



Disability Statistics in Humanitarian Action:

From evidence to action: Filling the data gap by enhancing the availability and use of quality data on persons with disability by humanitarian actors

Project Background:

Humanitarian actors are rarely aware of the number of people with disabilities in a given disaster or crisis¹. Without people with disabilities being systematically identified, humanitarian actors are not in a position to implement an appropriate inclusive response and often do not address specific challenges of people with disabilities in emergencies, such as protection from violence, as reflected in the Humanitarian Disability Charter endorsed by more than 140 stakeholders at the World Humanitarian Summit. However, a number of substantial challenges remain as regards the collection and use of disability data in humanitarian response contexts:

- Regularly-used humanitarian assessment tools often treat disability as a binary “yes-no” question, which reinforces a medical interpretation of disability and not generate data that is sufficiently comparable or reliable to inform humanitarian programming.
- Humanitarian actors lack information and knowledge about other available or appropriate tools to collect disability data and how to use them.
- Consequently, mainstream humanitarian actors often rely on disability-focused organisations to take ownership over age and disability-related issues. Yet these organisations usually have very limited capacity and have little experience or expertise in humanitarian response, and therefore are not equipped on their own to identify and address the needs of all people with disabilities affected in a given crisis.
- Finally, while an internationally standardized set of questions to assess disability prevalence does exist, the use of the Washington Group Questions has been limited and not systematic in humanitarian action, and has not provided a basis for scaling up for use by humanitarian actors more widely.

Therefore, to encourage increased uptake the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is funding a new project to further test and assess the Washington Group Questions for use in humanitarian response contexts and to develop guidance on their use that is designed specifically for humanitarian actors.

To deliver the project Handicap International is working alongside the Washington Group and the International Disability Alliance to engage a range of key humanitarian actors directly both in the testing of the Washington Group Questions in ongoing humanitarian programmes and in the development of a guidance, learning and dissemination materials, so as to ensure that they will be used appropriately, effectively and systematically by humanitarian agencies in the future.



Timeline



The project started in July 2016 and will take 30 months – testing and guidance will be completed by 18 months with the remaining 12 months dedicated to dissemination and uptake. The action research will start in March 2017 and be completed in March 2018. Drafting of the guidance and training materials will start from December 2017. The last year of the project will be dedicated to dissemination and uptake.

Action Research

The action research will last from March 2017 to March 2018. The objective is to test and assess the WGSS of questions for use in existing and ongoing humanitarian programmes. Three locations have been selected for the action research (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan and the Philippines) for their geographical and thematic variety. In each country, HI will be recruiting a Project Officer to support humanitarian agencies taking part in the action research.

During the action research, we expect humanitarian agencies' field teams to take part in the following activities:

- (1) Training sessions organised by HI in each country on the use of WG questions in humanitarian contexts.
- (2) Contextualisation of the research methodology to ensure that it is relevant to the different agencies' practices and programmes.
- (3) Review of existing data collection tools and processes to incorporate the WG questions. The Project Officer will work with the field teams to identify the best place to collect disability data in the different programmes and review existing tools, processes and M&E practices. If necessary, guidance and additional training will be provided.
- (4) Participation in workshops (start-up, mid-term and evaluation) during the action research to give feedback to HI on the use of the WG questions. This will be an opportunity to discuss and address challenges (for example by reviewing tools and processes) as well as identify best practices. All the information gathered in these workshops will be used by HI when drafting of the guidance and learning materials on the use of the WG questions in emergency contexts.

Any additional M&E activity required for the action research (focus group discussions, key informant interviews, spot-checks, surveys etc.) will be carried out by HI's Project Officer during, monitoring visits.