COUNTRY STRATEGY PLAN
SOUTH SUDAN

SUMMARY
Preface

South Sudan is on the brink of a new era; it now has major opportunities to break with its history of war. But there are barriers to inclusive human development like: poverty, violence, insecurity and limited access to basic services.

Since 2005, LIGHT FOR THE WORLD has been working towards the welfare and dignity of persons with disabilities here, promoting their full participation in society. We are pleased to note that the determination of our implementing partner organisations is bearing fruit. But many steps still have to be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities have full access to basic services and full participation in community life.

This strategy will lay out these steps. It is intended to be a guide and compass for meaningful implementation of our programmes. We intend to face the country's challenges along with all relevant stakeholders so our work changes the lives of people who need this most.

We are therefore looking forward to collaborating with you as well to build an inclusive society in South Sudan!

The LIGHT FOR THE WORLD team of South Sudan
Main areas of focus in South Sudan

**Focus:** Eye health and prevention of blindness.

**Objective:** We aim to prevent blindness, restore eyesight and promote eye health by removing the physical, social, cultural and communication barriers that prevent access to high-quality eye care services, especially for those living in poverty.

**Focus:** Rehabilitation and inclusive education for persons with disabilities.

**Objective:** We aim to use comprehensive and sustainable intervention systems to enable access to education and ensure that persons with disabilities can use their potential, skills and abilities to participate fully in society.

**Focus:** Promotion of inclusive development and the rights of persons with disabilities.

**Objective:** We are working to promote inclusive development cooperation that ensures the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities.
The Republic of South Sudan was born as an independent country on July 9th 2011. It faces enormous challenges due to a long history of war. There is limited infrastructure in place, particularly to serve education and health needs. Major investment is necessary to enable these sectors to fulfil the needs of the people.

**Eye health and prevention of blindness**
There are major gaps in the availability of eye care services -due to a lack of trained eye care staff and resources- as well as in general service provision for persons with disabilities. For eye care one of the greatest challenges ahead is to make sure that people do not become blind of preventable causes of blindness.

**Rehabilitation and inclusive education for persons with disabilities**
According to the Education Management Information System of South Sudan, 35,814 students with disabilities are enrolled in primary education. This amounts to a mere 1%, while it is estimated that 10-15% have disabilities.

**Lack of medical care: 2 doctors per 100,000 inhabitants**
**Eye care: 3 Ophthalmologists in the whole country**
**Prevalence of blindness: 4.1%**
**Prevalence of low vision: 7.7%**
**Literacy total population: 27% (male 40%; female 16%)**
**Disability rate: 15.3% (number of people living in Africa with a mild or severe disability)**
Promotion of inclusive development and the rights of persons with disabilities

Independence has created a momentum for change: development is underway. It is important at this time to advocate for including eye care in the health system, and to include the rights of persons with disabilities in policies that are currently being developed.
International policy frameworks

Eye care – VISION 2020
VISION 2020 is the guiding framework for eliminating avoidable blindness by the year 2020. It was initiated by World Health Organisation (WHO) together with 20 international non-governmental organisations, including LIGHT FOR THE WORLD. The VISION 2020 partnership provides guidance and technical support to countries that have formally adopted its agenda. The currently operational VISION 2020 plan for South Sudan was drawn up in 2006.

Inclusive Education – Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
At the current pace, none of the MDGs will be achieved in South Sudan because of low capacity in national institutions, poor basic infrastructure and limited resources for development. The MDG on primary education for all is off-track, with low enrolment rates, and regional and gender disparities in access to education -limited rights for children with disabilities as well as girls and women.

Inclusive development – UNCRPD
In 2006, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which is a ground breaking multi-lateral treaty. Once ratified by UN Member States, it obliges governments and other actors in the development sector to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to, and are included in, all areas of life on an equal basis with others. The Republic of South Sudan has not yet ratified the UNCRPD. However a few provisions for the needs of persons with disabilities have been enshrined in the interim constitution. In addition, the government demonstrates commitment to this issue via intense preparations to ratify international and regional human rights conventions.
Donor policies
South Sudan receives a lot of international aid from bilateral and multilateral donors. Most institutional donors do not have strategies for the country that directly address the needs of persons with disabilities. Although some major donors, like DFID and USAID, have disability policy papers, this is not included in their strategy for South Sudan. The EC, however, promotes the active inclusion and full participation of disabled people in society, in line with the EU human rights approach to disability issues. Eye care is part of an officially agreed package of health services that basic health units will have to deliver, so it is an element of donor support involving internationally accepted standards. But it does not get priority in the current funding mechanism for health care in South Sudan.
Towards an inclusive society in South Sudan
*Fostering inclusive development 2013 - 2015*

Eye health and prevention of blindness
The VISION 2020 national plan for prevention of blindness of South Sudan states that there have been no comprehensive studies into the prevalence of blindness in the whole country. The estimated prevalence of blindness is 4.1%. The main causes are estimated to be cataract, Onchocerciasis Volvulus (OV), Trachoma and vitamin A deficiency. A 2007 study conducted by Ngondi et al. in Mankien revealed a high prevalence of trichiasis in children, underscoring the severity of blinding trachoma.

Priorities in the national prevention of blindness plan are to:
- form eye care units in primary health care clinics, state hospitals and teaching hospitals;
- ensure supply, storage and distribution of essential equipment, drugs and consumables;
- establish a reliable system for outreach to remote areas and referral;
- establish a suitable management system for eye care in the health sector of South Sudan;
- train human resources for eye care – ophthalmic clinical officers (OCO), cataract surgeons, ophthalmologists and support staff.

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD’s programme
LIGHT FOR THE WORLD is responding to these priorities by supporting, developing and expanding a comprehensive eye care programme in line with VISION 2020 principles.
Our objective is to promote quality comprehensive eye care services and address needs at primary and secondary level.
The activities we support focus on:
• creating necessary infrastructure;
• disease control and prevention;
• service delivery through outreach;
• and training of human resources for eye care.

Our support will be concentrated in Jonglei State and Lakes State. The emphasis will be on moving from an ‘emergency’ approach to delivering eye care services towards embedding the eye care services in the government system and putting referral chains in place.

We support:
• training of human resources - OCOs, primary eye care workers/nurses, cataract surgeons, and possibly ophthalmologists;
• building capacity within partner organisations for delivery of quality eye care services and linking to government;
• helping local governments (states, counties) to develop capacity in management and implementation of eye care;
• development of infrastructure for eye care at primary and secondary level by providing equipment, buildings and administration systems.

Rehabilitation and inclusive education for persons with disabilities.
There are only estimates but no real data concerning the number of persons living with disabilities in South Sudan. 15.3% of Africa’s inhabitants are estimated to live with a mild or severe disability, while 2.3% of people live with severe disabilities (unable to perform certain functions at all). We can safely assume that
the numbers in South Sudan are higher than the African average, given the recent history of war, poverty and deprivation.

The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare has taken initial steps to develop policies for persons with disabilities, but facilities and access to services is very limited due to gaps in service provision and stigma.

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD’s programme
LIGHT FOR THE WORLD’s work in rehabilitation and education is organised to fulfil the following strategic objective: Persons with disabilities living in poverty have access to rehabilitation, education, health, and livelihood and participate actively in their communities.

*The activities we support focus on:*
- establishing comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in which inclusive education is a full part of the matrix – following CBR guidelines;
- establishing models/ building on pilot programmes – innovation and replication or scaling up of best practices.

CBR focuses on enhancing the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation so they can access and benefit from education, employment, health and social services. CBR projects apply comprehensive WHO guidelines.

The inclusive education programme focuses on improving access to mainstream education for children with disabilities.
We support:
• teacher training in special needs education;
• improved physical access to schools;
• identifying and screening of children with disabilities and giving them appropriate treatment and rehabilitation to participate in family, community and school;
• capacity building for relevant authorities and school management.

In the communities and among all stakeholders, awareness is being raised on the rights and possibilities of children with disabilities with regard to education. At national level, the need for an inclusive education policy is being raised and worked on together with other stakeholders.

The current inclusive education and rehabilitation programmes will be integrated along the lines of the CBR Matrix in which education is one of the five sectors covered. LIGHT FOR THE WORLD and partners do not seek to cover all sectors themselves: a CBR programme can also be achieved by involving other stakeholders. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of persons with disabilities; their families, organisations and communities; and relevant government and non-government health, education, vocational, social and other services. The models that are developed will be shared and used as model programmes. Activities are focused on removing barriers as well as improved service delivery and attitudinal change in communities. Attention is shifting from improving access to the schools to quality education for all.
Promotion of inclusive development and rights for persons with disabilities
Linked to education and rehabilitation activities is the promotion of an inclusive society and the rights of persons living with disabilities. Attitudes in South Sudan towards persons with disabilities are mixed. Studies indicate that people consider disability as a curse, except for those who were wounded during the wars, and consider persons with disabilities as incapable of education or work. Often, persons with disabilities are considered unfit for marriage.

The Republic of South Sudan has not yet signed and ratified the UNCRPD but its constitution has a few relevant provisions. Persons with disabilities are entitled to the same educational facilities as other people (article 29). Article 30 states that persons with special needs and the elderly are entitled to participation in society and enjoyments of all freedoms and rights set out in the constitution, similar to all other citizens. Governments at all levels are responsible for guaranteeing this. In practice, there is probably still a lot to be desired.

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD’s programme
LIGHT FOR THE WORLD will promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their access to services offered by the government and civil society organizations. Based on the learnings in the education programme, we will build capacity amongst other actors for working in a more inclusive way. This could be government institutions (i.e. Ministry of Education), international organizations (i.e. UNICEF) as well as international and local NGOs. We will develop our services in disability mainstreaming as an organisation change process.
We will actively participate in advocating for government adoption and ratification of UNCRPD as a starting point for developing relevant national laws and regulations that foster an inclusive society.

Disabled People’s Organisations (DPO) will be strengthened through the CBR programmes to advocate for communities in which persons with disabilities can participate on an equal basis. Support for the formation of (associations of) DPOs and helping them to build capacity is a way to boost the participation of our target group in the process of advocacy, and to work on sustainability of the disability movement. If possible, this should include attention to organisations at national, state and county levels.
Roles LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

In fostering local ownership and programme development, LIGHT FOR THE WORLD will play the following roles:

- **Strategic funding** – we provide financial support to projects that make a difference and can be used as examples to government and other organisations.

- **Capacity building** – we strengthen the role of our partner organisations (the organisations we support financially as well as other actors, such as government institutions and other NGOs) by supplying technical support. We facilitate processes of organisational change and strengthening on request of the partner organisations and provide disability mainstreaming advisory services;

- **Linking and learning** (including knowledge management and research) – we facilitate strengthening of networks of organisations working on eye care and rehabilitation and inclusion so as to improve the quality of services and foster knowledge development.

- **Lobby and advocacy** – we lobby the government and other actors (NGOs, churches, etc.) to develop an inclusive society.
Key players in disability and eye care

ACROSS
Carter Centre
CBM (Christian Blind Mission)
CMA (Christian Mission Aid)
DPOs (Disabled People’s Organisations)
Handicap International
Martha Clinic
Ministry of General Education and Instruction (National & State)
Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Information
Networking Organizations (OVC)
SEM (Sudan Evangelical Mission)
Sight Savers
Usra Tuna

Sources
Contact:
The LIGHT FOR THE WORLD team of South Sudan
P.O. Box 613, Juba, South Sudan
T: +211 177800178
southsudan@lightfortheworld.nl

Impressum:
Content: Bertien Bos, George Nzomo, LIGHT FOR THE WORLD
Editor: Roeland Hoekstra, LIGHT FOR THE WORLD
Photos: LIGHT FOR THE WORLD