

ACCESSIBLE INNOVATION FOR AN INCLUSIVE BANGLADESH





Foreword

Accessibility is not a special feature; it is a foundation for equitable public service delivery. As Bangladesh continues to expand digital services across government, finance, education, health, justice, and social protection, the next measure of progress is clear: every citizen must be able to access, understand, and use these services with dignity.

This publication brings together public-sector initiatives, civil society contributions, and emerging assistive technologies that are helping make inclusion practical. The stories featured here show how thoughtful design, accessible technology, institutional commitment, and partnerships can reduce barriers for persons with disabilities and strengthen services for everyone.

For Aspire to Innovate (a2i), inclusive innovation is central to citizen-centric governance. Through its Disability Innovation Lab (DIL) and broader digital transformation initiatives, a2i works with ministries, agencies, innovators, organisations of persons with disabilities, development partners, and private-sector actors to make accessibility part of the way services are designed from the beginning.

The work of Friendship and Sightsavers reflects the value of inclusive approach. Friendship's experience in reaching climate-affected and geographically isolated char communities through integrated physical and digital service models shows how innovation can bring essential services closer to people who are often left outside conventional systems. Sightsavers' long-standing work in Bangladesh on eye health, disability inclusion, advocacy, and the Equal Bangladesh campaign further demonstrates how civil society leadership and organisations of persons with disabilities can help strengthen inclusive policy and practice.

Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) 2026 is therefore not only a moment of awareness. It is an opportunity to recognise progress, learn from promising models, and renew our collective commitment to an inclusive and progressive Bangladesh.



Aspire to Innovate (a2i)



a2i has played a catalytic role in Bangladesh's digital transformation journey by helping government institutions redesign public services around citizens' needs. From the early foundations of e-governance to today's integrated digital service ecosystems, a2i has supported reforms, platforms, service simplification, innovation mechanisms, and data-informed decision-making across sectors.

Over nearly two decades, a2i has helped shift public service delivery from manual, office-centred systems to more accessible, transparent, and efficient digital models. National platforms and initiatives such as the National Information Portal, D-Nothi, myGov, e-Courts, and a wide range of simplified e-services have contributed to reducing time, cost, and hassles for citizens while improving institutional responsiveness.

a2i's work is grounded in the belief that digital transformation must be inclusive to be meaningful. To realise this, it promotes citizen-centric design, cross-government collaboration, and institutional ownership to support a governance model where technology serves people, strengthens trust, and expands access for all.



Disability Innovation Lab (DIL)



DIL advances accessibility-focused innovation for persons with disabilities by connecting policy reform, digital solutions, capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration. It works to make digital services, education, employment, entrepreneurship, and public awareness more inclusive across government systems.



Trained **200** university students and **40** persons with disabilities as accessibility professionals and auditors.



Audited more than **200** government and non-government digital services.



Supported the development of **109** Multimedia Talking Books for all Class 1-10 textbooks for the 2025 academic year with NCTB.



Engaged more than **100** stakeholders nationwide to strengthen inclusive governance networks.



Friendship



Founded in 2002 by Runa Khan, Executive Director, Friendship is a Social Purpose Organisation dedicated to bringing opportunity, dignity, and hope to marginalised and unaddressed communities in Bangladesh through its four commitments; Saving Lives, Poverty Alleviation, Climate Action, and Empowerment.

For over two decades, Friendship has operated at the frontlines of Bangladesh's riverine char regions, some of the most climate-impacted and geographically isolated communities in the world. These shifting river islands remain largely disconnected from mainland infrastructure and access to public services, creating compounded barriers to education, healthcare, and social inclusion.

To bridge this divide, Friendship has pioneered an integrated, hybrid service delivery model that combines physical outreach such as hospital ships, physiotherapy services and accessible boats, with innovative digital solutions like mHealth and ICT-enabled learning. By aligning technology with community realities, Friendship ensures that digital innovation acts as a powerful equaliser, reaching marginalised populations and persons with disabilities who are often invisible to conventional systems in 23 districts of Bangladesh thus far.

The goal, therefore is to bridge the gap between isolation and innovation, because the point of accessibility is to have no boundaries.



Sightsavers is a global non-profit organisation working to eliminate avoidable blindness, prevent disease, and promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. The organisation was founded in 1950 and has been working in Bangladesh since 1973.

In Bangladesh, Sightsavers has contributed to eye health, disability inclusion, research, policy advocacy, and community-based services for more than five decades. Its work supports remote and underserved communities while strengthening national efforts to promote disability rights and inclusive development.

In 2023, Sightsavers launched the Equal Bangladesh campaign, bringing together organisations of persons with disabilities and civil society actors to advocate for inclusive policies and stronger disability rights. The campaign is led by a steering committee of elected OPD representatives, with Sightsavers Bangladesh serving as the secretariat.



RECOGNITION OF ACCESSIBLE INITIATIVES



Therapy Service Management for Persons with Disabilities



Organisation

National Foundation for the Development of the Disabled Persons (JPUF), Ministry of Social Welfare



Purpose

To ensure accessible, timely, and integrated therapy services for persons with disabilities and individuals at risk of disability, especially in remote and underserved areas.



How it works

The platform digitally manages free therapy and rehabilitation services through 103 Protibondhi Seba O Sahajjo Kendra (PSOSK) across 64 districts and 39 upazilas. It supports registration, assessment, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, hearing and vision assessment, referral, assistive support, and administrative service tracking.



Impact

The initiative improves access to essential rehabilitation services, reduces administrative barriers, strengthens coordination, and enables persons with disabilities to receive support closer to their communities. It also supports data-driven and inclusive service management nationwide.

Online Police Clearance Certificate Service



Organisation

Bangladesh Police, Ministry of Home Affairs



Purpose

To provide accessible, transparent, and citizen-friendly police clearance services through a fully digital platform for citizens in Bangladesh and abroad.



How it works

Citizens can register online, submit applications, upload documents, make digital payments, and track status through SMS. The service also supports expatriate Bangladeshis through embassies and high commissions, reducing the need for repeated physical visits.



Impact

The service saves time and travel costs, improves transparency, and makes police clearance easier for persons with disabilities, older persons, people in remote areas, and overseas applicants.



Disability Information System (DIS)



Organisation
Department of Social Services,
Ministry of Social Welfare



Purpose
To establish a rights-based national digital system for identifying, registering, and connecting persons with disabilities to services and benefits.



How it works
Persons with disabilities or their guardians can apply online or through local social service offices for registration and disability identity cards. The system supports data submission, medical verification, approval, NID verification, and integration with social protection, rehabilitation, education, and allowance programmes.



Impact
DIS strengthens inclusive governance through a national disability database that supports evidence-based planning, targeted service delivery, transparency, and equitable access to public services for persons with disabilities across urban and rural communities.



Gram Adalat Mobile Application



Organisation:

Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, with support from the European Union and UNDP



Purpose:

To make local justice information and village court procedures accessible, inclusive, and easy to understand for all citizens.



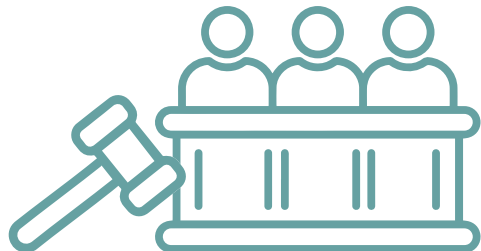
How it works:

The mobile application provides village court laws, procedures, FAQs, educational videos, and downloadable forms without requiring registration. It includes text-to-speech support, audio learning features, colour-blind accessibility options, simplified navigation, and feedback options.



Impact:

The app improves legal awareness and access to local justice, especially for rural communities, persons with disabilities, and users with low literacy. It helps citizens understand rights and engage with village court systems more independently.



EBL Skybanking



Organisation
Eastern Bank PLC



Purpose
To provide secure, seamless, accessible, and inclusive digital banking services that empower customers to manage their finances anytime and anywhere.



How it works
Through a single mobile platform, users can transfer funds, pay bills, recharge mobile accounts, make QR payments, manage cards, open fixed deposits, request cheque books, and monitor accounts in real time. The platform includes biometric login, transaction alerts, screen reader compatibility, and voice-assisted navigation.



Impact
EBL Skybanking promotes financial inclusion by enabling diverse users, including persons with visual impairments, to access banking services independently. It supports cashless transactions, reduces reliance on physical branches, and contributes to Bangladesh's digital economy.

INNOVATIVE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Battery Operated Customized Motorized Tricycle



Organisation

Assistive Technology Centre for Persons with Disabilities (ATCPD), Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)



Purpose

To provide safe, affordable, and independent mobility support for persons with physical disabilities.



How it works

The tricycle is customised according to the user's body measurements and includes a rechargeable battery, comfortable seating, hand-controlled driving system, safety brakes, durable structure, and a maximum speed limit of 25 km per hour. Locally available materials and spare parts make maintenance easier.



Impact

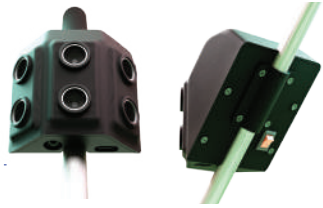
The device improves mobility, independence, access to education and livelihood opportunities, and participation in community life while reducing dependence on family members.



Abhash Smart Cane



Organisation
Drishti



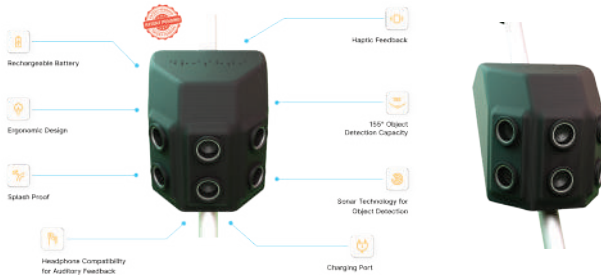
Purpose

To help visually impaired people navigate with greater safety, independence, and confidence.



How it works

The Abhash Smart Cane combines ultrasonic obstacle detection, haptic feedback, and voice guidance. Drishti also supports users through a nationwide network of district ambassadors that promotes accessibility, education, and employment opportunities.



Impact: The smart cane enhances mobility and safety for visually impaired users, supporting greater inclusion in education, work, and daily life.

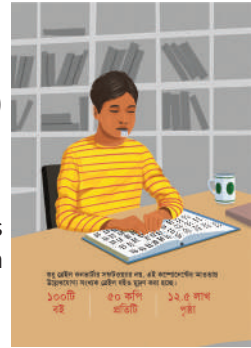
EBLICT



Organisation
Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC)



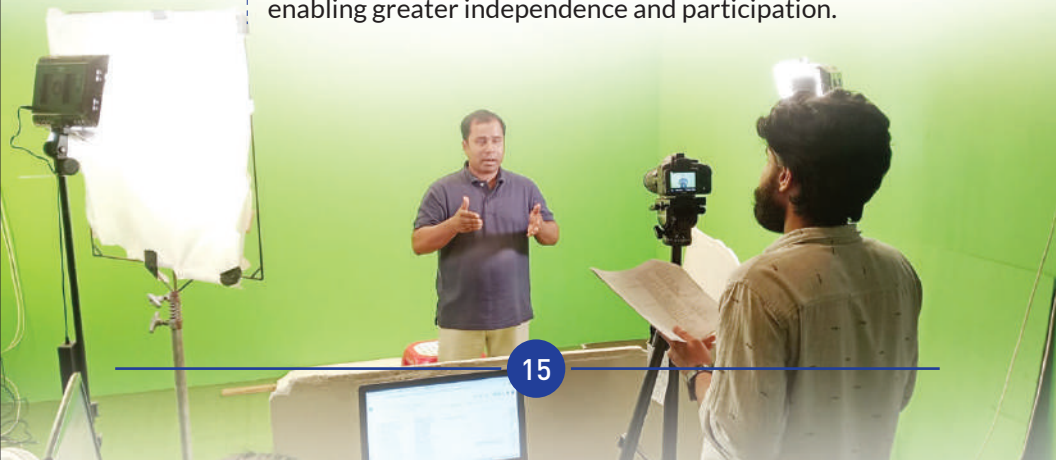
Purpose
To empower persons with disabilities through AI-driven communication and accessibility technologies.



How it works
EBLICT offers sign language recognition, text-to-sign puppet technology, chat communication tools, Bangla text-to-Braille conversion, and Bangla screen reader technologies for accessible communication and learning.



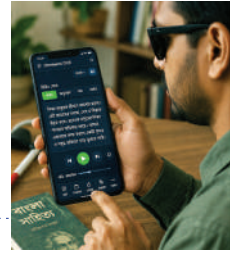
Impact
The initiative improves access to education, healthcare communication, employment, and digital services for persons with speech, hearing, and visual impairments, enabling greater independence and participation.



Omnisent OCR



Organisation
Omnisent



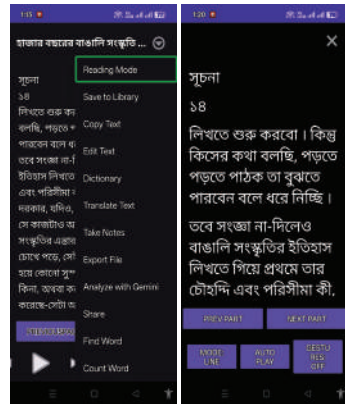
Purpose

To expand equal digital access for visually impaired communities by making Bengali documents readable and usable.



How it works

The solution converts handwritten, printed, scanned PDF, and non-Unicode Bengali text into accessible Unicode text. It includes multilingual OCR, text-to-speech, smart reading modes, note-taking, document management, export features, dictionary support, translation tools, and a screen-reader-friendly interface.



Impact

Omnisent OCR helps visually impaired students, professionals, and low-vision users independently access information. The solution is currently in user testing and is seeking further support for cloud OCR, AI services, hosting,

Affordable Automatic Standing Wheelchair



Organisation

Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP)



Purpose

To promote dignity, mobility, and health equity for persons with spinal cord injuries in resource-limited settings.



How it works

Designed for cervical cord injury survivors, the wheelchair includes an electric-powered standing mechanism controlled by a simple joystick. Chest and knee restraint systems support a safe transition from sitting to an upright position.



Impact

The device helps prevent secondary complications such as pressure sores and osteoporosis, while improving confidence, psychological well-being, and social inclusion by enabling users to interact at eye level.



EduAssist: Intelligent Assistive Learning Platform



Organisation
EduAssist



Purpose

To make learning more accessible and inclusive for learners with special needs through technology-driven educational solutions.



How it works

The platform includes AI sign language recognition, digital Braille with smartphone haptic feedback, voice navigation, accessible multimedia learning tools, smart assessments, and adaptive learning support across web and mobile platforms.



Impact

EduAssist supports inclusive education by enabling real-time communication, touch-based learning, and personalised educational support, contributing to SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 10 on reduced inequalities.

Multimedia Talking Book



Organisation

Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), supported by a2i and owned by NCTB



Purpose

To make national curriculum textbooks accessible through synchronised visual and audio learning materials.



How it works

The initiative converts textbooks into DAISY-standard multimedia books that can be read visually and listened to through audio. Since 2013, more than 109 textbooks have been transformed into accessible formats and distributed to visually impaired learners at the beginning of each academic year.



Impact

Multimedia Talking Book has advanced inclusive education, reduced the digital divide, and supported Bangladesh's progress toward SDG 4 by enabling learners with disabilities to access curriculum content more independently.

Accessible Dictionary



Organisation

Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)



Purpose

To ensure equal access to language and knowledge for everyone, including persons with disabilities.



How it works

Adapted from the government-approved dictionary, the platform supports Bangla-to-Bangla, Bangla-to-English, English-to-Bangla, and English-to-English searches through online and offline access. It includes screen-reader compatibility, responsive layouts, high contrast, text resizing, and keyboard shortcuts.



Impact

With more than six million online uses, the Accessible Dictionary demonstrates how inclusive digital tools can expand access to education, information, and everyday learning for all users. The initiatives featured show that accessibility is both a design responsibility and a development priority. When services, platforms, and technologies are built with persons with disabilities in mind, they become easier, fairer, and more effective for everyone. As Bangladesh moves toward a more inclusive digital future, the challenge is to make accessibility a standard practice across all sectors. Through collaboration among government, innovators, civil society, development partners, and persons with disabilities, accessible innovation can become a shared national commitment.



ACCESSIBILITY STARTS AT DESIGN AND ENDS WITH IMPACT