



Disability in the Dominican Republic

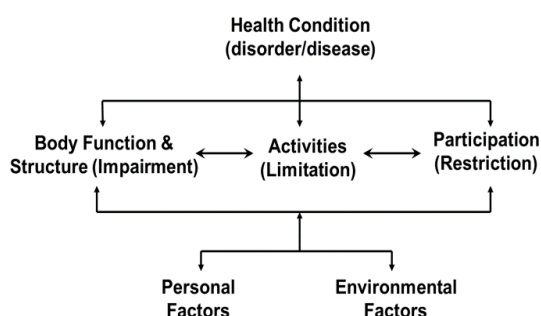
The Importance of Disability

Disability is both a multidimensional concept and experience. Disability can affect anyone at any time – from birth through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Worldwide, many people with disabilities do not have equal access to education, employment, and health care. In addition, those with disability may experience barriers to participating in civic and social life activities.

Defining Disability

No single definition of disability exists. Definitions vary depending on the purpose for measurement. Moreover, the nature and severity of disabilities can vary greatly depending on cultural contexts¹. Yet, data on the size and characteristics of the population with disability, which also allow for cross-cultural comparisons, require standardization in both the conceptualization and the measurement of disability.

The ICF Model of Disability



The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), developed by the World Health Organization², provides the necessary and consistent definition of disability. According to the ICF model, disability arises from the interaction between an individual and

that individual's contextual (personal and environmental) circumstances. Thus, the degree to which participation in life activities is restricted depends on the interaction between the individual's functioning (ability to perform basic functional activities) and the environment.

The Washington Group

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG), a city group established under the United Nations Statistical Commission, was formed to address the need for population-based measures of disability by promoting and coordinating international co-operation in the area of health statistics, focusing on disability data collection tools suitable for censuses and national surveys.

The WG has developed, tested and adopted the Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) to collect such data. The questions use the ICF as a conceptual framework. The WG-SS is comprised of 6 questions measuring difficulty functioning in basic actions, with response categories that capture the full spectrum of difficulty functioning, from mild to severe. Disability is defined as having “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one WG-SS question.

The WG Short Set on Functioning

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

Response categories: No difficulty / Some difficulty / A lot of difficulty / Cannot do at all

Dominican Republic Data on Disability and Methods

The 2022 Dominican Republic Population and Housing Census was the tenth national census, carried out to count and characterize all inhabitants, dwellings, and households in the country between November 10 and 30, 2022. The main objective of this census is to obtain detailed demographic and socioeconomic information for public policy planning, as well as information on housing and its conditions, such as access to water and types of materials. The total population of the Dominican Republic in 2022 was 10,773,983 inhabitants and 3,694,060 private dwellings.

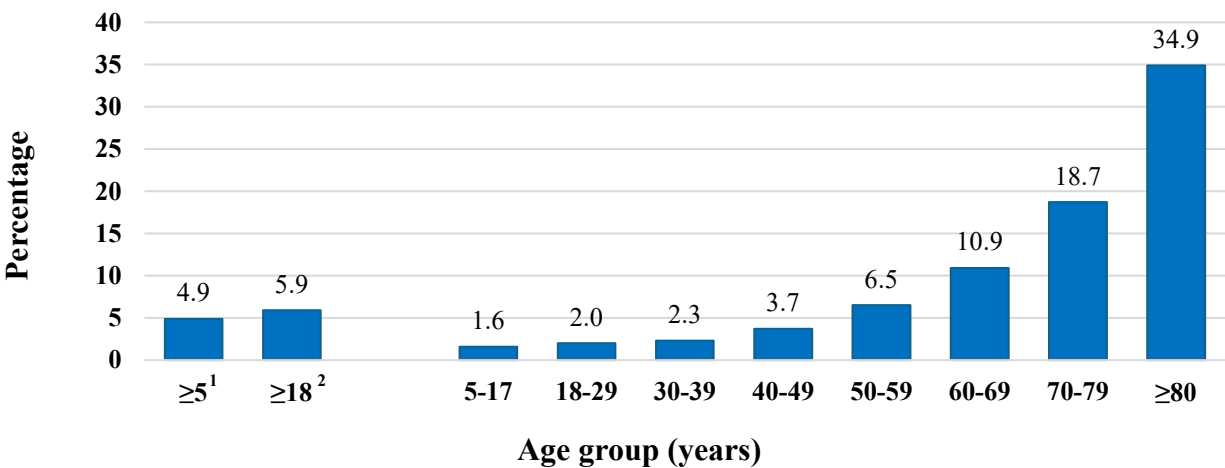
Tablets were used for data capture and processing in the field during the census. Data collection was carried out using a mobile application developed in CSPro (Census and Survey Processing System), a public domain software used by several countries in the region for processing census and survey data. The interviews were conducted by enumerators, and at the end of each interview, the data was synchronized with the ONE Central Office server. Furthermore, the collected data was validated by supervisors at the end of each segment and then transmitted to a separate repository at the ONE Central Office to ensure its integrity. Finally, at the conclusion of the census, a backup of the data collected on all tablets was made to guarantee the preservation of the information. For more information on the 2022 XCNPV, visit <https://www.one.gob.do/datos-y-estadisticas/temas/censos/poblacion-y-vivienda/2022/>.

The 2022 census operation included the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning, which was used to produce percent estimates for this report. Differences between percentages were evaluated using two-sided significance tests at the 0.05 level. Some of the estimates reported here are age-adjusted using the 2020 world population³ to facilitate cross-country comparisons.

Prevalence of Disability

- The age-adjusted percentage of people aged 5 and over with disabilities is 4.9%. In contrast, the age-adjusted percentage of people aged 18 and over with disabilities is 5.9%.
- The prevalence of disability increases with age, from 1.6% among people aged 5 to 17 to 34.9% among those aged 80 and over.

Figure 1. Prevalence of disability: age-adjusted and age-specific percentage of the population 18 years and over and by age group, Dominican Republic, 2022



¹Total for ≥5 is age-adjusted using the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](#)) using the following age groups: 5-17, 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and ≥80 years.

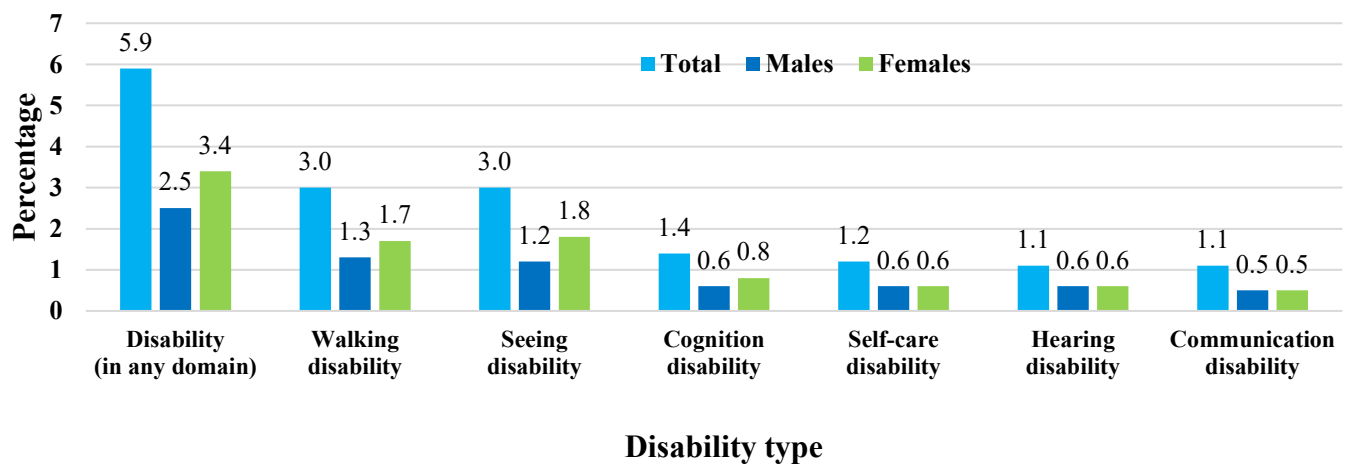
²Total for ≥18 is age-adjusted using the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](#)) using the following age groups: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and ≥80 years.

Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities.

Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.
Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

- Females (3.4%) are more likely than males (2.5%) to report having a disability (in any domain).
- Females are more likely to have seeing and walking disabilities than males. However, there was no statistical difference between males and females in the self-care, hearing, and communication domains.
- The most common types of disability reported are vision and walking.

Figure 2. Prevalence of disability in any domain and disability in each domain: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, by sex, Dominican Republic, 2022



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](https://population.un.org/wpp/)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, and ≥80 years.

Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as having disability (in any domain). Disability in each domain is defined by a response of “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” in that domain.

Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.

Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

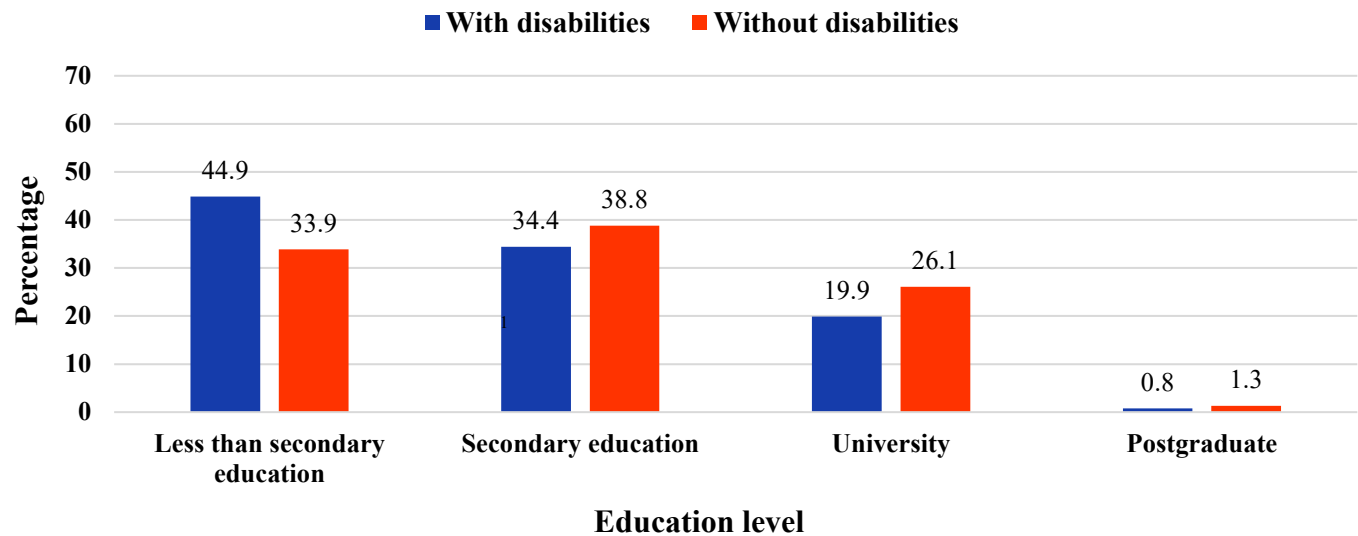
Outcomes Disaggregated by Disability

Disaggregating data by disability status allows for a comparison of outcomes for people with and without disabilities and constitutes a necessary first step in addressing disparities. Outcome indicators such as educational attainment and employment, which are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals⁴, or specific programmatic objectives, can be monitored over time to determine whether gaps exist between people with and without disabilities, and whether these gaps are increasing or decreasing over time. In this section, data on educational attainment, employment status, area of residence, and marital status are disaggregated by disability status for the Dominican population.

Educational Attainment

- Adults 18 years and older with disabilities (44.9%) were more likely to have less than secondary school education compared to those without disabilities (33.9%).
- Adults with disabilities (34.4%) were less likely to have completed secondary level education compared to those without disabilities (38.8%).
- Adults with disabilities (19.9%) were less likely to have a university degree than those without disabilities (26.1%).
- The percentage-point difference in postgraduate education attainment between adults with and without disabilities is only 0.5 percentage points.

Figure 3. Education level by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Dominican Republic, 2022



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](#)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, and ≥80 years.

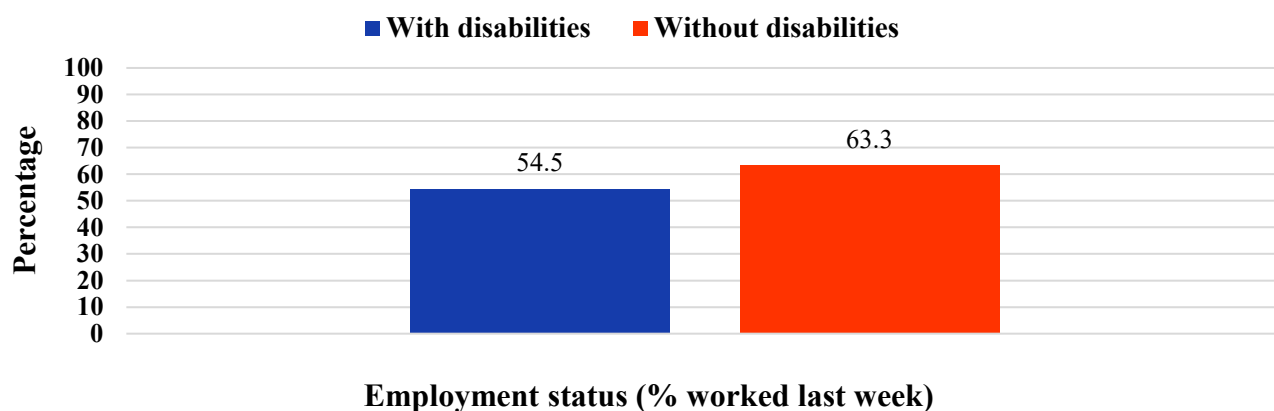
Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities. Education level refers to each stage of the educational structure, determined by the students’ physical and mental development and social needs. The Dominican educational system comprises the following levels: Initial (early childhood education), Basic, Secondary, and Higher.

Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.
Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

Employment Status

- In 2022, 54.5% of adults aged 18-64 with disabilities were employed in the past week, compared to 63.3% of adults without disabilities.

Figure 4. Employment status by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18-64 years, Dominican Republic, 2022



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](https://population.un.org/wpp/)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–64 years.

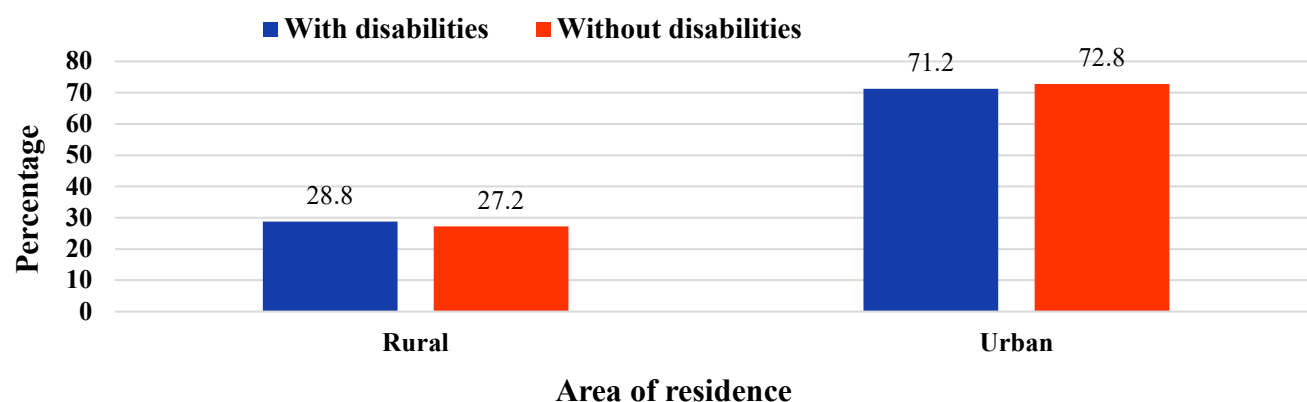
Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities. A person is considered employed if they have been working for pay or profit in the last week prior to the interview.

Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.
Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

Area of Residence

- In 2022, 28.8% of adults aged 18 and over with disabilities lived in rural areas, compared to 27.2% of people without disabilities.
- 71.2% of adults with disabilities lived in urban areas, compared to 72.8% of those without disabilities.

Figure 5. Area of residence by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Dominican Republic, 2022



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](#)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, and ≥80 years.

Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities. Area of residence is classified as either urban or rural. The urban population resides in administrative centers of provinces, municipalities, and municipal districts, while the rural population resides in *secciones* (sections) and *parajes* (localities).

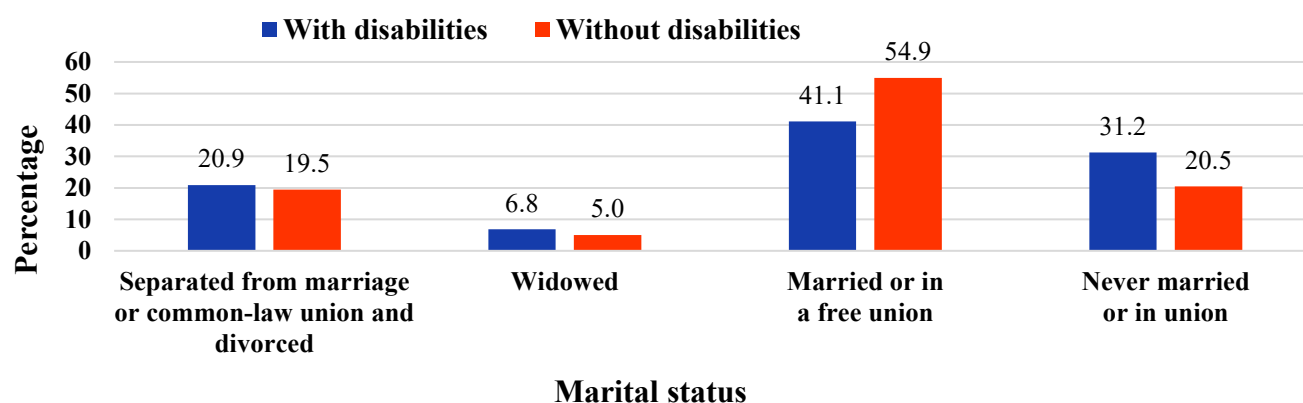
Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.

Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

Marital Status

- In 2022, 20.9% of adults 18 and older with disabilities reported being separated from a marriage or common-law union or divorced, compared with 19.5% of adults without disabilities.
- Among adults 18 years and older with disabilities, 6.8% reported being widowed, compared to 5.0% of adults without disabilities.
- Adults with disabilities (41.1%) reported being married or in a common-law union, compared to (54.9%) of adults without disabilities.
- In contrast, 31.2% of adults aged 18 and over with disabilities reported never having been married or in a union, compared to 20.5% of adults without disabilities.

Figure 6. Marital status by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Dominican Republic, 2022



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](#)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79, and ≥80 years.

Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities. Marital status is defined as the status of being in a union or married for the population aged 12 years and over at the time of the interview, according to the laws or customs of the country, covering categories such as single, married, divorced, and widowed.

Estimates are based on household interviews with the entire population in private homes across the country.

Data source: X National Population and Housing Census, 2022. National Statistics Office ONE, Dominican Republic.

References

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Other Relevant Sources

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2. General report of the 10th National Population and Housing Census 2022 - Digital version, available at: <https://www.one.gob.do/publicaciones/2024/informe-general-del-x-censo-nacional-de-poblacion-y-vivienda-2022-version-digital/?altTemplate=publicacionOnline>