

Strategy

ASED India Program

This document provides a guideline for ASED's engagement in India. Within the framework of ASED's overall strategy, it defines the parameters of intervention specific to India.

Context

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially came into force. Of these, four are of particular importance to ASED's work



1. No Poverty: end poverty in all forms everywhere
2. Zero Hunger: end hunger, achieve food security, improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
4. Quality education: ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Gender Equality: achieve gender equality and empower all women & girls

The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Goals recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

India too is party to achieving these goals in order to create a secure and dignified future for its populations, especially those living below the poverty line in the marginalized urban and rural areas¹.

ASED's program in India contributes to the country's efforts in two distinct fields: education and disability.

While **education** is seen as a basic right laying the foundation for a more sustainable, inclusive and developed society there are several issues affecting its reach and quality:

- Access
 - there are not enough schools, particularly in the more remote areas
 - distances to the nearest school are often an obstacle, particularly for girls (safety issues when going to school)
 - Cultural barriers
 - Many parents do not want to send their girls to school. In particular, safety of the girl child is of paramount concern when schools are located in far flung areas. Hence there is a noticeably higher dropout rate among girls after primary school.
 - In certain communities little value is given to education. Parents prefer that children work and contribute to the family's income and they assume their children will be employed in the same kind of job as their own. When there is an acceptance that children may attend school preference is given to a more traditional education linked to their culture. This situation particularly affects children from rural, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Muslim communities



- Quality and relevance of education

The education provided is often ineffective and meaningless. In the name of Right to Education (2009) and the Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act 2012, the Government has opened many schools but they are often run, especially in the rural areas, by little or ill trained 'teachers' who fail to make education a child friendly, meaningful and relevant intervention. The pedagogy is boring and depends mainly on learning by rote. Dropout rates are high.

¹ 52.2% of population over 15 is employed, of which 55.5% earn less than 2\$ a day. 68% of India's population is rural

- Attendance issues
Children often miss school due to other chores at home or because they are ill (sanitation issues, including at the school locations). This leads to discontinuity in learning, loss of interest, etc.
- Insufficient State and/or private funding. Where schools exist in the marginalized urban and rural areas the infrastructure is most often poor - classrooms, toilets and drinking water facilities are inadequate, unsafe and unhealthy. Funding is unavailable for infrastructure enhancement.

These elements have a direct bearing on the motivation of parents to send their children to school and on the attendance rate of students, leading to poorly educated children who cannot get out of the vicious cycle of illiteracy and poverty.



Education does not have a standalone effect - it impacts all areas of an individual's life across all ages. An educated population ensures optimal utilization of resources thereby preventing deprivation and hunger: an educated mind reasons against gender discrimination and promotes gender equality: girl child education and women's empowerment.

There are many measures initiated by the Government that address the issue of **disability** in India but from a practical, day-to-day perspective there is still much to be done. The country lacks good-quality, safe and professionally run centers enabling disabled children to attend, study, train and develop life and professional skills adapted to their capacities. Professional training centers providing youth with skills enabling them to earn a living, whether they work in an institution or autonomously are also

lacking in most cities, and there is a strong need to develop disability service training involving parents.

Hence ASED's engagement in India seeks, through access to education and professional training for disadvantaged youth to shape a better future for themselves and their communities and impacting generations.

History of the ASED India Program

ASED has been operating in India since 1991.

For 20 years it carried out projects in the humanitarian field such as support to destitute children living in the Kalkaji neighbourhood of New Delhi and assistance to communities in Sirkali (Tamil Nadu) and the Nicobar and Andaman Islands following the tsunami in 2005.

Since 2010 ASED's work has focused on development issues, in particular improving access to quality education and vocational training adapted to local needs.

ASED's mission: Provide underprivileged children and adolescents with the tools to achieve self-sufficiency and to sustainably improve their future

ASED believes that children who grow up in a healthy environment, who receive balanced nourishment, and who are taught to sustainably exploit their natural environment and their resources while understanding their limitations, will grow into adults capable of making the choices necessary to enable them to feed their communities, develop social services, and conceive and build the infrastructure required for their economic development.

ASED's guiding principles

- Secular and apolitical engagement
- Sustainable professional development assistance
- Partnerships that respect local culture and involve local populations
- Fight discrimination
- Combat corruption, notably through rigorous monitoring of projects
- Transparency

Program areas

In keeping with its operative guidelines and India's commitment to achieve the SDG's, the ASED India Program focuses on the following:

- A) Geographical locations
Rural areas and socially & economically marginalized sections in urban locations (urban slums/urbanized villages)



B) Sectors

1. Education-Early Child hood Education and formal secondary /senior secondary education, with a particular focus on girls especially in middle & higher classes (higher dropout rate)

Objective: Facilitate access to good basic education tailored to their social, natural, economic and cultural environment

Activities

- Create or improve existing educational facilities (infrastructure, equipment & furnishing, transportation, pedagogical equipment...)
- Organize pedagogical training courses
- Improve well-being in school: health & hygiene (drinking water, toilets...)

2. Skill Development/Vocational/Training- youth between 16 and 20 years of age with focus on employability

Objective: Provides support to young people in senior classes/completed formal schooling by imparting relevant, market oriented training so that they can take charge of their own future

Activities:

- Professional training adapted to the local environment
- Linkages with Industry for job placements

3. Rehabilitation of disabled children and youth through education and skill training

Objective: Facilitate children and youth with disabilities to access relevant education and skill training

Activities

- Create disable friendly or rehabilitate facilities ensuring easy access
- Organize social training courses
- Enhance autonomy (skill training; setting up professional services; ...)

C) Age Group

Focus is on

Pre primary: 3-6 years / Secondary: 14-15 years / Sr Secondary: 16-18 years

Vocational: youth up to 20

Disability: up to 25

D) Gender

Both boys and girls with a positive discrimination towards girls

How does ASED work ?

ASED works with local partners and beneficiary communities to develop projects intended to bring about lasting change in line with its goals. ASED only executes projects requested and developed by local communities.

Partners in India are well-established and renowned local organisations, for the most part with an innovative approach to education/disability.

Projects are submitted to donors to raise the necessary resources for their implementation. ASED monitors and regularly evaluates the implementation of projects and, where necessary, provides technical support to partners. It keeps the donors fully informed of the progress of activities.

Projects respond to specific needs at a specific time; support provided is ad-hoc and limited in time (3 years at most per project). ASED does not cover running costs as it expects that partners have the capacity to raise the necessary funds to run their operations as the project is implemented and to pursue their work once it is finished.

