

Training on conducting Accessibility Audits for developing District Disability Access Audit Teams

Sri Lanka has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2016 and is obliged to ensure upholding of Human Rights and protection of persons with disabilities. In addition, the Constitution of Sri Lanka guarantees equal protection for all persons under the law. However, they are often not considered in need assessments and thus experiencing environmental, cultural and attitude barriers in accessing essential services.

In order to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including the provision of reasonable accommodation, the HRCSL has taken the lead to set up district-wise disability access audit teams to conduct disability access audits in collaboration with the JURE project under the UNDP and UNICEF, funded by the European Union. Disability access audits, involves a comprehensive inspection and assessment of various aspects related to accessibility. In establishing these disability access audit teams, the HRCSL aims to conduct district-wise disability access audit trainings to create awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

In these programmes, teams were formed to conduct disability access audits in 25 districts and in 9 provinces. Each group consists of people with different types of disability such as persons with physical, visual disabilities and hearing impairments as well as government officials representing District Secretariat Offices, Urban Development Authority, Provincial Engineering Departments, Department of Building, Department of Local Government etc. The experienced resource persons who are all disabled and offered a lived user experience as part of the process. This is important as it captures information that more traditional audits do not.

Our main goal is to identify existing disability access facilities in government institutions through district audits and take the first step in enhancing infrastructure needs, improving overall accessibility and supporting the protection of rights of disabled persons. With the knowledge and training provided by the Accessibility Audit Training Programmes, our audit teams have conducted audits in 18 districts covering 9 provinces so far.

Accordingly, disability access audits in Badulla and Monaragala districts of Uva Province were conducted on the 27.10.2023 at the National Hospital, Badulla and on the 03.11.2023 at the Auditorium of the Public Library, Monaragala. Similarly, disability access audits in Western Province also successfully conducted on 27.02.2024, 29.02.2024 and 05.03.2024 at the Base Hospital, Kiribathgoda, District Secretariat, Kalutara and Sethsiripaya (Stage II) Office Complex, Battaramulla respectively. Another two audits were conducted in Urban Council, Puttalam on 25.03.2024 and Divisional Secretariat, Kurunegala on 01.04.2024 covering Northwestern Province.

Furthermore, the audit teams comprised disabled participants and government officers of the Central Province who previously received accessibility audit training under the same initiative were also efficaciously completed audits on 29.04.2024, 29.04.2024 and 30.04.2024 in Municipal

Council, Kandy, Divisional Secretariate, Kotmale and General Hospital, Matale respectively and in order to complete the audits in Sabaragamuwa Province, two audits were conducted in Ratnapura and Kegalle Divisional Secretariats on the 29.04.2024 and 30.04.2024 respectively. In addition, our audit teams were audited Divisional Secretariat, Anuradhapura on 01.04.2024 and Divisional Secretariat Aralamwila on 05.04.2024 in the North Central Province.

Northern province audit teams also completed audits in Kilinochchi and Jaffna Districts, where on 03.04.2024 in Samurdhi Department, Kilinochchi and on 04.04.2024 in Bank of Ceylon, Jaffna. Further, we have completed an audit in the New District Secretariate building in Thiraimadu and People's bank – Arasayadi Branch in Batticaloa on 09.04.2024.

Overall, the information identified in the reports prepared by the group members on the district-wise audits will be used to make recommendations to the Government regarding the access facilities of persons with disabilities.

Provincial wise Audit Training Programmes



Western Province



Sothern Province



North Central Province



Central Province



Uva Province



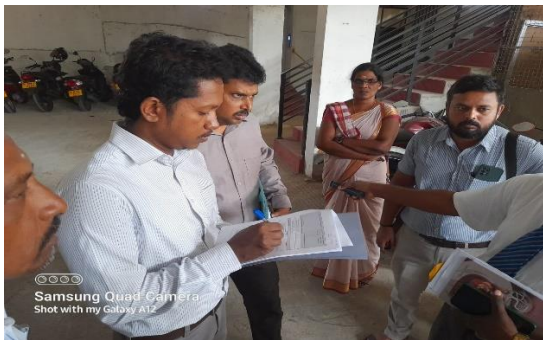
Sabaragamuwa Province



Northern Province



Northwestern Province



Eastern Province

Disability Audits



Gampaha District



Kalutara District



Colombo District



Rathnapura District



Kegalle District



Kandy district



Matale District



Kilinochchi district



Batticaloa District



Jaffna District



Anuradhapura District



Polonnaruwa District



Audit in Kalmunai



Kurunegala District



Badulla District



Nuwara- Eliya District