



Leonard Cheshire Global Alliance Covid-19 pandemic position statement

May 2020

Introduction

More than one billion persons with disabilities, 15% of the world's population, make up one of the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups within society.

On March 11th, the WHO Director-General officially declared that Covid-19 is now a global pandemic. It is the most vulnerable in society, including persons with disabilities, who will be hit hardest.

Persons with disabilities must not be left behind in the response to this pandemic. 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.

This briefing aims to outline what the Leonard Cheshire Global Alliance believes are the most urgent challenges in response to Covid-19.

The Leonard Cheshire Global Alliance

The Leonard Cheshire Global Alliance is a loose network of over 200 independent Cheshire organisations across 54 countries supporting persons with disabilities. We are one of the largest pan-disability networks in the world united by a shared history and a desire to change attitudes towards disability.

We are extremely concerned about how the Covid-19 global pandemic will impact on persons with disabilities across the world, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Of the 54 countries where Global Alliance members are present, two-thirds are located across Africa and Asia¹ where support structures are weak.

Enormous efforts are being undertaken to protect persons with disabilities, however, more needs to be done. If communities do not work together in addressing Covid-19 its impact will be much greater and longer lasting.

A unifying call

The Global Alliance is issuing a unifying call to duty bearers to come together in the time of Covid-19 to ensure:

- 1) Specific considerations for safeguarding persons with disabilities are highlighted in pandemic responses
- 2) Covid-19 information dissemination available in disability accessible formats

¹ 36 of 54 countries



- 3) Full access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for persons with disabilities, staff and volunteers in high-risk settings, including residential care
- 4) Donation of necessities (e.g. food, hygiene products)
- 5) Donors to provide additional funding to organisations who are readjusting programmes for persons with disabilities in response to the pandemic