



From barriers to breakthrough



LOCATION: Child Sponsorship programmes in India



PROJECT NAME: Disability mainstreaming



GOAL: Ensure that people living with disabilities equally participate and benefit from all aspects of World Vision's long-term programming



Overview

Across the world, an estimated 15% of people are living with some form of disability. However, in India, government data states that only 2.2% of the population are living with a disability. However, across our long-term Area Programmes, this is higher, averaging 4-5%. As these figures are substantially lower than the global average, World Vision predicts the government data are likely an underestimation, with the majority of people living with disabilities remaining 'invisible' in their communities.

The World Health Organisation recognises disability as both a public health and a human rights issue and, as such, must be a development priority.

World Vision's response

We believe that if we don't focus our attention on children with disabilities, we are not fulfilling our promise to serve the most vulnerable children. World Vision adopts the social model approach, to include persons with disabilities in our work.

In India, disability mainstreaming (ensuring that people living with disabilities are recognised, included and able to participate) is a high priority. Significant strides have been made in this area following a UK government-funded disability mainstreaming project¹ a decade ago. A study conducted five years later, highlighted that the project had provided the momentum for disability inclusion to become a priority in India through specialised training, technical support and deliberate efforts to fund disability mainstreaming projects.² These gains and good practice have been sustained long after the programme ended.

RESULTS

Across all World Vision India's long-term sponsorship programmes data is collected helping to paint a picture of the need – this includes those living with disabilities, helping to identify and address their specific challenges. Using this data, programmes are then adapted to take into account the particular needs of adults and children with disabilities, ensuring they can take part in, for example, livelihood programmes, children's clubs, education and life skills activities. Adults and children with disabilities are pro-actively included in the design, monitoring and evaluation stages of our programmes.

World Vision India has developed guidelines for communicating about disability and the rights which those living with a disability are entitled to. Children and adults with disabilities are no longer side-lined but are actively taking part in events and are included in media stories, alongside their able-bodied neighbours. They have also produced a braille version of their Annual Report.

Chanda's story

In Bhojpur Area Programme, 10-year-old Chanda, born with a physical disability, talks about her joy after receiving a life-changing gift through World Vision.

"I was not able to attend regular school, I was missing my friends and my family was also depressed about

my situation, but World Vision India intervened. I was assisted with a wheelchair... Now, I am very happy and also thankful for the great support given by World Vision India. Now I can meet my friends and every day, my sister takes me out to the market. I am so happy about it. I want to thank World Vision for all the support that they have given me."

Now that she has her wheelchair, Chanda's independence and future prospects have expanded. She's an active member in the local children's club and attends school. This was all made possible through the support of UK sponsors, donors and the integral partnership between World Vision and the local Disabled People's Organisations (DPO). Links with government services and other state level networks have also meant that children and adults with disabilities can continue to get the support they're entitled to even when World Vision eventually leaves the area.

Chanda's story is an example of our 'twin-track approach': both working with individuals through targeted interventions to address their needs (in this case a wheelchair) and also working with wider society to address inequality and remove the barriers that prevent people from exercising their rights, so Chanda and others can get the education and services they deserve.

OPPOSITE: Chanda, 10 (in front), with her mother and older sister.

¹Programme Partnership Arrangement funded by the UK Government's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly DFID) between 2008-2011.

²See [World Vision UK ex-post evaluation of the Programme Partnership Arrangement \(PPA\) funding for disability inclusion](#) – A case study review of World Vision India's progress towards mainstreaming disability.





ABOVE: Manghu's wife and daughters, Roshan and Safiya, join him at the egg shop.

Manghu's story

Using the data our teams collected, they identified Manghu as one of those most needing support. Manghu and his wife both have disabilities and live with their two daughters, Roshan, 11, and Safiya, 7, in a village in rural India.

Manghu runs a small shop in the local market but he has been struggling to provide for the whole family. Our project in their area invited Manghu and his wife to be part of the 'Graduation Model' programme. This is a livelihoods programme, helping families to improve their income. Through this support, the family were helped to open an egg shop.

Now, Manghu is happy as he earns 300 to 400 Rupees (£3-4) per day. With the money they earned the family have been able to buy a fan, table, and gas for cooking. They've also made repairs to their home and built a separate toilet for the family, improving their sanitation and hygiene.

Manghu happily shares:

"I was feeling very helpless. I was worried about my children's future and how to manage the needs of my family. But with the assistance given by World Vision now I have a safe life ahead for me and my family. The income I make is not a lot, but I am careful with it and can even save a little. Thank you, World Vision for the love and continued support towards me and my family!"



ABOVE: With his new spice stall, Mahesh can now support his family.

Mahesh's story

FIGHTING FOR HIS FUTURE – COVID-19 AND A DISABILITY

In Vaishali, another UK funded long-term Area Programme, Mahesh Thakur, 46 years old and head of a family of seven, has a physical disability which left him unable to work. His wife struggled to make ends meet with her daily wage as a labourer. Then because of the COVID-19 lockdown, she was unable to work at all.

The local World Vision programme helped Mahesh with livelihood recovery support. He received 5,000 Rupees to start up a small shop to sell spices (masala) in the local market. He now earns between 400-500 Rupees per day meaning that the family is now able to afford three nutritious meals per day and Mahesh can send his children to school.

"World Vision has shown me a new way to live and changed the future of my children," says Mahesh.

Working together

DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS

In May 2020, World Vision India worked together with over 250 DPOs and produced a study on the importance of DPOs, in empowering people with disabilities. With the support of DPOs children and adults in our programmes were able to obtain a Government of India Medical Board Certificate, required to access the social services they need.

Additionally, 1,500 people with disabilities were given livestock and business support to start small businesses. About 2,000 faith leaders took part in disability inclusion training, helping them to alter attitudes from thinking disability is a curse from God, towards not just providing a charitable response but also including people with disabilities in faith functions and activities.

Rev. J. Vincent Johnson, one of the faith leaders who completed the training, shared his testimony:

"I learnt to love one another, especially a person with disabilities who is created in the image of God. We want to train our church members and train others to love people with disabilities as equal to us, and not to hurt them, to make our church promote equality."

Priyanka, a teacher at the South India Biblical Seminary also said:

"I observe there are four obstacles for the church in caring for people with disability – they are practices and facilities, language and attitude. The church should strive for inclusion for a better world."

Disability in a pandemic

HOW OUR LEARNING WILL SHAPE OUR RESPONSE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, World Vision India has been keen to understand the impact it is having on people living with disabilities. Research has been undertaken and four reports have been produced focusing on: the challenges faced by women with disability; inclusion of people with disabilities in the response to COVID-19; the impact of lockdown on education for children with disability; and the psychological effect of COVID-19 on women with disability.

One of the studies found that 66% of adolescent girls and women with disabilities in urban areas and 20% in rural areas are more likely to experience gender-based violence because of their vulnerability during the pandemic. Of the respondents, 12% of those in urban and 24% of those in rural communities said they had experienced gender-based violence since the lockdown in March 2020. However, it's believed that incidences in rural areas are sadly higher than this. Significantly, 76% of those asked chose not to answer, stating that this is a family matter, suggesting a high level of stigma on reporting this type of incidences and that gender-based violence may be happening far more than figures reveal.

The findings from these reports are informing the next phase of World Vision India's COVID-19 response strategy.

BELOW: Faith leaders take part in World Vision's training, working towards a more inclusive and 'disability-friendly' church.





TOP LEFT: Afrin, 9, received her wheelchair, as part of a project in partnership with technical agency proVISION ASIA and funding from Thomson Reuters, in 2019. **TOP RIGHT:** Mobility aid users with their families and World Vision staff. For some, this was the first time they knew how it felt to sit upright. "I felt like I am a new person as I feel much happy and can move around freely," said Srinivas. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Prashantha, 11, with the World Vision staff who have helped him gain his mobility.

What have we learnt?

Better inclusion of people with disabilities has made a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable children and their families in our Area Programmes in India.

Success achieved in disability mainstreaming within World Vision India has been due in part to: Senior and programme level staff demonstrating a deep understanding and promotion of disability inclusion as a critical component of programmes aligned with human rights principles.

- The introduction of a disability adviser who, as a person living with a disability themselves, was appointed to support programmes to include disabled people.
- Policies have been improved to increase inclusion of children with disabilities, particularly in child sponsorship.
- Tools and capacity building are available to guide disability mainstreaming in programmes.

LEARNING AND IMPROVING FOR THE FUTURE

A twin-track approach of working directly with people living with disabilities to help them access services, while also advocating for changes to policy, attitudes and behaviour is the right way of working. However, when it comes to meeting practical needs, such as wheelchairs, the road to access funding can be long and challenging. In such cases, our partnerships with local DPOs are invaluable. DPO experts can use their experience and local knowledge to ensure that people receive the most suitable help and support available.

The successes achieved thanks to disability mapping and data collection, illustrate how important it is to carry out this research in all our work regardless of the type of programme. Making this a part of every programme we run will ensure that children with disabilities, who are most vulnerable, are visible, considered and included from the start. Progress is still needed to achieve this in all our programmes, hindered greatly by the challenge for increased funding and resources and competing priorities.

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At World Vision, our focus is on helping the most vulnerable children, in the most dangerous places, overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian faith, we've worked together with communities, partners, local leaders and governments, for over 70 years, so that children – of all faiths and none – are empowered to experience fullness of life. World Vision UK is a registered charity no. 285908, a company limited by guarantee and registered in England no. 1675552. Registered office as above.

COVER: Chanda, 10, from India. All photos: © 2019/2020 World Vision