



# Educational support to children with disabilities during Covid-19

Sunanda Mavillapalli



**Leonard Cheshire supports individuals to live, learn and work as independently as possible**

- We provide inclusive education and economic inclusion programmes that support people with disabilities in 15 countries across Africa and Asia
- Inclusive education is a core thematic area for Leonard Cheshire's global work.
- Our model delivers a range of interventions and a systematic approach to address key barriers:
  1. Attitudinal and behavioural barriers related to social norms
  2. Infrastructural and environmental barriers
  3. Policy barriers
  4. Resource barriers





## Key summary of Leonard Cheshire's response

- Collaborating with the government directives to prevent further spread of Covid-19
- Responding to emerging needs and priorities of girls/children with disabilities, their families
- Rapid Reviews to understand the needs of girls/children with disabilities and their families.

## How are children studying at home?

- 87% of children with disabilities were accessing education at home during Covid-19.
- The majority of children with disabilities were learning via their **school notes** (56%) and **school textbooks** (73%).
- Children unable to access education at home, reasons included **lack of study materials**, **severity of disability** or **support required** from their teachers.



## Concerns shared by parents of girls with disabilities

- Lack of access to **education resources** (62%)
- Lack of **skills to support home schooling**, especially when it comes to supporting the additional needs of children with disabilities (40%).
  - 80% of parents said they do support their children at home; 64% said they provide a daily programme of study for their children.
  - 26% sat with their children to interact and only 20% read with their children.
  - 45% provided other moral support and motivation to their children.





## Key barriers highlighted during/post lockdown for girls with disabilities

- Limited access to technology (phones, radios, television, etc.)
- Lack of access to rehabilitation services
- Higher poverty levels - risk of pregnancy, child marriage
- Lack of accessible learning content delivered remotely
- Exposure to GBV, child protection and COVID-19 infection
- Inadequate follow up due to lack of constant teacher-learner interaction
- No access to food and medicines

## Main challenges reported by teachers

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- ❑ 81% of the teachers can't reach the children through remote learning technologies
- ❑ 49% of teachers had provided learning materials (e.g. study packs, reading materials, online/softcopy study packs, hard copies of study packs and learning schedules) to children with disabilities
- ❑ But 87% said they are not able to visit the children's homes, 20% don't have the contact details of the children



## How did we respond to barriers ?

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- **Weekly phone calls** with project caregivers/beneficiaries to ensure any concerns from the girls were captured
  - Opened up a toll-free **help line** number
  - Distributed **dignity kits and hygiene packs**
  - Provided **information on prevention of the spread of Covid-19**
  - Produced **informational brochures** for parents or guardians
  - Developed **radio talk shows**
  - Piloted an **Online E-Learning Platform for Capacity building of teacher**
  - Use of **government platforms** for promoting accessible learning programmes

## Recommendations provided by teachers to improve home learning

- Maintain daily study hours and timetable
- Parental support and their involvement in home learning
- Access to smartphones for parents to interact with teachers
- Assistive devices for learners with disabilities e.g. eyeglasses, wheelchairs etc.
- Provision of ICT devices/resources to teachers
- Access to TV and radio education programmes
- Facilitation of basic needs/equipment, e.g. solar lamps for learners and sanitary kits for girls
- Increase study resources, revision materials, books and internet technology
- Identify ways of reaching the learners, for example organising face-to-face sessions with a restricted number of learners at a time.

## Way Forward- Some ideas

- Further research on how different types of disability and gender are affected by home schooling and their access to learning materials.
- To support families; practical advice and information on how to manage home learning, emotional support and encouragement etc.
- Need for continued medical assessment to ensure children with disabilities have access to the assistive devices they need to support their learning .
- Explore innovative ways of connecting children remotely and providing additional psycho-social support and access to health information, especially concerning Covid-19
- Take this opportunity while schools are closed to increase the teachers' skills in inclusive education and capacity to deliver learning remotely using available ICT and digital resources.

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Thank You