Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action

2019 Analytical Paper on World Humanitarian Summit Self-Reporting on the Agenda for Humanity Transformation 3G

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Executive Summary

The Agenda for Humanity, launched at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) addressed the need to protect and respect the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as other groups, in humanitarian crisis under transformation 3G on "including the most vulnerable". The "Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action", an initiative launched at the WHS, provided more details of the commitments that actors would need to take to ensure their response was inclusive. The Charter has been a crucial advocacy tool to raise the issue of inclusion on the humanitarian agenda, together and in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Charter demonstrates the collective willingness to achieve the full and meaningful inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations across the humanitarian system. As of December 2019, the Charter had been endorsed by over 230 stakeholders, of which 30 were Member States. The latest Member States who joined the list of endorsers in 2018-2019 were Afghanistan, Cyprus, Nigeria, Poland and the United States. Recently, networks like Sphere joined, as well as a number of national organisation of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and NGOs.

One of the main commitments from the Charter was the development of Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, endorsed by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). A Task Team, co-chaired by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and Humanity & Inclusion (HI) worked relentlessly between 2016 and 2019 on the drafting of the Guidelines through a multi-stakeholder participative process. The analysis of 2019 reports under the Platform for Action Commitments and Transformation (PACT) showed that, beyond international efforts to develop resources to support the realisation of commitments taken, new initiatives were also taken towards national and organisational internal frameworks, with policies and practices being progressively more inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Humanitarian actors are challenged to modify responses to promote the protection and equitable inclusion of persons with disabilities and consider their experience and capacities. However, they are facing major challenges that are still hampering this objective, mainly linked to difficulties in gathering reliable disability-disaggregated data to inform programming, a lack of understanding of intersectionalities with other factors of risk, such as gender and age, a lack of funding and significant gaps in trained human resources.

Deliberate actions in all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle are required to ensure that persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are systematically included in the response and can participate meaningfully in decision-making.

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[1] This paper is presented by CBM, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) as part of their collaborative project "Inclusive Humanitarian Action for Persons with Disabilities".

AGENDA FOR HUMANITY
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES
24 TRANSFORMATIONS

Overview of the current landscape

As the launch of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[2] at the 2016 WHS generated political momentum, a number of policies and technical resources were developed at different levels, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Global Disability Summit (GDS), hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom, and co-hosted by IDA and the Government of Kenya in July 2018 in London, represented another opportunity to advocate for and commit to inclusive humanitarian action.

Three 2018 UN General Assembly Resolutions[3] noted the Charter and included reference to non-discrimination, inclusive and active participation and contribution of persons with disabilities, as well as disaggregation of data by disability. The Global Compact on Refugees adopted in December 2018 included explicit references to persons with disabilities, in particular to non-discrimination, meaningful participation and leadership of persons with disabilities, as well as disaggregation of data by disability.

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[2] http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/

[3] A/RES/73/136 on International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters; A/RES/73/139 on Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations; A/RES/73/142 on inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities

Breakthroughs also took place at the UN Security Council. In December 2018, an Arria Formula meeting on persons with disabilities in conflict was organized by Poland, Cote d'Ivoire, Germany, Kuwait and Peru, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and IDA. In April 2019, Ms. Nujeen Mustafa became the first woman with a disability to brief the UN Security Council on the situation of persons with disabilities in Syria. In May 2019, the Secretary-General released his report on the "Protection of civilians in armed conflict"[4] recognizing the impact of armed conflict on persons with disabilities. These steps led to the unanimous adoption of the first-ever resolution of the UN Security Council calling upon Member States and parties to armed conflict to protect persons with disabilities in conflict situations and to ensure they have access to justice, basic services and unimpeded humanitarian assistance[5].

The year 2018 also saw a number of organizational frameworks and policies being shaped, especially the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)[6], launched in June 2019, a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that the UN system is fit for purpose in relation to disability inclusion, which will equally impact the humanitarian-development-peace pillars of the UN system[7].

Background

This paper aims to provide an overview and initial analysis on the self-reports submitted to the PACT relevant to persons with disabilities. Out of the 117 stakeholders who reported in 2019, 36 stakeholders[8] self-reported on actions taken related to persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, mostly under transformation 3G. The rate of reporting increased in 2019, with 30 percent of self-reporting stakeholders submitting a report under transformation 3G, compared to 26 percent in 2018.

The self-reports analysed used the keywords 'disab*', 'disability', 'disabilities' and 'DPOs'.

Positive trends

The analysis of self-reports draws to the following positive considerations: strengthening of stakeholders' policies and practices; continuing the international multi-stakeholder effort to develop resources such as the IASC Guidelines; and international advocacy. However, the level of information provided does not allow undertaking a full analysis on whether these actions are compliant with the CRPD, including appreciating levels of engagement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.

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[4] S/2019/373, https://undocs.org/S/2019/373

[5] S/RES/2475 (2019), https://undocs.org/s/res/2475(2019)

[6] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/03/UNDIS_20-March-2019_for-HLCM.P.pdf

[7] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/documents/iasc-guidelines

[8] Among the 36 stakeholders feature 12 Member States (Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the UK), the European Union, nine UN agencies (FAO, IOM, UNICEF, UNDP, UN WOMEN, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNRWA, WFP), 11 iNGOs (Christian Aid, CHS Alliance, Doz e. V., HelpAge International, Humanity & Inclusion, Food for the Hungry, Humentum UK, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Malteser International, Plan International, Women's Refugee Commission), one faith based organisation (Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe) and two other organisations (Sphere network and the Viet Nam Red Cross Society)

1. **Evidence of initiatives taken to strengthen national and organisational internal frameworks, policies and capacities on inclusive humanitarian action for persons with disabilities**

Over half of stakeholders analysed in this paper provided information on their efforts to strengthen frameworks on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. In 2018, the European Union (EU) developed an operational guidance note on disability inclusion[9], in consultation with EU partners and OPDs. Germany developed a "gender-age-disability marker" to mainstream disability-sensitive programming and ensure that the different needs and capabilities of women, girls, men and boys with disabilities are accounted for in its humanitarian assistance. Germany's updated strategy on humanitarian assistance[10] also reflected inclusion as an important cross-cutting theme, and it is planning to launch its first cross-sectoral Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in development cooperation, which also considers the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in fragile contexts. Germany is now systematically requesting that its partners gather disaggregated data on gender, age and disability, and that they provide information on their strategies to foster inclusion in the design and delivery of their humanitarian projects. In 2018, the Italian Cooperation approved the new "Guidelines for disability and social inclusion in cooperation interventions 2018"[11]. Australia and New Zealand finalised a joint Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Pacific Humanitarian Action[12], which incorporates a commitment to disability inclusion, and to improve collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data. Thailand's disaster management activities, under the current National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan (2015-2019)[13], are inclusive of persons with disabilities, and a guideline on disaster preparedness for persons with disabilities in flood situation was developed.

The most relevant achievement within the UN has been the development of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)[14], a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that the UN system is fit for purpose in relation to disability inclusion. More specifically, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) established an internal multi-disciplinary working group on disability as a platform for informal exchange of good practices and technical expertise. It is also in the process of developing a technical guidance note for country offices to support disability-inclusive programming. UNICEF rolled out its guidance on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[15] to build capacity of UNICEF offices in the field. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a Guidance Note on Disability Inclusive Development[16]. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) finalized an e-learning on working with persons with disabilities in forced displacement[17], which included substantial content on promoting participation by persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in all areas of programming. OHCHR started the process to update the "OHCHR tool on assessments in humanitarian action" to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, and continued to include persons with disabilities in the "OHCHR Training Course on Human Rights in Humanitarian Action". The United Nations

[9] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/2019-01_disability_inclusion_guidance_note.pdf
[10] https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/282228/3cfd87de36f30bb61eed542249997631/strategie-huhi-englisch-data.pdf
[11] In Italian, https://www.esteri.it/mae/resource/doc/2018/02/linee-guida-disabilita-2018.pdf
[12] https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/DFAT-MFAT-Humanitarian-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Framework-for-the-Pacific.pdf
[13] https://www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=54086&cid=170
[14] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/03/UNDIS_20-March-2019_for-HLCM.P.pdf
[15] http://training.unicef.org/disability/emergencies/
[16] https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/human_rights/disability-inclusive-development-in-undp.html
[17] https://www.unhcr.org/4ec3c81c9.pdf

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) launched its first annual report on disability inclusion[18] and developed a data assessment report to advance the improvement of disability disaggregated data collected by the agency. The World Food Programme (WFP) developed an operational guidance to guide staff on the identification of persons with disabilities and ensure their meaningful inclusion in WFP programmes. To better track inclusion of people with disabilities, WFP also developed a new output indicator in the Corporate Results Framework to capture the number of women, men, boys and girls with disabilities receiving food/cash-based transfers/commodity vouchers/capacity strengthening transfers.

In the international NGO space, Christian Aid worked to strengthen disaggregated data collection by sex, age and disability by using the Washington Group Questions on Disability[19]. Food for the Hungry trained their staff to take additional time to ask about persons with disabilities, and to dedicate special attention to accessibility in programme design. International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) developed a Humanitarian Gender and Inclusion Guidance Note which focuses on gender-responsive programming as well as the inclusion of persons with disabilities and sexual and gender minorities. Plan International developed and rolled out a guidance note on sex age disability disaggregated data (SADDD).

2. Reporting about funding and programming addressed to persons with disabilities

A number of Member States and organisations showcased programmes that have a specific focus on persons with disabilities. Nineteen out of the 36 stakeholders (over half) reported about their disability-specific projects and programmes in crisis contexts.

Austria funded programming that was inclusive of persons with disabilities in Syria and Ukraine. Canada funded programming in Iraq. Overall, one quarter of the EU humanitarian aid projects in 2018 included persons with disabilities as targeted beneficiaries. Germany continued to fund programming in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. Italy implemented programmes including persons with disabilities in humanitarian in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Senegal and Somalia. In 2018, Italy funded a Programme for Humanitarian Impact Investment (PHII), implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which aimed at finding additional ways to finance vital services for people with disabilities in conflict-affected contexts.

UNICEF and UN Women reported that twenty and eighteen field offices, respectively, implemented humanitarian programmes that systematically included children, women and girls with disabilities. OHCHR supported the Geneva Academy in the organization of trainings in Palestine and Ukraine to build capacity internally and externally with humanitarian stakeholders and governments. It also issued an emergency grant in Bangladesh. In 2018, UNRWA identified and provided assistance to an estimated 545 persons with disabilities experiencing a protection risk.

About 20 HI field programmes have dedicated projects and activities to promote inclusive humanitarian action, influencing strategic planning and humanitarian programming. In Syria and Iraq, Doz e.V. programmes focused on the most at-risk groups, including persons with disabilities.

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[18] https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/disability-inclusion-annual-report-2018
[19] http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/short-set-of-disability-questions/

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe implemented programmes in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Uganda.

While these are interesting initiatives, there is insufficient information to appreciate: (1) the share and significance of such disability-specific projects as part of the wider operations of each stakeholders; (2) the extent to which disability has been mainstreamed across all humanitarian initiatives, beyond disability-focused projects and programmes, and (3) levels of compliance of these projects and programmes with the CRPD, including the meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.

3. **International and multi-stakeholder efforts to develop globally recognised technical resources, including the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[20]**

The development of IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities garnered great attention. A number of donors and stakeholders reported engaging in the IASC Task Team in charge of the development of the Guidelines, co-chaired by UNICEF, IDA and HI. The EU, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, New Zealand, UNICEF, UN Women, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNRWA, Christian Aid, HI and the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) reported on their involvement. In particular, WRC led the drafting of the gender-based violence prevention and response section of the Guidelines and worked with stakeholders to ensure that gender was mainstreamed throughout the Guidelines. HI, CBM and IDA are collecting and reviewing case studies on field practices to be published alongside the IASC Guidelines[21].

UNICEF reported about the development of a guidance on strengthening disability inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)[22], following a collaboration with HI, IDA, the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and UNHCR. HI also worked with IDA and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to enhance the availability and use of quality data on persons with disability by humanitarian actors. An open source e-learning toolkit[23] on "Collecting Data for the Inclusion of Persons with disabilities in Humanitarian Action – The Application of the WGQs" was disseminated to the humanitarian community in 2019.

The "Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for older people and people with disabilities"[24] (HIS) developed by the Age and Disability Capacity Building Programme (ADCAP) consortium led by HelpAge International, and including CBM, DisasterReady.org, HI, IFRC, Oxford Brookes University and RedR UK, was also published in 2018. The standards became a member of the Sphere Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP), an alliance of standards initiatives aimed to improve quality and accountability in humanitarian action.

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[20] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/documents/iasc-guidelines

[21] https://blog.hi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Case-studies_Inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action_CBM_HI_IDA.pdf

[22] https://reliefweb.int/report/world/guidance-strengthening-disability-inclusion-humanitarian-response-plans

[23] https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/projects/disability-data-in-humanitarian-action

[24] https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/adcap-age-and-disability-capacity-building-programme/

Moreover, the Sphere Handbook[25] was revised to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities, promote an inclusive and people-centred approach, and take steps to become aware of barriers to assistance and protection.

4. Advocacy on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action towards implementing partners and fellow organisations, and at international level

The Global Disability Summit (GDS), hosted by the Government of the United Kingdom, and co-hosted by IDA and the Government of Kenya in July 2018 in London, represented a landmark moment to enhance advocacy on inclusive humanitarian action for persons with disabilities. The GDS outcome document, the Charter for Change[26], includes explicit reference to the Charter of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, and 81 stakeholders made commitments on inclusive humanitarian action.

UNICEF, OHCHR and IDA were driving forces in the organization of a UN Security Council Arria Formula meeting on persons with disabilities in conflict, hosted in 2018 by Poland, Cote d'Ivoire, Germany, Kuwait and Peru. The objective of this meeting was to raise awareness within the UN Security Council of the issues impacting persons with disabilities.

UNHCR engaged with IDA in developing the Global Compact on Refugees, which contributed to mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities through the Compact. UNHCR also welcomed the participation of OPDs representatives in the 2018 NGO Consultations and High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

Donors, such as Austria, the EU, Finland, Germany, New Zealand and Norway also reported about ongoing international advocacy through networks such as the Global Action on Disability Network (GLAD), and by taking actions to encourage partners to integrate measures ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their humanitarian actions. UN Women reported supporting the representation and participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response, advocacy and policy creation and bringing gender perspectives.

Challenges

Stakeholders who reported on activities relevant to persons with disabilities under transformation 3G highlighted the following challenges as hampering the implementation of their commitments to this transformation:

- **Lack of data and analysis**. In sudden-onset disasters and armed conflicts, generating comparable and robust data disaggregated by sex, age and disability remains challenging for humanitarian actors. The lack of data hinders the assessment of the needs and priorities of persons with disabilities in the field and the development of inclusive programming reflecting these.
- **Lack of human resources and capacity.** Uneven capacity and knowledge on mainstreaming inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian programmes continues to present

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[25] https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf
[26] https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/gds-charter; the Global Disability Summit Charter for Change is distinguished from the Charter 4 Change that emerged from the WHS

challenges for humanitarian actors. While guidance exists and is being further developed, implementation requires dedicated resourcing and practical support to humanitarian actors.

- **Lack of engagement with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations.** OPDs and persons with disabilities face difficulties in accessing trainings on humanitarian action, and generally there remains a lack of collaboration between humanitarian stakeholders and disability-rights stakeholders.
- **Lack of understanding of intersectionalities.** Understanding and addressing intersectionalities also remains a challenge for humanitarian actors. Silos between gender, age and disability actors exist.
- **Funding amounts and distribution.** Humanitarian actors are not accustomed to allocate funding to ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. Moreover, OPDs experience difficulties to access humanitarian funding. While more in-depth tracking and analyses of humanitarian spending would be needed, budgets allocated to pilot and scale initiatives aimed at boosting the effective and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities across all areas of humanitarian actions seem insufficient till date to leverage fast and wide-scope changes in practices.