

Policy on Disability

i. Introduction:

Ferrando speech and hearing centre (FSHC) is a disability and development organization promoting the cause of persons with disabilities (PwDs) particularly in rural areas. Its area of operation includes Ri-Bhoi district.

FSHC is a registered Society, registered under the Societies Registration Act in New Delhi in the year 1997. It is also registered under Sections 12 A and 80 G of the IT Act, and under Niti Ayog. It's administrative office is situated in Umniuh-Khwan , Ri-Bhoi district-Meghalaya..

ii. Vision of FSHC:

- Our vision is to educate and empower persons with disability especially who are deaf and hard of hearing for an independent living in an inclusive society.

iii. Mission of FSHC:

- FSHC is a charitable organization committed to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities especially who are deaf and hard of hearing through early intervention, education, vocational training, and rehabilitation services.

iv. Strategies of FSHC:

FSHC's strategies to take forward its work with persons with disabilities, include the following:

1. Community Based Rehabilitation/Inclusive development
2. District level Initiatives
3. Mainstreaming disability
4. Disabled Persons Organizations
5. Lifting Barriers
6. Fellowship Programmes

In all the above strategies, it will align its work with the following key strategic pillars of development:

- a. Inclusive Education of children with disabilities especially the deaf and hard of hearing.
- b. Early intervention and rehabilitation of children with disabilities.
- c. Empowering animation – promote empowered people's organizations (DPOs) and DPO movements through CBR staff.
- d. Skill development and vocational training for the adult disabled.
- e. Dialogue through CBR staff– dialogue with the poor, duty bearers and the nature. We will enable partner staff to spend quality time with the village

community for their empowerment, help build solidarity with other groups, facilitate schemes and entitlements, engage with duty bearers and policy makers, care for the environment – planting of saplings, promote hygiene in the villages through Swach Bharath Campaign etc.

- f. Volunteering – enrol volunteers and engage them in our work, CBRF staff will also volunteer besides encouraging partners’ staff to volunteer.
- g. Sharing communities – encourage community members to share their time, donate in kind and cash, mobilise resources from CSR and individuals.

v. FSHC’s understanding of disability and persons with disability:

Impairment is not disability. An impairment associating with an environmental barrier causes disability resulting in restricted participation and limited functional abilities. Disability results from an interaction between a non-inclusive society and individuals. Disability is not about ability or inability: it is about diversity. Doing things differently is an accepted norm. Respect for difference is one of the key principles of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNCRPD). Who then are Persons with disabilities? According to UNCRPD *“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”*.

It is the above stance that FSHC adopts with regard to its understanding of disability.

vi. Rights of persons with disabilities Act 2016 (RPD Act 2016)

The RPD Act 2016 recognises 21 types of impairments. They are broadly classified as below. FSHC covers all types of disabilities as listed below in its activities, programmes and services.

Physical disability	1. Locomotor disability 2. Leprosy cured person 3. Cerebral palsy 4. Acid attack victims 5. Muscular dystrophy 6. Dwarfism
Visual impairment	7. Blindness 8. Low vision
Hearing impairment	9. Deaf 10. Hard of hearing 11. Speech and language disability
	12. Intellectual disability
	13. Specific Learning disabilities
	14. Autism spectrum disorder
	15. Mental illness
Chronic neurological conditions	16. Multiple sclerosis 17. Parkinson's disease

Blood Disorders	18.Hemophilia
	19.Thalassemia
	20.Sickle cell disease
	21. Multiple Disabilities

vii. FSHC’s priority groups amongst persons with disabilities:

FSHC covers all age groups in its programmes and activities. It also covers all categories of persons with disabilities irrespective of gender.

However, Children and adult with disabilities, are given priority in all our interventions.

viii. Principles of FSHC:

FSHC follows the principles of the UNCRPD in its work.

- (a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons;
- (b) Non-discrimination;
- (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality of opportunity;
- (f) Accessibility;
- (g) Equality between men and women;
- (h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

We recognise the universal rights of all persons including carer’s and service providers, and the inter-dependence of people. Our choice of work in remote rural regions is based on the principle of equity.

ix. FSHC strives to build the right awareness.

FSHC will take steps to build the right awareness amongst family members of persons with disability, the village community and the public in general, government officials and the elected representatives on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities to promote equalization of opportunities. It takes steps to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life. It promotes awareness on the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

x. FSHC promotes accessibility in all forms:

FSHC will work towards promoting accessibility in all forms to persons with disabilities. It promotes accessible communication, information, transportation, physical infrastructure and day to day utility products and services.

xi. FSHC works towards protection and promotion of rights of persons with

FSHC will take all steps towards protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities. It takes measures to facilitate full inclusion and participation in the community.

Besides, FSHC will take steps to promote the rights of persons with disabilities as given below:

- Education
- Health
- Right to life
- Protection and safety in natural disasters and other emergencies
- Access to justice
- Right to liberty and security
- Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Living independently and being included in the community
- Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
- Work and employment
- Adequate standard of living and social protection
- Participation in political and public life
- Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

xii. FSHC promotes an equal opportunity policy with suitable reasonable

No discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions.

FSHC gives equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in employment. Amongst the persons with disabilities, women with disabilities are given preference for jobs. Persons with disabilities belonging to the weaker sections – scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward classes will be given preference in employment.

It is envisaged that 10% of the jobs are reserved for persons with disabilities within the Organization. Similarly, it encourages its partners and other associates to follow a reservation policy within their respective organizations to promote equal opportunities along with suitable reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.

xiii. FSHC's learning on the status of disability inclusion in the development

FSHC has about 25 years of experience working in rural areas, promoting Community Based Rehabilitation for the empowerment, inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities. It has realized that persons with

disabilities are always side-lined with regard to their legitimate rights and inclusion / participation / equal opportunities in the mainstream. Further, the schemes and entitlements that are meant for the general population are not offered to persons with disabilities pushing them to the special schemes and limiting them to the reservations under the disability category. Barriers related to attitudes and other accessibility related issues are hardly addressed. Other identities of persons with disabilities based on gender, caste etc., are not considered for availing reservation to access entitlements.

xiv. Framework for influencing the policy makers and elucidate a process of dialogue with stakeholders.

FSHC along with CBR staff and DPOs will engage with policy making bodies to promote inclusive policies. DPOs will continuously engage with duty bearers through interface meetings at the project level and also make frequent visits to the government offices with their list of issues and submit memoranda.

FSHC and its DPOs will constructively engage with the Chief Commissioner and the State Commissioners for persons with disability to see that the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are implemented on a fast track mode.