Video 1:

Maybe you’ve heard about the Washington group on disability statistics. I’d like to tell you a little bit about it. The WG was established under the UN statistical commission in 2002 following an international seminar on disability statistics. Often when the statistical commission of the UN faces a problem that is difficult to solve that has to do with statistics it might be labour statistics, or some kind of economic or education statistics, they ask countries around the world to form a group in order to solve that problem. They ask a particular country to host the first meeting of the group, and that group takes on the name of the city. In 2002 the commission asked the USA to host the first meeting to look at disability statistics. That meeting took place in Washington DC, that’s why it’s called the Washington group. We were established to look at the disability statistics because there are international problems with the measurement of disability. Disability is not uniformly measured around the world, different countries used different questions, they have different definitions of disability and that creates data that aren’t comparable. In some countries, prevalence rates can be as low as 1% or less. And in other countries the prevalence rate can be over 15-20 or 25%. We have to understand why that difference exists and try to form some kind of common ground so that countries are asking the same kinds of questions in getting the same kinds of data - so they can be comparable. That’s one of the things the WG wants to do. And to that end we’re been working for the past 15 years to develop sets of questions that can be used in different circumstances. Many countries only collect disability data through their national censuses. A census demands that a lot of questions are asked very quickly of everybody in the country. So there’s a lot of competition for space on a census form - and you can only ask a few questions. So that’s why the WG first decided to establish a Short Set of questions on disability. That set of questions was adopted in 2006. It took almost 4 years to get agreement on a simple set of 6 questions, but we did that. And we’ve made a lot of progress since then. We realised that at the same time that disability couldn’t be covered in a short set of questions, it certainly can be covered in 1 question. Some countries ask us … well we can only ask 1 question on disability, and we say to them if you can only ask 1 question then don’t ask any questions at all. It’s impossible - disability is too complex as a process as a way of life for many people. It involves more than just a person’s body functions, or their abilities to do things or their level of participation - It’s all of those things. We developed that short set of questions realising that we really have to ask more questions to get more information. So we developed an extended set of questions that’s about 30 or 35 questions that gives a lot more information on things that we couldn’t ask with only 6 questions. That set was developed and finalised in about 2009 or 2010 and we’re analysing data now in the USA using those questions. Since then also, we’ve partnered with UNICEF to look at children’s functioning and disability because the other thing we realised that when we ask questions of the general population, were not specifically targeting the special situations of children with disabilities. The life events that they face are currently changing as they develop and we have to focus on different parameters than on the general population or the adult population. Things like behaviour, attitudes, coping with change, and making friends become important domains that need to be captured when we look at child functioning and disability. So with UNICEF we’ve developed two modules, one for very small children 2 years to 4 years of age, and one for slightly older children 5 to 17 years of age. Those questions have been tested and are almost finalised. They’ll be finalised we hope by the end of 2015. And then they’ll be ready to use in surveys around the world. Many countries have pressed us to use those questions, and they are being tested, but we want to finalise them before we send them out. The other module that we’ve been working on with UNICEF is one on inclusive education. What this begins to approach is the aspect of participation. If we take for granted that all children should have access to education, it’s the one thing that all children do or should do is go to school. By a focusing on that we can look at barriers and facilitators to education for all children with and without disabilities and find out if children with disabilities have a harder time accessing education than children without disabilities. This module looks at physical structure of schools, transportation getting to schools, education materials that are suited to children with different kinds of functional abilities and also attitudes - attitudes of parents, schools, school administration, teachers and classmates. Things that might make it difficult for children to access school. Those are the modules that we’ve been working on.