

VOICE OF SPECIALLY ABLED PEOPLE

Newsletter Highlights (July - August 2021)

1. **COVID-19 Relief efforts:** Volunteers continued to help, every week, in 6 states of India
2. **VOSAP Research Internship:** Concluded with 5 presentations, attended by leaders in the US disability sector
3. **Youth advocacy:** Launch of VOSAP Ignite to engage high school students in the US
4. **Corporate Advocacy:** Research data presentation to Duncan Channon employees

Dear Friends,

We hope you all are safe and healthy!

We are happy to present the VOSAP newsletter, which highlights initiatives related to youth engagement, Covid-19 Relief Efforts, Launch of Ignite Program for high school students in the US, Enabling people with Surgical Interventions, advocacy with corporates and much mor

1. COVID-19 Relief Efforts :



Pandemic has brought some of the most challenging times for a lot of people. We are glad to be in a position to help the people in need. With generous donations and support from our partner NGOs, hundreds of people were provided ration kits, 3 layered mask, and sanitizers every weekend in different cities of India: Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Dahod (Gujarat), Varanasi (U.P.), Belgaum (Karnataka), Nagda (Madhya Pradesh), Haridwar (U.P.) and Hyderabad (Telangana) as part of COVID-19 relief efforts.

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers for going out every week, visiting door to door, taking enormous risk, and reaching out to help underprivileged Specially Abled People.

- There were incidents during relief work where we were in a dilemma to let our volunteers continue going out in the risky surroundings, when Girish ji and some of the other volunteers tested positive during this work and we had to keep our work on hold for a while. But this could not shake the determination of our volunteers and they resumed distribution after 3 weeks in Belgaum by being extra careful.
- In Hyderabad, despite heavy rain and the risk of being in close proximity to a large number of people in a small room, our volunteers managed their way positively to continue with the distribution program.
- In Nagda our team came up with a unique strategy to boost the vaccination program. They distributed ration kits to the people who came for vaccination at the centres to help them at the same time appreciate them for taking the vaccine.
- Our volunteers reached out door to door to people in need in Ahmedabad. During the home visits VOSAP volunteers engaged, inspired them.

These efforts were commendable. These frontline warriors have made a huge difference in thousands of lives in these tough times. And this work will continue till there is a need on the ground.

Youth Engagement

2. VOSAP VRI Presentations 2021: witnessed presence of distinguished officials



28 talented and compassionate interns worked during the summer on 5 research projects related to disability and they presented their research outcomes as part of final VOSAP Research Internship presentations during the week of August 2.

It is an immense pleasure that the VRI 2021 final presentation sessions witnessed the participation of many leaders, dignitaries of the community working towards inclusivity, accessibility, and advocacy of Persons with Disabilities. We are grateful to *Pap Talla from UN ECOSOC*, *Carlos Benevades, President of the disability commission, Los Angeles county*, *Jordan Sun, Chief innovation officer of San Jose city*, *Daniel P Cochrane, Clinical instructor, disability and human development* and *RJ Cooper, CEO of RJ cooper and associates inc* for their time and effort to appreciate these future leaders by their valuable presence, insights and inputs.

1) **Trends in Assistive Technologies** - Led by Shreya Ramesh, studied the trends and understood the entire supply chain starting with innovation in academia to start up, to commercialization and NGOs/Beneficiaries. The team reached out to more than 200 vendors and innovators in the US.

2) **Federal and State Programs for Persons with Disabilities in the USA** - Led by Fatima Jaber, They looked at the healthcare, education and employment sector. Analyzing the distribution of federal and state budgets allocated towards promoting inclusion of PWD.

3) **Non-Compliance of Employment-related ADA** - Led by Sophie Manoukukian, they studied the effects of ADA laws and ADA noncompliance in regards to the high unemployment rates of persons with disabilities. They analysed the federal court database (PACER), and also interviewed various stakeholders to understand ADA noncompliance.

4) **Representation of PwD in Advertisements** - Led by Lexie Van Os, They reached out brands, companies, marketing executives, and ad agencies and social media influencers to understand the possible reasons of lack of representation of PwD and they Analyzed over 300 advertisements since 1980s, the current advertising landscape (social media, print and digital media) for persons with disabilities (PWD) and evaluating business benefits through such inclusion.

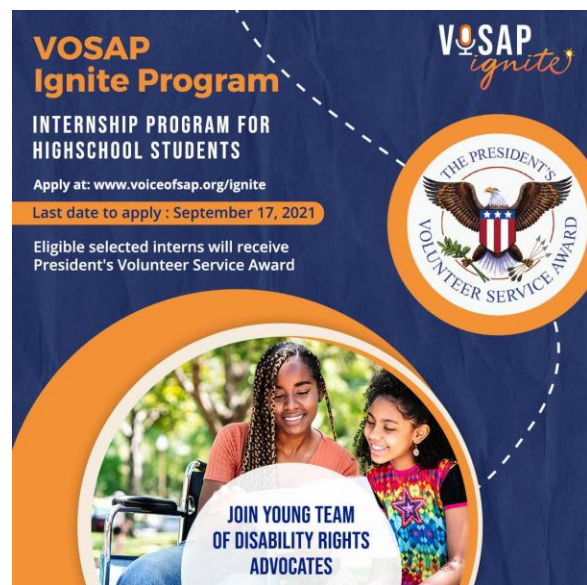
5) **Representation of Disability/PwD in CSR projects** - Led by Sharon Wang, They studied corporate social responsibility programs (CSR) by reaching out to more than 200 fortune 500 companies in order to understand the CSR efforts in the disability sector. Analyzing how various companies prioritize PWD inclusivity through their CSR programs.

VOSAP believes in Data-driven Advocacy, and these 5 projects helped us enormously to get valuable inputs and to think of a way forward. This 10 weeks of rigorous study of the topics was an exciting and insightful journey with rising youth of various universities contributing with data research, analysis, and recommendations.

Complete Videos of these 5 Project Presentations are available to watch on our official [website](#).

3. Launch of VOSAP Ignite program for high school students in the US

VOSAP is excited to launch the VOSAP Ignite program for high school students of Grade 9 to 12 to encourage students to learn about disability, build a network, volunteer, and promote empathy and sensitivity in students towards Persons with disabilities and to nurture virtue of 'Individual Social Responsibility.



4. VRI 2021 cohort call #2 presentations - Representing disabilities in the business sector

On July 23rd, we had an opportunity to host various experts from disability sector - Dr.S.K.Ramesh, former dean of california state university, Tanner Gers, Head of partnership at

Usablenet, Michelle Witman, founder of asset based consulting, Reyma McCoy McDeid, executive director of the national council on independent living and white house appointee by president Blden. The panel discussion as part of VOSAP Research internship Cohort 2 was informative and insightful where our participants had enriched discussion with our panelists.

Enablement Program:

700 visually impaired people were helped with VOSAP surgical interventions:



The VOSAP Enablement program is now expanded to include surgical interventions. VOSAP partner Blind People's Association enabled 700 people majorly in the rural areas of Gujarat as well as in other states with visual impairment to get a free surgical intervention to get the vision. (Eye surgeries are limited to Gujarat as of now)

VOSAP is planning to enable 3,000 more people in the next 12 months with Assistive Devices and surgical interventions.

Assistive device technology:

1. Founder of VOSAP Met with Prashant Gade of INALI Foundation regarding assistive technology

INALI foundation has been working since 2016 with the aim of providing affordable upper limbs with technology interventions to those who have lost them in an accident or don't have them by birth.

VOSAP founder Mr. Pranav Desai had a meeting with Director of INALI foundation Mr. Prashant Gade regarding enabling People with disabilities with prosthetic hands. This effort has already helped 5000 plus people, VOSAP join hands to expand its impact.

2. Meeting with Peter, CEO of TranslateLive -

Translative has helped the hearing impaired to communicate in 60+ languages with its assistive device, it is very helpful for hotels, hospitals, government offices, mass transit stations etc and It is most useful where sign language interpreters are not available. Our founder discussed the possibility of reaching out to discuss

3. VRI 2021 Project : 'Trends in Assistive Technology'

VOSAP is connected with hundreds of AT industries. We reached out to more than 200 people, manufacturers, solution providers, Innovators as part of VRI 2021 project and conducted 15 interviews to explore the trends in assistive technology. Carving a way forward with collaborations and leadership.

4. Aspire Impact meeting

Aspire Impact's initiative 'Impact Future Project' on Accessibility, Disabilities & Inclusion (DNI) hosted a meeting on 20th August 2021. VOSAP founder Mr. Pranav Desai participated in the discussion and shared ideas on investment and innovations in Assistive Technology, and how this innovation can be brought to the market.



5. Application for assistive devices

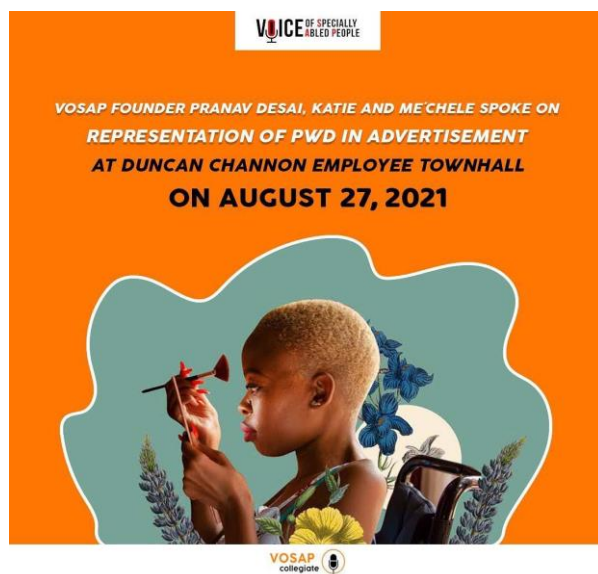
The application for assistive devices is now available on our website for anyone. The applications will be processed on a first come first basis and other logistical considerations. We encourage you to help SAP in your community to apply online.

<https://www.voiceofsap.org/application-for-asst-device/>

Corporate Advocacy:

Duncan Channon, progressive advertising agency in Los Angeles and San Francisco

VOSAP Research findings were requested to be presented in front of all employees of Duncan Channon, a leading, progressive advertising company from San Francisco. We are very encouraged to know the leadership found this research work useful and invited the VOSAP team to present for 1 hour on 'Representation of PwDs in Advertising'



It was a great opportunity for VRI2021 interns Katie and Me'Chele to present their excellent work, findings to the CEO, entire leadership, and employees of Duncan Channon.

VOSAP made a strong business case for ad media agencies to increase the representation of Persons with Disability in their creative work and to look for more ad agencies to start representing PwD for higher returns, brand recall for their client. Vosap presented an entire team of employees at town hall.

Building on the success of the collegiate VOSAP Research Internship (VRI) program, we launched this new internship program specifically for high

school students: VOSAP Ignite!

Ignite is designed to encourage students to volunteer and strengthen the VOSAP mission of helping and promoting the empowerment of Specially Abled People. Through the program, we want to create empathy, have an inclusive perspective, and nurture the "Individual Social Responsibility" mindset.

Everyone can do something in creating a better world for Specially Abled People, the process of making the world inclusive for ALL the people. Please join us as **volunteer, donor, supporter, thought leader** – in the way you believe you can make your impact with VOSAP as a platform!

If you are inspired to help Specially Abled People, please register as a volunteer to start learning and contributing.

Do follow us on Instagram (@vosap.official), facebook (/voice of sap) and LinkedIn (/voice of sap) for regular updates on the ongoing work and progress.

Donate generously to VOSAP and change the life of SAP!

Please take care, stay safe and keep embracing Inclusion of SAP, more so now than ever before!

Please Download VOSAP mobile app (iOS, Android) and start volunteering today!