Project Mumbai is now a Five-year-old.
Does it make us happy? Yes, we are thrilled.

Oh, you guys are just five, but you guys have impacted so many
in such a short time, exclaim many.
Oh Wow, already Five, has been the welcoming remark from scores of others.
Yes, it does make us feel happy about our journey thus far.

In these five years, there is a lot that people have expected of us. On behalf of my entire team, I can
proudly affirm that we have always lived up to the expectations of our stakeholders, partners, funders,
beneficiaries and most of all, our champion volunteers.

We are working on the mental health of adolescents across municipal schools and the emotional well-
being of not just police personnel, but inmates of prisons. We are transforming the city by recycling
plastic waste. Through Naksha we are mapping the cultural history of the roads of Mumbai, close to
1900 km of them, through citizen participation. We are setting up libraries in communities, digital labs
in municipal schools, promoting organ donation awareness in families and across these initiatives and
more, triggering a wave of volunteerism. Urging citizens to make some time for Mumbai.
Kuch Pal Mumbai Ke Liye.

As you read this, Mumbai’s first Inclusive Garden, ideated by
Project Mumbai is ready for citizens. Work to integrate inclusive
education has begun. Employment-based skilling, Inclusive
physical and digital infrastructure, sporting opportunities,
awareness and sensitization are just some of the areas we have
put our collective focus on.

We need your partnership, support, willingness, skill and
collaboration. If you feel passionate enough about Mumbai and
wish to see it a better place for citizens, you must join hands with
us. For those with ideas that can be turned into action and willing
to forge partnerships, write to me at shishir@projectmumbai.org.

Mumbai needs your Kindness.
Together We Can!

Let us make Mumbai Inclusive.
In the truest sense.

Shishir Joshi
Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder,
Project Mumbai

#WeAre5
1,50,00,000+ LIVES TOUCHED

1,50,000+ CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS

150+ PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

150+ INITIATIVES

15+ AWARDS - INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

Supported by our generous donors & a vast hyper-local, citizen-volunteer network which includes many of YOU!

thank you!

#MUMBAIKELIYEKUCHHBHIKAREGA
#KindnessCapitalofIndia
www.projectmumbai.org

and countless blessings...

#WeAre5
Stitching memories, forging relationships, with kind people, towards many more...
5 YEAR JOURNEY...

- Khaana Chahiye Nutrition support for those in distress during COVID
- Mission Suraksha Supporting our heroes in uniform
- Citizen-led dashboard for non-covid hospitals
- Salaam Rakshak India’s largest volunteer-led public art on 41 railway stations of Mumbai to salute COVID warriors
- Emotion Express A log book of shared mental health Inspirations
- Data Top-up plan to help Municipal school children in their education during COVID
- Shambar Takke Shaaii A voting awareness initiative
- Samvaad A Mental Health Helpline 18001024040
- Seamless Navigation at Civic Hospitals
- Environment 2.0
- Bas Kar Mumbaikar An anti-littering campaign across Mumbai
- The Smiling School Project (TSSP)

2018

- Mumbai Plastic Recyclothon
- Jallosh Clean Coasts
- Samavesh Making Mumbai Inclusive & Accessible
- Mumbai 2.0 A conference with the aim to arrive at action points for the next five years, benefiting the city and its residents.
• Satrangi A volunteer-driven initiative to beautify Mumbai’s public spaces
• Harita A student-led fellowship to map the Gardens of Mumbai
• Agni Rakshak Making Mumbai FireSafe
• Young Minds for Mental Health
• Maitri Project Volunteering opportunities for the elderly
• Nayi Disha Emotional well-being of inmates of prisons
• Garden Libraries Enabling Community Reading
• Manaswin Mental Health for the Uniformed
• Har Ghar Hai Donor Organ Donation Awareness Drive
• Naksha An Urban Mapping and Cultural History initiative through Mumbai’s lifelines--the roads
• Mumbai Gives

Learning 2.0 - Inclusive Education in BMC School
Six co-curricular initiatives for our municipal school children.
• Read Mumbai – Setting up reading libraries in BMC schools
• Green School – Kitchen Garden-Installation of Portable framing Systems on school terraces
• Tech Tool 2.0 – Digital Literacy and Skilling in Schools
• Dashboard for NGOs
• Inclusive Education
• Kindness Project

AND MANY MORE...
As an organisation, we have grown a lot in the last five years. We have had our ups and downs, but our resolve to make Mumbai the kindness capital of India has not wavered. From this issue onwards we wanted to do something we had never done before!

As our CEO shares and we strongly believe--Project Mumbai is a Jack of All Trades but Masters of Some. Our Verticals focus on everything from the environment, mental health, organ donation, urban mapping, cultural history and hopefully in the future many more. One of our newest vertices – Samavesh – aims to raise awareness about how Mumbai as a city has to become more inclusive for people with disabilities and those who are neurodivergent.

This issue will focus on how being ‘othered’ in society is not because people who are neurodivergent or those who have a disability are different. But it is simply because the world isn’t built for them (at least for now anyway). For example, think of all the buildings without elevators, it may not affect someone able. But there are many people of all ages who can’t climb stairs. This limits their access to spaces when it comes to schools, workplaces, and housing societies. When you interview for a position in a school or office, the important things one has to consider should be on the lines of growth, people and opportunities not if the school or office building is accessible or not. To make a truly inclusive city, we have to take a long hard look at what can be done. But to make this dream a reality, we have to look at the problem from an intersectional perspective for any real change to occur.

What is Intersectionality?

To walk a mile in someone else’s shoes is not just a cheesy saying, it is a life philosophy that all must practise. Diversity is inherent to not just humanity but life! All living things come in different shapes, colours, sizes, and abilities.

That is what makes us strong. But sadly as humans, we don’t treat this diversity equally. As humans, we have created hierarchies that exist only because we created them. This issue will take an intersectional look at the problems faced by people with disabilities and those who are neurodivergent in the spaces of education, legislation and cultural representation.

Identity is an important facet of life. They help us see the world in unique and different ways, but that also means that identities shape how others see us as well. Ever since we are young we are told certain “truths” about ourselves, or others around us. “Boys can’t cry”, “Women are weak”, “don’t buy property there, it’s a Muslim area.”, “eating meat is so impure”.

#WeAre5
Feminism started as a movement in the early 20th century as a fight for British and American women to have the right to vote. But since then Feminism has become a fight for equal rights and opportunities for all, with people working on this goal for over 100 years from all over the world. Some inspirational feminists include Gloria Stienem, Emma Watson, Malala Yousafzai, Roxanne Gay and Maya Angelou just to name a few. Closer to home in India, some amazing women like Savitribai Phule, Aruna Asif Ali, Sarojini Naidu and Tarabai Shinde are some of the well-known names who worked in the advancement of women’s rights. Because of the work of such amazing women, and men as well! A lot has changed over the years for women. But there is diversity amongst women themselves, that is where “intersectionality” comes in. The term coined by academic and activist Kimberley Crenshaw is essentially a tool to help us create ideological frames to think of social problems from various perspectives. To essentially walk a mile in someone else's shoes to understand them better. Intersectional feminism recognizes that the problems faced by Muslim or Dalit women would be different to the problems faced by Hindu women. Problems faced by the LGBTQ+ community stem from a different place compared to problems faced by Bahujan and Adivasi people, but the lived experience of a Queer Bahujan individual will be a unique one. What intersectionality helps us see is that there is no single solution to a social problem. As human beings, we have to learn how to be open to new ideas and be empathetic to people who are different from us. Intersectionality helps us to have difficult conversations, and open our minds and hearts.

The list is endless. But these are not truths at all, they are stereotypes. Stereotypes are taught to us, we see them in the stories we read, in the news, and told to us by our family, friends or teachers. But these same mediums can also show us that when we break stereotypes we liberate our humanity.

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You may have heard these words recently, and believed them to mean the same thing. But there is a difference between Neurodiversity and Neurodivergent. Neurodiversity refers to the diversity of Neurotypes in the world. Whereas Neurodivergent describes people who are divergent from the common neurotype (also called being neurotypical). This distinction is important while talking about inclusivity to understand neurodivergence better, and to accommodate for adequate interventions.

Concepts and ideas help us make sense of the world around us. Intersectionality is a mere tool to help us do so. It's not a hierarchy of oppression, but rather an expansion of our understanding of someone else's experience.

Now that we have covered the basic concept of Intersectionality. This newsletter will try to take an intersectional lens to neurodivergence and disability and understand what interventions can be taken as a society to create a better, more inclusive world. This newsletter will break down how the following institutions or discourse can be more inclusive towards people with disabilities or neurodivergence: such as education, legislation, and cultural representation.
Simran looked around her. All she could see were strangers who looked at her like she was an unknown creature in a zoo. The 23 children of classroom 5A were clustered together in groups of girls and boys, all looking different from each other. The only similarity was that all 46 pairs of eyes were focused on her with a mix of fear, anger, shock and disgust. Make that 48, if you counted Ms. Verma, who gave Simran a forced smile, which did not hide her dislike.

“This is our new student, Simran,” said Ms. Verma. “Please make her feel welcome.” None of her students looked like they would obey her. Ms. Verma directed Simran towards a pair of desks, of which one was empty. “Payal is absent today,” she said. “She’s your desk partner.” Simran hoped that the missing Payal would be nicer than her classmates, whom she could hear loudly whispering “is she retarded?”, “is this chinky girl from China?”, “what if she gives us Covid?”, and other comments she didn’t want to think about. She knew she could not tell them that she had topped her class in Math in her last school, that she played the piano, that she had read every Harry Potter book thrice and that she had won two gold and seven silver medals for swimming, because they would never believe her.

Next morning, Simran entered the classroom feeling scared. At her desk was a short, dark-skinned girl with two neatly made plaits framing her chubby face. She looked up as Simran walked towards the desk and smiled, “Oh! You’re Simran! I’m so happy to meet you, I’m Payal!” Simran was so shocked by Payal’s enthusiasm, that she almost fell backwards. Payal pulled Simran down to her seat, and asked her one question after another: where did she live? What was her favourite cartoon character? Which books did she like to read? How many people lived in her home? What was the yummiest food she had ever eaten? Payal paused, out of breath, then suddenly touched Simran’s hair. “I love your hair, and you have such beautiful brown eyes that slant upwards!” she exclaimed. “I have Down Syndrome,” Simran said shyly. Payal did not say anything.

Simran was so scared that she had lost the only friend she had ever made. It would have been so lovely to have someone to share her tiffin with, go to the playground with, and giggle with in breaktime. Simran was used to being on her own and having her tiffin at the teacher’s desk. But oh, how she wished she could have a friend!

Payal looked closely at her face, then suddenly she smiled. “I know! You’re just like Punky, from my favourite TV show!”. Simran didn’t know what Payal was talking about “Punky has Down Syndrome,” continued Payal, “and I love her! She’s so cute and happy all the time, and she loves music and dancing, and her eyes are just like yours!” Simran just stared at Payal, who jumped up and hugged her. “And you and I are going to be best friends forever!” Simran was so happy she thought her heart would burst!
Wouldn’t it be lovely if there was a Payal in every classroom? Someone who made friends with other children who were different from her, and actually liked their differences. But, when we think of our friends, we usually think of people who are like us – those who have the same kind of families, go to the same schools and college, work in similar jobs, who like the same kind of TV shows, books and music... you get my drift. It is rare for us to think of making or actively seek out a friend who is unlike us. Those are the people who we tend to avoid because they are different.

This becomes a dividing factor in the classroom, where there can be teachers like Ms. Verma, who do not help to include neurodivergent children like Simran, who had Down Syndrome, as well as others, who could have neurodivergent conditions like autism, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia or ADHD. Students could also be influenced by their parents, who may have told them not to mix with neurodivergent (those whose brain is different from their neurotypical friends) people, thinking that they are a bad influence on their children.

These beliefs make neurodivergent people, whether at school, college, the workplace, or anywhere in society, extremely lonely. Just imagine what it must be like to not have a single friend, to not have anywhere to go or anyone to hang out with – that is a reality for a majority of neurodivergent individuals.

So why not look within to our own inner Payal, and start reaching out to people who are different? If you’re a teacher and/or a parent, you have a chance to not only change the way you think, but also teach your children to be more accepting, more inclusive and kinder, which is a much more important lesson to teach than algebra or biology. If you own or work with a company, you have a change to hire neurodivergent employees, and not only give them a job, but a chance to participate in working life. Because, different does not mean bad or less; it just means that we can get to know someone new, who may look, think and act a little differently from us, but who can become a friend.

Gopika Kapoor is a lifelong Mumbaikar, neurodiversity consultant, author and parent advocate.
“Children/ young adults are best suited to drive inclusion and embrace neurodiversity.”

By Nidhi Mishra

I (Nidhi Mishra) say this as someone in her 40’s, leading a movement for child-led inclusion alongside my co-founders Mugdha Kalra (Media veteran and special-needs mom to her teenage son Madhav, on the autism spectrum) and Archana Mohan (Head of Content, Bookosmia and award-winning author at commonwealth level).

Why do children and young adults lead a movement for inclusion?

Children are curious, full of unfiltered questions and free of the conditioning that society rubs on us. Why doesn’t he look at me? Why is she not talking with me? We have rarely heard ourselves ask these questions, isn’t it? Sometimes hesitant to come across as insensitive, sometimes too busy with our own lives and dealing with our own plateful of problems. But childhood is about abundance- an abundance of time, of curious questions and of acceptance of not conforming to a certain norm.

With 1 in 7 people in the world expected to be neurodiverse (as per WHO), it is very likely that you will be crossing paths with someone who has a neurodiverse condition- a classmate, your neighbour in the apartment playground, even someone you bump into at the mall. So shouldn’t you know how to be comfortable being around people who are different from you? Won’t you want the same respectful treatment from others if you are different from them in any way? Also growing up in a world where you have heard and taught of inclusion from an early age through school and college is so much more organic than turn on a switch when at work in your 30s and looking to hire neurodiverse people.

Also, 50% of all chronic mental health issues take root before age 14, as per WHO. Anxiety/body image issues/ depression etc have become common parlance among parents of adolescents. In such an environment, isn’t it better to convey to our own children that it is okay for them to be different from others? And what better way to be kind and accepting of differences in one’s own self, than learning to be kind to others who are different?

How to get your child (and you) started?

1) Inclusion starts with ‘seeing’- At Bookosmia, we heard this powerfully in a poem we published by 13-year-old Akshita Yadav from Nagpur titled ‘I See You’ as she spoke about a neurodiverse girl in her class. It was clear from her poem that sometimes emotions trump information and relatability trumps awareness. We live in a world where access to information is always a click away, but there is no substitute for experience, especially when it comes to being with people different from you. Be open to making different friends. Watch the month-long Annual Inclusion Fest with daily spotlights on our neurodiverse friends- adept at everything under the sun- from beading to graphic design to Bollywood quizzing to Indian classical music.

Break stereotypes, and leave comments, likes, and messages. When a child sees another child on the screen, telling a story, there is an instant linkage. We start identifying common ground. Interest is kindled, information will follow soon.

While ‘neurodiverse’ is a very big label, it is easier to see and understand it than to read in blogs and information brochures that- A child with Down Syndrome is different from one with Autism / A child with Autism is different from another child with Autism / All of us have our unique ways of thinking.
Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving..

- Harvard Health Publishing

2) Watch/read /consume media that has diversity

Working with some of the most prominent neurodiversity activists who are special-needs moms, we at Bookosmia, run a dedicated imprint Not That Different which publishes books about/by neurodiverse people. These books are exciting and capture a young reader’s imagination, like our latest book Extra about 10-year-old Sara who is off for summer vacation to her aunt’s house in Anjor, a sleepy but picturesque fishing village. But the vacation isn’t just a laze in the sand as she predicted when she and her cousins, Shreya and Noor discover an object that has been missing for millions of years – The Moon’s third eye. What happens next? Can the girls find a way to navigate through their differences? Will Shreya’s Down Syndrome slow them down or will it boost their chances of solving the mystery?

3) Make inclusion cool

Asking your child to be more inclusive because it is the right thing to do may or may not have the desired effect. But seeing your favourite celebrities making inclusion cool and a part of pop culture may catch the attention of many people. Celebrities can amplify awareness to their massive fan-base through a single click. So make sure you stay tuned to what your child’s favourite film star and sportsperson is endorsing.

This article is written by Nidhi Mishra. Founder of ‘Bookosmia’, India’s largest publisher ‘For kids by kids’. Its Flagship programme Not That Different (NTD) is India’s first child-led movement to embrace diversity and inclusion.
Introduction

Persons with disabilities, who constitute over 2.2% of India's population (Census of India, 2011), have long endured multiple levels of exclusion and marginalisation and represent one of the most vulnerable sections of Indian society. Where people who are able-bodied can travel, work gainfully, look forward to recreation and leisure, persons with disabilities face multiple physical, institutional, and behavioural barriers that restrict their access to numerous avenues for social and economic participation.

It is imperative to provide special attention and protection to the rights of persons with disabilities. India has gradually, and more so with the enforcement of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ('RPWDA') shifted towards the 'social model' of disability, recognizing that disability is a product of societal constructs rather than mere bodily impairments as with the 'medical model'. In this context, the current framework under the RPWDA grants a range of rights and entitlements to help individuals overcome barriers and participate fully in all aspects of society.

However, till date, ‘Accessibility’, which as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('UNCRPD'), includes the ability to live independently and engage fully in all aspects of life, is still an unrealised dream in India, and instead, represents a formidable challenge that persons with disabilities face in their day to day lives.

Efforts have been made in India through legislation and government schemes to ensure barrier-free access to buildings, public transport, digital spaces etc. The Accessible India Campaign or ‘Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan’ launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment ('DEPWD') is a prominent example. Launched in 2015 its objectives were of achieving universal accessibility for persons with disabilities. Yet, a lot more is needed to realise equal rights for persons with diverse disabilities - both visible and less visible - along with building of awareness and advocacy to ensure enforcement of what is already guaranteed on paper.

This article will first explore the broad rights and entitlements related to accessibility accorded to persons with disabilities and then delve into the challenges that impede the realisation of accessible and inclusive spaces, specific to cities and urban areas, for persons with disabilities.
The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights to all persons in India, including those with disabilities. The Supreme Court of India has also reaffirmed this principle by noting that the fundamental rights to equality, freedom and life apply with full force and vigour to persons with disabilities (Vikash Kumar v. Union Public Service Commission & Ors., 2021). In addition to the constitutional mandate, there is a legislative mandate found in the RPWDA and the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 (‘NTA’). These laws explicitly describe the rights of persons with disabilities.

The RPWDA also outlines rights specific to accessibility and provides a legislative cover to the Accessible Indian Campaign which aims to ensure barrier-free access to public spaces and facilities. The RPWDA also provides the right to reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities, which refers to the provision of necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments to ensure they enjoy rights equally with others.

### Rights and Entitlements

**What broad rights pertaining to 'Access' are guaranteed to persons with disability?**

Among other rights, persons with disabilities have:
- Right to equality, life with dignity, personal liberty and right against discrimination on the ground of disability.
- Right to live in the community, have a cultural life and participate in recreational activities.
- Right to access justice, healthcare, inclusive education, and polling stations.
- Right to accessible built environment, transportation, information, and communication technology (‘ICT’), consumer goods and public and private services;

**Example of benefits that can be availed from government schemes**

- Receive aids and appliances from the government under the Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances Scheme.
- As an NGO, receive grant-in-aid for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities under the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme.
- Barrier free access to public systems under the Scheme for Implementation of the RPWDA (‘SIPDA’), which include various sub-schemes for the implementation of provisions of RPWDA.
- Receive benefits such as day care, group homes, health insurance and aids and assistive devices for persons with ASD, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities under multiple schemes of National Trust.

E.g., from Government of Maharashtra: Child Homes for children with intellectual disabilities

### Who is responsible for the enforcement and realisation of these rights?

- Both private and public parties are responsible for making their environments and services accessible in compliance with the notified accessibility standards for buildings, buses, aviation, Information and Communication technologies, culture, and sports complexes.
- Central, state, and local governments are responsible for developing schemes, laying down standards and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities under RPWDA.
- National Trust is responsible for facilitating full participation and independent living of persons with autism spectrum disorder (‘ASD’), cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities.

**What actions can one take in case of violation of these rights?**

- File a complaint with the Chief /State Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities in case of violation of rights under RPWDA.
- File a case before the Supreme Court or High Courts of India.
- For a grievance related to any National Trust schemes, organisations registered with the National Trust can lodge a grievance through the website of National Trust, Ministry of Social Justice, and Empowerment (‘MSJE’) or directly call the Chief Executive Officer of National Trust.
Access to Urban Spaces - Challenges and Considerations

Need for Awareness and Sensitisation:

Despite the extensive legal framework that is in place in India for realising access for persons with disabilities across different sectors, there are significant challenges to implementation. The biggest gap in implementation is the lack of awareness and sensitisation. Research conducted by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy identified rampant ignorance and attitudinal barriers as the primary reasons for non-compliance of accessibility standards in various settings such as buildings, buses, parks, and more.

A key issue that stems from the absence of sensitization and awareness is the failure to consider cross-disability perspectives when designing urban spaces and facilities. The professionals involved in the planning and design of urban areas are not trained in diverse needs and experiences of persons with disabilities. This gap in knowledge can result in the design of facilities that cater to only specific types of people with disabilities and not provide for the needs of people who may be vulnerable for reasons apart from their disability. For example, when gender and disability intersect, the safety of women with disabilities has to be ensured while developing accessible facilities.

The Lack of Focus on Invisible Disabilities:

Disabilities can be diverse and distinct from one another. The RPWDA recognizes 21 types of disabilities categorised under the heads of physical disability, intellectual disability, mental illness, disability due to neurological conditions and blood disorders, and multiple disabilities. Given the varying experiences of disabilities, it is essential to recognize that accessibility requirements could be equally diverse and must be approached from a holistic perspective.

There is a common tendency of people to focus on physical aspects of disabilities and overlook the existence of invisible disabilities when planning cities or providing services. A lot of services that could be accessible for persons with physical disabilities, might still be inaccessible for persons with invisible disabilities such as psychosocial disabilities, learning disabilities, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. For example, tactile paving in a mall or metro station may help directionally guide a person with visual impairment, but lack of clear signage or use of clear symbols may make it difficult for a person with a learning disability to navigate such a space. Furthermore, other components of the built environments such as lighting, colours, signages, sounds etc. could positively and negatively affect persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Regrettably, in our research we found that such requirements of neurodivergent people are often glossed over during the designing of public spaces.
Need for streamlined implementation of accessibility mandates:

Another set of challenges is the nature of functioning of Government bodies and departments responsible for implementing the rights of persons with disabilities. Due to the involvement of multiple ministries and agencies at the central, state and municipal levels, there is lack of coordination and synchronicity between different government departments. For instance, in the recent working paper on, In our research we found that even though the RPWDA moves the needle beyond access to basic healthcare, it still exhibits limited to no consideration of the needs of persons with mental illness and psychosocial disability, with accessibility guidelines and standards only focusing on certain disability groups such as locomotor disability, visual impairment, and hearing and speech impairments.

Additionally, even private entities often neglect their responsibility to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities. A survey conducted by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, Mission Accessibility and I-STEM revealed that some of the most popular consumer-facing mobile applications, including PayTM, Swiggy, Zomato, and Flipkart, were found to be significantly inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

In conclusion, persons with disabilities are endowed with a bouquet of rights and entitlements, yet the issue of their accessibility in urban environments and across various sectors remains a multifaceted challenge. Addressing these issues can significantly contribute to creating a more inclusive society where accessibility is a priority for all. To achieve this, it is crucial that both government and private sectors make a concerted effort to fulfil their responsibilities as implementing agencies, thereby turning the rights of persons with disabilities into discernible realities.
Taare Zameen Par - This classic Amir Khan film did not just make Darsheel Safary a household name but also helped many Indian parents understand the plight of their children in India’s rigid educational structure especially for those who are Neurodivergent. The film follows eight year old Ishaan Awasthi (Safary) who is considered a trouble maker because of his poor academic performance. He is sent to boarding school as a means to discipline him, It is not until his new art teacher Ram Shankar Nikumbh (Khan) realised that Ishaan has Dyslexia, and that he could help him.

The movie showed us that children shouldn’t conform to the system, but rather the system should expand to cater to diversity. It showed the positive impact holistic education can have on children, and help cater to their strengths. Teacher’s can change lives and this movie proves it!

Barfi - This gem of a film starring Ranbir Kapoor as Murphy ‘Barfi’ Johnson won many hearts when it first released in 2012. ‘Barfi’ is a romantic comedy-drama that follows Murphy and the two main loves of his life Jhilmil (Priyanka Chopra) and Shruti (Ileana D’cruz) exploring a wacky and endearing love triangle. Murphy and Jhilmil’s relationship deserves a special shout out, not just for how cute they are, but to so lovingly show that unlike what most of us believe, people with disabilities also need and want to form romantic connections with others, have families and grow old together.

Even though Ranbir and Priyanka aren’t hearing impaired or autistic respectively, their performances were not rooted in stereotypes. They portrayed the characters as fully fleshed out human beings, letting the audience immerse themselves in the story as if we knew them. But maybe next time such a story is made (hopefully very soon) the actors bringing them to life are Neurodivergent as well. Representation just doesn’t matter on screen but behind the scenes as well.

CODA - This Oscar Best Picture Winner, is a sweet and sentimental family drama that follows Ruby Rossi (Emilia Jones) an american teenager with a passion for Music. Ruby is the only hearing member of her family, and her family relies on her to interpret for them. Being a CODA, an acronym for Children of Deaf Adults, this responsibility affects Ruby’s academic and social life as well her dreams of becoming a singer. The film had some powerhouse performances, especially Troy Kastur who played Fran Rossi, Ruby’s father who won Best Supporting Actor. The film was celebrated for casting deaf actors in leading roles, something sadly not seen very often in the film industry.
**Speechless** - Speechless follows the life of J.J. DiMeo and his wacky family. J.J. (Micah Fowler) has cerebral palsy, and is non-speaking. The show has an entertaining cast of characters that get into the best sitcom shenanigans. From navigating domineering mothers, a house that's falling apart, crushes and first loves, School rivalries, and inaccessibility. The show is a heartwarming take on the power of having a supportive family, even if they are rough around the edges.

**Margarita with straw** - Margarita with a straw, is a cult classic starring Kalki Koechin, Sayani Gupta and William Mosley. The film stars Koechin playing Laila Kapoor, a college student who has Cerebral Palsy. The story follows Laila receiving a scholarship to attend a semester at NYU, and the journey of self-discovery that she has there. The film is a nuanced depiction of disability. Kalki Koechen in her portrayal of Laila, and Sayani Gupta's portrayal of Khanum, a character who is visually impaired is outstanding. Both actors portray their characters' realities in a manner that steers away from reinforcing harmful stereotypes, and aim to tell the story with empathy and nuance. The film explores themes of self-acceptance, sexuality, empathy, grief, loss and inclusion.

Where to Watch: Netflix

**Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution**-
This rousing documentary directed by James LeBrecht and Nicole Newnham chronicles the life of summer campers at Camp Jened. The documentary explores how camp Jened created a culturally safe space designed for people with disabilities, away from the stigma put on the disabled by a rigid and inaccessible society. The film features some of the most notable figures of the disability rights movement such as: Ann Cupolo Freeman, Denise Sherer Jacobson and Judith Heumann who all attended camp Jened together. Their time at the camp in fact inspired them and their friends to band together and fight for their rights and to ensure that society will include them.

Where to Watch: Netflix or Youtube

**Percy Jackson & The Olympians series, Heroes of Olympus Series (and most characters in a Rick Riordan Book).**

Percy Jackson & The Olympians, is a classic children's fantasy series. Filled with action, friendship and drama. Rick Riordan brings to life the exciting world of Greek Mythology, in 2000s America. Following the adventures of Percy Jackson, Annabeth Chase and Grover Underwood the books are a thrilling ride. The series was a cornerstone of Neurodivergent representation, with all main characters having Dyslexia, ADHD, or other forms of neurodivergence. Fun fact! Rick Riordan wrote the series based on bedtime stories he created for his son who has dyslexia. The series is also getting a screen adaptation releasing on Disney+Hotstar in Dec. 2023.
We congratulate Project Mumbai on a truly impactful five-year journey. It has stepped in beautifully into a huge gap that existed in the need for well-executed public–private–people partnerships that addressed the humungous problems that millions of us face on a daily basis. We are really proud to have partnered Project Mumbai during its stellar work during the pandemic, and it’s drive to make the city much more inclusive. Our best wishes for it to grow from strength to strength and help make Mumbai the city of every citizen’s dreams.

Archana Chandra,
CEO of Jai Vakeel Foundation and
Co-Founder – A.T.E. Chandra Foundation
&
Amit Chandra,
Chairperson – Bain Capital India Advisors and
Co-Founder – A.T.E. Chandra Foundation

Project Mumbai has the potential to be the connecting membrane of the city, that brings together Samaaj, Sarkaar and Bazaar for a better city. It is a collective of all of us who want to see Mumbai thrive, and do so in a creative and constructive manner. Project Mumbai would serve the city well by mobilizing its energy and using it to support both the average Mumbaikar as well as the most marginalized. If it can do this while preserving its founding entrepreneurial spirit, it will become a venture like no other.

Abhishek Thakore,
Founder Blue Ribbon Movement

We congratulate Project Mumbai on the achievements of the past five years which have brought together a wide cross-section of society to bringing about change on issues that affect the daily lives of millions of people. At the Consulate General of Canada in Mumbai we are lucky to have had the opportunity to work with you on projects to support the environment and education and hope that these efforts can continue so future generations are not negatively impacted by the social ills of today. Our first chance to work together was for a beach clean-up in which our Consulate team helped clean a small section of beach and learned about the scale of the plastic pollution facing Mumbai and the Arabian Sea. The second was a project to introduce environmental education and organic farming techniques into local schools in coordination with the BMC. The number of people benefiting from these and the many other initiatives you have undertaken make Project Mumbai a force for positive change, and one that should be replicated around the world.

Diedrah Kelly,
Consulate General of Canada to Mumbai.

Abhishek Thakore,
Founder Blue Ribbon Movement

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Archana & Amit Chandra

Diedrah Kelly

Diedrah Kelly

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES FROM PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE US...

Abhishek Thakore

Abhishek Thakore
In the short span of 5 years, Project Mumbai has created a profound impact on life in Mumbai leaving an indelible mark through its work for so many diverse causes. Protecting the environment, supporting good mental health, helping the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic, creating opportunities for the differently abled are just some of the exemplary projects that come to my mind. Along with my congratulations and deep gratitude for this amazing work, I send wishes that the next 5 years, leading up to Project Mumbai’s 10 yr completion, enable Project Mumbai to create far bigger impact, both in scale and scope. Projects that would make life of every Mumbaikar, safer, healthier and little less stressful. My beloved city of birth and its hard-working, resilient citizens deserve the highest quality of life— and an NGO like Project Mumbai has already proven that it can do this very well indeed. One thing, I know for sure, Project Mumbai, Mumbai ke liye kuch bhi karega!

Preeti Vyas,
President & CEO,
Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd.

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Amita Chauhan,
Board Member,
Social Venture Partners India

Project Mumbai is the perfect example of what committed citizens, united by purpose and direction, can achieve! Under the dynamic leadership of Shishir Joshi, it has been wonderful to watch Project Mumbai tackle so many issues that affect each of us in our daily lives. Particularly heartening is their focus on Mental Health, especially through the pandemic when this became an even greater problem than ever before.

I’m looking forward to the next 50 years of Project Mumbai and waiting to see how they make an even bigger impact in areas like waste management, sound pollution, and access to open spaces for everyone.

Congratulations to the entire team at Project Mumbai! Onwards and upwards!!

Rekha Koita and Rizwan Koita,
Directors
Koita Foundation
To the team at Project Mumbai,
Congratulations on five impactful years in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Your initiatives have significantly benefited over 150 million people, showcasing your commitment to the community. Your inspiring Learning 2.0 initiative for our municipal school children have shaped a more inclusive Mumbai for the differently abled and the neuro-diverse, exemplifying the true spirit of our city. The invaluable work that you have done in crucial areas like environment, safety and mental health will go a long way towards improving quality of life for citizens in various ways. Thank you for bridging the gap between people, businesses, and the administration through your Public-Private-People partnership model and kindling the spirit of Mumbai in citizens through your volunteer model.

As you move forward, we look to your continued dedication in making Mumbai cleaner, greener, and safer – a city where its citizens thrive in happiness and harmony.

Rekha Koita and Rizwan Koita
Directors
Koita Foundation

Preeti Vyas
President & CEO
Amar Chitra Katha Pvt. Ltd.

Amita Chauhan
Board Member
Social Venture Partners India

Rekha & Rizwan Koita

Preeti Vyas

Amita Chauhan
The city of Mumbai never fails to astound us with its glitter and glamour, ceaseless entertainment factor and unity amongst the citizenry. Mumbai has set exceptional examples of empathy and humanity while fighting against catastrophes time and again, that has fallen on the city. Be it natural or manmade, the city has stood strong and united, withstanding every bottleneck that has transpired to shake its foundation. Of the manifold elements that are instrumental in strengthening the moral, social and ethical pillars of the city, PROJECT MUMBAI is perhaps one of the most prominent organizations, undertaking genuine efforts to identify challenges and resolving those through realistic solutions.

With an objective of ensuring social transformation through positive changes and successful public private-public collaboration, and making the city a better place to live in, PROJECT MUMBAI under the dauntless leadership of Shishir Joshi has been a captain to multifarious initiatives involving food, clean water, environment, mental health, accessibility and inclusivity that has attained phenomenal outcomes. It is undoubtedly his tireless dedication and passion that has made the organization the perfect vista to resolving multiple causes that has remained untouched for decades. A recipient of almost fifteen awards, this non-profit organization has been penetrating deep into the unexplored sectors of the society, extending invaluable support to the lesser privileged sections of citizenry with education, nutrition and inclusivity.

Embracing the tagline "MUMBAI KE LIYE KUCH BHI KAREGA", I believe Project Mumbai will grow and soar way higher with the noble cause to serve the community, selflessly.

I wish this magazine all the very best from my end!

Swati Pandey,
Vice Chairman & Managing Director,
Maharashtra Airport Development Company Ltd.

Mumbai is different things to different people, variously called the “city of dreams” “maximum city” etc... It is also the migration capital of the world with literally tens of millions of people coming from the length and breadth of the country in pursuit of lofty dreams or just for eking out an existence...it truly is a microcosm of India with people from the nook and corners of the country calling it home and surviving and thriving in the dog eat dog world of human existence... Survival or Growth not Kindness is the first word that comes to mind when one thinks of Mumbai... but for its aspiring millions it's kindness that will help them achieve dreams... Project Mumbai which completed five years is making an effort to change Mumbai into the kindness capital of the world and in its short span of five years it has demonstrated that kindness and compassion thrive in the maximum city... whether it's caring for the city’s millions and helping them out of the Covid nightmare or creating safe spaces for its children in the city’s parks or making the city disable friendly and inclusive or making it eco friendly by recycling its waste, Project Mumbai and its founder Shishir Joshi have dared to dream and make it happen... that gives huge hope for not just the twenty odd million people who live here but for the nation as a whole that depends on the city for their economic prosperity... Happy fifth b’day PM... May you thrive and grow!!!

Ujwal Thakar,
Partner & Cofounder,
Ujwal Impact Advisers
Project Mumbai's week-long initiative celebrated every October, to get people, organisations, and movements across sectors and age groups to do their bit for Mumbai--helping us make Mumbai the country's Kindness Capital.

**SOME MORE IMPACT DATA**

**PLASTIC COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING**

- 1190 kg **from drop locations**
- 1252 kg **from Jallosh~Clean Coast**

**CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS**

- 29
- 500+
- 1000
- 1000+

**LOCATIONS**

- 4
- 10
- 2
- 100+

**HAR GHAR HAI DONOR AWARENESS SESSION**

- **2** locations
- **10** citizen volunteers pledged as donors

**#WeAre5**
Neurodiversity refers to the collective diversity of human minds across the whole population. It is a scientific fact that society is neurodiverse.

Neurodivergent/ Neurotypical describes a single person who processes thoughts and responds to the world in a way that is different (diverges) from the majority. Some people may describe themselves as multiply neurodivergent, e.g., Autistic, ADHD and OCD.

Neurotypical refers to people who have brains that function in a similar way to most of their peers. Individuals who are neurotypical develop skills, such as social or organisational skills, at around the same rate as others their age.

Feminism is the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of all genders.

LGBTQIA+ refers to the spectrum of Human sexuality. LGBTQ+ is an acronym for the following: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual +. The plus (+) refers to other terms such as Non-Binary, Demisexual, gender fluidity and many many more.

Disability is a general term for one or more functional limitations in carrying out major life activities. A disability may be physical, mental, or sensory. Disability is a functional limitation with regard to a particular activity.

Impairment refers to a problem with a structure or organ of the body.

Cross- Disability means including all forms of disability, including but not limited to acquired, congenital, intellectual, brain, neurologic, sensory, mobility, mental health, episodic, etc.

Able-Bodied describes someone who does not identify as having a disability.

Sexual Orientation A person’s identity in relation to the gender of the persons whom they are attracted to.

Gender Gender is a social construct that determines norms, behaviours and roles that can vary between societies and time. Gender is put into categories of male, female and non-binary.

Sex refers to a person’s biological status, that is usually assigned at birth based on the person’s physical anatomy. Sex is put into categories of Male, Female and intersex.

Body Dysmorphia is a mental health condition that disrupts how you see and feel about your own body and appearance.

Intellectual Disability is a broad disorder characterised by early onset limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour.

Multiple Disabilities are the simultaneous occurrence of two or more disabling conditions that affect learning or other important life functions.

Locomotor disability is a disability of the bones, joints or muscles leading to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs or any form of cerebral palsy.
Invisible Disability is a non-visible disability is a disability or health condition that is not immediately obvious. It can defy stereotypes of what people might think disabled people look like. This can make it difficult for people with non-visible disabilities to access what they need. The impact of living with a non-visible disability can be slight or can have a huge effect on someone’s life.

General Etiquette Tips to Build Inclusive Behaviour

**Practise the Golden Rule:** Treat everyone as you would like to be treated.

**Always Ask Before Giving Assistance:** Just because a person has a disability, they don't necessarily need or want your assistance. Never help someone without first asking them.

**Think Before You Speak:** Avoid using labels when you speak - they are offensive to everyone, including people with disabilities. Always use people's first language when writing about or speaking to people with disabilities.

**Avoid Showing Pity or Being Patronising:** People with disabilities aren't victims. It is also very disrespectful to pat people with disabilities on the head or talk down to them as though they were children.

Interacting with People with Disabilities

Here are some ways to interact with people with specific types of disabilities:

- When you interact with someone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, remember that some individuals may be able to hear, some may be able to lip read, while others prefer to use sign language or assistive technology. Ask them how they prefer to communicate.
- When you interact with someone who is blind or visually impaired, always introduce yourself and let them know when you are leaving. You may offer your arm or elbow as a guide if they request assistance but never push, pull or grab the individual.
- When you interact with someone who uses a wheelchair, do not push, lean on, or hold the person's wheelchair. Try to put yourself at eye level when talking with someone in a wheelchair.
- When you interact with someone with a cognitive disability, speak to the person in clear, simple sentences. Be patient with them and give them time to communicate with you.
- When you interact with someone with a speech impairment, allow them as much time as they need to communicate. Be respectful and avoid trying to finish their sentences.
LET'S COLLABORATE!
MUMBAI NEEDS YOU

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING FOR A CAUSE

Are you a Corporate House/Corporate Citizen with some fire in your belly? Do you feel for your city? Strong enough to call it MY CITY?

Here is your chance. A call to action for Corporate citizens to volunteer for a cause. As a team, be it protecting water bodies, being trained in Civic Problem Solving, Fire Safety methods, Better City Governance, Maintaining Green covers or any larger cause.

There is a cause waiting to be championed. You could be that champion.

Write to us at volunteer@projectmumbai.org

JOIN THE PROJECT MUMBAI TEAM AND BE A CHANGE MAKER

Our initiatives are aimed at improving the quality of life for Mumbaikars. Help us in our endeavour by contributing your time or volunteering with your skills.

Write to us at info@projectmumbai.org

Subject: Volunteering4ProjectMumbai

Along with your details, please include a brief note on your area of interest and the amount of time you can devote to a particular cause.

DONATE FOR A CAUSE

Project Mumbai is relentlessly working on initiatives that impact citizens' lives. We have been fortunate to get pro bono support from individuals and experts from time to time. But some of the services are expensive, some projects require funding and there are costs to be met. We would be happy to have you on board as a donor partner. You can choose a cause we are working on, a project we are associated with or donate to the Project Mumbai Corpus Fund which will get appropriately utilised. Our projects do fall under the CSR Category too. We also assure complete transparency in all financial transactions and use of resources.

The Project Mumbai bank details are mentioned below:

Project Mumbai
Axis Bank Ltd, Andheri West
Account No. 918020096511456
IFSC: UTIB0000740
Send us a text about your donation with your name, address and PAN to mobile no: +91-9653330712
You could also call us on: +91-9653330712

www.projectmumbai.org
info@projectmumbai.org
+91-9653330712
@projectmumbai1
@project_mumbai

SHARE A SOLUTION

If you see a city problem which you can solve, share it with us.
We will help take you to the right civic authority.
Write To Me:
shishir@projectmumbai.org