



IGSSS in the North East

Genesis, Evolution and Growth

**Achievements and Impact of Interventions in Disaster
Risk Reduction and Youth Development**

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Introduction

Purpose of the Documentation

This document highlights IGSSS work and its impact the organisation has created over the last three decades of community engagement in the NE region. The document is an effort to map out in a special way, the impact & contribution in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction, Youth Development and most importantly, the growth and progression of the organisation post NEIP programme phase over in 2006-07.

IGSSS had begun its operations in the NE region as early as in 1985-86, with a small one staff back-office at Dimapur (Nagaland) manned by Paul Lokho, a native of Senapati district in Manipur; He also served as the first Regional Manager of IGSSS-NE. From a small field office, IGSSS under Paul Lokho rapidly expanded to become a full-fledged regional office in less than 4 years, working with several like-minded NGOs of the region under Development Support Activity (DSA)/National Integrated Empowerment Programme (NEIP) of IGSSS.

Work was also initiated with committed youth under IGSSS Student Mobilization Initiative for Learning through Exposure (SMILE) programme. Rapid strides were made and the organisation soon became a well-known national development organisation to the people of the region.

By virtue of being the earliest to set up base in the region, IGSSS garnered the support and acceptability from numerous people initiatives and civil societies' organisations. Over the years, through a continuous sensitive facilitation of these organisations and peoples' initiatives, IGSSS has played a crucial role in the growth of many NGOs active in the region today.

1. The North East Region and IGSSS

IGSSS in North East Region

IGSSS completed three decades of work in the Northeastern region in 2015–2016. Starting its intervention with a one-person Field office at Dimapur (Nagaland) in 1985-86, IGSSS had established a brand image of a development support organization working with local NGOs and like-minded INGOs by the 1990s. From working with varied NGO partners located in different parts of the NE to successfully implementing the SMILE (Students Mobilization Initiative for Learning through Exposure) programme, IGSSS is acknowledged as one of the earliest national development organizations which started working in the region.



However, till 2007-2008, IGSSS NE region had a restricted programming under National Integrated Empowerment Programme (NIEP) - the first flagship programme of the organization, and the Development Support Programme (DSP) through which individual projects were supported. Except for the SMILE programme, all other projects and programmes were implemented through NGO partners active in the region.

The Game Changer and New Direction

The Assam flood of 2007 propelled IGSSS to a direct and rapid humanitarian intervention with German Agro Action/Welthungerhilfe under European Union –

European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (EU-ECHO) fund and which was followed up with recovery and rehabilitation phase under European Union – Disaster Preparedness under European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (EU-DIPECHO) funding.

This was a game changer for IGSSS as the unprepared response to the massive emergency situation led to introspection within the organization leading to a resolve to strategically build internal capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). This was thought to be extremely relevant as the region is highly vulnerable to both, recurring natural and human-induced disasters.



With the phasing out of NIEP/DSP following the organizational development (OD) process, the second national flagship programme of the organization, Peoples' Empowerment Action through Rural Livelihood (PEARL) was launched and a new set of leadership was put in place in 2009 in the NE region.

Apart from the funds that were raised through the European Union, the main pillar of support, till this point, was Misereor. However, the direction now was now to expand the IGSSS programme and its resource base beyond Misereor funding to a multiple donor-base and to also transform IGSSS to a technical resource agency working on Disaster Risk Reduction.

IGSSS established its first Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) team at the NE regional unit in 2010 to keep pace with the current present frequency & intensity of disasters. The team worked tirelessly on mainstreaming DRR, streamlining emergency response and demystifying climate change as well as for developing a relevant strategy & policy within IGSSS. An Emergency Response Team (ERT) was set up, key staff trained on DRR and emergency response operations. The ERT became active within the first year of commissioning & was acknowledged by the aid agencies as well as by the local government..

The Welthungerhilfe supported (formerly GAA) project in Assam was being wrapped up when the regional team facilitated a 5 years rights based DRR support partnership with DanChurchAid (DCA) South Asia in 2010. This was the beginning of the golden phase of DRR in IGSSS as the partnership with DCA helped IGSSS immensely, not only in terms of resource mobilisation for several emergency responses but more importantly, it helped in building the technical capacity of the IGSSS team.

Contribution & Impact of Work with Reference to Disaster Response

Under the long term partnership with DCA, IGSSS accessed DANIDA Mat Aid (Material Aid) support in 2011-12 which helped the team learn about material management & logistic operations in emergencies. The partnership also introduced and oriented the IGSSS staff on Humanitarian Accountability Partnerships (HAP) which was incorporated by IGSSS in all its emergency projects by mandatorily setting up a community level complaint mechanism.

The NE team has ensured visibility of IGSSS in all Inter-Agency coordination meetings, both at the region and also at national level (Sphere India). By 2011-12, IGSSS had established itself as a leading national organisation in the DRR sector both in NE and across the country. IGSSS has always led from the front in all major humanitarian responses. It has played an active role in all major disasters – be it the unfortunate Bru IDP (Indigenously Displaced People) camp inferno, 2011, the devastating Sikkim Earthquake, 2011, ethnic conflict in Assam, 2013 followed by floods, Uttarkhand Floods, 2013, the ethnic conflict of Rengma-Karbi of Nagaland, Assam 2014, Phailin Cyclone, 2014, the great floods of Jammu & Kashmir, 2014 or the recent most Manipur flood and landslides in 2015.

Besides ensuring a timely response during emergencies, IGSSS also strategically engaged in Inter-Agency Coordination at state, regional and national level, both, as a founding member and as a technical agency. IGSSS has hugely contributed to the development and finalization and also field testing of JRNA (Joint Rapid Needs Assessment), especially in the sub-sectors of Human Strife/Conflict, Urban Disasters and IDPs/Urban refugees etc.

The Sphere Secretariat has acknowledged the role of IGSSS as a founding member of the IAG-Assam secretariat and also featured the IGSSS Seeds/Grain Bank programme as a best practice in DRR. "The Seeds of Change" – a seed bank in a flood-prone area which is also a replicable model for other flood-prone areas. IGSSS has received an accreditation certificate for its contribution to good practices in disaster risk reduction.

2. IGSSS Engagement with Internally Displaced Persons

The Bru or Riang, as they are identified in Tripura or Tuikuk in Mizoram, are one of the indigenous communities of Mizoram who were displaced internally following Bru – Mizo ethnic tension coupled with political turmoil in 1997. A large but indeterminate number of Brus fled to neighbouring Tripura and Assam, though the bulk went to Tripura (presently sheltering in seven relief camps under Kanchanpur Sub-Division of North Tripura District). The Centre and State Government have been providing free ration and temporary shelter since then, but the community is still struggling to acquire their basic human rights of education, health, livelihood, shelter and proper food. Children have grown up in the most abysmal conditions and are denied access to the minimum basic rights of children. Trafficking of children and young girls has been a common issue of concern, which has been reported. In the absence of a specific policy for the IDPs, they are sometimes termed as migrants or refugees by different groups, but are not included under the migrant or refugee law. IGSSS with support from the European Union has worked under a rights based perspective for over three years (2010-2014) advocating for an adequate response from service providers in protecting the IDP's basic rights of education, food, health and livelihood.

Under this program, IGSSS managed to bring the issues of the NE IDPs to many national fora. The IDP community was also mobilised into self help groups which were supported to successfully advocate for access to education under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, the Public Distribution System and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Scheme – all of which were completely absent during the initial stage of intervention.

IGSSS developed its capacity on the issue of IDPs and the ability to handle sensitive issues which were considered state subjects, such as IDPs rehabilitation/repatriation. IGSSS also learned to coordinate with more than two state governments at the same time.

In fact, the Mizoram state Home Department, which was initially reluctant to deal with the IGSSS intervention, eventually issued us a letter of authority to assist in the repatriation road map – the only national NGO ever permitted by the state government to do.

3. Involving Youth as Change Makers – A NE India Experience

The youth development, SMILE program in the North Eastern states has a rich history of reaching to young people to clarify their perspectives, enhance their potential & equip them with skills & knowledge to become responsible, value based agents of change in society.

As a result of this, some of them have joined development agencies; others have taken leadership roles in their own areas/community. Others have showed real interest in forming their own groups and registering their organizations. Many of the SMILEers who had initiated development work in the past are now running their own organizations in different parts of the region. This perhaps is the greatest contribution of IGSSS to the region.

Change-Makers of NE India

Centre for Peace & Development – Aizawl is a rights based agency which owes its start-up to an IGSSS fellowship and mentoring. (Angela Chalthanthiangi Ralte, the Founder Director was the Coordinator of IGSSS SMILE programme – NE). This organisation is today is one of the most vibrant NGOs in Mizoram partnering varied organizations such as Childline Indian Foundation, North East Initiative Development Agency (<http://neida.org.in/>), United Nations Drug Control Program, Government of India, programs of the State Government.. <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/angie-ralte/17/65/410>



Prodigals Home – Dimapur – a well-established NGO of Nagaland has also been an offshoot of an IGSSS small grant and fellowship. Solomon Dili, a renowned personality in the early 1990s from the Naga society gave up a potential civil service career to work for the community. Today Prodigals Home works with women marketing federations, youth entrepreneurs on livelihoods and sustainable development. <http://prodigalshome.in/>

At the individual change-maker level, there are hundreds of IGSSS ex-Fellows and SMILERS (those who participated in the SMILE programme) who today swear their gratitude to IGSSS. Mention may be made of only a few such individuals:

Zubin Zaman, Dy. Director OXFAM, started off as an IGSSS fellow, joined IGSSS as a Youth Coordinator and then became a Field Executive before moving out to OXFAM. Today, Zubin is a well-known humanitarian activist who holds the important position of Deputy Director - Humanitarian - Disaster Risk Reduction at Oxfam India. <https://in.linkedin.com/pub/zubin-zaman/4/466/908>



Dr. Dr. H.T.C. Lalrinchhana, Chief Judicial Magistrate/Civil Judge, Mizoram, took an active part in the SMILE orientation before charting out a career in legal justice. As a SMILE alumni, Dr. Lalrinchhana has carried on his resolve to work for social justice and has set a right example for the role the youth can play in the societal development. He is a name to reckon with in Mizoram today. He says, "Being a youth having less experience, the days in SMILE helped me a lot to learn about what others thought, helped develop my communication skills which I could put to good use while preparing for future competitive examinations. Having lived in the North Eastern region, I was limited by a parochial attitude added to which there was limited sharing with the national mainstream. Involvement with the IGSSS SMILE program, enriched my knowledge & outlook and helped build my strategy towards life. It was very gainful to be part of an interaction at the inter-state level where there was a sharing of thoughts and problems of the NE particular region."

Sunil Basumatary, Deputy Director (Youth Development Officer) National Service Scheme (Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports) was an active youth volunteer and a SMILE Fellow of IGSSS and he decided to follow his passion and serve the youth by joining the Government of India. Presently, Sunil is Regional Head, NSS for the NE states and is based at Guwahati.



Sem Haokip, CEO and founder of STPWD, New Delhi faced his turning point as a SMILE participant when he visited the Narmada Bachao Andolan. He decided then and there to set up a national level tribal focussed educational institute. Today, STPWD manages free to low cost, affordable schools called Ebion Public Schools in the slums of Delhi and the interior villages of Manipur and Assam.

Youth Employment Summit Campaign

IGSSS initiated the entry of the Youth Employment Summit (YES) in the NE region by hosting the Secretariat both at its Head Office at New Delhi and also at Guwahati during 2004-5. The YES India Network is a youth-led national level coalition focusing on promoting youth employment in the country. The main aim is to work with diverse stakeholders comprising of opinion leaders, policy makers, government agencies, youth activists, youth organizations, NGOs, Corporates, media and other groups to develop programs and projects for youth employment and work towards the creation of sustainable livelihoods for youth. YES India is part of YES Global campaign to create sustainable livelihood opportunities by building the capacity of the youth across nations. For details please check (<http://www.yesweb.org/docs/prfeb112005.pdf>) and (<http://projects.tigweb.org/YES-India/about/>)

IGSSS also spearheaded the organisation of the "North East Regional Youth Summit on Ecology" in collaboration with the Chief Wildlife Wardens of Nagaland & Arunachal Pradesh, The Youth Employment Summit (YES) Campaign Networks were launched in Nagaland in December 2004, in Mizoram in Feb 2005, in Manipur in July 2005 and Arunachal Pradesh (Sept. 2006). And also "Launching the One Stop Youth Resource Centre "The Enterprising Youth Centre" IN 2008". In 2009, IGSSS also successfully organized a "Regional Consultation on Youth and Employment in 2009".

People Networks and Alliances:

IGSSS has also promoted and nurtured networks and alliances besides working with individuals and NGOs in the region. The earliest network promoted was NEDA (North East Development Alliance) which was formed in 2006 with a new "Right Based Approach". The theme for year 2006 was "Empowerment through Right to Information (RTI)" <http://northeas.blogspot.in/2006/06/north-east-development-aliance-neda.html>

The other networks incubated and promoted include the Sustainable Livelihood Forum – Manipur and the Farmers' Federation in lower Assam (through the NGO partner Gramya Vikash Mancha (GVM). GVM has been promoting a strong network of farmers among approx. 35,000 small and marginalized farmers of Nalbari, Baksa and Kamrup districts of Assam. The organization has a strong base in its operation area with active village volunteers in every village and different social groups, promoted by the organization.



4. Key Visible Initiatives of IGSSS-NE

IGSSS has been one of the driving forces in initiating/setting up notable organisations and fora in the NE region. This included the first ever forum on Sustainable Livelihood in the state of Manipur called the Sustainable Livelihood Forum – Manipur (SLF-M) which was initiated during the second phase of the PEARL program with a few IGSSS partners and many non-partners who are engaged in the Right to Food campaign. The forum has sustained even till today though IGSSS has withdrawn its support.



The SLF-M took on the mission of holding the first ever state level Public Hearing on the Public Distribution System (PDS) which brought the Supreme Court's Right to Food Commissioner's Team led by Mr. Harsh Mander to the hearing.

The Inter Agency Group (IAG-Assam) was initiated by like-minded humanitarian and developmental agencies of NE, largely based in Assam and the IAG-Assam Secretariat was hosted by IGSSS for two years with the then Regional Manager IGSSS Mr. Mangneo Lungdim as its first Convenor cum Secretary.

Presence of IGSSS in the NE region (2015)

Operates from four field offices Ukhrul and Churachandpur (Manipur), Lakhimpur (Assam), Ziro (Arunachal Pradesh) Bongaigaon and Karbi Anglong (Assam) coordinated by the regional office at Guwahati. Partnering with eight local NGOs in Sikkim, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Assam

Some Visible Contributions & Publications of IGSSS in the NE:

- Founding convenor cum Secretariat for Inter Agency Group – Assam
- Brought to the national attention, issues of IDPs – documented a video on the Bru/Riang IDPs, advocated with National Human Rights Commission, National and state governments, received a govt of Mizoram permission to work on the very sensitive issue of repatriation.
- Drafted the IGSSS DRR Policy paper – which later on merged with the Strategy Document in 2010
- Co-convened regional review of the National Youth Policy 2010 for NE states.
- Instrumental in the holding of the first ever state level Public Hearing on PDS in Manipur

- Publication of “Psycho-social Manual with focus on Children in difficult circumstances” in collaboration with TISS-NE campus (2014)
- Action Research on Kuki Village Governance – A Case for Churachandpur district – Manipur through a team of Delhi University researchers (2014)
- Guidelines for Psychosocial Care & Support in Emergency Setting - Developed by IGSSS with technical support of Department of Psychiatric Social Work, LGBRIMH (2014)
- Piloted successfully household level arsenic mitigation in Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts – through a transfer of technology with Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO – Nepal) on Arsenic filter and management.
- A draft paper on organisational positioning for Humanitarian Emergency Response and Risk Reduction in India – a paper for Catholic Relief Services-India (edited by Mangneo Lhungdim)
- A brief Note on Intervention and Plans in Assam Conflict Situation of IGSSS – Mangneo Lhungdim
- A brief Report on Projects and Plans in Sikkim submitted to His Excellency; Shri Balmiki Prasad Singh, the Governor of Sikkim in 2012
- IGSSS Disaster Response – providing Aid & Assistance; Timely, Rightly, Efficiently

ANNEXURE

1. CASE STORIES

Impact of Kanchan Arsenic Filter on people

Name of Village: Tengagarah

G.P: Lotak

Block: Bordoloni

Dist: Dhemaji, Assam

Tengagarah is a village inhabited by 39 households of whom 20 households are Adivasi families who are downtrodden, economically and socially backward. The villagers were helplessly drinking iron and arsenic contaminated water from their only source of drinking water – a tube well & river water. They had been suffering from various diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, skin diseases etc.



Having seen the situation of the villagers, IGSSS provided a Mark III hand pump near the houses of 10 Adivasi families who were drinking contaminated water. After installation of the hand Pump, IGSSS tested the water at the Rural Laboratory, Gogamukh (established by UNICEF) and found arsenic beyond permissible limit. To further verify the contamination, IGSSS team tested the water using the Jal Tara kit and found arsenic beyond permissible limit.(0.05mg/l). Considering the situation, IGSSS provided the Kanchan Arsenic Filter which removes arsenic and makes the water potable. The Kanchan Arsenic (KAF) Filter decreased the arsenic from 0.05mg/l to 0.02 mg/l which is permissible for drinking purposes.

The villagers have testified that now they are consuming clean water as they are now rid of previous pain of diseases like lip red, diarrhoea, dysentery, etc.

'Poverty to Food Sovereignty'

Village: Gosaibari

Post Office: Na-Nadi

G.P.: Bhebari

Dist: Dhemaji

Assam.

Total Population in the Village : 854

Total House Hold: 152

Community : SC,ST,OBC, GENERAL,.

The Gosaibari village was set up in the year 1964 and has been affected by floods since 1972 by the rivers Subansiri, Kumatia cum Jiadhal and Na nadi. In this village 90% of the families are dependent on agriculture, 9% on fishing, 1% on Govt jobs and business. They had not accessed any information on modern methods being used in agriculture prior to the IGSSS intervention. Their produce was not sufficient for them and they went to other villages in search of seeds because they used to lose their own indigenous seeds in the perennial floods. They had to borrow seeds from landlords or the money lenders who imposed higher rate of interest, again resulting in the same vicious cycle.

IGSSS constructed a seed bank and supported 70 kg of mustard seeds in 2008. IGSSS also provided a guideline on how to manage the seed bank along with the seeds. Thus a Seed Bank Management Committee was formed on 26,08.08 and it has been running smoothly till today. The Seed Bank Management Committee today has 405 kg of paddy seeds which can be lent to the farmers.



Certificates and Recognitions:



Letters from Deputy Commissioners (Assam & Manipur)

GOVT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER::LAKHIMPUR::NORTH LAKHIMPUR
DISASTER MANAGEMENT BRANCH



No. 2015 (R).11/DDMA/2015/08

Date:- 19-10-2015

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

This is to certify that Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS) established in 1960 is a non-profit organization registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 working with the mandate for a humane social order based on truth, justice, freedom and equity across 25 states and one Union Territory of India.

The IGSSS Field Office at Lakhimpur District, Assam has assisted the District Administration in organizing and conducting awareness and training programs in the district, particularly at the grassroots level.

The activities undertaken by IGSSS in the field were highly appreciated from all quarters and the awareness drives carried out by them had a very good and positive response among the people particularly the flood affected people in the entire district.

We look forward for their continual noble service and active participation in similar program in future and be a partner with district administration in emergency response and building a self-reliant and resilient community.


19/10/2015
Addl. Deputy Commissioner & CEO
District Disaster Management Authority
Lakhimpur, North Lakhimpur.

Addl. Deputy Commissioner
& CEO, DDMA
Lakhimpur, North Lakhimpur