

## Leonard Cheshire Policy Briefing

# Mitigating the Global Impact of Covid-19 whilst fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities

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## **Executive Summary and recommendations**

At Leonard Cheshire, we are extremely concerned about how this global pandemic will impact on the lives and livelihoods of persons with disabilities, who are often already one of the most disadvantaged and isolated groups in societies. Persons with disabilities must not be left behind in the response to this pandemic, and we have critical concerns that this crisis will result in a reversal of gains made in inclusive education and meaningful employment, as well as how social protection adaptations will be inclusive and how persons with disabilities will access information and support services.

Protection of human rights and efforts to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities are needed across the preparedness, response and recovery spectrum. Persons with disabilities could be left without vital support and advocacy due to the effects of Covid-19, with their rights denied, and them being put at risk of being the hardest hit by this crisis. We have identified six priority areas, and developed the following recommendations:

### **1. Access to information on Covid-19 for persons with disabilities**

- All Covid-19 information and prevention initiatives need to be inclusive, and Governments have a responsibility to ensure the information reaches everyone, whether they have access to the internet or not. Countries need to increase access to electronic devices and new technologies to all, especially to persons with disabilities.
- Government entities have a responsibility to provide communication that is equally effective to all audiences at all times, and reaches everyone, and all new platforms and funding initiatives supporting the dissemination of information on the virus must be accessible to all, including to persons with disabilities.

### **2. Educational progress of children with disabilities**

- The needs of children and young persons with disabilities need to be integrated in all initiatives exploring alternative ways of learning from the onset. Expertise from disability charities and DPOs on the ground should be leveraged to feed into these processes.
- National governments need to mitigate the disproportionate effects on children who already experience barriers to education, and implement the right support to ensure children with disabilities can continue to learn.
- Children with disabilities must be fully considered in international, national and local efforts to bridge the digital gap, and any low-tech solutions rolled out in the meantime need to be adapted to children with disabilities.
- Where children with disabilities do have access, it is essential that online platforms and resources are developed in a way that ensures they are fully accessible.

- Approaches to remote learning must be developed and delivered with children with disabilities in mind to ensure learning outcomes are delivered equally to all.

### **3. Protection and care of persons with disabilities**

- Appropriate safeguarding responses should be locally-designed and gender-responsive. Coordination between different stakeholders is essential to strengthen the response and for effective use of resources.
- Donors should consider offering additional funding to organisations who are redesigning programmes in response to the pandemic in order to ensure that safeguarding is not only prioritised in programme design, but effectively resourced.
- Mechanisms for reporting safeguarding issues should be strengthened or created where necessary.

### **4. Economic livelihoods and access to appropriate social safety nets for persons with disabilities**

- Countries must guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all, including to persons with disabilities, but also promote access to additional financial aid for persons with disabilities and their families.
- Support mechanisms rolled out internationally and nationally must be inclusive, and offer adequate social protection for persons with disabilities.
- Businesses must continue to provide adequate support to existing employees during the lockdown and once they have returned to work. For instance, employers must ensure that people with disabilities can independently and safely work from home or existing workplace. New businesses and businesses that will grow during the crisis must also be inclusive by adopting policies to attract and retain persons with disabilities.
- Governments need to support decent work for all, in line with SDG 8 and Article 27 of the CRPD, and when introducing special emergency public procurement procedures, they need to pay attention to business opportunities for persons with disabilities.

### **5. Social isolation of persons with disabilities**

- Governments and companies offering free access to educational and cultural resources to overcome social isolation must ensure these are available to persons with disabilities.
- Digital tools to overcome social isolation developed by tech companies need to be inclusive.
- More data is needed to better understand the many effects of pandemics on persons with disabilities, including social isolation.

## 6. Youth with disabilities

- Responses to Covid-19 on employment and education need to be inclusive, and acknowledge that youth with disabilities are among those who will be hit the hardest.
- Existing and new mechanisms to spread information on Covid-19 need to be inclusive, and address the needs of young persons with disabilities.

## Background

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, the WHO Director-General officially declared that Covid-19 is now a global pandemic. As a global organisation working to enable persons with disabilities to live, learn and work as independently as they choose, **we are extremely concerned about how this global pandemic will impact on the lives and livelihoods of persons with disabilities, who are often already one of the most disadvantaged and isolated groups in societies.**

**Persons with disabilities must not be left behind in responses to this pandemic.** While opportunities for greater inclusion may arise through, for example, the rapid growth in use of technology, there are many areas in which persons with disabilities could be left behind. Critical concerns include a reversal of gains made in inclusive education and meaningful employment; how social protection adaptations will be inclusive and how persons with disabilities will access information and support services. **There is an urgent need to avoid widening disparities and honour commitments to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to leave no one behind, and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities.**

This briefing aims to outline what Leonard Cheshire considers to be some of the most urgent challenges that persons with disabilities will face in light of this pandemic and **what can be done to ensure that persons with disabilities are not left further behind as a result of this global crisis, but are properly included in policy and programmatic responses to Covid-19.** Furthermore, persons with disabilities need to be seen as co-creators of Covid-19 responses, and not solely as victims or recipients.

At Leonard Cheshire, we are especially concerned about the impact that Covid-19 is having on:

1. **Access to information** on Covid-19 for persons with disabilities
2. **Educational progress** of children with disabilities
3. **Protection and care** of persons with disabilities
4. **Economic livelihoods** and access to appropriate **social safety nets** for persons with disabilities
5. **Social isolation** of persons with disabilities.

## 6. Youth with disabilities

### Policy areas

#### 1. Access to information on Covid-19 for persons with disabilities

##### a) State of play

Most governments are prioritizing projects to ensure everyone accesses information to protect themselves and play their part in slowing down the spread of the virus. However, **barriers to accessing information puts persons with disabilities at a higher risk of contracting Covid-19.**

**It is essential that information about how to stop the spread of the virus, as well as information about emergency measures being put in place by national governments in response to the pandemic, is made available in accessible formats.** This includes, for example, closed captioning, sign language interpretation, large print, high contrast print, and accessible digital media.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Catalina Devandas, recently warned that **little has been done to provide persons with disabilities with the guidance and support needed to protect them during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic**, even though many of them are part of the high-risk group.

##### b) Challenges

Without face to face contact, a lot of the information about the virus will be shared online. For instance, UNICEF is actively taking steps to provide accurate information about the virus by working with online partners like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok to make sure that accurate advice is available, as well as taking steps to inform the public when inaccurate information emerges. UNICEF also worked with WHO to develop online training modules for health workers, and FAQs and guidance for pregnant women and children.

Yet, this represents a challenge as the information presented online is not always accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, **many people in low and middle-income countries have limited access to these technologies, and those with disabilities are less likely than their non-disabled peers to have access to online services.** Therefore, many persons with disabilities continue to rely on low-tech means of communication.

##### c) What needs to be done?

**All Covid-19 information and prevention initiatives need to be inclusive.** Governments need to ensure the information reaches everyone, whether they have access to the internet or not. This means countries need to increase access to electronic devices and new technologies to all, especially to persons with disabilities. At the same time, all information shared through the use of technology needs to be inclusive. This includes ensuring that websites and other digital platforms are accessible to people with vision, hearing, learning, physical and intellectual impairments. Televised public announcements must be live-captioned and provided

by qualified sign language interpreters. Information also needs to be able to be delivered via assistive technology. All guidance needs to be in accessible formats to maximize the health of persons with disabilities and minimize the spread of infection, and information about the spread of the virus in their country and region needs to be accessible alongside basic information about how to protect themselves from the virus.

**Government entities have a responsibility to provide communication that is equally effective to all audiences at all times, and all new platforms and funding initiatives supporting the dissemination of information on the virus must be accessible to all**, including to persons with disabilities. All initiatives focusing on debunking myths and addressing misinformation about the virus, such as DFID's new H2H fund, equally need to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

## 2 Educational progress of children with disabilities

### a) State of play

**The widespread closure of schools has had an impact worldwide.** Statistics compiled by UNESCO estimate that just under 1.5 million learners have been affected (82% of total enrolled learners) with closures announced across 156 countries.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as proved by previous epidemics, the longer children stay away from school, the less likely they are to ever return.<sup>2</sup>

**Digital learning initiatives have been introduced or scaled up in many localities in order to allow children to continue to learn from home.** Learning content is mostly delivered through the internet, but also via TV and radio programmes. Some governments even use their official Twitter accounts to regularly disseminate the information on online learning.<sup>3</sup> Digital learning represents both an opportunity and a challenge for children with disabilities in particular.

### b) Challenges

**The risk of digital exclusion of children with disabilities represents a potential drawback of online learning initiatives.** Evidence from Leonard Cheshire's Disability Data Portal project found that fewer persons with disabilities compared to persons without disabilities have a mobile phone and use the internet.<sup>4</sup> In areas where there is a disparity between persons with and persons without disabilities in access to this technology, **children with disabilities risk falling behind while schools are closed.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures>

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, UNICEF scales support to 145 countries to keep children learning, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-scales-support-145-countries-keep-children-learning-covid-19-forces-majority>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2020/03/24/how-are-countries-addressing-the-covid-19-challenges-in-education-a-snapshot-of-policy-measures/>

<sup>4</sup> Leonard Cheshire (2018) Disability Data Review: [https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/fileadmin/uploads/lcdp/Documents/report-web\\_version.pdf](https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/fileadmin/uploads/lcdp/Documents/report-web_version.pdf)

Finally, there is a risk that **children with disabilities who have recently begun to be included in education may drop out and not return once schools have reopened**. For instance, school closures during the 2014–16 Ebola epidemic increased dropouts, child labour, violence against children, teen pregnancies, and persisting socioeconomic and gender disparities<sup>5</sup>. The closure of schools to control Covid-19 transmission may have a differential impact on women and adolescent girls as they provide most of the informal care within families, with the consequence of limiting their work, economic opportunities and education opportunities. In many contexts, girls may be less likely to return to school after the crisis.

#### **d) What needs to be done?**

We welcome the many initiatives focusing on digital learning that can allow learning to continue. However, **access to distance learning through digital technologies can be highly unequal, and not always adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities**. In line with Article 24 of the CRPD, and SDG4, every child has the right to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities should be promoted for all.

We need to ensure **the needs of children and young persons with disabilities are integrated in all initiatives exploring alternative ways of learning from the onset**, such as the Global Education Initiative led by UNESCO and supported by technology companies such as Microsoft and Google, and that **expertise from disability charities and DPOs on the ground feed into these processes**. Initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Education's new commitment, which aims to support developing countries mitigating both the immediate and long-term disruptions to education being caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, need to be used to reach the most vulnerable, including children with disabilities.

**National governments need to mitigate the disproportionate effects on children who already experience barriers to education, and implement the right support to ensure children with disabilities can continue to learn**. International funding mechanisms to support Ministries of Education and local education partners, such as the GPE's US\$250 million new fund aimed to help developing countries mitigate both the immediate and long-term disruptions to education being caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and sustain learning, must address children with disabilities.

It means that **children with disabilities must be fully considered in international, national and local efforts to bridge the digital gap**, and any low-tech solutions rolled out in the meantime need to be adapted to children with disabilities. Where children with disabilities do have access, it is essential that **online platforms and resources are developed in a way that ensures they are fully accessible**. Approaches to remote learning must be developed and delivered with children with disabilities in mind to ensure learning outcomes are delivered equally to all. Finally, all initiatives, whether they are low-tech or high-tech, need to **support teachers, parents and caregivers in adapting to home schooling modalities**.

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<sup>5</sup> The Lancet Global Health, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(20\)30116-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30116-9/fulltext)

### 3 Protection and care of persons with disabilities

#### a) State of play

**It is essential that policy makers implement comprehensive safeguarding measures that protect persons with disabilities throughout the Covid-19 response.** Persons with disabilities, and particularly those who experience other intersections of inequality, are at increased risk of harm due to a number of factors arising from or exacerbated by this pandemic. Some key challenges include access to health, gender-based violence, child protection, and reporting<sup>6</sup>.

#### b) Challenges

**Access to healthcare is a key concern in terms of prevention of harm to persons with disabilities during the pandemic.** Some persons with disabilities who contract the virus could develop a severe case of the disease as it can worsen existing health conditions. In addition, persons with disabilities may not receive care and support services to which they would normally have access putting them at further risk of harm. Requirements to self-isolate and restrictions on the use of transportation may also prevent persons with disabilities from accessing health centres putting them at further risk of harm. There is also a gendered dimension to the issue of accessing healthcare. During previous outbreaks of viruses and diseases, women were less likely than men to have power in decision making around the outbreak, and their needs therefore were largely unmet. For example, during the Ebola outbreak, resources for reproductive and sexual health were diverted to the emergency response, contributing to a rise in maternal mortality in a region with one of the highest rates in the world.

**Incidences of Gender-based violence are likely to increase as a result of Covid-19.** As the closure of workplaces and the slowdown of the global economy begins to affect livelihoods, intimate partner violence may increase. Furthermore, self-isolation may increase the psychological impacts of violence as well as the severity and frequency of the violence taking place – as survivors may have to be placed in quarantine with a perpetrator. Girls with disabilities who are marginalised due to harmful social norms, and who may already have been excluded from income generating activities, are more at risk of being forced into survival sex, transactional sex or sexual exploitation and abuse during times of crisis. In other disease and virus-related crises, there has been an increase in sexual violence broadly. Girls with disabilities may be at further increased risk of violence due to their lack of power in communities, their potential lack of access to resources and in some contexts their increased levels of social isolation.

**Child protection issues can be exacerbated by crises such as this pandemic.** Violence and other forms of child abuse may increase at the family level. There is a heightened risk of neglect, violence, exploitation, psychological distress and negative impacts on children's development. Child and Forced Marriage may increase as a means to cope economically for families (this can be linked to a need to decrease the number of mouths to feed or bringing in money from bride price). Families may feel that marrying their daughters may provide more safety for her than her family can

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<sup>6</sup> UK AID (2020), *Presentation: Girl's Education Challenge - Safeguarding and Covid-19*.

provide in the current climate as well. With an increase in child marriage, we may also see an increase in early pregnancy and associated death.

**Persons with disabilities are likely to face additional barriers when seeking to report abuse as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.** For instance, limited contact with their loved ones can impair persons with disabilities' ability to report abuse or neglect when they live in institutions and facilities. Established reporting mechanisms may no longer function, and services may be closed. Where services remain open, staff capacity to respond may be reduced due to illness or due to the diversion of funds to deal with the public health emergency. Safety, security and access to justice services may be disrupted as government institutions shift resources to the public health crisis. In addition, schools can be an important point of disclosure of abuse by children, and their closure removes another mechanism of reporting.

#### c) What needs to be done?

Appropriate safeguarding responses should be **locally-designed and gender-responsive**. **Coordination** between different stakeholders is essential to strengthen the response and for effective use of resources. Donors need to ensure additional resourcing is factored in when redesigning programmes in response to the pandemic in order to ensure that safeguarding is not only prioritised in design, but effectively resourced. **Mechanisms for reporting** safeguarding issues and of support should be strengthened or created where necessary.

## 4 Economic livelihoods and access to appropriate social safety nets for persons with disabilities

### a) State of play

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), global job losses as a result of Covid-19 are likely to significantly exceed their early estimate of 25 million.<sup>7</sup>

Given the additional barriers faced by persons with disabilities in relation to securing and retaining employment, **it is likely they will be amongst the hardest hit by the economic impact of the pandemic**.

Persons with disabilities are especially vulnerable for several reasons: (1) **many work in vulnerable employment** (short-term, part-time, informal), and may be first to go when businesses lay-off staff; and (2) **many work as self-employed and will struggle**, as business slows down or indeed halts altogether due to government restrictions. This is particularly worrying as people in informal employment would not have social protection they need in times of crisis.

### b) Challenges

There is a risk that **diversity and inclusion take a backseat, as businesses focus on survival**, and set aside other priorities or commitments from 'before' Coronavirus,

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<sup>7</sup> Reuters (2020) 'Tens of millions face losing jobs in escalating coronavirus crisis' Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-jobs/tens-of-millions-face-losing-jobs-in-escalating-coronavirus-crisis-idUSKBN21D374>

limiting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the immediate future and reducing or removing targeted support to existing employees.

Social protection policies and programmes reduce the impact of crises, such as the current pandemic, on persons with disabilities, reinforcing their ability to cope with unemployment. Despite the lack of literature on the effects of pandemics on the lives of persons with disabilities, pandemics are likely to intensify risk and insecurity for persons with disabilities in LMICs like in other countries. **The inadequacy of inclusive social protection systems in LMICs is likely to increase the burden of pandemics on persons with disabilities.** As a result, there is a high likelihood that a greater proportion of persons with disabilities will be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and be more at risk of experiencing extreme poverty as a result.<sup>8</sup>

### c) What needs to be done?

It is crucial that **support mechanisms rolled out internationally and nationally are inclusive and offer adequate social protection for persons with disabilities.** Governments will have to strengthen social protection to minimize the economic impact of Covid-19, but these need to be inclusive and acknowledge the disproportionate effect the pandemic will have on persons with disabilities, and the risk that they will fall through the gaps. It is critical that countries guarantee at least a basic level of social security to all, including to persons with disabilities, but also promote access to additional financial aid for persons with disabilities and their families.

At the same time, **businesses must continue implementing and/or adopting policies and approaches to retain persons with disabilities** and to promote an inclusive workplace, including, where relevant, continuing attracting persons with disabilities, and to bridge the disability employment gap. **Employers must also ensure that persons with disabilities can independently and safely work from home or existing workplace**, and that any equipment they had at work is also available at home. Finally, unemployed persons with disabilities must have access to support and have equal access to employment opportunities and training that may emerge during the crisis.

Longer-term, it is also critical that **persons with disabilities are adequately supported to return to work post-crisis**, and governments should ensure that **employment policies post-Covid-19 do not enable unfair or discriminatory dismissal of persons with disabilities.**

**Governments need to support decent work for all, in line with SDG 8 and Article 27 of the CRPD**, and when introducing special emergency public procurement procedures, they need to pay attention to business opportunities for persons with disabilities.

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<sup>8</sup> Asian Development Bank (2003) Social Protection Strategy. ADB publication.

## 5 Social isolation of persons with disabilities

### a) State of play

With several countries introducing restrictions which include self-isolation and quarantine measures in order to control transmission of Covid-19, **social isolation of persons with disabilities is a critical concern.**

### b) Challenges

**Evidence<sup>9</sup> demonstrates that persons with disabilities are at greater risk of social isolation during a pandemic.** Leonard Cheshire conducted a study during the Ebola outbreak in Liberia in which households with and without persons with disabilities were surveyed in affected communities. The research found that households with a disabled member in affected communities were more socially isolated (10% non-disabled households vs. 90% disabled households). The research also found that disabled households were more likely to go to community leaders for information (90%), for non-disabled households this was more spread out (38% community leaders, government 40%). The findings from the study clearly suggests that persons with disabilities are at risk of social isolation and misinformation (i.e. non-government sources). The research also identified other more general barriers that were shared in common between households (lack of food, information).

### c) What needs to be done?

When tech companies provide crucial digital tools to overcome social isolation, promoting social cohesion and raising awareness on health and safety guidelines to address the pandemic, **they need to make sure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities.**

**Governments and companies offering free access to educational and cultural resources to overcome social isolation must ensure these are available to persons with disabilities.**

**More data is needed to better understand the effect of pandemics on persons with disabilities.** Data should be gathered on and with persons with disabilities making efforts to ensure those most at risk of exclusion (e.g. women, young people, people with intellectual disabilities, deafblind people) are included. Evidence should be shared and used to **develop effective policies and interventions targeting social isolation of persons with disabilities** during this and future pandemics.

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<sup>9</sup> Leonard Cheshire, 'Research brief: Effective poverty reduction for persons with disabilities in Liberia.'

## 6 Youth with disabilities

### a) State of play

Youth with disabilities face **additional challenges during times of crisis across a range of issues including education, employment, and access to information.** Young persons with disabilities have been affected by the closure of schools, universities and other learning institutions as a result of Covid-19. **More than 1.52 billion children and youth are currently out of school or university, representing 87 per cent of the world enrolled school and university student population.**<sup>10</sup> In addition, nearly 60.2 million teachers are no longer in the classroom. Many young persons with disabilities will face delayed examinations and therefore a delay in receiving qualifications needed for employment.

### b) Challenges

**Youth in general – and those with disabilities in particular - are already vulnerable to the effects of economic shocks and loss of employment.** Before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was estimated that 600 million jobs would need to be created in the global economy in the next decade in order to keep pace with growing numbers of young people entering the labour market<sup>11</sup>. The global job losses expected in the wake of the pandemic are likely to impact upon this further. In addition, young people are disproportionately represented in the informal sector (an estimated 96.8% of employed youth in LMICs work informally<sup>12</sup>). Informal work is associated with low pay, few worker rights and a lack of social protection, meaning young people in LMICs are more exposed to the impact of economic shocks and more at risk of falling into poverty as a result.

**Young persons with disabilities also face barriers in accessing preventative information.** Many young persons receive information via the internet or messaging apps such as WhatsApp, rather than through traditional and official media, and therefore may be at risk of being more exposed to misleading and inadequate information.

### c) What needs to be done?

**Responses to Covid-19 on employment and education need to be inclusive, and acknowledge that youth with disabilities are among those who will pay a high price.** Governments need to create education and employment opportunities for youth, including youth with disabilities. Young persons with disabilities also need to be fully included in consultations and policy responses.

**Existing and new mechanisms to spread information on Covid-19 need to be inclusive and address the needs of young persons with disabilities.** Youth with disabilities need to receive information on how to protect themselves and others which

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<sup>10</sup> UN, 2020, <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> "Addressing the Youth Employment Crisis Needs Urgent Global Action", The World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/13/addressing-the-youth-employment-crisis-needs-urgent-global-action>

<sup>12</sup> Cambridge University & Restless development: <https://restlessdevelopment.org/file/getting-by-report-young-peoples-working-lives-pdf>

is available in accessible formats and distributed through both traditional and non-traditional media.

## **Opportunities**

The current pandemic also offers opportunities to rethink existing operational models and frameworks and implement an inclusivity-first approach.

### **Access to information**

In a pandemic, the health of all society is determined by the health of the most marginalised. Through producing accessible documents and communications about Covid-19, **there is an opportunity to ensure that vital public health messages reach everyone, therefore strengthening public health.** As organisations become aware of how to produce accessible communications, this awareness and skill will remain for future crises.

### **Use of technology for inclusion**

Flexible working policies such as remote working and working from home, which can allow for greater inclusion of persons with disabilities, have become more normalised since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the use of digital learning platforms has the potential to enable greater inclusion of children with disabilities.

### **Greater coordination around safeguarding**

As systems and processes are adapted to respond to the pandemic, there is an opportunity to strengthen coordination between stakeholder such as NGOs, UN agencies, governments and donors around effective safeguarding and to ensure specific considerations for safeguarding persons with disabilities are highlighted in the pandemic response.

### **Inclusive economic recovery**

The UN Secretary General has called for a recovery that builds a more inclusive society and addresses the inequalities that leave so many persons vulnerable to social and economic shocks.<sup>12</sup> There is an opportunity for policy makers to design inclusive social protection systems that protect those most at risk of exclusion and for market forces to be inclusive of marginalized groups in their recovery.

### **Data collection**

There is an opportunity to undertake research and gather data and learning on the impact of a pandemic on persons with disabilities in order to strengthen future responses. For example, improving our understanding of the impact on access to healthcare, income loss, violence including gender-based violence, and the relationship between disability and social isolation during a pandemic.

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