

Our mission in action



Leonard
Cheshire 

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interactive document**

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Introduction

It was with immense pride that I joined Leonard Cheshire in the UK as CEO in February 2021.

Before joining the team, I had huge respect for the difference this organization makes to the lives of people with disabilities. My mom was a nurse at a Leonard Cheshire service in the UK, so my family has a heartfelt connection to this diverse and wonderful organization.

The past year has been a year like no other. As with many organizations, the pandemic tested us in ways that could never have been anticipated. Many of our staff were at the frontline in the battle against Covid-19, keeping people safe, continuing to deliver essential support and working under immense challenges.

Whether it is enabling children with disabilities to receive an education, supporting people with disabilities into work, or empowering individuals to have greater choice, control and independence in their lives, Leonard Cheshire's impact around the world is immense and continues to grow.



As a woman with a disability, I know from first-hand experience that prejudice, discrimination and stigma still present daily barriers to people with disabilities around the world.

While there has been progress, young people with disabilities growing up today still face many of the challenges I did in being able to live the life they want.

435,645

**In total we reached
435,645 people and
organizations**

People with disabilities are impatient for change and an equal playing field. I want us to have an even bigger role making societal change a reality.

I am delighted to introduce this impact report, which provides a snapshot of the things we have achieved together and the stories of just some of the 435,645 people and organizations we reached over the past year.

None of this would have been possible without you – our amazing supporters, donors and partners. In a year that has been extremely challenging for all, your support has allowed us to adapt to change and continue to have a real impact on the lives of thousands of people with disabilities around the world.

I can't thank you enough and I'm looking forward to seeing how much more we can achieve together in 2021/22!

Dr Ruth Owen, OBE
Chief Executive

Our reach

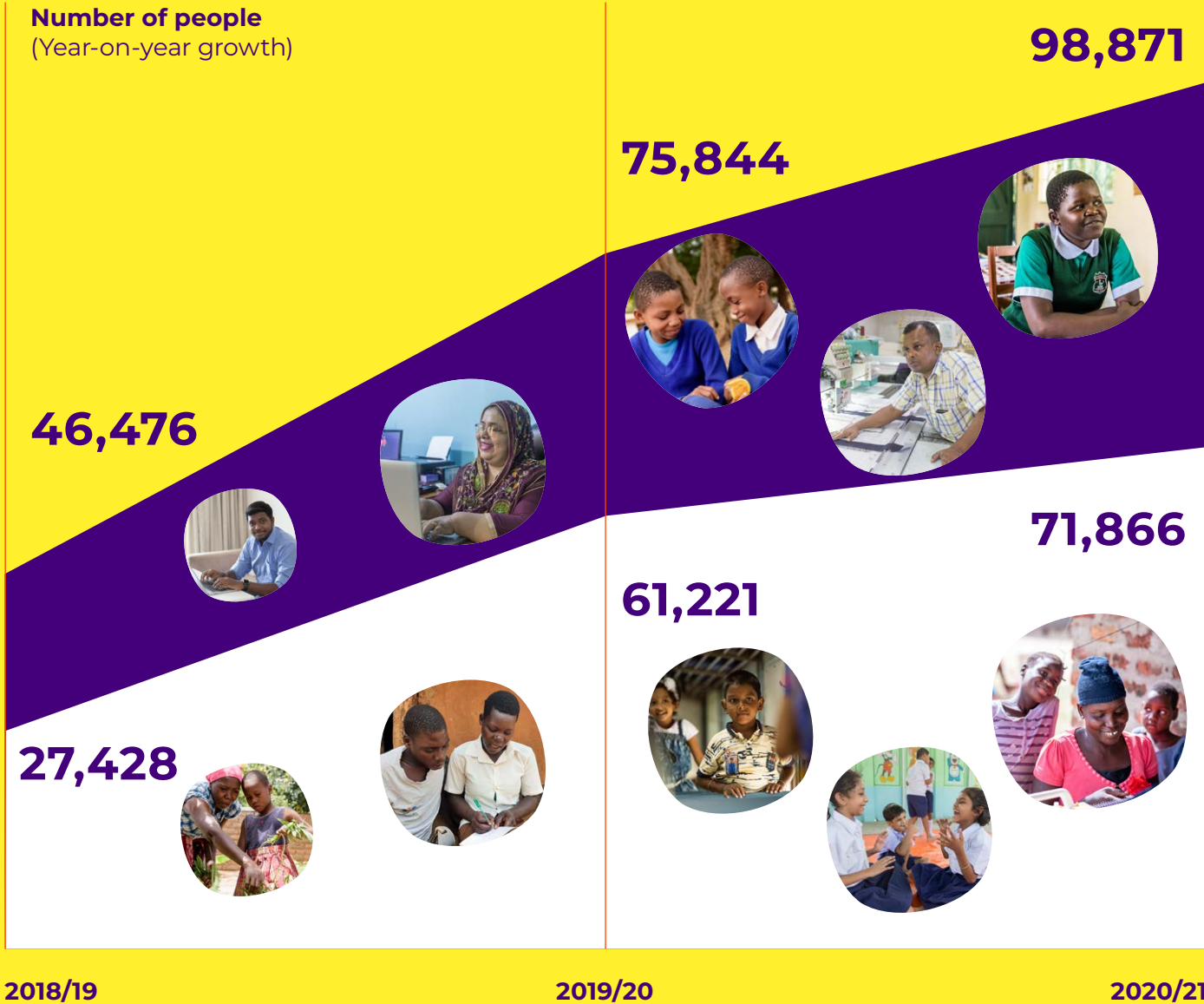
What your support has helped us to achieve together

In total, we reached
435,645
people and organizations in
Africa, Asia and the UK

Our reach

Despite a challenging year, in 2020/21 we supported more people than ever before

- Total direct reach
- Direct reach – people with disabilities



Our reach

In total we reached
435,645 people and
organizations globally

Social media
views

37.3m

Reach to build support
and awareness

221,641

Indirect reach

115,133

Direct reach

98,871

Direct reach
– people with
disabilities

71,866

Media
opportunities
to see/hear

202m

Our influence

In 2020/21 we continued to partner with global actors such as the World Bank, UNESCO and International Labour Organization, as well as working to influence companies such as Microsoft, Apple and Google around accessibility and inclusivity.

Our influencing activities raised awareness with individuals, organizations and decision-makers of the issues that people with disabilities face and the need for inclusivity



21,759

individuals



1,357

organizations



666

decision-makers

“Leonard Cheshire has been an excellent knowledge and technical partner on disability inclusion for the World Bank. Together, we have worked to advance knowledge on addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in the sectors of employment, education, and digital inclusion.”

Louise Cord
Global Director,
Social Sustainability and Inclusion
Global Practice, World Bank

Learn

Providing life-changing opportunities through education



11,023

We supported 11,023 children with disabilities to get an education in India and across Africa



2,916

We trained 2,916 teachers, government representatives, members of organizations of persons with disabilities and other key players on inclusive education



3,426

We trained 3,426 parents and male mentors on inclusive education



Too many young people with disabilities are denied the fundamental right of an education.

At least half of the world's 65 million school age children with disabilities do not attend school.¹ Girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to missing out, with boys prioritized for school places due to gender bias.

Education has the power to transform lives, creating positive futures for individuals, families and communities. For people with disabilities in low and middle-income countries, education can be particularly empowering in tackling poverty and isolation.

Through partnerships with our supporters and local grassroots organizations, we work with schools, government officials, communities and children and their families to ensure that no child is denied the life-changing opportunities that education brings.

Together we proactively contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Skills training and other opportunities are also out of reach for many people with disabilities, holding them back from fulfilling their ambitions and perpetuating stigma against people with disabilities.

Our learning and skills development programs are a lifeline for people with disabilities, transforming lives and widening horizons.

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Challenges and changes – our Covid-19 response

The pandemic has had an enormous impact on learning and access to education. With schools and catch-up centers closed as Covid-19 cases increased, it was vital we adapted our support for vulnerable children.

More than 1.5 billion students worldwide were affected by school and university closures.² Before the pandemic, children with disabilities were already more likely to be out of school, and the crisis only exacerbated this.

We explored innovative and alternative approaches to address these challenges. Many of the children we support through our inclusive education program do not have access to computers or smartphones, so we came up with a range of creative solutions to ensure no one was left behind.

Examples included supporting students at home in Kenya with phone calls and text messages; developing a Covid-19 resource pack for parents to support children with disabilities to learn at home; developing and delivering remote teacher training; and working with governments and organizations of persons with disabilities to send out vital messaging and support.

**We came up with
a range of creative
solutions to ensure no
one was left behind**





"I feel happy because I continue to learn from home though schools are closed."

Ronald

Staying connected in lockdown – supporting students in Uganda

Through our inclusive education project in Uganda, funded by Dubai Cares, we have supported more than 500 children with disabilities to go to school in the remote district of Amolatar.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, all learning institutions in Uganda shut down indefinitely. Our project team had to adapt quickly to ensure children with disabilities still got the support they needed to keep on learning.

Our team jumped into action by distributing learning materials across Amolatar District, including materials for children with visual impairments in both braille and large print. The team worked with council leaders and parents to share the materials and trained parents on ways to teach their children until schools reopened.

17-year-old Ronald carried on learning from home with materials we provided and support from his father and older sister. He said, "I feel happy because I continue to learn from home though schools are closed. This has been possible because of the learning materials given to me."

500

Our inclusive education project in Uganda has supported more than 500 children with disabilities to go to school

A model approach to inclusive education

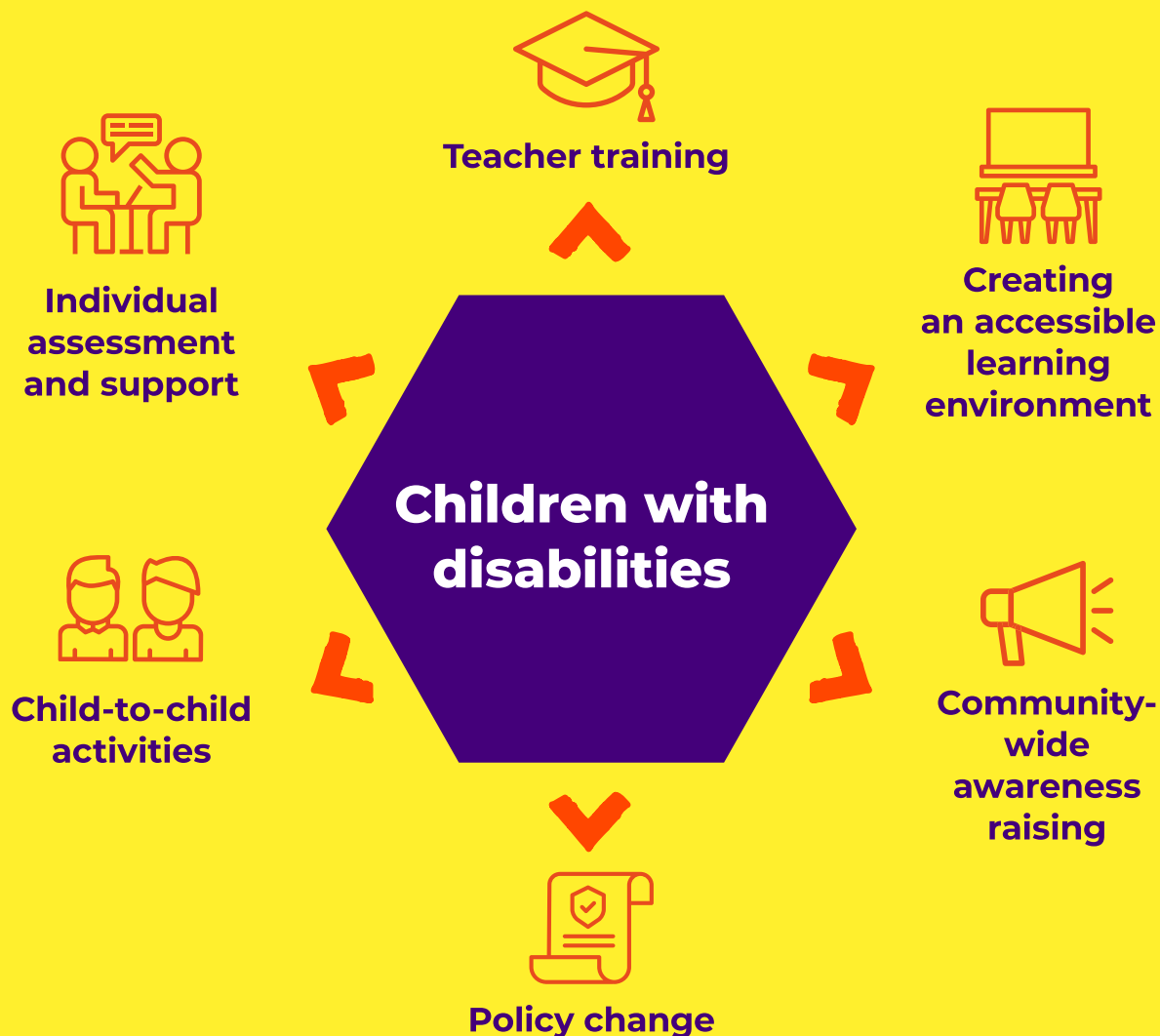
We have been pioneering inclusive education models in Africa and Asia since 2008, directly supporting a total of **49,496 children with disabilities** to access education to date.

Over the years we have developed and honed our delivery model, innovating and adapting to ensure that every child we support reaches their full potential. Every inclusive education project we run includes these six fundamental elements: Individual assessment and support; Teacher training; Creating an accessible learning environment; Community-wide awareness-raising; Policy change; and Child-to-child activities.

49,496

Since 2008 we have supported 49,496 children with disabilities to get an education in Africa and Asia

Our inclusive education model



Julia and Valentina's story – forming friendships

Stigma and misconceptions around disability make it hard for children with disabilities to make friends. We have designed child-to-child clubs as a fundamental aspect in our inclusive education model. The clubs encourage children with and without disabilities to socialize and support each other. They offer a great environment to learn more about disability inclusion and the importance of equal rights for all children.

Our inclusive education project in Tanzania, funded by Comic Relief, has been life-changing for Julia and Valentina.

Julia has a disability and has struggled to make friends. Julia and Valentina's friendship blossomed after we introduced child-to-child clubs to their school. Before the project started, they were in the same class but hadn't got to know each other.

Since attending the child-to-child club, Julia and Valentina have become close friends. They now do their homework together and play together outside of school. Julia is very bright and helps Valentina academically. And Valentina makes sure Julia is included in school activities.

Their friendship has also shown the rest of the community the importance of inclusion, and that children with disabilities should not be left out.

“The child-to-child club meant I could interact with other children and get more friends. This makes me feel happy and comfortable, something which was not possible before.”

Julia

“Other children were laughing at me because I was a friend of Julia. However, as time went on through the child-to-child clubs, all the children in the club love to play and help Julia.”

Valentina

88%

88% of children with disabilities reported greater self-confidence since being part of our inclusive education project in Tanzania³



Moi's story – changing attitudes in the community

Parent support groups and other community projects help create support networks and raise awareness of disability in the wider community. One of our more innovative initiatives in this area is our male mentor program.

When our Girls' Education Challenge project started out in Kenya, the team observed that almost all of those caring for children with disabilities were women, and most of the people attending meetings and training for the project were also women.

We put in place our male mentor program to address patriarchal norms and reduce stigma in the community. Fathers of girls with disabilities are trained as male mentors to educate other men on the rights and needs of girls with disabilities.

After training to be a male mentor, Moi has started changing attitudes in his community. He comes from a community with serious gender inequality and high rates of Female Genital Mutilation.

Thanks to Moi's efforts, households are abandoning outdated attitudes and harmful practices, creating a better future for girls and a healthier role for men.

Moi says, "It is the responsibility of those with the knowledge like the male mentors to enlighten the rest of the community and practice what they preach."

3,426

In 2020/21 we trained 3,426 parents and male mentors on inclusive education



The Orbit Reader – a simple device that makes a big difference

We are supporting schools to expand the use of innovative low-cost assistive technology for learners with disabilities.

In Kenya, we partnered with eKitabu to train 75 teachers on how to use and support visually impaired and blind students with Orbit Readers.

The Orbit Reader is a lightweight device that is used to read and take notes in Braille. The notes can then be converted back to electronic print for the teacher to read and grade.

Marydith has a visual impairment, and her teacher Pauline has been supporting her to use the technology in class. The Orbit Reader has greatly improved Marydith's learning progress – she can now read and write without straining her eyes. This helps her to succeed in class and stay at the same level as her classmates.

A global influencer on inclusive education

As the pandemic amplified inequalities in education, we joined the Global Education Coalition launched by UNESCO in May 2020 – a platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during this unprecedented disruption and beyond. This multi-sector Coalition brought together 175 institutional partners from the UN, civil society, academia and the private sector.

As governments across the world sought to get education systems back on track during the pandemic, we co-organized a webinar focusing on the challenges faced by girls with disabilities.

Our webinar, attended by around 1,000 people, amplified the experiences, learnings and recommendations from a diverse range of organizations and expertise, with the shared goal of ensuring that girls with disabilities do not become even more marginalized in education.

We've also shared our models with the Global Education Coalition on distance learning and blended training so that teachers are equipped to respond to the widest range of diversity in classrooms.

In November 2020, we partnered with UNESCO and the Portuguese Ministry of Education to co-host an international symposium on ensuring the right to quality inclusive education for people with disabilities. The online event was attended by 400 important education stakeholders, including senior representatives from a range of UN and donor agencies, education ministry representatives and youth with disabilities, who shared their own perspectives on how to ensure quality inclusive education for all.



One of the main themes was addressing violence and bullying against students with disabilities. Through a new partnership with UNESCO, we are looking at the scale of these issues, and carrying out a research project in five countries in East and Southern Africa. The research will be published in late 2021 with the aim of making schools safer places for students with disabilities.

21,759

Our influencing activities have reached 21,759 individuals

In many cases, our activities have led to greater impact, including decision-makers developing increasingly inclusive policies and practices

Influencing national policy in South Sudan

As well as influencing at a global level, we work with key national and local decision-makers, increasing awareness that implementing inclusive education is a legal and policy obligation. In many cases, our activities have led to greater impact, including decision-makers developing increasingly inclusive policies and practices.

In South Sudan we are the specialist disability partner on the Girls' Education program. We delivered awareness raising and capacity building workshops to influence partners on the program to embed standardized questions on disability⁴ in the national school registration tool and education census. This has resulted in the Ministry of Education recognizing more impairment types to improve planning and access to education for children with disabilities. South Sudan currently only has data for 6,000 children with disabilities in school. However, we predict an actual number closer to 145,000 once all disabilities are included.

We influenced the review and development of the inclusive education policy in South Sudan, working with partners to ensure the policy is closely aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Following this, we supported the Government to produce an implementation plan for the roll out of the policy.

Through close collaboration with the South Sudan Union of Persons with Disabilities, we strengthened the Government's recognition of the importance that disability activists and champions play changing the disability discourse. We trained radio broadcasters on disability awareness, specifically to ensure that young people with disabilities were interviewed on local and national radio stations. This brought a powerful message to the public that everyone has a right to education in their local schools and raised awareness of the important role that the Government and communities have in making that right a reality.



Looking to the future

“Our deep connections with communities and well-established models of support helped us to adapt rapidly during the pandemic.

Looking to the future we are now well-positioned to continue building on the best practices that have emerged in terms of delivery and innovation. Strengthened documentation, learning and research approaches will enable us to share best practice more widely and build on our reputation as a global influencer on inclusive approaches to education and learning.”

Sunanda Mavillapalli

Global Head of Programs
and Technical Assistance

► **Vickles, a pupil at
Ng'ong'onha Primary
School, Tanzania**



Work

Supporting people with disabilities to access meaningful employment and fulfilling careers



22,152

We supported 22,152 people with disabilities to seek employment in Africa, Asia and the UK



3,401

We trained 3,401 government representatives, employers, members of organizations of persons with disabilities and other key players on inclusive employment



45,000

45,000 people across India have registered on our employability platform



Globally, people with disabilities are around twice as likely to be unemployed as those without disabilities.⁵

Our employment programs support people with disabilities throughout their journey towards sustainable employment. We provide careers advice, training, work experience, paid internships, support to become self-employed and in-work assistance.

Despite some progress in attitudes, many employers lack an understanding of disability, with 24% of employers saying they are less likely to employ a person with a disability.⁶

That's why we also work with employers to improve their understanding of disability and inclusion and create more sustainable employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

22,152

We supported 22,152 people with disabilities to seek employment in Africa, Asia and the UK

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We trained 3,401 government representatives, employers, members of organizations of persons with disabilities and other key players on inclusive employment

1,861

We delivered inclusion training to 1,861 employees at 142 organizations





Challenges and changes – our Covid-19 response

Challenges faced by people with disabilities have been exacerbated during the pandemic, including chronic unemployment.

In 2020/21, we changed the way we delivered our support, finding innovative ways to ensure our employment services and programs remained available in virtual form. We also made sure vulnerable individuals taking part in our programs were adequately supported throughout the pandemic.

During the Covid-19 crisis, we also worked to influence government policies and practice. This included advocating for access to employment opportunities and support for people with disabilities.

Building sustainable livelihoods through economic inclusion

Our economic inclusion projects in Africa and Asia ensure people with disabilities receive the support they require to find employment or build a business, enabling them to earn a sustainable livelihood.

Preeti's story – finding a job at the right time

Preeti is a single parent who moved back in with her parents in Delhi after leaving an abusive partner. She wanted to support her family financially, but was worried that her lack of education and her mobility impairment might stop her from finding a job.

She found out about Leonard Cheshire's Inclusion 100 project through friends. The project, funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, promotes livelihoods opportunities for people with disabilities by offering them apprenticeship placements

through the Government of India's National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme.

After initial assessment and career counselling from our team, Preeti received skills training to prepare her for the job market and was introduced to different employment sectors that could be suitable for her. We supported her to attend an apprenticeship fair organized by Reliance India, and she was selected to become a retail store apprentice in March 2020. Following the successful completion of her apprenticeship, Preeti now has a permanent job with Reliance India as a retail associate.

Preeti said, "I am blessed to get this job at the right time. While many employees lost their job due to Covid-19 lockdown, I was able to find one."





Kanta's story – my journey to economic independence

Our three-year livelihoods project supporting women with disabilities in Northern Uganda, funded by the Foundation for a Just Society, ended this year. Since February 2018, we have supported 250 women to improve their livelihoods and increase household income through vocational training and by providing business skills and start up kits.

Kanta is one of the women who took part in the project. A single parent of four children, Kanta's chest and an arm were badly damaged when conflict raged through the country in the 1980s.

This meant she couldn't do many types of work. She couldn't see any way out of her situation and felt her community did not respect or value her. It was difficult to support the needs of herself and her family, let alone find the money for school fees.

But all this changed after joining the project. Being trained in tailoring, as well as receiving a sewing machine and materials, has transformed Kanta's life. She can support her family by making and selling well-designed table mats. And she is now treated with respect by the community. Their attitudes towards disability have really changed. Seeing Kanta being so creative has helped them to realize what people with disabilities can achieve, and the value they can bring to the community.

Kanta says: "I am an economically independent and self-reliant woman who can proudly take care of myself and my children's basic needs, courtesy of the project."



Innovating through digital inclusion

The pandemic may have turned many of our programs upside down – but this challenged us to diversify and explore new possibilities for providing support. In particular, our innovations in digital inclusion have brought real benefits for many people with disabilities.

Being able to offer more of our services remotely has opened up opportunities to people who may have found travel or face-to-face support challenging.

“After doing the course I’m really confident. I feel empowered.”

Shilpe

Shilpe’s story – digital pathways to employment

Shilpe has been using our Innovation to Inclusion (i2i) program’s Digital Employment Pathway in Bangladesh to access training and advice. Shilpe’s limited mobility has prevented her from accessing face-to-face training, guidance and events, but she can now do all this from home. For her, it is an invaluable resource. This is allowing her to take her first steps towards building a fulfilling career.

Shilpe signed up to our digital skills course, which has already delivered results. She is now working from home in a freelance capacity with a telemarketing company. The role is helping Shilpe to develop her skills further, unlocking additional possibilities for the future. “After doing the course I’m really confident. I feel empowered,” she says. “I am more independent now: I can do things independently.”

Technology is a game changer

Our Innovation to Inclusion program (i2i), funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, has now completed its second year. We lead the delivery of i2i through a consortium of partners, including the International Labour Organization (ILO). Through the program we are improving access to waged employment for people with disabilities in Kenya and Bangladesh. To date, we have created 1,365 job opportunities and supported 301 people into employment.

Following capacity building workshops and ongoing regular support meetings, organizations of persons with disabilities in these countries have developed and finalized national advocacy plans and are now ready to put them into action.

We have partnered with the Federation of Kenya Employers and the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network to engage the

private sector and create inclusive employment opportunities for people with disabilities. We are finalizing three new and accessible disability inclusion eLearning modules to provide companies with frameworks and guidelines for employing people with disabilities. The modules include practical information on legislation, reasonable accommodation and accessibility, and advice on creating more inclusive workplaces.

We are also exploring how technology and innovation can be a game changer for people with disabilities when accessing employment. A key development this year has been the launch of online career portals.

We have partnered with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and recruitment specialist Fuzu in Kenya, and mainstream job site bdjobs.com in Bangladesh, to provide training and advice on how to make their sites accessible. So far over 140 employers have advertized jobs for people with disabilities through these portals.

The portals offer accessible and inclusive pathways to employment, through which people with disabilities can access training and advice, as well as search for jobs. The portals were used by 3,707 people with disabilities to seek employment in 2020/21, and we have delivered live or online soft skills and digital literacy training to more than 3,000 people.

3,707

Our accessible career portals in Kenya and Bangladesh were used by 3,707 people with disabilities to seek employment



Expanding our reach in India

Before the pandemic hit, we had already started our journey towards developing a virtual livelihoods resource center – introducing a digital platform for job seekers with disabilities to search for jobs, access information and advice, and develop their skills through online training. This has enabled us to reach thousands of people who were previously unreachable, whether because of geographic location or because their disability prevented them from attending our centers in person.

Covid-19 has accelerated the pace of change, with more and more people working remotely and accessing services online. Since January 2021, 45,000 people across India have registered on our employability platform and have used the in-built self-assessment tool to sign up and access information, skills development training and employment opportunities.

To ensure that our support is inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible, we have also partnered with mainstream recruitment platforms, such as Youth Hub. We are providing them with disability inclusion training, and they are supporting young people with disabilities to build their profile, match with mentors and connect with potential employers.

45,000

45,000 people across India have registered on our employability platform

Finding jobs in a virtual world

In December 2020, we conducted a Virtual Apprenticeship Fair in India with a range of partners – the first ever event of its kind. The fair was conducted on the SkyFair online platform through which candidates seeking jobs could register and browse virtual stalls set up by

companies. Each stall had details about the companies along with the jobs for which the candidates could apply.

The fair was a great success, with 760 candidates and 57 employers taking part – and a total of 216 jobs on offer to date. We look forward to replicating similar events in the future.

216

216 jobs were offered following our Virtual Apprenticeship Fair in India





Virtual volunteering

In India, 30 volunteers from technology consultancy company Accenture developed and delivered training and mentoring to 100 people with disabilities, following training from Leonard Cheshire on accessible learning techniques. The interactive sessions were run via Skype. Modules included communications, computer programming and soft skills training.

“We could sense the drive in each candidate in learning new concepts and that was the major reason behind the success of this initiative. It was a very knowledge-gaining session for us as well.”

Karthika, Accenture volunteer

“Even though the trainers were new to training a visually impaired person like me, they very much adapted to teaching with assistive technologies to help me better understand programming tools. The training gives me confidence a visually impaired person can become an efficient software engineer.”

Arunkumar, training participant

The pilot has been extremely successful, with participants reporting improved confidence and skills – and the volunteers themselves also found it a valuable learning experience. Over the coming months we will be looking to build on the model further with new partners in Bangladesh and Kenya.

A photograph of a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt, looking down at a smartphone he is holding with both hands. The phone has a green case. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

We influenced a big breakthrough with Google that will make Android products more user-friendly

A breakthrough with Google

We're not only exploring the potential of technology to transform our care services, we're also acting as thought leaders and advocates of sustainable and inclusive solutions. Our Director of Assistive Technology sits on advisory panels for Microsoft, Apple, Google and the UK Government, and plays a key role in ensuring that inclusivity is prioritized when developing new technologies.

We influenced a big breakthrough with Google that will make Android products more user-friendly. We've been fighting for a more comprehensive cross-platform experience, in particular for touchscreen devices to have generalized gestures recognizable by all. Android devices are more problematic because manufacturers can add alternative interfaces to their products. Through our work with Google, a range of gestures and controls have now been built into the general platform. This means users can define them in ways that are most helpful to them or are most recognizable.

Disability means business

As well as supporting people with disabilities to find work, we also help businesses become more inclusive. Organizations have a lot to gain from promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. They can reach more customers, recruit from a wider talent pool, and gain a wealth of diverse perspectives, skills and experiences.

Our Training and Consultancy team continued to build on our previous successes, driving change in organizations to make quality jobs and services inclusive for people with disabilities. With the onset of the pandemic, we swiftly moved our services online, offering remote delivery using a range of digital platforms.

Recent clients have included Hyatt, CapGemini, and Ogilvy in the UK, as well as voluntary sector organizations such as Girlguiding.

1,861

We delivered inclusion training to 1,861 employees at 142 organizations

We drive change in organizations to make quality jobs and services inclusive for people with disabilities



Disability confident advertising

The creative team at Ogilvy, a global advertising and marketing agency, approached our training and consultancy team for support to integrate inclusion into their campaign development, and ensure that disability is considered throughout their creative process.

Following our support, the team has shared with us that they now have a better understanding of how to tell an authentic story and recognize the importance of engaging with people with disabilities throughout the creative process.

They have committed to embedding the following learning throughout their wider practices:

- Where appropriate, ensure people with disabilities are a part of casting, not because of their disability, but because they fit the narrative.
- Don't portray people with disabilities as the 'hero' or from a sympathetic viewpoint.
- Technology cannot replace real-life experiences. Technology should enhance, not replace, experiences.

The creative team at Ogilvy feels that the partnership with Leonard Cheshire has given them an increased awareness of their own accountability, and they now feel equipped to play their own part in creating more inclusive brands.

Expedia partnership: Breaking down barriers to travel

Last year our Training and Consultancy team worked in partnership with Expedia Group to publish an evidence-based report, 'Breaking down barriers to travel.'



Travel plans may still be on hold for many, but the report makes the case for resuming activity in a more inclusive way after the pandemic. We hope that it will pave the way for many more inclusive options for travelers with disabilities, and for the travel industry to become world-leading in developing products and services that are truly accessible for all.

“Leonard Cheshire worked with us to truly elevate our inclusion agenda’s reach to a larger network and to encourage inclusivity in the travel industry at large. The team brings innovative ideas, strong project management, deeply personal story-telling, and global pan-disability expertise.”

Veronica Velazquez, Senior Global Inclusion & Diversity Manager, Expedia Group New York, USA and **Lauren von Stackelberg**, Global Head of Inclusion & Diversity, Expedia Group London, UK

Changing the employment landscape for youth with disabilities

In Thailand, we are raising awareness of the issues affecting young people with disabilities as they enter the job market.

Through our Access to Employment project, in partnership with Disabilities Thailand and On Our Radar, we are training participants on storytelling and influencing skills. We are supporting them to share their experiences with key decision makers to bring about change in the employment landscape.

100%

100% of youth with disabilities taking part in our Access to Employment project reported an increase in their leadership skills⁷

JJ's story – employers can be flexible

JJ, who has Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, is one of the Lead Youth Advocates taking part in the Access to Employment project. This experience has given him the confidence and skills he needed to find the right job:

"In 2019, soon after I graduated, I had to disguise as a non-disabled person to get employed. But my employer raised their strictness which drove me to quit just before Covid-19 arrived in Thailand.

A reasonable adjustment for a person with Asperger's/Autism could be to provide access to a quiet room, flexible work times and frequent breaks. These will boost productivity instead of reducing it.

I finally got a better workplace at the start of 2021. A place where they understand Asperger's/Autism and are able to adapt to it. They let me carefully choose the work style I like the most.

The new workplace focuses on building Artificial Intelligence and I work as a user-interface engineer. I am able to work with flexible hours and I enjoy it. I am so grateful to Leonard Cheshire's project for supporting me to speak out and help me find employment."

"I am so grateful to Leonard Cheshire's project for supporting me to speak out and help me find employment."

JJ



Supporting young activists to bring about change

Young people with disabilities are powerful advocates for change. We work with them to bring about change in their communities, tackle the issues that matter to them most and hold governments to account.

In 2020/21, with funding from the Act for Change Fund, we launched our new 'Change Makers' advocacy and campaigning program for young people with disabilities in Belfast, Manchester, Glasgow and Swansea.

The participants are already making an impact. One example is an online petition launched by the Glasgow Change Makers, calling for improved wheelchair accessibility on public transport. So far, they've gathered over 2,000 signatures.

The group met with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to argue their case and they were very receptive to the group's ideas. We hope that the Change Makers will be able to play a key part in an accessibility working group this coming year – watch this space!

“So many times in the media I see reporters investigating an issue facing young people, but not listening or misinterpreting what we’re saying. Having young people report on the issues affecting us makes it more relatable, and our views are properly represented and heard.”

Arthur

Change Makers participant

Change Makers builds on the success of our '2030 and Counting' program in Kenya, Zambia and the Philippines, which was funded by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. Through this program, we supported nearly 80 young people to become 'citizen reporters'. We built their confidence and skills by training them to use their mobile phones to powerfully capture experiences – filming and recording in real-time the challenges faced by young people with disabilities.

We also provided the citizen reporters with a platform to advocate for their rights with key policy and decision makers, influencing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, a set of global goals relating to poverty and inequality agreed by the UN to be met by 2030.

“2030 and Counting enhanced my knowledge and skills and exposed me to the challenges faced by my fellow youths with disabilities. After my time on the program, I decided to set up a youth-led disability organization, promoting issues around disability and human rights.”

Ian

2030 and Counting participant





Isabella's story – achieving dreams in Papua New Guinea

Isabella took part in an earlier Leonard Cheshire youth leadership program, Young Voices. Since then, Isabella is very proud to have become the first person with a disability to graduate with a bachelor's degree in Law from her university in Papua New Guinea. She was admitted to the Bar as a certified lawyer in January 2021. She told us how Young Voices was instrumental in giving her the confidence to speak out about disability and fulfil her potential:

“Young Voices really shaped me into being the best version of myself that I am today. Having the opportunity to speak to different people at different events really made me want to be a youth advocate. It made me want to challenge injustices and fight for a more accessible society.

My goal now is to become a human rights lawyer so that I can advocate more for people with disabilities, so they can achieve their dreams and fulfil the vision they have for themselves.”

“Young Voices really shaped me into being the best version of myself that I am today.”

Isabella

Looking to the future

“The world of work is rapidly changing and the Covid-19 pandemic is accelerating the move to a digital economy. Albeit challenging, the current context presents an opportunity to build an inclusive future where people with disabilities have equal access to the labor market and participate fully in economic life.

Last year demonstrated the power of technology to transform the lives of people with disabilities. There are however limitations, as many of those we serve lack access to technology. Exploring how to use technology and innovation to serve the most vulnerable and marginalized will be a focus going forward.

Looking to the future, we are committed to deepening our engagement with people with disabilities to gather their invaluable insight. We will work with partners to ensure that Covid-19 recovery plans are inclusive and people with disabilities are not left behind.”

Sakunthala Mapa

Director of Innovation and UK Program Delivery

▶ **Thangammal, employee at Accenture Chennai, India**



Our year at a glance



Our reach

What your support has helped us to achieve together

In total, we reached
435,645
people and organizations in
Africa, Asia and the UK



Learn

Providing life-changing opportunities through education



11,023

We supported 11,023 children with disabilities to get an education in India and across Africa



2,916

We trained 2,916 teachers, government representatives, members of organizations of persons with disabilities and other key players on inclusive education



3,426

We trained 3,426 parents and male mentors on inclusive education



Work

Supporting people with disabilities to access meaningful employment and fulfilling careers



22,152

We supported 22,152 people with disabilities to seek employment in Africa, Asia and the UK



3,401

We trained 3,401 government representatives, employers, members of organizations of persons with disabilities and other key players on inclusive employment



45,000

45,000 people across India have registered on our employability platform



Who's who

Leonard Cheshire US Directors

Angela Ciccolo



Angela Ciccolo joined Special Olympics after 10 years with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the United States. She served as the organization's General Counsel and Secretary, managing all internal and external legal matters, and was the first woman to hold that position in the history of the organization.

Ciccolo is an experienced litigator and a member of the DC Bar, Maryland Bar and US Supreme Court Bar. She received her Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from the Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She is a member of the Advisory Committee on the US Commission on Civil Rights for the Commonwealth of Virginia and has served as an election monitor and speaker on issues of diversity and inclusion in the United States and abroad. Ciccolo is an award-winning author and recipient of numerous awards including the Medgar Evers Award of Excellence and the Bar Association of DC's Annice M Wagner Pioneer Award.

Tiziana Oliva



Tiziana oversees Leonard Cheshire's global work including policy influencing and programmes. She holds an MA in Human Rights and Social Change and has enjoyed a successful career in international development working in different parts of the world, including Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

She has extensive expertise in disability rights and inclusion, specifically within education and employment; she has also worked widely on promoting youth participation and representation as well as meaningful partnering with grassroots organisations.

Who's who

Marcie Roth



Marcie Roth is CEO of the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, leading disability inclusive emergency management initiatives for 61 million people with disabilities across the US and over 1 billion people globally.

Appointed by President Obama to FEMA in 2009, she established and served for 7.5 years as Director of the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, managing a team of 185 disability and disaster experts through 400 disaster deployments and transforming emergency management to be inclusive

of the rights and needs of the whole community. She has been leading disability rights and health organizations since 1996 and she has been consulting with businesses and communities before, during and after disasters since 2001.

Her recent publications include a report to the President and Congress from the National Council on Disability, Preserving Our Freedom: Ending Institutionalization of People with Disabilities During and After Disasters, Getting It Wrong: An Indictment with a Blueprint for Getting It Right, Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and A Resilient Community is One That Includes and Protects Everyone. In addition to her US based work, which includes two current legislative initiatives with a focus on disability, poverty and healthcare in disasters, she is a frequent consultant with the United Nations on disability inclusive disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action.

Ms. Roth is a Harvard Kennedy School Senior Executive Fellow with a BS in Public Safety Administration.

Who's who

Global Ambassadors

Judy Heumann

Global Ambassador for Advocacy

The renowned activist and campaigner for disability rights. Judy served as an advisor in both the Obama and Clinton administrations and is a senior fellow of The Ford Foundation. In 2020, Judy was nominated as one of the top 100 women of the year in TIME magazine. She also helped create and produce "Crip Camp" a documentary on Netflix (2020) which was short-listed for an Oscar for Best Documentary 2021.

Judy is keen to support and promote our access to education and livelihoods programs in Africa and Asia.

Amar Latif

Global Ambassador for Business and Travel

Amar Latif is a traveller, entrepreneur and TV personality. He was the first winner of The Stelios Awards for Disabled Entrepreneurs UK in 2007 and has been a great supporter of Leonard Cheshire's work ever since. He is the founder and director of Traveleyes — the world's first commercial tour operator to specialise in holidays for blind as well as sighted travellers. He now has a career as a TV presenter, and this has included presenting 'Travelling Blind' on BBC and 'How to Get Fit Fast' on Channel 4. In the past year, he appeared as the first blind contestant on Celebrity MasterChef and presented TV programs.

Olivia Breen

Global Ambassador for Sport

Paralympian Olivia is both a talented sprinter and long jumper. Olivia is the current IPC World Champion for the T38 long jump which she won in 2017. Olivia has represented Leonard Cheshire at Channel 4's Superheroes 2019 and supports all runners for the London Marathon and half marathons. Olivia was to represent the GB team at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, before this was postponed as a result of COVID-19.

Olivia became an ambassador for Leonard Cheshire in 2018 and is an Adidas Athlete. Olivia attended our Leonard Cheshire Wales Gala, read at our Leonard Cheshire carol service, and has produced mini videos to encourage our marathon runners.

Josh Wintersgill

Global Ambassador for Young Entrepreneurs and Tech

Josh is a young disabled entrepreneur from Bristol. Josh invented the portable easyTravelseat, which enables wheelchair users to use aeroplane seats safely, comfortably, and with dignity.

He founded his Ablemove company in February 2018. The same year, he won the Stelios Award for Disabled Entrepreneurs, presented in partnership with Leonard Cheshire. EasyJet and other airlines have now adopted this innovative device for use by disabled travellers.

Who's who

Jane Asher

Global Ambassador for Arts

An award-winning actress, author and chef, Jane Asher was a long term friend of our founder and has been a supporter of Leonard Cheshire for over 35 years. Jane has been an official ambassador since 2017. Jane has attended Gala dinners and read at our Leonard Cheshire carol concert in 2018.

Lord Puttnam CBE, Hon FRSA, Hon FRPS

Global Ambassador for Education

A major award-winning film producer and close friend of our founder (and Labour Peer), Lord Puttnam has been a long-term supporter of Leonard Cheshire. In 2017 he gave an inaugural lecture at Merton College, Oxford in memory of our founder.

Lord Puttnam is keen to promote education and opportunity for disabled people internationally and encourage and support film making.

Mark Lane

Global Ambassador for Gardening and Wellbeing

Mark is the UK's first disabled (wheelchair user) garden designer. He is well-known as a BBC Gardening presenter. Mark has written a book on the Royal Gardens. Mark has hosted Leonard Cheshire's Staff Awards, read at our Leonard Cheshire carol services, and ran Can Do workshops. Mark played a major part in our recent National Garden Scheme partnership, designing a service garden, and giving workshops to residents.

Sophie Morgan

Global Ambassador for Inclusive Education and Women

Sophie Morgan is a TV presenter, campaigner and author. She was paralysed in a car crash when she was 18. Sophie became a TV presenter for Channel 4, a successful artist and consultant across various industries on diversity and inclusion. Sophie regularly campaigns for disabled people, especially for transport, retail and fashion. Sophie travelled with Leonard Cheshire colleagues to Kenya to see our education projects in 2019. Sophie also presented our 2019 staff awards at City Hall in London and headed up our Radio 4 charity appeal in January 2019.

Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou

Global Ambassador for Business

Founder of the EasyJet group, Sir Stelios has had a relationship with Leonard Cheshire for over 13 years. In partnership with the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation, Leonard Cheshire runs the Stelios Awards which recognise the exceptional spirit and business ability of disabled entrepreneurs.

Sir Stelios has been our global business ambassador since 2017.

Robin Sheppard

Global Ambassador for the Catering and Hotel industry

Robin is a classically trained hotelier, who broadened the customer base of all bespoke hotels and led to several awards and accolades – most notably 'The RAC Hotel of the Year Award' and the Caterer and Hotelkeeper 'Hotel of the Year Award', as well as being named amongst Hotel Designs' Brit List – shortlisting the 25 most inspirational and influential hoteliers for the year.

Endnotes

- 1 The Learning Generation: The Education Commission Report, 2016. report.educationcommission.org. These data are based on lower- and middle-income countries, not global figures. Children were of primary and lower-secondary school age and are top-end estimates.
- 2 en.unesco.org/news/13-billion-learners-are-still-affected-school-university-closures-educational-institutions
- 3 Sample: 212
- 4 The Washington Group Questions
- 5 Disability and Development Report. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018. social.un.org/publications/UN-Flagship-Report-Disability-Final.pdf
- 6 Leonard Cheshire/ComRes 2018 Line manager survey. comresglobal.com/polls/leonard-cheshire-disability-employers-survey-w2/
- 7 Sample: 55

All reach and impact data is from the period April 2020 - March 2021.

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