

Project Annual Report
Educational Services for Children with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities in Vadodara,
Gujarat

January 2021- December 2021

Submitted to Asha for Education

Submitted by Sense International India



Executive Summary

95% of what one learns is through his eyes and ears. With dual impairment of key senses i.e., vision and hearing, the life of children with deafblindness gets limited to their fingertips to explore their surroundings. A child with deafblindness would be extremely lonely and would lead restricted life in absence of any support from family, community and rehabilitation professionals. Helen Keller said **“Blindness separates people from things; deafness separates people from people.”** With deafblindness a child is excluded from family, community and their surroundings.

Aiming at development of required educational service infrastructure and maintaining the established deafblind education- rehabilitation services in Vadodara, Gujarat Sense International India and Disha Charitable Trust received support from Asha from Education from January 2021. Under the support Disha Charitable Trust with technical guidance from Sense International India is implementing project ‘To provide centre-based education and rehabilitation services for children and young people with deafblindness and multiple disabilities in Vadodara, Gujarat’.

The project focused on identifying the unreached children with deafblindness, multi-sensory impairment and multiple disabilities in Vadodara district through survey and networking visits. The service users enrolled under the project were provided specialized education through home-based, centre-based services and online mode as per their individual needs. Parents’ capacity has been built for the provision of better services to their children and support them in their daily activities and education.

With its technical know-how in the field of deafblindness, Sense International India built and enhanced capacity of project team to work with children and adults with deafblindness and further train more human resource in the field of deafblindness. As result of capacity building the project team at Disha team took initiative and organized sensitization sessions for Anganwadi workers and Samagra Shiksha (SMSA) educators.

Project Objective	Annual Target	Achievement
1. Identification of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities	15	5 service users with deafblindness/multiple disabilities identified through networking during the project period
2. Centre and home-based services for 35 children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities	35	*26 children and adult received need-based services through centre based/home based or online platform keeping in view

		State guideline during pandemic.
3. Sensitization and building capacity of 10 govt. teachers	10 educators	33 SMSA educators sensitized through online platform on deafblindness, needs of children with deafblindness and creating inclusion within classroom setup.
4. Build capacity of project staff to ensure project sustainability project staff to work with deafblind children	4 project staff	5 project staff have been trained and their capacity have been built in developing IEPs, child safeguard issues, conducting online activities with children through mentoring.
5. Capacity building of parents of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities. We aim to train at least 70 parents in one year to provide better education support and advocate for the rights of persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities.	70 parents	52 parents have been sensitized as per their child needs and guided to work with children in home setup with the available resources.

* Includes 3 children who dropped out of project mid-year due to migration and ill health.

Project highlights for the year

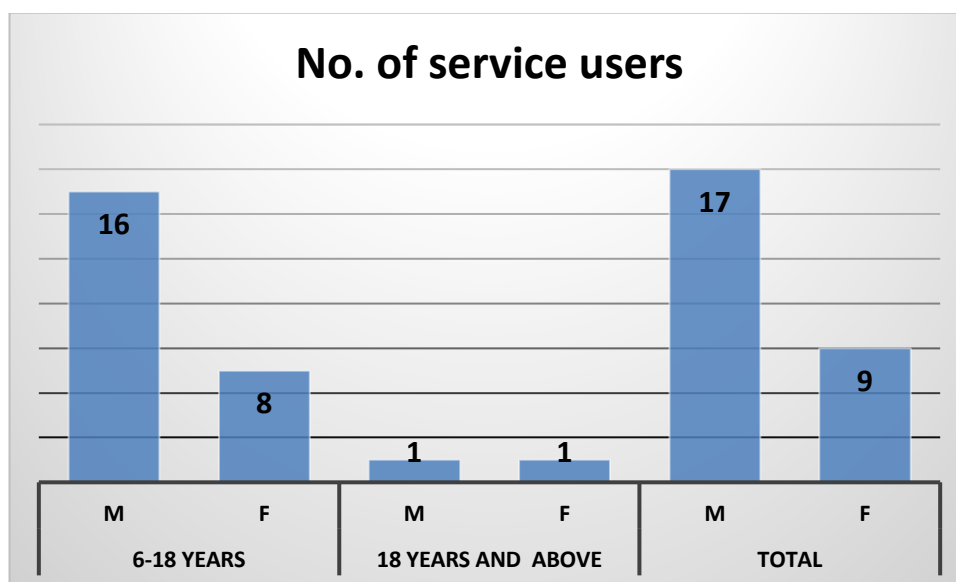
1. 5 new children and adults with deafblindness identified and enrolled for necessary rehabilitation services through referrals for sensitized parents and community members
2. 26 children and adults with deafblindness received educational and rehabilitation services through project
3. Mobile data recharge support to parents of 5 children in need
4. 2 clinical hearing assessments conducted. Post assessment the service users are diagnosed with mild to moderate hearing impairment.
5. 4 days mentoring support from Sense International India
6. 8 children attended general medical checkup organized within Disha's premises. 1 service users recommended for spinal surgery.
7. 26 children's individual education plan reviewed by the educators and new/modified goals planned for the children based on their progress and parents feedback
8. 12 children received physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy on need basis. Out of 12, 3 children received both speech therapy and physiotherapy.

9. 18 NGO officials sensitized on deafblindness
10. 33 Samagra Shiksha educators sensitized on deafblindness
11. 3 sensitization meeting conducted for parent's network group
12. 7 families received ration kit with support from Sense India during reporting year
13. 2 parents received smartphone with support from Intel and Sense India to attend Sense India Web Ed course on deafblindness.
14. Children and care givers linked with govt. schemes and supported to avail important disability related documents such as disability certificate.
15. Participation of 2 members from Disha in west regional network meeting held in Ahmedabad from 7th to 9th Dec.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOME

1. Identify 15 new children & young people with deafblindness & multiple disabilities in a year

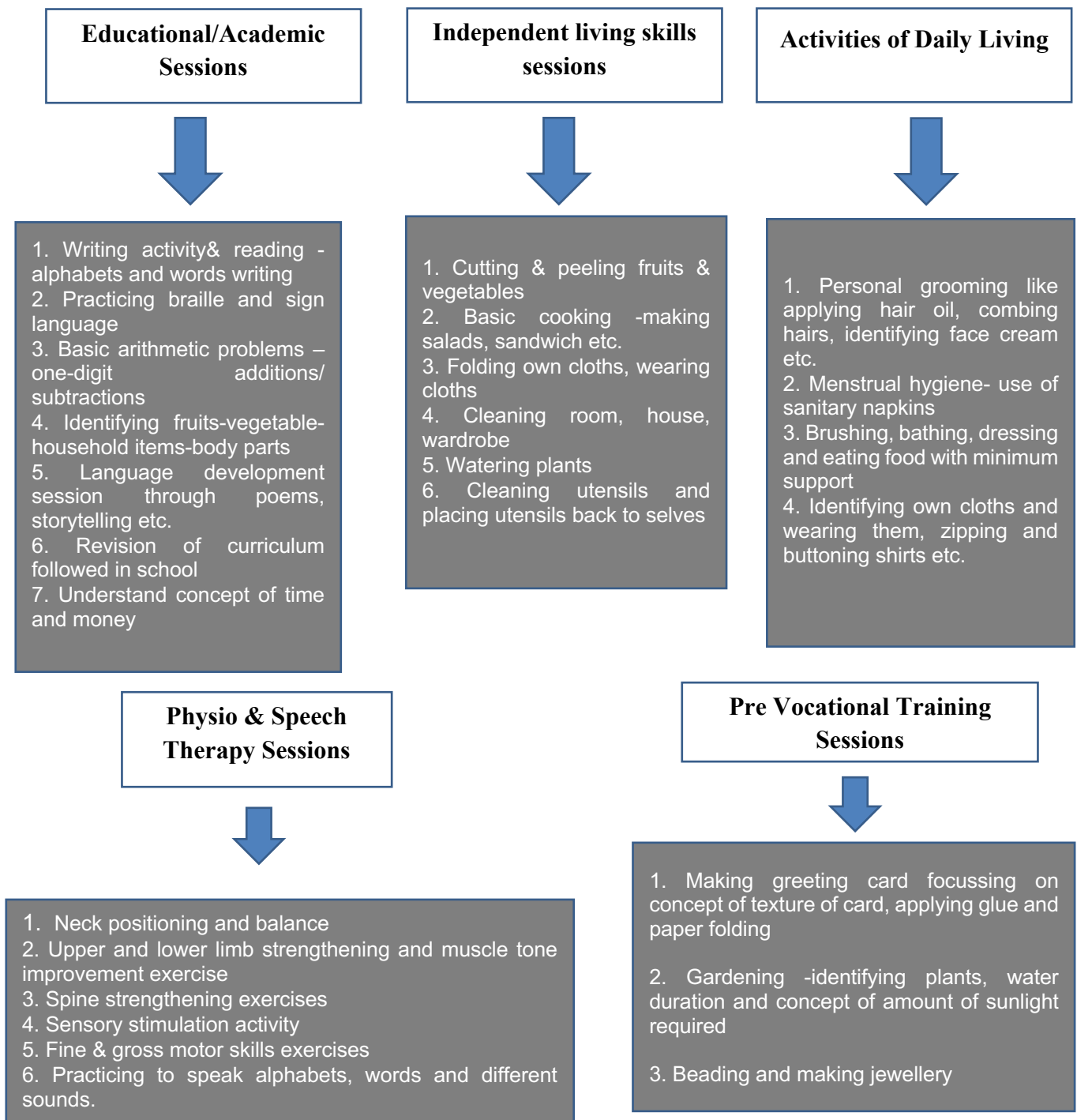
In the year 5 service users with deafblindness and multiple disabilities were identified through referrals. New identified service users and their family members received necessary guidance and training on different aspects of rehabilitation like vocational activities, activities of daily living (ADL), orientation and mobility techniques (O&M), developing independent living skills, personal grooming, physiotherapy etc. In total 26 service users have been supported directly through centre based, home based, support- based services and online platform.



2. Centre and home-based services to 35 children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities

26 service users received direct services through centre and home-based services. Not only children but parents received continuous guidance from educators in conducting the activities with available resources at home. Since centre remained closed due to pandemic, online sessions were taken for the children followed by regular guidance to parents over call and videos. Following services were provided to the services users:-

Sessions conducted by project team





With regular therapy sessions both online and offline Vatsal 's mobility has improved. He is able to move in the classroom with little support and holds objects. He has started to engage in activity and identifies family members as well as therapist.

With improvement in motor functions, he can now hold the water jug and tries to take bath with minimum support.

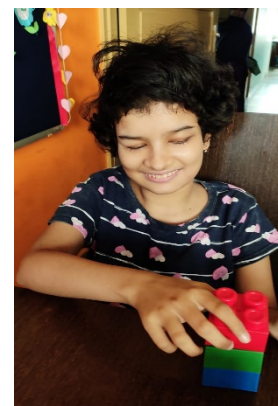
Shivam with minimum support has started to walk around the house and school. He is able to recognize his family members and follows instructions. In socialization also he has approved and be able to make friends in his neighborhood.

With hand over hand assistance, he can identify color and match them.



Harshal now counts without anyone's support and likes to draw. He has also started to socialize with people around him and expresses his wants and needs.

Zenab concentration span has considerably improved. She now actively engages in activities and is able to sit at one place for longer duration.



Support provided to children and caregivers

- Mobile data recharge support was provided to needy parents of 5 children. As livelihood of families selected were affected during pandemic the supported helped parents to continue with the online sessions for their child.
- **Development & Review IEPs-** IEPs of all the children receiving direct services under project have been prepared and regularly reviewed by the project team.
- **Clinical and functional assessment** - 2 clinical hearing assessments were also conducted to ascertain the extent of impairment in the children and adults. The results from clinical assessment assisted the educators in preparing rehabilitation plan for the children in need. Functional assessment for 5 new children identified completed by the rehabilitation team which included special educators, occupational- physiotherapist and speech therapist.



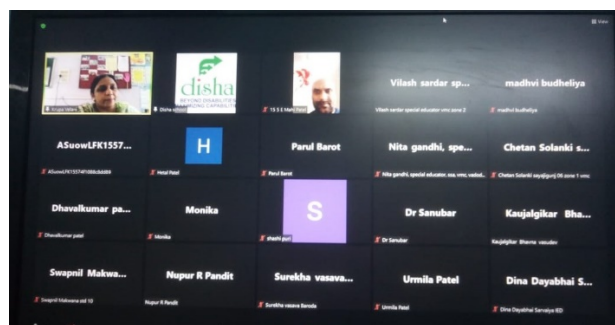
Clinical vision assessment

- **Medical- nutritional support-** 8 children attended general medical checkup organized within Disha's premises and parents were guided by the medical practitioners regarding medicines to be continued. On need basis families of 7 children received 2 times ration kit support from Sense India during pandemic.
- **Physio and speech therapy-** 12 children received physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy on need basis. Out of 12, 3 children received both speech therapy and physiotherapy.
- **Linkages with govt. schemes and avail disability related documents**

Schemes & Services	No. of children linked
Disability Certificate	3
Travel Concession Certificate	4
Disability Pension	4
Niramaya Health Insurance	2

3. Sensitize and build capacity of 10 govt. educators

33 SMSA educators sensitized by the project period in the reporting year. The session focused on building educator’s capacity to identify children with deafblindness, their assessment and curriculum adaptations to ensure their inclusion in mainstream education. Ms. Krupa Velani, Project Coordination, Deafblind Regional Centre – West as a resource person trained the educators on identifying children with deafblindness and modes of communication. The project team will be regularly following up with trained educators regarding identification of children, creating inclusive setup within classroom and assessment of children.



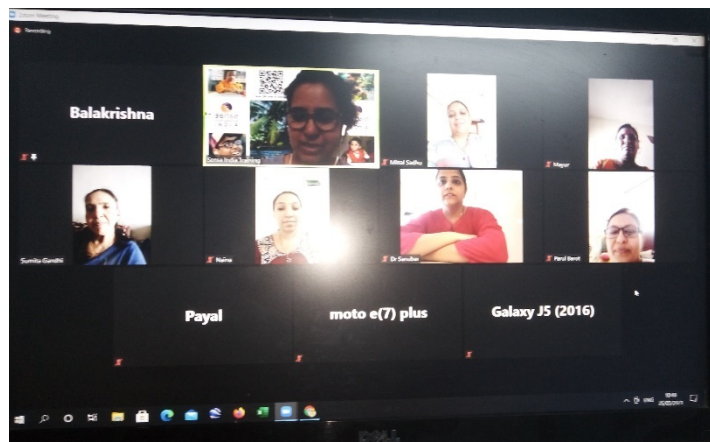
Online Sensitization Session for SMSA Educators by Ms. Krupa Velani

4. Build capacity of project staff to ensure project sustainability to work with deafblind children

Capacity of project team built through mentoring support by Sense India and Ms. Krupa Velani, senior professional in the field of deafblindness. The details of mentoring support are as follows: -

Name of Official	Date of Mentoring	Suggestions Provided by Mentor
Ms. Kalyani Jadhav, Trainer-Capacity Building, Sense India	25th and 26th May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team and parents to do braille labeling, large print labeling or hang objects in home environment to support child enhance his or her communication skills • Make daily time table of service users and follow the same • Create experience book post event for every child • Support parents in focusing on behavior modification with children as per need and be consistent in giving reinforcement

		and following planned schedule
Ms. Krupa Velani, Project Coordinator, Blind People's Association (DbRC-West)	27 th & 28 th August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents suggested to make daily diary and schedule of child at home with picture • Parents advised to make small videos of children engaged in activities and send to teachers. Teachers will discuss after seeing video • Maintain medicine schedule of children and regularly follow up with doctor • Children to be linked with ADIP scheme for Assistive devices



Screenshot of online mentoring



Ms. Krupa Velani interacting with project staff and parents during mentoring visit

As result of capacity building the Disha's team is conducting sensitization meeting for NGOs and other stakeholders independently. In the reporting period 18 NGO officials from local NGO named 'Sahaj' were sensitized on deafblindness with focus on identification of children with deafblindness and their assessment.



NGO sensitization by Disha's team member

NGO and Govt. Projects sath mein kam karte hai bohot accha he , jo baccha sanstha tak nahi pahunch sakte hai un tak Disha ki project team jati hai unko hama pura support hai

**Mr. Kirit Parel, Trustee & Principal, Sanskar Dham Education Trust,
Vadodara**

Teachers & therapist doing very good work for the special children, in such a pandemic situation, Our UPHC always ready to support the project team for their medical services

**Dr. Ekta Shah, Medical Officer, Urban primary Health Centre – Bavchavad
Vadodata**

5. Capacity building of parents of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities

Ensuring that parents/caregivers of persons with deafblindness, educators and persons with deafblindness come together, share their experiences and work collectively to bring the change the the project team has been encouraging and linking parents, educators and persons with deafblindness with the respective network groups. As Helen Keller once said that '**Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much**' network members are encouraged to make collective efforts for rehabilitation of persons with deafblindness within community and society as whole.

The meetings and workshops organized for the network members at local and regional level provided platform to parents, educators and adults with deafblindness to share their experiences as well as update themselves with the initiatives taken by network group nationwide for inclusion of persons with

deafblindness. The meetings also helped to raise awareness as well inform to parents to upgrade their knowledge and skills in the area of deafblindness.

2 caregivers of children with deafblindness received smartphone to support them in online sessions with educators and also to build their capacity through Sense India Web Ed. Courses. Both the care givers have successfully completed 3 months Sense India Web Ed course on deafblindness. One of the care giver Ms. Krishna is also pursuing 3 months Sense India Web Ed. On Sign Language.

3 online meetings were conducted with the parents i.e., on 23rd March and 31st March 2021. Apart from regular guidance to the parents on conducting activities with the children, 8 parents were part of these meeting. The project team is able to sensitize 52 parents in the reporting period. The meetings aimed at orienting and sensitizing parents in following areas: -

- Understand need of child and changes in behavior during pandemic
- Understanding and following goals prepared for the child
- Resource mobilization to conduct activities at home (developing teaching learning material)
- Support the child in doing activities under supervision of the project team
- Guidance to parents d to manage their stress and listening to their concerns
- Share feedback with team to evaluate child's performance/change teaching method etc.

Stories of Hope



Birth Asphyxia i.e. oxygen deficit at delivery can lead to organ damage in newborns followed by a fatal outcome or lifelong complications. Birth asphyxia is counted as one of the post-natal causes of deafblindness. Born in Vadodara, Gujarat in January 2006, Ishrat Ayesha Adilbhai has entered her teenage life this year. But unlike teenagers of her age young Ayesha is not able to groom herself. Followed by birth asphyxia, she spent critical first few weeks of her birth in incubator. As a result of complications after birth, Ayesha developed deafblindness and was also left unable to walk.

It was through family friend Ayesha's parents approached rehabilitation team at Disha Charitable Trust and saw ray of hope for their eldest and the only girl child. Before enrolling under the project Ayesha was unable to speak, was not able to walk independently. She was not able to hold anything and thus unable to eat food without any support. As Ayesha needed high support in activities of daily living, her parents felt exhausted as well as guilty of not been able to do much for their daughter.

Over years of continuous combination of speech, physio and occupational therapy Ayesha now speak few words, count numbers and is able to sense difference between hot-cold water. She has started to steps independently, hold spoon and tries to eat chappati on her own. She makes efforts to follow instructions and tries to talk on the phone. Her mother Ms. Shahjahan wishes “**Independent bane to bahut accha hoga. Betiya apna kaam khud kare to uske liya aacha hai, hum usko pura support karte hai**”. With guidance from the project team her parents have successfully received disability certificate and will soon be applying for disability pension.

16 years old Arjun Sureshbhai Mali from Vadodara has multiple disabilities. He has hearing impairment with intellectual disabilities leading to problem in speech too. Before enrollment under the project, he very shy and rarely used to socialize with others. He would sit alone and never share his things with other. Due to speech and hearing impairment, he was not able to express his needs. Over year of intervention Arjun has developed socialization skills. He has started to greet others and participates in group activities. He has also improved concentration span and is able to engage in pre vocational activities. Arjun can now identify shapes, different colours, can count numbers 1 to 10 and also understands concept of seasons. In motor activities he is able to hold pencil and do scribbling.



8-year-old Yaksh with regular physiotherapy sessions has developed good strength and is now able to walk with support. With better grip he is also able to object. In terms of behavioral improvement Yaksh now co-operates in activities. Yaksh can identify utensils like plate, spoon, bowl and glass. He can also identify fruits like apple, banana and Mango. Yaksh family members and special educators hope that he will be able to walk independently with regular therapy.

8 years old Yuvraj has deafblindness. Due to inability to express his needs he used to throw objects and behave aggressively. With regular sessions by special educator and therapist Yuvraj is now able to channelize his energy to activities conducted at centre. He has become active and relatively calm. He has started to muffles words like ma and papa with help of speech therapy. He can move with wall support. In terms of developing independent living skills Yuvraj carefully opens the bathroom door and switches on the light. He brushes on his own and has started to eat food with minimum support. He uses hand sanitizer when given to him.

