



Photo: CBM/Sheikh

Asia and Americas Region Annual Report 2022

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Our work in 2022

5,163,785

persons received services in core activities from CBM's partners

4,535,368

persons received medical eye services.

268,438

persons enrolled in CBID programme.

274,431

persons reached by ear and/or hearing care services.

250,287

cataract operations were performed.

70,455

persons reached by humanitarian assistance.

Foreword

As we reflect on the accomplishments and milestones of CBM in the region Asia and Americas, it is with great pleasure that I present to you our annual report. This report encapsulates our unwavering dedication, resilience, and commitment to serving individuals with disabilities in some of the most vulnerable communities around the world.

The year 2022 was a transformative period for CBM as we continued to innovate and drive forward our mission of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities. Despite the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving global landscape, we remained steadfast in our pursuit of excellence and achieved remarkable progress.

One of our key achievements in 2022 was the expansion of our programs and services, which reached even more individuals in need. Whether it was providing access to quality healthcare, promoting inclusive education, or empowering persons with disabilities through livelihood opportunities, CBM's impact was felt in countless lives. Our dedicated team worked tirelessly to forge partnerships with local communities, governments, and organizations, strengthening our collective efforts in creating a more inclusive society. Together, we implemented innovative strategies, advocated for policy changes, and raised awareness about the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Another significant achievement for the region in 2022 is that our core activities reached a larger audience, with a 57% increase compared to 2021, impacting a total of 5.2 million people. Asia & Americas played a crucial role, contributing 58% to CBM's global data for 2022.

As we look ahead to the future, we recognize the ever-increasing need to address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in a sustainable manner. We remain committed to advancing our programs, scaling up our initiatives, and collaborating with like-minded organizations to create a more inclusive and accessible world for all.

On behalf of CBM Asia and America's team, I invite you to delve into our annual report, where you will discover the remarkable achievements, impactful projects, and inspiring stories that have shaped our journey in 2022. Together, let us continue to empower persons with disabilities, restore their dignity, and ensure that no one is left behind.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Asfandyar Mandokhail'.

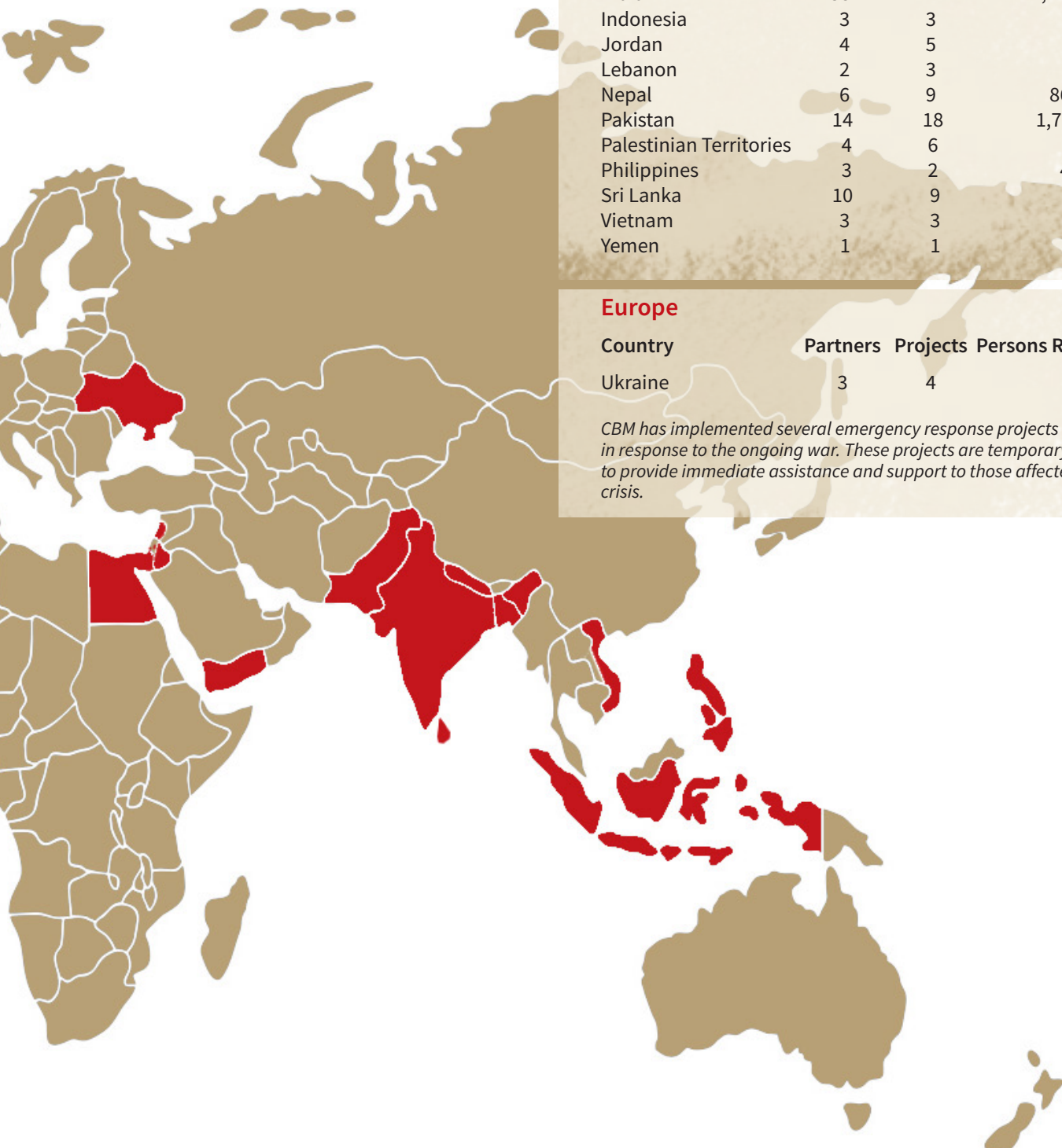
Asfandyar Mandokhail
Director Programme Delivery Asia & Americas

Asia and Americas Reach in 2022



The Americas

Country	Partners	Projects	Persons Reached
Haiti	7	9	29,790
Cuba	-	1	59,993
Honduras	4	4	1,083
Nicaragua	4	5	4,968
Guatemala	5	7	1,302
Bolivia	5	2	37,696
Latin American Region	2	2	20



Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean

Country	Partners	Projects	Persons Reached
Bangladesh	2	3	655
Egypt	2	2	-
India	38	47	2,227,050
Indonesia	3	3	-
Jordan	4	5	325
Lebanon	2	3	101
Nepal	6	9	865,525
Pakistan	14	18	1,798,740
Palestinian Territories	4	6	4,944
Philippines	3	2	42,683
Sri Lanka	10	9	52,251
Vietnam	3	3	36,659
Yemen	1	1	-

Europe

Country	Partners	Projects	Persons Reached
Ukraine	3	4	7,563

CBM has implemented several emergency response projects in Ukraine in response to the ongoing war. These projects are temporary and aims to provide immediate assistance and support to those affected by the crisis.

People reached = people received services in core activities from CBM's partners*



↑ His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein, President of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities speaking at the CBM and HCD hosted event “Planning today for an Inclusive tomorrow” in Jordan

A Year to Remember: snapshots into Asia and Americas’ 2022

Advocating for Inclusivity: Highlights from the ‘Planning Today for an Inclusive Tomorrow’ Event in Amman

The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) and CBM Christian Blind Mission hosted an event titled “Planning Today for an Inclusive Tomorrow” in Amman, Jordan, under His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein’s patronage. The event aimed to create a platform for sharing insights on improving the lives of persons with disabilities. The event was attended by over 200 representatives from government, civil society, diplomatic missions, and the donor community. Speakers at the event included Mr. Asfandyar Mandokhail, CBM Regional Programme Manager, Mr. Omar Alsaket, CBM Eastern Mediterranean Programme Representative, and Mr. Dominique Schlupkothen, CBM Director of CBID. The event concluded with a musical performance by the Jordan-based Caritas Children’s Choir.

Breaking Barriers: A Comprehensive Analysis of Disability Rights in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala

The 2022 subregional report on disability in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, supported by CBM, marks a crucial stride towards comprehending and tackling the obstacles encountered by people with disabilities in these areas. This insightful research, carried out by RIADIS, explores the complex barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from fully realizing their rights. Additionally, it scrutinizes the degree to which these countries are adhering to and achieving the standards set by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings, backed by CBM’s commitment to improving lives, are pivotal. They offer a comprehensive understanding of the current status of disability rights in these countries and form a solid foundation for suggesting policies and initiating interventions geared towards enhancing the living conditions of those with disabilities.

White Cane Safety Day: A Walk for Awareness in Islamabad

On October 14, 2022, CBM Pakistan in partnership with the Directorate General of Special Education and the Ministry of Human Rights held a walk in Islamabad to celebrate World White Cane Safety Day. The event was attended by teachers, students, NGOs, social workers, media, religious scholars, celebrities, human rights representatives, and civil society organizations. The walk aimed to raise awareness about the importance of white canes for people with visual impairments. Chief guest Abdul Sattar emphasized the need for laws ensuring accessibility for visually impaired individuals. The Director General of Special Education, Mr. Sheikh Azhar Sajjad, highlighted the right of visually impaired individuals to travel independently. Pakistani actress Ms. Laila Zuberi also attended the event and expressed her support for opportunities for visually impaired individuals. CBM - DiDRR Advisor Talal Waheed spoke on the importance of inclusion for persons with visual disabilities.

A Call for Disability-Inclusive Recovery in the Ukraine Crisis: The Riga Declaration

The European Disability Forum and SUSTENTO, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisation, came together in Riga, Latvia, to discuss the inclusion of disabled persons in the response and recovery process in the Ukraine Crisis. The conference, supported by the CBM-funded programme and partners from Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine, focused on addressing the immediate needs of disabled persons and promoting disability inclusion within the wider humanitarian community. The Riga Declaration for a disability-inclusive Ukraine was approved, calling on EU institutions, the Ukrainian government, the UN, and humanitarian bodies to initiate an inclusive humanitarian response. It emphasized the meaningful participation of DPOs, protection for disabled individuals during evacuation, accessibility as a key part of reconstruction, and deinstitutionalization of the care system for disabled persons in and outside Ukraine.

Bridging the Vision Gap: CBM India's Mobile Eye Clinics Revolutionize Rural Healthcare

CBM India's mobile eye clinics are transforming lives in rural areas by providing accessible eye care, a crucial need as 80% of vision-related conditions can lead to blindness. Operating in Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, and rural Delhi, these clinics offer vital services like refraction assessment, cataract screenings, and glaucoma treatment. In just a year, they've served over 118,045 individuals, including women and persons with disabilities. These clinics are not just bringing hope but also advocating for #HealthcareForAll.



Renowned Pakistani leading actress and celebrity Ms. Laila Zuberi Standing next to CBM Pakistan Country Director, and Director General Special Education.



Unveiling Progress: A snapshot from the Riadis report launch.



Together with our partner, the European Disability Forum, we joined SUSTENTO for the conference "How today's experience will help build Ukraine's future"



The mobile van stationed in a village with a group of people waiting for eye check-ups.





Prioritizing Inclusivity: A Look at A&A Humanitarian Efforts

In today's complex world, where multi-dimensional crises become ever more present, the urgency to make humanitarian action inclusive cannot be overstated, especially in disaster prone regions such as South Asia and Central America.

The essence of Inclusive Humanitarian Action (IHA) lies in pinpointing and eliminating obstacles that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing humanitarian services, while affirming their ability to meaningfully contribute to the process or inclusive emergency preparedness as well as inclusive rehabilitation efforts.

The year 2022 was marked by a unprecedented humanitarian crises in Asia and the Americas. The most notable of these crises occurred in Pakistan and India, largely due to an extreme monsoon season that swept across these regions. Climate change was identified as a key factor that likely increased the intensity of the monsoon rainfall, causing devastating flooding and landslides. The impact was severe on highly vulnerable communities who were left grappling with loss and destruction, but also with soils that are rendered useless for decades and the fall out of water borne disease, due to stagnant waters.

Sri Lanka continues to grapple with an ongoing and complex economic crisis, compounded by various factors. Disruptions in global supply chains caused by the war in Ukraine have led to soaring food prices and resource shortages within the country. Furthermore, the enduring impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has dealt a severe blow to Sri Lanka's tourism industry, resulting in a prolonged decline in foreign currency earnings. Alongside these challenges, internal issues such as the ban of fertilizer use in agriculture and corruption have further exacerbated the economic woes.

Recovery in Progress: The Continuous Struggle and Call for Action

In 2022, **70455 people were reached by CBM's Humanitarian Assistance.** The year served as a stark reminder of our interconnected world. Events in one corner of the globe can have far-reaching impacts, affecting people and places far removed from the original crisis. It underscored the urgent need for global cooperation in addressing climate change and conflict resolution. As we move forward, it is clear that collective action will be crucial to preventing such crises in the future.

Sindh 2022: From Devastation to Recovery with CBM

In the wake of Pakistan's devastating monsoon floods in 2022, Christian Blind Mission (CBM) emerged as a beacon of hope.

The floods, caused by extreme precipitation from two atmospheric rivers that passed over southern Pakistan in August, affected millions of people and led to the country's worst flooding in a decade.

Among the hardest hit were the individuals with disabilities and their families, particularly in the Matiari district of Sindh, where districts such as Dadu, Khairpur, and Mirpurkhas remained underwater for nearly two months. In response to this overwhelming crisis, CBM stepped up to provide significant support.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, CBM worked closely with the government to deliver immediate aid. In addition to reallocating approximately 91,000 EUR in existing projects through CBM's crisis modifier, the organization committed €250,000 for an immediate response, offering cash donations to around 3,000 households, many of which included families with disabilities.

Beyond financial aid, CBM, along with six local project partners in Pakistan, initiated a range of relief activities. These included providing medical aid, setting up temporary shelters, distributing assistive devices, and organizing food distribution. In addition, CBM set up medical and surgical eye camps in flood-affected areas of South Punjab, following a request from the Federal Minister for Human Rights.

The crisis persisted for months, with authorities warning that it could take up to half a year for the floods to recede in the hardest-hit areas⁷. In response to this ongoing crisis, CBM mobilized resources to implement a comprehensive flood response plan in collaboration with the government, the UN, and other NGOs.

Despite the significant challenges, CBM's dedication and resilience have been a testament to their

mission of supporting the most vulnerable in times of crisis. As they look back on 2022 and forward to future challenges, CBM carries the lessons learned from this disaster, ready to face whatever may come their way.



Inclusive Humanitarian Action

- 11,280** persons reached by humanitarian assistance including Medical and food distribution.
- 45,000** persons received inclusive eye careservices.
- 4,320** persons that received food items, hygiene kits, assistive devices and emergency relief



↑ Professor Sajjad Surhio, SIOVS (White Blouse) & CBM CD Syed Muhammed Ali Shah (Hat), observing an eye screen conducted by Dr Zahid Awan while meeting the families at the medical camp in SINDH.



↑ Sajjad sitting with CBM Pakistan Director Syed Ali, Monsoon floods ravaged large parts of Pakistan in September 2022, CBM visited Matiari district, Sindh to meet flood affected communities and be the part of emergency response in collaboration with Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Hyderabad

CBM's Impact: Sajjad's Triumph

Sajjad, a 23-year-old who conquered polio, faced severe challenges in the aftermath of Pakistan's catastrophic floods. However everything changed when he crossed paths with CBM.

Following the death of his parents, he took on the mantle of responsibility for his two younger brothers and sisters. They reside in the village of Akhund Liaquat in Matiari district of Sindh province, which was severely impacted by the recent floods in Pakistan.

The village, home to around 900 people, witnessed extensive damage due to the flood. Houses, roads, and public services were destroyed, critically affecting the socio-economic sources of the village. Sajjad, whose livelihood depended on a small bike repair shop in the village, was deeply affected.

As a polio survivor, he faced difficulties commuting to his shop, often relying on friends or relatives for transportation. The floods compounded his difficulties, as they not only damaged his shop but also his home. As the head of his family, Sajjad felt helpless during the flood situation. His daily earnings took a hit due to the closure of his shop, leaving him socio-economically weakened. The flood also had a profound impact on his mental health, as he was constantly worried about

meeting his family's daily expenses and basic needs. One day, a relative informed him about a team from the Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences (SIOVS) and CBM visiting a nearby village for the distribution of flood relief items. With the help of a friend, he reached the distribution point and shared his story with Syed Muhammed Ali Shah from CBM and the SIOVS team. He was provided with food, mosquito nets, a tent for temporary shelter, essential kitchen items, a water cooler, and other basic necessities. These provisions brought much-needed relief to Sajjad and his family.

After receiving the flood relief items, Sajjad expressed gratitude towards CBM and SIVOS. He acknowledged that the catastrophic flood had stripped his family of shelter, basic food items, clean water, and had left them mentally and physically drained. He was relieved that the aid provided would decrease the risk of diseases and enable him to rebuild his life once the flood waters recede. He eagerly looked forward to reopening his puncture shop and supporting his family again.



Humanitarian Action



2,250 Hygiene Kits

65+ Medical Camps

5,600 Dry Ration Kits

1,100 Psychosocial Support Initiatives



Rising Above the Flood: CBM's Emergency Aid in Assam

The monsoon season of 2022 brought unprecedented destruction to Assam, India. According to various sources, the floods that year were the worst in a decade, affecting over 88 lakh people and claiming 181 lives. The state of Assam had been grappling with severe floods and landslides since early April 2022 due to pre-monsoon showers followed by the south-west monsoon. The floods resulted in inundation of 238 villages across five revenue circles of Kamrup—Kaliabor, Raha, Samaguri, and Rupahi.

In the face of this disaster, persons with disabilities were among the most disproportionately affected. The panic was palpable when communication was made with partners at the location. “During the monsoon, Assam is prone to flooding, but this year’s flood is the worst in 70 years,” said Ravi Ranganathan, Head – Inclusive Health and Humanitarian Response at CBM India. “We are glad to be at the forefront of relief action, ensuring that all, including people with disabilities, receive timely assistance.”

To confront the aftermath, CBM India and the DIYA

Foundation launched an inclusive flood response in Assam, focusing on the hardest-hit districts. The flood response was initiated in Kamrup, Cachar, and Darrang districts, with CBM continuing to work relentlessly to support households with much-needed essentials.

The 2022 floods were not just a devastating natural disaster but also a poignant reminder of the importance of inclusive disaster response and preparedness. It underlined the need for humanitarian organizations to ensure that their relief efforts reach all sections of society, especially the ones most vulnerable.

The main focus of our aid provision

The primary focus of aid provision included more than 2,250 sanitation kits, over 5,600 dry ration kits, 65+ medical camps (including 3 eye camps), and over 1,100 psychosocial support initiatives. Despite the waters receding, the impact of the floods is far from over, with many still reeling from the consequences

Response and Recovery

In 2022, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine led to an escalating humanitarian crisis, leaving millions of people in urgent need both within Ukraine and in surrounding countries. CBM, stepped up to address this crisis ensuring persons with disabilities were not left behind in the response and recovery.

CBM made a substantial impact in Ukraine and its neighboring countries through its humanitarian response. CBM's mission was to improve the lives of those with disabilities, displaced individuals, and refugees caught in the crisis, Not just on providing aid, but also on advocating for disability inclusion in all aspects of the humanitarian response.

In partnership with the European Disability Forum (EDF), CBM was instrumental in ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were not overlooked in the response and recovery initiatives related to the Ukrainian conflict. CBM pledged €2.742 million towards these endeavors, focusing on meeting the needs of all persons with disabilities in Ukraine and neighboring countries.

Moreover, In collaboration with Momentum Wheels of Humanity, they dedicated €1.031.746 to establish an interim Assistive Technology (AT) Hub in Western Ukraine, providing assistive products, developing referral pathways for rehabilitation services, and coordinating with government stakeholders for future management. Additionally, CBM partnered with Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V., allotting €1.078.975 to support Internally Displaced People

(IDPs) in Western Ukraine. This included multi-purpose cash transfers, food support, distribution of non-food items, and covering rental costs for displaced families.

As we look to the future, CBM's commitment to providing inclusive humanitarian assistance in times of crisis remains unwavering. The organization continues to advocate for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, showing the world that no one should be left behind. Their work in Ukraine serves as a testament to their dedication and a beacon of hope for a more inclusive world.



↑ Kozak, wheelchair technician/ A shipment of humanitarian aid from his friends in Poland. Pavlo helped receive, sort and arrange transport throughout Ukraine.

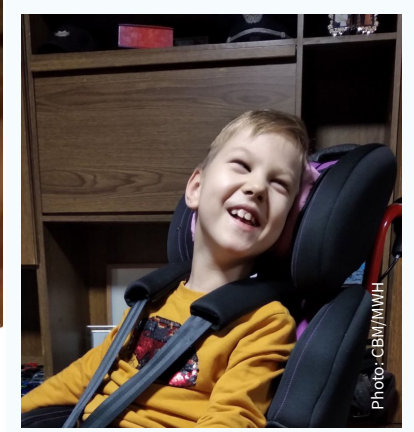
The Impact of the Ukraine War on Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis

Sri Lanka continues to face an ongoing and severe economic crisis, which has been exacerbated by a combination of factors. The disruptions in global supply chains caused by the war in Ukraine have significantly impacted Sri Lanka, leading to skyrocketing food prices and shortages of vital resources. Moreover, the enduring effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have dealt a devastating blow to the country's tourism industry, resulting in a prolonged decline in foreign currency earnings.

In addition to these challenges, internal issues such as a ban on chemical fertilizer use caused plummeting outputs for the agricultural sector, leading to

significantly reduced incomes for families, while having to face skyrocketing food prices. Corruption and mismanagement have further deepened Sri Lanka's economic woes. The country's economy has experienced unprecedented levels of inflation, and there has been a near-depletion of foreign exchange reserves. Power cuts and shortages of basic necessities like fuel have become common, and the inflation rate has soared to around 50% per year.

In response to this Crisis CBM has committed 42,000€ in Humanitarian Assistance to support Sri Lanka and to improve the experience of persons with disabilities.



Eight year Artem at his home in Brovary, Ukraine

The Power of Collaboration: A New Wheelchair for Artem

Eight-year-old Artem, who lives in Ukraine and has a dyskinetic form of cerebral palsy, recently received a new wheelchair through a collaboration between Momentum Wheels for Humanity and Christian Blind Mission (CBM).

Getting the right wheelchair for children like Artem, who struggle with uncontrolled movements due to dyskinetic CP, is essential but not easy. Artem's mother, Svitlana Makukha, admits that finding a suitable wheelchair has been a daunting task, particularly given the subpar quality of state-provided equipment for children with disabilities.

However, things took a positive turn when Artem received a new wheelchair, thanks to the joint efforts of Momentum Wheels for Humanity and the Christian Blind Mission (CBM).

Yuriy Metko, Senior Coordinator of the Assistive Technology (AT) Hub, explains that the chosen wheelchair for Artem comes with several additional postural support features that can be independently adjusted. This is vital for those unable to sit without assistance. Metko also points out the wheelchair's compatibility features and additional wheel for better off-road capabilities. The adjustable elements of the wheelchair allow Artem to sit in an anatomically correct position

comfortably and grow with him, reducing the need for regular replacements.

Last year, as Russia's shelling of Ukrainian cities continued, Artem had no choice but to switch to home-schooling due to his shelter's lack of wheelchair accessibility. However, Svitlana is hopeful as accessibility improvements are underway, which could see Artem return to in-person classes in the next academic year.

With the invaluable support from CBM and Momentum Wheels for Humanity, Artem's life has seen a significant improvement. As he navigates his condition, the new wheelchair offers him the promise of increased mobility and a better life quality, ensuring that his education and pursuit of happiness remain unhindered.



Embracing Vision: The Journey Towards Inclusive Eye Health in Asia and Americas

CBM Inclusive Eye Health services in Asia and the Americas are committed to promoting inclusivity, sustainability, and local ownership.

We focus on two main areas: strengthening national health systems for eye health and enhancing access to comprehensive and inclusive eye care services.

By forming strategic partnerships, we have been able to expand our reach and bring our services closer to the communities in need. Our achievements in preventing blindness include performing surgeries, conducting eye screenings, providing training to medical professionals and community volunteers, and leveraging innovative technologies to improve our impact. We also prioritize educational initiatives to raise awareness about eye health.

To ensure accessibility and affordability, we have established referral networks and worked towards making our services easily accessible to all individuals. Our goal is to make inclusive eye care a reality for everyone in Asia and the Americas.

Inclusive Eye Health

In the Asia and Americas
Region, CBM reached
4,535,368 people

Eye Operations (Overall)
343,898

Cataract Operations
250,287

Spectacles
356,507



Peek Pakistan: A Milestone of 1 Million People Screened

Since 2018, CBM and Peek Vision have been pioneering a revolution in eye health care in Pakistan. This dynamic partnership recently celebrated an extraordinary milestone - screening their millionth person, underscoring the transformative power of their joint venture.

CBM, in partnership with Peek Vision, is making significant strides in improving eye health care in Pakistan. Their joint initiative, Advanced Primary Eye Care (APEC), has been transforming the landscape of eye health since 2018, particularly in rural areas where access to such services has traditionally been limited.

Peek Visions' innovative smartphone technology, coupled with CBM's strategic interventions, has revolutionized primary eye care in Pakistan. This tech-enabled approach has allowed eye health professionals to extend their services to remote areas, breaking down barriers of distance and cost that have previously prevented many individuals from receiving necessary eye care.

Since its inception, APEC has made a profound impact on eye health care in Pakistan. A recent milestone saw the initiative conduct its millionth screening for vision and eye ailments. This achievement not only highlights the scale and effectiveness of the initiative, but also contributes to broader development goals such as poverty reduction and gender equity.

APEC's success has led to its integration into national and sub-national health plans as a model for advanced primary eye care. APEC Rural Health Centers are now foundational referral points within the health system, ensuring a more comprehensive approach to health care where eye health is a crucial component.

The collaboration between Peek and CBM has played a key role in advancing universal health coverage in Pakistan. By making eye health services accessible and affordable, they are enabling more individuals to receive the care they need without financial hardship. This aligns with the global goal of

universal health coverage and shows how strategic partnerships and innovative technology can make significant strides towards achieving health equity.

Looking ahead, the APEC initiative stands as a model for others to emulate, showcasing the transformative power of technology when leveraged for inclusive health care. With Peek technology and CBM's strategic interventions, the future of eye health care in Pakistan, and potentially beyond, looks promising



Peek Screenings

November 2018- July 2023

Community Screenings

1,198,914 Total Screenings

Male: 366,377

Female: 832,577

Household Screenings

612,530 Total Screenings

Male: 245,004

Female: 367,526

School Screenings

109,826 Total Screenings

Male: 61,480

Female: 48,346



Photo: CBM/LRBT

↑ Asavir while having an eye examination by the project trained optometrist in the low vision clinic, THQ Hospital, Sadiqabad

Asavir’s Path to Education

Nestled in the heart of Sadiqabad, Rahim Yar Khan, 12-year-old Asavir is redefining the boundaries set by retinitis pigmentosa thanks to the intervention of CBM’s Inclusive Eye Health project and a breakthrough low-vision device.

Asavir was born with retinitis pigmentosa, a rare genetic disorder that progressively steals away the gift of sight. Her condition was discovered when she was just an infant of six months, and despite numerous hospital visits, her parents found no cure. As Asavir grew older, her vision impairment began to interfere with her education. Reading and identifying objects became a Herculean task for her. Her parents, unfamiliar with the concept of low-vision devices and unable to bear the costs, were left grappling with fear for their daughter’s future.

But destiny had its own plans. The Inclusive Eye Health project—an initiative by Layton Rahmatullah Benevolent Trust, the Christoffel Blind Mission, and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ)—stepped in to bring a ray of hope. They established a low-vision clinic at the THQ hospital in Sadiqabad, aiming to identify children requiring low-vision aids and provide them with the necessary assistance.

In 2022, the project team, in collaboration with district health authorities, conducted school screenings. Asavir was one of the 25 children identified during

these screenings. After a thorough examination at the Low Vision Clinic, Asavir received a 4X telescope, a low-vision device that would revolutionize her learning experience. The transformation was immediate and profound. Equipped with her new device, Asavir saw a significant improvement in her academic performance and started actively engaging in class activities. Her teacher noticed the positive change and commented,

“Ever since Asavir got the low-vision device, she has become more involved in class activities. Whether it’s reading or doing artwork, the device helps her recognize things better.”

Asavir’s journey is a testament to the power of technology and the impact of dedicated organizations on the lives of those they touch. While her journey is far from over, with the support of the project and her new low-vision device, Asavir’s path is illuminated with endless possibilities.

Strengthening Ophthalmic Care in Sri Lanka

Diabetic retinopathy is a debilitating disease that stems from diabetes, attacking the retina of the eye. It can lead to permanent visual impairment, or even blindness, affecting about one-third of diabetics. However, a new project funded by CBM aims to combat this issue in five districts of Sri Lanka, bringing hope to many.

CBM's Revolutionary Project

CBM, in partnership with The College of Ophthalmologists, a government-supported institution, is implementing a preventive approach to tackle diabetic retinopathy, one of the leading causes of preventable blindness and visual impairment.

The project aims to improve access to eye care and establish early intervention services for children, such as eye examinations in schools. An estimated 466,000 children with and without disabilities and 250,000 people with diabetes stand to benefit from these screenings and support services. This initiative ensures they are not unnecessarily subjected to blindness due to refractive error or diabetic retinopathy. In addition to screenings, the project will train 300 health professionals and 2,690 members of other professions, like teachers. It also plans to provide 47,000 pairs of glasses. Designed to align with and support existing Sri Lankan government policies and regulations, the project is set to run until 2025.

Understanding Diabetic Retinopathy

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), diabetic retinopathy damages the blood vessels in the retina, making them leaky or blocked. Abnormal blood vessels can grow out of the retina, causing bleeding or scarring, which can eventually lead to permanent visual impairment or blindness. Thickening in the central part of the retina, known as diabetic macular oedema, is a common cause of visual impairment. It affects approximately one-third of diabetics and can lead to irreversible visual impairment if not detected and treated early.

Eye Health and Diabetes in Sri Lanka

Child eye health is a significant public health issue in Sri Lanka. Without proper eye health, children risk missing out on education, affecting their future income-earning potential.

Recent statistics from the International Diabetes

Federation reveal that the prevalence of diabetes among adults in Sri Lanka is 8.5%, equating to 1.16 million people. Research indicates that people with diabetes have a higher risk of eye problems. Despite an extensive network of public health facilities, disease prevention has lagged due to lack of public awareness and the high cost of screening and equipment. The Government of Sri Lanka has signed the Vision 2020 Declaration, identifying five priority eye diseases, including cataract, child blindness, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and low vision.

Project Outcomes

The project aims to strengthen and sustain ophthalmic care through efficient referral systems, stronger primary care, more trained staff, and increased awareness of preventive measures. Health Minister Keheliya Rambukwella, present at the project launch, stated:

"We are taking care of eye care at the grassroots level. We want to ensure that we leave no one behind. This intervention by CBM is timely as the country is facing major challenges in accessing health services due to the current economic crisis."

This groundbreaking project provides a beacon of hope for countless individuals in Sri Lanka. By prioritizing eye health, especially among children and those with diabetes, the nation takes a significant step towards preserving its citizens' vision and overall quality of life.



↑ Anjali reading outside her home

Meet Anjali and Lucky

Anjali, 18, and Lucky, 14, found conventional classroom learning to be less than thrilling. Their poor vision made everyday school activities a struggle, from deciphering what was written on the chalkboard to reading in class.

Their inability to engage fully in their education caused both frustration and embarrassment, significantly impacting their academic progress and mental wellbeing. The blur that clouded their vision also held them back from participating in social situations, whether at school or home. Things got so bad for Lucky that he had to leave school due to his worsening vision.

Their regressing condition led their parents to seek medical help. At the Neelbad Vision Center, both siblings were diagnosed with bilateral developmental cataracts. They were then referred to CBM partner Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital for further treatment. Lucky's left eye could only see up to 2 meters before the intervention.

Thanks to CBM, both siblings underwent surgery just a day after admission. The operation resulted in a significant improvement in their vision. Anjali's right eye vision improved by nearly twofold, while Lucky's left eye vision improved almost threefold.

The successful surgeries promise a significant enhancement in their overall quality of life. With their

restored vision, they can now pursue their education and partake in daily activities with renewed vigor. Additional surgeries are planned soon. Now, Lucky looks forward to returning to school, and Anjali can dream about her future without fear.. Their parents expressed deep gratitude for CBM's intervention:

"We are forever grateful for the opportunity to regain our children's vision. This has made a profound impact on our entire family."



↑ Lucky reading outside.



Empowering Inclusion: CBID

CBM's Community Based Inclusive Development projects continued to prioritize the inclusion of persons with disabilities within their communities.

CBID is a way of working that ensures people with disabilities are respected and included in their communities on an equal basis, in all areas of life. CBID projects often involve community mapping, capacity building, awareness raising, advocacy, networking, and sharing and learning. By developing understanding of the community context, building capacity, reducing stigma, collaborating with others, and generating evidence, CBID enables communities to actively participate in their own development. CBID programs are delivered by people within the community, with people with disabilities in the lead and aim to address various technical areas such as:

- i. Ear and hearing care (EHC)
- ii. Physical rehabilitation (PR)
- iii. Inclusive education (IE)
- iv. Disability inclusive disaster Risk reduction (DiDRR)
- v. Livelihoods

By implementing self-help groups and livelihood activities, these initiatives sought to improve the economic status of individuals with disabilities while promoting collaboration and community involvement for sustainable and holistic development. In their commitment to inclusivity, these efforts emphasized diversity, human rights, and the empowerment of individuals in Asia and the Americas.

Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID)



In the Asia and Americas Region, **268,438** persons enrolled in CBID programmes

65,576 persons enrolled in education settings in partner targeted schools

33,496 were boys

31,861 were girls

36,305 persons accessed livelihoods services

18,840 person received vocational training

5,873 persons obtained employment

11,592 persons obtained financial services

MISKITO DIVERS OF HONDURAS

CBM partners with GOAL LATAM and AHMBLI to provide livelihood opportunities for divers with disabilities and their families in the Miskito Coast of Honduras.

The indigenous Miskito community of Honduras, nestled along the Atlantic coast, has a long-standing tradition of diving. For decades, these skilled divers have braved the depths of the ocean to harvest lobsters, sea cucumbers, and shellfish. This industry, although lucrative, has exacted a heavy toll on the Miskito divers.

The High-Risk Profession of Diving

In Honduras, commercial diving is a multimillion-dollar industry that has brought both prosperity and peril to the Miskito people. The industry employs thousands and provides livelihood to an estimated 60,000 individuals from Rio Platanto to Gracias a Dios. But beneath the surface of this thriving industry lies a grim reality.

Due to faulty equipment and exploitative labor conditions, many divers suffer from decompression sickness. This condition occurs when nitrogen dissolved in the blood under high pressure forms bubbles as the pressure decreases. Although treatable with hyperbaric chambers, the availability of these chambers is limited, thereby reducing the chances of successful treatment.

The Human Cost of Diving

Teofilo Benece, a former diver turned physiotherapist at Puerto Lempira Hospital, highlights the plight of the divers:

"They have to go deeper, more to the bottom and then the price is paid".

The lack of produce close to the shore and fluctuating global lobster prices often compel divers to push themselves beyond recommended limits, thereby increasing their risk of decompression sickness.

The consequences of this high-risk profession extend beyond the divers themselves. The wives and children

of Miskito divers also bear the brunt of this difficult life. Divers with disabilities or deceased divers can no longer contribute to the family income, leading to lower education rates and poor nutrition among Miskito families.

A Ray of Hope: The Socioeconomic Reinsertion and Rehabilitation Project

In response to this crisis, CBM has partnered with GOAL LATAM and AHMBLI (Association of Honduran Miskito Divers with Disabilities) to provide livelihood opportunities for divers with disabilities.

As part of this initiative, AHMBLI, a well-known disability rights organization in Honduras, will lobby for the interests of divers with disabilities. The project aims to strengthen physical rehabilitation services and provide livelihood opportunities for divers with disabilities and their families. This initiative represents a significant step towards ensuring the welfare and dignity of the Miskito divers and their families.

The struggle of the Miskito divers of Honduras sheds light on the human cost of industries that exploit natural resources. It underscores the importance of implementing safety protocols and providing adequate healthcare facilities for workers in high-risk professions.



↑ A former deep diver Joseriz undergoes therapy via a decompression table by Teofilo, a physical therapist at the Puerto Lempira hospital.



↑ Randa,, and her handmade crafts at the Ceramics production unit – Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children

Transforming Adversity into Art: Randa's Story

After losing her hearing, Randa's parents were concerned about what the future had in store for their daughter. But with the support of a CBM programme, Randa, was provided with the tools to become a successful businesswoman.

Randa was just one year old when she had a high fever that caused her hearing loss. After hearing about the program, Randa's parents enrolled her in CBM partner, the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) Early Intervention program. A free program that offers deaf and hard of hearing children and their parents a group of educational, rehabilitative, and protective services. There, her parents received training through intensive activities to guide their communication development. "We started learning how to communicate with our child. We learned the sign language, and we learned how to accept our child happily without feeling shy," her mother added.

Due to the early intervention and collaborative efforts from a team of speech therapists, counsellors, and teachers, Randa and her parents were equipped with the knowledge they needed to make sure she could reach her full potential.

Building Livelihoods

As Randa got older, she joined the Vocational Training Unit part of the programme, where she

selected the skills she wanted to develop. Some of the skills the unit focused on enhancing are: creating a good colour vision and aesthetic instincts, developing attention to detail, and having solid familiarity with painting tools and materials. Randa products started to be exposed at Atfaluna Bazar. "Wow, I felt super happy the first time I saw my products exhibited in Atfaluna Gallery. I feel happier when people show admiration for them and buy them. This means money will return back to Atfaluna, and more support will be shown to people with hearing disabilities."

When talking about her dreams, Randa aspired to have her gallery with her products on it and would like to have her products tour around the world.

"I wanted to show the world what I have made and what people with disabilities are capable of doing."



Photo: CBM/ Shami Jayawardena

↑ The Thampanamveli tank rehabilitation Working Committee have a chat.

Building a Resilient and Sustainable Future

The district of Batticaloa in Sri Lanka is experiencing a climate crisis. Extreme weather events, including flash floods and severe droughts, are damaging crops and livelihoods, with the poor, persons with disabilities, and women-headed households being disproportionately affected.

Batticaloa district in Sri Lanka’s Eastern Province, once ravaged by decades of violent ethnic warfare, is now facing another form of assault - extreme weather conditions brought on by climate change. The populace suffers from both flash floods and severe droughts, resulting in significant crop damage and loss. The most vulnerable are the poor, disabled, and households led by women. Many of these individuals face exclusion from relief and rehabilitation programs, particularly when it comes to restoring their livelihoods.

In response, Christian Blind Mission (CBM) introduced Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) and Disability inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) practices in Batticaloa to safeguard ecosystems and secure livelihoods. The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) of Batticaloa implements this initiative, which benefits impoverished communities involved in agriculture, inland fishing, and livestock farming.

The project encourages Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) to collaborate with farmer societies and fishing groups to create and execute ecosystem development plans that enhance their resilience. A crucial activity is the renovation of small agricultural tanks that have fallen into disuse or been abandoned.



Photo: CBM/ Shami Jayawardena

↑ Poised to release some fish ‘fingerlings’ to the tank.



Photo: CBM/CPM/Sharmi Jayawardena

Kanthakutty Paskaran, is the President of the Eravur OPD. He too is a ex-combatant. He has begun a nursery to provide plant seedlings to farmers

Several OPD members are ex-combatants from Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, slowly healing from the physical and psychological wounds of war. Marimuththan Sivarasa, 46, a member of the Thampanamveli OPD and the President of the Farmer Society and the Tank Rehabilitation Committee, asserts,

"By renovating the tanks, people will have enough water in the dry season and experience less flooding during the rainy season. Additionally, the neighborhood wells will no longer dry up."

This is particularly important as people rely on a single rainy season – the north-east monsoon – which only lasts three months. Irrigation tanks must be well cared for and managed to store enough water for cultivation and other uses when the rainfall ceases.

The rehabilitation of four tanks in Batticaloa is fostering relationships between community organizations, the Department of Agrarian

Development and the National Aquaculture Development Authority, who provide technical advice. Community members are deciding how to manage and maintain the renovated tanks, including their fish production.

Parallel to the tank renovation, community members have been motivated to enhance vegetable cultivation in their home gardens, proving to be an effective solution to the country's current economic crisis.

Kanthakutty Paskaran, the OPD President of Eravurpattu, has put significant effort into his home garden and has established a plant nursery to supply seedlings to locals. "The nursery will bring me an income," says Paskaran. "I am using only compost fertilizer for my plants. I want to cultivate in the right way. And I want to continue to work for individuals with disabilities who are poor."

The CBM project provided home gardening packs, including seeds and seedlings, to households with individuals with disabilities and households led by women. "This will help address the nutrition needs of people, particularly the children. It's still the first year of the project, but we are making good progress," says Sadananthan Shamanthan, Project Coordinator, YMCA.

Partnerships between local communities, local government authorities, and government departments are crucial to CBM's project implementation. The empowerment of local stakeholders along with awareness and education programs are key elements in a project's sustainability mechanism.



Photo: CBM/CPM/Sharmi Jayawardena

Kanthakutty Paskaran, the President of the Eravur OPD working on his nursery to provide plant seedlings to farmers



Photo: CBM/ VitalVoices



The Vital Voices Global Partnership is an organisation that empowers women across the globe to become agents of change in their communities. This year, in collaboration with CBM, an event was organised in Haiti to bring together young girls and women to meet and learn from professional women to learn about inclusive entrepreneurship, diversity, and the importance of accessibility.

A Year in Progress: Snapshots into 2023

Breaking Barriers: The Vital Voices Global Partnership Event with CBM in Haiti

The Vital Voices Global Partnership, in collaboration with CBM, organized an event in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, aimed at empowering young girls and women through inclusive entrepreneurship, diversity, and accessibility. The attendees, primarily students from local schools and universities, were introduced to accomplished women leaders from various industries who shared their experiences and challenges, particularly focusing on the barriers faced by women with disabilities. The event provided a platform for in-depth discussions, advice, and insights, inspiring the participants to pursue their dreams despite any difficulties. This CBM-sponsored event underscored the importance of inclusivity and accessibility, furthering the mission of women's empowerment, especially for women with disabilities.

CBM Expands Reach with New Office in Guatemala City

CBM, celebrated the opening of its new office in Guatemala City. The event was attended by a variety of individuals, including community representatives, government officials, and donors. Speakers at the event included Juliana Turki, CBM Central America Representative, Ana Hernandez Aguliar, a disability and inclusion leader, and Velkis Valle, a disability rights advocate. They highlighted the importance of empowering people with disabilities and the impact CBM has had in the region. Asfandiyar Mandokhail, Asia and Americas Regional Program Manager, emphasized CBM's commitment to helping those with disabilities worldwide, referencing the organization's long history dating back to 1908. The opening of the new office was seen as an opportunity to better serve the community and increase

Promoting Inclusion in Guatemala's Electoral Process: A CBM-Funded Initiative

The Consortium of the Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) in Guatemala, supported by CBM's CBID Innovation Fund, is working to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Guatemala's electoral process. The OPD consortium has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Guatemala's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) to ensure the full participation of disabled individuals in the upcoming elections. This initiative includes various measures such as improving accessibility at polling stations, ensuring ballot privacy, and raising awareness among persons with disabilities about the electoral process. Training for electoral officials, staff, and volunteers is also part of the agreement. This initiative is expected to benefit around 70% of Guatemala's approximately 1.6 million individuals with disabilities who are eligible to vote.

Boosting Resilience: A Look at CBM's Project in Lebanon

A comprehensive project is currently being implemented in Lebanon, funded by the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation. This initiative, which is CBM's most significant intervention in the country, aims to enhance food security and socio-economic resilience, with a particular focus on individuals with and without disabilities. Amidst multiple crises that have left millions in need of aid, the project seeks to improve food security, income situations, and social cohesion across three locations while boosting disability awareness.

Inauguration of Tertiary Eye Care Service Centre at Fatima Hospital

Fatima Hospital Gorakhpur, in collaboration with Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti, recently inaugurated their Tertiary Eye Care Service Centre. With support from CBM since 2006, this initiative aims to combat the higher-than-average prevalence of blindness in eastern Uttar Pradesh. The hospital, which has grown over the past 40 years, is expected to increase its capacity for cataract surgeries beyond the current average of 3000 per year with the new centre. Thanks to CBM's support, the hospital now offers tertiary eye care services, including treatment for diabetic retinopathy and Retinopathy of Prematurity.

CBM's Eye Care Initiative in Balochistan Recognized by Pakistani Government

The Government of Pakistan has acknowledged the work of CBM Eye Health in Balochistan for their Integrated People Centered Eye Care Plan, a project aimed at improving the primary and secondary eye health care system in the country. The goal is to make these services more accessible, affordable, and of high quality. The initiative targets various groups including medical technicians, school-aged children, Lady Health Workers, Lady Health Visitors, and Medical Officers.



Juliana Turqui, Central America Representatives speaking at the official signing of the memorandum



Photo: CBM/Sheikh

Cutting of the ribbon for the new Central America headquarters in Guatemala City.

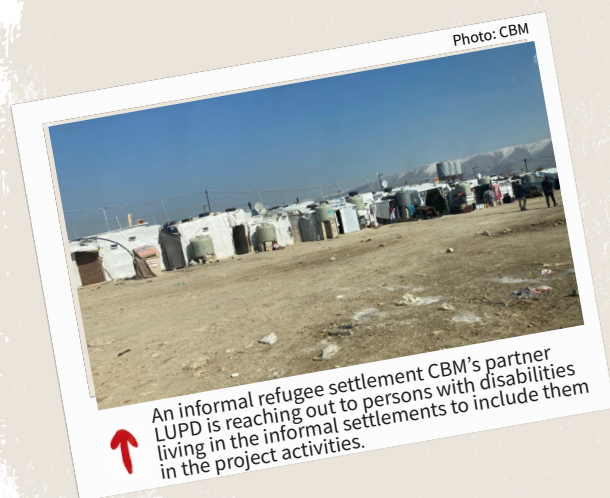


Photo: CBM

An informal refugee settlement CBM's partner LUPD is reaching out to persons with disabilities living in the informal settlements to include them in the project activities.



Photo: CBM

On March 14th, Fatima Hospital Gorakhpur with Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti inaugurated the newly constructed Tertiary Eye Care Service Centre in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.



Christian Blind Mission (CBM) is an international Christian development organisation, committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the low and middle income communities of the world. Currently, CBM supports 391 projects in 44 countries.



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