



Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action

Update on 2017 Progress

Background and Executive Summary

This paper was prepared by: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”. It aims to provide an overview and initial analysis on the self-reports submitted to the Platform for Action Commitments and Transformation (PACT) relevant to persons with disabilities. Forty-one stakeholders self-reported on actions taken related to persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, out of the 71² who submitted individual or joint commitments at or after the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). The self-reports analyzed used the keywords ‘disability’ and ‘disabilities’³. The self-reports analysed have been submitted by 13 States, the European Union, seven UN agencies, 14 iNGOs, and six other organisations.

This analysis provides an overview of progress towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action presented in the 41 reports. This evolution is indicated through the strengthening of internal policies and practices, as well as development of resources at global level, most notably the future Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

However, the reports also identify challenging areas to the full and meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities. Stakeholders primarily highlighted the lack of disability-disaggregated data and when existing, the lack of analysis of this data. Lack of attention to the situation of persons with disabilities in the planning and implementation of humanitarian responses and lack of technical human resources, technical capacity, and appropriate funding remain key challenges.

The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action launched at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit remains a useful advocacy and awareness-raising tool in the humanitarian environment. It demonstrates the collective willingness to enhance the full and meaningful inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations across the humanitarian system, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Charter contributed to the decision of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Working Group to establish an IASC Task Team, mandated to develop IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Although strongly supported by a number iNGOs and organisation of persons with disabilities, as well as some very active States such as Australia, Finland and the UK, further discussion and collaboration is needed to maximise the Charter initiative relevance and use in the medium- and long-term.

¹ This paper was prepared by CBM, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA)

² The number of stakeholders is the result of a search among commitments of the keywords ‘disability’ and ‘disabilities’

³ The number of stakeholders is the result of a search among self-reports of the keywords ‘disability’ and ‘disabilities’, as well as self-reports on the initiative of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action⁴

Over 200 stakeholders have endorsed the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (<http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/>) since its launch at the 2016 WHS. Seven States endorsed the Charter in 2017 and early 2018, namely Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Spain, and Sweden; two UN agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO, and the International Organization for Migration - IOM); and a number of mainstream iNGOs such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children UK, the International Rescue Committee, Solidarité International and Oxfam, networks such as the Start Network, as well as organisations of persons with disabilities and national NGOs.

The Charter articulates both the political will and the overall actions necessary to make emergency response inclusive of persons with disabilities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law overall.

All humanitarian actors, including Member States, UN agencies, NGOs and organisations of persons with disabilities are invited to endorse the Charter and pursue its five commitments: non-discrimination; participation; inclusive policy; inclusive response and services; cooperation and coordination.

In 2018, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action will develop IASC Guidelines to promote the full and effective inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. Deliberate action in all phases of the humanitarian programme cycle is required to ensure that persons with disabilities are systematically included in the response and can participate meaningfully in decision-making. The IASC Guidelines will be a key resource of guidance to tackle this challenge.

Data sources

Forty-one stakeholders reported on actions taken during 2017 concerning persons with disabilities across 11 transformations of the Agenda for Humanity, with the majority of those stakeholders reporting under 3G “include the most vulnerable⁵. This represents more than half (57%) of stakeholders who made individual or joint commitments towards persons with disabilities at or after the 2016 WHS. It is also to be noted that there has been a 10% increase in the number of self-reports submitted on 2017 implementation of commitments related to persons with disabilities compared to last year⁶.

Among the 41 stakeholders feature 13 Member States, namely Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Spain, Thailand, Ukraine and the UK; the European Union, seven UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UN WOMEN, OHCHR,

⁴ This box is not based on information shared in the PACT reports, but rather on the dedicated website <http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/>

⁵ The analysis covers reports submitted before 8 June 2018

⁶ 41 in 2017, and 37 in 2016

UNRWA and WFP), 14 international NGOs, two faith based organisations, two private entities, one national NGO, and one foundation.⁷

Six Member States: Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, and Ukraine self-reported on actions taken towards persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, although they had not committed to them at the 2016 WHS. At the same time a number of stakeholders, including Member States, have not reported on progress, despite their commitment to be more proactive regarding the situation of persons with disabilities. Although they did not submit a report at the time when the analysis was conducted, Finland is firmly financially supporting specific actions and advocating for an inclusive humanitarian action for persons with disabilities.

In a few cases, PACT reporting was supplemented with additional research to find out further information. Footnotes have been added where this is the case.

Achievements to date

The analysis of self-reports draws to some achievements in 2017 in terms of strengthening of stakeholders' policies and practices; development of new resources; and enhanced field engagement. However, the level of information provided does not allow undertaking a full analysis on whether these actions are compliant to the CRPD.

Almost half of the stakeholders who have reported on actions taken towards persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts reported that they have initiated or continue internal processes to strengthen their policies and practices in this area.

- Four Member States are taking actions in this sense. Canada, Germany and Thailand are supporting trainings of their humanitarian staff. Germany reported on the development of a gender-age-disability marker and will launch its first 'Strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities' in the German Development Cooperation, which will also have a focus on the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in fragile contexts. Italy updated its Guidelines on Disability and Social Inclusion in development interventions, including a specific focus on humanitarian aid. Ukraine revised its Law on Humanitarian Aid to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities.
- The European Union engaged in discussions with organisations of persons with disabilities on additional measures to support this agenda and for the first time included in the 2018 Humanitarian Implementation Plans the obligation for partners to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities in proposed actions. The EU will start to elaborate a guidance on inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU-funded humanitarian action.
- All seven UN agencies reporting on the topic are strengthening their capacity towards persons with disabilities in different ways. UNICEF⁸, UNRWA⁹ and WFP¹⁰ have reported about new

⁷ The 14 international NGOs are CBM International, Christian Aid, CHS Alliance, Food for the Hungry, Health Works, HelpAge International, Human Appeal, Humanity & Inclusion, Humentum UK, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Medair, Trocaire, Women's Refugee Commission, World Vision International; the two faith based organisations are Anglican Inter Faith Network of the Anglican Communion and Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe; the private entities are Global Star Logistics Co., Ltd and Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation; the national NGO is South Sudan Women with Disability Network; and the foundation is Fund for Congolese Women (FFC)

⁸ UNICEF guidance on Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action; <http://training.unicef.org/disability/emergencies/index.html>

⁹ UNRWA Disability Inclusion Guidelines; <https://www.unrwa.org/resources/strategy-policy/making-unrwa-accessible-all-through-disability-inclusion-disability>

¹⁰ WFP's Strategy Accountability to Affected Populations; <https://fscluster.org/document/wfps-strategy-accountability-affected>

guidelines and strategies developed in 2017. OHCHR and UNRWA delivered trainings to their staff. UNDP and UN Women included disability-inclusive goals, targets and indicators in their new strategic plans for 2018-2021. UN Women is also developing a dedicated 'Strategy for the Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities 2018-2021'. UNHCR reported on the development of partnerships with organisations of persons with disabilities.

- Seven NGOs (Christian Aid, Health Works, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe, CBM, HelpAge International, and International Planned Parenthood Federation - IPPF) reported about ongoing internal processes to strengthen inclusion of persons with disabilities in their humanitarian policies and practices.

Stakeholders reported on a number of resources developed or under development at global level to support the implementation of inclusive humanitarian responses for persons with disabilities in affected countries. Most notably, 2017 saw the publication of the following resources:

- 'Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities' by the Age and Disability Capacity Building Programme (ADCAP) consortium¹¹;
- UNICEF set of Guidance on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action¹², developed in collaboration with Humanity & Inclusion (HI);
- UNRWA Disability Inclusion Guidelines¹³ and Technical Standards and Guidelines for Physically Accessible Environment;
- A Facilitator's Guide for 'Strengthening the role of women with disabilities in humanitarian action', by Women Refugee Council¹⁴.

Moreover, the IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action¹⁵, co-chaired by the International Disability Alliance (IDA), UNICEF and Humanity & Inclusion (HI), has progressed towards the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, which are to be finalized in 2018 and disseminated in 2019. The Guidelines' development is currently financed by Australia, the EU, Finland and Luxembourg.

Other projects that are supporting advancement in the area, include the project between HI, IDA and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), to enhance the availability and use of quality data on persons with disability by humanitarian actors¹⁶. Moreover, a training module on CRPD Article 11 is being developed through the Bridge CRPD SGDs initiative¹⁷ by CBM, HI and IDA, aiming to strengthened understanding by humanitarian, disability and other relevant stakeholders on the scope and implications of the CRPD in humanitarian, conflict and disaster contexts, as well as greater understanding on the importance of collaboration and coordination between the humanitarian and disability sectors.

¹¹ Member of ADCAP consortium include CBM, DisasterReady.org, Humanity & Inclusion, HelpAge International, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Oxford Brookes University and RedR UK, and partners Kenya Red Cross Society, CBM and Christian Aid in Kenya; Concern Worldwide, Islamic Relief and HelpAge International in Pakistan; and Islamic Relief Worldwide and Christian Aid in the UK. For more information: <http://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/emergencies/adcap-age-and-disability-capacity-building-programme/>

¹² <http://training.unicef.org/disability/emergencies/index.html>

¹³ https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/disability_inclusion_guidelines.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/populations/disabilities/research-and-resources/1443-humanitarian-facilitators-guide>

¹⁵ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action>

¹⁶ <https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/disability-statistics-in-humanitarian-action>

¹⁷ <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/bridge-crpd-sdg-training>

A number of studies on persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts have also been released, for example by the Women Refugee Commission (WRC)¹⁸, HelpAge International¹⁹, CBM New Zealand along with the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and the New Zealand Aid Programme²⁰, and the South Sudan Women with Disability Network.

From a donor perspective, the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network²¹, a coordination body of donors and agencies working to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, has established a specific working group on humanitarian issues and is expanding its membership²².

Almost half the stakeholders²³ providing self-reports showcased their field engagement, by reporting on projects and programmes in crisis contexts. Some examples of activities run in 2017 and included in the self-reports are the following:

- DFID provided funding to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) Humanitarian Impact Bond to set up and run three new physical rehabilitation centers in Mali, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to help persons with disabilities access vital services to improve mobility.
- UNICEF's Supply Division launched an innovative project on accessible latrine slabs which are used in humanitarian contexts. Introducing agreed procurement quantities for accessible slabs, the project incentivizes suppliers to add accessibility components to the existing latrine slabs.
- HI is receiving financial support by Canada to improve the accessibility of physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support services and community awareness of environmental risks for vulnerable conflict-affected people in Iraq. HI is also working in Yemen, through German funding, to strengthen and mainstream inclusion in programming, in cooperation with other NGOs.
- CBM operates in Haiti, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to enhance understanding on humanitarian principles and approaches to inclusive humanitarian response. It also organized workshops on principles and approaches on inclusive humanitarian action in Indonesia and Ethiopia.
- In Zimbabwe, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe cooperated with disability NGOs, organizations of persons with disabilities and self-help groups; constructed inclusive boreholes in the El Nino emergency water and sanitation projects; provided emergency food/cash assistance, food and nutrition security of highly vulnerable households affected by the drought.

¹⁸ Vulnerability and Resilience-based Approaches in Humanitarian Response to the Syrian Crisis, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2226-WRC-SyrianCrisisReport_0.pdf

¹⁹ 'Missing millions: how older people with disabilities are excluded from humanitarian response', <http://www.helpage.org/newsroom/latest-news/millions-of-older-people-with-disabilities-risk-being-excluded-from-humanitarian-assistance-new-helpage-report-reveals/>

²⁰ 'Disability Inclusion Policy Brief - Gap analysis on disability-inclusive humanitarian action in the Pacific', <https://www.cbm.org/Disability-Inclusion-Policy-Brief-537302.php>

²¹ <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/global-action-disability-glad-network>

²² Germany reported to have joined the GLAD in 2017

²³ They include six Member States (Canada, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK), the EU, three UN agencies (UNICEF, UN Women and UNRWA) and eight INGOs (Christian Aid, Human Appeal, HI, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe, CBM, Health Works, WRC and World Vision International)

The obstacles/impediments to progress

Humanitarian actors are challenged to modify responses to promote the protection and equitable inclusion of persons with disabilities and consider their experience and capacities. This requires a fundamental rethink of the way humanitarian actors work, their policies, practices, processes and assumptions.

Stakeholders who reported on activities relevant to persons with disabilities under the transformation 3G “Include the most vulnerable” highlighted that the following challenges hamper the implementation of their commitments to this transformation:

- **Lack of disability-disaggregated data and lack of analysis of this data:** this has been indicated as the most significant challenge²⁴ in the self-reports, as it inhibits adequate identification, monitoring and analysis of access to services as well as threats and barriers faced by persons with disabilities in crisis situations.
- **A lack of attention to the situation of persons with disabilities**²⁵ and of understanding of the intersecting factors that impact individuals’ protection in the planning and implementation of humanitarian responses has also been raised as a challenge that leads to increased protection risks, discrimination and exclusion, as the rights of persons with disabilities, their needs, and the risks they face are not sufficiently considered.
- The **lack of technical human resources and technical capacity**²⁶ to ensure an inclusive humanitarian response also represent barriers to inclusion, and generate inconsistent quality in project design and deliverables.
- This consideration goes hand in hand with the recognition of **lack of appropriate funding**²⁷ to humanitarian projects inclusive of persons with disabilities and to organisation of persons with disabilities.
- The specificities of each crisis also create barriers to inclusive humanitarian responses, as humanitarian actors are often challenged by complex crises, restricted humanitarian access, implementing methods, and heavy coordination mechanisms.

About this paper

All stakeholders who made commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in support of advancing the Agenda for Humanity were invited to self-report on their progress in 2017 through the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation (PACT) (agendaforhumanity.org). The information provided through the self-reporting is publicly available and forms the basis, along with other relevant analysis, of the annual synthesis report. The annual synthesis report will be prepared by OCHA and will highlight trends in progress, achievements and gaps that need more attention as stakeholders collectively work toward advancing the 24 transformations in the Agenda for Humanity. In keeping with the multi-stakeholder spirit of the WHS, OCHA invited partners to prepare short analytical papers that analyze and assess self-reporting in the PACT, or provide an update on progress on initiatives launched at the World Humanitarian Summit. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.

²⁴ 15 stakeholders identified ‘Data and analysis’ as a challenge in the questionnaire on transformation 3G

²⁵ 8 stakeholders identified ‘Gender and/or vulnerable group inclusion’ a challenge in the questionnaire

²⁶ 8 stakeholders identified ‘Human resources/capacity’ a challenge in the questionnaire

²⁷ 7 stakeholders identified ‘Funding amounts’ a challenge in the questionnaire