



APRIL 2016



**26,500+**  
lives impacted



**3,118**  
leadership  
students &  
teachers trained



**143**  
scholarships  
awarded



**2,228**  
students  
attended  
after-school  
programs



**59**  
leadership  
& teacher  
trainings  
conducted



**163**  
international  
volunteers  
traveled  
abroad



**\$1.2M+**  
invested in  
education  
programs



**1,844**  
students trained  
thru e-learning  
programs

## Empowering Deaf Women in Ethiopia through Livelihoods Development, Training, & Mentoring



This spring, Visions launched a new initiative to supplement our ongoing work to empower the Deaf community in Ethiopia. Thanks to a generous

April '16 Edition

E-Newsletter #30

### In This Issue

[Empowering Deaf Women in Ethiopia](#)

[Making College a Reality for India Leadership Graduates](#)

[The Impact of the Visions Sri Lanka Leadership Program](#)

[Past Events - NYC & Davis](#)

[Visions Annual Awards 2015 - A Winners](#)

[Volunteer in Ethiopia this August](#)

[Our Current Needs](#)

[New Short Film: India Leadership Program](#)

**Get  
Connected!**

grant from [Dining for Women](#), this 1-year project aims to empower Deaf women and girls in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar who suffer great hardship and adversity on account of grinding poverty, an isolating disability, and the overall marginalization of women in society.

Building off ongoing efforts, and in close partnership with the Ethiopian Women with Disabilities National Association (EWDNA) and the [Kal Center for Special Needs](#), this initiative aims to provide meaningful educational support, mentorship, personal leadership & advocacy training, and livelihoods development assistance with the aim of enabling hundreds of highly under-served disabled women and girls to lead educated, self-sufficient, socially active, and healthy lives. Specifically, we will be:

- Providing **vocational & life skills training, mentorship/ counseling, and small business development support** for 40 Deaf women (20 in the capital of Addis Ababa and 20 in Bahir Dar) who are unemployed, under-employed, or identified as "at-risk."
- Conducting two 5-day seminars (one each in Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar) for at least 100 Deaf women and allies on the **leadership, personal empowerment, advocacy, and community organizing**.
- Developing **public advocacy and awareness-raising** materials (including printed materials; short educational films; and digital materials to be shared online) and conducting regular community education events.

The 2 training seminars are being conducted this month and next, and all 40 livelihoods beneficiaries have been identified already and will begin the program next month.

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<http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/26-3386678/visions-global-empowerment.aspx>

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## Making College a Reality for our India Leadership Program Graduates



## Annual Visions Awards Winner 2015 Announced

Earlier this month, we announced the winners of our 2015 Annual Visions Award. These awards are meant to recognize those volunteers who have made the greatest contributions to our work over the previous year. This year's winners are listed below. We are so grateful to everyone who helped make our work possible this year and enabled us to reach more youth than ever before.

**"Outstanding"**

Bridging the gap between school and either higher education or the working world is always a major challenge and concern for youth worldwide. With this in mind, Visions has provided more than 130 scholarships for high-achieving, motivated individuals to pursue their dreams.

As the next evolution of this idea, Visions recently introduced a **"Youth Guidance & Support Program"** in India this spring, beginning with the first batch of graduates of our Visions India Leadership Program who have been attending Visions trainings and programs for the past 4+ years.

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that 12 of these students will be heading to college this June! All of these youth (7 girls & 5 boys) are from dalit families, grew up in boarding homes, and do not have the financial means to afford higher education. However, thanks to an amazing team effort, these students are tapping scholarships, receiving ongoing mentorship, and have the full support of their parents/families.

Visions is providing scholarships (*about \$500 total per year per student*) to help them cover entrance exams, living expenses, books, etc. to help them realize their dreams. **If you are interested in sponsoring one of these 12 amazing young people (who are pursuing everything from Aeronautical Engineering to English to Medicine), please email us at [visionseducation@gmail.com](mailto:visionseducation@gmail.com) or simply donate [HERE](#) and we'll pair you up!**

## Dedication to Service Award

**Dr. Catherine Clark**  
(Rochester, NY)

**Mr. Gurdeep Sareen**  
(New York, NY)

**Mr. Joe Hill**  
(Pittsburgh, PA)

**Ms. Kaytie Nielsen**  
(Pittsburgh, PA)

**Ms. Leka Sivakumaran**  
(Edmonton, AB)

**Mr. Robert Friedman**  
(Irvine, CA)

## "Local Partner of the Year" Award

**Kal Center for Special Needs - Mrs. Aynalem Ayalew**  
(Bahir Dar, Ethiopia)

## Visions Sri Lanka Leadership Program Increases Student Achievement Scores

Visions student Priyatharshini obtained the highest score on the 2015 Ordinary Level (OL) exam in her school in Kithul in Eastern Sri Lanka. She credits Visions for motivating her to study hard and for enabling her to attend tuition classes that would otherwise be inaccessible and unaffordable for her. In total, 19 out of the 24 Visions Sri Lanka Leadership Program students who sat for the Ordinary Level (OL) exam in 2015 passed.

As the impact data below demonstrates, the 37 Grade 10 Visions Leadership program participants made impressive gains in student achievement as compared to those made the previous year:

### Total Subject Pass/Fail (end of Year 1):

**Tamil: 86.5% of students passed** (up from 62.2% before)

**+24.3% increase**

**Math: 81.1% of students passed** (up from 27.0% before)

**+54.1% increase**

**English: 64.5% of students passed** (up from 35.1% before)

**+29.4% increase**

**Science: 89.2% of students passed** (up from 43.2% before)

**+46.0% increase**

**History: 89.2% of students passed** (up from 67.6% before)

**+21.6% increase**

## Volunteer with Visions in Ethiopia This August!



2016 Annual Summer Service Trip Opportunity

	<b>ETHIOPIA</b> August 15 - 26, 2016 (11 nights/12 days) \$1800/person * Addis Ababa Bahir Dar, & Lalibela
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Costs get reduced by the penny as you help drive our local efforts in rebuilding, educating, and empowering the local community in Ethiopia. Help fund training sessions for Dalit youth, visit ongoing projects, and enjoy a wide range of cultural activities and adventures.

For more info & to apply to join us abroad this summer:  
[www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org/international-opportunity](http://www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org/international-opportunity)

\*Trip program fees are exclusive of roundtrip airfare, visa, and any personal shipping.

It's not too late..we are still accepting applications for our upcoming Visions summer service trip to Ethiopia (including Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, & Lalibela)

### **Subject Test Scores Improvement (over previous year):**

*Tamil: 83.8%* of students improved  
*Math: 83.8%* of students improved  
*English: 62.2%* of students improved  
*Science: 86.5%* of students improved  
*History: 70.3%* of students improved

### **Group Average Test Scores (end of Year 1):**

	Tamil	Math	English	Science	History
Grade 9 Average	44.9	28.0	33.8	39.7	50.0
Grade 10 Average	57.0	41.1	40.3	50.9	59.4
% Difference	12.1	13.1	6.5	11.2	9.4

*\*Average group test scores in Math, English, and Science were in the "fail" category prior to the program. Now, group average test scores in all 5 subjects are in the "pass" category!*

For many students, their participation in the program makes the difference between whether they pass or fail in school. In the village of Mathurankernikulam (an area deeply affected by war and economic hardship), four youth (2 girls, 2 boys) became the first students in their village to ever pass their O/L exams and move on to their A/L studies. Now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year under our current local host partner organization (CACM), the Visions Sri Lanka Leadership Program continues to make a significant impact on the lives of participating students.

## **Past Events**

### **January 30th - New York City, NY**

Started in 2008, the Annual Aquarius Charity Affair is a red-carpet formal event that celebrates the Aquarius birthdays of multiple individuals involved while fundraising and raising awareness for various charities. This year Visions was one of the featured charities at the event, which more than 1,000 people attended. Special thanks to DACK Consulting Solutions Inc. (<http://www.dackconsulting.com>) for sponsoring this event!

### **March 26th - Davis, CA**

Congrats to our fabulous Visions at UC Davis Chapter and Davis Dheem Tana team for putting on another amazing Annual Intercollegiate Indian Classical Dance Competition this year - a perfect example of service-oriented youth leadership in action!

Dar, & Lalibela) this August 1 - 26th, 2016! The application deadline is Friday, May 13th 2016. We hope you can join us! Learn more by clicking [HERE](#)

## **OUR CURRENT NEEDS**

**12 India Youth Scholarships: \$500/each**

**Tablets for India Leadership Program: \$100/each**

**Sri Lanka Leadership Academy: \$30/youth per month**

*\*To make a contribution of any amount, please visit [our website](#).*

**Short Film: Visions India Leadership Program**



\*Photo credit: **Rama Sivamani**



**Visions & ALC School Project  
India Youth Leadership Program**

Utilizing Visions' own unique curriculum, the Visions Leadership Program provides training for youth & adults in leadership & life skills, community service, rights education, and personal & professional development. More than 3,000 individuals have been directly trained through this program across Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, and Ethiopia since 2003.

**Watch the film  
HERE**

**PLEASE MAKE A CONTRIBUTION:**  
*Invest in deserving and marginalized youth.  
Invest in the leaders of tomorrow. Invest in Visions.*

**DONATE HERE**

We can only do this important work with your support. Donations are accepted online through our website OR can be mailed to us. Please make checks out to "Visions". All donations are tax-deductible [tax ID#26-3386678].

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**[www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org](http://www.VisionsGlobalEmpowerment.org)**

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