

STRATEGIC OUTLINE

NORTH-EAST INDIA 2019-2021



Background

The eight states of Northeast India are home to 46 million inhabitants and only connected to the rest of India through the narrow 22-kilometre “Chicken’s Neck Corridor” in West Bengal. About 70% of the population lives in the state of Assam, the most populous state of the region¹. The remaining seven states have very small populations and include large areas of mountains and forests. With more than 220 different ethnic groups, the North Eastern Region is an area of enormous cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Even though the conflicts and separatist movements of the past decades have declined, tribal tensions continue to flare up occasionally. Therefore the development of infrastructure, institutions, communication and services of the North Eastern Region is lagging behind the rest of the country although the national Government has been investing heavily into infrastructural and economic development in recent years. India is currently ranked 129th in the Human Development Index². Although having made significant progress in reducing absolute poverty, the country remains home to one third of the global poor.

1 Mobility India (2016), Disability & Rehabilitation in the North East of India in the North East of India, http://globaldisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Disability_Rehab_NEIndia_2016Feb.pdf (8.10.2018)

2 United Nations Development Programme (2018), Human Development Report, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2018-update> (8.10.2018)

Disability Inclusion and Government Programmes in India

The Government of India was one of the first to sign and ratify the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, in 2017 the new Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act came into force³. It pushes for stronger inclusion for persons with disabilities and is closely aligned with the UNCRPD and Sustainable Development Goals. Since then several programmes to improve health, education, livelihood, as well as social protection of disadvantaged groups including persons with disabilities have come into force.

Nevertheless, despite these positive developments practical implementation is still lagging behind, leaving a huge gap between policy level and implementation.

History of involvement and principles of cooperation

Light for the World started working in Northeast India in 2004. In 14 years, we built up comprehensive programmes in Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), Inclusive Education (IE) and Eye Care (EC).

3 Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2016), The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, <http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/RPWD%20ACT%202016.pdf> (8.10.2018)

After a review of the “Country Strategy for Northeast India 2015- 2019” it has been decided to gradually phase out of eye care and to focus on further developing and interlinking inclusive education, community based rehabilitation and disability inclusion through empowerment and mainstreaming.

With this programme Light for the World is contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular to SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, SDG 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” , SDG 8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, and SDG 10 “Reduce income inequality within and among countries”.



Strategic Lines and Priorities

Between 2019 and 2021 Light for the World will be guided by the following implementation principles::

- ▶ Focus on a comprehensive approach by bringing our different programmes closer together looking out for potential interlinkages and synergies
- ▶ Generating substantial learning for our Northeast Indian programme and beyond

A particular focus will be given to three innovative areas:

- ▶ Early Childhood Development,
- ▶ strengthening our approach in working with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and
- ▶ the empowerment of women with disabilities

Main objective:

Contribute towards an inclusive society in Northeast India, where persons with disabilities are fully included and empowered, and enjoy an improved quality of life.

Result 1:

An enabling environment for successful inclusive education and rehabilitation within the communities is created and sustained.

Light for the World’s support will focus on:

- ▶ Strengthening an integrated approach and ensure linkage between the CBR programme and the Inclusive Education programme
- ▶ Fostering a common understanding of the importance of CBR and community work for different stakeholders (such as partner organisations, schools, government authorities)
- ▶ Strengthening capacities of local partners in Early Childhood Development
- ▶ Strengthening capacities of local partners to work with people with less “visible” disabilities (such as psychosocial disorders, hearing impairment, low vision)
- ▶ Promoting regional networking and advocacy initiatives involving CBR organisations, DPOs and other partners of Light for the World in India

Result 2:

15 resource centres and 75 model schools for Inclusive Education are fully functional and contribute to the expansion and quality improvement of Inclusive Education for children with disabilities

The Regional Action on Inclusive Education Northeast programme (RAISE) will be implemented in 17 districts in 5 states of Northeast India in coordination with 3 international NGOs and 15 local partner organisations. It will focus on:

- ▶ Building up the capacities of partner organisations and creating a pool of expertise in Inclusive Education
- ▶ Enhancing teacher competence in Inclusive Education through several short- and long-term courses and hands-on support by Key Teachers
- ▶ Triggering a change in attitude towards Inclusive Education through targeted advocacy and awareness raising campaigns
- ▶ Collaborating with government authorities to create public-private partnership models that can be replicated in other regions
- ▶ Documenting and disseminating innovative approaches and good practices to ensure joint learning

In the coming years, Light for the World's role within RAISE will focus on:

- ▶ Targeted capacity and team building for the RAISE Coordination Team to enhance leadership skills and increase technical knowledge
- ▶ Providing technical support and guidance for Advocacy and awareness raising activities within the RAISE programme
- ▶ Close monitoring of Light for the World's partner NGOs and their progress towards inclusion and targeted capacity building if necessary
- ▶ Evaluating and systematizing the journey to Inclusive Education of Light for the World's partner organisations and summarizing key learnings for similar initiatives

Result 3:

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (DOPs) emerging from CBR programmes are able to sustain advocacy and ensure continued support to persons with disabilities in their communities through access to government and NGO programmes

Light for the World's support will focus on:

- ▶ Building the capacities of DOPs on local, district and state-level to ensure that they can act as competent advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities. They shall gradually take over the role of local lobbying and facilitating access to government services, thus ensuring the sustainability of the interventions
- ▶ Ensuring closer collaboration of DOPs emerging from CBR projects and the Disability Law Unit (DLU) to make use of the DLU's expertise and provide support and guidance to DPOs at all levels
- ▶ Researching factors for success and failure of the current DOP involvement in CBR programmes and linking findings to the overall work in Monitoring & Evaluation of DOP involvement at Light for the World International

Result 4:

Government and development programmes on state and national level are disability inclusive and persons with disabilities access existing government schemes and NGO programmes, particularly livelihood activities

Light for the World's support will focus on:

- ▶ Developing and professionalizing of a Resource Person in Disability Inclusion, who is capable of offering trainings and consultancies in disability inclusion to government authorities and other public and private stakeholders
- ▶ Providing trainings and consultancies on Disability Inclusion to Indian government authorities, international NGOs and other public and private stakeholders to ensure that programmes are disability inclusive





Light for the World International

Niederhofstraße 26

1120 Vienna

Austria

TEL: +43 1 810 13 00

EMAIL: india@light-for-the-world.org

www.light-for-the-world.org

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER:

Light for the World International

Responsible for content: Rupert Roniger * Editor: Eva Nittmann * Graphics: Julia Weiss * Photos: Light for the World