



Save the Children

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

December 2018 – December 2021

How Save the Children Australia will operationalise the Disability Inclusion Policy



Save the Children Australia's Disability Inclusion Working Group developed this *Disability Inclusion Action Plan* to show how we will bring our *Disability Inclusion Policy* to life. The action plan is aligned with Save the Children's global priorities:

Create positive impact for and with children

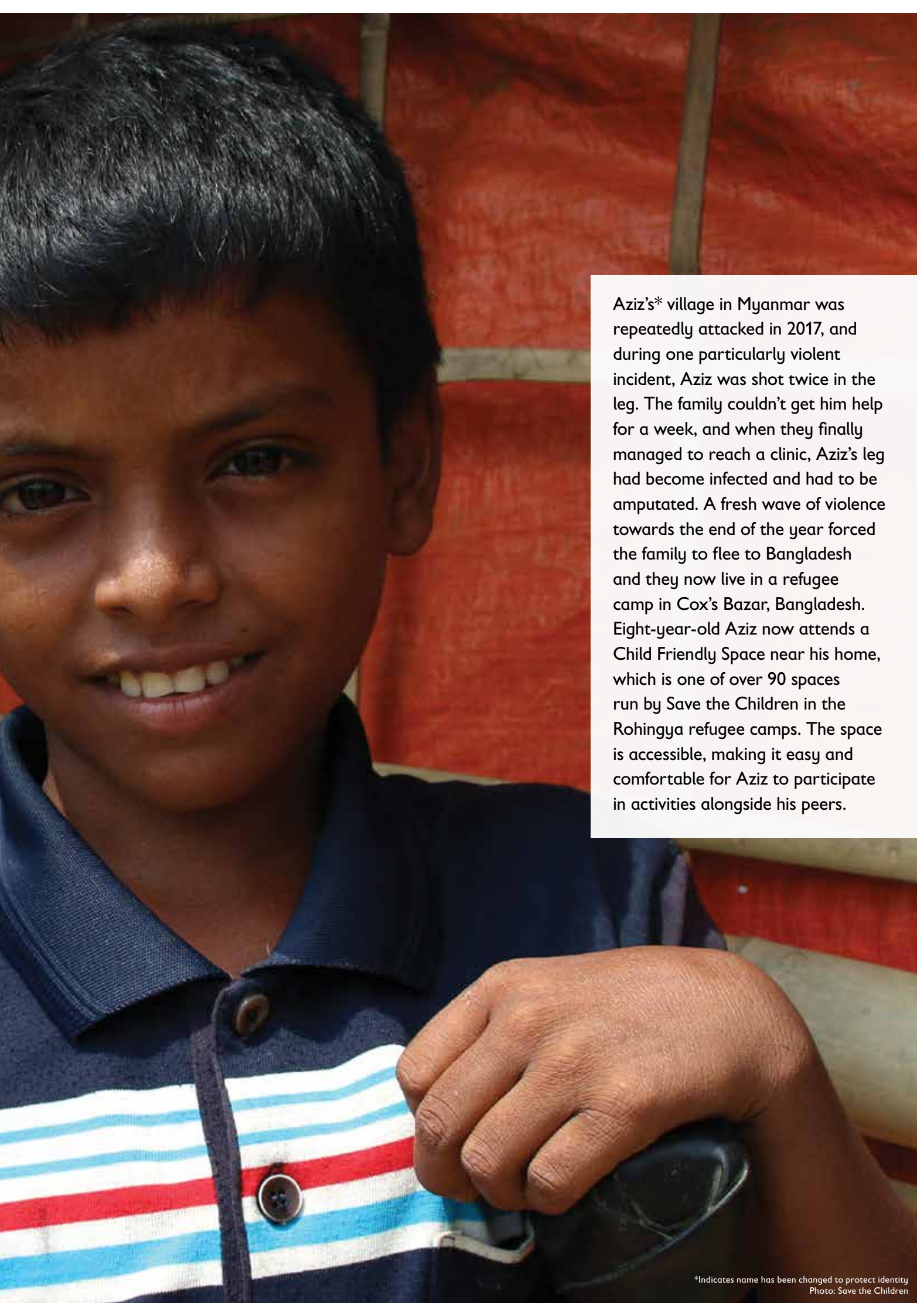
This action plan addresses barriers to inclusion in our programs and will help us reach more children and save more lives.

Fuel change with partners and supporters

We have an opportunity to boost our reputation and increase our competitive edge by telling others that we are committed to disability inclusion and take it seriously in our programs.

Be a great place to work

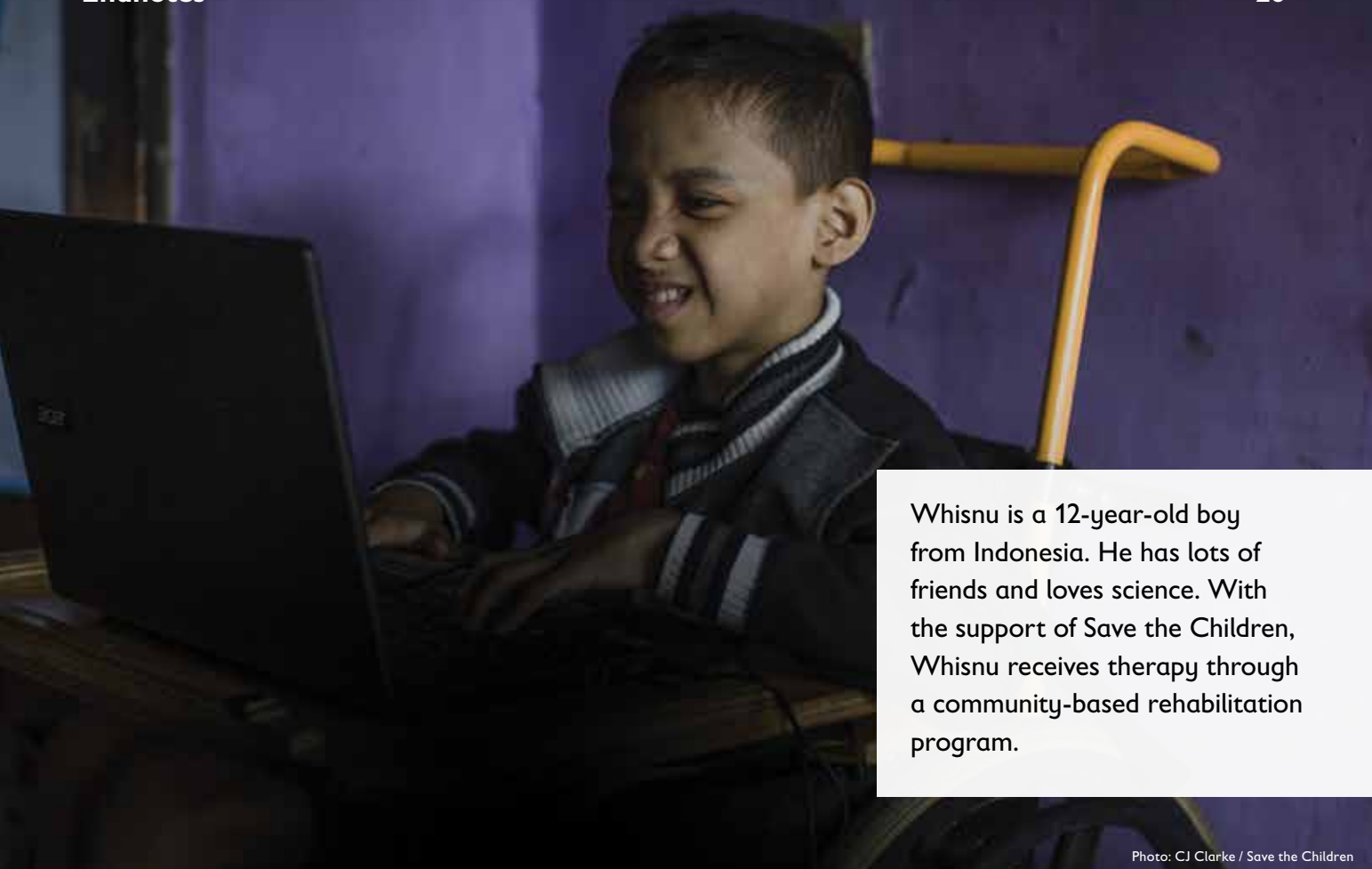
Being more inclusive will increase our productivity as we can tap into a wider talent pool for prospective staff, while also being more responsive to the wellbeing of existing staff.



Aziz's* village in Myanmar was repeatedly attacked in 2017, and during one particularly violent incident, Aziz was shot twice in the leg. The family couldn't get him help for a week, and when they finally managed to reach a clinic, Aziz's leg had become infected and had to be amputated. A fresh wave of violence towards the end of the year forced the family to flee to Bangladesh and they now live in a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Eight-year-old Aziz now attends a Child Friendly Space near his home, which is one of over 90 spaces run by Save the Children in the Rohingya refugee camps. The space is accessible, making it easy and comfortable for Aziz to participate in activities alongside his peers.

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Whisnu is a 12-year-old boy from Indonesia. He has lots of friends and loves science. With the support of Save the Children, Whisnu receives therapy through a community-based rehabilitation program.

Introduction

“Save the Children Australia firmly believes people with disabilities must have their human rights and fundamental freedoms protected, promoted and upheld, in accordance with domestic laws in Australian and international law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”¹

Our ambition is to achieve the rights of all children, but we put children who are most marginalised first and advocate for others to do the same. There is an estimated 1 billion people living with a disability worldwide, of which 93 million are children.²

Children with disabilities are more likely to die before their fifth birthday, less likely to attend school, and three to four times more vulnerable to abuse.³

In our programs:

We are committed to achieving better outcomes for children with disabilities across three breakthrough areas:

1. Survive

We work to ensure children with disabilities have access to quality health and nutrition to support growth and development in their first five years.

2. Learn

We work to ensure children with disabilities are supported to learn on an equal basis with others.

3. Protected

We work to ensure children with disabilities are safe and protected in families and communities.

In our workplace:

We will lead by example on disability inclusion. That means that in the workplace, we make access and inclusion for people with disabilities a priority. The key results we will achieve in the workplace are:

1. Accessible information

People with disabilities can easily access our communications.

2. Accessible facilities

People with disabilities can easily access our office facilities, program sites and shops

3. Accessible recruitment

Prospective or existing employees can easily apply for positions regardless of abilities and will have the resources they need to be supported in the workplace.

Casey is a bright and engaging woman living with a disability. She has a Certificate 1 in Work Education and has found it difficult to get a paid job without previous work experience. To bridge the gap, Casey applied for a volunteer position at Save the Children's retail store in Frankston.

Since being employed, she has gained valuable skills in customer service, team work and sales. Casey really enjoys her volunteer position and has gained more personal and professional confidence as a result of the experience.

She is looking forward to applying her knowledge and skills in the job of her choice in the future.



Eila* is four and loves being part of our Play2Learn program in Victoria. Play2Learn provides children aged 3-5 years with the skills they need to be ready to start school. In this picture, Eila is excitedly placing her hands over the handprints that are inside a tunnel.

Eila has Autism Spectrum Disorder. She is very imaginative and likes to play on her own. The Play2Learn program recognises that all children learn differently. The staff look for activities to support individual needs while also offering new challenges.



Save the Children's Theory of Change

We will achieve better outcomes for people with disabilities through our Theory of Change.



What does disability mean?

Article One of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability as “persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society”.⁴

Save the Children Australia has chosen to add ‘episodic’ to the definition in line with the evolving concept of disability referred to in the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability preamble. This is particularly important for humanitarian organisations who are more likely to be exposed to situations that may lead to episodic disabilities, such as mental health conditions.⁵

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Australia was actively involved in negotiating and drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and was one of the original state signatories in 2007. Today the treaty has 177 signatories, of which more than 70 percent are the in the Asia–Pacific region, which is the priority geographic area for Save the Children Australia’s programming.

Whilst the rights of people with disabilities has been enshrined in earlier conventions, the CRPD has put a spotlight on the specific rights of people with disabilities that are routinely denied and neglected.

The CRPD marks a paradigm shift in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. There is global recognition that people with disabilities are holders of rights and the CRPD is the legal framework under which they can claim those rights. This action plan uses the CRPD as its corner stone because it enables others to understand that disability inclusion is not an ‘add on’ but rather an integral component of our work. Without this approach, the rights of 15 percent of the population cannot be achieved.

Rosemary Kayess is the first Australian woman to be elected to the Committee that oversees the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Ms Kayess is an accomplished human rights lawyer, researcher and academic. She will begin her three-year term in January 2019.



Disability inclusion in Australia

“People with disabilities want to bring about a transformation of their lives. They want their human rights recognised and realised. They want the things that everyone else in the community takes for granted. They want somewhere to live, a job, better healthcare, a good education, a chance to enjoy the company of friends, to go to the footy and go to the movies.”⁶

- Australian Government,
Shut Out: The experience of people with disability and their families in Australia

It is estimated that 20 percent of Australians have a disability, which is just over four million people. Each year, one in five Australians will experience mental illness.⁷ There are more than 2.1 million people with a disability of working age and only half of them have a job. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are nearly twice as likely as non-indigenous people to be living with a disability.⁸

A report by Deloitte states that if unemployment rates for people with and without disabilities were to be reduced by one third, it would result in a cumulative \$43 billion increase in Australia's gross domestic product (GDP) over the next decade.⁹ Most people with disabilities can and do want to work and be as financially independent as possible, and their employment would help them to have a better standard of living and increased control of their finances.¹⁰

In Australia, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) protects individuals with disabilities from unfair treatment in many parts of public life.¹¹ The Act makes disability discrimination unlawful and promotes equal rights, equal opportunity and equal access for people with disabilities. Our action plan seeks to align its approaches and activities to demonstrate compliance with the DDA.

Our action plan is also guided by the National Disability Strategy¹² (2010-2020) which sets out a plan for improving the lives of people with disabilities, their families and their carers. Save the Children Australia's approach to disability inclusion will contribute to three of the key outcome areas: inclusive and accessible communities; rights protection, justice and legislation; and economic security.





To ensure people with disabilities can apply and volunteer in Save the Children's retail stores, advertisements are extended to disability service providers, volunteer networks and relevant educational institutions. Retail stores use a fantastic resource from Volunteering Victoria which gives practical strategies on how to make the workplace accessible for volunteers with disabilities.

Save the Children is currently negotiating a position in our Dandenong warehouse for a volunteer with a vision impairment. With the support of Vision Australia, Save the Children is modifying the workplace so that this volunteer has everything he needs to do his new job effectively.

Photo: Save the Children staff - Kellie, Yvonne and Kristine - at our Northcote store in Melbourne.

Disability inclusion around the world

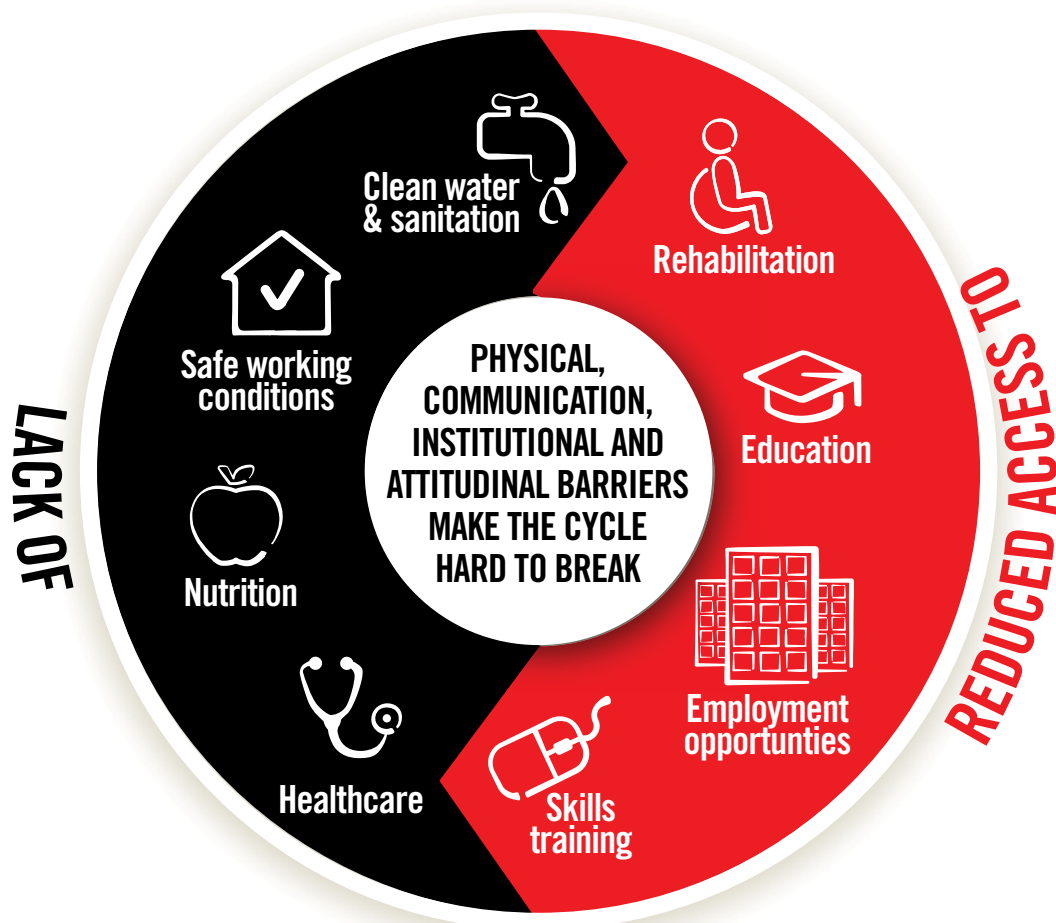
“The Asian Development Bank maintains that while there are costs associated with including people with disabilities, they are far outweighed by the long-term financial benefits to individuals, families and societies.”¹³

—Asian Development Bank

Globally, there are more than 1 billion people living with a disability, of which 80 percent live in low and middle-income countries.¹⁴ The number of people with disabilities is expected to double by the year 2050 due to an ageing population and the increase in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.¹⁵ Approximately 20 million women become disabled every year because of complications during pregnancy or child birth.¹⁶

The link between poverty and disability is inextricable. People with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty as they are excluded from mainstream health, education and economic opportunities. And being poor can increase the likelihood of disability due to injury and disease associated with poor nutrition, lack of clean water and unsafe work practices.


The Poverty and Disability Cycle



Development for All Strategy

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is recognised as a leader in inclusive development, due to strong advocacy efforts with bilateral and multi-lateral agencies. Its Development for All Strategy¹⁷ links poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth to the inclusion of people with disabilities in Australia's aid program.

The strategy promotes inclusive development for all partner agencies, for example, through the collection of disability disaggregated data and evidence of the participation of people with disabilities across the project cycle. As an accredited agency, Save the Children Australia is working hard to ensure its practice in both humanitarian and mainstream contexts is aligned with DFAT's Development for All Strategy.



On the evening of 11 June 2016, Ali* and his family were preparing to eat dinner when an airstrike hit a building close to their home in Sa'ada Governorate, Yemen. The family ran to take shelter in a small basement room, but before they got there, a second missile hit a nearby school. The blast sent Ali flying through a window and he fell two stories, landing on his neck. Just before another missile hit, Ali's mother and grandfather were able to carry him to the basement, where they stayed until the air strikes were over. Ali was unconscious, with blood coming out of his ears, mouth, and nose – and he was initially unable to hear or speak. Now, he uses a hearing aid in both ears, and after surgery and time with a speech therapist, he is slowly beginning to talk again.

Sustainable Development Goals

People with disabilities are frequently excluded from mainstream development initiatives.

The situation is often the same for people who experience marginalisation based on gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, socio-economic class and migration status.

In 2015, the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals. For the first time, the spotlight has been focused on the impact of inequality and the theme is “Leave No One Behind”. This means that the goals, activities and targets must be met for all nations and people and for all segments of society, including people with disabilities.

Barriers to participation

People with disabilities often face barriers which can impact on their ability to participate fully and on an equal basis with others in society. As an organisation, we have the capacity to address these barriers and make life easier for everyone.

The most common barriers are:

- **Attitudes.** For example, a manager doesn't provide opportunities for career progression for a person with a visual impairment on the basis of discriminatory views of capacity.
- **Environmental design.** For example, a building used for a fundraising event has toilets that are not accessible to a person with a mobility impairment.
- **Financial.** For example, the absence of policies to subsidise services for people with disabilities means that parents cannot afford basic medicines for their child with epilepsy.
- **Communication.** For example, a health worker is unaware of how to adapt her communication during a consultation for a person with an intellectual impairment which impacts on the quality of the information that is shared and received.
- **Information.** For example, child protection information isn't available in different formats which impacts on the ability of a child with a hearing impairment to report abuse.





Chun* is an 11-year-old boy who lives with his family in Cambodia. Chun's parents didn't enroll him in school due to their fears that he would be discriminated against due to his disability. Save the Children's 'Fighting Discrimination and Violence in School for Inclusive and Child Friendly Education Program' was instrumental in changing unhelpful community attitudes towards children with disability. Chun is now in school and has been provided with a bicycle to assist him in getting to and from school.

The evidence base for how to strengthen disability inclusion

In 2013, DFAT commissioned research¹⁸ into the key drivers of disability inclusive practice of NGOs in their overseas programs.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. **Whole of organisation approach** – Address disability inclusion across all operations, to ensure workplaces are inclusive and accessible to all.
2. **Professional development** – Provide training in disability awareness and disability inclusive programming for staff.
3. **Leadership** – Encourage senior leadership support and attract appropriately skilled people with a disability to serve on boards.
4. **Recruitment** – Build skills and confidence of HR managers and wider staff to recruit and support, train and mentor appropriately skilled people with disability as staff and volunteers.

Considering these recommendations, Save the Children Australia has developed a framework to strengthen disability inclusion in both our programs and workplace drawing on best practice from disability inclusive development organisations, most notably CBM and Humanity & Inclusion. Our framework is the philosophical basis for the action plan.

A disability inclusive program

Disability inclusive development ensures people with disabilities are included in and benefit equally from development efforts.

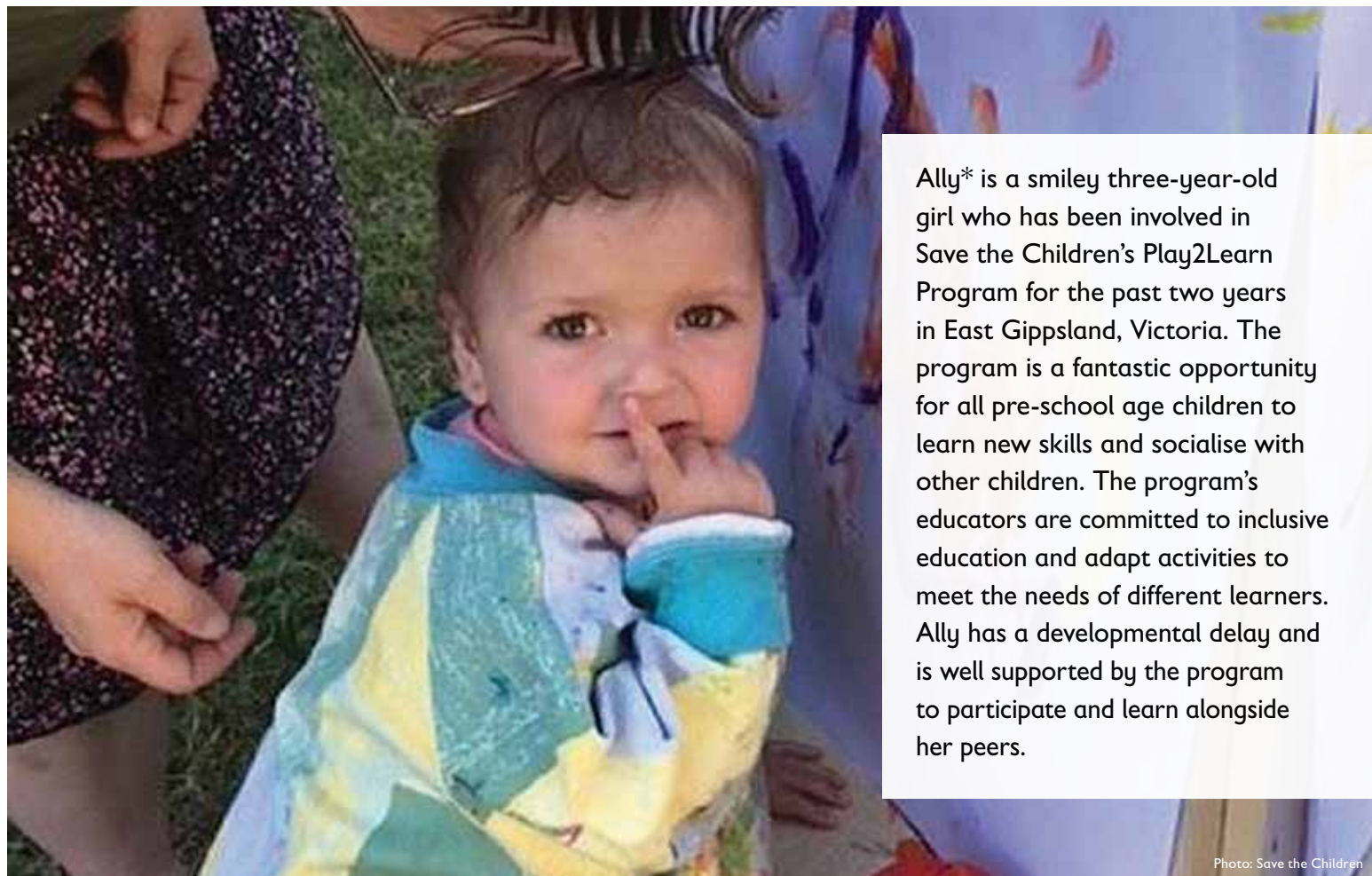
To make development effective, people with disabilities must be recognised as both beneficiaries and agents of development. An inclusive approach identifies and addresses the barriers to full and effective participation for people with disabilities.

A disability confident workplace

Potential employees, supporters and customers with disabilities represent a substantial opportunity to Save the Children Australia. Being a disability confident organisation means actively embracing inclusion across all parts of the business.

To build a ‘disability confident’ workplace, Save the Children Australia will focus on:

- understanding how people with disabilities relate to the business as potential and existing employees, as customers, suppliers and stakeholders.
- creating a culture of inclusion and removing barriers to people with disability.
- adjusting processes and systems to enable people with disabilities to contribute as employees, customers and stakeholders.



Ally* is a smiley three-year-old girl who has been involved in Save the Children's Play2Learn Program for the past two years in East Gippsland, Victoria. The program is a fantastic opportunity for all pre-school age children to learn new skills and socialise with other children. The program's educators are committed to inclusive education and adapt activities to meet the needs of different learners. Ally has a developmental delay and is well supported by the program to participate and learn alongside her peers.

Photo: Save the Children

Disability Inclusion Framework - The Foundation

Rights-based approach

Save the Children Australia is founded on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). While the CRC has specific reference to the rights of children with disabilities (Article 23) these rights are more comprehensively articulated in the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

As a result, both conventions underpin the framework used to support our approach to disability inclusion. The CRPD provides the basis for how Save the Children Australia understands whether people with disabilities can fully and effectively participate in our programs and the workplace.

Guiding principles

The extent to which the rights for people with disabilities are realised will be viewed within the parameters of the CRPD's guiding principles:

- Respect for dignity
- Non-discrimination
- Accessibility
- Respect for difference
- Full and effective participation in society
- Equality of opportunity
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities
- Equality between men and women

Disability Inclusion Framework - Our Approach

1. Twin Track

Once the gaps in the realisation of rights have been determined, the Twin Track approach will be adopted to address these gaps. This approach is recognised within the disability inclusive development sector as being the most effective way to strengthen inclusion. The approach has two pillars which should be implemented simultaneously to maximise impact.

Pillar One - Make MAINSTREAM policies, processes and practices inclusive:

In our programs, this may involve providing written information on nutrition during pregnancy in simple words or pictures for people with a cognitive impairment.

In our workplace, this may involve adapting the entrance to our buildings to improve physical accessibility for people with mobility impairments.

Pillar Two - Invest in SPECIFIC activities that will empower people with disabilities:

In our programs, this may involve providing financial and technical support to a Disabled Persons Organisation, so they can advocate for the rights of children with disabilities.

In our workplace, this may involve having a sign language interpreter attend an event when we know that children with hearing impairments will be attending.

2. Reasonable accommodation

The Twin Track approach can only be effective if there is commitment to the principal of 'reasonable accommodation'. This term means providing support, modifications or adjustments to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise their human rights on an equal basis with others.¹⁹ Save the Children Australia recognises that reasonable accommodation is necessary to achieve the human rights of persons with disabilities and will endeavour to uphold this principle where it does not impose a disproportionate or undue burden.

3. Minimum standards for disability inclusion in programming

Save the Children Australia has developed a set of best practice standards to help programs – both in Australia and overseas – to be able to track their progress toward disability inclusion. The standards have been developed from a collation of best practice indicators for disability inclusion in the sector.

The achievement of these standards is intended to support Disability Sensitive Programming which means that projects have the capacity to identify and respond to the barriers to inclusion to meet the basic needs of people with disabilities. Save the Children Australia will work closely with our program staff and partners to develop tangible activities that will enable these standards to be reached over a realistic timeframe.

4. Partnerships

Engaging people with disabilities throughout the project cycle is a key part of Save the Children Australia's approach to inclusive programming. Save the Children Australia recognises the important role that Disabled Persons Organisations and disability-specific service providers play in supporting mainstream agencies to be accountable to the needs and priorities of people with disabilities. It is therefore a priority for partnerships to be developed with these organisations to promote access and inclusion for people with disabilities.



Afia* is just three years old and lives with her mother Sanjana*. They are Bangladeshi and live in an area that has become part of the refugee camps sheltering Rohingya families who have fled violence in Myanmar. Afia* has a disability that affects how she plays, learns and moves around. She needs regular medical care, but it's difficult for the family to travel to the city. Save the Children has set up a health post close to their home and now it's much easier for Afia to get the healthcare she needs.



Twelve-year-old Sunil* lost his house in the 2015 Nepal earthquake. He and his mother, Sri Maya, now live on school grounds in a temporary shelter provided by the Resource Centre for Rehabilitation and Development Nepal (RCRD) – a long-time partner of Save the Children. RCRD have been developing the capacity of schools where children with disabilities study – children like Sunil, who has Down Syndrome – so the risks are reduced should a new earthquake take place. As well as RCRD's work, Save the Children's school safety program is ensuring that children with disabilities are aware of, and prepared for, all hazards.



Disability Inclusion Framework - Our Approach

5. Data collection

Collecting disability data is an important element of our approach to strengthening inclusion because we can then start to track whether we are making a positive change towards the realisation of rights for persons with disabilities. In both our programs and our workplace this means using methods to collect internationally comparable data and having systems in place to track and analyse this data. The Washington Group Questions and UNICEF Child Functioning Module will be trialled as data collection tools in our overseas programs as a first step.

6. Champions for change:

Save the Children will utilise a network of champions to strengthen our approach to inclusion both domestically and overseas:

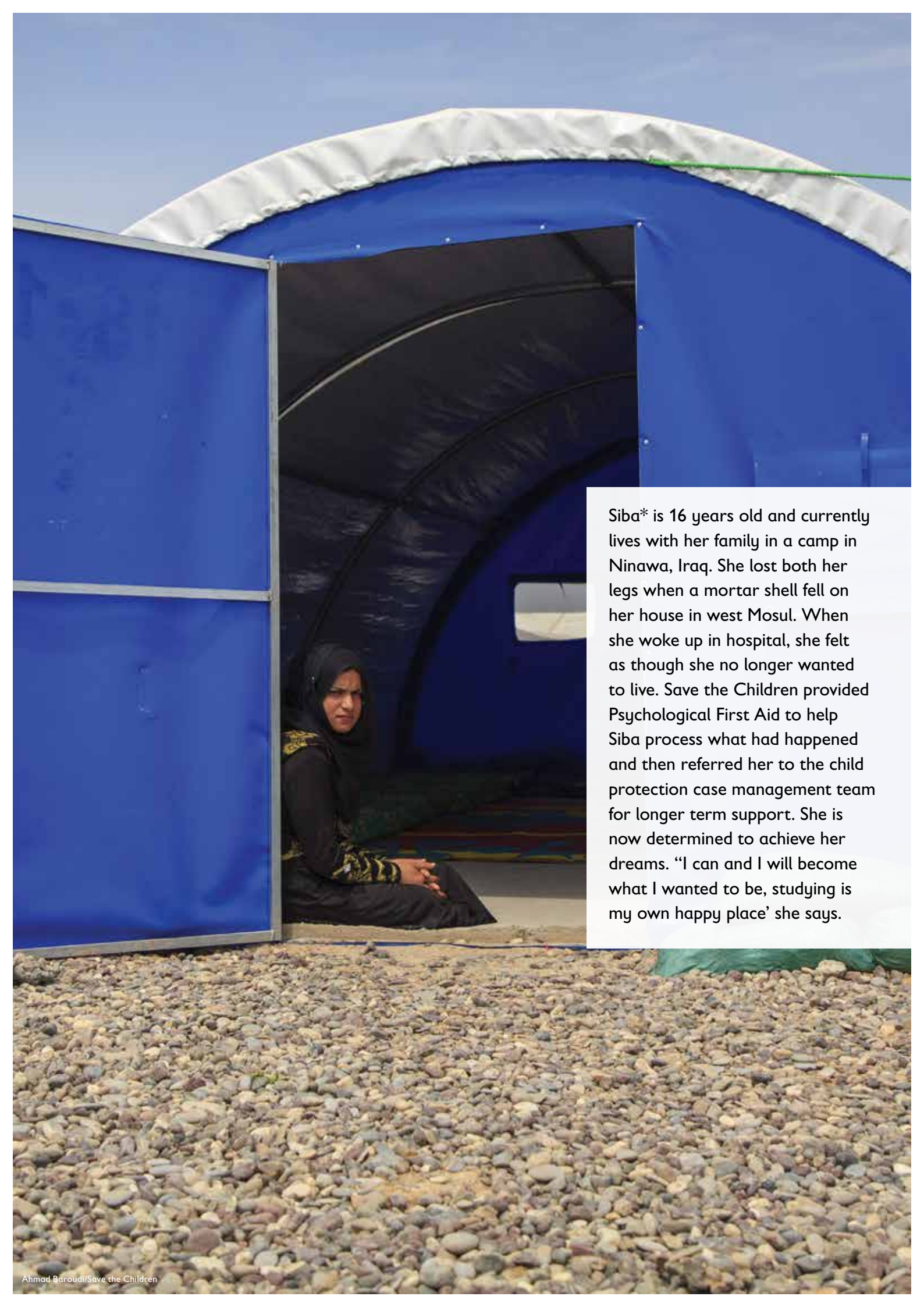
- a. A Disability Inclusion Technical Advisor will provide support to the international programs team to strengthen inclusion in our overseas programs.
- b. A Country Office Disability Focal Point will be identified in priority Country Offices in Asia-Pacific and receive coaching and mentoring from the Save the Children Australia Disability Inclusion Technical Advisor or relevant national partner.
- c. Save the Children Australia's Disability Inclusion Working Group will be responsible for driving change within their respective departments, according to the activities listed in this action plan. Each activity has indicators that will support members of the group to track progress.
- d. Save the Children Australia's Executive Team will provide oversight for the Disability Inclusion Working Group and champion change at Board level. Progress against the action plan will be provided on a six-monthly basis to the Executive by the Disability Inclusion Technical Advisor.
- e. Save the Children International's Disability Inclusion Working Group will drive policy, strategy and capacity building within the global organisation. Save the Children Australia will play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of this group to ensure the priorities for the Australian aid program and obligations under the National Disability Strategy and Disability Discrimination Act remain in focus.

Top-Level Disability Action Plan: December 2018 – December 2021

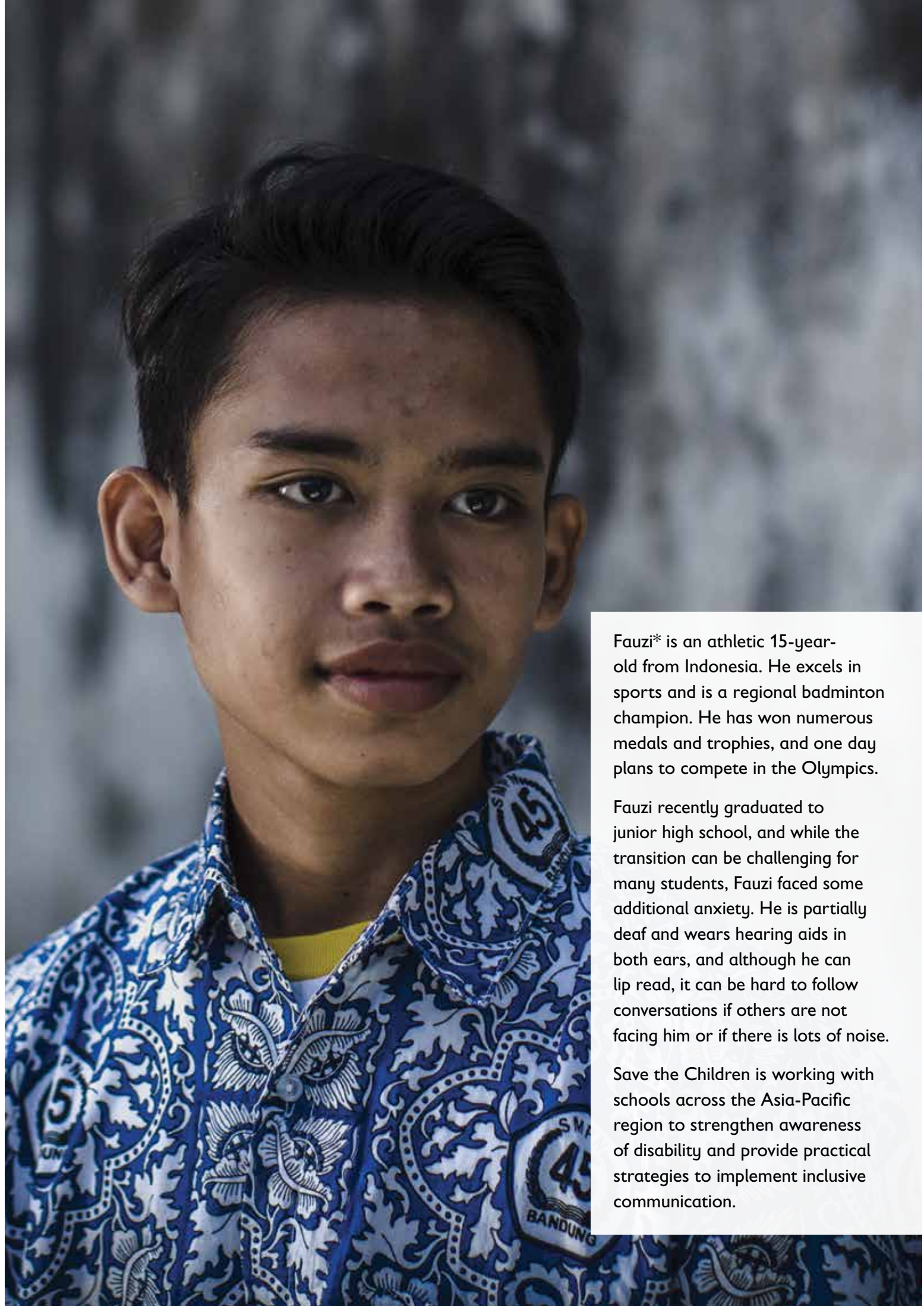
Overall objectives

1. Save the Children Australia will increase the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in our PROGRAMS in Australia and overseas.
2. Save the Children Australia will increase the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in our WORKPLACE – as new and existing employees, supporters and donors.

	OUTCOME	TARGET	KEY ACTIVITIES
1	Board, Executive and staff are confident to interact with people with disabilities in the workplace	60% of Board, Executive and staff report they feel more confident to interact with people with disabilities	Training in 'Disability Confidence'
2	Child safeguarding training specifically identifies and addresses the added vulnerability of children with disabilities	All new safeguarding training packages developed consider disability Training tools are more accessible to people with disabilities	Prepare safeguarding packages based on best practise disability inclusion principles Consult with children and youth with disabilities and their representative organisations Review training tools and adapt for accessibility
3	Overseas programs are more inclusive of children with disabilities	60% of ANCP and humanitarian programs meet half of the Disability Sensitive - Minimum Standards	Training for programs staff in Disability Sensitive - Minimum Standards Mentoring and coaching for country office Disability Inclusion Focal Points Identify opportunities for partnerships with Disabled Persons Organisations
4	Advocacy activities include and represent the voices of children with disabilities	Five media pieces promoting disability inclusion messages and/or featuring the voices of children with disabilities Three policy submissions and two research reports promoting disability inclusion messages and/or featuring the voices of children with disabilities	Consult with children and youth with disabilities and their representative organisations

A young woman, Siba, is sitting in the doorway of a blue tent. She is wearing a black headscarf and a black dress with yellow and black patterned sleeves. The tent has a white interior and a blue exterior. The ground is covered in small, light-colored stones. The sky is clear and blue.

Siba* is 16 years old and currently lives with her family in a camp in Ninawa, Iraq. She lost both her legs when a mortar shell fell on her house in west Mosul. When she woke up in hospital, she felt as though she no longer wanted to live. Save the Children provided Psychological First Aid to help Siba process what had happened and then referred her to the child protection case management team for longer term support. She is now determined to achieve her dreams. "I can and I will become what I wanted to be, studying is my own happy place" she says.



Fauzi* is an athletic 15-year-old from Indonesia. He excels in sports and is a regional badminton champion. He has won numerous medals and trophies, and one day plans to compete in the Olympics.

Fauzi recently graduated to junior high school, and while the transition can be challenging for many students, Fauzi faced some additional anxiety. He is partially deaf and wears hearing aids in both ears, and although he can lip read, it can be hard to follow conversations if others are not facing him or if there is lots of noise.

Save the Children is working with schools across the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen awareness of disability and provide practical strategies to implement inclusive communication.

Top Level Disability Action Plan: December 2018 – December 2021

	OUTCOME	TARGET	KEY ACTIVITIES
5	External communications and events are inclusive of people with disabilities	Compliance with website accessibility standards WCAG 2 AA is improved. Events meet agreed accessibility guidelines	Review website to determine WCAG 2AA to be considered as a priority; Liaise with current website agency re: process for building in accessibility Integrate event accessibility guidelines into event management procedures Develop networks with disability specific organisations
6	Volunteer program is more inclusive of people with disabilities in retail stores	Increase in the number of people with disabilities working in our retail facilities	Review and update policies and procedures Adapt job description and facilities as required to meet needs of employees with disability
7	Programs based in Australia are more inclusive of children and youth with disabilities	Action plan in place to guide how disability inclusion will be strengthened	Review current delivery and available resources to support disability inclusion across states
8	Recruitment policies, processes and systems are more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities	Action plan in place to guide how disability will be strengthened Applicant and employee databases capture disability data Organisational policies are in alignment with the Disability Inclusion Policy 60% of hiring managers are confident in recruitment and retention of people with disabilities	Map resources available through Job Access to support disability inclusion in the workplace Review applicant and employee databases and integrate disability content Review each policy for alignment with Disability Inclusion Policy Carry out training for hiring managers on disability-sensitive recruitment and retention
9	Office facilities, shops and program sites are accessible to people with disabilities	Melbourne Office meets accessibility standards under Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 Ten additional Save the Children Australia sites are assessed against the accessibility standards	Safety and Security Manager Trained Workplace inspection tools and processes adapted Sites assessed, and recommendations prioritised and implemented

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