



GPC GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2020 CONCEPT NOTE FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS

Inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons in the humanitarian response to GBV

29 September, 3-5pm (Bangkok time)/10am - 12pm (Geneva time)

Zoom link (to be distributed to registered participants with invitation to event)

Rational/purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the specific protection risks that persons with disabilities and older persons face in emergencies, including exposure to Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Globally, persons with disabilities are three times more likely to experience different forms of violence than persons without disabilities. Violence against older persons is widespread, but it is not well documented.¹ Violence is perpetrated in multiple forms - by intimate partners, family members, caregivers, or community members. Intersecting inequalities impact risks of violence - when age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic and migration status and rural and urban divides combine.

During COVID-19, risks of GBV among women and girls with disabilities and older women have significantly increased as a rise in domestic violence has been documented globally.² These risks are exacerbated due to confinement with abusers during lockdown, social isolation, disrupted routines and when caregivers cannot reach people in need, and compounded by increased anxiety and economic hardship.³ Yet, despite rising risks, services are decreasing - with fewer health, security and justice interventions available as resources are diverted or restricted. Ensuring persons with disabilities and older persons have accessible information and multi-sectoral services to address these risks must be at the core of our humanitarian planning and multi-sector response.

Persons with disabilities and older persons are vital participants in humanitarian response, especially as these environmental factors heighten the risks they face. A range of guidelines, practices and tools are emerging to ensure that persons with disabilities and older persons are integrated throughout humanitarian action and there are protection mechanisms in place to address GBV. However, there has not been sufficient attention to how their full engagement and meaningful participation is integrated into coordination through cluster-level, decision making processes – including strategic planning and accountability to affected population initiatives.

¹ Violence Against Women and Girls, Brief on Violence Against Older Women, May 2016

² UN Women, COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls, 2020. In a consultation by HelpAge, older women reported that different intersecting characteristics put them at heightened risk of violence. This included living with disabilities, being a migrant or a refugee, living in rural areas, having low literacy levels, being single or widowed, or receiving care and support for independent living.

<https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/rights/violence-against-older-women/>

³ UN, The Impact of COVID-19 on Older Persons, May 2020, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2020/05/COVID-Older-persons.pdf>



In order for the humanitarian response to COVID-19 and beyond to be effective, we must examine how we are addressing these immediate protection needs in coordination with persons with disabilities and older persons. Through dialogue, this session will aim to provide a contextual mapping of protection risks and barriers faced by persons with disabilities and older persons, particularly in relation to GBV.

Field - level practitioners and the IASC Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities will share promising practices on the implementation of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, both within specialist GBV services and through targeted GBV risk mitigation across sectors. Follow-up actions will be determined to bolster inclusion during emergencies.

Expected Outcomes

- 1) Participants from HRP and GHRP contexts will develop a deeper understanding of barriers and specific risks faced by older persons and persons with disabilities in relation to GBV, and key strategies for inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons during emergencies to address it.
- 2) Participants will become familiar with existing GBV guidance and tools in relation to protecting persons with disabilities and older persons, for further field level adaptation as needed.
- 3) Participants will become familiar with core guidance and initiatives linked to the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to address these challenges, including key areas to address for accessibility to promote inclusion of older persons and persons with disability in the GBV response.
- 4) The session will initiate dialogues and foster networking between Protection Cluster and AoR Coordinators and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons.
- 5) A set of practical follow-up actions will be identified to improve inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons in IASC guidance, and coordination and implementation of a range of humanitarian responses to GBV.

Format/Content of the Event

Format: Remote, interactive webinar (Zoom)

Timezones: Asia – Pacific, North Africa and Middle East, and Africa

Language: English (*Additional sessions may be added for other languages and timezones in the future as a follow up action if participants are interested*)

Content:

- I. Keynote speaker : Overview of protection risks, barriers, opportunities
- II. Panel discussion 1 : Dialogue with field-level implementing partners
- III. Panel Discussion 2 : Key guidance and tools/methods to support response
 - IASC Disability Guidelines
 - Inclusion actions for feedback and complaint mechanisms related to PSEA and AAP
 - Inclusive methods for research related to GBV in emergency settings
- IV. Plenary discussion on proposed follow up actions
- V. Wrap up



[Speakers/Moderator/ technical donor partner](#)

Moderators: GBV AoR

Co-facilitators: UNHCR, HI and Help Age International

Potential speakers/resource persons: IPs, Elhra, IASC Disability Reference group

Donor: DFAT

[Field Cluster/Operations](#)

GBV AoR will lead on the event as per original proposal, but in collaboration with other sectors.

[Pre-event questions /survey to be shared with participants upon registration of the event](#)

- 1. For GBV sub-cluster and Protection Cluster coordinators only:** Reflecting on our work, with reference to our clusters how many have representatives of the disabled persons who are disabled themselves participating in meetings and in workshops? (i.e. **NOT** organisations representing or working with people with disabilities).
2. What are the barriers and constraints disabled persons face in participating in decisions affecting their lives and what immediate action should be taken by the humanitarian actors to ensure participation of people with disabilities?
3. What role should humanitarian practitioners play in facilitating referral and access to GBV services for women and girls with disabilities, and a range of other humanitarian services including reproductive health services; access to information on development programs which disabled persons might benefit from; and health-related information, including COVID 19?
4. How can representation of persons with disabilities and older persons in decision-making structures be improved to avoid misrepresentation of their needs in policies and programs?
5. This webinar will be held in Zoom.
 - Live captions will be provided
 - Digital/text versions of webinar materials will be provided in advance
 - Please indicate if other accommodations are required

[Background Reading](#)

- *IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*
- Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and persons with disabilities
- WRC, Piloting the IASC Disability Guidelines on GBV
- GBV AoR Helpdesk, *Disability Considerations for GBV Programming in COVID-19*
- [IASC key messages on applying the IASC Guidelines on Disability in the COVID-19 Response](#);
- UNHCR, *Age, Gender and Diversity Considerations - COVID-19*



- Help Age, *COVID-19 Guidance and advice for older persons Protecting older people during the COVID-19 pandemic*
- Humanity and Inclusion, *A principled and inclusive response to COVID-19, focused on the most vulnerable*
- [IASC webpage on Accountability and Inclusion](#)