disabilities from the project schools participate in project activities. According to ECCA, their participation is meaningful, but numbers are few. As ECCA works with schools, they mainly reach those children and youth who attend school.</p> <p><b>FINDING 6.</b> It was not possible to confirm the accessibility of project materials and sites as this assessment is based on online workshops. According to ECCA counselors most meeting and event venues are not accessible.</p> <p><b>FINDING 7.</b> ECCA staff and Youth Counsellors participate in project planning. According to ECCA persons with disabilities have limited possibilities of participation. Within the scope of this assignment, it was not possible to interview members of Child Clubs.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 4.</b> ECCA is welcoming children and youth with disabilities in the project activities, but their number is small as ECCA works within schools and thus has limited possibilities to affect their number. According to ECCA, the participation of children and youth with disabilities is meaningful in the project. The program’s monitoring and evaluation practices are not fully participatory.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 5.</b> ECCA is doing important advocacy work towards local authorities and parents regarding the right to education of children with disabilities. Continuing this work and strengthening ECCA staff’s understanding of disability inclusion will support the meaningful participation of children with disabilities.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 6.</b> Raise awareness of other children participating in the project activities to support the meaningful participation of children with disabilities.</p>
<p>5. To what extent has ECCA’s collaboration and partnerships with local organisations of persons with disabilities been relevant and meaningful: What kind of collaboration has been carried out and partnerships created with the organisations of persons with disabilities? How have these efforts benefitted the projects in disability inclusion? How have these efforts benefitted the organisations of persons with disabilities?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 8.</b> ECCA has cooperated with the National Rehabilitation Centre of the Disabled (NRCD), which is a national OPD, and the Nepal Business Disability Network in connection with employment questions. The NRCD has trained ECCA staff on the human rights of persons with disabilities. There have been some contacts with other OPDs, but starting cooperation has proven problematic as the OPDs often expect financial support from ECCA.</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 5.</b> ECCA’s cooperation with OPDs has been quite limited.</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 7.</b> ECCA’s main working sector environment is extremely important for persons with disabilities. As climate change affects the environment, persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group are often unproportionally affected. Therefore, it is Important that ECCA continues to approach different OPDs, as cooperation would benefit both partners.</p>
<p>6. How has ECCA collaborated with other stakeholders in disability mainstreaming? How have these efforts benefitted the disability mainstreaming?</p>	<p><b>FINDING 9.</b> ECCA works with schools, Parent Teacher Associations, and parents of children with disabilities to promote the right to education. ECCA also has active contacts with local authorities, they are invited to see project activities. A challenge for disability</p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION 6.</b> ECCA is welcoming all children and youth with disabilities from the schools in their project activities. However, ECCA has</p>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATION 8.</b> ECCA will benefit from a continued cooperation with the local authorities in the project areas based on the education policy of Nepal. Paying attention to the</p>

	mainstreaming is that the schools do not accept children with disabilities who have other than physical disabilities, because teachers do not have the skills to teach them.	limited possibilities to influence which children attend school, and those children mainly have physical disabilities.	accessibility of information and accessibility of the physical environment will further support the meaningful participation of children and youth with disabilities.
7. How has ECCA been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?	<b>FINDING 10.</b> ECCA is actively engaging local authorities in disability inclusion. Usually, they are positive towards ECCA's message on disability inclusion, both sides benefiting.	<b>CONCLUSION 7.</b> ECCA has been able to promote the human rights-based approach to disability in its cooperation with the local authorities of the project areas.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 9.</b> When ECCA strengthens its staff's understanding of the human rights of persons with disabilities and the practical implementation of disability inclusion, it will have an effect on ECCA's cooperation with the duty bearers.
<b>Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)</b>			
11. Do the program's monitoring and evaluation systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion? Are indicators feasible and relevant? Is disability disaggregated quantitative data and narrative information and progress on disability inclusion given in mid-term monitoring reports and annual reports? Is the data sufficient and relevant?	<b>FINDING 11.</b> ECCA reports the number of children and youth with disabilities participating in project activities disaggregated by sex. Participants are under 18 years with a few exceptions, which means that disaggregation by age is not necessary. ECCA conducts trainings and organizes events that aim at raising awareness about disability in the communities and among duty-bearers. These activities are important, but the monitoring data does not give estimation of the progress in awareness.	<b>CONCLUSION 8.</b> The data is sufficient but not all of it is relevant. ECCA staff does not fully grasp the monitoring method.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 11.</b> For the next programme period use indicators that disaggregate disability (vs. no disability), gender, and age when relevant. Find ways of strengthening ECCA's understanding of the monitoring methods and processes.
12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in the Taksvärkki program: Have the Washington Group questions been used in a meaningful way in the Taksvärkki program? What is their additional value in Taksvärkki's work?	<b>FINDING 12.</b> The use of WG-SS questions to assess PWDs in the project was challenging to ECCA, and there clearly was a misunderstanding on the purpose and correct use of the questions. For ECCA the necessary information is the number of persons with disabilities disaggregated by gender, and the type of support these individuals need in order to meaningfully participate in the project activities.	<b>CONCLUSION 9.</b> Collecting the needed information on disability does not require a heavy WG-SS questionnaire.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 12.</b> Move from WG-SS questionnaire to a simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the project.

# 1. Introduction

Taksvärkki ry. is a Finnish civil society organization (CSO) that promotes the rights of children and youth by strengthening meaningful youth participation through development projects in the Global South and Global Citizenship Education and communications in Finland.

Mainstreaming disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's and partners' work has been a key area in the program and organizational development since 2018. The work has included e.g. staff training, drafting or reviewing organizational policies, guidelines and development plans on social inclusion, and cooperation with local organizations of persons with disabilities. In 2021-2022, Taksvärkki's campaign for schools in Finland addressed discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. Accessibility of communications has also been mainstreamed. The specific budget for capacity building and efforts on disability inclusion, and disability specific activities cover around 3 % of the total program budget. However, social inclusion, including disability inclusion, is a crosscutting objective that should be integrated in all work supported by Taksvärkki.

## 1.1 Objectives and scope of the assignment

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR), the purpose of this assignment is to conduct a review of the disability inclusion in Taksvärkki development cooperation program. The review provides an external and independent assessment of the efforts in the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's development cooperation projects implemented by local partner organizations in the global South, in Malawi and Nepal, and in Taksvärkki's global citizenship education and communications work carried out in Finland.

The objectives of the review are:

- 1) To assess the relevance of the activities and the progress made in the disability inclusion in Taksvärkki development cooperation program
- 2) To analyze the successes and challenges faced in the disability inclusion work and gather the best practices and lessons learnt
- 3) To produce relevant, action-oriented recommendations so that they can be used for the future development of mainstreaming disability inclusion in all work done by Taksvärkki and its partners

## 1.2 Methodology

The review was carried out by Veera Pensala (team leader) and Anja Malm from Consultancy Agency ZULU in December 2023 – May 2024. The survey combined findings from document review with in-person and online interviews and workshops, and with findings from the field trip in Malawi. The evaluation applied mixed methods for collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data to enable triangulation in the identification of key findings. The following methods were used in the survey:

1. **Desk review.** A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the programme documents was carried out from the perspective of the survey questions. The materials reviewed are listed in the Annex 4.

2. **Semi-structured online interviews and focus groups** (19 persons). An online workshop over Zoom was organized with ECCA, Nepal. Interviews with focus groups and individuals were partly online, partly live. Persons interviewed are listed in the Annex 5.

3. **Workshop with Taksvärkki staff** (7 persons). Two workshops were carried out for Taksvärkki staff; evaluation and validation workshops. Persons interviewed are listed in the Annex 5.

4. **Field trip to Malawi** (68 persons). The 5-day field mission was carried out by team leader Veera Pensala. During the field trip, 2 workshops were carried out with local partner CYECE and 7 focus groups with other duty-bearers and rights-holders. Persons interviewed are listed in the Annex 5.

## 2. Disability inclusion

### 2.1 Taksvärkki

#### Findings

#### Disability inclusion at the organizational level

##### 1. How is disability inclusion reflected in Taksvärkki's main organizational documents and intervention design?

**FINDING 1.** Taksvärkki's strategy does not specifically address disability inclusion although one of the focus areas for the program period 2022-2025 has been the strengthening of disability inclusion. Instead, the organization's equity plan is a comprehensive and concrete plan for promoting disability inclusion in all activities of Taksvärkki. The program manual considers disability inclusion in the program's approach, values, principles and ethical guidelines, but in the sections covering project planning and implementation, disability inclusion is absent for the most part. On the other hand, Taksvärkki is updating the manual and is adding its own section on disability inclusion in project planning and implementation. In Taksvärkki Development Cooperation Program for 2022–2025 covers partly considers disability inclusion partly. Please see more detailed observations in table 1.

Table 1. Disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's main organizational documents and intervention design.

Document	Observations supporting the disability inclusion	Observations on deficiencies or other remarks
<i>Taksvärkki ry:n strategia 2020 (Strategy of Taksvärkki)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the strategy, human rights-based approach is highlighted, with equity and equality being emphasized as the core values: in this context, persons with disabilities are mentioned as one of the target groups.</li> <li>The objectives include promoting equality and non-discrimination for vulnerable individuals, as well as enhancing accessibility of the activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The terms disability mainstreaming or inclusion are not mentioned in the document.</li> </ul>
<i>Yhdenvertaisuussuunnitelma (Equity Plan)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan describes comprehensively and concretely the current status, actions taken, and future measures in improving accessibility, developing anti-racist activities, and promoting diversity in Taksvärkki's operations (administration, personnel and board, development cooperation, communication and global education, Taksvärkki fundraising).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan is available only in Finnish.</li> </ul>

<i>Taksvärkki program manual for cooperation partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program approach, values, principles, and ethical guidelines consider disability inclusion.</li> <li>• A separate section on disability inclusion is being developed but has not yet been added to the manual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project planning and implementation do not take into account disability issues.</li> <li>• The language addressing disability in the program manual is partially outdated.</li> </ul>
<i>Taksvärkki Development Cooperation Program for 2022–2025</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus for the program period is to strengthen disability inclusion, particularly by enhancing the expertise of local partners and promoting accessibility in practical operations.</li> <li>• The context describes the disability issues.</li> <li>• All three development cooperation objectives take into account disability inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theory of change does not consider disability inclusion.</li> <li>• Global education and communication address disability only as a matter of material accessibility. Disability inclusion promotion is not included in activities (only as part of diversity).</li> </ul>

**CONCLUSION 1.** Taksvärkki's organizational documents and intervention design do not consistently and systematically take into account disability inclusion – in some documents, the matter is well highlighted, while in others, it is only addressed in certain sections.

## 2. To what extent are Taksvärkki's organizational practices accessible?

**FINDING 2.** The staff of Taksvärkki is highly committed and motivated to promote disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's operations. Their work is guided by an equity plan, which includes concrete measures to promote accessibility and diversity in Taksvärkki. In all its communication, events and other activities, accessibility is taken into account. In all development cooperation project work, efforts are made to promote disability inclusion. In job advertisements and consulting assignments, Taksvärkki encourages persons with disabilities to apply.

The organization's premises are accessible, with the latest addition being newly constructed accessible sanitary facilities. Ramps have been installed at the entrance, and there is ample space in the corridors and rooms for unrestricted movement. The lighting is sufficient in the office premises. In the larger meeting room, there is echo, which may disturb those with hearing impairment. The surface of table of the smaller meeting room is highly reflective, which may disturb those with poor vision.

At the moment, there is one employee with a disability working at the Globaalikeskus, whose salary is supported by Taksvärkki.

**CONCLUSION 2.** Taksvärkki's organizational culture actively promotes and fosters the realization of equality and non-discrimination in all of its operations. Taksvärkki has taken sufficient measures to make the office accessible. The organizational practices are accessible in key areas: Taksvärkki considers physical accessibility when organizing events and trainings,

pays attention to the accessibility of its campaigns and all produced materials, and seeks to increase diversity among its staff and volunteers.

### 3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient and sustainable in Taksvärkki?

**FINDING 3.** The Taksvärkki staff has received basic training on disability issues as well as advanced training continuously since 2018. Staff members have also learned about disability inclusion and accessibility issues from their colleagues, through their work and services provided by Disability Partnership Finland. List of obtained trainings at Taksvärkki:

- ⇒ General Accessibility and Inclusivity (2019, 2021)
- ⇒ Deaf, Sign Language Users, and Visual Impairment (2021)
- ⇒ Online training on disability data organized by Fingo and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2020)
- ⇒ Considering Students with Special Needs during School Visits (2022)
- ⇒ Consideration of NEPSY Children during School Visits (2023)
- ⇒ Training on Easy-to-Understand Facilitation (2023)

Although the staff's expertise appears to be at a good level, they feel they only have moderate or satisfactory knowledge of disability issues. Many feel that they are in need of additional training on disability inclusion. There is turnover among volunteers and a continual need for training. Also new employees need basic training on disability inclusion. List of capacity needs on disability inclusion at Taksvärkki:

- ⇒ How to consider accessibility from the outset when designing and producing global education materials
- ⇒ How to better incorporate disability inclusion in practical work such as group facilitation and activity planning
- ⇒ Easy-to-understand guidance
- ⇒ Accessibility and plain language, producing clear text
- ⇒ Psychological safety
- ⇒ How to consider different types of disabilities in the work
- ⇒ Monitoring and evaluation, qualitative indicators for monitoring, data disaggregation
- ⇒ Systematic promotion of disability inclusion in the work

Promoting disability inclusion seems to be systematic at Taksvärkki, and it's been done correctly. However, the absence of a systematic written plan of disability inclusion may have led to feelings of whether enough has been done and what is still missing.

**CONCLUSION 3.** The Taksvärkki staff has the necessary basic knowledge of disability issues, but there is a need for concrete and deeper disability expertise. New employees require basic training and volunteers on-going training due to turnover. A written plan with minimum standards and checklists could systematize and provide structure for disability inclusion work at Taksvärkki.

Picture 1. The staff of Taksvärkki positioned themselves along a line (in the middle of a room-length line); measuring and showing their own competence in disability inclusion.



#### 7. How has Taksvärkki been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?

**FINDING 4.** Taksvärkki has raised awareness about disability issues in its global education, especially during the campaign of the school year 2021-2022, when it focused on discrimination against persons with disabilities. The 2023-2024 campaign materials also highlight disability.

**FINDING 5.** Taksvärkki does not actively advocate on disability inclusion towards authorities or other duty-bearers in Finland. However, Taksvärkki has been actively promoting disability inclusion in its own work since 2018, and for example, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is well aware of this effort and considers it highly important.

**CONCLUSION 4.** Although Taksvärkki does not engage in active advocacy work on disability issues, advocacy emerges as a result of the organization's long-standing efforts towards disability inclusion in all its work.

#### Disability inclusion in Taksvärkki's global citizenship education and communications

#### 8. What lessons have been learnt from the "What is stopping you?" campaign in terms of disability inclusion?

**FINDING 6.** The aim of the “What is stopping you?” campaign was to make visible discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities. The campaign was a success with regard to accessibility of information. During the campaign time Taksvärkki had a disability inclusion specialist in staff. This had a great impact on the accessibility of the campaign and increased the capacity of all staff to implement disability inclusion.

Since the campaign and based on the various trainings that Taksvärkki staff have received, they systematically pay attention to accessibility of information in the global citizenship education and information dissemination. Taksvärkki staff have a lot of knowledge and practical understanding on accessibility of information and disability inclusion, but they don't always seem to recognize this themselves.

**CONCLUSION 5.** Taksvärkki knows how to create accessible campaigns and materials. Taksvärkki is strongly committed to accessibility in the production of materials, social media, and websites. The inclusion specialist has left a permanent impact on the working practices in Taksvärkki.

#### 9. To what extent are Taksvärkki's communications and global citizenship education activities and materials accessible?

**FINDING 7.** Taksvärkki is an exceptionally good example of an organization committed to accessibility of information. The Finnish language used on Taksvärkki website and different materials is clear and fluent. All video materials have subtitles in Finnish, Swedish and English, and pictures on web pages and Instagram have alt texts.

Both communications materials and global citizenship materials are generally accessible. Shortcomings are few and only in details. More attention could be paid to the alternative texts of pictures. On the Swedish and English pages some alt texts are accordingly in Swedish or English, but some are in Finnish. In some social media material, there is not enough contrast between colours.

On the Taksvärkki website there is material also in Easy Finnish. However, this material is not easy to locate on the site.

**FINDING 8.** Volunteers visiting schools to give global citizenship education are aware of accessibility on a general level. Their capacity in questions of accessibility and disability inclusion understandably varies depending on their personal history (studies, work experience) and on the length of their volunteer work within Taksvärkki. Those who have a longer history have received training through Taksvärkki.

The volunteers seem to have a positive, unproblematic attitude to disability inclusion. Before visiting a school, they receive information about any special needs of the students from the teachers. As information about disability is confidential information, they rely on information given by the teachers and are not in a position to inquire about it. Some said the personal assistants of special needs students are there to support the learning of these students. This sounds somewhat like shifting responsibility onto other shoulders.

**FINDING 9.** The Challengers group has members with different disabilities. They are aware of accessibility of information and some individuals also of physical accessibility.

Taksvärkki had not trained the group about disability inclusion and accessibility. Some had learned about these questions through social media, some through their own experience and by participating in disability activism. They said that they pay attention to accessibility when posting in social media.

Everybody agreed that meaningful participation of persons with disabilities happens in the group. Special needs are inquired about before events, and they are also taken into account. The group felt that Challengers is a safe space where it is easy to come as you are.

**CONCLUSION 6.** Taksvärkki's understanding of accessibility of information is on a high level and the staff is committed to accessibility. There is an understanding of the importance of Easy Finnish for many different groups of people, e. g. those with learning difficulties and learners of Finnish. All communications materials and global citizenship materials are generally accessible.

**CONCLUSION 7.** Volunteers visiting schools are aware of accessibility on a general level, but would benefit from a more practical understanding of different disabilities. E.g. how to include a student with a visual impairment or a student using a sign language interpreter.

**CONCLUSION 8.** Taksvärkki has succeeded in creating a positive atmosphere and an inclusive way of work for the Challengers group.

## Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)

11. Do the program's monitoring and evaluation systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion?

**FINDING 10.** Taksvärkki program's monitoring tools (results framework and annual report) extensively request information on disability inclusion, with minor shortcomings (see below table 1). Taksvärkki receives only limited information about disability inclusion in some of its projects, as this aspect of work is not yet extensively undertaken in them.

Table 2. Disability inclusion in Taksvärkki program's monitoring tools.

Document	Observations supporting comprehensive data collection on disability inclusion	Observations on deficiencies related to comprehensive data collection or other remarks
Taksvärkki Project Annual Report Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concrete questions targeting right-holders: 1) Increased participation of persons with disabilities in the activities and their number, disaggregated by gender and type of disability; 2) Advocacy or initiatives carried out on disability inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The form does not ask about the accessibility of activity locations, or the accessibility of information used in the projects.</li> <li>The language used in the form "people of disabilities" is outdated. The correct way of expression is "persons with</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concrete questions targeting duty-bearers; 1) Changes in accessibility or quality of services considering the accessibility for persons with disabilities; 2) Changes in policies or practices.</li> <li>• Concrete questions targeting partners' capacity; 1) Capacity and organizational practices development on disability inclusion, 2) Cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Cross-cutting objectives: Ways of participation of persons with disabilities in the project: 2) Project's contribution to reducing social inequality, promotion of the rights of the persons with disabilities and improving the situation.</li> </ul>	<p>disabilities", recommended by the United Nations.</p>
Taksvärkki Results Framework	<p>Development Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome indicators: The outcome harvesting method collects changes in progress regarding disability inclusion, alongside other changes.</li> <li>• Indicator data on accessibility, quality services, policies and practices, trainings and other activities, advocacy efforts, roles in decision making and community structures, and collaboration with CSOs, is requested to disaggregate on disability.</li> <li>• The number of right-holders with disability is requested, disaggregated by sex.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact includes the concept of diversity, but the indicator does not measure it in relation to disability inclusion.</li> <li>• Although the indicators request information on disability, some of the data is solely quantitative (e.g. 3 changes related to disability inclusion on accessibility and/or quality services), while some is solely qualitative (e.g. 22 trainings in total, one of the listed topic has been disability). This data does not provide a comprehensive picture of the result.</li> <li>• Result framework does not gather the number of duty-bearers with disabilities (apart from the indicator that gathers the number of persons with disabilities who have attended the trainings).</li> <li>• Outcome IV does not gather data on development of organisational documents, practices or accessibility on disability inclusion.</li> </ul>
	<p>Global Citizenship Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The data on participating Teacher Students, GCE Educators, Student Champions and Challengers is disaggregated by disability.</li> <li>• Promoting accessibility of information during school visits is indicator target in 2022.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program does not have specific measures to encourage the participation of Teacher Students, GCE Educators, Student Champions and Challengers with disabilities.</li> <li>• Taksvärkki as an organization is committed to accessibility of information, the staff has solid capacity</li> </ul>

		in it and GCE materials are accessible, but this does not show in the results framework.
	<p>Taksvärkki Program Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates of guidelines and procedures on disability inclusion.</li> <li>• External evaluation of disability inclusion and action plan for implementing the recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No training on disability inclusion on an on-going basis.</li> </ul>

**FINDING 11.** At the program level, within the Program Results Report, disability data is scattered throughout the report and partially gets lost among other information. Data also remains anecdotal and disconnected, lacking a comprehensive overview. On the other hand, it is good that the disability information is cross-cutting throughout the report, rather than being gathered in one chapter.

**CONCLUSION 9.** Although Taksvärkki’s monitoring tools collect extensively data and the organisation has significantly promoted disability inclusion in all its operations, a comprehensive overview of the work is not apparent from the annual report.

## 12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning questions in the Taksvärkki program?

**FINDING 12.** Taksvärkki experimented with the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) questions during the baseline survey at the beginning of the current program period in its projects in the global South, as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Disability Partnership strongly recommended it. The questionnaire was not used in Finland.

However, the proper use of questions requires expertise and interviewer training, consuming significant resources. Taksvärkki was trained, but at least in one project the data was not utilized as intended.

The use of WG-SS is designed and best suited for censuses and large surveys. From Taksvärkki's perspective, crucial information regarding disability revolves around how to support those individuals who require assistance to meaningfully participate in Taksvärkki’s activities. This information can be obtained, for instance, from a school class teacher in Finland or from leaders of youth groups within projects. For the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the number of these individuals corresponds to the definition of a person with disability and thus fulfills the requirement for data disaggregation.

**CONCLUSION 10.** Washington Group Short Set on Functioning questions are not relevant to use in Taksvärkki's projects. Taksvärkki is able to obtain the necessary information on disability with less effort, without using this cumbersome set of WG-SS.

## 2.2 CYECE – Malawi

### Methodology

The review was conducted by combining findings from document review with findings from in-person workshops, focus groups, interviews and observation during the field trip in Malawi from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2024.

### List of documents reviewed

- Strategy
- Organisational guidelines and policies
- Project documents
- Monitoring and annual reports 2023

### Key informants and stakeholders consulted

- Center for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE) / staff (N=6)
- Youth with disabilities in the project (N=12)
- Youth without disabilities (N=12)
- Organisations of persons with disabilities from the District Disability Network / organisations (N=4)
- Civil society organisations from the District Disability Network / organisations (N=5)
- Community Disability Forums / forums (N=2)
- Child Protection Committee / committee (N=1)
- Community Girls Safeguarding Standards Committee / committee (N=1)
- Teachers from primary school and secondary school / teachers (N=8)
- Federation of disability organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA)
- Malawi Council for the Disability Affairs (MACODA)

### Findings

#### Disability inclusion at the organisational level

1. How is disability inclusion reflected in CYECE's organisational documents; strategy, policies, guidelines, manuals, and intervention design; project documents?

**FINDING 1.** CYECE's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 highlights persons with disabilities as part of the organization's priority areas and key objectives. The new forthcoming strategy aims to more strongly integrate disability inclusion into all aspects of the organization's work. It will outline that disability inclusion must be incorporated into all CYECE's projects.

CYECE currently does not have a disability policy. Other organizational documents of CYECE do not specifically address disability inclusion.

Disability inclusion is strongly and comprehensively included in the project documents and intentional design of the GEMPE project.

**CONCLUSION 1.** In CYECE’s strategy and GEMPE project design, disability inclusion has been and will be strongly taken into account. However, in organizational guidelines, disability inclusion is not strongly present.

## 2. To what extent are CYECE’s organisational practices accessible?

**FINDING 2.** The staff is highly motivated and committed to promoting disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's work.

CYECE does not have persons with disabilities on its board or staff, but has one volunteer and one SRHR champion with a disability. In job advertisements, CYECE encourages persons with disabilities to apply.

CYECE has aimed to make its 7 offices accessible. Previously, a few offices were located on upper floors; now all are situated on the ground floor, and their entrances are accessible. However, none of the offices have accessible sanitary facilities.

**CONCLUSION 2.** CYECE’s organizational practices are accessible. The offices are still partially inaccessible, as the sanitary facilities are not accessible.

Picture 2. GEMPE staff in front of the office in Salima, Malawi.



### 3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient and sustainable in CYECE?

**FINDING 3.** The CYECE staff has been trained by FEDOMA on disability issues in 2019 and 2021. However, not all current employees were present at these trainings. The current staff have learned about disability issues through their work with the disability organizations and for example, when disability trainings have been provided to project stakeholders. Taksvärkki's webinars have also been a good learning platform about disability work.

Despite the trainings and experience gained from the project regarding disability inclusion, The staff feel they only have moderate knowledge of disability issues (average 6 on a scale from 1 to 10). Many feel that they are in need of additional training on disability issues. List of capacity needs on disability inclusion within GEMPE project at CYECE:

- ⇒ Planning a disability inclusive project
- ⇒ Monitoring and evaluation of disability inclusion
- ⇒ Accessible communication and materials
- ⇒ Disability types and how to interact with different disabilities
- ⇒ Correct language on disability

**CONCLUSION 3.** The entire CYECE staff need continuous training on disability inclusion. The project staff at GEMPE have a good understanding of disability inclusion, but there is a need for more in-depth training on various disability issues.

### Disability inclusion in GEMPE project

#### 4. To what extent are CYECE's project activities accessible for persons with disabilities?

#### 10. Are the project's participatory monitoring and evaluation practices accessible?

**FINDING 4.** In 2023, 58 youth with disabilities (8,18 % of all youth) participated in youth clubs, girls' corners and girls' clubs in schools. Youth with disabilities participated in 7 (out of 13) youth clubs, 7 (out of 13) girls corners and 11 (out of 11) girls clubs. Two youth with disabilities held decision-making positions in 2 youth clubs, while the rest were regular members. Both district-level youth networks included a person with disability.

Adults with disabilities who participated in the project, were involved in the District Disability Network and in 13 Community Disability Forums.

**FINDING 5.** The youth activities of the project are mainly carried out in community central locations, such as schools and village squares, where the facilities are quite accessible.

Some persons with disabilities are unable to participate in events held further away due to lack of transportation. Participation of the deaf in the project's activities is weak, as sign language interpreters are not available.

Adults with disabilities of District Disability Network meet in CYECE's office in Salima, which is accessible. Materials produced in the project are accessible.

Picture 3. Communication materials in GEMPE project. CYECE, Malawi.



**FINDING 6.** Interviewed youth with disabilities felt that they all participate in the planning and implementation of their group's activities. In their own opinion, half of the respondents felt they were very actively involved in activities, and half were somewhat actively involved. Nobody felt they were passive. In monitoring activities, only one from the interviewed group had participated.

Activities where youth with disabilities participate in youth groups:

- ⇒ Speaking in awareness raising and sensitizing activities
- ⇒ Performing drama
- ⇒ Participating in farming activities
- ⇒ Following the activity
- ⇒ Advocating and lobbying disability inclusion, for instance, to teachers
- ⇒ Conducting peer education sessions for other girls

It is noteworthy that both persons with and without disabilities, in separate interviews, highlighted discrimination occurring within youth groups. Examples of discrimination included not wanting to sit next to a person with a disability, moving away, certain kinds of looks, or speaking ill behind someone's back.

When asked what prevents youth with disabilities from participating in youth groups, many mentioned that many do not accept their own disability and there is still discrimination within the community, which makes them hesitant to leave their homes. Other reasons included not knowing about the activities of the groups or what benefit they could have for them.

**CONCLUSION 4.** A significant number of youths with disabilities participate in the project's youth structures, although there are only a few in decision-making positions. In their own opinion, they all participate either actively or somewhat actively in the groups. For the most part, the youth activities are accessible, although participation from the deaf community is low. With special measures, it is possible to increase the number of youths with disabilities in the project.

5. To what extent has CYECE's collaboration and partnerships with local organisations of persons with disabilities been relevant and meaningful?

6. How has CYECE collaborated with other stakeholders in disability mainstreaming: How have these efforts benefitted the disability mainstreaming?

**FINDING 7.** The GEMPE project collaborates particularly with disability and mainstream organizations that are part of the District Disability Network established by the project.

CYECE has trained the network's organizations and supports them in meetings. There has been mutual learning and experience sharing with these organizations, and local disability organizations have been crucial to the success of disability inclusion in the project.

Thanks to the network, disability and mainstream organizations work together for advocacy. Previously, organizations conducted all advocacy work individually. Now they work together and coordinate advocacy efforts, which is much more impactful. Local disability organizations have also become empowered and strengthened in their work. Mainstream organizations have started to mainstream disability in all their work.

**CONCLUSION 5.** The collaboration between GEMPE project, disability and mainstream organizations has been meaningful in the project. The structure created by the project, District Disability Network, has unified the advocacy efforts; disability and mainstream organizations have begun to advocate together for disability inclusion, demonstrating a unified front in promoting the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in Salima region.

7. How has CYECE been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?

**FINDING 8.** Raising awareness about inclusive education and disability rights in the communities has been a key activity in GEMPE project. As a result, according to all the groups interviewed during this assignment, the attitudes and behavior towards the persons with disabilities have started to become more positive within the project communities; family members with disabilities are no longer hidden at homes, more children with disabilities attend school, and for example violence against persons with disabilities is less prevalent.

However, prejudices, discrimination, and misinformation about disability still largely persist among the wider public in communities. From the perspective of the project the schools are not accessible, there is a severe shortage of special education teachers and learning materials for children with special needs. In addition, all community structures engaged in the project expressed a need for more expertise to promote disability inclusion effectively in their activities.

**FINDING 9.** As an organization, CYECE is involved in 14 national networks in Malawi. In these networks, CYECE promotes inclusive education as part of its advocacy work. CYECE plans to expand disability inclusion in the future to include areas such as SRHR. CYECE's advocacy work

has contributed to increased awareness of disability and understanding of disability inclusion among various stakeholders.

**CONCLUSION 6.** The work done by the project to advocate and raise awareness about disability within communities has been important and significant, but more of it is still needed. In this work, various community structures also need additional training on disability inclusion. CYECE, as a mainstream organization, plays a significant and important advocacy role at the national level in Malawi.

## Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)

11. Do the program's monitoring and evaluation systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion?

**FINDING 10.** The GEMPE project collects diverse and comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data on disability according to program requirements. Disability data is disaggregated according to gender requirements, but it is not systematically disaggregated based on age. On the other hand, if all participants in the project are youth, disaggregation is not necessary. According to the guidelines of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, organizations can define their own age groups and classify individuals accordingly in their programs.

**FINDING 11.** The project involves youth with disabilities, but the monitoring does not specify how extensively they are involved in different structures, for example, how many different youth groups, girls' clubs or corners include youth with disabilities.

GEMPE staff do not collect data directly from persons with disabilities; instead, they receive this data from individuals without disabilities. The monitoring data provided by the youth groups' leadership committees, which currently have representation from only two persons with disabilities.

There are no markers for disability inclusion within the progress markers to measure the progress of disability inclusion at the moment in the project. However, the original intentional design included disability-specific progress markers.

**CONCLUSION 7.** The GEMPE project collects adequately and sufficiently the data on the progress of disability inclusion for the most part. With small improvements in project monitoring, it would be possible to gather more direct and precise information on the progress of disability inclusion.

## 12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in the Taksvärkki program?

**FINDING 12.** The use of WG-SS questions to assess the persons with disabilities in the project was challenging, and the collected data was partly misinterpreted. In a project like GEMPE, the necessary information is the number of persons with disabilities who need support to participate meaningfully in the project's activities, and the type of support these individuals need.

**CONCLUSION 8.** Collecting the needed information on disability does not require a heavy WG-SS questionnaire in GEMPE project.

### 2.3 ECCA – Nepal

#### Methodology

The review was conducted by combining findings from a document review, interviews with key informants and findings from an online workshop with ECCA staff on February 28.

#### List of documents reviewed

- ECCA Information (strategy paper)
- ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPS FOR CONSERVATION AWARENESS (ECCA) Annual Report July 2022–July 2023
- Project Annual Report 2023
- Taksvärkki Outcome Database Jan-Dec 2023
- Taksvärkki Program Output Indicators data sheet 2023
- Project Intentional Design based on Outcome Mapping 2023-25
- Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion (ppt, pdf)
- Making ECCA HO PwD friendly
- Taksvärkki Project Document ECCA

#### Key informants and stakeholders consulted

- ECCA / staff and volunteers (N=8)
- MFA Unit for Civil Society
- Abilis office in Nepal

## Findings

### Disability inclusion at the organisational level

1. How is disability inclusion reflected in ECCA’s organisational documents; strategy, policies, guidelines, manuals, and intervention design; project documents?

**FINDING 1.** Inclusion thinking and practical inclusion work is familiar to ECCA. Earlier this work was about gender and ethnic minorities, but for several years already Taksvärkki has supported ECCA in disability inclusion. Until now Taksvärkki’s guidelines and project manual have guided ECCA in disability inclusion.

However, ECCA has only a short mention of disability in its information paper (strategy). The organization’s annual report states as a major achievement the following “The schools are facilitated with child/girl friendly WASH facilities and managed with proper hand washing and menstruation hygiene management facilities” with no mention of disability (page 10). When reporting on the Taksvärkki supported project the same report gives as a key intervention “Possible integration of social inclusion in project outcomes basically on child/girl friendly/disable friendly facilities and inclusion on different dialogues” (page 13). This is the only mention of disability in the report in the framework of a concrete project but remains quite vague.

**CONCLUSION 1.** As an organisation ECCA is willing to promote disability inclusion and take concrete actions towards this goal.

Picture 4. Meeting with local youth counselors. ECCA, Nepal.



## 2. To what extent are ECCA's organisational practices accessible?

**FINDING 2.** All staff members are motivated to promote disability inclusion in all aspects of the organization's work. There are persons with disabilities among the staff as local counsellors (volunteers), which helps take concrete action towards inclusion.

It is noteworthy that Taksvärkki is the only donor requiring disability inclusion. This is a surprise, because both EU and OECD-DAC require results data on disability. ECCA's efforts to include persons with disabilities also benefit the other donors' projects.

The head office premises are under renovation to improve accessibility. The renovation started after requests from persons with disabilities, so it is not only a donor-led initiative. A ramp has been built at the entrance and the toilet is now more accessible. So far ECCA has seen the accessibility of the built environment from the point of view of persons with physical disabilities, especially wheel-chair users.

At the moment the field offices are not accessible. Nepal's geography and non-accessible buildings are a huge challenge to persons with disabilities.

**FINDING 3.** ECCA's website includes features that support persons with low vision. It is possible to enlarge the text font and switch to a dark background. The website is not accessible for users of screen readers and there are other features that make it non-accessible for persons with low vision.

**CONCLUSION 2.** ECCA has a lot of work ahead but all staff members are aware of disability inclusion questions and willing to improve the organizational practices. Staff members with disabilities are valuable in practical implementation. ECCA's other donors appreciate this approach, thus ECCA's and Taksvärkki's actions contribute towards disability inclusion in their projects, as well.

## 3. Have the capacity-building efforts been sufficient and sustainable in ECCA?

**FINDING 4.** The head office staffs have received several trainings through the years, and they are training field staff. Partly the training has remained on a general level and more concrete instructions are needed. More concrete training and guidance on accessibility has been provided by counsellors with disabilities.

The staff appreciates the disability training provided by ECCA. Some say they had earlier no knowledge of disability. The staff members and youth counselors with disabilities are important sources of information. Lately, some members of the staff have acquired a wider understanding of disability and the various needs of different disability groups. There is a growing interest and willingness to learn more e.g., on how to create a socially accessible environment for persons with disabilities, and about learning disabilities and mental health.

ECCA staff have confidence to train duty-bearers and other stakeholders, which has become evident in cooperation with the local authorities of the project areas. According to one interviewee ECCA would benefit from deeper insights to the government policies on disability and on the education of children with disabilities.

**CONCLUSION 3.** The capacity of ECCA staff on disability inclusion is variable, but they are all eager to learn more. Some staff members have a wide understanding of disability and the human rights of persons with disabilities, others have received less training, and there is a lack of knowhow on how to do disability inclusion in practice.

## Disability inclusion in ECCA'S project

4. To what extent are ECCA's project activities accessible for persons with disabilities?

10. Are the project's participatory monitoring and evaluation practices accessible?

**FINDING 5.** Children and youth with disabilities from the project schools participate in project activities, and the schools and families are welcoming ECCA's work with their children with disabilities. According to ECCA, the participation of children and youth with disabilities is meaningful, but numbers are few. As ECCA works with schools, they mainly reach those children and youth who attend school. Children with low vision and low hearing are included in ECCA's project in early school years, but after 8th grade they move to special schools, because teachers do not have the skills to teach them. At the moment girls with disabilities are underrepresented in ECCA's work.

The schools accept only children with physical disabilities, so children and youth with other disabilities are not easy to reach. Lately, ECCA has raised the issue of intellectual disability and schools have started to notice children with intellectual disabilities.

Examples of initiatives in 2023 to promote disability inclusion:

- ⇒ A child club in Dhankuta organized an awareness program on disability for school students with the help of teachers.
- ⇒ Naya Trishna's online portal published the news of Street Drama for the Anti-Drug Awareness and Disability Orientation Program.
- ⇒ A program on intellectual disability was attended by principals, School Management Committees (SMC), Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), child club representatives, and child club teachers. ECCA realized that intellectual disability is a critical issue that often goes unnoticed when working with disabilities in a school setting.
- ⇒ ECCA has created a platform for ECCA staffs and youth counsellors residing inside Kathmandu to discuss promoting the rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- ⇒ ECCA has worked to improve the accessibility of school buildings.

Despite the positive attitude and concrete efforts, it seems to be a challenge for ECCA to increase the number of children and youth with disabilities participating in the project

activities. This year there was not any involvement of Youth with Disabilities from the school setting, but two youth counselors with disabilities participated actively in ECCA' work.

The Youth Counselors supported by ECCA work with the local communities contributing to the right to education for children with disabilities. Some Child Club and Nature Club participants have become disability activists, who change the attitudes of communities.

**FINDING 6.** It was not possible to confirm the accessibility of project materials and sites as this assessment is based on online workshops. According to ECCA counselors most meeting and event venues are not accessible.

**FINDING 7.** ECCA staff and Youth Counsellors participate in project planning. According to ECCA persons with disabilities have limited possibilities of participation. Within the scope of this assignment, it was not possible to interview members of Child Clubs.

**CONCLUSION 4.** ECCA is welcoming children and youth with disabilities in the project activities, but their number is small as ECCA works within schools and thus has limited possibilities to affect their number. According to ECCA, the participation of children and youth with disabilities is meaningful in the project. The program's monitoring and evaluation practices are not fully participatory.

Picture 5. Knowledge Sharing Program with youth counselors, ECCA, Nepal.



5. To what extent has ECCA's collaboration and partnerships with local organisations of persons with disabilities been relevant and meaningful?

**FINDING 8.** ECCA has cooperated with the National Rehabilitation Centre of the Disabled (NRCD), which is a national organization of persons with disabilities (OPD). The NRCD has trained ECCA staff on the human rights of persons with disabilities. ECCA is a member of Nepal Business Disability Network promoting office accessibility and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. ECCA is connected also with the Nepal office of Abilis Foundation. There have been contacts and visits to a few other organizations promoting disability inclusion but not longer cooperation.

ECCA's contacts have been mainly with so-called cross-disability organizations. There have been some contacts with other OPDs, but starting cooperation has proven problematic. It has created an uncomfortable feeling at ECCA that the OPDs often expect financial support from ECCA in exchange for cooperation.

**CONCLUSION 5.** ECCA's cooperation with OPDs has been quite limited.

6. How has ECCA collaborated with other stakeholders in disability mainstreaming: How have these efforts benefitted the disability mainstreaming?

**FINDING 9.** ECCA works with schools, Parent Teacher Associations, and parents of children with disabilities to promote the right to education. Contacts with the local communities are important, because generally there is very little understanding about disability and the right to education of children with disabilities. ECCA also has active contacts with local authorities, they are invited to see project activities.

A challenge for disability mainstreaming is that the schools mainly accept children with physical disabilities. After the 8th grade youth with other disabilities move to special schools, because teachers do not have the skills to teach them. Lately, the schools have started rethinking how to include more children with disabilities.

**CONCLUSION 6.** ECCA is welcoming all children and youth with disabilities from the schools in their project activities. However, ECCA has limited possibilities to influence which children and youth attend school.

7. How has ECCA been able to raise voices and issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the awareness raising and advocacy activities?

**FINDING 10.** ECCA is actively engaging local authorities in disability inclusion. Usually, they are positive towards ECCA's message on disability inclusion, both sides benefiting. Some Child Club and Nature Club participants with disabilities have become activists, who raise awareness of

duty-bearers and communities. In the countryside in Nepal attitudes are more traditional than in the cities and can be harmful for persons with disabilities.

**CONCLUSION 7.** ECCA has been able to promote the human rights-based approach to disability in its cooperation with the local authorities of the project areas. Child and Nature Clubs supported by ECCA have been starting points to some children and youth with disabilities, who have become disability activists.

## Disability specific Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)

11. Do the project's monitoring and evaluation systems adequately and sufficiently gather the data on the progress of disability inclusion?

**FINDING 11.** ECCA reports the number of children and youth with disabilities participating in project activities disaggregated by sex. Participants are under 18 years with a few exceptions, which means that disaggregation by age is not necessary. ECCA conducts trainings and organizes events that aim at raising awareness about disability in the communities and among duty-bearers. These activities are important, but the monitoring data does not give estimation of the progress in awareness.

**CONCLUSION 8.** The data is sufficient but not all of it is relevant. ECCA staff does not fully grasp the monitoring method.

12. What is the relevance of applying the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) in the Taksvärkki program?

**FINDING 12.** The use of WG-SS questions to assess the persons with disabilities in the project was challenging to ECCA, and there clearly was a misunderstanding on the purpose and correct use of the questions. For ECCA the necessary information is the number of persons with disabilities disaggregated by gender, and the type of support these individuals need in order to meaningfully participate in the project activities.

**CONCLUSION 9.** Collecting the needed information on disability does not require a heavy WG-SS questionnaire.

## 3. Recommendations

### TAKSVÄRKKI

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** If disability inclusion remains a key focus for Taksvärkki in the future, reflect it better in the next organization's strategy. Translate the Equity Plan into English. Consider adding disability aspects into theories of change. Update the program manual to include guidelines for incorporating disability inclusion in project planning and implementation. Revise the language regarding disability in accordance with current UN guidelines in all Taksvärkki's organisational documents.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.** Assess the specific training needs of the staff and encourage staff to participate in advanced trainings provided by various service providers. Offer regular basic training on disability issues to volunteers and to new employees. Consider making a written disability inclusion implementation plan with minimum standards and with checklists to systematize the disability inclusion work at Taksvärkki.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.** Conduct an accessibility audit on the web site to reveal possible shortcomings with regard to screen readers. Collect all Easy Finnish texts on one web page, and add Easy Finnish in the header as one language choice. Make a basic check-list on accessibility to help staff and volunteers when choosing a site for an event. Organize a short training based on the list.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.** In the results framework, give more precise data on disability inclusion, e.g. by providing both quantitative and qualitative data against the same indicator. Gather data on number of all duty-bearers with disabilities, accessibility of activities and information, and on development of Taksvärkki's and partners' capacity, organisational documents, practices or accessibility on disability inclusion. Focus on more comprehensive analysis on disability inclusion at the program level, for instance, by providing one-pager infographics on disability inclusion. Align the language to correspond with the recommendations of the United Nations.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.** Move from WG-SS questionnaire to a simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the program.

### CYECE – Malawi

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** Create either separate disability policy to support disability mainstreaming in the organisation, or address the disability inclusion clearly in other organisational policy document.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.** Renovate the sanitary facilities to be accessible at the CYECE offices.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.** Provide basic training on disability rights and inclusion for the entire staff at CYECE. The training should be offered on a continuous basis. Also, offer opportunities for more in-depth training on various disability issues for those with advanced knowledge.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.** Encourage youth clubs to review their rules to ensure they are non-discriminatory and promote equal and inclusive participation for all. Encourage all youth structures to plan their activities to support the meaningful participation of youth with disabilities, including ensuring that meeting and activity venues are accessible. Encourage youth clubs to give leadership roles for youth with disabilities (consider quotas). Train youth with disabilities to become facilitators and on advocacy to become champions in advocacy. Establish peer support groups for youth with disabilities to be empowered. Cooperate with MANAD to find solutions for the participation of the deaf in the project.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.** Sensitize, raise awareness and build capacities on disability rights and inclusion of all community members and structures in the project. Strengthen cooperation between different community structures, such as Child Protection Committees and Community Disability Forums, and between District Disability Forums and Community Disability Forums. Promote dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers. Assess the disability inclusion gaps in by-laws, enhance their review and enforcement in communities. Involve media for community outreach on disability inclusion. Advocate for better accessibility, more special education teachers, and for more resources for children with special needs in schools.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.** In addition to youth with disabilities, gather data also on number of duty-bearers with disabilities involved in the project. Set target numbers for the participation of youth with disabilities in youth structures. For example, each structure should include at least one person with a disability. To follow-up, disaggregate the data according to the number of youth structures that include youth with disabilities. Gather data on disability inclusion directly from persons with disabilities, for example, through periodic focus group discussions. Add disability-specific progress markers for community structures.

**RECOMMENDATION 7.** Move from WG-SS questionnaire to a simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the project.

## ECCA – Nepal

**RECOMMENDATION 1.** Mainstream disability in the information (strategy) paper and other relevant documents and procedures in addition to disability document which is currently developed.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.** ECCA benefits from continued support by Taksvärkki. This support could include administrative and HR practices. When ECCA's disability document is approved, it is important to put it into practice. A deeper and wider understanding of the accessibility of the built environment and of information would make ECCA's activities more accessible to different disability groups.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.** When ECCA’s website is renewed, it is recommended to use an accessible template to create a site that is easy to read with screen readers. Some commonly used software is WordPress, WIX and Site 123, but there are many more that offer a wide selection of templates free of charge. Choose an accessible template from the selection and follow the instructions, and the result is an accessible website. Remember to add alt texts to pictures using the language of the web page (Nepalese, English).

**RECOMMENDATION 4.** Continue training to ECCA staff. A training scheme covering the main issues would help systematize the training, and this training would be given to all new staff. Attention should be given to different disabilities and the concrete implementation of disability inclusion. Studying Nepal’s policies on disability and inclusive education supports ECCA’s work in project areas.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.** ECCA is doing important advocacy work towards local authorities and parents regarding the right to education of children with disabilities. Continuing this work and strengthening ECCA staff’s understanding of the needs of different disability groups and disability inclusion will support the meaningful participation of children and youth with different disabilities.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.** Raise awareness of other children participating in the project activities to support the meaningful participation of children with disabilities. Encourage girls with disabilities to participate, as they are at the moment underrepresented in ECCA’s project activities.

**RECOMMENDATION 7.** ECCA’s main working sector environment is extremely important for persons with disabilities. As climate change affects the environment, persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group are often unproportionally affected. Therefore, it is important that ECCA continues to approach different OPDs, as cooperation would benefit both partners.

**RECOMMENDATION 8.** Continue cooperation with the local authorities in the project areas based on the education policies of Nepal. Paying attention to the accessibility of information and accessibility of the physical environment will further support the meaningful participation of children and youth with disabilities.

**RECOMMENDATION 9.** Continue strengthening ECCA staff’s understanding of the human rights of persons with disabilities and the practical implementation of disability inclusion to have an effect on ECCA’s cooperation with the duty-bearers. Encourage children and youth participating in the project activities to become disability champions, who can change the attitudes of their communities.

**RECOMMENDATION 10.** Find ways of strengthening ECCA’s understanding of the monitoring methods and processes.

**RECOMMENDATION 11.** Move from WG-SS questionnaire to a simpler method to gather the needed data on persons with disabilities in the project.

## 4. Further reading

Below, there are 5 guides collected for implementing disability inclusion in development cooperation. Each of them has something particularly good: one provides detailed information on organizing accessible events, another has good checklists for disability-inclusive projects, and yet another explains what disability inclusion means at the organizational level.

You will notice that many of these things are already familiar, and many of you are implementing them excellently in your own work. However, these guides will still be helpful, for example, if you want to create your own checklists for your activities.

Since there is no guarantee of the functionality of the links in the future, it is advisable to download the appropriate manuals from the links provided to your work computer now.

1) Disability Inclusion. Trainer's Manual. A guide for supporting training capacity for disability inclusion. Light for the World. 2024.

<https://www.undp.org/cambodia/publications/disability-inclusion-trainers-manual>

2) Guide to Disability Inclusion. Self Help Africa.

<https://selfhelpafrica.org/ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/10/Guide-to-disability-inclusion.pdf>

3) A handbook on mainstreaming disability. VSO United Kingdom. 2006

[https://asksource.info/pdf/33903\\_vsomainstreamingdisability\\_2006.pdf](https://asksource.info/pdf/33903_vsomainstreamingdisability_2006.pdf)

4) Inclusion Made Easy: A quick program guide to disability in Development. CBM Ireland. 2012.

[https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/cbm\\_inclusion\\_made\\_easy\\_a\\_quick\\_guide\\_to\\_disability\\_in\\_development.pdf](https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/cbm_inclusion_made_easy_a_quick_guide_to_disability_in_development.pdf)

5) Towards Disability Inclusion. A handbook for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Government and Ready-Made Garment Sectors. Centre for Disability in Development. 2022.

<https://cdd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Towards-Disability-Inclusion.pdf>

On the following 3 pages, there are also three checklists or step-by-step guides that provide tips for implementing disability inclusion in project work. These lists were compiled by Veera Pensala in conjunction with evaluations of Finnish organizations.