

How women with disabilities were treated during COVID-19, and how to make things better

The experiences of women with disabilities and COVID-19 in Nigeria

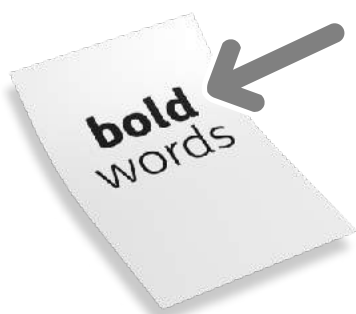


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In this easy read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are [blue and underlined](#). These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction

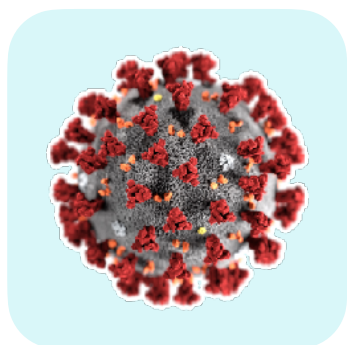


UN Women and Sightsavers have been looking at how women with disabilities have been affected by the **COVID-19** crisis.



We are organisations that:

- help women be stronger
- make things fairer for women around the world.



COVID-19 is also called Coronavirus. It is an illness that is spreading around the world. It can affect your lungs and breathing.



We spoke with women with disabilities in 2 states of Nigeria to find out how COVID-19 had affected them.



We talked to 16 groups and 10 individual people in Lagos and Kano.



This is our report and our ideas for what should happen now.

How women with disabilities coped



Many countries had a **lockdown** to help keep people safe and to stop COVID-19 from spreading.

A **lockdown** is where everyone stays at home and keeps away from other people. Many businesses had to close.



People with disabilities have a harder time than other people in normal times.



Women with disabilities have a harder time than men in normal times. These differences were worse because of the lockdowns.



Women with disabilities who were looking after children had more difficulties than most during the lockdowns.

Not enough food



The women told us there was not enough food during COVID-19.

Some of them only had 1 or 2 meals a day, or fed their children instead of themselves.



Some women said their children had gone out begging, but could not get much because most people were staying indoors.



Men could find more food than women, but they did not always bring it back to the house.



People didn't have enough food because:

- they weren't earning enough money



- the price of food went up



- they could not travel to get food.

Not enough money



There was not enough money during COVID-19.

Some women had taken up sex work as a way to make money.



Other women sold their things or lost their homes.



Many women borrowed money.

Health



Some women knew people who had caught COVID-19 and had become very ill or died.



People didn't have money for medicines and had to try using herbs.



People were frightened to go to hospital in case they caught COVID-19.



Some people couldn't get health care because there was no transport.



Mental health

Some of the younger women talked about feeling lonely or unhappy because they had to stay inside.



Some women talked about how COVID-19 and lockdowns had caused arguments in the family.

Lack of movement



It was hard for women with disabilities to get around.



Women who needed a wheelchair had no support to get into the wheelchair. They had to crawl around on the floor.



Friends in the community did not want to help in case they caught COVID-19.

Education



Schools were closed. Some schools had some lessons on TV or radio, but children with disabilities could not access them.



One woman said she paid for online lessons for her child, but it was very expensive.



Now that schools are open again, children are being rushed through their work.



This is hard for the children with disabilities who did not get lessons while they were at home.

Jobs



Some of the women had their own businesses.



But they used the money for the businesses to keep their families going through COVID-19.

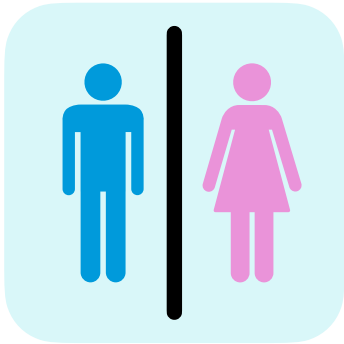


There was no money left to keep the businesses going.



Some women said that it will take a while before things get back to normal, and their businesses are working properly again.

Men and women



The effect of COVID-19 was different for men and women.



Men were not able to earn money to help their family.



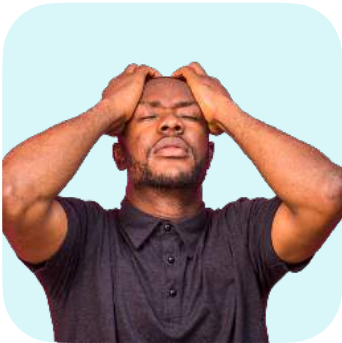
Men did not like the women going out to ask for help.



Women had to look after the house and the education of the children.



Women often had good ideas, but men would not listen to them.



Some women said that the tensions in the home led to men hitting them.



Women with disabilities could not escape the violence. They could not run away.

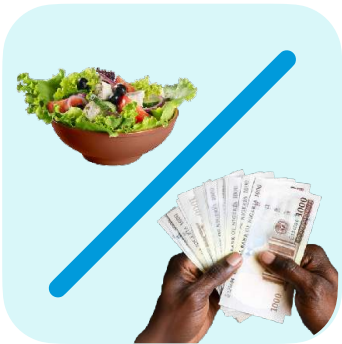


There was some violence against people with disabilities outside the home. Sometimes this was caused by people with disabilities not being able to read the rules.

Government support



The government did give some support but it was not enough.



Some women got food and others got small amounts of money.



Some people got free facemasks.



People with disabilities are not on the list of people who could get support. This is because the government thinks that people with disabilities are not important.



In some places people with disabilities did not get help because the way you had to ask for help was not **accessible** to them.

Accessible means it is easy to use and suitable for people with different needs.



Government staff often gave food to the people they knew rather than people with disabilities.

The women said that the government did not listen to them.



The women wanted the Organisations of Persons with Disabilities to be involved in giving out food.



The women trusted people with disabilities more than other people.

What should happen



The government should give extra help to the people who are treated the worst.



People with disabilities are treated worse than other people.

Women with disabilities are treated worse than men with disabilities.



Women with disabilities need the most help.



Registering people with disabilities

Registering means having people's names on an official list.



The Government should register people with disabilities so that they know where they are, and can help them quickly.



Speaking up

Women with disabilities should be given more help to speak up.

They should be given more opportunities to have a say in how things work.



Violence against women

The services that help women who are suffering from violence should be more accessible to people with disabilities.



Education

Children with disabilities should be able to go to classes that help them to catch up with things they have missed.



Health care

Health care should be more affordable for women with disabilities.



Training

There should be training for women to help them to get a job or set up their own businesses.



Government

The government should have more staff who help people with disabilities.



They should have a Special Advisor on Disability.



They should give enough money to help people with disabilities take part in things.



There should be better laws to protect and help people with disabilities.

For more information



If you need more information, please go to our website: www.unwomen.org



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