



# Impact Assessment Report (FY: 2021-22)



Mphasis F1 Foundation | Uber Access and Assist

# CONTENTS

---

1 Executive Summary.....	6
2 Introduction .....	8
3 Objectives and Scope of Study.....	9
4 Assessment Framework .....	10
5 Methodology Adopted.....	13
6 Findings & Analysis.....	15
6.1 Program Design: Relevance .....	15
6.2 Program Delivery – Effectiveness and Efficiency .....	17
6.3 Impact and Sustainability.....	20
7 SWOT Analysis .....	21
8 Conclusion .....	22
9 Recommendation.....	23

# List of Acronyms

---

CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
RPwD	Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
DEOC	Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
LFA	Logframe Analysis
TOC	Theory of Change
KII	Key Informant Interviews
PwD	Person with Disability

## List of Table

---

Table 1	Pre- and Post-COVID performance analysis for Uber Assist and Access
Table 2	Characteristics of the product services
Table 3	Mapping program relevance in meeting national and global needs
Table 4	Training details
Table 5	Effectiveness of the training as per the drivers
Table 6	Business Model for Uber Access and Assist
Table 7	Uber Access user pattern since launch

# List of Figures

---

Figure 1	Retrofitted feature in Uber Access
Figure 2	Change in ride type of Uber Access – COVID 19
Figure 3	Uber Access pre-Covid and post-Covid trip pattern
Figure 4	Uber Assist pre-Covid and post-Covid trip pattern

# 1 Executive Summary

---

India has long faced significant challenges in providing accessible and inclusive public and private transport infrastructure, and Bengaluru city is no exception. Despite being known as the "Silicon Valley of India," the city's public transport system remains inadequate, with many residents relying on private vehicles or informal modes of transport such as auto-rickshaws. Moreover, the transport system is often inaccessible to people with disabilities, with few provisions for ramps, lifts, or other accessibility features. Without accessible transportation options, these individuals may struggle to access essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment. This can lead to social isolation, limited economic opportunities, and reduced quality of life.

Mphasis Ltd as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) supports interventions that create opportunities for disadvantaged communities with emphasis on persons with disabilities. Through their corporate foundation 'Mphasis F1 Foundation', it focuses on interventions for people with disability (PwD) multilaterally in the areas of providing inclusive and accessible infrastructure in alignment with various national and global policies.

To make transportation inclusive and accessible, Uber India and Mphasis F1 Foundation partnered together in 2018 to improve the transportation infrastructure in Bengaluru city for persons with disabilities especially persons with physical impairment and senior citizens. This program was carried out by Mphasis F1 Foundation under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of the Companies Act, 2013. The program aligns globally with SDG 10,11 and nationally with activity (ii) of schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013 and in alignment of the activities stated in Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPD), 2016.

An impact study was conducted to find out the effect of the intervention in providing accessible and inclusive private transportation for people with disabilities (PwD) in Bengaluru city. The sample collected for the assessment was 40 which was administered through telephonic surveys and key informant interviews with cab drivers, trainers, and Uber India team.

The objective of the Uber Access and Uber Assist program was to improve the mobility of PwDs and senior citizens in Bengaluru city with accessible and inclusive transportation. Uber India and Mphasis F1 Foundation jointly launched the program in January 2018 with Uber Assist. Uber Assist was introduced to cater to the transportation needs of people with disabilities and senior citizens, in an effort to provide inclusive services. As part of this initiative, Uber conducted training sessions in collaboration with the Disability Equality and Opportunities Council (DEOC) for 500 Uber Assist drivers. The training was designed to equip drivers with the necessary skills to become effective customer service providers, with a focus on enhancing their behavioral and attitudinal skills in dealing with customers who require special assistance. This training aimed to ensure that Uber Assist drivers are capable of handling sensitive situations with compassion and professionalism, creating a comfortable and welcoming experience for all passengers.

In October of 2018, Uber launched Uber Access, a service designed specifically to cater to the transportation needs of wheelchair-bound people with disabilities and senior citizens. The vehicles used for this service were specially designed with retrofitting to ensure a safe and comfortable experience for the riders. Of the 49 vehicles launched, 39 were accompanied by in-house training sessions provided by the Uber India team to drivers. To encourage drivers to provide this service with diligence and care, Uber removed commissions and targets for Uber Access trips. A monthly incentive was introduced based on the driver's engagement on the platform, which ranged from INR 25,000 to INR 30,000 per

month prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Uber and Mphasis shared the maintenance costs of the vehicles, ensuring that they remained in good condition for the safety and comfort of the riders.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the performance of both the product services before and during COVID-19 which had affected the program’s performance in meeting the needs of the primary stakeholders i.e., customers and in retention of the drivers.

TABLE 1: Pre- and Post-COVID performance analysis for Uber Assist and Access								
Performance	Uber Access (launched in Oct’2018)				Uber Assist (launched in Jan’18)			
	Pre-Covid April’20)	(till	During-Covid June’21)	(till	Pre-Covid April’20)	(till	During-Covid June’21)	(till
Total cabs	39		< 39		500		< 500	
Total trips (approx.)	19,000		1956		3288703		3,14,705	
% Decrease in trips (pre-Covid to during Covid)	↓ 89.7%				↓ 90.4%			

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Uber Access experienced a surge in trips, providing a valuable daily commuting option for people with disabilities. On average, drivers completed 17 trips per week, with the number of trips increasing to 40 per week if they opted for airport pickups and drop-offs. This increase in demand resulted in drivers earning a higher income, with their monthly earnings ranging from INR 45,000 to INR 90,000. This not only demonstrated the financial benefits of providing the Uber Access service but also highlighted its positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities who were able to enjoy greater mobility and independence in their daily routines.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the positive momentum of Uber's efforts to provide accessible and inclusive private transport infrastructure. The pandemic caused a significant reduction in demand for rides, and many drivers also left the city, resulting in a major setback for the Uber Assist service. In fact, 80-90% of trained drivers did not resume their services through the platform, forcing Uber India to discontinue the Uber Assist program altogether in 2021. Unfortunately, Uber did not start the program afresh with new drivers. Additionally, due to the lack of a strong marketing strategy by Uber in the post-COVID era, the demand for Uber Access also dropped significantly. The pandemic had a profound impact on Uber's efforts to provide inclusive transport services and resulted in a major setback for their program.

The Uber Access program is currently at a near standstill, with only around 10 vans still operating on the platform. With Uber's apparent exit from the program, there is a pressing need to explore ways to revive it, particularly if it means having a better financial infrastructure to support this project. The demand for accessible and inclusive transportation remains a critical need, and it is essential to find ways to continue providing this service. One possible solution could involve Mphasis F1 Foundation and Uber India collaborating with multiple corporations to address this complex opportunity. The service provided by Uber Access was safe, affordable, and more inclusive than that of other service providers in this domain, and it is crucial to explore all options to ensure that it remains available to those who need it.

## 2 Introduction

---

Accessible and inclusive transportation in India is a significant challenge, as many individuals with disabilities face significant barriers when trying to use public transportation systems. However, there are efforts underway to improve accessibility and inclusivity. One of the biggest challenges faced by individuals with disabilities is the lack of infrastructure designed to accommodate them. Many public transportation systems in India, including buses and trains, are not equipped with the necessary ramps, lifts, or other accommodations needed to ensure that individuals with disabilities can use them safely and comfortably.

To address this issue the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2016 launched the Accessible India Campaign, which aims to make all public buildings and transportation systems accessible by 2022.

As part of this campaign, many Indian cities have begun to introduce accessible features in their public transportation systems. For example, some buses are now equipped with wheelchair ramps and designated spaces for wheelchair users. Additionally, some train stations have been made more accessible by adding ramps and lifts to platforms and entrances.

Another significant issue is the lack of awareness and understanding among the general public regarding disability and accessibility. Many individuals with disabilities report facing discrimination and stigma when trying to use public transportation, which can make it even more difficult to navigate the system.

Overall, while there have been efforts to make public transportation more accessible and inclusive in India, there is still much work to be done. To ensure that all individuals with disabilities have equal access to transportation, it is important to continue to raise awareness and invest in infrastructure improvements that accommodate their needs.

In order to supplement the government initiatives in improving public transportation, Mphasis F1 Foundation and Uber India came into a partnership in 2018 to improve the private public infrastructure to offer greater convenience and flexibility than traditional public transportation options. This was launched exclusively in Bengaluru with 39 Uber Access vans and 500 Uber Assist cabs where 'Uber Access' is an accessible van for wheelchair bound riders and 'Uber Assist' which connected riders with drivers who have received specialized training to assist individuals with disabilities and senior citizens.



## 3 Objectives and Scope of Study

---

The study aims to understand the implementation pathways of the training programs conducted to create employment opportunities for the marginalized community youths and the program helps them to learn while earn. The impact assessment study tries to map the program implementation against the proposed plan and draws focus on how the interventions have helped the communities overcome the programmatic challenges to meet the intended outcomes.

### 3.1 Objectives of The Study

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

- **Assess the relevance and efficiency of the intervention** in ensuring that the beneficiaries challenges are addressed by the project and to review the implementation pathways - assessing process and activities.
- **Understand the effectiveness of the intervention:** How each activity has led to creating the desired outcomes.
- **Understand the major success factors and challenges** in the intervention.
- **Find the areas of improvement across** all the factors from program design to implementation.
- **Provide an assessment framework** to be able to capture impacts in a manner that is effective recommendation.

### 3.2 Limitations of The Study

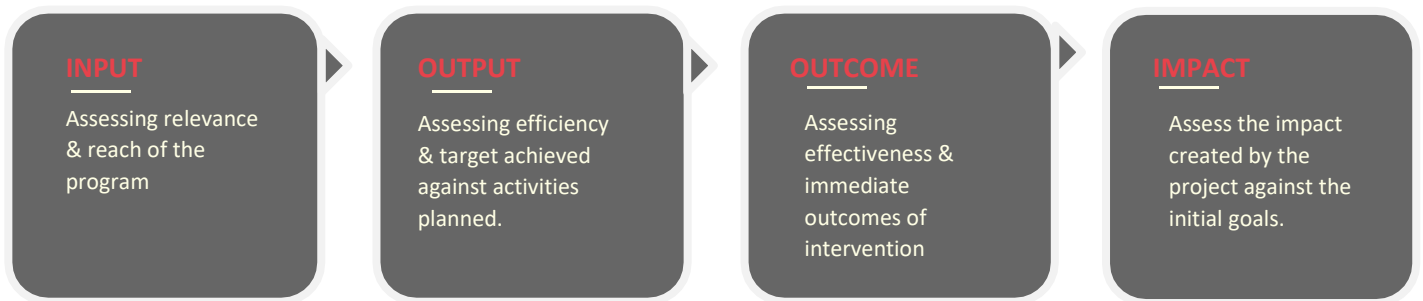
- Interaction with customers could not take place due to Uber's policy of not disclosing customers personal information.
- It was challenging to virtually connect to uber drivers where some of the drivers were unreachable due to changes in phone numbers.
- There was limited data available on Uber Assist
- Uber India was unable to provide the database for Uber Assist drivers.

# 4 Assessment Framework

To create an overall framework for the impact assessment, the following activities were undertaken. We began by establishing the scope of the assessment in terms of the type of stakeholders to be engaged and topics to be discussed with them. Based on this and the understanding of the project activities, we developed stakeholder-wise detailed questionnaires to ascertain factors including rationale for supporting the program, the implementation process, roadblocks in operations and beneficiary feedback about the efficacy of the program. The findings and recommendations arising out of this process are mentioned in the subsequent sections of the report.

## 4.1 Theory of Change

The THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK (ToC) for the given program is illustrated below:



Need	Input	Output	Outcome	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive urban transport system accessible for persons with disabilities and senior citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of ride sharing companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal partnership agreement with ride sharing company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of drivers continuing to provide accessible services</li> <li>% of trips done per year</li> <li>% increase in rider demand</li> </ul>	Enabling inclusive, accessible transportation for persons with disabilities and senior citizens
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining eligibility criteria for selecting cab drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of drivers onboarded</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of training partners</li> <li>Capacity building of drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal partnership with the training delivery team</li> <li>No. of drivers trained.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of key stakeholders to conceptualize and design universal design vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of vehicles launched as part of the program</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning costing and budgeting to operationalise accessible services for the beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rider's fare determined.</li> <li>Compensation package including maintenance fee for the drivers determined</li> </ul>		

## 4.2 Logical Framework Model

A **LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MODEL** is created against the identified ToC to reflect the identifiable indicators, means of verification, and assumptions, as given below:

LOG FRAME ANALYSIS (LFA)				
	Project Summary	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
<b>IMPACT</b> ↓	<b>Overall Objectives</b> Accessible transportation has increased the independence of persons with disabilities and senior citizens in Bengaluru city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of drivers continuing to provide accessible services</li> <li>• % of trips done per year</li> <li>• % increase in rider demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative and Quantitative interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries</li> <li>• Physical visits</li> <li>• Reports &amp; course manuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers remain committed to providing accessible cab services.</li> <li>• The compensation provided to the drivers doesn't lag.</li> <li>• Social and political climate remains conducive for the service to function.</li> </ul>
<b>OUTCOMES</b> ↓	<b>Specific Objectives</b> To improve the mobility of PWDs and senior citizens in Bengaluru city with accessible transportation			
<b>OUTPUTS</b> ↓	<b>Expected Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal partnership agreement with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Mobilisation of accessible vehicles</li> <li>• Capacity building of the drivers</li> <li>• Wages, rider's fare determined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of training conducted.</li> <li>• No. of accessible vehicles launched</li> </ul>		
<b>INPUTS</b> ↓	<b>Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheduling the capacity building training of the trainers</li> <li>• Conceptualising of training modules</li> <li>• Preparing the vehicles with necessary retrofitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining eligibility criteria for selecting cab drivers</li> <li>• Identification of key stakeholders to conceptualise and design universal design vehicles.</li> <li>• Planning costing and budgeting to operationalise accessible services for the beneficiaries</li> </ul>		

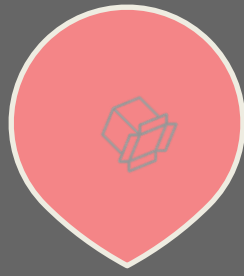
### 4.3 Three Point Assessment Framework

Based on the TOC and the LFA created, we examined the relevance of services, the preparedness for program activities, qualitative and quantitative assessments, efficiency, and effectiveness of delivery of services as well as any innovations that may have been implemented on the ground.

The impact assessment findings are further anchored around Give’s Three-point Assessment Framework as illustrated here.



**Program Design**  
 Relevance of the intervention  
 Preparedness for the intervention  
 Qualitative & Quantitative assessments



**Program Delivery**  
 Efficiency of program implementation  
 Effectiveness of program



**Impact & Sustainability**  
 Depth of impact  
 Sustainability of impact

#### Program Design

We studied program design through program strategies, inputs and resources, assumptions, outreach mechanisms, and much more. We also consider if the program design attends to specific needs of the stakeholders, program locations, social categories, site, and situation, among other development needs. Give’s Impact Assessment approach for program design is based on Assessment criteria like Relevance and Preparedness using methodologies such as assessment of baseline survey.

#### Program Delivery

Give assesses the Program Delivery to understand the success of the program delivery mechanism in attaining the overall objectives such as cost effectiveness, resource efficiency, equity in service delivery, best practices and challenges, perception about the services among the relevant stakeholders, among other actors.

#### Impact

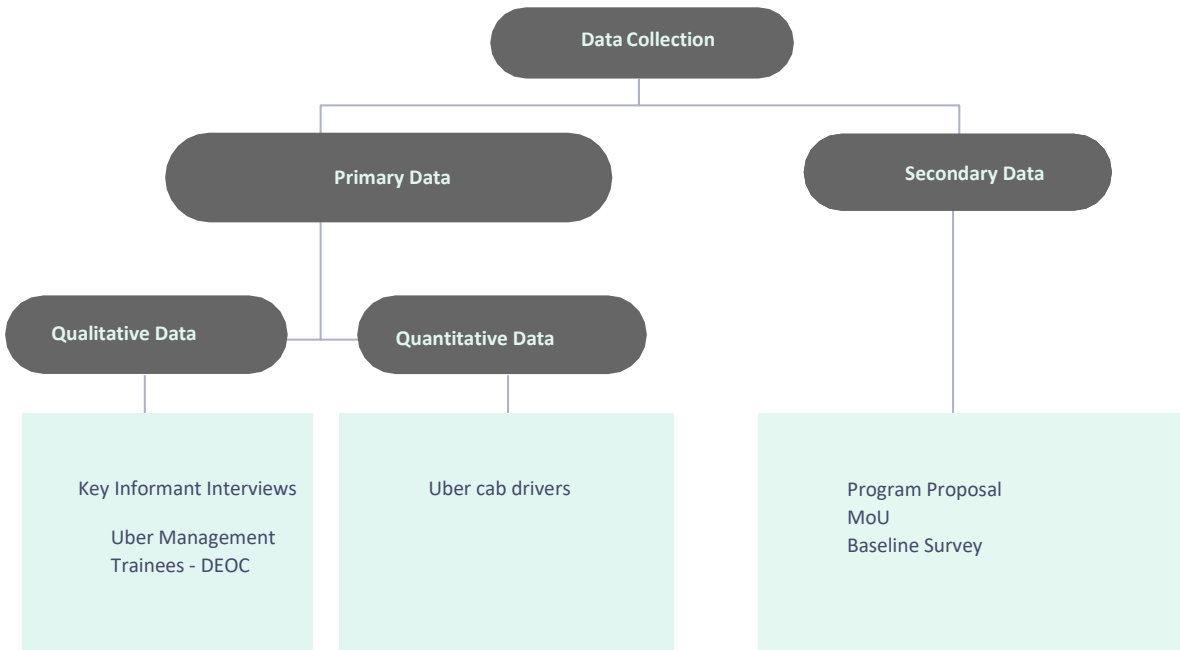
The program’s impact potential was assessed to ascertain whether a change or the desired outcome can be attributed to the program intervention. Give uses criteria such as scale of Impact and impact sustainability to understand the impact potential of the project.

# 5 Methodology Adopted

We initiated the impact assessment study by identifying the key stakeholders for the project. These stakeholders were ratified in consensus with the implementing partner. The study takes a ‘mixed method’ approach which includes both qualitative as well as quantitative data capture and analysis.

The quantitative tools provide values to key indicators related to access, awareness, quality. It also maps the outputs against the targets and outcomes perceived by the beneficiaries. On the other hand, the qualitative method and approaches provide a better understanding and help to build a storyline for the achievements and gaps in the program from the lens of immediate stakeholders involved in the program implementation, other than the beneficiaries. A qualitative study gives substantiated evidence for a better understanding of the processes involved in the program implementation. Thus, the ‘mixed method’ approach also helps in developing a framework for gap identification and course correction.

## 5.1 Data collection



- **Primary data:** Primary data is the key to collecting first-hand information as evidence from the beneficiaries and stakeholders on the interventions. It allows us to understand the benefits delivered, its effectiveness and key challenges to assess the impact created by the program and arrive at recommendations that enhance it.
- **Secondary data:** For secondary data collection, the program proposal, MoU, and program report were referred. These documents gave high level insights about the projects including the inception and implementation phase along with the processes followed.

## 5.2 Sampling strategy

The program was implemented in the city of Bengaluru, Karnataka. Considering a confidence interval of 95%, and 5% allowable margin error, the study was planned for 37 primary data collection and 4 key informant interviews (qualitative).

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

The following formula details out the sample size calculation process with the assumptions considered.

- N= Total stakeholder population
- z = Z Score (Z-score is the number of standard deviations a given proportion is away from the mean and 1.96 here corresponding to a 95% confidence interval)

- e = Margin of Error (Percentage in decimal form; here taken as 0.05 (+/- 5% error)
- p = sample proportion (0.5)

The quantitative data collection, we created representative and stratified samples to ensure accurate results.

Sampling Plan for beneficiary surveys (Quantitative Data Collection): We stratified the sample by two parameters, namely:

- Intervention geography,
- Socio-economic strata of the stakeholders

The following table elaborates the sample size and distribution as per the strategy.

Stakeholder/ beneficiary interactions	Samples
Uber Drivers	37
Training Team	2
Uber Management	1

The study could record survey interviews of 41 respondents, against the planned sample size of 50 over a period from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Key informant interviews:** Questionnaires were designed for each stakeholder interview. All relevant questions were asked to the respondents and were captured. This was done through purposive sampling.

Stakeholder Group	No. of interviews (achieved)
Uber Management Team	1
Trainers	2
Access rider	1

## 6 Findings & Analysis

Descriptive statistic (basic features of the data including frequencies, counts, percentages), comparative analysis (before and after comparisons), and content analysis (for qualitative data to interpret and analyze unstructured textual content into manageable data done to analyze and interpret the data collected. The findings for the interventions on accessible and inclusive transportation in Bengaluru city are as per the three-point assessment framework described earlier.

### 6.1 Program Design: Relevance



The mobility of persons with disabilities is often compromised as countries including India lacks universal design of public transport infrastructure. To mitigate such challenges Uber India along with Mphasis F1 Foundation launched two service products called *Uber Access* and *Uber Assist*. **Table 2** provides an overview of the program design through the two service products i.e., Uber Access and Uber Assist.

TABLE 2: Characteristics of the product services					
Services	Type of Car	Features	Objective	Target	No. of vehicles launched
Uber Access	Van	Accessible space inside the car and lift	To provide accessible and inclusive transportation	Persons with disabilities (Wheelchair Bound)	39
Uber Assist	Sedan	Empty boot space for foldable wheelchair etc.	To provide inclusive transportation	Any riders needing assistance from drivers (e.g., senior citizens, pregnant women etc.)	500

*"My mother is 80 years old, and wheelchair bound whose mobility improved drastically with Uber Access services. It was a challenge before needing assistance of two people to lift her and board her in a car. The drivers were very helpful. They had assisted her to visit the temples and other places – moving independently without needing us to be constantly around. Her quality of life had improved". ~ Rama, DEOC Team*

The program, through its intervention plan shows its relevance and alignment to both national and international policies. **Table 3** provides an overview of the relevance of the program both from local, national, and international context.

TABLE 3: Mapping of the program's relevance in meeting national and global needs

Policies/ Law/ Goals	Target/ Schedule / Activities	Alignment with the program
<p>Sustainable Development Goals</p> 	<p><b>Target 11.2:</b> By 2030, provide access to <b>safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems</b> for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons</p>	<p>The program was the first of its kind to improve the accessible public transport through one of the leading rides share aggregators.</p>
<p>Sustainable Development Goals</p> 	<p><b>Target 10.2:</b> By 2030, <b>empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all</b>, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p>	<p>The program through both Uber Access and Assist provided inclusive and accessible transportation leading to improved mobility of persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)</p>	<p><b>Article 9:</b> To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.</p>	<p>The program reduced the interdependence of persons with disabilities and senior citizens and improved their independence through accessible transportation and inclusive communication strategy through cab drivers.</p>
<p>Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016</p>	<p>Section 41: The appropriate Government shall take suitable measures to provide, (b) access to all modes of transport that conform the design standards, including retrofitting old modes of transport, wherever technically feasible and safe for persons with disabilities, economically viable and without entailing major structural changes in design</p>	<p>The program has supplemented the universal transport infrastructure plan of the government in improving mobility of persons with disabilities.</p>

The quality of the program design conceptualized by Uber is tactile in nature especially with respect to the following traits:

- **Quality control of the vehicles:** Several design iterations were carried out before the launch date to ensure all the accessible design challenges were mitigated.
- **Selection process of the drivers:** Uber India selected the drivers based on the quality metrics that are recorded on their platform. Drivers with five-star ratings with limited or zero rider complaints were selected for the program.

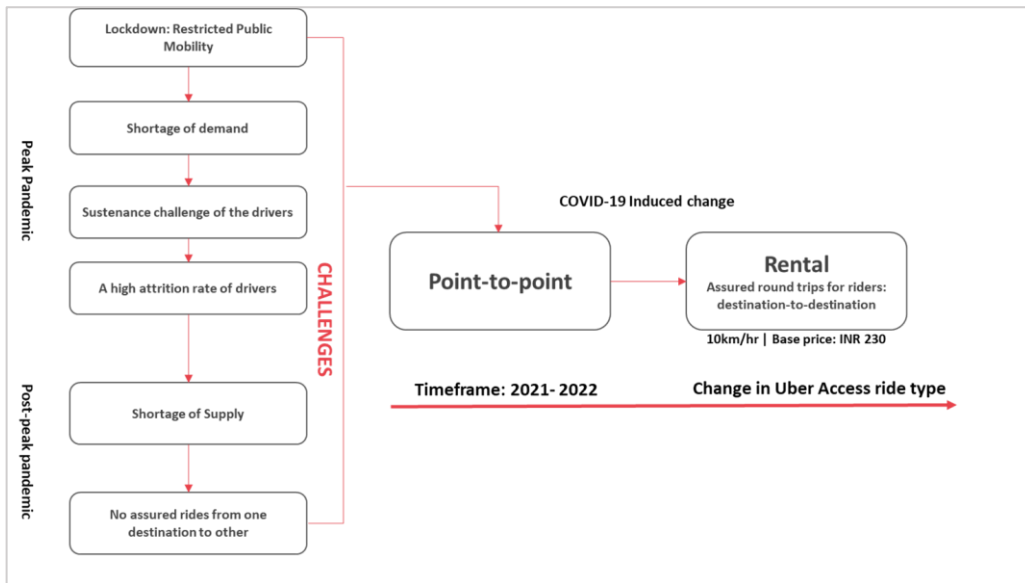


Figure 1: Retrofitted features in Uber Access

**Preparing drivers with requisite skills and knowledge on accessible transportation:** Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre (DEOC) was the training partner for Uber Assist and Uber conducted in-house training for Uber Access program. However, in a span of 1-2 years after the launch of the program, Uber India made changes to acclimatize to the changing social landscape induced by COVID-19. **Figure 2** depicts the change



the program had made in Uber Access as a result of the imbalance in demand and supply of rides and rider request on the Uber platform.



**Figure 2: The change in ride type of Uber Access-COVID 19**

The above strategy adopted by Uber India showed their alertness in assuring rides for its customers amidst the shortage in supply of Uber Access cabs due to the attrition of the drivers from the platform. The forced migration of daily wage labours including cab drivers during the peak pandemic had affected the program critically because:

- If the majority of the cab drivers’ part of Uber Assist and Uber Access had left the platform, it meant Uber had a limited number of drivers who were trained for this job.
- It meant Uber had to mobilise a new batch of drivers post peak pandemic and start from the beginning with respect to training and orientation.

The relevance of the program from the context of its design and intervention plan continues to be a vital need however, post pandemic its capabilities to remain relevant is seen to have depleted. Because over time while the scaffold of the program is still present, Uber India did not initiate the program to the intensity that it should have in doing the following:

- Re-mobilising drivers to induct them into the program.
- Providing refresher courses for drivers who were part of the program from the beginning.
- Training new batches of drivers
- Having strong marketing strategies to create awareness about the program post pandemic.

## 6.2 Program Delivery – Effectiveness and Efficiency

### Training

As a preparatory phase prior to implementing the program, Uber India and DEOC trained the drivers to build the required communication and behavioral skills to be job ready. **Table 4** provides an overview of the structure of the program designed and delivered to its key stakeholders.

TABLE 4: Training Details				
Service Products	Training Team	Duration	No. of drivers trained	Focus
Uber Assist	DEOC	3 hours	500	Communication and Behavioral skills
Uber Access	Uber India	6 hours	39	Communication, Behavioral and technical skills

The training modules prepared by DEOC for the Uber Assist drivers were based on a customer study conducted to understand their point of view and challenges related to accessibility. The insights from the study enabled the training team to bring a more dynamic interaction with the drivers by showing them recorded materials of customer feedback on the challenges faced by persons with disability in accessing cabs. Such steps adopted by DEOC thereby show the effort taken to assimilate the drivers into a newer setting of accessibility and inclusion in transportation.

DEOC's core intent in building the disposition of the drivers also included conceptualizing certain phenomena such as 'Saharsha' i.e., 'first see and observe' to understand the customer requirements before assisting them. The training was not limited to only wheelchair bound people but provided guidance on handling persons with visual and hearing impairment too. Similarly, the training sessions for Uber Access drivers which was conducted in-house also focused on the importance of 'consent' apart from the technical know-how on the accessibility features of the vehicle and mechanics of handling wheelchairs. It shows that both the training had a core focus on instilling in the drivers the socially acceptable and considerate aspects of behavior.

Table 5 provides drivers' ratings on the quality of the training attended as part of the program in preparing them to be prepared for their job.

TABLE 5: Effectiveness of the training as per the drivers	
Scale	No. of drivers' response
To a great extent	33
Somewhat	3
Very little	2

The efficiency of the program especially with Uber Access post its launch can be attributed to the business model devised by Uber India which differed from the other services on the platform such as Uber Go and Uber Premier including Uber Assist.

Considering the target population of 2.94 Lakh PWDs in Bengaluru is significantly less than the rest of the population in the city, the potential frequency of the bookings will be lower than the other services comparatively. In order for the drivers of Uber Access to stay dedicated to the platform, the business model had secured the drivers income through the reasons as seen in Table 6.

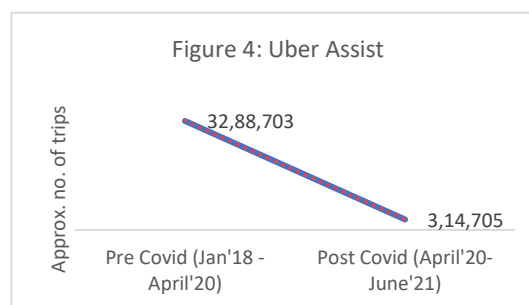
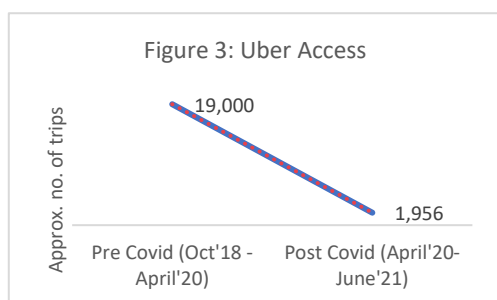
Table 6: Business Model for Uber Access and Assist		
Benefits	Uber Access	Uber Assist
Purchase of the vehicle by Uber	✓	✗
Commission to Uber	✗	✓ (standard 20%)
Incentives by Uber	✓ (Not fixed amount)	✗
Ride Targets	✗	✓
Vehicle maintenance cost by Uber	✓ (upkeep and servicing done by the company)	✗
Diesel/ Petrol Cost	✗	✗

The above table also shows that the drivers of Uber Access had very limited expenses that had to be borne by them except for diesel which reduces their operational cost further. The incentives for Uber Access were a more dynamic process which was given to the drivers on a monthly basis based on the number of engagements i.e., trips completed. For example, if a driver completes 20 trips the incentive was approximately INR 5,000. The incentives later were changed to a monthly basis where the amount ranged between INR 25,000 – INR 30,000 per month with the login time on the platform for 6-8 hours per day with weekly one day as a holiday.

Table 7: Uber Access user pattern since launch			
Year	Count of trips	Total of Fare (Rs)	Total trip kms
2018	466.00	1,48,683.00	960.00
2019	▲ 13,027.00	60,51,205.00	55,297.00
2020	▼ 5,529.00	32,51,451.00	55,041.00
2021	▼ 1,066.00	9,92,638.00	18,245.00
2022	▼ 2,901.00	22,86,907.00	26,643.00
2023	▼ 10.00	14,563.00	26.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,999.00</b>	<b>1,27,45,447.00</b>	<b>1,56,212.00</b>

In terms of engagement of Uber Access post its launch as seen in **Table 7** indicates the steep increase in engagement in 2019 covering 55,297km by 39 cabs. It can be inferred that there is a demand for accessible transportation in the city. During the pre-covid phase the drivers of Uber Access did 17 trips per week on average which were point-to-point pick-up and drop. However, the number of rides increased to 40 trips per week if they chose the airport drop and pick-up route.

However, **figures 3 and 4** show a steep decline in the rides affected by COVID-19 for both Uber Access and Uber Assist. Uber Assist was eventually shut down at the end of 2021. During the pandemic when the majority of the drivers had left the platform, according to Uber 80% to 90% of the Assist drivers did not return to resume services through the company. As a result, Uber had to mobilise new drivers and train them under Assist service product which was not initiated.



### 6.3 Impact and Sustainability

The program, which launched Uber Access and Assist, showcased the significant impact such an intervention could have. Unfortunately, the outbreak of COVID-19 disrupted the entire program. During its operational period, the program demonstrated an affordable, user-friendly, accessible, and inclusive model that significantly improved the quality of life of people with disabilities (PWDs) and senior citizens. However, the program's biggest challenge currently is its inability to prove its sustainability. Vijay's story, which is shared below, is a testimony to the assessment's findings regarding the impact and sustainability of the program.

Vijay N Manjunath is a resident of Bengaluru who was using Uber Access till 6 months back. He had started using this service since the time it was launched in 2018. He has used this service to commute to work when he was in ANZ then JP Morgan and up until recently to LinkedIn office where he presently works. His use of Uber Access was extensive which went beyond daily commute to work. Vijay also runs a non-profit organisation 'Karnataka Wheelchair Cricket Association' for which he would use this service during the weekend.

According to him, the drivers were well mannered and knew the technicalities of handling a wheelchair. Vijay uses a motorised wheelchair which is too big to fit into his home lift. The drivers have been an assistance in such situation where they have helped in shifting him to move to a standard wheelchair that would fit in the lift and would fold his motorised wheelchair.

#### What changed post-COVID-19?

He saw a change in the behaviour of the drivers who were still providing their services through Uber Access. The cancellation was more frequent and demand for additional money above the fare price were some of the challenges that were faced by him. The drivers often complained that they were not getting any salary from Uber which had made it difficult to make their ends meet monthly.

**Note: During the pre-COVID-19 phase drivers were earning on an average INR 45,000 – INR 90,000 per month. For every 4 km, the Uber Access fare was INR 250-INR 280. While Uber provided a fixed amount of INR 10,000 – INR 12,000 per month as a sustenance salary during and post COVID-19 with the condition for the drivers to stay logged in for minimum 6 hours on the platform and zero cancellation of rides, however, drivers continued to struggle to earn the same amount as pre-pandemic phase.**

#### What has been the association with the Access drivers?

Since he was a frequent user of this service, Vijay had built a good rapport with them. This has resulted in him having personal contact with them and uses their driving services (not as part of Uber Access service or the product) for his own vehicle since they are aware about the dos and don'ts in handling PWDs especially wheelchair bound people.

**Note: Majority of the Uber Access drivers have mentioned that the vehicles have been take back by Uber and booking on the platform had drastically come down.**

#### What Uber India failed to do?

Vijay believes the Uber India's marketing was very limited and failed to create awareness in public about Access services. The awareness about such services was only known to persons with disabilities mostly wheelchair bound people who were around 200-300 approximate riders in the city. Such services are also important for senior citizen people and majority of them remained unaware throughout the active period of this service.

**Note: Post-COVID-19 Uber India did marketing about resuming of its Uber Access service to its customer base who had previously used this service. The intent to extend the marketing through standees and posters in hospitals and clinics did not materialise due to monetary reasons.**

#### How does Uber Access service differ from other accessible transport services in Bengaluru?

Vijay has used Kickstart, a transport facility for wheelchair bound people in Bengaluru but according to him it's not as safe as Uber Access. According to Vijay, the van is small, and the ramp is not scientifically designed making it a big challenge for users. He explains further that while recently availing the service from his home to Bellandur, he realised that if there are no support provided to the wheelchair rider from behind while on the ramp, there is every possibility of the wheelchair to move backwards which can be accidental prone. Uber Access however was very spacious and had all the modern and safe amenities for riders to travel safely.

The other pertinent factor is the cost incurred during travel through Kickstart is very expensive. They charged him INR 2000- INR 3000 to travel from his home office in Bellandur. This is very expensive for him especially since he has recurring health expenditure monthly due to his disability. He states that "... even if we earn decent income, our expenses are quite high due to our health condition and if our travel expenses are also so high it becomes extremely difficult to manage our finances".

Vijay is hopeful and wishes that Uber resumes its services again and with better marketing strategy so that a greater number of people are aware of such services in the city.

**Note: Almost 94% of the drivers' interviewed states that they are willing to resume their service under Uber Access. They had rated their overall experience as 4.7 out of 5 which indicates their high satisfaction in providing the service.**

# 7 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is conducted to understand the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It was conducted from the responses received from the program team and other implementation-level stakeholders, at the same time considering the beneficiary feedback.

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The program aligned to the RPWD Act 2016 in supplementing the Government of India's plan in creating universal design in transportation infrastructure.</li> <li>● The program aligned to SDG 10 and 11 in improving safe affordable, accessible transportation and in promoting social and economic inclusion.</li> <li>● The business model of Uber Access provides a safety net for drivers to provide their services diligently.</li> <li>● Uber Access and Assist services jointly created an inclusive and accessible environment for PWDs and senior citizens in Bengaluru city.</li> <li>● The program fostered independence of PwD and reduced interdependencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The program's inability to create a strong marketing strategy during the peak of its service and post COVID-19 lead to an untapped customer base and eventual ending of the program.</li> <li>● Lack of initiation to mobilize and train new Uber Assist drivers post COVID-19 to resume this service.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uber has the potential to revive Uber Assist by providing training to the new batch of drivers.</li> <li>● Uber Access has an edge to be a forerunner in an inclusive transportation. With intent in place, it has overwhelming opportunity to upscale in the city of Bengaluru and replicate in the other cities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With discontinuing Assist from the platform and Access being on its way out, the need for accessible and inclusive public transport infrastructure continues to be a need where PWDs and senior citizens will face challenges in:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased interdependencies</li> <li>● Reduced Mobility</li> <li>● Lack of social and economic inclusion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 8 Conclusion

---

It was commendable that Mphasis F1 Foundation had facilitated an inclusive transportation program with Uber through Uber Access and Assist program. The program can be seen as an advocacy and supplementation to the universal transport infrastructure plan of the Government of India in improving the mobility of persons with disabilities as per the RPwD Act, 2016. For the impact to be visible for a program like this, takes around more than a year when ridership of PwD shows an upward trend. The social and economic quotient of having such an infrastructure in place enables independence among PwD which is a significant impact in itself.

The statistics from the time Uber Access till end of 2020 i.e., 19,022 trips and 1,11,2908 kms demonstrates the need for such services and the impact they can have on the mobility of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and senior citizens. Such an outcome was reached with only 39 Uber Access vehicles.

In addition, the absence of targets and commission cuts in Uber Access's business model was a significant factor in promoting driver diligence and security, with minimal operation costs. It is equally important to acknowledge that this approach differs from Uber's regular products and likely incurs substantial costs to the company. To sustain this program monetarily, it is necessary to involve additional stakeholders. With a stronger marketing strategy, Uber can potentially improve bookings on their platform and expand their customer base to include senior citizens. The marketing approach adopted during both pre- and post-COVID-19 was insufficient, and a more robust awareness campaign would be required for the program to continue.

Providing accessible transportation is crucial, but it is equally important for the riders to feel safe. Uber in Bengaluru prioritized rider safety, distinguishing itself from other service providers like Kickstart. This highlights that the accessible vehicles designed for this program are more scientific and safer for riders.

Despite the discontinuation of Uber Assist, the importance of inclusivity in private transport services remains crucial. Instead of entirely abandoning the service, Uber should focus on creating a culture of inclusivity. This can be achieved by providing comprehensive training and developing a positive disposition in all of its drivers. By doing so, drivers will be able to assist passengers effectively whenever the need arises, ensuring that all customers feel valued and included.

Lastly, rather than abandoning the program that laid the groundwork for an inclusive and accessible transportation infrastructure in Bengaluru city, which demonstrated potential impact, should be revitalized. Doing otherwise risks retreating to a time where individuals with disabilities and senior citizens feel limited by the lack of safe and accessible transportation options, hindering their ability to fully participate in social and economic activities and furthering their exclusion.

# 9 Recommendation

The recommendations have stemmed from on-ground observations, interactions with the beneficiaries and visit to each of these locations; whereas after having analyzed program from the third-party perspective the strategic set of recommendations are made for the foundation to consider as way forward.

Owner	Recommendation
Mphasis F1 Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the program implementation. The program can be relaunched with other implementing partners if need be.</li> <li>• Uber Assist can be effectively launched with the support of Mphasis F1 Foundation by mobilizing and training a new cohort of drivers. The foundation can ensure that these drivers possess the appropriate attitude and skills to offer inclusive service.</li> </ul>
Uber India and Mphasis F1 Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given that large ride-sharing companies have the bandwidth to deliver high-quality service, it is crucial that both parties iterate on the design plan for Uber Access. This includes the business model, which should be examined to identify potential opportunities for collaboration with other corporations to fund the program.</li> </ul>