

# **Promoting rights through community action: improved access to inclusive education for children with disabilities**

**Nilphamari, Bangladesh**

Leonard Cheshire Disability

## Leonard Cheshire Disability's Inclusive Education

Inclusive education refers to children with disabilities attending mainstream schools alongside non-disabled children. In an inclusive school, children with disabilities do not study in separate classes; instead teaching methods, textbooks, materials, and the school environment are designed so that girls and boys with a range of abilities and disabilities – including physical, sensory, intellectual and mobility impairments – can learn in the same classroom amongst their peers.



# LCD's Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

- January 2012 – December 2014, funded through the European Commission
- Implemented by LCD's partner, Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)
- Project objective: To create a conducive environment for the promotion of inclusive education by working with children with disabilities, their parents, teachers, local schools and the education authorities.
- Specifically:
  - To ensure that 2,100 children with disabilities were enrolled and retained in mainstream schools, achieving quality education.
  - To ensure barrier-free access to education and the necessary accompanying health & rehabilitation services.
  - To create a knowledge base and facilitate linkages in order to support collective actions of a larger alliance of NSAs.

## The holistic approach

- Child centred approach, adapting the environment to the child, addressing the main barriers preventing children with disabilities to enrol and stay in school
- Within one year, the attendance of children with disabilities increased from 18% to 66.4%, while drop out rate fell from 2.9% (pre-project) to 0.8%. Over 2,100 children were supported into education.
- Key intervention areas:
  - Assessment of each child and subsequent support
  - Training of over 400 teachers on inclusive education methodologies
  - Establishment of inclusive education resource centres
  - Infrastructure adaptations in schools to improve accessibility
  - Child-to-child clubs and parents groups
  - Sustainable, affordable transport solutions to reach school



# Advocacy and policy change

- Awareness raising and sensitisation around disability inclusion and rights of people with disabilities.
- Encourage lasting change and inclusion in all levels of the education system
  - Parental engagement and ownership
  - Review of the primary school curriculum and textbooks to lobby for accessibility and inclusivity, working with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
- Teacher training
  - Lobbying of the Directorate of Primary Education to standardise the inclusive education training module for all teachers
  - With the National Academy for Primary Education, a review of the DPE Inclusive Education module took place and modifications made.

## Inclusive Education in Bangladesh going forward

- Policy brief and government engagement/ownership
- Teacher training
- UNGEI
  - [UN Girls' Education Initiative Annual report 2014](#)