

Poverty isn't just a mind-set, it's an attitude that crushes your spirit. can stop that feeling of utter helplessness? At Kamla Foundation, developing solutions enabling us to create lasting change and in so helping to find paths out of poverty, providing hope and dignity

What we are doing for them



What we are doing

We are working across many regions in India supporting communities to build better lives for themselves, grow resilience and protect livelihoods. Because we want lasting change, we address the inequalities that keep people locked in poverty and injustice. We tackle both the symptoms and the systems - campaigning for genuine, durable change.

Our vision

We believe all lives are equal. No-one should be discriminated against or live in poverty. We want a just and sustainable society in which everyone can safely speak truth to power, claim their human rights and build a better future for themselves.

We offer direct support to people and communities living in poverty, adding value to the work of our partners and of all those who challenge discrimination and exploitation.

Addressing inequity

Inequity refers to the uneven distribution of power, resources and opportunities among people and groups based on societal division such as class, caste, race, ethnicity, religion and geography. **It means abundance for the few and injustice for the many.** Inequity keeps poor people poor and powerless and denies millions their rights. An inequity lens acknowledges the inter-connection between the multiple dimensions of inequity and consistently asks who does and does not have access to power, resources and opportunities, and why.

How we work

We have learned that how we work is as important as what we work on. This understanding shapes our contribution towards social justice, the movement that we are a part of.

We are guided by our vision, mission and values, and the transformational change that we seek. We know that to meet the challenge of a complex and unpredictable future, we need to develop new skills, innovate and improve our ability to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances.

The inequalities that drive poverty and injustice are complex and multi-dimensional. They are created and sustained by unjust, deeply entrenched and interacting systems such as patriarchy, sexism and caste that can affect anyone, anywhere. **We take a multi-dimensional approach** which makes us and our impact distinctive.

- ✓ We **amplify the voices** and actions of people that experience poverty and injustice and work with those who fight for their causes.
- ✓ We **mobilise resources** for sustainable development programming that can lift people out of poverty.
- ✓ We think and act **locally and globally**. We build coalitions within and between the regions we operate.
- ✓ We work with communities **before, during and after crises** to build their resilience, save lives and together address the root causes of poverty.
- ✓ We want **lasting solutions**, tackling the inequalities that keep people poor and vulnerable, campaigning for genuine, lasting change.

Collaboration

Change at scale is possible when we act in solidarity with and amplify, the voices of people experiencing poverty, injustice, exclusion and crisis.

We seek new ways to connect with different communities in all their diversity and aspire to become a partner of choice for them. We know that it is our supporters, volunteers, partners and donors who make it possible for us to make a difference.

Our peers and partners value our ability to innovate in supporting our work with the homeless, water, sanitation, women empowerment, community development and life changing cleft operations. We see crises through the eyes of the community and always focus on wider solutions. Our ability to respond at scale gives legitimacy to our humanitarian advocacy and influencing. We take an evidence-based approach which gives us credibility when pushing for systemic change. Our influencing work has become more effective and sustained. Leadership training has supported many partners and communities in their effort to build a collective voice. They are starting to change how those in power think and act. We have developed alliances with activists, movements and civil society groups. Together, we are shifting the narratives and changing the terms of the debate.

Change-makers

At Kamla Foundation, we believe in the power of people to transform their own lives. We fight poverty by training change-makers. When these change-makers pass their learning onto colleagues, friends and the next generation, we create long-lasting change in some of the poorest regions of India. Training more change-makers is the answer to poverty, all we have to do is unlock their potential.

Just imagine if you've never been to school.....

How would you feel? You are not able to write your name, read simple words, or count money. You have low self-esteem. You are open to being exploited, cheated and abused. You don't understand official documents but have to endorse them anyway. You use a thumb print and feel humiliated.

Moreover, if you're a woman, your opinion is not important. The word of your 8 year old son may carry more weight. You fear the police and public officials, and have little or no understanding of your basic rights, including your rights over your children, your property, your inheritance and your body.

This is an example of a typical woman we support in rural India. We find that each person has different starting points, based on the circumstances of their life stories. In working with the most vulnerable, we have learned that we need to 'listen' to them to understand how to customise our program of support to suit their individual needs. In doing so we are able to do such things as mediate, provide employment support, campaigning skills and empowerment training. These changes help them realise their potential to progress to a better quality of life.

Extending our reach

We are engaging with and lobbying decision makers and challenging practices that can put an end to inequality. We will also reach out to champions in other sectors, for their support. Where appropriate, we want to bring our power and influence to bear on the fight for a just and sustainable world. In partnering with others, we will find flexible and equal ways of engaging, adapting to their ways of working, and making ourselves accountable to them. Our watchwords will be agility, respect and long-term commitment.

Creating lasting impact

Through our work we find that poverty is not transferred as a 'package', but as a complex set of positive and negative factors that affect an individual's chances of experiencing poverty, either in the present or at a future point in their life journey.

The voices of the poor are often forgotten and drowned out by a plethora of statistical analysis developed to understand and better the lives of the most in need. We find that an individual's unique life experiences and personality is just as crucial to determining whether they will escape from poverty as the nature of the aid they receive.

Poverty is mired in a sense of futility that spreads among those people barely keeping afloat. This bleak surrender is part of what keeps them bonded to poverty, numbing them and us (those in far better circumstances) until it seems there will never be an end to it. Through our work we are providing significant opportunities in measurable, transformational change that can eventually eliminate grinding poverty. We are doing this by building bridges, moving beyond our role of facilitating, enabling and grant giving, helping the most marginalised realign their paths out of poverty.

Bhupendra Mistry

KAMLA FOUNDATION

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"Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue, it is hard for an empty bag to stand upright"

Benjamin Franklin