

# Vision Empower

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 22







# *Progress in Challenging Times*

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In these uniquely challenging conditions of the past year, we have been on a mission to work with the students and teachers with blindness in India to overcome these challenges through our interventions, both online and in-person.

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# Executive Summary



*“In a world built on the ability to see, vision, the most dominant of our senses, is vital at every turn of our lives. People with vision impairment are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, neglect and violence. The coronavirus pandemic and its consequent impact, such as lockdowns, has worsened their challenges, isolating them further. The pandemic has also underscored the importance of making information available in more accessible formats – including in Braille and on audio platforms.”*

*- The WHO World Report on Vision 202*

Students with blindness in India are generally enrolled into special schools. We find that majority of the teachers in these schools are also visually impaired. Misconceptions in society on the capabilities of visually impaired persons has led to a lack of inclusive pedagogic processes and accessible foundational content in STEM subjects. Computer Science is considered beyond the reach of students with visual impairment and their teachers. Overall, these issues have led to persons with visual impairment being denied career opportunities at par with sighted persons in India. Vision Empower has designed programs to make Science, Mathematics and Computational Thinking education

accessible for students with visual impairment. Many teachers with visual impairment in India are also not digitally literate. This was a major hurdle during the pandemic situation since 2020 for these schools to engage with students. VE created Digital Literacy tutorials and conducted Digital Literacy trainings for large numbers of teachers to address this challenge. It has also been found that students enrolled into school in Grade 1 are not at the desired level of cognitive development and other foundational skills. This required VE to engage in research to develop a curriculum to help parents of children with visual impairment with the necessary caregiving skills.

Overall, the past year has seen significant improvement in learning and growth in the portfolio and outreach of VE.

## Collaborative Framework

**VE adopts a collaborative framework for implementation of its programs to address the challenge of inequitable and exclusive STEM and Computational Thinking (CT) education for students with visual impairment.**

Over the last five years, VE has been fortunate to build strong relationships with the community and other stakeholders including partner NGOs, Government departments in the states we operate in, CSR Teams, R&D Labs and assistive technology firms. We have taken time to understand the real challenges faced by the community and steadily grown in outreach from interventions in a single school in 2018 to touch 30 schools

in 2021 and taken the VICT trainings to 83 schools across the country this year. This was made possible by the use of Subodha, our accessible LMS as the repository of accessible STEM material available as courses for teachers and students. So far, 1278 courses have been made available on Subodha in 5 vernacular languages. During the lockdown up until the schools reopened, Subodha was of great help to teachers who accessed them. However, despite multiple online training sessions and handholding, VE felt the need to create an app which would be more user friendly and accessible on the mobile. Hence the Subodha app development project was initiated in 2021. VE and partners such as XRCVC and HOPE foundation envisions this app as the future platform for all material of inclusive and accessible

education. VE is immensely grateful to sponsors Microsoft and Wipro, whose support made it possible for us to ship all the educational aids required for the STEM and CT programs to all the schools. This will be of immense help to the schools in now executing the activities as per the instruction kits.

**FICCI CSR Award 2022**

The Jury Recommendation Award 2022 at the FICCI CSR to our worthy sponsor, Microsoft India, for Project VICT, was a feather in the cap of VE and IIITB as a validation of the effectiveness of project execution and recognition of the immense efforts from the VE team. The presentation from Dr. Manohar Swaminathan of Microsoft and Vision Empower at the ACM India’s 3rd Computational Thinking in Schools (CTiS) conference in 2021 was very well received

by the larger audience of teachers and academics with an interest in CT and has opened the doors for much more collaborative work in the field of inclusive CT education. A revelation during the VE STEM interventions at schools was that the continued lack of reading and comprehension skills and of interesting content for the children to remain life long readers. The Hexis-Antara solution from Vembi Technologies has been deployed at schools in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Tripura and teachers have been trained to use it. As the program implementation partner for the solution, VE is working closely with the schools to curate desired content and introduce the solution into the school workflow. The immense enthusiasm from teachers and students have encouraged the team to work extra hard to provide every desired feature possible.

**Gamechangers**

The VE initiatives were recognized as gamechangers in India and goodwill was generated through forums such as the World Society of Information Systems which has nominated Vidhya, co-founder of VE, as the representative from India to the WSIS and as a Gender Trendsetter for 2022. She has been entrusted with a mandate to impact the lives of many more students worldwide, not only as a role model, but by conducting workshops and trainings at a global level through VE. As the spokesperson of Vision Empower, she has been engaging with various stakeholders across the world to create awareness about inclusion in education and in the digital society and engaging in brainstorming sessions in the United Nations Dialogues as part of the International Telecommunication Union.

VE is sincerely grateful to our funding partners Microsoft India and Wipro Foundation for the continued support and mentorship. The support for educational aids which came later in the year from both organizations helped 30 schools across the country to be provided with mission critical educational materials to be used regularly by teachers and students in the coming years. As VE steps into the fifth year of operations, our commitment to the mission will be supplemented with great focus on organizational development and creating a workplace which lives by the values of inclusion, trust and transparency.

**Supriya Dey**  
Managing Trustee





# The VE Way

*The VE process mandates content review by domain experts, core VE team and mentors.*

## Evolution through Education

We finalized curricular material after review of literature and engagement with experts in special education and experts in the area of Science, Math and CT. The team leads taken individual responsibility for specific subject areas/topics and have been designing the implementation plan based on the specific needs of the learning area. VE has conducted sessions during all workshops with the educational co-ordinators and engaged with school authorities and teachers often. Thanks to Microsoft networking initiatives, VE has created new partnerships with NGOs such as Saksham Trust in Delhi and Blind People's Association in Gujarat through Microsoft.

Prof Amit Prakash has initiated research activities which will help to create affordable means of dissemination of education to the remote areas of the country. He has been part of all workshops to inspire the participants and stakeholders such as Principals, Pedagogic Experts and government representatives. He has been in constant dialogue with Tier 1 institutions in India as part of the [IUA \(Inclusive Universities Alliance\)](#), to create more awareness and implement inclusive practices in higher education. He was the Program Chair for the Empower Conference 2021 which was conducted to bring together stakeholders in the Assistive Technologies(AT) sector, including researchers, practitioners in the government and industry, people with disabilities, disabled persons organizations, special educators, inclusive designers, entrepreneurs, impact investors as well as policymakers engaged in different ways with issues involved in the creation, production and dissemination of AT solutions.

The portfolio of VE has evolved based on the gradual evolution of the collective understanding within the team, about the educational needs of the beneficiaries. The capacity building exercises within VE were also accordingly designed. To address the objectives of Creation of accessible content and Pedagogies for an inclusive classroom, the VE team had to develop knowledge on the principles of Inclusive Education such as

Universal Design for Learning and Ludic design for Accessibility. Formal training sessions and direct hands-on experience from the schools have helped in building the body of knowledge created at VE. The same can be demonstrated in the form of course modules created by VE and made accessible on the VE LMS, Subodha.

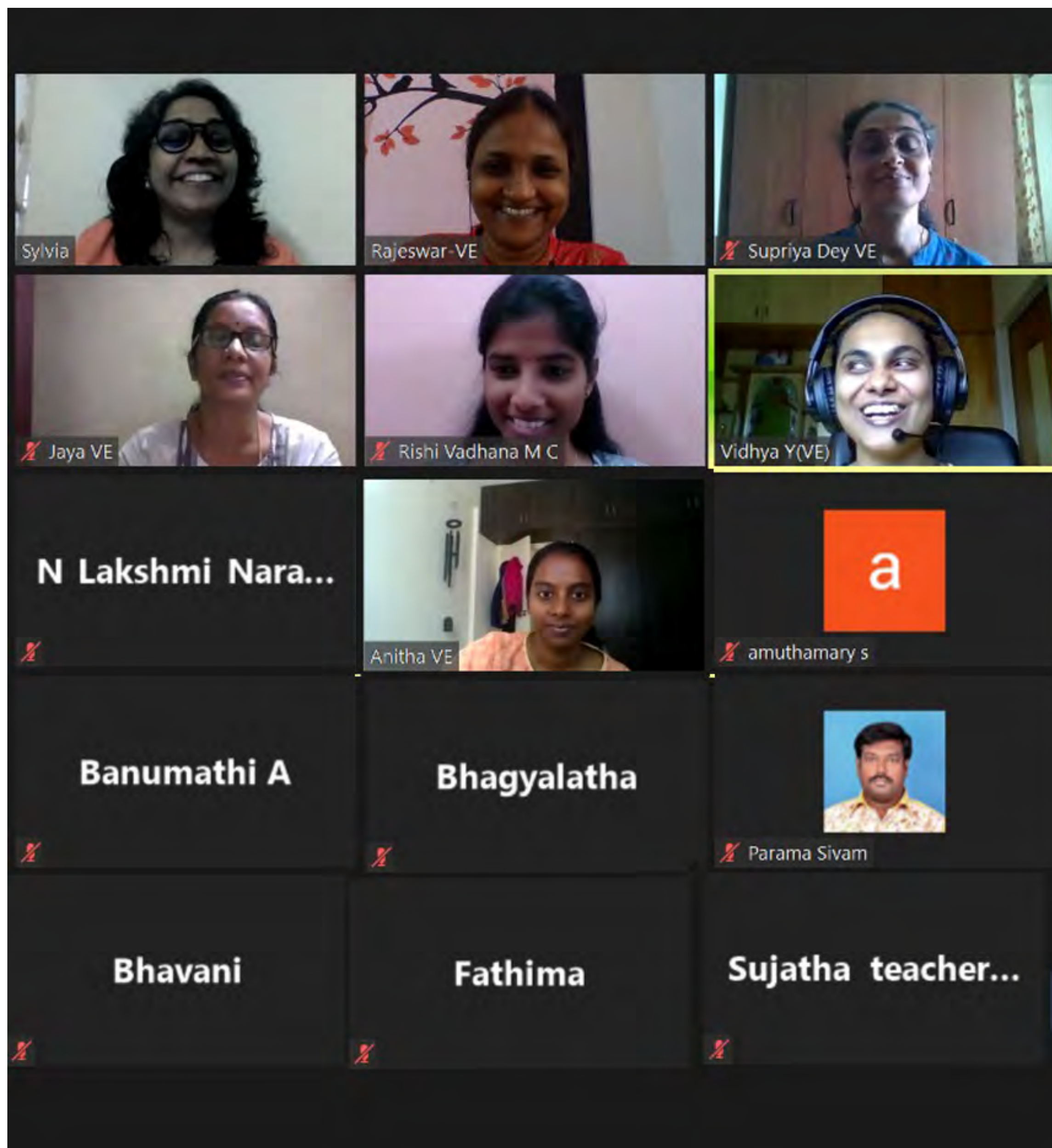
The process of making Math content accessible using MathType and the creation of accessible Math content has helped in increasing the knowledge level within VE about accessible interfaces and thereby contributing to the overall inclusive content being provided to schools.

Due to the pandemic, it was required to respond to the needs of the special schools. At this time, VE focused on Effective and Accessible Digital Literacy for teachers with blindness to conduct classes online for their students. VE created tutorials for teachers on Digital Literacy and conducted training sessions and webinars for teachers in Karnataka. In collaboration with Hope Foundation, VE created Digital Literacy tutorials for teachers in Tamil Nadu. These have now equipped VE to design Hybrid classes where the VE Co-Ordinator may or may not be required to be present in-person in the class, when the teacher is working with the students on a module. This was a new way of engaging with schools, which evolved.

To address the gap in the student's knowledge at an age-appropriate level, VE has focused on Early Childhood Care and Education of children with blindness, since without this foundational knowledge, VE programs will not be effective. The knowledge of the team in this area required enhancement and the secondary literature review and content creation for preschool age children has been developed.

Currently, the team's expertise in the areas of topics in Science, Math and Computational Thinking for the school curriculum for Grades 6-10 are being focused upon.





## Shared Vision

The shared vision of the founding team to empower visually impaired children through inclusive education reverberates with the entire team. The salient measures taken to retain this focus in 2021-22 were:

- The structure and content of employee induction program was enhanced with assignments and group sharing of responsibilities. The program focuses on busting myths about the limitations due to visual impairment and inspires VE associates to think innovatively on the education and prospects of persons with blindness.
- Regular updates and open communication in addition to daily stand-up calls, formal weekly meetings and monthly updates to the entire team helps VE to keep everyone posted and collaboratively address new challenges and mitigate risks. During the pandemic, maintaining a cohesive team through the digital medium and collaboratively working to meet the team objectives has been possible due to the efforts of the leaders to remain connected with a dispersed team and encourage outreach to the community of beneficiaries.
- Detailed Appraisal program designed to foster development of each individual as per their aspirations and career goals, and aligning these with the goals of the organization. This includes quarterly one on one chats with HR to address the individual challenges in their personal context.
- Hands-on nature of involvement from leadership in all activities and respect for every team member's perspective and ideas has helped VE to retain the shared vision.
- Appreciation of small and large successes and teamwork are encouraged and recognition of significant contributions through team announcements have helped.
- Foundation Day Celebrations on completion of four years of VE.
- Creating a Communication Plan for VE. Initiated the Social Media presence and launch of HIVE (Highlights and Insights from VE) Newsletter for more awareness development.



# The Year **Gone By**

*VE furthered its reach and impact in the existing interventions as well as initiated research & analysis with its partners.*

## Execution



### 1. Learning Resources

VE provides students with visual impairment with accessible learning resources in various vernacular languages for Science and Math.

Science and Math books are reviewed to create accessible Braille books with diagrams and tables in collaboration with Matruchhaya for Karnataka

Vision Empower has collaborated with NIEPVD - Chennai, in creating Math Braille books. VE team underwent 2 KT sessions from Matruchhaya on creating Braille books and along with NIEPVD team to learn and understand the process.

One sample chapter was worked on by adding Alt text to the required images as per the TN Board textbook and shared in the Duxbury format. The team will continue the work in creating the TN Math Braille books.

The VE team is creating the Unicode and printing sample books in Bangla for NCERT Board for the state of Tripura and providing books to IEPVD (Boys & Girls). We have additionally provided NCERT books in the ePUB format. VE was able to procure the required software and the Index Braille printer required for Braille printing and tactile diagram printing.

These are distributed to schools to enable teachers and students to refer/read at grade appropriate levels. Tactile Diagrams, Models are distributed to the schools. These are usually procured from vendors or created specifically in collaboration with partners such as Enability Foundation, RLF or with the help of volunteers. Teacher Instruction Kits are provided to teachers of Science and Math and these are distributed in Braille to the teachers with blindness or in print for the sighted teacher.





In 2021-2022,

**Resource Creation:**

- A total of 796 Teacher Instruction Kits has been created (We have completed Karnataka Board and NCERT) covering Grades 1-10, TN Board TIK's are in progress
- Grade 4 Term-I Math Braille Book in the Duxbury format is shared with NIEPVD for their review.
- Grade 3,4,5,6 Science and Math sample Books along with tactile diagrams were sent to 2 schools in Tripura for proofreading.
- e-pub file format NCERT books and access to Sugamya Pustakalaya were provided for VI teachers in Tripura.
- Math & Science primers were provided to a few of the schools we are working with by Saksham.
- VE obtained approval from the Govt of Karnataka to procure Tactile View Software was provided to the Mysore Govt. Braille Press and the staff were trained on usage of Tactile View by Matruchhaya experts.
- After comparing various resources available with XRCVC, Sugamya Pustakalaya, Saksham, Bookshare, and NAB, audiobooks for NCERT for Grades 7-12 were downloaded and distributed to schools and relevant books



## 2. Pragya Teacher Training

Teacher Training for Science and Math Teachers to help them with the pedagogic methods. Due to the pandemic most of the Pragya Training sessions were conducted online with the teachers, but as teachers started coming to school offline sessions were also conducted.

## 3. VICT- Computational Thinking (CT) for VI Persons

VE creates an accessible CT curriculum for students with visual impairment based on the ACM CT curriculum from CSPATHSHALA in collaboration with IIITB and Microsoft, following a play-based approach. The research for the same is available on <http://www.ludicdesign.org> as well as the VE publications on <http://www.visionempowertrust.org/publications/>.

- In 2021-2022, the CT syllabus was mapped with the numeracy games being played with children and Learning areas were identified with Key Learning Indicators (KLI) for each Key Learning Area (KLA). A rubric was designed to measure the outcome of the games in terms of learning areas with the help of KLIs.
- Play plans were created for 56 games on Numeracy concepts so far including 12 games to be played during online group sessions.
- Detailed review of literature was conducted to understand the global standards for assessments, assessment methods for persons with disabilities, etc, which were then adapted to fit the play-based Ludic Design for Accessibility (LDA) framework.
- Cards designed for children with visual impairment have been distributed to schools and to children VE would engage with online with their parents.
- The CT curriculum was designed by the VE team to implement a step-by-step progression of numeracy concepts students learn through play and also to maintain uniformity across states.





## 4. Digital Literacy

VE creates tools to help students and teachers with visual impairment gain digital literacy skills to access information at par with sighted persons. This is especially important for teachers during the pandemic situation when schools are closed. The Subodha app will help children/Teachers to access the repository of information. A series of 113 tutorial sessions were created for the teachers in Kannada and Tamil and distributed over Youtube. School wise WhatsApp groups were created to support the teachers with all the required information. A field executive has been recruited to support the teachers at all times. A Youtube Channel was created to make it easy for teachers to access the audio tutorials.

## 5. Subodha

Subodha is the accessible LMS created by VE to act as a repository of all the information required to address the needs of students and teachers with visual impairment. In 2021-22, VE was able to design and develop the features of Subodha following the Design principles of Accessibility in 5 languages (English, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada & Bangla).

**DIGITAL LITERACY**  
Episode 1:  
How to download any app from  
Play Store  
For visually impaired |  
Language - Kannada  
By Vidhya Y  
In collaboration with the team led by Manohar  
Sawant of Microsoft Research

**Subodha**  
LEARNING FOR ALL

Anubhav   Pragma   Digital Literacy   Vision Empower   Tutorials for teachers   Tutorials for Students   VE in News

**Vision Empower**  
144 subscribers

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**Episode 9: Exploring function and other keys**  
7:13  
2 views • 7 days ago

**Episode 8: Keys for Navigation**  
4:21  
3 views • 7 days ago

**Episode 7: Exploring Alpha Numerical Keyboard**  
14:37  
3 views • 7 days ago

**Episode 5: Navigating Keyboard**  
9:09  
2 views • 7 days ago

**Panel Discussion - Dayton team & STEM teachers in...**  
1:36:10  
16 views • Streamed 9 days ago





## 6. Ananda

VE Volunteering program Ananda helps us to create solutions with support from volunteers from academia and industry.

In 2021-22, VE has been lucky to enlist a large number of volunteers and volunteering organizations who have helped in various activities online:

Project Sitara is a group of college students who helped in the creation of Science TIKs for Grade 10 and tutoring of students online. They were able to enlist volunteers (10), train with VE and work on the projects.

Several groups of Christ College students have worked on Tactile Diagram creation, helping the team look for accessible activities and DIY videos.

Engineers (40) from Microsoft India attended a volunteer training session from VE and helped in student content creation on Subodha for the NCERT Board in the form of MCQ's.

Key Individual volunteers have engaged with VE throughout the year to work on TIK review, mentorship on content and translations to Hindi.



## 7. Antara-Hexis

VE has piloted a reading program to schools on the Antara-Hexis refreshable Braille Display platform. VE has introduced non-textbook reading content to children at grade appropriate levels. VE has trained teachers to ensure the device and platform is used to ease reading and develop good reading habits in children.

## 8. Early Childhood Care and Education

VE has initiated research on Early Childhood developmental needs of children with visual impairment. A compendium will be released for parents and care givers to be able provide their children with the age-appropriate skills for children before they are admitted to school.





## Supporters



Microsoft



Wipro Foundation



IIITB



Ametek Corporation

*Vision Empower is sincerely grateful to our funding partners  
Microsoft India, IIIT Bangalore, Wipro Foundation and Ametek Corporation for their contributions.  
Thank you for playing an important part in helping us accomplish our goals.*



# Partnerships



**Enability Foundation Chennai**  
Vision Empower and Enability Foundation collaborate on creation of tactile diagrams using Tactograph, a product designed by Enability. The two teams work on making more tactile diagrams available to visually impaired teachers and students for the VE interventions on Science and Math.



**University of Dayton Ohio**  
Technology research by students and faculty members from the university to design assistive technologies for the community interventions of Vision Empower.



**Government of Karnataka**  
To deliver online and classroom training to teachers from all special schools for the blind in Karnataka



**Government of Tamil Nadu**  
To implement VE programs across all schools for the blind in the state.



**Government of Tripura**  
To implement accessibility in STEM education for the two govt schools for the blind in Agartala



**Saksham Trust**  
VICT sessions with children in the Delhi region. Creation of ePUB accessible books for Tripura, procurement of tactile diagrams and Geometry toolkits for VE interventions.



**Hope Foundation**  
VE and Hope Foundation signed an MoU to create and disseminate accessible Digital Literacy tutorials for 1000 teachers with visual impairment in Tamil Nadu teaching in government schools, using the VE Subodha accessible LMS.



**XRCVC Mumbai**  
Vision Empower and XRCVC collaborate in providing online content on Subodha, the VE accessible LMS.



**NIEPVD Chennai**  
VE and NIEPVD Chennai collaborated on conducting joint trainings for teachers with visual impairment in Tamil Nadu on STEM and CT.



**Microsoft Volunteer Team**  
Creation of accessible student content on Subodha for Science and Math.



**Project Sitara**  
Creation of Teacher Instruction Kits for Science and Math for Grades 8-10



**Christ College**  
Enlisting volunteers for creation of tactile diagrams, creation of accessible text book content and translations of student/teacher content into multiple local languages.



# Outreach Summary

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
States	1	1	6
Schools	3	10	30
Teachers	40	70	405
Students (Direct)	39	20	398
Beneficiaries (Indirect)	39	720	17248
Volunteers	25	68	300

Content				
Courses	TIKs	CT Play Plans	Audio Tutorials	DIY Videos
1278	798	56	118	46

Workshops				
CT Play Sessions	Teacher Workshops	Teacher Trainings & Follow-Ups*	Anubhav	
307	10	60	1	

School Interventions			
Schools	Teachers	Students (Direct)	Students (Indirect)
30	405	398	3750

\*Teacher Trainings and Followups were done for 83 Schools





# Organization

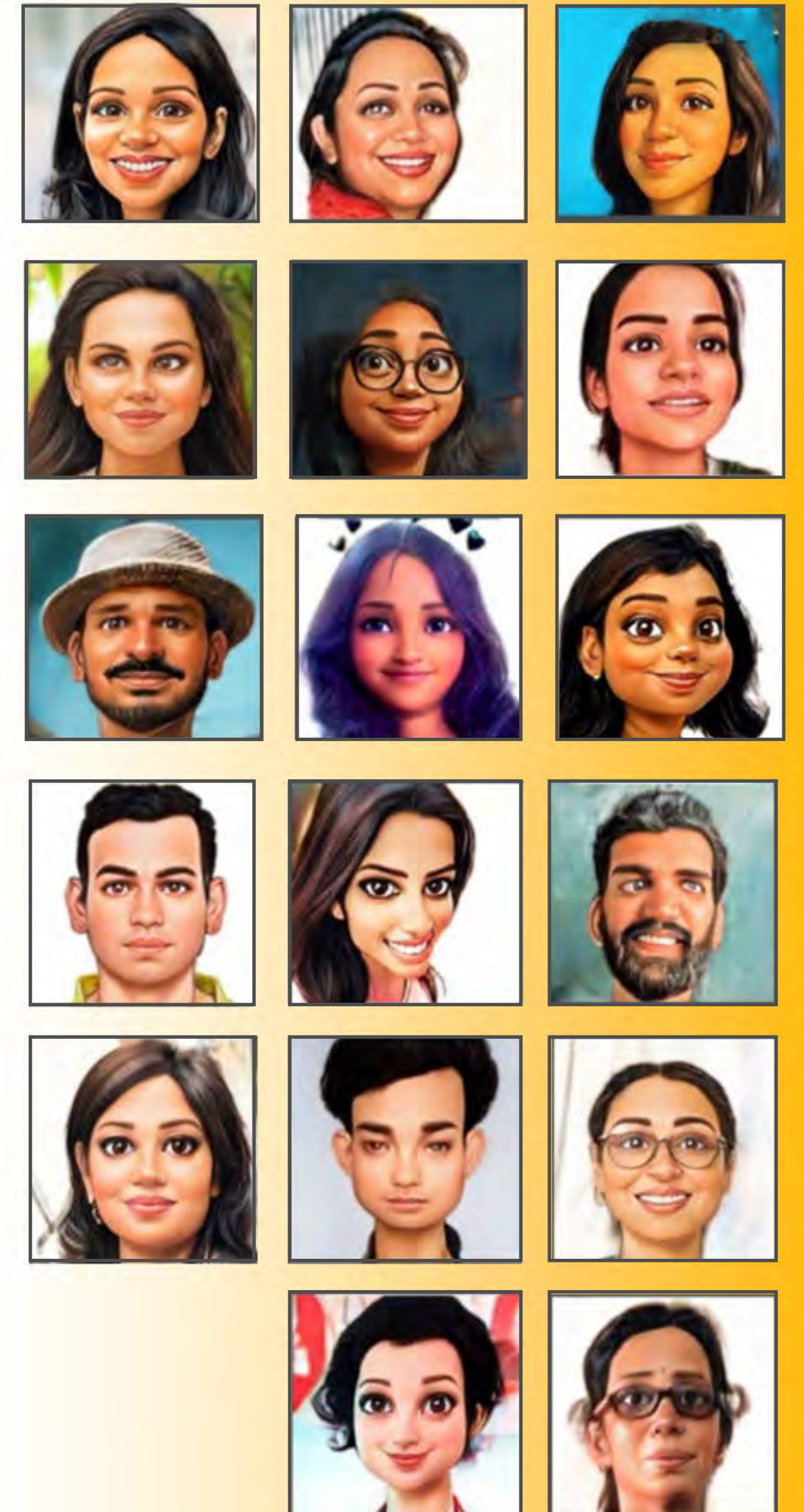
## Leadership Team



### Vidhya Y

Co-founder & Trustee

Vidhya completed her Masters in Digital society from IIIT, Bangalore in 2017. She was the topper and Gold medallist in her class. She was the first blind student to study Maths in Bachelor's degree in Computer Applications from Christ University Bangalore and was the topper of her batch. She co-founded Vision Empower in 2017 to ensure that children like her do not face the same challenges she faced during her education. She has been a Research Fellow at Microsoft Research from July 2018 to September 2020 to design joint research pilot programs on Numeracy and Digital Literacy for visually impaired students. She is currently leading the research pilot on VE Early Childhood Intervention for children with visual impairment. She started the Digital Literacy Initiative for teachers with blindness by creating tutorials and offering weekly webinars to teachers. She has contributed significantly to the awareness development about inaccessible STEM education globally and is currently nominated by the World Society of Information Systems as the Gender Trendsetter of 2022.







## Supriya Dey

Co-founder and Managing Trustee

Supriya was employed in the IT industry for more than two decades in firms such as Wipro Technologies, Lucent Technologies and Alcatel Lucent and was the Chief Manager for the Center for Software and IT Management, IIM Bangalore. She has a BTech in Computer Science and Technology from IEST, Shibpur and a Masters by Research in IT & Society from IIITB. As a co-founder and Managing Trustee, she has been involved in designing all the interventions from VE, forming alliances with strategic partners, fundraising and obtaining necessary government support. She leads the Research Programs at VE and the overall development of VE as an organization



## Sylvia

Program Director

As Program Director at Vision Empower, Sylvia Veeraraghavan leads program design and execution, partnerships and manages the VE execution team for STEM and CT initiatives. After two decades of rich experience in the IT services industry at companies such as Wipro and Mindtree, Sylvia spent five years in the development sector at Janaagraha as the Head – Civic Participation. She used her leadership and technology skills for programs to design, build and roll out multiple Digital Solutions for transformational societal change.



## Prof. Amit Prakash

Co-founder and Mentor

Amit Prakash is an Associate Professor at the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB). At IIITB, he serves as the Convener of Centre for IT and Public Policy (CITAPP) and is in the core team of the E-Health Research Centre (EHRC). He teaches courses in the areas of e-Governance, social complexity & systems thinking and technology product management and coordinates the academic activities of the MSc (Digital Society) programme. He has prior experience of over 15 years in public policy consulting and design of digital technology projects through his employment in organizations such as Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC). He works closely with Vidhya and Supriya as a mentor for all the VE initiatives. He also leads the specific research activities of VE as Principal Investigator and provides mentorship to students, interns and external Research Associates of VE. He is the interface for all financial and legal requirements between Microsoft, IIITB and VE.





## Meghna Chowdhury

**Lead - HR and Administration**

Meghna has been a Wipro Fellow since January 2020. She has an MBA in Human Resource Management with experience as an HR manager earlier in her career. Besides she has a Diploma in Montessori Training. So, her work at VE as Administrative and HR Co-Ordinator has been very beneficial for the organization. She leads the HR and Accounts function deftly.



## Anshumaan Agrawal

**Regional Manager, North**

Anshumaan has a BTech and MTech in Computer Science from IIIT Bangalore and has experience of three years working in the social sector. With his interest and strength of knowledge in this area, he is instrumental in creating government alliances and programs in alignment with government policies.



## Devidatta Ghosh

**Lead Educational Co-Ordinator**

Devidatta has a Masters in Organizational Psychology and a Physics Hons graduate degree. She is an artist of repute and has more than a decade of experience as a science teacher. A self-motivated and proactive team member with a passion for special education, she contributes to various initiatives of Vision Empower, and leads the Tripura interventions.



## Rajeshwari Pandurangan

**Lead Educational Co-Ordinator**

Rajeshwari has a B. Tech degree in Chemical Engineering, and a Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education. She has a total experience of 14 years of working with children in pre-school age group. A very dynamic contributor with a great hunger for learning, she contributes to many of the critical initiatives at Vision Empower passionately and leads the Karnataka operations.



## Jyoti Bisht

**Lead Educational Co-Ordinator**

Jyoti has a Master's in Education from Azim Premji University. She has a certificate in "Teaching children with Visual Impairment : Empowering Classrooms" from the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She has contributed to the design and implementation of all Vision Empower programs over the last three years. Her research interests are in inclusive pedagogy.



## Legal

In 2021, Vision Empower has:

- Renewed 12A Certificate as per the new CSR policy recommendations
- Secured 80G Certificate
- Registered under Form CSR-1 with Ministry of Corporate Affairs

## Growth and Attrition

One team member, Arathi, who was associated with VE as a Designer exited from IIITB.

Rajeswari joined VE in April 2021. She comes with a rich experience in early childhood care and education.

Rishi, MPhil in Mathematics with focus on students with visual impairment, joined VE as a Special Educational Coordinator in May, 2021.

Three school coordinators, Jaya, Rajesh and Sudipta have joined in 2021, and are handling the activities to be conducted in schools at Chennai, Karnataka and Tripura, respectively. Jaya is based at Chennai; Rajesh is based at Mysore and Sudipta is based at Agartala.

Venkatesan joined VE as the Chief Financial Consultant in February, 2022

## Governance

Governance structures: The confirmed advisory committee of Vision Empower consists of Prof Amit Prakash (IIITB), Prof Damodaran Seshadri (IIMB, ISB), Prof Padmini T (Trustee, Pratham & Prof Emeritus, University of Mysore) and Dr. Swami Manohar (Principal Scientist, Microsoft Research). The board of trustees (Prof Amit, Vidhya Y and Supriya Dey) meets once every month to review the projects, accounts and people requirements. The Managing Trustee (Supriya Dey) and Program Director reviews the project wise accounts weekly. For the financial year 2022-23, VE has started managing financial accounts on Tally. VE has also recruited Venkatesan K, ex-CFO of Mindtree and later, Happiest Minds, as the Chief Financial Consultant to maintain and advise on Finance and Accounting processes and statutory compliances. Weekly meetings are conducted for review of VE Finance and Accounts.

The Income Tax Audits of Vision Empower have been conducted by B P Rao and Co., Bangalore. Vision Empower follows standard processes as per Income Tax department of India for the TDS and PT payments of employees on a regular basis.

Since VE was incubated at IIITB, for all funding received by VE through joint research projects with IIITB, all VE project deliverables are audited by IIITB legal and finance teams. For all joint projects, VE submits quarterly reports to IIITB and raises invoices against milestones achieved as per project plan signed by Principal Investigators at IIITB and the funding agency. IIITB audits all VE accounts annually.

The Organisation Policy Manual has been finalized. This is on the VE drive. Can be provided for reference.



# Capacity Enhancement

VE creates an individual capacity enhancement plan during the appraisal cycle beginning every April, in alignment with the financial year. These are identified by the employee and the manager/reviewer and finalized during discussions. In addition, a set of trainings are selected from the list shared by Wipro Foundation from Wipro and its partners for capacity building. Other partners such as Microsoft India also offer courses on Data security and protection, statutory requirements and governance.

VE organizes webinars and panel discussions with experts on STEM Accessibility and promotion of inclusive educational practices in academic institutions.

VE has recruited persons with visual impairment and has created a systematic plan for improving their digital literacy and also enlisted them for courses on Digital Literacy with XRCVC for areas not yet covered by VE.

VE also identifies individual employees based on their aptitude and choices and nominates them for courses being offered by other universities such as IITB.

Learnings from training are shared with the team formally in sessions organized post training. Other learnings from the field are shared in Observation Sheets, which are available internally to all. VE conducts knowledge sharing sessions at least once a month on rotation basis.

COURSE

## 1. COV885 a course on creating accessible document for visually impaired

ATTENDED BY Anitha, Rajeswari

Two members from Team-VE attended COV885, a course on creating accessible documents for the visually impaired. This was a 14-hour course conducted by Prof. Volker Surge and Prof Balakrishnan. The course focused on making the STEM visual artefacts like table, equations, diagrams accessible

COURSE

## 2. Understanding the functionality of NVDA

ATTENDED BY All VE team members

An intensive four-hour in-house training was conducted by Nibin Mathew on understanding the functionality of NVDA and various shortcuts used by screen readers to access content was provided to all the educational co-ordinators in Team-VE.

COURSE

## 3. Understanding Mathtype

ATTENDED BY All VE team members

The entire team underwent a training on application of mathtype to make the math equations accessible by Anitha Ramaswamy.

COURSE

## 4. Workshop on Data Security and Privacy

ATTENDED BY Supriya, Sylvia, Meghna

Three members attended workshops with Microsoft on Data Security and Privacy. Internal training was conducted for creation of accessible content on Subodha using the automated script designed.



COURSE
<b>5. Training on Localize usage</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>All VE team members</i>
The team attended sessions on usage of Localize to create content in local languages
COURSE
<b>6. Vikramshila-Early childhood Learning</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Rajeswari, Meghna</i>
Two VE team members have attended the workshops conducted by Vikramshila-Early Childhood Learning. Two team members continue to attend the workshop on disability studies.
COURSE
<b>7. Session conducted by Matruchhya</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>All VE team members</i>
The entire team attended a workshop on Tactile view to create accessible textbooks in Math & Science for visually impaired.
COURSE
<b>8. Webinar on latest Income Tax compliances for NGOs conducted by Impactyog</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Meghna</i>
The Webinar on Latest Income Tax Compliances for NGOs-Impactyog, following areas were dealt with 1. Amendments in the Income Tax - Section 12AB 2. Renewal procedures and timelines 3. Additional Income Tax compliances introduced for NGOs 4. Way forward for NGOs

COURSE
<b>9. Webinar on NEP-Vision to Action conducted by The Teachers Foundation</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Devi, Rishi, Meghna</i>
4 Educational Coordinators attended the NEP-Vision to Action conducted by The Teachers Foundation
COURSE
<b>10. Course on “An introduction to Accessibility in the Global South”</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Anitha, Aarti, Rajeswari</i>
Two educational coordinators are doing a course on "An Introduction to Accessibility in the Global South" from the Center of Accessibility in the Global South, IIIT-Bangalore. The course coordinators are Dr Manohar Swaminathan, Microsoft Research and Prof. Amit Prakash, IIIT Bangalore. The objective of the course is to bring in a Global South perspective on accessibility covering broad aspects of development theory and disability studies, organizational design and performance, and design principles and approaches for assistive technology (AT). The course commenced from 3rd of August 2021 and is a 15-week course, with a lecture hour of 3 hours per week.
COURSE
<b>11. TIE Aspire Fellowship</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Vidhya Y</i>
Vidhya Y is attending the TIE Aspire Fellowship training on Leadership at NGOs, a fortnightly engagement.



COURSE
<b>12. Vikramshila-Phase 2</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Rajeswari, Meghna</i>
Meghna and Rajeswari attended the ECL course from Vikramshila, this course is a combination of blended online, face to face and site –based support. The course is divided into 3 phases. Phase-1-Theoretical perspective of ECE Phase -2- Face to Face. Apply theory into practice through developmentally appropriate practices (DAP). Phase-3- (Onsite support) Observe the classes and provide necessary support January-March, 2022.
COURSE
<b>13. Leadership Program organised by Dhan Academy</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Devi, Rajeswari</i>
Two team members from VE attended the Leadership Program organised by DHAN Academy, Tamil Nadu. The course helped them to Learn the Art and Science of Enabling Great Results through Strategic thinking, people management, execution excellence, complexity management.
COURSE
<b>14. IGNOU</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Devidatta</i>
Devidatta completed a two-year course in MA industrial organisational psychology.
COURSE
<b>15. Interaction with Prof Volker Sorge regarding making math accessible</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Sylvia, Devidutta, Rajeswari, Anitha &amp; Meghna</i>
Team-VE attended a talk by Prof Volker Sorge regarding Math accessibility on 1st March,2022 at IIIT Bangalore.

COURSE
<b>16. Organizational Development Program</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>Devi, Supriya</i>
Supriya and Devidatta are attending an Organizational Development Program of collaborating with two OD fellows from the program and work towards design and development of the organisation conducted by Wipro Foundation.
COURSE
<b>17. Wipro Foundation’s Organization Design and Development (OD) Program – 2022</b>
Wipro has selected 8 partner organizations for this program. There are 16 people doing Fellowship under this program. Two OD-fellows are working with Vision Empower to help address the organizational issues and challenges that VE would like to work on. As they are doing the course, they are engaging with VE trying to understand how we work using various tools, frameworks, models and approaches of organization.
COURSE
<b>18. Internal workshop</b>
ATTENDED BY <i>All VE-team members</i>
The team conducts TED sessions every Thursday. Motivational talks and learning videos are shared by one of the employees to help associates to exchange perspectives, articulate ideas and share these with the team, while the whole team discusses and debates on the same.
MathType workshops were conducted by Anitha for the whole team to ramp up.
The employees who attend external trainings and workshops then hold an internal knowledge sharing session for the whole team on the learning and experience.



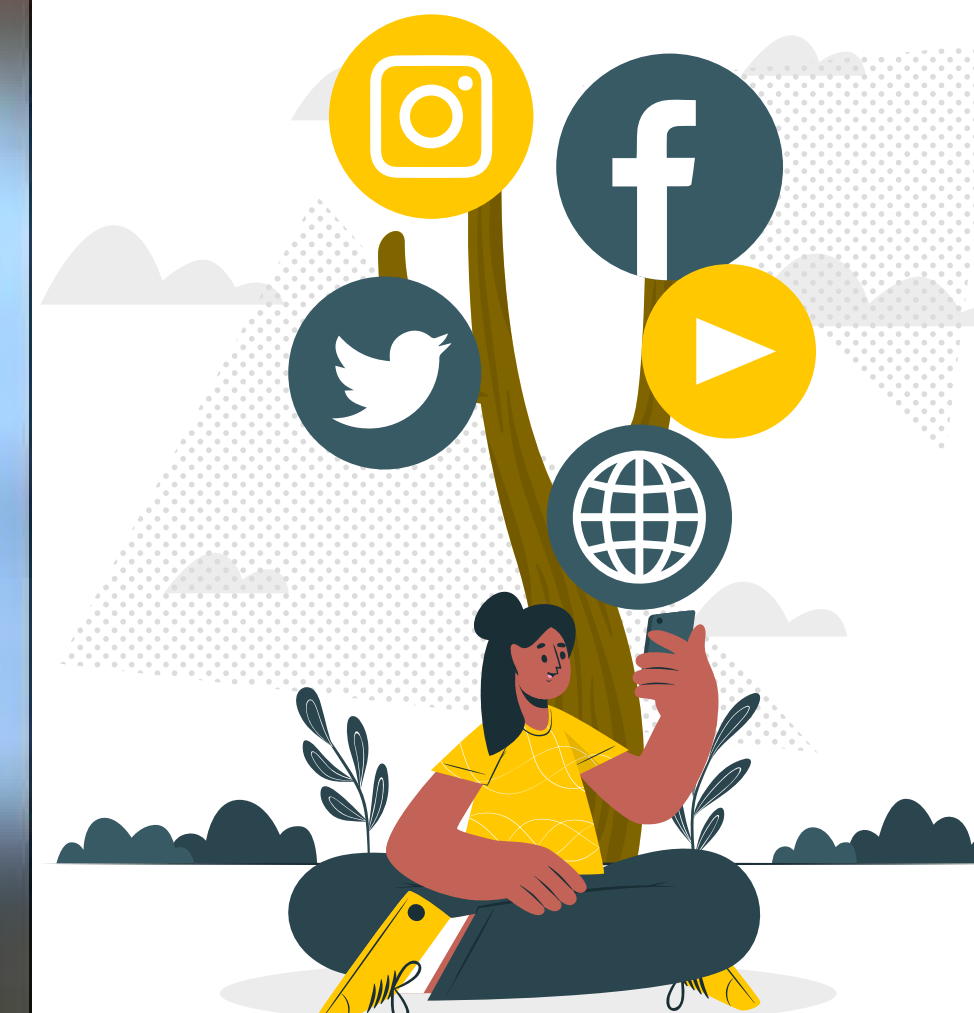
# Media & Communications








## Outreach Events Organized

- **Empower 2021:** in collaboration with IIITB, this conference was meant to create awareness about Assistive Technologies.
- **CTiS 2021:** VE participated in the Computational Thinking in Schools conference organized by CSPathshala and demonstrated the VE curriculum.
- **FICCI:** VE presented the Project VICT to FICCI and the project won the Jury Commendation Certificate at the FICCI CSR Awards 2021.
- **CAGS:** VE has collaborated with CAGS on organizing an industry wide seminar for awareness on the Inclusion Ecosystem.
- **WSIS:** Vidhya has represented India in the WSIS Forum, a UN WSIS Forum 2022 - Launch of the Repository of Women in Technology.

## Website and Social Media Presence



-  [visionempowertrust.org](http://visionempowertrust.org)
-  [/channel/UCA21q6ZlvW\\_rtM0Pm5tE5fA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA21q6ZlvW_rtM0Pm5tE5fA)
-  [/Vision-Empower-237416101567208](https://www.facebook.com/Vision-Empower-237416101567208)
-  [/vision\\_empower/](https://www.instagram.com/vision_empower/)
-  [/vision\\_empower](https://twitter.com/vision_empower)



## Coming Back To School

A Maggu

*With the phased reopening of schools taking place across the country, there is nervousness about the threat to children's well-being and the learning losses over the past year and half. We spoke with non-profits to understand how various stakeholders are bracing themselves up and responding to these challenges.*

Since March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a strict preventive lockdown was imposed across the country. From May 2020 onwards, lockdown was eased in a phased manner – initially on a set of essential

## Samuhik सामूहिक पहल Pahal

A Journal of Our Collective Action

October 2021 | Vol 2 Issue 02

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Computational Thinking in Schools



Cilre Splendor 2021 - A Virtual Inclusive International Conference on the Future of Education



## THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Home > Good News

### A vision to guide the challenged - meet Vidhya Y from Karnataka

*A visually-impaired entrepreneur beats all odds to not only conquer STEM learning, but also to help others like her*

Published: 20th March 2022 06:18 AM | Last Updated: 20th March 2022 01:18 PM



Vidhya Y

By Karthik K K  
Express News Service

## Other Media Coverage

- Vidhya Y was featured in a blog written by Devi Lockwood on “[Tech for disabled people is booming around the world. So, where's the funding?](#)” on 19th May 2021.
- Vision Empower conducted a workshop on VICT – [Computational Thinking for Children with Visual Impairment at the ACM India's 3rd Computational Thinking at Schools Conference](#) on 30th September 2021.
- Vision Empower featured in [Wipro Foundation's Samuhik Pahal Newsletter](#) themed on “[Coming Back to School](#)” released in October 2021.
- Vidhya Y's (co-founder of Vision Empower) journey featured in the “[The Logical Indian](#)” blog on 27th October 2021.
- Vidhya Y, co-founder Vision Empower participated in [Splendor 2021](#), an International Virtual Conference conducted by Cilre. Vidhya was invited as a speaker in a fireside chat on the topic “[Designing Learning for Accessibility](#)” held on 19th November 2021.
- “[HERSTORY](#)” features Vidhya Y, co-founder of Vision Empower to Celebrate Women for Whom “[Disability was Never a Barrier](#)” on 21st November 2021.
- Project VICT – Computational Thinking for Persons with Visual Impairment implemented by Vision Empower won the [Jury Commendation Certificate in the 19th FICCI Corporate Social Responsibility Award](#) on 24th November 2021.
- Vidhya Y, represents Vision Empower, in the “[Brainstorming and Knowledge Cafe of World](#)” session as a speaker which revolved around the theme of ‘[ICTs for Gender Mainstreaming](#)’ on 26th November 2021.
- [Breaking Barriers for Women with Visual Impairment](#), Vidhya Y as a panellist at WSIS Forum.
- [A Vision To Guide The Challenged – Meet Vidhya Y from Karnataka – The Indian Express.](#)
- [Accessible Math Resources for Schools from Vision Empower.](#) Article in Samuhik Pahal, A Wipro Foundation Newsletter.



# Future Plans: Academic Year 2022-23

VE has committed to implement the VICT program for Grades 2-5 in 100 schools across India in 2022-23. These schools will primarily be in the 6 states that VE currently operates in - Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat, Kerala, Tripura and additional states such as Odisha and Uttarakhand where the operations will commence.

Over the next 2 years, VE plans to reach out to 300 schools across the country in its mission to ensure every child with visual impairment in the country gets access to the content created for them. The CSPathshala CT curriculum content will also be implemented for Grades 6 - 8.

VE will also implement the STEM interventions for select topics from Grades 6-10 in 10 schools in Tamil Nadu, as a pilot in 2022-23. In the following two years, we will implement selected portions of the STEM and CT programs for Grades 6-10 in all schools in TN as per TN syllabus and Karnataka as per Karnataka syllabus. VE is creating accessible NCERT content for Science and Math which will be rolled out to participating states as well. Educational Aids required by the schools will be provided with support from donors.

VE will conduct Pragma in hybrid mode for all the schools in the states the intervention is taken to. VE will conduct Anubhav Experiential Learning camps at school with support from the teachers.

The VE Early Childhood program will be piloted in 2022-23. Parents and caregivers of these children will be trained to work with VE co-ordinators.

A systematic study is being carried out in parallel to understand the impact and ensure feedback is absorbed into the program. The following two years will be used to collaborate with partner organizations from the Ophthalmology domain to implement the program for children at a larger scale.

VE will deploy Subodha in all schools and introduce the Hexis-Antara reading program in all the states covered by VE operations. VE will support Vembi Technologies in evaluating and conducting usability studies of all assistive technologies designed.



VE will seek implementation partners in various states to jointly take the interventions to as many children with visual impairment as possible.


VE will actively support initiatives of the Centre for Accessibility in the Global South through research collaboration and joint academic activities which address the needs of persons with visual impairment in the global south.

VE will design internal operational processes to support the needs of organizational development and realize its vision.





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