



Strategic Plan Memphis Foundation 2019-2023

1. Memphis Foundation in short

We see a worldwide social exclusion and discrimination against deaf and blind youth, especially in the poorest areas of the world. They often do not participate in their communities and are confronted with misconceptions about their abilities. As a result, they miss out on opportunities to grow, and society misses out on their valuable contributions. But deaf youth and blind youth are equal to their peers who do not have these impairments, and have just as much potential to contribute to a better future. Together with others, the Memphis Foundation wants to break this cycle of exclusion of blind and deaf youth. So, they will be included in their communities and get opportunities to grow their talents and contribute to society.

Memphis Foundation is a not-for-profit and non-governmental organisation, and was established on 23 November 2018 in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

The foundation was initiated by the Dutch football player Memphis Depay, who is committed to support and empower deaf youth and blind youth across the world. It builds on Memphis' distinctive celebration after scoring a goal on the football field; by blocking his ears and looking to the sky, Memphis shows that he is deaf and blind for destructive criticism. Instead, Memphis embodies a focus on inner drive and a strong belief in inner strength. With the Memphis Foundation, we aim to empower young deaf and blind people to feel just as powerful and strong.

Core values

We show respect We value diversity and recognise the worth and dignity of every person.

We are passionate We follow our inner drive and passion, and we are convinced that joy and fun are key to achieving change.

We are accountable We act responsibly and with integrity, behave ethically and ensure transparency in all that we do.

We stand for innovation We constantly strive to innovate, we cultivate new ideas and encourage creativity.

We work in collaboration We strengthen our impact through partnerships that are built on shared goals.

Vision

Memphis Foundation believes in a world where deaf youth and blind youth can fully participate in their communities, and where they can discover their talents and shape their future.

Mission



Memphis Foundation empowers deaf youth and blind youth and builds supporting communities around them, through the power of sport and music.

2. Context

Deaf or blind youth have big dreams and ambitions. Just like their peers without disabilities, they wish to lead happy and fulfilling lives and they have the potential to contribute to their communities. In reality, however, it is difficult for young deaf or blind people to achieve these ambitions, as they face many obstacles to their participation in society.

Young people with disabilities are among **the most marginalised groups** in society. They are often **excluded from their communities** and lack access to basic services, including healthcare and education. Children and youth with disabilities are also particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse and exploitation. Girls with disabilities are often even more vulnerable and excluded, since they are discriminated based on both gender and disability. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability. Poverty and disability are known to reinforce each other; children from poor families are more likely to become disabled due to lack of access to healthcare, malnutrition, poor sanitation and dangerous living and working conditions. As a result of their disability, these children will experience barriers to accessing services and opportunities to mitigate poverty.

The exclusion of deaf and blind youth from their communities is not only due to physical barriers, but also caused by **social barriers** such stigma and discrimination. This is the result of misunderstanding, prejudice, unfounded fears and cultural and religious views. Lack of understanding about people with disability exists at all levels of society, from the family and the community up to the level of policymakers at the national and international level. The negative perceptions often result in families hiding their children with disabilities, excluding them entirely from the community. Exclusion can also take the form of **institutionalization**, where young deaf and blind people live in separate institutes. Although this provides them with the necessary specialized support, they remain isolated from their communities. It is therefore important to de-institutionalise where possible and to create opportunities for youth within these institutes to interact with their peers in the community

Exclusion from the community means that deaf and blind young people are isolated from social, cultural and political processes. They **miss out on opportunities for personal development**, to discover their talents, build their strengths and grow into independent and confident citizens. In fact, barriers for inclusion can even be internalised; low expectations from their environment can undermine the confidence and aspirations of these youth. Because of this exclusion, youth with disabilities lack access to education and social protection, have few opportunities to build social networks, and are therefore less likely to find decent employment as they grow up. Because of their exclusion from decision-making and political processes, the voices of these youth will remain unheard and they are unable to influence decisions that affect them and their communities. The invisibility of these young people means that they are often, intentionally or unintentionally, left out of developments.

Exclusion also means that **communities will continue to be ignorant** about the abilities of deaf and blind youth. As long as these young people are excluded from daily life, there are few opportunities to



address the misunderstanding, fears and beliefs that underlie the stigma and discrimination within the community and society at large. As long as community and society at large do not see deaf and blind youth as their equals, it will remain very difficult for young people to build a prosperous and decent life for themselves.

This way, **exclusion is a reinforcing cycle** where individuals miss out on opportunities to develop their skills and confidence for participation in society, and misunderstanding and stigma within communities is left in place as long as deaf and blind youth continue to live in isolation. **It is time to break this cycle** and remove the barriers for inclusion of deaf youth and blind youth and promote participation on an equal basis.

Box: Facts and figures

An estimated 15% of the world population lives with some form of disability, the large majority in developing countries. Globally, it is estimated that there are over 93 million children with disabilities.

An estimated 466 million people worldwide suffer from disabling **hearing loss**, including 34 million children. Deafness can be present from birth (congenital), for example due to genetics, infections or inappropriate use of drugs during pregnancy or complications during birth. Deafness can also develop at a later stage (acquired) with various causes, such as infectious diseases, chronic ear infections, injuries to the ear, excessive noise and ageing.

Globally, it is estimated that there are 36 million people who are blind and an additional 217 million have severe **vision impairment**. It is unknown how many of these are children. In low income countries, blindness and severe vision impairment is often caused by cataract that is present at birth. Other common causes of vision impairment include: diseases such as measles and rubella, untreated eye infections in new-borns, vitamin A deficiency, and the use of harmful traditional eye remedies. In many low-income countries, access to eye care is very limited.

Box: Rights and sustainable development

SDGs – Leave no one behind

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pledges to 'leave no one behind'. In 2018, the UN published its first comprehensive review of disability in the context of the SDGs. The report found that there is still a long way to go before we reach disability-inclusive sustainable development. The report argues that inclusion is not only the right thing to do, but also necessary to achieve the SDGs; we need to consider people with disability as both beneficiaries and agents of change for sustainable development for all. The inclusion of people with disability should be seen as a cross-cutting issue and considered in the implementation and monitoring of all the goals. There are also seven targets and eleven indicators that explicitly refer to persons with disability, including access to education, employment, inclusive schools and empowerment of children with disabilities.

UN Conventions



The exclusion of people with disabilities is a human rights issue; they experience inequalities, violations of their dignity, and are sometimes even denied autonomy. The rights of children and youth with disability are not only enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights, but also in the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Convention on Rights of the Child.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* was adopted in 2006. It marked a shift from medical perspective on people with disability, to a rights-based approach. Its core message is that people with disabilities deserve equal respect and enjoyment of their human rights. It is built on eight guiding principles, including dignity and autonomy, non-discrimination and full participation, including for children with disabilities. The convention makes specific reference to the right of participation in social and cultural life, leisure and sport.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* entered into force in 1990 and has changed the way children are seen and treated; they were no longer considered objects in need of care but were recognised as individuals with their own set of rights. The convention is based on the understanding that children should grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, and be brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity; to be fully prepared to live an individual life in society. Several articles in the convention refer to the rights of children with disabilities, including the right to special care and access to education. It also highlights that every child has the right to play.

3. Strategy

Memphis Foundation seeks the full participation of deaf and blind youth in their communities, where they are stimulated to discover their strengths and shape their future. We work to empower deaf and blind youth and build their confidence, view and voice so they can grow as individuals and as part of their community. At the same time, we address misunderstanding and break stigma to build supporting communities around these deaf and blind youth. To achieve this, we use the development power of sports and music.

For whom?

The primary beneficiaries of Memphis Foundation are youth who are deaf or blind in low- and middle-income countries.

In these countries, Memphis Foundation establishes partnerships with organisations who directly support these young people (e.g. inclusive schools, community sport and music clubs, community-based organisations). Through this collaboration, we strengthen the capacity of these partners to be effective in their programmes support of deaf youth and blind youth.

Memphis Foundation also works in support of deaf youth and blind youth in the Netherlands.

Where we work



Memphis Foundation aims to work in low- and middle-income countries across the world, as well as in the Netherlands. The foundation does not implement its own programmes but always works in partnership with local organisations.

Memphis Foundation strives for national outreach, with local impact. To achieve this, we collaborate with our partners on two levels.

At the community level we create inclusive sport and music opportunities, where deaf youth and blind youth play together with their peers. This way, we empower these young people and promote their inclusion in the community. At national level, we create a stage for young deaf and blind people to share their voice and views, by organising inspiring and high-end inclusive sport and music events.

Ambitions

The first year after establishment of the foundation (2019) will be used to build a strong and sustainable foundation with a clear vision and innovate strategy to impact the lives of deaf and blind youth and their communities.

By 2023 Memphis Foundation will:

- Work in 5 countries
- Establish collaborations with 75 community organisations and strengthen 300 community leaders within these organisations
- Empower over 20 thousand deaf youth and blind youth

In 2019 we establish the first partnerships in Ghana with the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind, ANOPA Project and the Ghana Blind Union and start working for impact in the Cape Coast community and at the national level. Moreover, we plan to establish partnerships and organise activities in support of deaf youth and blind youth in the Netherlands.

In the subsequent years we also aim to:

- Continue to grow into an organisation with international recognition for our innovative strategy and strong impact;
- Establish ourselves as a trusted partner and establish new partnerships to increase our impact;
- Increase and diversify the funding base of the foundation (€4 million annually by 2023);
- Strengthen our presence in the Netherlands.

4. Theory of Change



To break the cycle of exclusion and discrimination, Memphis Foundation promotes full inclusion of deaf youth and blind youth in their communities and empower these young people to discover their talents and shape their future. We use the power of sport and music to achieve this.



Inclusion and empowerment

Deaf and blind youth are just like everyone else, with different identities, needs, wishes and dreams. They want to be active participants and contributors within their communities. To empower young deaf and blind people means that they can use their own power to shape their future and the future of their community. This is about strengthening their capacity to make change, while eliminating things that stand in the way, such as stigma and discrimination. Participation in the community is key to empowerment, because being part of social life is an important element of personal development and confidence building and because through their participation these young people can help transform the community to be more inclusive.

Elements of empowerment

Memphis Foundation distinguishes three interrelated elements of empowerment [based on/adapted from positive youth development framework]:

- The power within: Deaf and blind youth have the necessary life skills and the agency to use these skills to shape their own futures.
- The power to advocate: Deaf and blind youth are able to influence their communities, and express their voice and views to advocate for their inclusion in society.
- The power of support: The communities around deaf and blind youth value and support them, and encourages these young people to thrive.

The power within

Empowerment requires young deaf and blind people to have the capacity to decide what they want to do with their lives, and the capacity to act on those decision. This *power within* can be strengthened by



developing the competences and knowledge of these young people so they can decide what is important for their future. To act on these decisions requires confidence, self-efficacy, perseverance and a positive outlook on the future. By strengthening the power within, we encourage deaf and blind youth to make their own decisions, give them the agency to transform their lives based on their own need and priorities, and to collaborate with others on an equal basis. The life skills and attitudes that contribute to power within can come from formal education, but can also result from informal learning and social interactions, for which sport and music is a valuable tool.

The power to advocate

In addition to the power within, empowerment means that young deaf and blind people are able to make their voice heard and share their vision for their own future, and that of the community. By self-advocating they are able to claim equal opportunity and access their rights. The power to advocate means to become visible, vocal and active, to have a say and be heard and to be recognised and respected for your contributions to the community and society at large. Sport and music can create opportunities for young deaf and blind people to showcase their talents, and to express their voices and views.

The power of support

The empowerment of deaf and blind youth also requires a supporting and encouraging environment around them, where they experience a sense of belonging and acceptance through interaction with peer. To leverage this power of support, it is necessary to break the stigma and deconstruct disempowering social and cultural beliefs around children with disabilities. Deaf and blind youth need to be empowered to self-advocate, but it is also important to find advocates within the community to create a critical mass of awareness to bring about positive change. Sport and music can be used to create more inclusive communities by bringing together people from different backgrounds around a common interest and address stigma and exclusion in the community and society at large.

5. Sport and music for empowerment and inclusion

Memphis Foundation uses the power of sport and music to work on the empowerment of deaf youth and blind youth in a way that is both fun and effective.

The power of sport

Sports are enjoyed by a wide range of people across the world, and it has the potential bring people together around a common passion. Sport offers role models, and often has intrinsic values that reflect important values in society, such as team work, ambitions, goal setting, commitment and fair play. This makes sports a valuable tool to contribute to development.

Sports can lead to positive changes for deaf and blind youth and their communities. It can build social capital; for deaf and blind youth it can support in building life skills and self-esteem, while at the same time it increases social interactions with their peers and builds supporting communities and social networks. Sports can also be used to break stigma and raise awareness. It can address and remove negative social-cultural attitudes towards deaf and blind youth, by challenging the norm of ability and



removing social barriers for interactions among young people in the community, with and without disability.

For sports to contribute to positive developments within individuals and communities, it is important to create a safe environment, a place of fun and enjoyment where participants are challenged and where there is room for reflection. To create this safe space, the dynamics of the group need to be monitored, since acceptance and peer support are key. We need to prevent negative outcomes, such as exclusion on sports field and beyond and affirming stereotypes, especially in relation to girls who are deaf or blind.

The power of music

Music is a universal language, it connects people across backgrounds. It transcends differences and brings people together around a common passion for music and can create lasting relationships. For young people with disabilities, making music allows for a focus on their abilities and talents rather than limitations, both for themselves and their environment.

Both listening to a making music can be a great way to explore identity, it can help discovering values and in developing a personal vision. Learning music also requires developing essential life skills such as commitment and discipline and allows young people to explore strengths and build confidence. Moreover, music allows young people to express themselves, make their voices heard and self-advocate.

6. Strategic pillars & programmes

The work of Memphis Foundation is built on three strategic pillars:

We strengthen local organisations: We collaborate with local organisations and community coaches who support deaf youth and blind youth in developing life skills. They also act as bridge between deaf and blind youth and other young people in the community and thereby encourage them to interact and play together. Throughout our collaborations we strengthen the work of these organisations.

We create inclusive sport and music opportunities: We engage deaf youth and blind youth in sport and music activities where they can develop essential skills and discover their strengths and talents. We strive for all-inclusive activities for deaf and blind youth to learn and play together with their peers in the community and promote their integration in existing sport and music opportunities within the community.

We raise awareness: We raise awareness in the community and beyond, about the power and potential of deaf youth and blind youth. This way, we challenge stereotypes and break stigmas.

These strategic pillars are implemented three interrelated programmes:

- 1) Memphis Foundation capacity programme
- 2) Community sport and music programme
- 3) Memphis Foundation national events/experiences



- **Memphis Foundation capacity programme:** We bring together people who work in support of deaf and blind youth, such as community coaches, music and sport teachers at inclusive schools. Together, we strengthen their capacity for effective and inclusive sport and music programmes that encourage participation and empowerment. [we will develop signature capacity development programme for the Memphis Foundation, on how to use sport and music for inclusion and empowerment of deaf and blind youth. This will also include capacities for specific sports and music practices that are suitable for deaf or blind youth, such as goalball and blind football].
- **Community sport and music opportunities:** The coaches and teachers who were involved in the training will work together in strategic partnerships to organise inclusive music and sport opportunities in their communities. This includes sport and music practices on a regular basis, where deaf and blind youth play together with their peers, as well as community events and competitions.
- **Memphis Foundation national events and competitions:** where we create a stage for deaf and blind youth to share their voices and views and show the world what they are capable of. This includes national sport events and competitions as well as high-end music events with well-known musicians. [Memphis Music Experience, Memphis Sport Festival]

[Throughout the programmes we aim to create added value by building on and contributing to the work and brand of Memphis Depay as an international football player, rapper and ...]

7. References:

Context:

- World report on disability (2011)
- State of world children: Children with disability (2013)
- WHO (2018) Factsheet: Blindness and vision impairment
- WHO (2019) Factsheet: Deafness and hearing loss
- UN Flagship report on persons with disabilities (2018)

Inclusion and empowerment:



- <https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/DisabilityInclusion.pdf>
- INCLUDE WHO (online learning)
- UN conventions
- Report of UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (2019) “Empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education”

Sport:

- Sport for development report (UU, ISA, etc.)
- Getting into the game (Unicef & barca foundation)

Music:

- <http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.com/documents/music-addressing-social-inclusion.pdf>