i2i
Innovation to Inclusion

Learning Update
January **2022** | Issue 3

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the i2i Learning Update. Throughout 2021-22, we will be producing these regular newsletters, featuring our latest activities, key learning, steps we are taking to embed new knowledge in our work and share it among the i2i consortium and the wider disability, economic inclusion and inclusive employment sectors.

Once again, there is plenty of news and updates for you to get stuck into. If you have feedback on i2i learning, or ideas for future editions, contact Claire Arnott, i2i M & E manager claire.arnott@leonardcheshire.org. Wishing you all the very best for the New Year, from the whole i2i team.

About i2i

i2i is a three-year programme funded by UK aid from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and implemented by a consortium of nine partner organisations, led by pan disability charity Leonard Cheshire. It addresses key challenges facing people with disabilities in accessing economic opportunities and waged employment in Bangladesh and Kenya.

Evidence and learning from i2i will be used to identify and implement, at scale, successful innovative market-based interventions to support people with disabilities in Bangladesh and Kenya and further afield.

Data-driven advocacy for inclusive employment and social protection

A learning document

New learning document records OPD experiences on data-driven advocacy

i2i has published a new learning document recording the experiences of OPDs in Bangladesh and Kenya around using methods and tools for data-driven advocacy.

It explores how data collection has been the cornerstone of OPD advocacy strategies, the importance of developing relationships between rights-holders and duty bearers, and how strategic collaboration has been essential to the success of the activities.

This approach involved a step-by-step process with OPDs in Bangladesh and Kenya to:

- develop knowledge and skills
- identify and gather relevant data
- use strategic evidence-based planning
- strengthen the national coalition of OPDs
- play to the strengths of each individual member to effectively use data.

OPDs involved in i2i found there were 12 learning points other OPDs implementing advocacy activities could benefit from.

Some of the key learnings were:

- Educate rights-holders and meaningfully engage them in the whole process.
- Sensitisation of duty bearers using data is an essential first step in the process leading to changes.

- Data helps build credibility, which can lead to stronger relationships and greater impact.
- Data helps target key weak or ineffective policies and provisions.
- Greater recognition by duty bearers of the support OPDs can give them to develop, implement and monitor concrete [shared] commitments.
- Individual advocacy actions should not be seen as an end point, but as a starting point to build a movement towards change.

There were also six key learning points for other stakeholders in their planning and supporting activities, including:

- Build the development of data gathering processes and tools into any advocacy strategy.
- Ensure process indicators are included in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) plans for advocacy activities.
- Plan for 'shocks' in the co-creation, planning and implementation stages of any advocacy programme of activities.

A webinar looking more closely at the learning will be held on Tuesday, February 1. More information coming soon.

Change is not linear

writes Claire Arnott, i2i M&E manager

A recent round of focus group discussions with i2i participants raised some interesting insights and provided an important reminder that change is not linear and simple.

This may seem obvious, but too often in development programmes we do activities, tick off outputs, count targets and move on.

As programme participants feedback about the challenges they still face in their workplaces, either with colleagues or workplace cultures, it is important to reflect on how we are thinking about full ecosystems within the private sector and continuing to press for change at all levels.

This change will continue long after i2i ends and there will be setbacks. But as the programme nears closure we must commit to embedding work already done and ensuring knowledge, practices and next steps are continued.

Close-out event plans

Planning has begun early in the New Year for i2i's close-out learning events, to be held in March 2022, just as the programme draws to a close.

Decisions will be taken soon regarding the format of the close-out event - live, virtual or hybrid - and the focus and content of key events and sessions.

Our inaugural i2i Learning Conference, held online between March 29 and 31, 2021, attracted more than 400 delegates - representatives from around the globe from government, civil society, OPDs, NGOs, international agencies and the private sector.

The overall theme of last year's conference was *Innovations for economic inclusion in a digital world*.

From ticking the box, to thinking outside of it

Moving towards active participation of OPDs in disability decision-making
Webinar on Tuesday, December 7, 2021 | 10am UK time

Douglas Otieno (Moderator) Executive Director, Tinada Youth Organisation, Kenya

Jahan Ara Begum (Hena) General Secretary, Alliance of Urban DPOs, Chittagong, Bangladesh (AUDC)

Harriet Knowles & Rachel Kean Disability Capacity Building programme, UK FCDO

José Viera CEO, World Blind Union and Representative of UN Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities

i2i hosts two webinars

Since the last Learning Update, i2i has successfully hosted two webinars with our consortium partner the European Disability Forum.

The December webinar was titled *From ticking the box, to thinking outside of it: Moving towards active participation of OPDs in disability decision-making* and explored the need to shift from, or go beyond, brief consultation to active, meaningful and two-way participation when governments and other bodies engage OPDs and people with disabilities in shaping policies and strategies.

The webinar was an OPD-led reflection on the levels and quality of current engagement with organisations and people with disabilities, asking *is consultation enough? is consultation going in the right direction? is it true that OPDs and people with disabilities are increasingly consulted but not yet truly participating? will things change in the lead-up to and after the Global Disability Summit?*

Back in October, at our webinar **Disability-inclusive employment in a new digital, COVID-changed landscape**, attendees heard about new i2i research on how assistive technology is bridging the employment gap for people with disabilities in Bangladesh and Kenya.

There were perspectives from jobseekers/ employees with disabilities, OPD reps and employers on benefits and challenges of disability-inclusive employment's shift into digital spaces.

The panel featured Salma Mahbub, General Secretary of B-SCAN, John Wambua of United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK) and Joshiah Sangma, a comms and advocacy intern at CBM Bangladesh (see picture on pg 1).

You can listen again to this webinar here.

Addressing gender gap in Bangladesh

*Early i2i data from both Bangladesh and Kenya showed men were far more likely to access i2i services. **Surya Akter**, i2i's programme manager in Bangladesh, explains steps being taken to redress the balance.*

i2i has **introduced 14 registration centres/ hubs** within OPDs, so women with disabilities can complete their i2i Career Advisor registrations and access other facilities and support.

There has been much discussion that women with disabilities are unable to register and take opportunities through the platform due to their lack of involvement with technology. In view of this, it is planned to **create a video tutorial for women with disabilities that will guide them to access the portal.**

Three models have been developed for private sector employers as part of i2i. **Detailed information on how to include more women with disabilities in the workplace has been provided in a module to raise awareness among employers.**

A resource tool - an information guide/ resource book on steps taken by the government and private sector to create employment and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities - has been developed. **Information has been provided on how women with disabilities get support through the government and private sector.**

To support women with disabilities to be more involved in the i2i platform, **case studies of employed and successful women are being prepared, which will be uploaded on to the portal very soon.**

i2i partner **CSID has been visiting various OPDs and disability-focused organisations to engage more women with disabilities through their network and assist them to get registered on the portal.**

The subject of **gender inclusion is being brought up in sensitisation sessions/ meetings with employers.**

i2i impact stories start to take shape

Research and interviews are underway as the next set of i2i case studies/impact stories from both Bangladesh and Kenya start to be gathered

i2i's communications team is gathering content for and writing a total of 12 case studies focused on various participants and stakeholders and/or activities/approaches of i2i or the work of OPDs and private sector companies connected with i2i in both countries.

Focus areas could include:

- Stories of change focused on a person with a disability's engagement with the programme.
- The experiences of jobseekers with different disabilities looking for decent, suitable work and using i2i support to do so.
- Disability inclusion initiatives of private sector companies and how these are being supported by i2i.
- Other activities, approaches, processes and practices of the i2i programme.

The case studies will capture the direct impact of the i2i programme and its activities on people, organisations, systems, structures and practices.

eLearning ready to go and new partnerships

i2i's soft skills eLearning modules have been finalised and uploaded to the NCPWD Career Portal and i2i Career Advisor (English versions only).

In Kenya, we have partnered with Village2Nation to share our soft skills modules and workplace inclusion eLearning modules for employers.

In Bangladesh, we are working with Emporia, a digital skills eLearning platform for people with disabilities.

i2i beneficiaries can take this training for free and receive support towards internet costs for accessing it.

Meanwhile, Leonard Cheshire and i2i has received an international award for soft skills modules (see article to the right).

Call to fill in learning and user feedback logs

i2i continues to ask consortium members and partners to fill in programme learning and user feedback logs with any recently collected information.

'Really interesting relevant stuff has come out in recent data discussions about why people are leaving jobs and challenges securing jobs - people should include this great information in the logs so we can use it for future discussions and in FCDO reports,' said Claire Arnott, i2i's M&E and learning manager.

'This will be really important in helping to understand what has been tried, challenges and the perspectives of programme users.'

i2i scoops learning award

We are very proud to announce that i2i won a bronze award for Excellence in the Design of Learning Content - Public & Non-profit Sector at the International Learning Technologies Awards, 2021.

Our eLearning partner LAS was commissioned to design and develop 23 modules covering soft and digital skills for learners with disabilities, particularly auditory, visual or neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

A Universal Design for Learning approach was used to create learning assets and routes catering for different learners' needs. Text, images, animation, audio, video and other media were used to encourage and reinforce learning. An holistic approach was taken so every individual could have a similar learning experience.

The project was a true team effort, with LAS, Leonard Cheshire, partners in Bangladesh and Kenya and the learners themselves overcoming challenges to deliver a learner-centric, engaging programme that goes well beyond accessibility standards and offers opportunities to all to genuinely change lives.

You can read more about our inclusive approach to eLearning in this new blog by Angel Perez, i2i's senior technology and innovation lead.

Photos: Courtesy of Joshiah Sangma, pg 1; i2i/Habiba Nowrose pgs 2 and 4; Courtesy of Angel Perez, pg 5.