

“Strategic Plan -2020-2025: People’s Participation”



(Acknowledgement, Motivated and inspired by [“STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 23’: Caritas India”](#))

Introduction: In 2005, **People’s Participation** was founded by a group of passionate and committed people to promote natural rights and consciousness with a dream to see a sustainable and equitable India in their lifetime. Concerned with the most pressing issues of their times, they started a Postal Course on Human Rights’ to spread knowledge on their Constitutional Rights. Awareness, campaign, social movement, networking, advocacy etc and recruitment of community volunteers were the methods to work for the cause. Strategy plan for **People’s Participation** is not just wishful thinking but rather renewed commitment with a redefined vision for better competitive advantages with various stakeholders. This would provide a clear vision for all the collaborators of **People’s Participation** in understanding the new paradigm shift in development, placing people at the center of all the processes.

It is our pleasant duty to appreciate and thank each and every one who contributed in the designing and development of this strategic plan. We hope and believe that this plan will give us a focused direction and the way forward.

Who are we: We take the opportunity to project this organization as a representative of the under privileged/weaker section of the society for their continuous up gradation in all spheres for last fifteen years.

All disadvantaged groups e.g. women, children, aged and others irrespective of their castes, creeds, colours, status etc. have the inherent capacity to take responsibility and make choices about their lives. In fact, they are able to articulate and access their rights and emerge as leaders facilitating positive social change. *People’s Participation (PP)* sees itself as a facilitator enabling this change. It believes that access to information and knowledge about the world and the changing social and economic structures contribute to the target groups having greater control over their lives. A culture of silence prevents the disadvantaged groups from articulating their dreams and aspirations as well as to express the pains of violations they have experienced. People’s Participation hopes to create a culture of questioning that strengthens their abilities to challenge and change the structures that keep them silent. A collaborative and collective process that connects individuals and organization with each other enhances learning in a mutually beneficial way. People’s Participation aims to draw on this synergy to help reach common goals.

People's Participation activities spread to several Districts in West Bengal and assistance has come from the local authorities, eminent personnel and citizens. Committed individuals from every lifestyle have chipped in. Since its inception, the goal of the *People's Participation* team has been to ensure that people get their rights and are living in a healthy environment. Since 2005 *People's Participation* has organized thousands of people in different areas to become human rights facilitators, catalyzing life style changes within their communities. *People's Participation* has developed a unique model based on Peoples' rights to participation and development wherein they act as agents of change by forming groups and spreading awareness within their localities.

As we look back on another year and reflect on achievements and obstacles, let us reiterate the key elements that make *People's Participation* unique—its replicable and strong foundation, a broad vision encompassing an inclusive geographical approach, a complete coverage, coupled with close links and co-operation with the Government.

VISION of 'People's Participation':

We are committed to social justice, sustainable development and human rights. The right to communicate freely is a basic human right and a necessity for sustainable development. Access to information is essential to informed decision-making at all levels. We are committed to the dissemination of information and promotion of sustainable development initiatives, in response to the needs of underrepresented and marginalized sectors of society.

For bridging the data gap and improving information availability we are committed to develop and establish an ideal medium for the Participation and exchange of a trusted and accurate source of quality information. Empowerment of the vulnerable section of the disadvantaged section; to provide basic Education, Health, Training, Recreation to the down trodden people and empowerment of women and adolescent girls of the Society. To secure "Food-Shelter- Work" for all' is our dream.

Mission: Our mission is to utilize the available resources in such a way that their uses can lead to substantial improvement in the quality of life of the people with whom work is being done.

Values:

The work of People's Participation' is guided by the following values:

- We are pro-poor.
- We are inclusive, impartial and non-discriminatory.
- We work in partnership with others to achieve results.
- We respect fundamental human rights and listen to the people we work with.
- We value objectivity, integrity, professionalism and openness.
- We value transparency and accountability.

- We esteem entrepreneurship and innovation.
- We share all knowledge about the work we do

PP in Today:

People's Participation as a small and smart development organization is recognized as a right based social welfare organisation in serving the poor and marginalized. Traversing over 16 years of its service, PP has become an organization promoting Inclusive and equitable development. Its commitment to integrated human development and her constant striving to be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the poor have greatly positioned her as one of the pioneer organizations in the social development scenario. PP has gained and gathered a wealth of experience and expertise in Community Mobilization, Community Organization and different development issues.

Strengths:

People's Participation has a clear vision, mission, values and principles. PP has a strong network partners and community relations at the grass roots. PP has a 16 years long history of good work and established Credibility.

Good relations with governments are its strength. Diverse and expert professional staff team members give an additional advantage to **People's Participation** in all its development work. PP has successfully integrated its faith-inspired base with a secular approach to work. It has good internal policies and systems. An important strength is the capacity and experience to manage fair portfolio programmes on various themes such as child rights, women-elder-youth empowerment, environment, human rights, beggars, peace, labours, cultural, livelihoods, inclusion, disability etc.

Area of improvement:

Visibility, branding and strong action based networking of **People's Participation** needs improvement. Improvement in engagements with other CSOs, other than our traditional partners, is an area of concern for the future. Technological advancement and data management require attention. Traditionally, **People's Participation** has been implementing programmes through communities of target group beneficiaries' only.

Transparency and Accountability:

We strive to develop our programmes with the involvement of the communities we claim to work with. This makes transparency a dual responsibility for us- we are as accountable to you, our donor and we are equally responsible to the communities we work with. This will be visible in the way we report back- while we send updates, event reports, and regular reports to our funders, we also ensure that the money we spend on a community is known to them.

Opportunities:

The Sustainable Development Goals: (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 as a part of the resolution, ‘transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’. India is committed to achieve the 17 SDGs and the 169 associated targets, which comprehensively cover social, economic and environmental dimensions of development and focus on ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions. **People’s Participation** does maintain the SDGs agenda transforming our world concept towards the poor and underserved.

Volunteering:

Volunteering means commitment to willing service. Volunteer is a person who according to his/her gifts and capacities is able to perform important tasks in the diaconal work. Most of the volunteers see a deep connection between their faith and their service and it is their faith that prompts them for diaconal work. Volunteerism is not just a token of service but a fundamental option, a way of life that leads to self-sacrifice and can result in total denial of oneself for a supreme purpose. Common citizens are capable and willing to the diaconal work. There are quite a few of them, who are highly qualified and who use their professional skills in diaconal ministry without expecting anything in return.

People’s Participation understands volunteering as a powerful and practical way to reach out to the most marginalized sections and reduce poverty and inequality. **People’s Participation** believes that it is only when people step forward – either as local or national citizens – the sustainable change happens. By enabling people and the communities to play a more active role in development by volunteering the essential pre-conditions for systemic and sustainable change such as ownership, participation, empowerment and inclusion – can be realized. At its core, volunteering is a powerful expression of a people centered approach to development.

Empowered Communities:

Self-determining decisions and rights based actions are taken by the marginalized communities through community managed and owned systems, organizations and movements at local, regional and National level.

Strategic Actions:

- **Community managed and owned Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Advocacy: People's Participation** would ensure that the local communities have a decisive say at all levels of programme interventions, i.e., Ownership and control by the local community on prioritization of issues, planning of action, taking action and tracking progress on the action plan.
- **Promoting National/State/Regional Peoples' Movements: People's Participation** will connect of CBOs and target communities in different programme areas and will also connect them to existing or emerging social movements. The strategy would be to facilitate and strengthen social movements at grassroots, state, regional or national level for larger level impacts on policies. These movements should be 'People led'.
- **Leadership development for marginalized communities at all levels- local, state and national level:** The movements and community managed initiatives will need leadership and **People's Participation** will develop this among the marginalized communities. **People's Participation** will create a set of change agents who are equipped/capacitated on pro-people values/perspectives and actions and contribute to the transformation of society.
- **Creating Macro-level economic entities controlled by local communities:** Our prime communities lose out, as their produce is sold at low prices in a market controlled by exploitative forces. On the other hand, there are successful experiments of collectives of communities into various types of processing, manufacturing or marketing processes.
- **Dialogue with poor:** This dialogue is done in multiple ways: through empowerment, education and facilitation of developmental actions. **People's Participation** will build capacities of partner organizations and partner communities to dialogue for the poor. It will take actions in solidarity with the poor in their struggle for rights, entitlements, dignity and basic service.
- **Dialogue with duty bearers: People's Participation** will advocate with different stakeholders namely – the affluent sections to share the riches with the poor; the Legislature and policy makers for influencing policy; with the Executive and local governance systems for policy and programme implementation; with the media for highlighting and sensitizing the issues and with the larger public through public campaigns and with the corporate towards sustainable and responsible business practices.
- **Dialogue with nature: People's Participation** will be promoting actions for a human ecology, actions on eco-based climatic resilience and actions for the protection of natural resources.
- ◆ **Identify, engage and retain volunteers: People's Participation** will design systems and processes for identifying, engaging and retaining volunteers. PP will cast the net wide and find challenging, interesting and satisfying avenues for volunteers. PP will seek their physical, mental and emotional involvement. It will increase the opportunities for volunteers to contribute for sustainability of the pro-poor social change processes.

- ◆ **Ensure standards of best practice and consistency in supporting volunteers:** Volunteers will be prompted to undertake committed actions through facilitation and quality support from time to time. For this, standard processes will be developed and refined on an ongoing basis.
- ◆ **Recognize and celebrate volunteers: People's Participation** will endeavour for meaningful engagement with volunteers and recognize and celebrate volunteers.
- ◆ **Develop partnerships with professional associations and bodies like educational and medical institutions, as well as the corporate sector: People's Participation** has formal and informal contacts with professional associations and bodies. **PP** will formalize these relationships and develop a tripartite link between them, **PP** and volunteers.
- ◆ **Mobilizing Community resources:** Engage with community more meaningfully, while respecting and recognizing community's willingness to participate and contribute to social initiative; continue to involve community as partner in action and create new avenues for sharing and giving; Transparent methodology to be adopted with communities to update the fund utilization.
- ◆ **Generating support from Corporate Social Responsibility, companies and corporate foundations:** Identify and initiate dialogue with responsible Industries/ corporate that may support **People's Participation** financially; Sensitization of corporate towards issues and ground realities and explore partnership on real issues for holistic development of community.
- ◆ **Increasing government resources in our operations:** Develop and design programme and projects that are connected to Government priorities and budget availability; Cultivate a relation and nurture the process with strong advocacy strategy; Design and conceptualize fundraising campaign on Thematic area aligned with ongoing Govt. campaigns.
- ❖ Guidelines, methodologies, practical tools, manuals and training schedules will be developed to operationalize these strategic perspectives to create a common understanding across staff and partners for achieving the desired impacts.

Conclusion:

The new strategic plan will emphasize on new strategic themes like Peace Building, climate Adaptation, peoples' rights' based on the changing context. It also visualizes linking of micro level efforts to create macro level impacts on structural reasons responsible for continued poverty and inequality.

This strategic plan will be converted into workable action plans, achievable targets and indicators. A periodical review of progress on the strategic plan will also be conducted. The reviews will also help in any fine tuning and modifications when needed. Capacity building programmes for staff and partner

communities will be organized to ensure that the strategic plan is implemented with the required skills and expertise and the expected results are achieved.

We would like to consider this document as a dynamic one which would be critically reviewed at regular intervals to determine the efficacy of the strategic processes. This would be pursued in a participatory environment and appropriate revision would be effected in the plan for better implementation and outcomes. We look forward to the active collaboration of all our stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy and critical contributions in the forward journey.

