Report of Ability of Countries to Disaggregate SDG Indicators by Disability
July 2016

Introduction

The overriding principle of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, is global eradication of disadvantage through the improvement of situations for all peoples. To ensure that "no one is left behind", the chapeau of the SDGs notes the importance of disaggregating data by characteristics associated with exclusion and vulnerability, including disability. The SDGs contain 17 Goals, with 169 targets, including specific indicators related to disability. As the WHO/World Bank World Report on Disability and much subsequent research has shown, people with disabilities disproportionately live in poverty and are excluded from social and economic activities. Without disaggregation by disability status, it is not possible to monitor the progress and outcomes of the implementation of the 2030 agenda activities in a way that documents if people with disabilities are indeed being left behind or not.

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) thus undertook an investigation to assess the current capability of national statistical offices to disaggregate the SDG indicators by disability status. The WG is a city group established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2001 to promote and coordinate international cooperation in the area of statistics focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. It is composed of national statistics offices (NSOs). In the past 15 years, over 135 countries have had representation in the WG.

The WG developed a short, easily administered set of questions for disaggregating data by disability status. The WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) has been recommended by the UN Statistical Commission for use in the 2030 round of censuses and recommended by UNDESA's Disability Data Experts Group for disaggregating SDG indicators. The WG-SS contains six questions, is easy to use and requires approximately one minute to administer. The set has been tested in many countries, and to date have been used in over 60 countries.

In order to assess the extent to which disaggregation of SDG indicators by disability status is feasible (using existing data instruments that will most likely be used for reporting on those indicators), the WG asked its member NSOs to report on 65 indicators identified as being either specifically related or suitable for disaggregation by disability.

In general, the results are very promising. Many countries are currently capable of such disaggregation for many indicators. Often countries can disaggregate some indicators but not others because disability questions are not yet included in all data instruments. However, as they already have experience using good disability questions on some data instruments it would require a minor effort to expand their capacity for disaggregation by simply using those questions on other already existing instruments. Similarly, for countries currently using poor quality questions on disability, the cost of replacing those questions with the WG-SS would be minimal.

The results of general testing of the WG-SS, and their current use by a variety of high, middle, and low-income countries, suggests that disaggregating SDG indicators by disability status is highly feasible.

Methodology

NSOs that have at one time participated in WG meetings or activities were asked to categorize their capability for producing each of 65 indicators identified as being either disability-specific indicators or suitable for disaggregation by disability. These were in the areas of poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, energy, employment, inequality, cities, climate, and justice.

The four categories for each indicator were:

- Can be produced and disaggregated by disability;
- Can be produced for the general population, but not disaggregated by disability;
- Cannot be produced, even for the general population; and
- Uncertain about whether it can be produced.

NSOs were also asked to provide the actual questions used for that disaggregation. The best practice is to use the WG-SS (including the appropriate response categories). Indeed, some countries used this approach. Unfortunately, some countries used other approaches that research shows tend to greatly under-identify people with disabilities. However, as they are already using questions on disability it would not require much effort (or space on their data instruments) to replace them to be consistent with international standards.

Results

Thirty-nine countries responded to WG questionnaire, eight of them reporting use of the Washington Group Short Set questions. The results, though, most likely under-estimate the ability of countries to disaggregate the indicators for several reasons. For example, one country was excluded from the table because although they reported that the WG-SS was used in their Demographic and Health Survey and a question on health conditions is included in their census, they did not fill out the rest of the survey to report which indicators they could produce. The same was the case of another country, which had a question asking about a list of medical conditions in their census. In addition, the secretariat of the WG is aware of at least a couple countries that have used the WG-SS on multiple surveys, but did not respond to the survey. A recently published review of the use of the WG questions (described below) suggests that better data on disability is becoming more available globally.

In addition some of the responses that indicators could not be disaggregated may be due to the fact that while it is possible to disaggregate, in practice, some countries have not yet done so. For example, Egypt reported the use of the WG-SS on its census and labor force survey, as well as a single disability question on its household income and expenditure survey, but also reported it could not disaggregate any indicators. When asked in followup about a set of eight key indicators (two on poverty, education, employment and one on WASH and inequality), Egypt reported that they could disaggregate all of them except the education indicators but have not yet done so. These six indicators are included in Table 1 for Egypt, but presumably they could produce more if asked. The same thing is true for Turkey, which reported using the WG-SS on its census and a national household survey, as well as some other

disability questions on its household income and expenditure and labor force surveys, but reported not having any disaggregated data. Again, this is likely because they have not used the data in this way, although the capability exists.

Table 1 shows the results for the thirty-seven countries whose responses were tabulated. The first row shows the total number of indicators to be disaggregated by SDG, and the other entries show how many of those indicators can be disaggregated for each country. However, it must be kept in mind many of these indicators cannot even be produced for the total population, let alone be disaggregated. The last two columns show how many of the 65 indicators could be produced for the general population, and then what percent of those can be disaggregated. The shaded countries can disaggregate at least 10 of the 65 indicators. These were Australia, Argentina, Israel, Italy, Moldova, and Mongolia.

Table 2 shows the indicators that can most commonly be both produced and disaggregated by disability status. The most common is the proportion of youth aged 15-24 years not in education, employment or training. The two main poverty indicators are also among the more commonly available for disaggregation. The justice indicators were the least producible for anyone, let alone for people with disabilities although Israel and Norway were able to produce and disaggregate two of them.

Conclusion

Disaggregating SDG indicators is feasible. A fair number of countries of different income levels are already including the WG Short Set questions in their data instruments. Even more are including disability questions in some capacity. Expanded use of the WG-SS in place of these other questions will improve the quality of that disaggregation and provide consistency, without imposing any noticeable burden on their current data instruments.

We suspect our results underestimate the current ability of countries to disaggregate data. Some countries responded to the survey that they did not have disaggregated data, even though some of their data instruments had disability questions that were not currently being used in analysis.

In fact, in an earlier survey distributed to NSO's by the WG that only asked about the use of questions on censuses and surveys (and not about disaggregation), 51 countries responded with information about the disability questions they've used. Of these 51 countries, in addition to Israel and Turkey mentioned above, six other countries reported using the WG-SS, namely Aruba, Bangladesh, Maldives, South Africa, USA, and Zambia. Many other countries used questions that could easily be modified to match the WG-SS without any additional costs to administering their census or survey. For example, many countries used the same wording in their questions, but used yes/no response categories instead of scaled responses. Countries with easily modifiable questions were a diverse group including Argentina, Ghana, Malawi, Mexico, Norway, Oman, Panama, Philippines, and the Republic of Korea.

Moreover, the use of the WG questions is growing. For example, there is now panel data from Living Standards and Measurement Surveys (LSMS) in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda. Vietnam recently used them on their national disability survey. The WG questions have been used as part of service delivery by NGOs, for example Sightsavers in India. These are just a few examples. In fact, the Demographic and Health Survey has tested the WG-SS and plans to include the set as part of their core survey module. The WG is in discussion with the World Bank to do the same thing for the LSMS, which is currently undergoing a re-design.

Overall this assessment of the capability of SDG indicator disaggregation, and other experience with NSO's in the design and implementation of the WG questions shows that identifying people with disabilities according to international standards is both feasible and growing. With further inclusion of these questions on data instruments there is a strong potential for disaggregation of key indicators by disability. Unlocking the full potential of the disaggregation will require more technical assistance to support NSOs to make the most of their existing instruments and data. More information on the work of the WG, including more detailed information on question development and how to implement the WG tools, as well as future plans, can be found at www.washingtongroup-disability.com

To that end, under a grant from DFAT, the WG has re-designed its website, is working on new training materials, and plans a series of regional workshops to build the capacity of NGOs.

Table 1. Number of SDG indicators to be disaggregated by disability status, by country

	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)												Number of indicators that can be disaggregated by disability status	Number of indicators that can be produced for the general population	Percent of producible indicators that can be disaggregated by disability status
	No Poverty	Zero Hunger	Good Health & Well-being	Quality Education	Gender Equality	Clean Water & Sanitation	Affordable & Clean Energy	Decent Work & Economic Growth	Reduced Inequalities	Sustainable Cities & Communities	Climate Action	Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions			
Number of indicators that can be disability disaggregated	**5**	**3**	**16**	**8**	**10**	**2**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**8**	**65**		
Afghanistan	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	6	83%
Argentina	2	0	0	4	1	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	14	31	45%
Australia	2	0	0	4	5	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	18	29	62%
Belarus	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	33	9%
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	13%
Chad	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	38	11%
China	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	5	6	83%
Costa Rica	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	9	37	24%
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	9	33%
Curacao	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	100%
Dominican Rep	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	16	38%
Egypt	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	6	18	33%
El Salvador	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	5	100%
Estonia	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	5	7	72%
Hong Kong	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	23	17%
India	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	4	30	13%
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	17	6%
Israel	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	13	40	33%
Italy	0	0	1	3	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	15	30	50%
Kosovo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	0%
Latvia	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	7	9	78%
Lithuania	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	28	14%
Mexico	3	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	24	38%
Moldova	5	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	12	47	26%
Mongolia	4	0	0	3	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	16	39	41%
New Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	38	5%
Norway	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5	23	22%
Palestine	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	34	6%
Panama	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	N/A	N/A

For more information on the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, visit:
http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/.

Peru	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	25	16%
Poland	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	18	22%
Russia	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	9	27	33%
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Slovakia	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	26	15%
Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0%
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0%
UAE	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	100%

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Table 2: Most common indicators that can be disaggregated by disability

Indicator Number	Description of indicator	Number of Countries (out of 32)
	More than 10 countries can produce	
1.1.1	Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)	12
1.2.1	Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age	12
6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	11
7.1.1	Percentage of population with access to electricity	12
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	16
	5 to 10 countries can produce	
1.3.1	Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	5
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	6
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	7
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	8
5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions	6
5.b.1	Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex	5
6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water	8
8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex	5

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