

## Educational Services for Children with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities in Vadodara, Gujarat

### From Isolation to Inclusion

Our vision is of a world in which all children and adults with deafblindness can be full and active members of society.

**Deafblindness** is a unique and complex disability. Sense International India is the first and only nationwide agency providing specialised services for children and adults with deafblindness and multi-sensory impairment to overcome the challenges caused by deafblindness. The proposed project aims to continue and strengthen services for children with deafblindness and multi-sensory impairment through the established centre in Vadodara, Gujarat.

#### Our partnership with Asha for Education

Sense International India and its partner organization Disha Charitable Trust with the support of Asha for Education have been implementing the project '**Educational Services for Children with Deafblindness and Multiple Disabilities in Vadodara, Gujarat**'. The project started in the year 2021. Over 1 year, through the deafblind centre, the project has catered to the specialized needs of vulnerable children and young adults with deafblindness and multiple disabilities in Vadodara, Gujarat. The services provided for rehabilitation under the project ranged from early intervention for children in the age group 0-6 years to skill-building training for adults in the age group 18 years and above. The centre currently is providing services to 24 children and young adults with deafblindness and multiple disabilities.

Before enrolment under the project, Ishrat Ayesha Adilbhai was completely dependent on her family members for her care and activities of daily living. Her parents were guided and counselled by professionals on the importance of developing independent living skills and education for a child with a disability.

With sustained therapeutic intervention and one to one sessions Ayesha is now able to 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**".

Pr  
for Jan'21 to Dec'21

The project focused on identifying the unreached children with deafblindness, multi-sensory impairment and multiple disabilities in Vadodara district through survey and networking visits. As COVID-19

pandemic resulted in much disruption among the planned project activities the project team was able to reach to 5 new children with deafblindness/ multiple disabilities. 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. 52 Parents' capacity has been built for the provision of better services to their children and support them in their daily activities and education. 33 Samagra Shiksha\* educators were sensitized through online platform on deafblindness, needs of children with deafblindness and creating inclusion within classroom setup. As per the need 12 children received therapies such as physiotherapy and speech therapy and many caregivers were linked with govt. disability schemes.

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.

## Proposed Project

**The proposed project aims to further strengthen and expand the current project.** Through the project, we would like to expand our reach and include an additional 16 children during the period January 22-Dec 22 and provide them with the required needs-based individualised education and rehabilitation support services.

Major objectives of the project include:

1. To reach out and develop appropriate educational services for 40 (24 existing + 16 new) identified deafblind children and young adults and their families through the centre based and home-based services in Vadodara Gujarat.
2. Capacity building of parents of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities.
3. To build the capacity of project staff to work with deafblind children- Training & capacity building of partner organisation and staff (1 National Training on Deafblindness, 1 Regional Training on Deafblindness, On-site training programmes and project M&E visits)
4. To build the capacity of state SMSA/ government teachers on deafblind issues
5. To promote sharing and networking activities among parents/ families, teachers and NGOs at the local, regional and national level through quarterly local network meeting and 1 National Conclave of Networks

|   | Objectives of the project   | Activities   | Outcome   |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Identify and support children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities in the community | Identification of children through networking visit to anganwadi workers, primary health care centres, govt. hospitals and other disability-based organizations. | 40 children and about 40 families in Vadodara and surrounding areas, will come within the project |
| 2 | Ensure the identified children receive Centre-  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical &amp; functional assessment,</li> </ul>  | Individual assessment of each child and setting up their goals                                    |

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|   | based and/ or Home-based services.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an 'individual education plan' (IEP) for each individual,</li> <li>• Therapeutic services,</li> <li>• Nutrition and medical support</li> <li>• Training in mobility, communication abilities, sensory awareness, daily-living skills, social and wherever possible, vocational skills.</li> </ul> | through Individualised Educational Plans and monitor their progress. This progress will be reported.   |
| 3 | Build the capacity of project staff to work with deafblind children.   | Support by Sense India's qualified and experienced staff will include onsite and field visits by Sense India trainers. The project staff will also participate in regional and national level trainings.  | The institutional capacity of our NGO partner will be enhanced. We aim to train at least 4 staff during the project period thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of the work |
| 4 | Build the capacity of parents/ caregivers to work with deafblind children.   | Training sessions with parents through both offline and online mode.  | Parents will be able to understand and follow the activities at home to achieve the goals as set in IEP of the children.   |
| 5 | Promote sharing and networking activities among parents/ families, teachers and NGOs at the local, regional and national level | Parents/ families of deafblind children and teachers will be motivated to join the national network of families: Prayaas; and the network of teachers: Abhi Prerna  | A support group of parents and teachers will strengthen at the local level   |
| 6 | Build capacity of state Samagra Shiksha/ government teachers on deafblind issues   | Samagra Shiksha teachers will be trained to identify and include deafblind children in schools.   | Samagra Shiksha teachers will be able to identify and enrol deafblind children in government schools. We aim to train at least 10 teachers during the project period.                |

The project is designed based on the needs expressed by persons with deafblindness and their families. The approach reflects the immediate and future expectations of people with deafblindness and their families, obtained through regular interviews, interactions in their familiar settings and consultations within their communities.

## Impact Measurement

| Short to Medium-term impacts   | Means of Impact Measurement  |
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| Proper screening for correct diagnosis and 40 children and young adult receiving need specific services based on her/his individualised educational plan (IEP) | Number of children screened and the number of children receiving needs-based independent living training;<br>Documentation of diagnosis and assessment of each child under the project – assessment documents of newly identified children and need assessment document of existing children; Maintenance of individual educational plan (IEP) in the child’s file and its regular reporting to the project coordinator. |
| Enhancement of the skills and knowledge of 4 project staff to work with the child with deafblindness more effectively,   | Number of children receiving services versus enrolled at the centre;<br>Improvement in quality of services to the child;<br>Pre-training and post-training tests results   |
| Enhancement of the skills and knowledge of 80 family members to work with a child with deafblindness and multiple disabilities more effectively                | Number of family members trained to address the needs of persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities;<br>Number of parents joining the network groups<br>Better compliance of child’s follows up plan at home;<br>Parents’ active involvement in the team meetings and their feedback on training of persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities and its outcome.                                      |
| Enhancement of the skills and knowledge of 10 Samagra Shiksha teachers to work with a child with deafblindness and multiple disabilities effectively,          | Number of children enrolled by SMSA;<br>Pre-training and post-training tests results<br>No. of children identified and referred from teachers trained to the project for assessment and further intervention   |

| Long term impacts   | Means of Impact Measurement  |
|---|--|
| 40 Children who receive the services are showing progress on their growth and developmental milestones.   | Documentation & Reporting of the progress of each child – in terms of success “Stories of Hope”                        |
| Enhancement of the capacities of partner organisation to continue services for children more effectively, | Partner willingness to integrate deafblind work in their larger organizational work                                    |
| Increased awareness of deafblindness in community and referral to the centre on time                      | Number of children diagnosed as “deafblind” at the end of the project; and Number of referrals received at the centres |

## Project Outputs and Outcome

- Need-based individualised education, therapy and rehabilitation services to 40 (24 existing + 16 new to be identified) children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities

- Capacity building of 80 parents/family members of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities to provide quality care to their family members and advocate for their issues
- The capacity of our partner organisations will be built on deafblindness and related issues. 4 project staff members will be provided with the capacity-building support, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the work
- Training and capacity building of 10 government teachers associated with the Inclusive Education for All initiative, for identification and inclusion of children with deafblindness and multiple disabilities in mainstream schools
- A support group of parents and teachers will be formed at each of the project locations to advocate for the rights of persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities

The long-term impact envisaged by Sense India for the project is that children provided education and allied services at the centre will become functionally independent and certain children through Sense India's training initiatives with government's *Samagra Shiksha* teachers will be able to enrol in mainstream schools and complete their education in inclusive setups. The parents/family members provide training through the project, will work on spreading awareness in the community on deafblindness and become a self-sustainable group advocating for the rights of their children and persons with deafblindness in general. The children who otherwise would have completely missed out on education will get educated through their centre and will look forward to becoming micro-entrepreneurs through Sense India's vocational training project for young adults with deafblindness and multiple disabilities or find other meaningful employment opportunities and become productive members of the society.

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