



## Disability in Kiribati

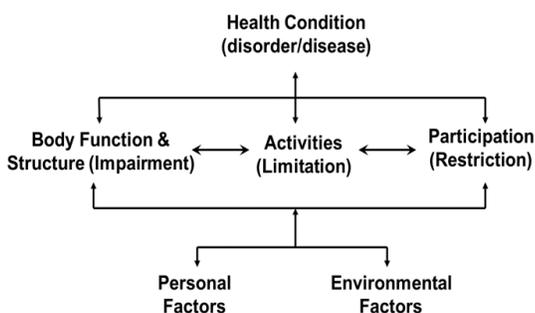
### The Importance of Disability

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 contexts<sup>1</sup>. 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 Organization<sup>2</sup>, 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

# Kiribati Data on Disability and Methods

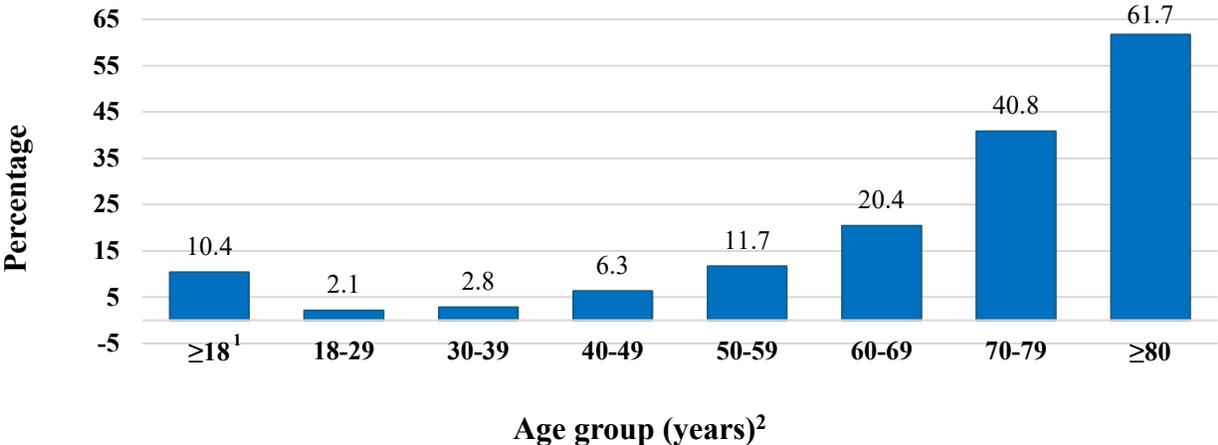
The Kiribati National Statistics Office (KNSO) conducts the Population and Housing Census. This report used data from the Kiribati 2020 Population and Housing Census. The Census is conducted every five years, with 2020 being the inaugural census administered by the Republic Statistician and using modernized data collection tools such as computer-assisted personal interviewing. The Population and Housing Census covers all the dwellings and people living in Kiribati during the data collection. The final population for 2020 included 23,285 private households and 114,549 total population (70,150 adults aged 18 and over)<sup>3</sup>. For more information, refer to the *Kiribati Disability Monograph: From the 2020 Population and Housing Census*: [https://sdd.spc.int/digital\\_library/kiribati-disability-monograph-2020-population-and-housing-census](https://sdd.spc.int/digital_library/kiribati-disability-monograph-2020-population-and-housing-census).

The six variables from the WG Short Set on Functioning were used to identify the population with disabilities. Individuals aged 5 years and older who had reported at least one domain as “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do it at all” were identified as having disabilities, in accordance with the recommendations of the WG. Outcome measures were disaggregated by disability status, for the comparison of people with and without disabilities, a necessary step towards addressing disparities. 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 population<sup>4</sup> to facilitate cross-country comparisons.

## Prevalence of Disability

- The age-adjusted percentage of persons aged 18 and over with disabilities is 10.4%.
- The prevalence of disability increases with age, from 2.1% among those 18-29 years to 61.7% 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, Kiribati, 2020**



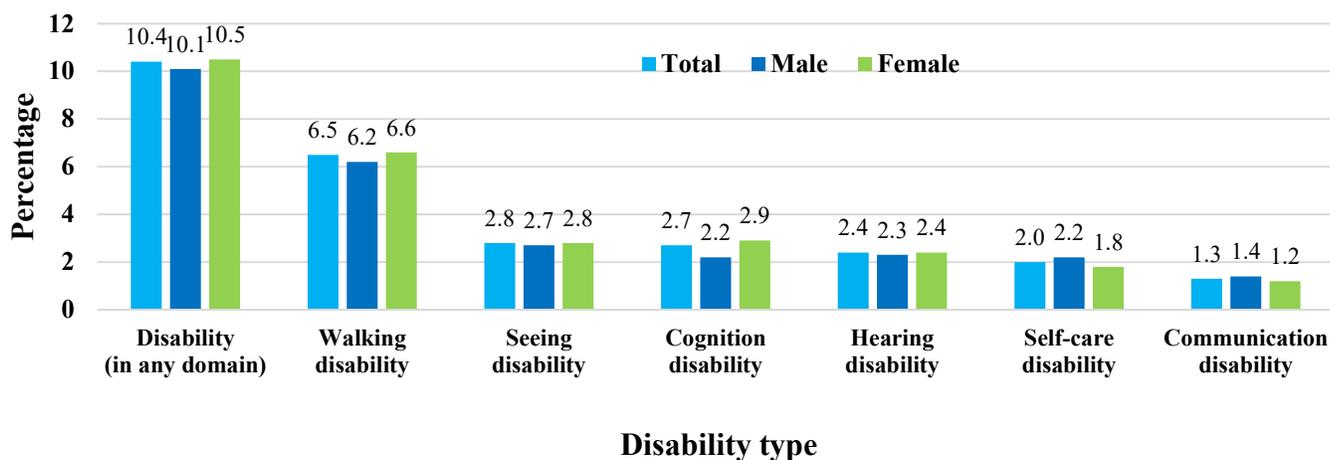
<sup>1</sup>Total for ≥18 is age-adjusted using the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/)) using the following age groups: 18–29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, and ≥80 years. <sup>2</sup> Significant quadratic trend by age (p < 0.05).

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 it at all” to at least one of the six functioning domains were classified as with disabilities.

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2020.

- Females (10.5%) are slightly more likely than males (10.1%) to report having disability (in any domain).
- Females are more likely to have walking disabilities (6.6%, compared to 6.2% among males) and cognition disabilities (2.9%, compared to 2.2% among males), while males are more likely to have self-care disabilities (2.2%, compared to 1.8% among females).
- The most common type of disability reported is 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, Kiribati, 2020**



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 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.

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2020.

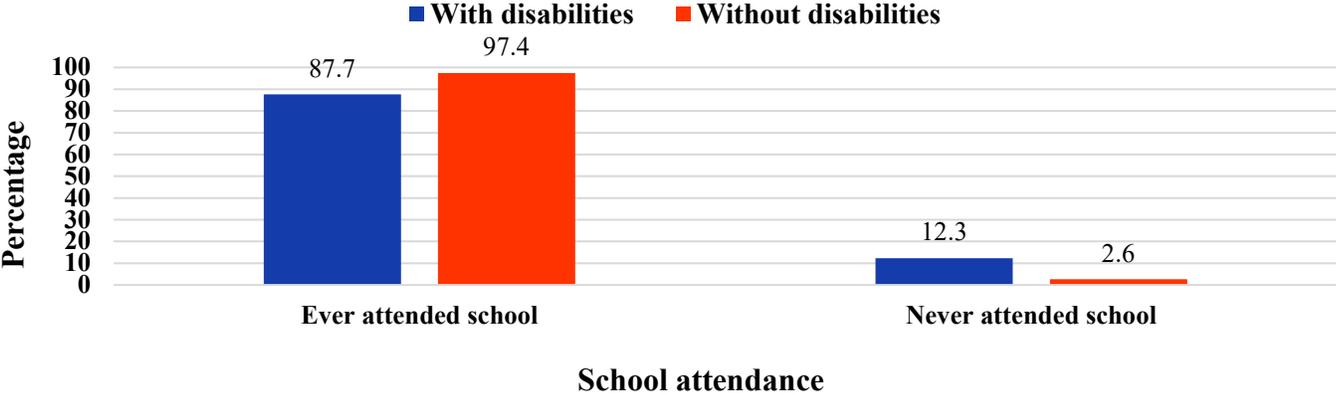
## Outcomes Disaggregated by Disability

Disaggregating data by disability status allows for the comparison of outcomes for people with and without disabilities and is a necessary first step towards addressing disparities. Outcome indicators, such as educational attainment and employment, any of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals<sup>5</sup> or specific programmatic objectives, can be monitored over time to determine if gaps exist between those with and without disabilities and whether those gaps are increasing or decreasing across time. In this section, data on school attendance, educational attainment and employment status are disaggregated by disability status.

### School Attendance

- Adults aged 18 and over with disabilities (12.3%) were more likely to have never attended school compared with those without disabilities (2.6%).

**Figure 3. School attendance by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Kiribati, 2020**



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.

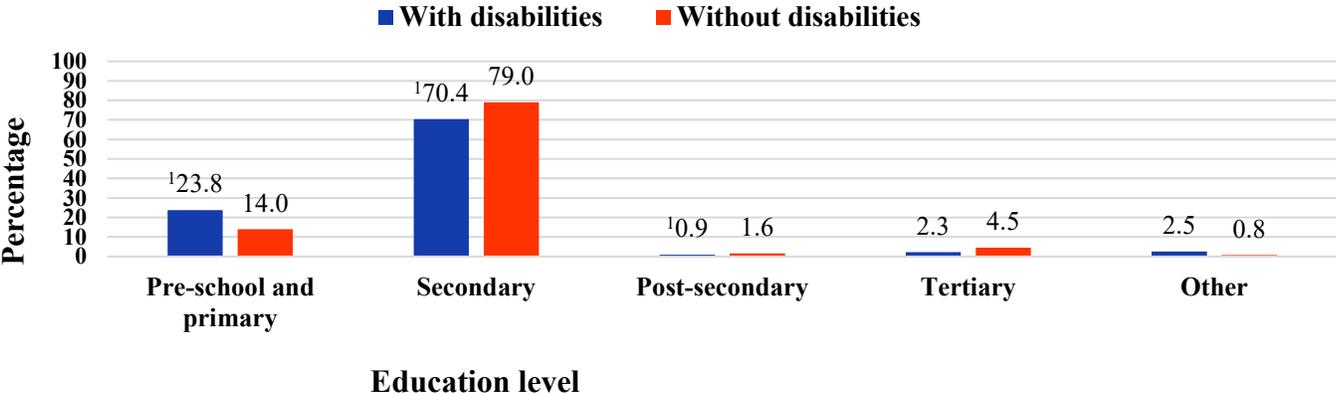
Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all”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

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2020.

**Educational Attainment**

- Adults aged 18 and over with disabilities (23.8%) were more likely to have only completed pre-school or primary school education compared with those without disabilities (14.0%).
- Adults aged 18 and over with disabilities (70.4%) were less likely to have completed secondary education compared with adults without disabilities (79.0%).

**Figure 4. Education level by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Kiribati, 2020**



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.

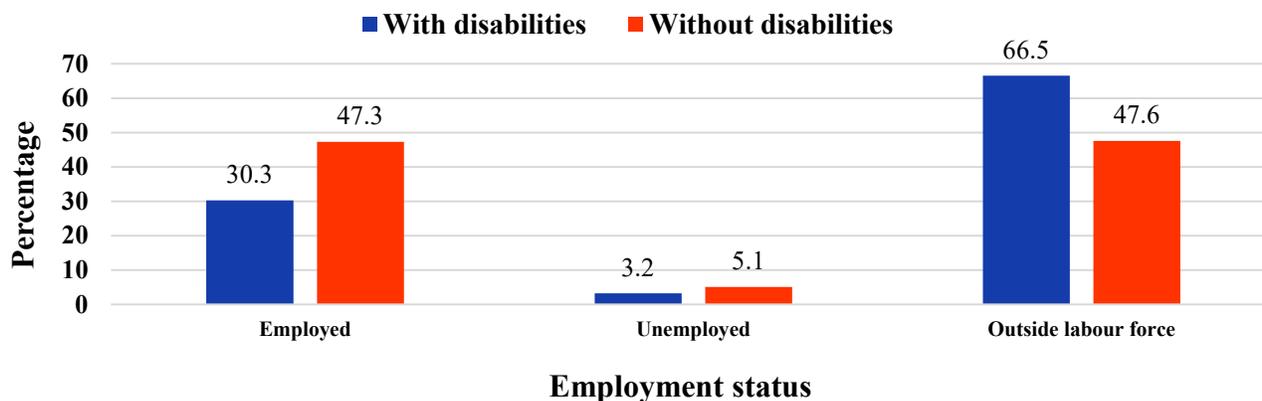
Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all”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

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2020.

## Employment Status

- In 2020, 30.3% of adults aged 18-64 with disabilities were employed in the week before the census compared with 47.3% of adults without disabilities.
- Adults aged 18-64 with disabilities (66.5%) were more likely to be outside the labour force compared with adults without disabilities (47.6%)

**Figure 5. Employment status by disability status: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18-64 years, Kiribati, 2020**



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, 60-64 years.

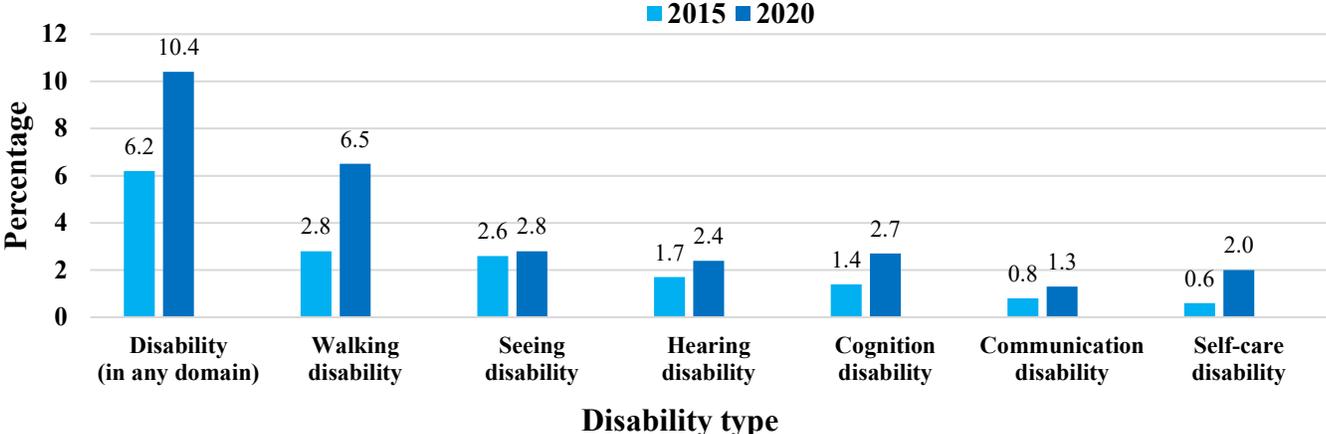
Disability is defined using the WG Short Set on Functioning, which asks about difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, communicating, remembering or concentrating, and self-care, such as washing all over or dressing. Respondents who indicated “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all”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

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2020.

## Trends in Disability

- In 2020, the prevalence of disability among adults aged 18 and over was highest for walking (6.5%) followed by seeing (2.8%), cognition (2.7%), hearing (2.4%), self-care (2.0%), and communication (1.3%).
- The percentage of adults with disabilities (in any domain) increased from 6.2% in 2015 to 10.4% in 2020.
- No clear trend was observed between 2015-2020 for disability in the domains of communication and seeing.
- The percentage of adults with disabilities in walking increased from 2.8% in 2015 to 6.5% in 2020.
- The percentage of adults with disabilities in cognition increased from 1.4% in 2015 to 2.7% in 2020.
- The percentage of adults with disabilities in self-care increased from 0.6% in 2015 to 2.0% in 2020
- The percentage of adults with disabilities in hearing increased from 1.7% in 2015 to 2.4% in 2020.

**Figure 6. Trends in disability in any domain and disability in each domain: age-adjusted percentage of the population 18 years and over, Kiribati, 2015 and 2020**



Age-adjusted percentages are based on the 2020 world population (available at: [World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/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.

Data source: Kiribati National Statistics Office, Population and Housing Census, 2015 and 2020.

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