**REPORT: Task Team Workshop on the Development of**

**IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**

Geneva, 6 October 2016

The first in-person meeting of the Task Team mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for the development of IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action was convened on 6th October 2016 in Geneva by the Co- Chairs. The Guidelines will assist humanitarian actors, governments and affected communities to coordinate, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate essential actions that foster the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, resulting in the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and changing practices across all sectors and in all phases of humanitarian action.

The workshop, attended by more than 25 individuals representing UN agencies, member states, civil society organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, and the IASC, aimed at:

1. Finalizing the ToR and work plan for development of the IASC guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action
2. Brainstorming possible work-streams and mechanisms for the functioning of the Task Team
3. Identifying resources and developing a preliminary resource mobilization plan

**Welcome, adoption of agenda and introductions**

Colin Allen (IDA), Rosangela Berman-Bieler (UNICEF) and Ricardo Pla Cordero (HI) made introductory remarks on behalf of the organisations co-chairing the Task Team. They welcomed participants and provided a brief introduction. Mr Allen put forward the significance of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the process as equal partners. Ms Berman-Bieler expressed excitement for a process that will positively improve humanitarian action, following the launch of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. She thanked Finland and Australia for their collaboration in this process. Mr Pla Cordero focused on recurrent barriers faced at field level that the Guidelines aim to address.

**Presentation by GBV and MHPSS on their experience of developing IASC guidelines**

**Jessica Izquierdo from IOM / GBV Reference Group** presented the process followed for the revision of the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action (GBV Guidelines, 2014)[[1]](#footnote-1). Led by UNICEF and UNFPA, the Task Team of 16 agencies was not divided in sub-groups, although naturally agencies tended to be more active on their specific issues of expertise. The Guidelines were drafted by two consultants, who were hired with funds raised by the Reference Group. The Guidelines are divided in thematic area sections of about 20 pages, which can be used independently.

Recommendations:

* More consultation is better, as it supports sectoral ownership
* Highlighted importance of inputs from field teams
* Field testing/piloting of guidelines is essential
* The implementation strategy is key (develop training materials, think about how to institutionalize the guidelines within organizations)

**Mark Van Ommeren (WHO / MHPSS Reference Group)** talked about the development of IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (MHPSS, 2007)[[2]](#footnote-2). The Task Team, which included 27 agencies, was co-chaired by WHO and InterAction. The format and structure used for the Guidelines reflects the one used for the 2003 IASC HIV/AIDS Guidelines[[3]](#footnote-3), with an initial matrix and ‘short’ action sheets for 25 domains. The Guidelines’ content and structure were developed collaboratively; each agency was responsible for drafting different parts of the Guidelines under the facilitation of the co-chairs who spent up to 3,000 hours on the project in total. The Task Team did not divide themselves in sub-groups for the drafting. Mr Van Ommeren identified the implementation of the Guidelines as the most challenging phase, .The guidelines are highly referenced (eg. on internet, other guidelines), but not very much used in the field.

Recommendations:

* Be participatory; fund for time for facilitating guidelines development process (approximately 2000 -3000 hours!)
* Manage power balances openly (UN, non-UN, different sectors)
  + Mr Van Ommeren regretted they did not involve States enough in the consultation
* Agencies pay mostly own costs (ownership) but external funds are needed for consultations and facilitators’ time
* Ensure multiple rounds of consultation but once structure is in place, lock it
  + Spread consultations throughout the process, do not limit them at the beginning and/or at the end
* Ensure quality by technical leadership or consultants throughout
* Do not start without having a clear vision of end product structure and size (set final length/ word count early on)
* Do not send for review any drafts that are any longer than what you intend the product to be
* Do not wait with field testing ideas until after publication (test as you go)

**Briefing by IASC Secretariat on IASC Guidelines, Task Team responsibilities and linking with other groups/processes within the IASC**

**Tanja Schuemer (IASC Secretariat)** presented the functioning of the IASC and how the Task Team will collaborate with the IASC Secretariat. She enumerated the Task Team responsibilities:

* Alignment: the objective of the Task Team is aligned with IASC WG priorities
* Time-bound and task-oriented: the drafting of Guidelines on Inclusion of Disability in Humanitarian Action should take about 2 years
* Structure: the Task Team is co-chaired by two IASC organizations, ideally a UN and a non-UN
* Membership and inclusivity: the Task Team should be open to all interested agencies with an expertise in the field
* Reporting to the WG: the Task Team will have to present bi-annual progress report (simple format, one pager) to the IASC WG. The Task Team is also invited to present its work to the WG through face-to-face meetings/workshops on an ad-hoc basis
* IASC website: the Task Team will have the possibility to manage a dedicated page on the IASC website

Recommendations:

* Sponsor: UNHCR will be the sponsor of the Task Team at IASC WG level
* Human resources: it is useful to have a coordinator/secretariat to ease the co-chairs’ work
* How to develop the Guidelines: useful to connect with IASC subsidiary bodies and consult the IASC guide on how to develop guidelines
* Work plan: it should focus on the development of Guidelines (dissemination and training should be considered as a different project)
* Endorsement of the Guidelines by the IASC: to facilitate the endorsement, the IASC should not only be kept informed, but also invited to collaborate to the Guidelines’ development. The organisation of face-to-face sessions along the way to exchange with the WG might be useful
* Implementation roll out: it could be done through subsidiary bodies or through agencies and mainstream organisations

Agreed actions:

* Katja Laurila ([laurilak@un.org](mailto:laurilak@un.org)) and Nuhad Al-Alfi ([al-alfin@un.org](mailto:al-alfin@un.org)) from the IASC Secretariat should be included in the Task Team mailing list
* Organise an initial presentation of the work plan to the IASC WG

**Discussion and finalization of initial work plan**

The session, chaired by Gopal Mitra (UNICEF), aimed at gathering feedback on the work plan. Particular attention was given to missing or unnecessary activities, lack of clarity, sequencing and timing of activities.

Decisions: Before the discussion and finalization of the work plan, the TOR was considered finalized as the suggestion made by the IASC Secretariat of limiting the length of the Task Team to two years was integrated and no other major feedback was received from the Task Team.

* Phase 1: Formation of Task Team and Technical Sub-Groups
  + The communication and participation strategy should foster engagement of other IASC subsidiary bodies, the global clusters, other communities of practice and Global South partners, including the development of an accessible website
  + Proposal to develop andcirculate a matrix of proposed thematic areas and phases in the guidelines and invite agencies with expertise to lead/volunteer in respective areas
* Phase 2: Resource Mobilization and Human Resources
  + The timeframe for this phase could be reduced (potentially only Q4 2016 or upto Q1 2017)
* Phase 3: Data Collection, Mapping and Research
  + The timeframe for this phase should be reduced to 6 months (Q1-Q2 2017)
  + Proposal to organise a consultation workshop at the same time as the interviews
  + Proposal to add the dissemination of existing resources and guidelines to colleagues in the field
  + Suggestion to use an accessible interactive platform for consultation (the possibility to have a community of practice in the global protection mainstream portal was mentioned; the IASC website could handle limited upload of documents, but would not allow for collaboration)
* Phase 4: Development of Initial Draft Guidelines
  + This phase should be allowed more time, especially the review process
  + Field and online consultations – could be streamlined to one quarter only
* Phase 5: Final Review, Validation and Production
  + Produce guidelines - the production of guidelines should fall under phase 6
  + Proposal to include in this phase the formal endorsement and launch of guidelines by IASC members, and the development of initial guidelines dissemination strategy
* Phase 6: Endorsement and Dissemination
  + Included only for information, not considered part of the guidelines development
  + Dissemination of guidelines to all relevant stakeholders – the dissemination of guidelines should fall under phase 5
  + Proposal to move in this phase the production of guidelines
  + Proposal to add a launch event

Overall, it was decided that phases 2 to 5 should cover the 2 years’ timeframe foreseen for the development of guidelines by the IASC Secretariat.

Other considerations arising during the discussion:

* The guidelines should consider the diversity in the disability sphere
* It is essential to define the ideal user/audience of the guidelines and how the final product will look like.
* It could be useful to have the guidelines in electronic format, possibly interactive and/or as a mobile application ( usability in emergency settings should be considered)

**Discussion on possible work streams and preliminary discussion on broad structure and outline of the guidelines**

The moderators of the session, Facundo Chavez Penillas (OHCHR) and Annika Sandlund (UNHCR), presented ideas on how the work streams for the development of the guidelines could be organized, proposing a grouping by process based on the work plan, thematic sectors, Humanitarian Programme Cycle, or based on the principles of the Charter.

Decisions:

* On work streams:
  + A combination of grouping by process extracted from the work plan (e.g. developing a desk review, testing the guidelines, etc; especially to manage phase 2 and 3 of the work plan), by cross-cutting issues (such as data collection, gender, etc.), by Humanitarian Programme Cycle[[4]](#footnote-4) (e.g. needs assessment and analysis, strategic response planning, etc.), by thematic sector (such as Education, Health, Protection, etc. for phase 4 and 5), and by the 5 principles of the Humanitarian Disability Charter could be envisaged;
  + Some agencies could volunteer to provide input on thematic sectors, while others could focus on the cross-cutting issues, etc. depending on their expertise (e.g. one agency could focus on mainstreaming participation throughout the guidelines)
* On broad structure and outline of the guidelines, the guidelines should include:
  + Conceptual framework (including reference to the Charter principles) / matrix
  + Cross cutting issues - umbrella approach linked to thematic aspects
  + Thematic aspects (developed based on the humanitarian programming cycle)
  + Other items to be potentially included: a summary of the humanitarian programme cycle, an accountability table (e.g. protection policy), tools (e.g. checklists) to facilitate usability

Other considerations highlighted during the discussion:

* Before starting with the content drafting, input should be gathered on the information and tools needed by the end users in the field

Agreed actions:

By Q4 2016, circulate a matrix of proposed thematic areas and phases in the guidelines and invite agencies with expertise to lead/volunteer in respective areas.

**Task Team: nature of membership and participation**

Chaired by Marc Zlot (ICRC), the session looked at the nature of Task Team membership and the decision-making process.

Decisions:

* Allow open membership to the Task Team
* Enforce the decision-making process as described in the ToR (*Decision-making will be consensus based. If consensus is not achievable then a majority decision as determined by the co-chairs will be required. Agreement on accuracy of minutes, wording of documents etc. will be on a ‘no objections’ basis, with every effort made to ensure Task Team members have adequate time to respond.*)

Other considerations arising during the discussion:

* New members that join along the way will not be allowed to call into question decisions taken before their enrolment
* To be considered a Task Team member, the individual should actively participate (as done in the participatory mainstreaming task team)
* Active members will be listed in periodic reporting to the IASC WG
* Agencies won’t be required to formally provide an overview of resources they would dedicate to the project, as it could inhibit participation
* A differentiation between core members and associated members could be considered later on in the process

**Resource mobilisation: identify resource requirements e.g. initial funding of a part-time administrative coordinator for Secretariat, sub group on resource mobilization, developing concept notes and funding proposals**

Vladimir Cuk (IDA), Heli Lehto (Permanent Mission of Finland), and Tristen Slade (Permanent Mission of Australia) co-chaired the session on resource mobilisation.

Decisions:

* Initial resources will be sought to begin work on the Guidelines before the end of 2016 through the Australian International Development Fund
* UNICEF volunteered to support as secretariat in the initial stage

Considerations arising during the discussion:

* Funding is necessary to hire consultant/s to write the guidelines, organise field consultations and workshops, ensure reasonable accommodation, organise field testing, layout and publication
* Australia expressed a commitment to financially collaborate to the guidelines’ development
* Funding to humanitarian assistance in Finland is channelled only through UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC, IFRC) and Finnish NGOs. There are other possibilities for funding applications, but a detailed concept note should be shared with the government for consideration
* States could have a consulting role in the IASC development process, especially when they have expert resources in the government that could provide input
* Finland and Australia could support the Task Team in expanding the donor base, especially among the Group of Friends to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action
* Generally, it may be easier to channel funding via UNICEF, rather than through IDA or HI
* In terms of fundraising, it is preferable to seek funds from the humanitarian aid budget lines at donor level, and not disability lines
* Fundraising could be done along the way, instead of seeking funds to secure the whole two-year project from the start. Micro grants could be foreseen to fund DPOs in the field testing and/or other activities
* The proposal development and management of the funding should be run by the Task Team, the IASC Secretariat is not in a position to provide support
* Some activities (e.g. within phase 3 and 4) could be supported by post-graduate/PHD/post-doc projects

Agreed actions:

* A proposal to Australia will be developed immediately by the co-chairs
* Future proposals will be developed by a working group comprising the co-chairs, Emma Pearce, WRC and Isabelle de Muyser-Boucher, OCHA
* A briefing to States (Group of Friends to the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action) on the IASC Guidelines will be organised, possibly at the beginning of November. This briefing could be extend to the IASC (possibly with connection Geneva-New York)

Should you have any questions, please contact the Task Team co-chairs:

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* Gopal Mitra, Programme Specialist - Children with Disabilities, UNICEF ([gmitra@unicef.org](mailto:gmitra@unicef.org))
* Ricardo Pla Cordero, Inclusion in Humanitarian Action Technical Advisor, HI ([rplacordero@handicap-international.org](mailto:rplacordero@handicap-international.org))

**Please see the full list of participants below**

**Full list of participants**

* Annika Sandlund (on behalf of Kirstin Lange), UNHCR
* Camille Gosselin, Handicap International
* Colin Allen, International Disability Alliance (IDA)
* Christine Bock, Womens’ Refugee Commission
* Elena Bertozzi, Handicap International
* Emma Pearce, WRC
* Facundo Chavez Penillas, OHCHR
* Georgia Dominik, IDA
* Gordon Rattray, CBM International
* Gopal Mitra, UNICEF
* Heli Lehto, Permanent Mission of Finland
* Isabelle de Muyser-Boucher, OCHA
* Jessica Izquierdo, IOM / GBV Reference Group
* Jody-Anne Mills, WHO
* Katja Laurila, IASC Secretariat
* Lea Labaki, HRW
* Marc Zlot, ICRC
* Mark Van Ommeren, WHO
* Marta Pawlak, ICRC
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* Monica Martinez Menduiño, Ecuador
* Ricardo Pla Cordero, Handicap International
* Rosangela Berman Bieler, UNICEF
* Tanja Schuemer, IASC Secretariat
* Tristen Slade, Permanent Mission of Australia
* Vladimir Cuk, IDA

1. See: <http://gbvguidelines.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See: <http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: <http://www.who.int/3by5/publications/documents/en/iasc_guidelines.pdf?ua=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)