



Executive Summary: IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

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At a glance

These guidelines set out actions that humanitarian actors must take to effectively identify and respond to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in humanitarian settings. Each chapter includes recommended actions to place persons with disabilities at the centre of humanitarian action, both as actors and as affected people. While specific to persons with disabilities in the context of humanitarian action, they build on more general standards and best practices. The guidelines are designed primarily for use in policymaking, coordination, programming, and funding including governments, humanitarian leaders, Cluster/Sector leads, programmers in humanitarian and development organizations, donors, as well as local, national and international organizations of persons with disabilities.

Five key messages for field leaders

1. Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15% of the world's population,¹ likely higher in humanitarian settings. They are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected communities² and are disproportionately affected by conflict and other crises. In disasters, two to four times as many persons with disabilities die than persons without disabilities.³
2. The guidelines aim to ensure that all phases of humanitarian action are disability inclusive. It emphasizes that persons with disabilities should not only be recipients of humanitarian assistance, rather they should be included as actors in humanitarian response.
3. The guidelines build on legal and policy frameworks as well as other instruments that address disability inclusion in humanitarian contexts, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the Sendai Framework, as well as the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.
4. The factors placing persons with disabilities at heightened risk in emergencies situations may be exacerbated by other factors, e.g., age, gender, location, and economic status. It is important to consider the multi-faceted marginalization that this may cause.
5. The guidelines provide a rights-based framework to approach the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts, specifically through the of analysis of risks and systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities, as well as 'must do' actions that are required if persons with disabilities are to be included in all phases of humanitarian action. The document could be used by all humanitarian actors – no background in disability inclusion is required.

Four essential actions to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities

The guidelines offer four 'must do' actions that should be applied to sector-specific actions:

1. promote meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations
2. remove barriers
3. empower persons with disabilities and support them to develop their capacities
4. disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion

¹ WHO and World Bank, World Report on Disability (2011).

² Report of the United Nations Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, One Humanity, Shared Responsibility.

³ Katsunori Fujii, 'The Great East Japan Earthquake and Disabled Persons', in Disability Information Resources, Japan.

The full IASC product is available at <https://iasc.ch/iasc-disability-guidelines>

For support using this product, or to provide feedback on the product or this summary, contact the IASC secretariat at: iasccorrespondence@un.org.

Summary drafted by: IASC Reference Group for MHPSS in Emergency Settings