Cochlear implants in LMICs

From possibility to a pathway

Why access must mean more than the device

Dr Carolina Der
Technical Lead, Hearing Programme
World Health Organization



© World Health Organization

The need is greatest where access is hardest

Nearly 80%

of people with disabling hearing loss live in low- and middle-income countries



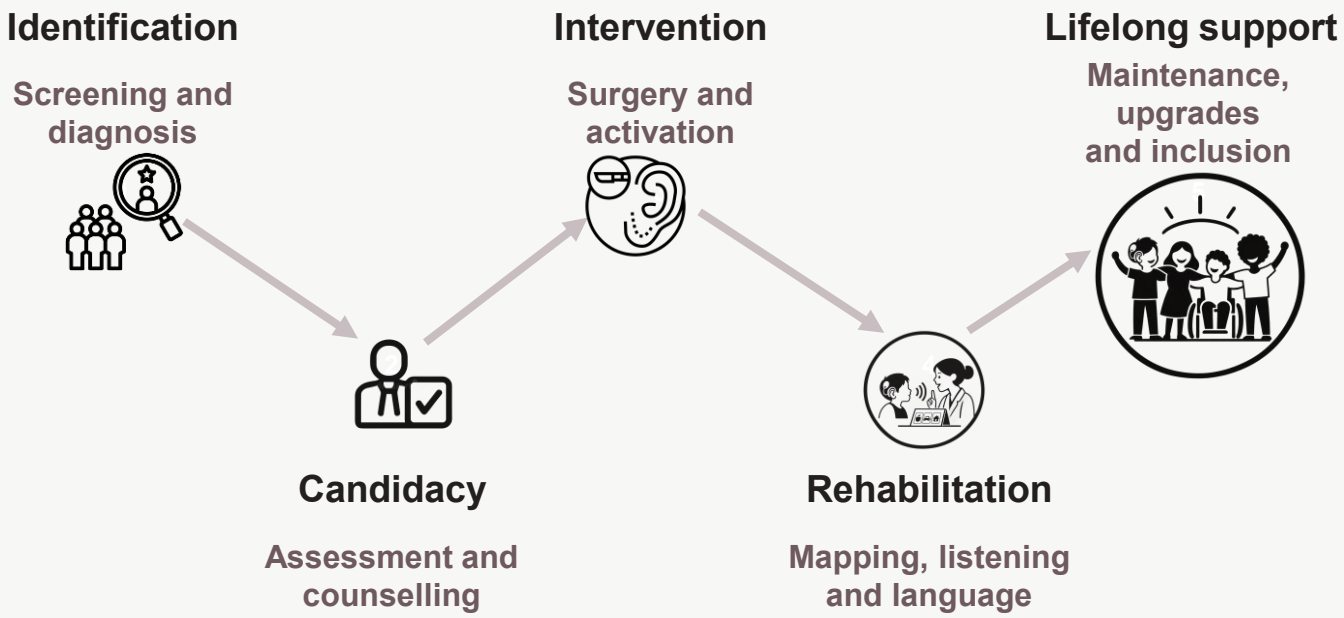
Access must extend beyond the device.

IDENTIFY	REFER	PROVIDE	SUSTAIN
Screening and diagnosis	Candidacy and counselling	Surgery and activation	Rehabilitation

© World Health Organization

CI is a pathway, not a product

Every link must work, over time, close to where families live.





Families carry the pathway between services.

A connected pathway across the life course

© World Health Organization

A significant policy signal

Implantable hearing devices are included in the forthcoming second WHO APL.

WHO PRIORITY ASSISTIVE PRODUCTS LIST (APL)

Implantable hearing devices included for the first time

- **Cochlear implants**
  Including speech processors
- **Bone-conduction implants**
  Including speech processors

OTHER HEARING PRODUCTS IN THE APL

Applications and software for people with hearing loss • Body-worn hearing devices • Digital hearing aids • Ear and hearing protection • Personal remote microphone system • Alarm signallers



World Health Organization

Publication planned for the end of 2026

© World Health Organization

What must change?

Move from isolated opportunities to sustainable national pathways.

Plan for the whole pathway

Fund services, rehabilitation and maintenance.

Build multidisciplinary capacity

Connect clinical, rehabilitation and education teams.

Design for continuity

Bring follow-up closer to where families live.

Use lived experience

Shape policy, services and accountability.



Listen to families. Design with families.

© World Health Organization

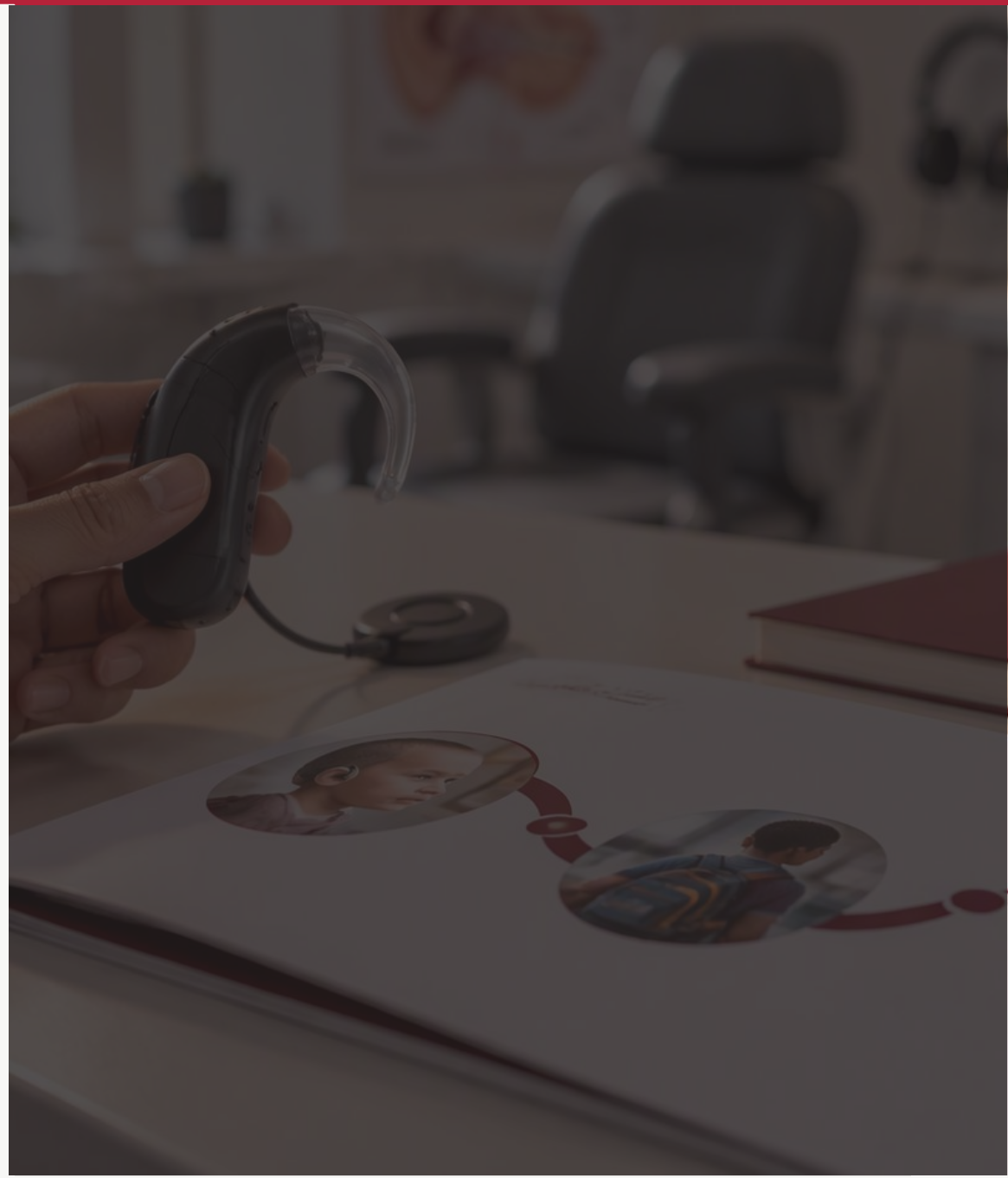
Thank you!

Access to cochlear implants must mean access to the whole pathway.

Let’s continue the conversation

derc@who.int

World Health Organization



© World Health Organization