



The Enabling Inclusion (EI)® App: A story from rural South India about COVID-19 and digital technology

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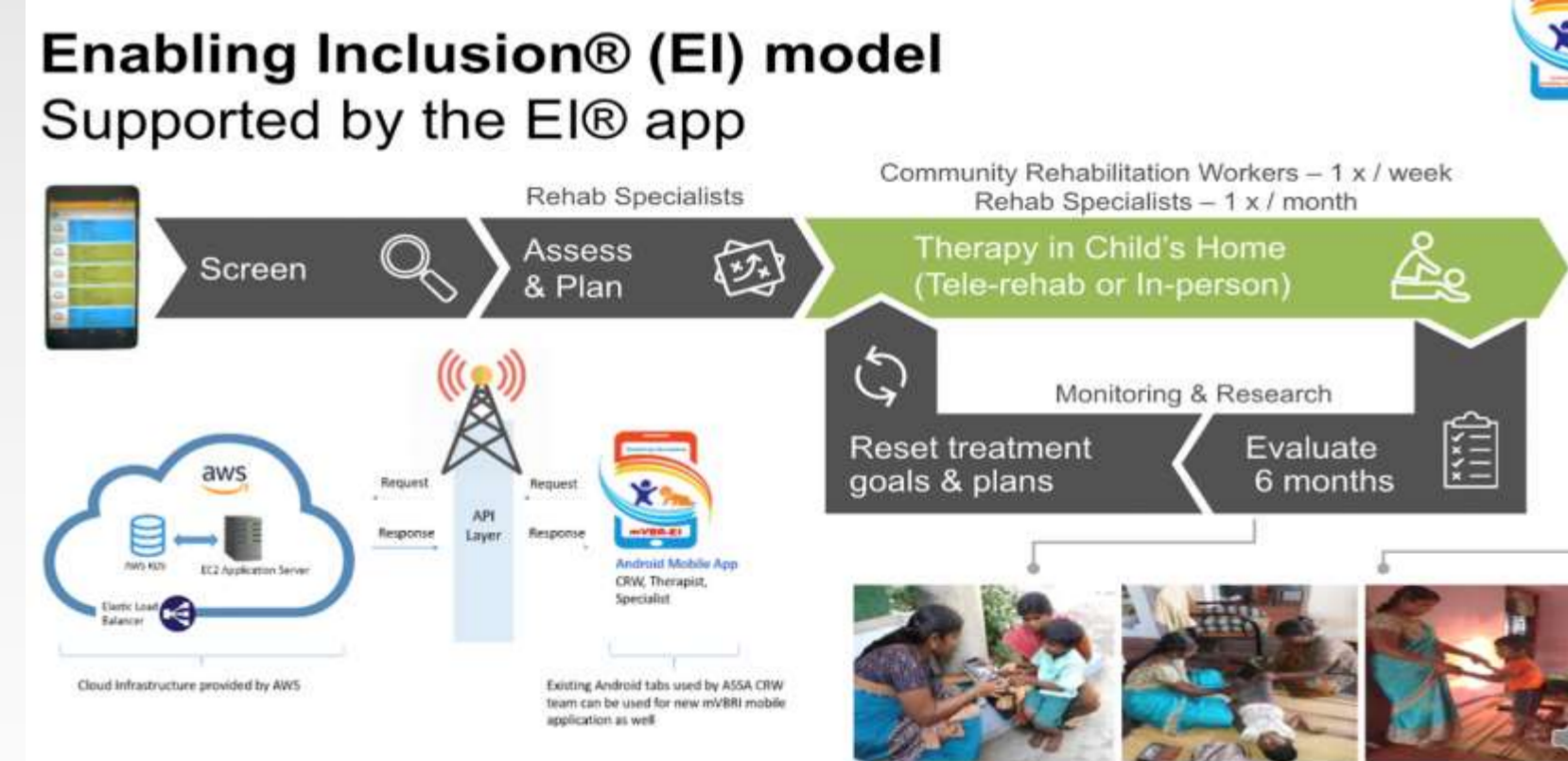
Introduction

Low and middle-income countries such as India are home to 95% of the world's children with disabilities (CWDs) under the age of five years, and 80% live in rural areas with no access to early intervention services.

Amar Seva Sangam Ayikudy (ASSA) is a unique non-profit, **non-governmental organisation in Tamil Nadu, India**. ASSA is intimately involved in various community initiatives and strongly believes that digital technology offers unique solutions towards bridging the healthcare divide.

In 2014, Amar Seva Sangam (ASSA), a disability NGO working in Tamil Nadu, India initiated the development of an innovative solution to support the rights of CWDs and their families.

The EI® model is based on the principles of **family-centred care** and is implemented using a **community-based rehabilitation** strategy and is used with children between 0-18 years of age. **The EI model's integrated modules include:** Validated screening tools, assessment module, standardized evaluations; family-centred goal setting tool and caregiver measures, ICF-based intervention activities and training and awareness module.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, India saw multiple lockdowns that impacted rehabilitation service provision within the country. Digital technologies helped provide and maintain service provision to children with disabilities in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu through the Enabling Inclusion (EI)® App developed and implemented by ASSA.

The EI® App and Health Coaching

- Services provided in ASSA via the (EI)® App were suspended from March 20th, 2020 due to COVID-19.
- ASSA implemented health coaching as a client-centered, goal-oriented approach that helped empower caregivers to self manage and promote the development of children with disabilities.
- During COVID-19, the EI® App evolved to help provide **health coaching** to parents and children requiring it within the community.
- 19% of families** received services through video calls and **81% families** received audio calls, which occurred 2-4 x times a week.
- Health coaching was provided in 2 ways. A **Mixed approach** where the parents and child were directly observed and coached on handling and **home interventions** via video calls and the audio calls were used to check in and troubleshoot any queries parents had.
- Parents received supportive messages to help them cope with caregiving through those difficult months at regular intervals.



RESULTS

Figure 1: Pre-existing clients versus clients recruited during lockdown (n=2939)

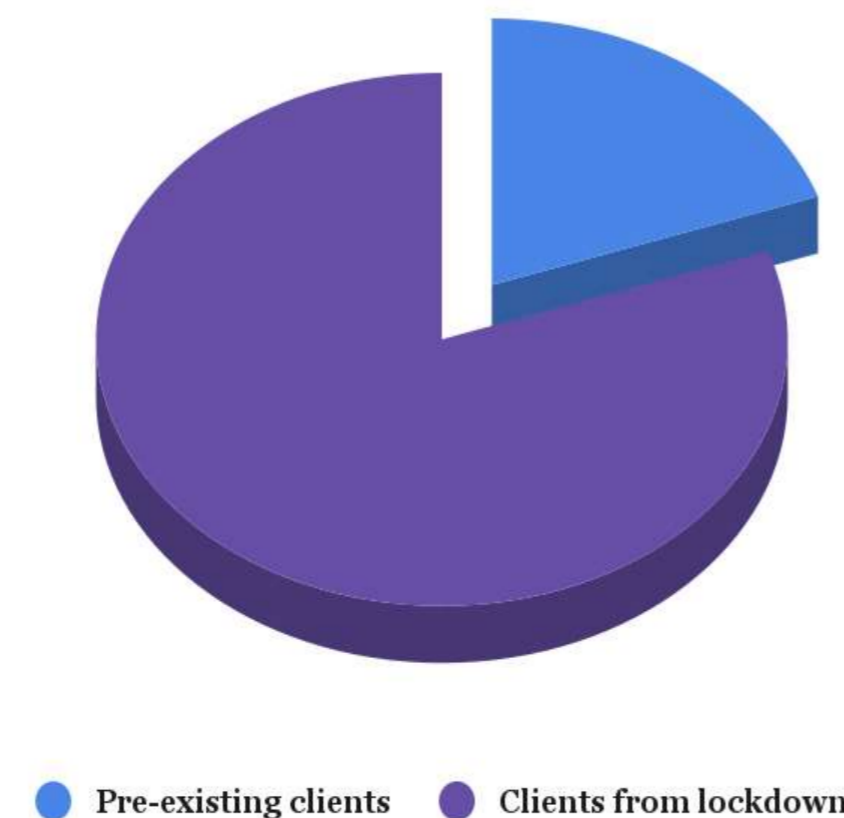
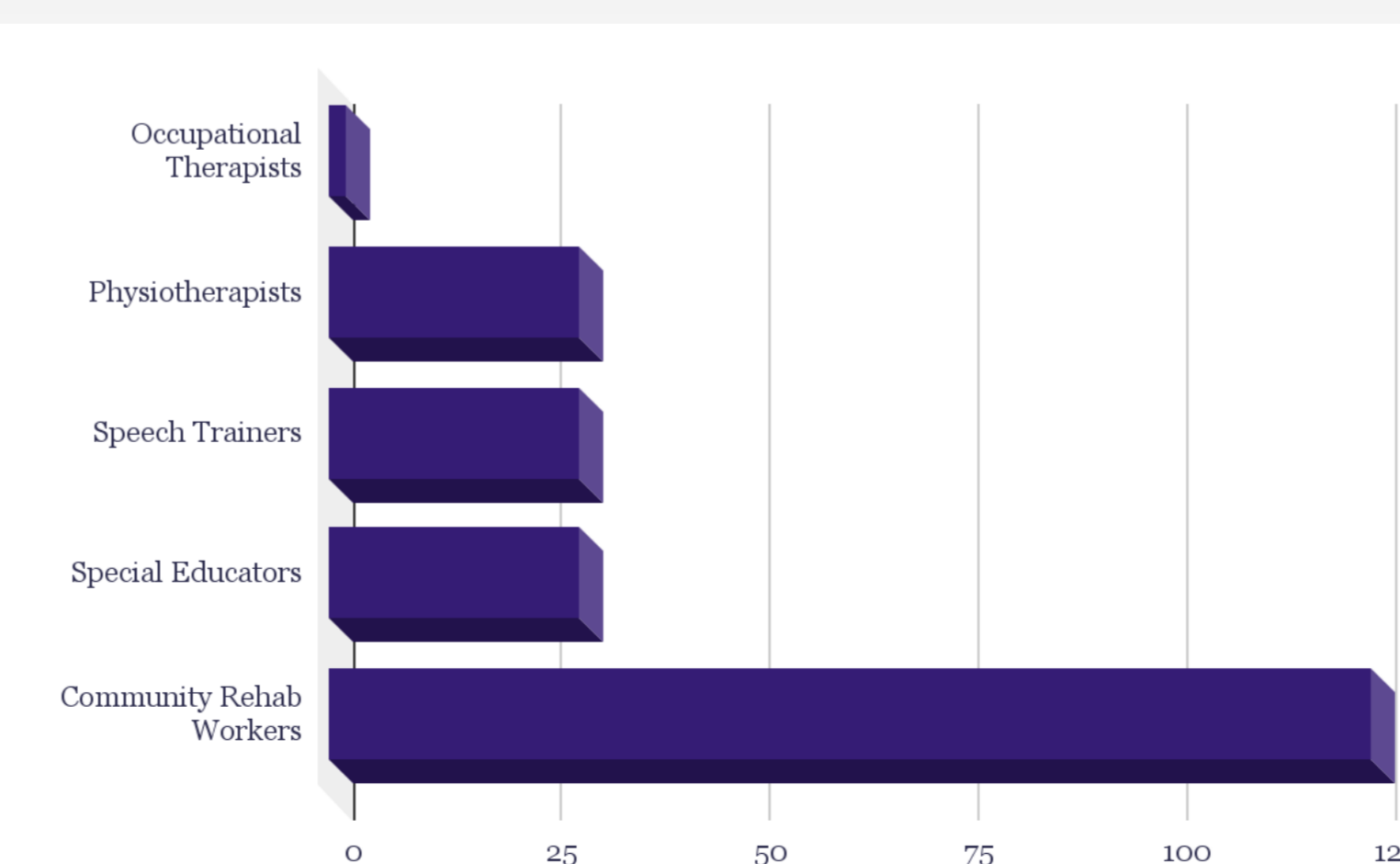


Figure 2: Services provided by ASSA workers and volunteers



Conclusions

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, an NGO located in rural India was able to **sustain services, and scale-up rehab service provision** for children with disabilities through the use of digital technology and tele-rehab via the **Enabling Inclusion® app**.

It helped provide guidance on caregiver skills, suggestions on activities to be used at home to maintain engagement and level of function. Coupled with tele-rehabilitation, coaching ensures that children with disabilities continue to receive regular care regardless of their circumstances.



References

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