Title: Digital technology and rehabilitation: Bridging the service gap in India

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Background:

A lack of rehabilitation therapists including physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech

therapist, psychologists and special educators in rural and urban slum areas creates a major

service gap for early intervention and child rehab services for children with disabilities (Cwd) in

India. Amar Seva Sangam Ayikudy (ASSA) is an India non-profit, non-governmental

organization, run by people with disabilities. ASSA believes that digital technology offers unique

solutions towards bridging the healthcare gap for CwD in India. To further this goal, they have

created a family-centered, community based software solution called the Enabling Inclusion®

app that supports the provision of early intervention, child, youth and young adult rehabilitation

services, by connecting community rehabilitation workers and parents of children with

disabilities to rehabilitation specialists. Community rehabilitation workers are trained by

rehabilitation specialists in administering screening tools and conducting interventions at the

child's home or at centres close and accessible to families. The entire process is facilitated by the

EI App. It acts as a communication and organizational tool between all stakeholders, including

children with disabilities, their parents/ family members, community rehabilitation worker,

rehabilitation therapists / specialists and the organization's management. It is designed as a one

stop case management tool.

The Enabling Inclusion app has been used by 23 other NGOs across 7 states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Pondicherry) and 5 government organizations (NIEPID - National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, Tamil Nadu's Dept of Health, Education and Disability).

Overall, the EI® software solution has facilitated the screening of 2,84,024 children for developmental disabilities. As a result of the solution, 11,368 children have received rehabilitation services, 31,455 caregivers have been empowered and 16,761 community workers have been trained since January 2015. Due to awareness brought about by the community workers 219,050 people within communities were trained in disability rights. Implementing digital technologies holds unique advantages for densely populated countries such as India with strong digital infrastructure. It allows for remote communication across all stakeholders, thus bridging service gaps for children with disabilities and their families and communities in India.