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Facilitating Vaccination in a Blind School

MAHARASHTRA



Visually impaired children in schools of Nagpur have a life of hardships and prejudice due to their physical limitations. The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to intensify their daily life of struggle. Set amid underdeveloped infrastructure and an atmosphere of stigma, schools for the visually impaired faced tough challenges to vaccinate all their students.

The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), ensures equitable vaccination to vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and marginalized communities.



The State Government collaborated with the Project, and delegated the awareness programs and vaccine dispensation activities to local change agents to increase vaccine uptake among under represented groups. In Maharashtra, the Project has engaged with local Non-Governmental Organizations like Marathwada Gramin Vikas Sanstha (MGVS), Transport Corporation of India Foundation (TCIF), YR Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education (YRG Care), The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TMLTI) and HelpAge India to build vaccine confidence amongst priority groups.



The Project team faced parents and students running low on self-esteem and avoiding the vaccine, fearing side effects that would worsen their already delicate health – resulting in a lot of vaccine dropouts.

With untiring dedication and sensitive pro-vaccine counselling, the Project team was able to increase vaccine uptake in the community. Setting up targeted vaccination camps on campus also helped them complete their COVID-19 vaccination course with ease.

Today, students from Nagpur’s special schools regale in finding a new sense of self-worth and are celebrating COVID-19 free lives that are full of possibilities.