

# Enable the Disable



**They are Differently abled.  
Not disable  
Create a social atmosphere,  
which will enable them to  
live a full life  
Let us give them full human  
stature.  
Let us empower them; Let  
us display their exceptional  
talent.**

The legislative understanding of the term 'person with disability' in Sri Lanka is that "any person who as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capacities, whether congenital or not, is unable by him/herself to ensure for him/herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life".

The government or civil society organizations do not seem to know the exact numbers/percentages of persons with disabilities in Sri Lanka. A survey conducted by the Social Services Department in 2001 was inconclusive due to not being carried out in the correct manner. According to the information received the Social Services Department estimates that between 8–10% of the population in Sri Lanka consists of persons with disabilities but unfortunately there are no breakdowns for the number of children with disabilities.

However in Sri Lanka's case the figure mentioned above does not take into account the 30 years of Civil War. The consequences of war in terms of disability for both combatants and the civil population, especially children, and others due to fighting, bombs, mines and trauma are massive.

The issue of disability is one of the burning issues in Sri Lanka in today's context. However the awareness and attitudes of the community towards the issue are very poor while the disabled-friendly infrastructure facilities are not at satisfactory level. Therefore the people with disabilities are facing many challenges such as unequal treatment in employment, education and social exclusion, etc.

## Objectives

- Increasing awareness and creating positive attitudes on differently-abled people among the general public
- Introducing and increasing awareness on facilities which are available for differently-abled persons
- Getting the differently-abled persons to contribute to the economic development in the country
- Supporting the families of the persons with disabilities to overcome social stress.

## What we have done

1. Human Touch – inclusive artistic expression with professionals and differently-abled youth.
2. Workshops – Empowering and integrating them with the society through artistic soft skill development.
3. Music video – An artistic approach to grasp attention and improve awareness of the public on people living with disabilities and to create social spaces.
4. Soldiers with disabilities – Therapeutic approach through theater and arts to improve physical and mental competence of the soldiers who has been disabled due to the conflict.
5. Dance performances with hearing impaired Youth – Performances were created, combining body movements and choreography.

## Planned Activities:

Theater 4 Change is planning to carry out a campaign to change the attitudes of the communities at every level towards persons with disabilities. As a part of this campaign the Theater 4 Change is planning to produce high quality, appealing feature testimonial videos of the life stories of successful persons with disabilities.

Act4 also plans for a Performing art production with all the groups underwent training and being part of our activities plus newly identified performers and professionals.

