

IN THEIR WORDS

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With my experience of working closely with women with disabilities, I feel that we have to come forward and speak for our rights despite the existing challenges. As the president of the disabled person's group of Sundar Haraicha Municipality, I am continuously advocating to ensure the rights of women with disabilities.

● **Parwati Guragain** · Power to Persuade alumna, Nepal

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I have not had the chance to meet other women like me outside of my community circle. Meeting these amazing women gave me more hope and I didn't feel alone in this journey. I also made some solid contacts that could help influence the change we are trying to bring about, and now I'm working closely with them and I feel our voices have amplified.

● **P. Vijayaletchumi** · Power to Persuade alumna, Sri Lanka

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) *Power to Persuade: Empowering Women with Disabilities to Influence Public Policy* initiative gives women with disabilities a meaningful voice in dialogue and advocacy on public policy.

Through discussions on policy priorities, role-play exercises and advocacy plan development, participants build the skills to advocate with policymakers, elected officials and other political powerbrokers for reform.

The training has been delivered in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

SUPPORTED BY



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



IFES · POWER TO PERSUADE

Empowering Women with Disabilities to Influence Public Policy in South Asia

Advocacy successes from the growing South Asia alumnae community.

Bangladesh

Nepal

Pakistan

Sri Lanka



Pakistan

01



Hafiza Aroosa Amjad, alumna, Pakistan

Alumnae developed recommendations for local, provincial and national officials on including women with disabilities in decision-making, and presented them at provincial and national policy conferences.

Provincial advocacy groups are now working to put policies in place on:

Meaningful participation

Employment

Accessible healthcare

Inclusive education

Awareness raising

Accessible infrastructure

“I aim to establish a network of women with disabilities in my union council and aim to raise their voices!”

Hafiza Aroosa Amjad, alumna, Pakistan

Nepal

02



Parwati Guragain, alumna, Nepal

3

levels of government reached

5

districts with virtual advocacy meetings

Alumnae developed recommendations for disability and gender-inclusive COVID-19 policies and plans, then met local representatives to review how inclusive their COVID-19 response had been for women with disabilities.

They have also trained women with disabilities to make face masks and hand sanitizer, and are developing an easy-to-read guide on COVID-19 prevention.

Bangladesh

03



“As a person with a disability, this training will help me in the field I work. I didn’t have much of a clear idea of advocacy. I have learned a lot of new things through this Power to Persuade training.”

Farzana Akter, alumna, Bangladesh

Sri Lanka

04

Thushari Ganga, an alumna who is Deaf, is developing an awareness program for Deaf and hard-of-hearing girls on staying safe from sexual harassment, bullying and other abuse.

She has already reached young girls with auditory disabilities with information on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and how to access support services.