



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT -HEAR A MILLION



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Enable India implemented the Hear A Million Programme as part of its mission to empower individuals with hearing impairments across India through education, skill development, leadership development, and advocacy. Before the intervention, persons with hearing impairment faced significant barriers in accessing quality education, employment opportunities, and information due to the absence of Indian Sign Language (ISL) resources and limited ecosystem support. The programme aimed to create a unified vision for inclusion and empowerment of persons with hearing impairment by building a consortium of partners, developing community leaders, and establishing accessible platforms for information dissemination.

RBL Bank Limited commissioned SoulAce Consulting Pvt. Ltd. to conduct an independent Impact Assessment of the Hear A Million Programme implemented across India, with headquarters in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The assessment was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the intervention in improving the empowerment of persons with hearing impairment, skill development, and livelihood outcomes. The study covered beneficiaries who participated in various programme components, including the empowerment Course for persons with hearing impairment, Manthan workshops, Margadarshi career guidance sessions, and collective meetings. A total of 75 beneficiaries were interviewed as part of this assessment.

PROJECT DETAILS



Implementation Period

October 2020 to March 2023 (2.5 years)



Financial Year of Impact Assessment

FY 2025 - 2026



Location

Bengaluru, Karnataka (Pan-India reach through digital platforms)



Implementing Partner

Enable India



Alignment with SDGs



PROJECT ACTIVITIES



Conducted 154+ workshops and sessions, including Empowerment Courses for Persons with Hearing Impairment, career guidance, and awareness programmes.



Organised 8 Manthan collective workshops reaching over 1,500 persons with hearing impairment and allies.



Established partnerships with 20+ organisations across education, employment, early intervention, technology, and advocacy domains.



Delivered one-on-one counselling support to over 800 individuals.



Developed and launched the Leadership Programme for Persons with Hearing Impairment, with a curriculum spanning multiple phases.



Created accessible content, including ISL videos with English subtitles and Hindi voiceover, across social media platforms.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DONOR PARTNER



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Hear A Million Programme was designed with the following objectives:



To build deaf leaders and a deaf leader network as a starting point for systemic change, creating change-makers who can be role models for the community.



To build a growing consortium of partners that will learn to respect and understand each other's strengths, best practices, and work together collectively over the years.



To build insights through action-based research that can guide the programme towards reaching one million deaf individuals after 2.5 years.



To build access to information, solutions, stories, policies, schemes, institutions, education, skilling, livelihoods, and more using platforms, technology, and a consortium.



To enhance the self-confidence, leadership, and agency of deaf participants so they can actively engage in education, employment, and community life.



To improve employability skills among participants through career guidance, technical training, and job readiness preparation.



To create awareness on important social issues, including mental health, LGBTQ+ inclusion, women's empowerment, and disability rights within the deaf community.



To achieve 10,000 touchpoints with deaf individuals over 2.5 years as foundational elements for the broader goal of reaching one million.

INTERVIEW WITH THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



KEY FINDINGS

**74.6%**

of the participants had no income before joining the programme, indicating the intervention reached economically disadvantaged individuals.

**90.7%**

of the respondents attended five or more sessions, reflecting sustained engagement and consistent participation throughout the programme.

**98.7%**

of the participants attended core programme components, including panel discussions, awareness sessions, and the Deaf Empowerment Course.

**89.3%**

of the participants reported feeling much more confident and independent after completing the Deaf Empowerment Course.

**60.0%**

of the respondents stated that Manthan workshops provided inspiration and role models, while 34.7% reported connections with deaf leaders and organisations.

**98.6%**

of the respondents who attended Margadarshi career guidance workshops confirmed that the sessions helped in their career development.

**94.7%**

of the participants who received one-on-one counselling reported that their issues were successfully addressed.

**96.0%**

of the respondents participated regularly in collective meetings, demonstrating strong community engagement.

**98.7%**

of the participants used the Access Mantra platform frequently as their primary source of accessible information.

**93.3%**

of the respondents found the language used in promotional materials to be very clear and accessible.

KEY IMPACTS

**73.3%**

of the respondents currently earn between INR 10,001 and 20,000, compared to only 6.7% before the programme, reflecting substantial income improvement.

**100%**

of the participants reported feeling greatly empowered as active citizens following their engagement with Hear A Million activities.

**98.7%**

of the respondents became much more aware of LGBTQ+ issues within the deaf community following awareness sessions.

**88.0%**

of the participants reported significant improvement in confidence as the primary skill developed through the programme.

**97.3%**

of the respondents observed deaf leaders influencing public advocacy, media campaigns, and social mobilisation.

**94.7%**

of the participants observed that many companies have adopted deaf-friendly practices, including interpreters and inclusive hiring.

**98.7%**

of the respondents observed improvements in education through interpreter provision, accessibility changes, and curriculum updates.

**100%**

of the respondents expressed feeling connected to a larger national network of deaf organisations, indicating successful community building.

**58.7%**

of the participants reported that the Access Mantra forum helped them solve problems through community learning and peer support.

This contributes to overall programme reach and inclusive communication effectiveness.

06. OECD FRAMEWORK



Relevance



Coherence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability

The Hear A Million Programme was evaluated using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria. This internationally recognised framework provides a structured approach to assessing development interventions across six key dimensions: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. The evaluation draws upon quantitative survey findings from 75 beneficiaries, qualitative data from stakeholder interviews with trainers, educators, partner organisations, and implementing agency staff, and a review of programme documentation across the October 2020 to March 2023 implementation period.

RELEVANCE Does the intervention address identified needs?	COHERENCE Is the intervention aligned with other initiatives?	EFFECTIVENESS Are objectives being achieved?
EFFICIENCY Are resources used optimally?	IMPACT What difference does it make?	SUSTAINABILITY Will benefits continue?



RELEVANCE

The programme demonstrated exceptional relevance to community needs. Survey data confirmed that 74.6% of beneficiaries had no income before the intervention, and 74.7% were unemployed. The programme directly addressed critical gaps in deaf empowerment, employability, and community connection. The participatory approach through collective meetings and feedback mechanisms ensured alignment with beneficiary priorities throughout implementation.



COHERENCE

The programme aligned well with broader development objectives, including SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships). The consortium of 20+ partners across employment, education, early intervention, technology, and advocacy demonstrated internal coherence. Coordination with Enable India's existing placement services ensured alignment with the employment ecosystem. Minor gaps in the technology platform delivery affected digital coherence.



**EFFECTIVENESS**

The programme achieved exceptional effectiveness in meeting its objectives. All core targets were met: 100% reported feeling greatly empowered, 89.3% much more confident after DEC, 98.6% found career guidance helpful, 94.7% had counselling issues addressed, and 90.7% attended 5+ sessions. The 11,346 touchpoints exceeded the 10,000 target for a 2.5-year period. The 98.7% attendance at core programme components demonstrated sustained engagement.

**EFFICIENCY**

The programme demonstrated strong efficiency in resource utilisation. The shift to online delivery during COVID-19 enabled reaching thousands of participants cost-effectively through Zoom. The consortium model prevented duplication of efforts across partners. The per-beneficiary cost of Rs 2,053 delivered comprehensive multi-component programming. Technology platform investments (Access Mantra, Forum app) did not achieve intended outcomes, representing efficiency losses in that component.

**IMPACT**

The programme delivered a transformative impact across multiple dimensions. Income transformation was dramatic: no-income participants reduced from 74.6% to 8%, while those earning Rs 10,001-20,000 increased from 6.7% to 73.3%. Systemic impacts included 94.7% observing deaf-friendly company practices, 98.7% noting education improvements, and 30+ deaf teachers hired in Haryana schools. The 100% empowerment and 100% network connection rates confirmed a comprehensive impact.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

The programme established strong foundations for sustainability. The 20+ partner consortium creates distributed ownership. The 52 trained deaf leaders are actively sharing knowledge in communities and institutions. Workplaces have integrated empowerment modules into their own training. The 10-year vision toward 1 million individuals provides long-term direction. Challenges include partner coordination, sustainability and continued funding requirements for programme continuation.



Relevance



Coherence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability