



Newsletter, Issue #10, published February 2023

Special edition: The Washington Group & Center for Inclusive Policy

To determine if no one is left behind, it is necessary to first identify the population with disabilities so that the characteristics of those with disabilities can be compared to those without disabilities.

- Disability is an **umbrella term** that describes the results of the negative interaction of individual characteristics and the environment (WHO, 2001). The umbrella covers a range of topics, including **functional status** across a wide range of domains; **characteristics of body structures** and functions that can cause functional limitations; the **age** at which these limitations begin; **environmental barriers** and facilitators; the use and impact of **assistive devices and services**; and the **interaction** between functional characteristics and the environment on participation across all areas of life.
- Data should be collected in all these areas to fully support the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** and the pledge to leave no one behind that is core to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Obtaining information on disability has been challenging.** Disability, as understood in the biopsychosocial and human rights-based model of disability, is a **complex and multifaceted concept**. As a result, the language of disability is *not* specific.
- Moreover, it is **not possible to write one question or a short set of survey questions** that can adequately and accurately capture the complexity of disability in its entirety, as questions must be short, clear, and precise to produce valid information. This has led to the use of many problematic questions.
- To address this challenge, the **Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG)** was established in 2001 following the UN International Seminar on the Measurement of Disability. The WG, a UN Statistical Commission City Group, was tasked with the promotion and coordination of international cooperation in generating **statistics on disability suitable for censuses and national surveys** and providing basic information on disability that is comparable worldwide. As its first task, the WG created **a set of questions** that capture a part of the complexity of **social model of disability** and produce valid, reliable, and internationally comparable data using a limited number of questions.¹
- The WG-SS captures a part of the social model of disability, but when used **in conjunction with other data** collected (e.g., data on participation rates), the resulting analyses address whether full inclusion has been achieved.
- The data obtained can also be used to **monitor prevalence trends** for persons with limitations in specific basic action domains, including by characteristics such as age. It can also be used to **compare levels of participation** in employment, education, family life, or other outcomes among those *with* disability versus those *without* disability to assess if persons with disability have achieved social inclusion and monitor effectiveness of programs and policies to promote full participation.

¹ The Washington Group **Short Set** on Functioning (WG-SS) is comprised of six questions that obtain information on functioning in core domains:

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 (e.g., understanding or being understood by others)?

Each question has four response categories: No difficulty; Some difficulty; A lot of difficulty; Cannot do at all



In some cultures, stigma is associated with disability creating additional measurement challenges.

Other Washington Group Tools and Endorsements

- In addition to the Short Set, **the WG has developed other tools and sets**, which expand on the number of domains covered and the extent of information obtained in each domain.²
- The question sets have been developed collaboratively with partners and **widely tested** to ensure they produce internationally comparable data relevant for policy and program development and evaluation. They are extensively documented, including guidance for implementation and analysis.

Check out the redesigned [WG website](#), which is optimized for accessibility and contains all updated documents, Frequently Asked Questions, and topical blogs to assist data collectors and users.

- The questions have been **adopted widely and support a consistent approach** to data collection. The WG tools have been endorsed by numerous actors in the disability sector, including NGOs, INGOs, OPDs, academia, and development agencies, as the means to collect disability data and disaggregate SDG indicators by disability status in a wide range of applications.
- The full complement of WG tools has been implemented in a growing and significant number of data collections (**censuses in over 100 countries and surveys**) by National Statistical Offices (NSOs). In addition to their use in censuses and surveys, the tools have been included in administrative systems, education contexts, program registration systems, **disaster risk reduction** and other **humanitarian contexts**, as well as in general program planning. They are promoted by international aid programs, as the means to collect disability data in their programs and projects. The questions are also included in the guidance developed by the **UN Statistical Division and UN Economic Commissions** for the 2020 round of censuses. They have been adopted as the way to disaggregate data for the Incheon Strategy on Making the Right Real in Asia and recommended by UN DESA's Disability Data Experts Group as the way of disaggregating the SDGs by disability status. In addition to their use in censuses to obtain prevalences and disaggregate outcomes measures included in the census, the questions have been added to **Household Income and Expenditure and Living Standards Measurement Surveys** to disaggregate poverty, social protection and a wide variety of social indicators, to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Demographic and Health Surveys to disaggregate child and health indicators, to Labor Force Surveys to disaggregate employment indicators, to National Disability Surveys for disaggregation and for relating disability status to environment characteristics, participation, assistive devices, access and utilization of services, and more general indicators and to administrative data systems to disaggregate programmatic indicators.
- The WG works with all NSOs, and organizations interested in using the tools providing technical assistance and training to support data collection, dissemination, and disaggregation by disability.

² A key feature of these sets is the inclusion of questions on psychosocial domains. In addition, the Child Functioning Module was developed in collaboration with UNICEF and the Labor Force Survey – Disability Module was developed with the ILO. In collaboration with UNICEF, the Inclusive Education Module and the CFM-Teacher Version, for use in educational settings, are both currently being tested.

Washington Group Regional Disability Statistics Groups

Most recently, the WG has been engaged in building disability data collection and analysis capacity at the country and regional levels. **The goal is to create a consortium of NSOs in a region** that, working in consultation with civil society and advocacy groups, serves as a viable and sustainable support mechanism for the implementation of the WG tools and methodology.

To date, there are **six active Regional Disability Statistics Groups**: the Pacific Group on Disability Statistics (for Island countries in the Pacific); the Casablanca Group (for Arabic-speaking countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East; the ESCWA region); the Kathmandu Group (operating in the South Asian region); the Buenos Aires Group (for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America); the Brazzaville Group (for French-speaking and Western/Central Africa); and the Southern and Eastern Africa Group (for English-speaking countries in that region).

GIZ support for African Regional Groups on Disability Statistics

GIZ has supported the work of two groups based in Africa: the Brazzaville Group and the Southern and Eastern Africa Group.

Brazzaville Regional Group on Disability Statistics (BG)

GIZ supported the inaugural meeting of the BG, held virtually, on 24 March 2022. Eleven of the 21 countries invited were in attendance. During the meeting, presentations were made on the history and objectives of the WG, the WG's Regional Disability Statistics Group program, and the draft Terms for Reference (ToR) and Work Plan for the BG. The ToR and Work Plan were officially adopted following this meeting. Additionally, the BG members determined that an in-person training would most benefit its members.

The BG held its first in-person training in Lomé, Togo, on 15-16 July 2022. In addition to GIZ funding, support for the meeting was provided by Afristat and IFORD, with local organizational support from the Togo National Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED) Fifteen attendees from 12 countries took part in the training which was provided by the BG chairpersons.

In the coming year, the BG is preparing to conduct additional trainings focused on disability data analysis including the calculation of indicators, the production of tables, drafting guidelines and planning for the creation of a standardized country report. and the dissemination of country reports.

Southern and Eastern Africa Regional Group on Disability Statistics (S-E Africa Group)

GIZ supported the inaugural meeting of the S-E Africa Group, held virtually on 27 July 2022. The meeting was attended by representatives from 12 of the 22 countries invited. A Steering Committee for the group was formed comprising members from five countries along with the two co-chairs. The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and Work Plan were presented, and agreement was reached that group members would send additional inputs on the documents following the meeting. Subsequently, these inputs were incorporated, reviewed, and confirmed at the next Steering Committee meeting.

To prepare a training agenda, Country Report templates were sent to the 22 countries in the region to obtain information on experiences in the collection and production of disability statistics. Key areas identified include technical support in data analysis and dissemination, improving data quality and the development of disability specialized surveys. The group is developing plans for in-person meetings to address key areas identified in the count reports.



Center for Inclusive Policy

The Center for Inclusive Policy (CIP) is a non-profit NGO that supports international and national stakeholders to ensure that policies, practices and programs foster full and effective inclusion of persons with disabilities through policy analysis, research, training, and strategic thinking to build the capacity for inclusive policy through knowledge development and dissemination, technical assistance, and by facilitating dialogue and links between various stakeholders.

In the past year with GIZ, CIP has supplied technical assistance to disability data collection efforts in Rwanda, Namibia, and Togo. In Rwanda they offered advice on the design of the data collection tool associated with the Disability Management Information System developed in Rwanda, as well assisting with the dissemination and training on the DMIS to both the government and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. In Namibia, CIP has provided trainings to the NSO and other stakeholders on disability data collection and analysis and in Togo, CIP also gave technical support to the design and analysis plans of data collection.

For more information

Additional information on the Washington Group on Disability Statistics may be obtained at: <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>. Information on the Center for Inclusive Policy may be obtained at: inclusive-policy.org.

For questions contact: WG_Secretariat@cdc.gov

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