**REPORT OF FESTUS FAJEMILO FOUNDATION/PARTNERS TO THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT COVID-19 E-LEARNING PROGRAMME**

**Background:**

The COVID19 pandemic has had significant impact on the education sector globally. Consequently, governments across the world shut down schools as part of measures to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus especially amongst children.

In Nigeria, the Federal government closed schools from March 19, 2020 and in response to the situation, efforts were made towards using the electronic media and various social media platforms to deliver education programs to children in their homes. In this regard, Lagos state was the first state in the country to kick start the initiative which was aired on the state-owned Radio and Television stations, two private radio stations as well as YouTube platform.

However, a careful appraisal of the virtual learning in Lagos state, indicates the near absence of provisions for the inclusion of, and accessibility for children with disabilities (CWDs) which informed the initiative of Festus Fajemilo Foundation, JONAPWD (Lagos State Chapter) and Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul with funding support from Liliane Foundation, Netherlands to come up with some interventions to make the program accessible and beneficial to children with disabilities.

These interventions include:

* Adaptation of audio-visual instructions into sign language interpreted instructions for children with hearing disability.
* Adaptation of appropriate infographics and simplified content for children with intellectual and learning disabilities.
* Strengthen the capacity of the E-class instructors in the use of appropriate disability inclusive language for the needs of children with visual and intellectual/learning disabilities.
* Raise awareness of parents and guardians on the availability and use of the media for delivery of school lessons in view of the on-going COVID-19 lockdown.

The goal of the above interventions is to strengthen the practice of inclusiveness in the delivery of education in line with the Lagos State Policy on Inclusive Education through equal participation and inclusion of children and youngsters with disabilities in the E-learning program of Lagos state government amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

**Program Milestones and outputs**

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| PLANNED | OUTPUT/ACHIEVED |
| Adaptation of audio-visual instructions into sign language interpreted instructions for children with hearing disability (support 3 sign language interpreters) | **6 sign language interpreters 3 each at primary and secondary levels** supported to provide sign language interpreted instructions for children with hearing disability. |
| Adaptation of appropriate infographics and simplified content for children with hearing and intellectual/learning disabilities | Dedicated content to meet the needs of children with hearing impairment and intellectual/learning disabilities at lower primary level developed and submitted to the Chairman, Lagos state universal basic education board (LASUBEB). Though there was delay in the use of the content submitted which led to the exclusion of children with intellectual/learning and hearing disabilities at lower primary level for the first 10 weeks of the remote learning, SUBEB has however commenced studio recording in the 11th week, adapted content with full participation of special education teachers as delivery instructors. The airing of the recordings according to SUBEB chairman, commences soon. The adapted content was developed by Dr. Shonibare of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council and Dr. Adeleke Philip of the department of Special Education, University of Calabar. The content for the Deaf is an eleven-week lessons to safeguard and update the Deaf into the thinking of the times, hands washing, wearing nose mask and social distancing, while the content for children with intellectual/learning disability is designed based on their needs and cognitive ability. Specifically, to stimulate the children in their keeping abreast with the daily skills and update for them to be relevant and active based on individual endowment. |
| Strengthen the capacity of 10 E-class instructors in the use of appropriate disability-inclusive language for the needs of children with visual and intellectual/learning disabilities. | **Trained 110 teachers/administrators/personnel**  of Lagos state ministry of education and Lagos state universal basic education board. The number consists of **13 primary school instructors** and **97 secondary school teachers/administrators/personnel** at the ministry of education. Two virtual training were conducted precisely 16th of June 2020 for primary school teachers and 1st July 2020 for the secondary school teachers. Objectives of the training include; help participants understand concept, models, types of disability & implication for E-Learning, equip them with disability – Sensitive Communication skills, the need for them to be aware of the needs of learners with disabilities as they deliver E-Learning classes. General comments by the participants and that of Barrister (Mrs) Solarin, General/Permanent Secretary, Education district 1 who spoke on behalf of the ministry said it’s an eye opener and better the understanding of the teachers which will go a long way in improving teachers attitude towards children with disabilities. |
| Raise awareness of parents and guardians on the availability and use of the media for delivery of school lessons in view of the on-going COVID-19 lockdown:   * Conduct 6 awareness raising on TV & Radio about the Lagos state E-Learning program * Support 44 teachers of inclusive & special schools to invite parents to E-classes & monitor participation * Support 10 DPO leaders to invite parents to E-classes & monitor participation | * 5 media awareness carried out; 2 on Radiolagos 107.5 (Yoruba programs – “Ojutaye” & “Jenwi Tmi” reaching about 3.5 Million listeners of the program, 1 on EKO FM 89.7FM “Morning Show”, 1 on Nigerian Info 99.3FM (Mid-Day Talk) and 1 on Lagos Traffic Radio 96.1FM ( Yoruba program “Bo Se Nlo”. * 39 special education teachers supported with N1,000 airtime weekly for 10 weeks to create awareness and monitor participation of children with disabilities in their inclusive unit in the E-Learning program. * 7 DPO leaders supported with N1,000 airtime weekly to create awareness and monitor participation of children with disabilities among different disability groups in the E-Learning program. * 2031 pupils/students with disabilities reached during the 10-week of collaboration. An average of 885 children with disabilities were sensitized weekly to participate in the program. * Sharing of YouTube link timetable for the secondary school level classes. * Production of documentary showcasing participation of children with disabilities in the E-Learning program in their homes, views of their parents and monitors, lessons learned to be shared on various social media platforms. |

**Monitoring & Evaluation:**

The program was assessed through a google feedback form designed for the teachers and DPO leaders who send in weekly report of their monitoring. Through this, we were able to harvest the positive impact as well as challenges experienced by CWDs. Parents/guardians of children with disabilities also shared their recommendations that could help achieve better delivery of E-learning.

**Positive Impact of the program:**

From the google feedback form submitted by the monitoring teachers/DPO leaders, the E-learning program despite being new to both the instructors, learners and the administrators, there were positive impact recorded some of which are highlighted below:

* Program is good, educative, and interesting, enhances learning & and make it fun.
* The program keeps their children engaged calm.
* The program ensures continuous learning and refreshes their brains despite school closure because of Covid-19 pandemic.
* Makes special needs children have sense of belonging.
* It encourages parents/guardian’s participation in child’s education and enables them to have direct insights into experiences of teachers with CWDs in school.
* It develops/enhances capacity of children, parents and teachers in the use of technology for learning.

**Challenges:**

Despite the continuation of learning amidst Covid19 pandemic, its introduction came with array of challenges as expressed by parents/guardians of children with disabilities as well as teachers/DPOs who monitored CWD’s participation in the program. Among the challenges experienced by families, poor/epileptic power supply was top on the list of which 40.8% of families reported expressed that the power problem affected active participation of their children. Other challenges as highlighted by the parents/guardians include:

* Non availability of some parents in supporting their children during the lessons in pursuits of their businesses.
* Lack of gadgets (smartphones, computers, Television, Radio etc.) for some CWD with which to access the program.
* Content being delivered too high for pupils in the lower primary level to comprehend, especially children with hearing impairment and learning/intellectual disabilities.
* Time allocated to each lesson was too short for some category of CWDs to comprehend.
* Poor phone network prevented reaching out to some parents of CWDs regularly by the monitoring teachers and DPOs.

**Recommendations:**

The parents of CWDs provided some recommendations which they said considered will improve the delivery of Virtual learning program going forward.

* More awareness should be created to encourage parents to support their CWDs for increased participation in the program.
* Time allocated to the program should be increased to allow time for CWD’s better comprehension.
* Improve power supply especially now that children are learning at home.
* Efforts should be made to increase visibility of the sign language interpreters on TV screen to enable students with hearing impairment comprehend teaching.
* Instructors should make use of instructional materials as much as possible despite virtual teaching.

**Lessons Learned:**

Lagos state government runs policy on inclusive education, the government have 44 inclusive schools of 31 primary and 13 secondary, so having an E-Learning program, this policy should capture that aspect as well. Therefore, there is the need for the state government to revisit the policy, to see that in future any other aspect of education apart from the regular classes is also inclusive.

**Conclusion:**

Overall, the provision of remote learning despite challenges experienced, has sustained learning, and kept pupils/students engaged while at home because of coronavirus pandemic. The intervention provided by the consortium of Festus Fajemilo Foundation, Lagos state chapter of JONAPWD and Daughters of Charity has helped in a great measure to drive the program and ensured the participation of children with disabilities who were initially not captured in the program. This is in fulfillment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “leaving no one behind” regarding Article 24 and SDG 4 – quality education.

We wish to express our profound appreciation to Liliane Foundation, Netherlands, for providing the funding support and the opportunity to have provided these interventions even at the short request.

Equally, the Project Team (FFF, JONAPWD-Lagos and Daughters of Charity) deeply appreciates the Lagos State Government through the Honorable Commissioner for Education Mrs. Folasade Adefisayo, the Chairman Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board (LASUBEB), Honourable Wahab Alawiye-King and the Permanent Secretary, State Ministry of Education Mrs. Abosede Omobolanle Adelaja for the support and partnership.

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The invaluable cooperation of the Coordinator, Head of Inclusive Unit, Mr. Afolabi Oyebade and all the 44 heads of inclusive units as well as the E-0Learning instructors cannot be overemphasized regarding the overall success of the intervention.

Thank You.