Access Before Sympathy

Over Sixty Years of Disability Work in One Indian City

ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY · BENGALURU · SINCE 1959







A rehabilitation session. The real test is whether the city can be used afterwards.

1959
founded in Bengaluru
after one family's encounter with polio care

1m+
people with disabilities served
over the organisation's life

2m+
people sensitised
schools, employers, public bodies

3
Bengaluru campuses
Lingarajapuram, Jeevan Bhima Nagar, Kothanur

> The Association of People with Disability (APD) has worked on disability in Bengaluru since 1959, which makes it older than most of the policy it now helps enforce. It looks at a life cycle rather than a diagnosis, because what a person needs at three is not what they need at thirty.

The work runs from early intervention for small children through inclusive schooling, assistive technology, spinal cord injury rehabilitation and community mental health, to livelihoods and job placement. One organisation stays with a person across their whole life.

Alongside it runs advocacy. The Yes To Access campaign pushes for barrier-free public space, which is the part that decides whether the rest is usable: a trained worker still needs a bus they can board.

HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

Spend the time on the rehabilitation floor and the livelihood unit. The campus shows the life cycle in one morning.

Go and stand in it.

APD

Every sheet in this set points to a place you can visit: a sorting platform, a solarised health centre, a processing floor, a driving lesson. It is real work, and all of it is open to visitors.

WHERE TO GO



The Lingarajapuram campus

Rehabilitation, early intervention and assistive technology.



An inclusive classroom

Where the education program meets a mainstream school.



A livelihood and placement unit

Training, and the employers who do and do not hire.

THREE QUESTIONS FOR THE ROOM

01 India has disability law and poor disability access. Where exactly does the gap between the two sit?

02 APD treats disability as a life cycle rather than a condition. What would your own sector do differently under that frame?

03 Sensitising two million people is harder to measure than treating one. Which does more, and how would you know?

WHAT WE RUN

Academic programs

Business, leadership, entrepreneurship, healthcare, technology, sustainability and culture. Immersions of 12 to 15 days built around one of them.

Executive programs

Company visits, policy briefings and operator conversations, tailored to a sector.

Faculty and dean cohorts

Site-based curriculum development with Indian universities, industry and state agencies.

Service learning programs

Working visits with non-profits, social enterprises and CSR partners, tailored to your group.

READS WELL WITH: CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK

19 The Health System

18 Women & Work

SOURCES The Association of People with Disability, apd-india.org: founded in Bengaluru in 1959; more than one million people with disabilities served; more than two million sensitised.