Disability Inclusion

Overview

Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent **15 per cent of the world’s population**. In humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage and are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected communities. Persons with disabilities are a diverse group. They have different impairments and diverse identities (as women, indigenous persons, children, etc.). Due to the **intersectionality** of these factors and the impact that this has on the barriers they face, persons with disabilities may face multiple forms of discrimination and be at heightened risk of violence and abuse.

The **Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD) affirms that States Parties must protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in their laws, policies and practices; and must also comply with the treaty's standards when they engage in international cooperation. **Article 11** of the Convention refers to the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and natural hazards. The CRPD, along with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, set out other standards that protect persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings.

**Who are persons with disabilities?** Persons with disabilities include persons who have long-term sensory, physical, psychosocial, intellectual or other impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, prevent them from participating in, or having access to, humanitarian programmes, services or protection. IOM's work needs to lower or remove the barriers that persons with disabilities face in order to address the level of risk faced by the individual or affected population. IOM's work should also identify and improve the enablers (or facilitators) that persons with disabilities have to increase their resilience, safety and protection.

Humanitarian programming needs to be built on **solid evidence and data**. Data that is disaggregated by disability, data collection and disability prevalence and information on the barriers that persons with disabilities are facing are crucial at all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. Programming also needs to be undertaken in **partnership** with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and ensure their **meaningful participation** at all stages and throughout all activities.

Key Considerations
IOM projects, whether disability inclusion is mainstreamed or targeted, need to be based on reliable data and solid evidence where possible. DTM can be consulted on collecting disability disaggregated data as can local NGOs and OPDs who often have secondary data sources on barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

To improve meaningful access to humanitarian services, it is crucial for IOM projects to identify and address the barriers that persons with disabilities face. These barriers can be attitudinal (stigma against discrimination), environmental (infrastructure and built environments) or institutional (prohibitive laws and policies). When identifying these barriers, staff need to remember the intersecting identities of persons with disabilities. Women, children, older persons may experience multiple barriers and, consequently, heightened risk.

IOM needs to consult, involve and support persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in humanitarian programming and processes. Processes that are put in place to facilitate participation need to be accessible to all.

The is a need for staff to be trained on disability inclusion to improve how IOM implements inclusive humanitarian responses. Training on disability inclusion is available in IOM and DOE Protection run specific training courses aimed at staff working in humanitarian settings.

Relevance to IOM’s Emergency Operations

Given the fact persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15 per cent of the world's population and in humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage, IOM staff have a duty to ensure that their programmes are inclusive of, and contribute to the protection of, persons with disabilities. This means that IOM's programmes need to tackle stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities, ensure that they are not forgotten in humanitarian service delivery, enable their meaningful participation in IOM projects and ensure accountability mechanisms are accessible and responsive to their needs.

Migration may cause, create and/or exacerbate disabling factors and IOM's commitment to address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration require action to be taken to reduce barriers that migrants with disabilities face in their day-to-day life. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees include specific provisions on persons with disabilities that advocate their inclusion in responses to movements of refugees and migrants.

Coordination

At an institutional level, IOM is a member of the IASC Disability Inclusion Reference Group, which feeds into the IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion. The activities and initiatives taken at this level aim to ensure disability inclusive humanitarian action across the board. IOM also reports yearly against the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), which requires internal co-ordination on programming, policy, planning and evaluation.
matters related to disability inclusion. Regional strategies and country programming are required to ensure that humanitarian programmes address key indicators within the strategy.

As co-leads of the CCCM cluster, IOM have a role in ensuring that the barriers that persons with disabilities face within collective and communal displacement settings are addressed at a cluster level. Additionally, in the past few years, IOM has scaled up its engagement with the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and the areas of responsibility (AoR) thereunder giving it the opportunity to ensure that disability inclusion is included within protection cluster activities and co-ordination mechanisms.

DTM has collected disaggregated data in disability using the Washington Group Methodology in countries such as South Sudan. Data that is collected by DTM on disability contributes to identifying the factors that put persons with disabilities most at risk in humanitarian contexts. This data is shared across clusters and feeds into the HRP process.

At a national level, IOM has partnered with organisations such as Humanity and Inclusion and CBM to ensure that they have the internal expertise to train staff, carry out targeted projects on disability inclusion and collect data on disability. IOM also partner with, and fund, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) for project implementation. Partnership with NGOs and OPDs is highly recommended in IOM's humanitarian service delivery.

**Links**

- IOM Disability Inclusion SharePoint folder (INTERNAL to IOM)
- IOM Special Edition News Desk for International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Why Disability Matters to IOM
- Othman al-Kinani lost his eyesight, and gained a new sense of clarity
- The Other Kids Have Their Legs, I Have My Wheels
- Displacement Tracking Matrix in South Sudan: Disability & Inclusion Survey
- IOM Iraq Launches Countrywide Strategy for Disability Inclusion

**Contacts**

For more information on protection mainstreaming, contact the DOE Protection team: DOEProtectionHQ@iom.int

**Key Points**

- Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15% of the world's population. In humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage and are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected
communities.

- IOM is committed to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its humanitarian response.
- IOM supports the improvement of data collection on disability, the reduction of barriers to ensure more meaningful access to humanitarian services for persons with disabilities, sustained and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities throughout project cycles and capacity development of IOM staff and partners on disability inclusion.

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