

Long read: Theory of Change

INTRODUCTION

This Theory of Change outlines how Liliane Fonds envisions impact. It provides the foundation for our Multi-Annual Strategy and guides our partnerships, programming, and advocacy.

Liliane Fonds is committed to creating inclusive societies where children and youth with disabilities (CYWD) enjoy equal rights and opportunities. We believe that sustainable change is only possible when led by communities themselves. Local partners, such as community-based organisations, caregiver networks, and disability rights groups, play a central role in this work. Our role is to support and strengthen their efforts.

Developed in close collaboration with partners, thematic experts and stakeholders, this Theory of Change serves as a shared reference point. It reflects both our vision and our practical approach to programming, monitoring, and evaluation.

CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Worldwide, children and youth with disabilities are among the most marginalised. Their exclusion is linked to poverty, systemic inequality, and weak public services. Challenges such as conflict, climate change, and shrinking civic space intensify their vulnerability.

Despite the existence of global frameworks like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, implementation remains limited, particularly at local levels. As a result, children with disabilities continue to face stigma, discrimination, and restricted access to essential services.

Globally, an estimated 1.3 billion people (16% of the population) experience significant disability. Around 240 million are children. Most live in low- and middle-income countries, often in rural or fragile settings with little access to education, healthcare, or protection. Girls and women with disabilities face multiple layers of exclusion and increased risk of violence. In addition to these challenges, they often encounter intersectional discrimination due to both gender and disability, limiting their access to education, safety, and participation.

In these circumstances, families and communities already show incredible resilience and commitment. Liliane Fonds supports their ongoing efforts to build more inclusive environments for children and youth with disabilities.

HOW LILIANE FONDS SUPPORTS ITS PARTNERS

Our approach is grounded in the belief that local actors are best placed to drive inclusive change. We support their leadership through five key enablers:

Reputation & Expertise

Liliane Fonds brings decades of experience in disability-inclusive development. Our reputation helps to increase the impact of partner-led initiatives at national and local levels. Together with partners and knowledge institutions, we generate and share evidence-based insights into Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR/CBID), advocacy, and inclusive programming.

Diverse Funding Sources

We mobilise financial support from a range of donors, from individuals and partnerships in the Netherlands to institutional and governmental funders. This diversification helps partners reduce dependency on any single source, and access funding aligned with their goals. Due to the flexible funds of our private donors, we are able to provide long-term and tailor-made support, which enables partners to grow and generate a more sustainable impact. We also facilitate new connections between partners and funders, increasing local access to resources that align with their goals.

Fund Management & Technical Support

Beyond financial support, Liliane Fonds' team of thematic experts supports partners with expertise in the various CBR domains to optimise programme quality in the fields of health and rehabilitation, education, livelihoods and SRHR. We do so by acting as a 'critical friend': we aim to complement and strengthen local expertise through innovation and knowledge products. We provide hands-on, responsive programme management guidance, always tailored to local realities. This includes monitoring and evaluation tools, flexible reporting formats, and capacity-strengthening workshops. We also promote the implementation of child- and youth safeguarding standards, which are essential for ensuring safe and inclusive programming environments. Our aim is to help partners adapt and scale their interventions without compromising quality, allowing them to remain in the driver's seat.

Equitable Partnerships & Knowledge Exchange

We invest in long-term, trust-based relationships that prioritise local leadership and shared decision-making. Liliane Fonds does not have country offices; instead, autonomous country partner networks operate with support from Liliane Fonds. Local grant managers coordinate these networks within their own countries, implementing multi annual programmes that they co-designed. We foster connections between partners to build stronger alliances and enable mutual learning, through joint research projects, partner meetings and communities of practice. This facilitates knowledge exchange across programmes and enhances quality by valuing local expertise. In addition, we provide innovation grants to support locally rooted innovations.

Mobility & Technology Access

Through our collaboration with MIVA, we support practical, partner-chosen solutions to overcome barriers, such as vehicles to reach remote areas, solar panels to power clinics, mobile phones and tablets for telerehabilitation, or braille computers for children in school. These tools are critical enablers that expand the reach and impact of inclusive services where they are most needed. We pilot innovative technological solutions such as telerehabilitation to strengthen digital data collection and better outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

Core Strategies

Liliane Fonds focuses on three interrelated strategies to reach our shared goal of ensuring that every child and youth with a disability experiences improved quality of life and dignity:

1. Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a disability strategy initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for low- and middle-income countries. CBR evolved over more than four decades, reflecting changes in global understanding of disability, development policies and human rights.

Liliane Fonds considers CBR a core strategy for achieving Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID). CBR seeks to reduce stigma and discrimination, improve access to essential services, and empower children, youth, and families to exercise their rights and participate fully in their communities and society.

As a multi-sectoral approach, CBR encompasses health, education, livelihoods, social inclusion, and empowerment. It follows a twin-track approach: strengthening both mainstream systems and disability-specific services.

Local communities, families, and partner organisations are already taking the lead in addressing the needs of children and youth with disabilities, while promoting their inclusion in daily life. Liliane Fonds supports and reinforces these efforts by providing technical, financial, and strategic assistance, always tailored to the local context, making optimal use of local resources, and working to strengthen existing structures and policies.

We focus on the following thematic areas, as part of a holistic CBR approach:

- Rehabilitation

A successful rehabilitation approach involves a network of supportive structures, resources, and professionals at different levels, working together through collaborative care pathways. There is no one-size-fits-all solution: rehabilitation is closely connected to the ecocultural system surrounding the child and their family.

At Liliane Fonds, we advocate for early identification and intervention for children with disabilities, with a strong focus on family- and community-based care, especially in hard-to-reach areas. This involves collaboration across referral systems, strengthening the workforce, and using innovative tools such as telerehabilitation.

We aim to empower children and youth with disabilities and their families to express their needs and priorities and live their lives according to their wishes. At the same time, we support societies and services to become more inclusive, as children and youth with disabilities can only thrive in an enabling environment.

- Inclusive Education

Providing access to education for children and youth with disabilities is a key part of Liliane Fonds' strategy. We support partners in promoting inclusive school systems and encouraging collaboration between mainstream and special education. Inclusive education means adapting the education system to meet the needs of all learners and creating an environment where everyone can

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thrive.

Our partners work to ensure that education systems and teacher training programmes are inclusive, responsive, and tailored to diverse needs. For education to be a meaningful right, it must be accessible, acceptable, available, and adaptable.

All actors -governments, educators, parents, and civil society- share the responsibility to fulfill the right to education for every child, including those with disabilities. We also recognise the important role of special needs schools in the transition towards a more inclusive society.

- Livelihoods

Together with our partner organisations, we lead initiatives that support youth with disabilities, their parents, and caregivers in achieving greater inclusion, socio-economic empowerment, and access to employment or entrepreneurship. Many youth with disabilities face exclusion from the labour market and a lack of opportunities for self-reliance. Through targeted livelihoods programming, our partners address both the supply and demand sides of the labour market to break this cycle.

On the supply side, our partners ensure that youth with disabilities and their social environments have access to market-relevant, high-quality skills training. On the demand side, our partners engage with employers to promote inclusive hiring practices, advocate for inclusive policies and legislation with policymakers, and help shape enabling environments for inclusion.

- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

All children and youth, including those with disabilities, have the fundamental right to make informed decisions about sexuality and reproduction, decisions that affect their bodies, lives, and futures. To do so, they must have access to accurate, evidence- and rights-based information and services that are disability-inclusive.

Improved access to SRHR services saves lives, promotes well-being and leads to better socio-economic outcomes for individuals and households across generations.

- Child Protection

Child safeguarding is essential to prevent and respond to any form of harm that may affect children and youth with disabilities that are included in our programmes. In the context of Liliane Fonds, safeguarding specifically refers to preventing harm caused by the organisations and their implementing partners.

Liliane Fonds requires all partner organisations to implement clear safeguarding policies, including a code of conduct and practical guidelines on how to apply safeguarding in their activities.

In addition, partners may develop community-based protection programmes to improve protection mechanisms and make these disability-inclusive. Depending on priorities, partners include actions to respond and prevent violence, exploitation, neglect, and other harmful practices affecting children with disabilities in their programmes.

2. Effective Networks

We believe in the power of collaboration. Liliane Fonds supports the development of local networks of organisations that share values and complement each other's expertise. These networks co-create inclusive, multi-year programmes based on country context analysis and our Theory of Change.

Effective networks drive systemic change by staying connected to the community, amplifying voices at every level, and influencing policies and systems. We contribute by facilitating collaboration, learning, and funding, allowing local actors to lead the way in tackling the root causes of exclusion.

When local organisations with complementary expertise work together with shared goals, their combined impact is greater than the sum of their parts. These networks develop and implement programmes that empower children and youth with disabilities to become agents of change in their communities.

3. Lobby & Advocacy

Liliane Fonds advocates for the rights of children with disabilities and more inclusive systems.

We stand alongside our partners to advocate for the rights of children and youth with disabilities, amplifying their voices on national and international platforms. Our approach is grounded in human rights treaties and the principle of "leave no one behind" from the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our advocacy is rooted in the lived experiences and insights of local actors. We support our partners in defining their own evidence-based advocacy agendas and to strengthen the voices of youth with disabilities to advocate for their own rights. In both Dutch and international networks, we promote disability inclusion, participate in public debates, and provide well-founded recommendations that reflect the realities of children and youth with disabilities and those who support them.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We focus on inclusive development that is shaped by the following principles:

- Participation & Inclusion: Children and youth with disabilities are actively involved in shaping programmes that affect them.
- Family-Centeredness: Families are central to care and decision-making, recognising the diversity of family structures.
- Rights-Based Approach: We uphold the UNCRPD and UNCRC, promoting full rights for children with disabilities.
- Gender Equality: All programmes address the specific needs and rights of girls and women with disabilities.
- Community-Based: Services are delivered close to home, using local resources and structures.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

By working closely with local partners and networks, we work toward the following intermediate outcomes:

Community & Systems Strengthening

- Enhanced access to quality CBR services at the community level for children and youth with disabilities, across all CBR domains (health, education, livelihoods, social inclusion, and empowerment).
- Enhanced capacity and effectiveness of community-based networks and referral systems to specialised services in urban areas, to implement inclusive programmes.
- Enhanced responsiveness of duty bearers towards the protection and inclusion of children and youth with disabilities.

Child & Family Empowerment

- Enhanced ability of children and youth with disabilities to exercise their rights, including in the areas of inclusion, protection, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
- Strengthened capacity of caregivers to provide appropriate care, support, and advocacy for their children.
- Reduced stigma and discrimination of children and youth with disabilities in daily life.

OUTCOMES / IMPACT

At Liliane Fonds, we envision a world where every child and youth with a disability can reach their full potential. Our contribution focuses on supporting local partners who enhance access to quality Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) services at the community level. These partners play a central role in ensuring that children and youth with disabilities receive the care and support they need, close to home.

By strengthening community-based networks, including local organisations, caregivers, stakeholders, and referral systems, our partners make CBR programmes more effective, inclusive, and sustainable. We contribute by providing financial and technical support and by facilitating connections across networks and sectors.

Together with our partners, we also support caregivers in providing appropriate and empowering care for children and youth with disabilities. These efforts help young people exercise their rights, including their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and foster an environment of acceptance and protection. Reducing stigma and discrimination is a key objective, one that is led by the communities themselves.

We also stand behind our partners in advocating for more responsive action by duty bearers, ensuring that governments and institutions recognise and address the rights, needs, and potential of children and youth with disabilities.

Through these shared efforts, we work towards a future where every child and young person with a disability:

- Achieves their highest attainable standard of health and development.
- Completes quality education in a learning environment that is inclusive, supportive, and accessible.
- Gains economic autonomy and self-sufficiency.
- Makes informed choices and exercises their rights, including SRHR.
- Lives in a community free of barriers, grounded in disability-inclusive norms, beliefs, laws, and policies.

By working in partnership, we help build inclusive communities that respect the dignity of all children and youth with disabilities. Through collective effort, they can grow into agents of change in their families, communities and societies.

CONCLUSION

This Theory of Change reflects Liliane Fonds' commitment to supporting locally led inclusion. It outlines the strategies, partnerships, and principles we will follow to contribute to impact by 2030.

As a shared guide for partners, staff, and stakeholders, the ToC will inform programme development, learning, and advocacy. Above all, it reflects our belief that inclusion is not only a goal, it is a right.

Easy-read: A better future for children with disabilities

At Liliane Fonds, we believe that every child has the right to grow up in a safe and loving environment, to go to school, to be heard and to be part of their community. But for many children and youth with disabilities (CYWD), this is still not reality.

In many places around the world, children with disabilities are excluded. They face stigma, poverty, and cannot access the services they need. They are often kept at home, bullied, or denied the chance to go to school or visit a clinic. Girls and young women with disabilities face even more barriers.

And yet, we see something powerful in every community: hope, strength, and people who care. Persons with disabilities, parents, caregivers, community members, and local organisations are already doing incredible work. We believe in them and we stand beside them.

What we want to achieve

Inclusion is a basic right for every child. We want to help create inclusive communities where all children and youth with disabilities can thrive. That means a world where they:

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- Are accepted and supported by their families and neighbours
- Receive the health care and rehabilitation services they need
- Go to school and learn with others
- Receive the care and tools they need to grow
- Have access to jobs and opportunities as they grow older
- Can make choices about their lives, including their bodies and relationships
- Live in a safe environment, free from violence and discrimination

HOW WE WORK

We know that the best ideas often come from the people living closest to the problem. That's why we work through local partners: community-based organisations, networks of caregivers, disability rights groups, and youth advocates. They lead. We support.

We do this in five key ways:

1. Sharing knowledge and expertise
We have decades of experience in disability inclusion in many countries and use this to support local work, policy change and to generate knowledge products.
2. Raising funds from diverse sources
We collect donations from individuals, foundations, and governments, and help local organisations access resources.
3. Providing technical and programme support
We offer advice, tools, and support on programme design, management, safeguarding, and disability inclusion and stimulate innovation and research.
4. Connecting people and ideas
We help partners learn from each other and build strong networks for lasting change.
5. Removing barriers
We advocate for the rights of children and youth with disabilities and more inclusive systems and laws. With MIVA, we support access to practical tools -like transport, solar panels, or braille tech) that make a difference in daily life.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON

1. Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

This is our main strategy. It means building support to families close to home. We work in five interrelated areas:

- Rehabilitation: early support, home-based care, and functional referral systems to specialised care

- Inclusive education: learning together in regular schools, and -when needed- in specialised settings
- Livelihoods: job training, access to entrepreneurship and inclusion in the workplace
- SRHR: support access to disability inclusive reproductive services
- Child protection: keeping children safe from harm and abuse

2. Stronger local networks

Liliane Fonds supports the development of local networks of organisations that share values and complement each other's expertise, and that drive systemic change. We help local groups work together, share knowledge, and grow stronger as a team. These networks build bigger and better programmes for long-term change. We support local governments with inclusive policies and practices. We bring local service providers together for appropriate and inclusive services.

3. Advocacy for children's rights

We speak up with our partners in national and international spaces, so that governments and leaders listen, change policies, and take responsibility.

WHAT WE AIM FOR

Together with our partners, we want to see:

- Children and youth with disabilities getting the care and support they need
- Children and youth with disabilities and their families who feel stronger and more confident
- Schools, services, and communities that welcome everyone
- Less stigma, more understanding
- Governments and service providers that respond to children's needs

We believe that every child with a disability has potential. With the right support, they can grow into confident, capable people who help shape their communities.