



SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Disability Data: An evidence-informed approach to the use of disability disaggregated data in WFP programming

Summary

 Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

May 2022

Executive Summary

Confusion exists as to whether data disaggregation by disability is necessary or sufficient to ensure persons with disabilities are included in WFP activities. This document is a quick overview of a decision-making support regarding the disaggregation of data by disability. Using a matrix of 5 questions, users will be guided to assess whether, in a particular instance, disaggregated data can support better food security outcomes for persons with disabilities. This provides the flexibility to make a context specific decision, using a rationale and approach that is corporately consistent.

A 'yes' response to each of the criteria suggests that data disaggregation is likely to 'work' in context, i.e., to be successfully and reliably implemented and analysed, and to produce information that can support positive outcomes for food insecure persons with disabilities. Mixed yes and no responses are possible, and even likely. Ensure relevant colleagues are involved in making the best decision. Case examples of real WFP decisions are available in the longer version of this document.

NOTE

In this document, disaggregation of data by disability assumes use of the **Washington Group Short Set of Questions (WGQ-SS)**, the gold standard tool for this purpose. Ad-hoc adaptations to the WGQ-SS affect the reliability and validity of data collected, may result in under-estimation, and impact comparability. **Therefore, we do not endorse or recommend ad hoc adaptations of the WGQ-SS.** Further detail on the WGQ-SS, translations, cognitive testing, and international application are available [online](#). Remember that the WGQ-SS is designed for disaggregation, **not identification**.

WILL IT WORK?		
CRITERIA	QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CONSIDERING DATA DISAGGREGATION	
Purpose	Is there a clear and shared understanding of why these data should be collected, and how the resulting information can contribute to programmatic objectives?	[YES] [NO]
Buy-In	Are key staff involved in the collection, analysis, and use of data willing to implement the WGQ-SS?	[YES] [NO]
Feasibility	Is disaggregation feasible in the available timeline and implementation context, using the available resources and modality of data collection?	[YES] [NO]
Quality	Is your data collection process capable of implementing quality checks and adapting as required? ¹	[YES] [NO]
Analysis & Action	Is there a plan in place to analyse and use the data to contribute to inclusive programming?	[YES] [NO]

If the answers to these questions are 'no' but you still want to move forward with data disaggregation, see the long version of this document for advice.

¹ This criterion does not refer to adapting the questions themselves, which is discouraged apart from two standardised, potential adaptations - the removal of reference to hearing aids and/or glasses, if such devices are rare in your context. Otherwise, adaptations tend to negate the ease of understanding, comparability, and reliability for which the questions have been designed and tested.

1. PURPOSE

Is there a clear and shared understanding of *why* these data should be collected, and *how* the resulting information can contribute to programmatic objectives?

Disability inclusion is a relatively new priority for WFP and its donors, and experience has shown that data work best where the programmatic purpose of those data is clear from the outset. When the purpose (and limitations) of disaggregated data remains ambiguous, it is challenging to generate buy-in for implementation, or data may be collected but never analysed or meaningfully actioned.

2. BUY-IN

Are key staff involved in the collection, analysis, and use of data willing to implement the WGQ-SS?

Organizationally, WFP is characterized by disseminated decision-making power. Ensuring shared understanding of the purpose and importance of data disaggregation is therefore key to buy-in among relevant decision makers. The opposition of a single individual can prevent implementation, while the buy-in of even one key staff has resulted in large scale and national level disaggregated data collection.

3. FEASIBILITY

Is disaggregation feasible in the available timeline and implementation context, using the available resources and modality of data collection?

It must be practically feasible to collect the data for the purpose identified, using the timeframe and financial and human resources available. Consider the need for staff training, survey design adaptations, and the analysis implications of your sample. Remember that adaptation of the WGQ-SS is not advised, as it negatively impacts comparability and validity of resulting data. Instead, see the longer version of this document for alternative data approaches.

4. QUALITY

Is your data collection process capable of implementing quality checks and adapting as required?

This criterion does not refer to adapting the questions themselves but instead encourages building in a period of piloting, or post-process reflection, to ensure that implementation really does/did fulfil the purpose you initially identified, and proved feasible in practice. Rather than waiting to 'see how it goes', ensure that a quality check is built in to the process, and includes all relevant colleagues.

5. ANALYSIS & ACTION

Is there a plan in place to analyse and use the data to contribute to inclusive programming?

Where data are collected but not analysed, it wastes time and financial resources, and contravenes the principle of data minimization. Where data are collected but are incorrectly analysed: not used, or are perceived to be misused, doubts and resistance will arise. Ensure that relevant colleagues have the necessary skills and time to analyse and appropriately interpret the data, and that end users have an action plan for the resultant information (e.g., targeting, advocacy, reporting, etc.)

TAKING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Data disaggregation by disability is a powerful tool to support inclusion, but it is not the only tool available, and is unlikely to be sufficient alone. Secondary data, primary qualitative data, and proxy measures can serve as complementary or alternative data sources, can triangulate disaggregated findings, or explain contextual barriers and enablers. If the primary purpose of data collection is identification of individuals, a different approach than disaggregation using the WGQ-SS should be used. The long version of this document contains detailed information about alternative app.

Trinity College Dublin Research Team: Claire O'Reilly & Caroline Jagoe

**DISABILITY INCLUSION, PROGRAMME - HUMANITARIAN AND
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION (PRO)**

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy - T +39 06 65131

wfp.org

Cover Photo:
TCD/Claire F. O'Reilly