Learning lessons from COVID-19

Easy read version of: **A disability-inclusive response to COVID-19: four lessons learned about including people with disabilities in humanitarian aid**
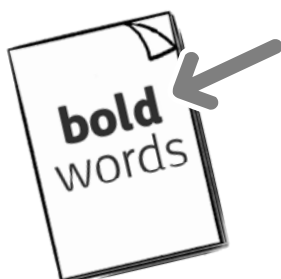
easy read

Contents

In this easy read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.

Some words are blue and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

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Introduction

Inclusive Futures is an organisation that works to make things fairer for people with disabilities around the world.

We have been helping people with disabilities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria and Tanzania during **COVID-19**.
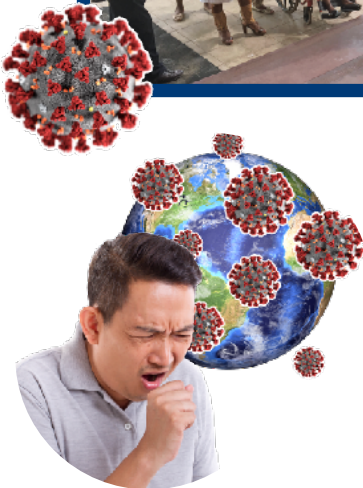
COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus. It is an illness that is spreading around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.
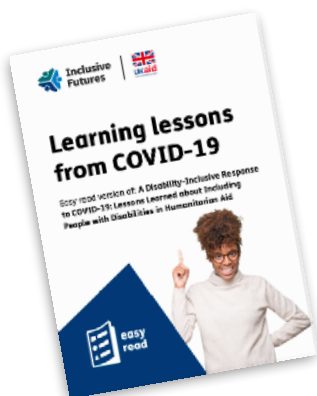
This is a report about what we have learned and what we can do to make things better in the future.

Why we work with people with disabilities

There are more than 1 billion people with disabilities in the world.

About 1 in every 7 people has a disability.

COVID-19 and people with disabilities

People with disabilities are more likely to be seriously ill if they catch COVID-19.

People with disabilities are also more likely to need care and support services. Many care and support services did not work as well during COVID-19.

Many countries did not do enough to protect the **rights** of people with disabilities during COVID-19.

Your **rights** are things you are allowed to have and do by law.

People with disabilities and poverty

Poverty means not having enough money to pay for the things you need to live.

People in poverty are more likely to develop a disability because they can't get the healthcare and support they need.

People with disabilities are more likely to become poor because they don't have the same chances to work and earn money as other people.

Governments are not doing enough to:

- collect information about people with disabilities

- involve people with disabilities in decisions about services

- make sure people with disabilities can access support, especially during COVID-19.

Working with people with disabilities during COVID-19

Inclusive Futures works with people with disabilities in Africa and Asia.

When COVID-19 started, we had to change many of the ways that we worked.

During this time we:

- gave money to some people with disabilities, to support them

- provided soap to help keep people safe and clean

- helped people with mental health conditions

- helped people get health services

- helped people with disabilities who run businesses.

We also talked to governments about how they should be helping people with disabilities.

During COVID-19 we have:

- spent £1.48million on our work

- reached 60,000 people

- given information to over 14 million people through social media, TV and radio.

Learning 1: Working with organisations run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities

We have learned that you help people with disabilities more if you involve their organisations.

In Kenya

In Kenya, organisations collected information about the needs and **priorities** of people with disabilities during COVID-19.

Priorities are the things which are most important to you.

In Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, organisations made sure that people with disabilities could use their mobile phones to get money safely.

In Nigeria

In Nigeria, we worked with people with disabilities to give information about COVID-19 over the radio.

What we learned

We found that it took some time to find good ways of working together with organisations run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities.

But it was worth the time it took to build a good relationship.

It was also worth helping the organisations run by people with disabilities to communicate by video online so they could be part of conversations.

Learning 2: Collecting information about people with disabilities

In many countries, there is not enough information being collected about people with disabilities.

Before we can help people with disabilities in different countries, we need to know:

- where people are

- what they need and what their priorities are.

Where there wasn't enough information about people with disabilities, we worked with organisations run by people with disabilities to find out:

- where people were

- what their needs and priorities were.

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In Nepal

In Nepal, there wasn't enough local information about people with disabilities.

So we worked with local organisations run by people with disabilities.

We telephoned each person to see what their needs and priorities were.

We gave wheelchairs, walking frames and other devices to over 50 people.

In Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, we needed to collect information from people with disabilities.

But people didn't always understand exactly what information we wanted.

We had to learn different ways to ask questions of different people.

We soon learned what people's needs and priorities were.

What we learned

We need to collect information in different ways to understand what people with disabilities want and need.

Learning 3: Information must be accessible

When COVID-19 started, information in most countries was not being made accessible for people with disabilities.
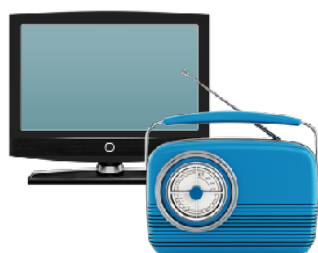
People with disabilities did not know how to keep safe.

They did not know what the rules were.

We worked with organisations run by people with disabilities, TV, radio, newspapers and governments to provide accessible information.

In Nigeria

In Nigeria, we worked with local radio and TV to explain more about COVID-19.

We also helped to put up accessible signs at health centres.

After a while, people started to be able to keep themselves and their families safe.

People started to understand more about washing hands and wearing face masks.

In Kenya

In Kenya, we realised that we had to make sure the information was right for people with different needs and priorities.

We provided tablet computers for people with deafblindness and their families.

This meant that people could have information about how to keep safe from COVID-19.

In Nepal

In Nepal, we worked with the staff at a call centre.

The call centre staff needed to give information to people with disabilities about disability rights and mental health problems.

The staff gave information about how people with disabilities can access support.

What we learned

Information needs to be presented in different ways so it is accessible for all people with disabilities.

Learning 4: Making things better for people with disabilities in the future

The best way to make changes that help people with disabilities in the long term, is to work closely with organisations run by people with disabilities.

As well as providing help in an emergency, we also work to:

- improve the way people think about people with disabilities

- tackle the things that stop people with disabilities taking part.

In Kenya

In Kenya, many people couldn't work. Many jobs stopped.

People with disabilities tend to work in jobs that are not very secure. This means their job could easily stop if things go badly.

We worked with very small businesses run by people with disabilities to keep going during COVID-19.

This meant that people with disabilities made money again.

In Nigeria

In Nigeria, we helped the government to work with organisations run by people with disabilities.

The government realised it needed to work with these organisations to make sure people with disabilities would be okay in the future.

We worked with them to make improvements to local hospitals so that they can be used by people with disabilities.

In Tanzania

In Tanzania, we worked with the government and an organisation run by people with disabilities to involve people with disabilities in government plans.

The organisation run by people with disabilities has now been invited to work with the Prime Minister's office to work out how to open up schools again, after COVID-19.

What we learned

We can make changes which last, like:

- job training

- making buildings easy to use

- working with the government.

These changes can improve life for people with disabilities now and in the future.

An example of our work

This is Jinnatunnesa. She is 28 and lives in Bangladesh with her family. She is deafblind.

Her husband lost his job because of COVID-19.

She was given money to help her buy food and to repay a loan.

It is one example of the people we helped in Bangladesh.

Nearly half of people with disabilities we spoke to had no money coming in at all.

People were only able to eat 2 times a day.

We helped by giving money through an **app** on people's phones.

An **app** is a computer programme for your phone, tablet or computer, to help you do something.

We gave money in this way to nearly 3000 people.

After receiving the money, people like Jinnatunnesa and her family were able to go back to having 3 meals a day.

Some people used the money to get their businesses started again.

What's next?

Based on the work we have done during COVID-19, we have learned that we need to:

- work more with organisations run by people with disabilities in different countries

- collect more information about people with disabilities in different countries

- provide information that is accessible

- work to improve things for people with disabilities for the future.

For more information

If you need more information please go to our website:
www.inclusivefutures.org