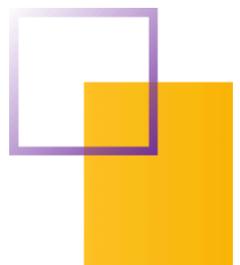




ACCESS FOR AID

BRIDGING CONNECTIVITY IN
CONFLICT ZONES FOR
HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH
AFFECTED BY LONGEST INTERNET
SHUTDOWN IN MANIPUR IN NORTH
EAST HIMALAYAN REGION OF INDIA



INTRODUCTION

Access for Aid is a humanitarian initiative, by the Council for Social and Digital Development (CSDD) and the North East Development Foundation (NEDF) aimed at providing free internet broadband packs to support humanitarian groups and agencies operating in conflict zones affected by prolonged internet shutdowns, since May - June 2023, in 3 districts of Manipur in North East Himalayan Region of India, bordering Myanmar. The project specifically targets locations experiencing ethnic violence between two major indigenous tribal groups, Meitei and Kukis, where access to reliable internet connectivity is critical for coordinating relief efforts, facilitating communication, and accessing vital information.



The Access for Aid project represents a critical intervention to address the challenges faced by humanitarian groups and agencies operating in conflict zones with internet shutdowns. By providing free internet broadband packs, this initiative aims to ensure that essential relief and rehabilitation efforts can continue unimpeded, ultimately contributing to the well-being and resilience of affected communities. Internet services were shut down in the Manipur state on May 3, 2023, immediately after violence broke out and restored on September 23, after 143 days, but had to be curbed again 4 days later, until the end of December 2023, selectively.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the Access for Aid project is to bridge the connectivity gap in conflict zones by providing free internet broadband packs to humanitarian groups and agencies. This initiative seeks to ensure that relief and rehabilitation efforts can continue unhindered despite impacts from long spells of internet shutdowns, affecting social and economic conditions and thereby enabling groups and organizations to effectively coordinate responses, deliver aid, and support affected communities.

THE OUTREACH

The project has identified 60 humanitarian groups and bodies in conflict zones, buffer zones and relief camps covering 3 districts, and providing them with no-charge broadband internet packs and connectivity for 6 months duration. Currently, 26 groups have been reached out.

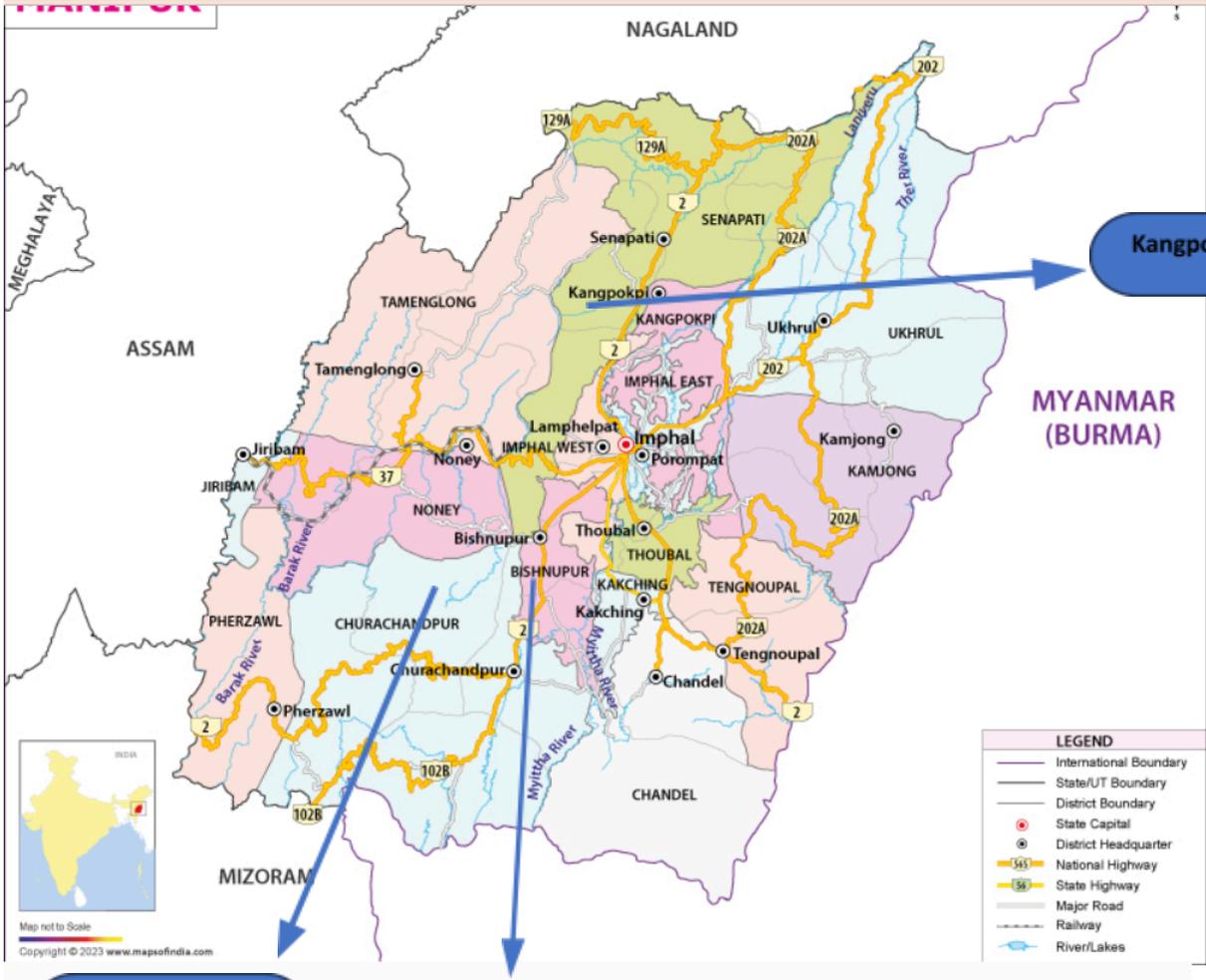
PROJECT DURATION

The project is being launched from January until June 2024

LOCATIONS

The project is being implemented in 3 most affected districts - Bishnupur, Churachandpur and Kangkopki District.





Churachandpur District

Bishnupur District

Kangpokpi District



KEY COMPONENTS

Needs Assessment: To identify the specific requirements of humanitarian groups and agencies operating in conflict zones with internet shutdowns. This assessment informs the allocation of free internet broadband packs based on the size of the organization, the scope of operations, and the severity of internet disruptions.

Partnerships: Forging partnerships with internet service providers, and other stakeholders to secure free or subsidized internet broadband packs for distribution to humanitarian organizations. Collaborate with local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community leaders to facilitate access to affected areas.

Distribution Strategy: Developing and implementing a distribution strategy to ensure equitable access to free internet broadband packs among eligible humanitarian groups and agencies.

Capacity Building: Provide training and capacity-building support to humanitarian organizations on leveraging internet connectivity for effective relief and rehabilitation efforts. Offering guidance on utilizing digital tools, communication platforms, and online resources to enhance coordination, data collection, and reporting.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Project monitoring internet connectivity levels, usage patterns, and outcomes among supported humanitarian groups. To focus on gathering feedback from stakeholders to identify challenges, successes, and areas for improvement.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- **Enhanced Coordination:** Improved coordination among humanitarian groups and agencies through uninterrupted access to internet connectivity, enabling more efficient and effective delivery of relief and rehabilitation services.
- **Timely Response:** Faster response times to emergencies and crises due to improved communication channels and real-time access to information and resources.



- **Empowered Communities:** Empowerment of affected communities through increased access to information, communication, and support services facilitated by internet connectivity.



- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Raised awareness of the importance of maintaining internet access during conflicts and crises, leading to advocacy efforts to protect digital rights and prevent future internet shutdowns.

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