



**ADD**  
International

## OUR WORK IN ACTION. SABINA'S STORY.

Sabina was 6 months old when she got polio. In her rural community in Bangladesh, there were no health clinics to provide a vaccination. The polio left her physically disabled. As she grew up her neighbours told her she'd been cursed that she was paying for an ancestor's wrongdoing. Their words were thick and constant, and with no alternative narrative to explain her impairment, Sabina started to believe them. She questioned what sins her grandparents must have committed. She shut herself away and withdrew deeper and deeper into herself. One by one she relinquished every dream she had for her life.

Then one day disability activists visited her village.

They told Sabina that there were other disabled people, just like her. That she was entitled to the same rights as her neighbours. They persuaded Sabina to leave her home and meet with them.

For the first time Sabina realised she wasn't alone. Sabina is now an award-winning women's activist, transforming lives throughout her community. She is part of a network of thousands of disability activists working in extreme poverty to build movements for change. And we are with them every step of the way.

"Women are like the broom in the house. The cheapest household appliance. The disabled woman is first a disabled person and then a woman. This is a vicious combination."

I always kept myself in a shell. People have dreams when they meet other people. When one lives within him or herself then there is very little chance of having a dream.

I used to be reclusive and hide myself away. The question of my rights was a far cry.

Through ADD I got capacity building training to build my confidence and skills.

I am now the President of the district Women's Council. Last year, the Ministry of Women's Affairs awarded me a prize for my work.

If we hear that a woman has been attacked we visit her and take the necessary action. Recently a disabled woman was raped. The villagers tried to cover it up. The girl was forced out of her home. I took the girl in and we worked hard to settle the case. We filed a report against the perpetrator. Before our group, disabled people weren't allowed in the police station. We were driven out from the station gates. Now they give us chairs to sit on. When we see one disabled woman is in danger we feel that we ourselves are in danger. I take it like this: it could also happen to me. If we do not act to solve our problems then the negative propaganda in our society about the disabled women will remain intact.

I dream of a society where there will be no word like 'disabled'. All our work and endeavour will be successful when disabled people have the identity of a human being."

## WHO WE ARE

ADD International supports disability activists in Asia and Africa fighting for independence, equality and opportunity for disabled people.

Disabled people living in poverty are among the most vulnerable and marginalised people on earth. Often, they have no access to basic human rights, education, or the opportunity to earn a living. That's why all our work is driven by disability activists and their organisations. They have the passion and courage to fight for change. It's their lives, and their communities, at stake.

What they often need are the practical skills and resources to run an organisation. That's where ADD International steps in.

We take the vision of disability activists and we give them the practical tools to turn that vision into functioning, powerful organisations. We call this process capacity building. It has transformed lives and built powerful movements for change.

**Tim Wainwright, ADD International Chief Executive:**

"We are not representatives of disabled people from developing countries. We are an ally to that group of people. It's very dangerous to ever say that we understand what those groups want. Our role is to enable them to articulate what they want and to help them achieve it."

"If you really want change to be embedded, yes you can give guidance, yes you can accompany people, but if you keep doing things for people, then it can be counterproductive, it can be disempowering. Once you've done something for yourself once, you can do it again."

"Capacity building disability activists and their organisations is an incredibly cost effective way of working. You're not handing out services, you're not handing out food or medical care. You are helping to figure out ways to ensure that disabled people have all those things as rights, not handouts."

## PROJECTS

We currently work in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania. In each country we support a network of disability activists to deliver life-changing work on the ground, and we help them lobby global leaders and people with the power to make real change. Our disability activists follow thematic work based around ending violence against disabled women and girls, inclusive education, economic opportunity, tackling the mental health crisis, water and sanitation access, or supporting people with albinism. One third of our funding comes through public support, the remaining two thirds is institutional support, provided by trusts and government.

## RESEARCH

Research is a critical part of our work to support the global case for disability inclusion. We are involved in several research projects and always advocate a participatory approach where disabled people are actively involved, often as the researchers themselves. Research areas either completed, or in the pipeline, include:

- Reviewing implementation of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda
- How far market-based approaches can reach very marginalised groups – particularly disabled people
- The experiences of disabled children in Tanzania, through their own voices
- Participatory research looking at issues of the carers of children with intellectual disabilities

*We are keen to collaborate on research that relates to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for disabled people e.g. How can we best facilitate disabled people's participation in decision making on sustainable development? What are the costs (human and economic) if disabled people are excluded? And how can we best reach those who are very furthest behind, for example because of intersecting exclusion due to disability, gender, and ethnic identity? To start a conversation please contact [info@add.org.uk](mailto:info@add.org.uk)*