

## A holistic approach towards Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Bangladesh – Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD)

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The aim of the project is to improve access to Inclusive Education for children with disabilities and to influence changes in the education system to benefit all learners. The engagement and involvement of children with disabilities was central to the project, and the experiences and opinions of these children were collected through one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions throughout the project period.

### QUOTE:

*“The project made great strides towards ensuring that all children have access to a quality education, supporting over 2,500 children with disabilities to enrol in mainstream primary school, and equipping their teachers with new skills and knowledge.”*

—Ms. Aimee Long, LCD International Programmes Officer

### FACTS & FIGURES

- 2,128 children with disabilities were supported to enrol in 262 schools in the Nilphamari district; and an additional 400 that were already in school were supported to continue attending.
- 402 teachers were trained on Inclusive Education.
- 3. The project starting data indicated that only 18% of children with disabilities in the district were going to school regularly. Within a year of project implementation, the attendance of children with disabilities in school had increased considerably to 66.4% and the dropout rate had fallen from 2.9% to 0.8%.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

A substantial proportion of children with disabilities in Bangladesh are out of school, do not receive the assessment or support services they need in order to attend school, and face such additional barriers as: stigma; lack of awareness of their rights; inaccessible school infrastructure; lack of teaching and learning materials; lack of inclusive pedagogy; and lack of accessible public transport to and from school. Further, the majority of teachers have not been trained on how to support children

with disabilities in the classroom or how to ensure that lessons are inclusive. In addition, there is no policy in place to ensure that primary school curriculum and textbooks are accessible to children with disabilities.

## **SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY**

Leonard Cheshire Disability initiated the project in Nilphamari, one of the poorest districts in the northern zone of Bangladesh. Rather than focusing on just one area of education, this project employed a holistic approach that addressed a variety of the main barriers affecting the ability of children with disabilities to enrol in and attend school, and aimed to ensure a sustainable impact. Notably, children with disabilities participated in accessibility audits of their schools so they could contribute to suggestions on how best to reduce the infrastructure barriers that they face. A detailed review of the primary school curriculum and textbooks was conducted in collaboration with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board and the Directorate of Primary Education. As a result, the Education Minister and other key authorities agreed to extend their support for promoting Inclusive Education and to roll-out these recommendations through the appropriate departments. Working with the National Academy for Primary Education, the project reviewed and made changes to the Inclusive Education module offered by the Directorate of Primary Education, and as a result, all primary school teachers will be trained using this module.

## **OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY**

The impact of this project is likely to continue for years to come, as it has successfully created greater awareness among parents, communities, and teachers on the importance of enrolling children with disabilities in mainstream schools going forward. LCD will continue to refine its Inclusive Education model and will roll it out across Africa and Asia. This model represents good value for money, particularly given its holistic and comprehensive nature, and yet it can be easily adapted and replicated to new areas or environments, taking into consideration local contexts.

Photo: Yes

Life story: No

## **CONTACT**

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