

Free treatment offered for 1000 disabled Africans in India

#OperationRehab aims to revolutionise the delivery of healthcare and education to disabled people in Africa by offering free or heavily subsidised medical treatment, rehabilitation, education and skills development to thousands of disabled Africans over the next few years, starting in South Africa.



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The initiative aims to empower the beneficiaries, reduce the financial burden on their families and contribute to Africa's economic growth.

#OperationRehab is modelled on the work of the [Disable Welfare Trust of India](#) located in Gujarat State. The Disable Welfare Trust is an initiative offering free medical treatment, rehabilitation and vocational training to hundreds of underprivileged children in India. To date, the trust has treated and educated more than 4,000 children. The trust's founder, Shree Kanubhai Tailor, is a noted philanthropist and disabled people's champion.

Replicating the trust's model

Shree Kanubhai Tailor will lend his expertise to the #OperationRehab project and oversee the replication of the trust's model in South Africa in partnership with local government officials, disabled people's groups and corporate funders. The initiative is led by South African marketing and advertising agency [Media Revolution](#) as a part of its corporate social responsibility programme. Media Revolution has teamed up with Shree Kanubhai Tailor to allow thousands of beneficiaries to fly to India for treatment. The pair will also work to create treatment and rehabilitation centres in South Africa.

Dharmesh Nagar, strategy director at Media Revolution, notes that the project aims to restore dignity and empower those who are disabled. “At #OperationRehab, we help the poorest of the poor and help restore their dignity. Through the donation of medical treatment and assistive devices, we empower disabled people to take their place in the workforce and relieve them and their families of a significant financial burden. With the support of donors, beneficiaries are given hope and a new future.

“In India, the Disable Welfare Trust is able to treat thousands of disabled people at no charge, thanks to the generous support of its sponsors. We hope to see South African and African companies stepping forward with a similar level of support.”

Ultimate Christmas gift

The first beneficiary of #OperationRehab, 55-year-old Sharad Narsai of Lenasia, returned to South Africa just before Christmas with the ultimate Christmas gift: a new, life-changing prosthetic leg. Speaking of his experience, Narsai said, “I had never before experienced care on the level received at the Disable Welfare Trust centre.”

“It is mind-blowing and completely exceeded my expectations,” he added. “I have never been treated with such care and respect at a healthcare facility. And it is truly heart-warming to see how well the centre cares for the disabled children who are resident there. Many of them were abandoned by their parents because of their disabilities, but at the Disable Welfare Trust they are happy, loved and well-educated. The full-time art teacher at the centre’s school has no arms so he paints using his mouth. One young woman who spent her entire childhood there is now a qualified doctor and still goes back to work with the children. These success stories would not have been possible without the Disable Welfare Trust’s good work. South Africa desperately needs a facility like this,” declared Narsai.

Urgent need for empowerment

According to a [Statistics South Africa report](#) based on the last census, over 2.8-million people suffer from some form of disability in South Africa alone and around 600,000 are listed as severely disabled. This highlights the urgent need to empower disabled people and bring them into the mainstream of education and work so that they can continue to contribute to society, in line with the goals of [President Jacob Zuma’s Presidential Working Group on Disability](#).

The #OperationRehab initiative calls all like-minded organisations, companies and individuals to join forces and advance the goal of creating a highly efficient treatment, rehabilitation and vocational centre for disabled people in Africa.

All new partners and sponsors will benefit from the expertise of South African marketing and advertising agency Media Revolution to publicise and promote their role in restoring livelihoods and improving the lives of disabled people in Africa.

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