

DRG NEWSLETTER - JUNE/JULY 2026

Welcome to the DRG Monthly Newsletter!



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Dear DRG Members,

The DRG newsletter is back after a short summer break, so this edition brings you a combined newsletter for June and July. We were still busy behind the scenes: the stocktake of the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action got underway, and we are in the process of assessing the impact of funding cuts on our members. You can read more on the stocktake, below.

Looking ahead, we expect a full and busy second half of the year. Humanitarian emergencies continue to unfold around the world, and this summer's heatwaves have been a stark reminder of how climate change is fuelling new and compounding crises, even as OPDs and other humanitarian actors continue to face massive funding cuts. This edition also features a range of member updates and opportunities, a call for papers on disability in situations of war and conflict, a gender and disability alert on Lebanon, an IDA 2025 Annual Report, Disability-inclusive Food Security training package, and a look at how AI supported UNFPA's recent humanitarian evaluation. We also take this opportunity to thank the Australian DFAT for its vital, longstanding support to the DRG. Without this support, we would not have been able to grow as we have done and to deliver the joint initiatives that have brought together OPDs, NGOs and UN entities. We hope to be able to continue receiving such important donor support to continue our important collaboration.

As always, we encourage all DRG members to share any updates, new resources, upcoming events and other relevant information to include in our newsletter.

Kindest Regards,

Nurten Yilmaz (UNICEF)

Ulrike Last (Humanity & Inclusion)

Gordon Rattray (International Disability Alliance)

UPDATES FROM THE DRG

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING DFAT FOR VITAL CONTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT TO THE DRG

Since June 2023, the Disability Reference Group (DRG) has grown into a well-established network and a Community of Practice of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), with 700 members. The DRG has strengthened OPD participation, developed useful resources and training, and convened global and country-level dialogues. The DRG has also contributed to major global processes, launched time-bound working groups and a country-level coordination community of practice, and responded to the Humanitarian Reset and sector-wide funding cuts through member consultations and strategic advocacy. This progress was made possible by foundational funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs

and Trade (DFAT), which ensured accessible meetings, enabled meaningful OPD engagement, and sustained the DRG Secretariat—helping the network reach its first Annual Meeting in March 2026. We express our sincere and profound gratitude to DFAT for its significant support, partnership and steadfast commitment to advancing disability-inclusive humanitarian action. We look forward to continued collaboration to sustain and scale this work.

Survey on the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) [Guidelines](#) on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, adopted in 2019, aim to make disability inclusion a core component of humanitarian response. A stocktake is currently underway to assess how the Guidelines have been applied in practice, identify factors that have supported or hindered their uptake, and inform actions to keep them relevant in the evolving Humanitarian Reset context.

The stocktake is led by the IASC Disability Reference Group and Secretariat, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), and conducted by the independent consultancy [hera](#) (Right to Health and Development) on behalf of Humanity and Inclusion. For greater detail on the stocktake, you can refer executive summary [here](#).

As someone engaged in emergency response, you are invited to complete a short online survey that aims to gather information on the uptake of the 2019 IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

- The questionnaire can be accessed through this link:
<https://accessiblesurveys.com/v2/ksfzWIP4TOpvhhoJfpAq>
- You can select either the Arabic, English, French or Spanish version at the beginning of the survey or by clicking on the three dots in the top right corner
- You can select the preferred accessibility settings by clicking on the icon (person with wide open arms) in the top right corner
- The questionnaire has 25-30 questions and should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete
- Please respond to the survey before **9 September 2026**.

If you have any questions about the stocktake or this survey, please contact Mario Spiezio: mario.spiezio01@gmail.com or Marianne

Eelens: marianne.eelens@hera.eu.

Thank you for your engagement.

[Access the survey here](#)

DRG MEMBERS UPDATES AND CURRENT CALLS

Call for Papers "Persons with disabilities in the context of war and conflict"

by Bezev

We know a lot about crisis and conflicts going on in the world. Current wars are contributing to record levels of global displacement, widespread civilian harm, and growing pressure on international institutions and humanitarian systems to respond effectively.

We know, however, much less about the situation of persons with disabilities during these challenging times. They are hardly addressed in discussions about war and conflict in media, research and literature. What we know is that persons with disabilities remain amongst the group of most vulnerable people in situations of war and conflict. While knowledge about their situation has slowly increased over the last years, we still pay far too little attention to their situation in our responses to wars and conflicts. Consequently, their needs are still too often overlooked, invisible and forgotten.

Against this background, issue 2026-2 of the journal "Disability and International Development" is intended to review the situation of persons with disabilities in the context of war and conflict to take a closer look at challenges, countermeasures, lessons learned and best practices. Please find more information in the Call for Papers [here](#). **Deadline for submission of papers: 31st August 2026.**

[Access the Call here](#)

Gender and Disability Alert: Displacement, Disability and Gender in Lebanon's 2026 Crisis

by UN Women



This Gender and Disability Alert, developed by **UN Women Lebanon** in partnership with the **Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities (LUPD)** and **Trócaire**, with the generous support of the **Government of Australia** and the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, examines the impact of Lebanon's 2026 conflict and large-scale displacement on persons with disabilities, with particular attention to women and girls with disabilities. Drawing on humanitarian data, government sources, rapid assessments, testimonies and evidence from Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, it identifies gaps in data,

accessible shelter, protection, services and humanitarian assistance. It also presents recommendations for a disability-inclusive, gender-responsive and rights-based humanitarian response.

[Access the Report here](#)

IDA Annual Report 2025 – Global influence, national action, lasting change in challenging contexts

by IDA



The [International Disability Alliance's 2025 Annual Report](#) highlights how organisations of persons with disabilities are driving change around the world. From guiding global policies to strengthening national advocacy and delivering practical solutions in communities, 2025 showed what is possible when persons with disabilities are empowered to lead.

Working together with members and partners, IDA contributed to improving the lives of an estimated **23 million persons with disabilities**. We supported **203 organisations of persons with disabilities**, helped advance **109 disability-related laws and policies**, and enabled **904 OPD-led initiatives across 67 countries**.

Behind these figures are real stories of change. More people with disabilities are influencing the decisions that affect their lives, obtaining quality rights-based services, and leading solutions to barriers in health, education, employment, humanitarian action, climate policy and community inclusion. Together, we are helping build greater inclusive societies where everyone can participate and thrive.

These achievements would not have been possible without the leadership of our members and the commitment of our partners, donors and allies. They demonstrate the power of working together in a strong, representative and united global disability movement.

We invite you to read the report, share it with your networks, and continue supporting disability inclusion and the leadership of persons with disabilities worldwide.

Disability-inclusive Food Security Training Package

by Handicap International



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The [Leave No One Behind](#) project at Handicap International is pleased to announce the launch of their new training package on [“Introduction to Disability-Inclusive Food Security in Humanitarian Action”](#). This training package – developed in collaboration with Action Against Hunger, the African Disability Forum, Malteser International, Welt Hunger Hilfe, and the World Food Program has a modular structure – has 8 total modules from which you can pick and choose depending on your audience, as well as an orientation module to the Food Security sector. Each one contains PowerPoint presentations, facilitator guides, videos, and group works which are all adaptable to your own context. The training package covers everything from an introduction to disability, the IASC Guidelines, accessibility, Must-Do Actions and the twin-track approach, project cycle management, AAP, cash and voucher assistance, and a preparatory module on the Food Security sector for audiences such as OPDs who may not have specific sector-knowledge, all framed within the lens of disability-inclusive Food Security. Please contact Amanda Panella (am.panella@hi.org) and Haakon Spriewald (h.spriewald@hi.org) for questions or if

your organization is interested in using the package and would like to hear more in-depth about its contents and instruction for use.

[Access training package here](#)

How AI Supported the Evaluation of UNFPA's Humanitarian Action

by UNFPA



Evaluations at scale sift through enormous volumes of information to build their evidence base. [The independent evaluation of UNFPA's capacity in humanitarian action 2019–2025](#) was no exception: the evaluation team reviewed more than 1,500 documents and publications across 15 countries (a significant proportion in French and Spanish) and conducted over 600 interviews and focus group discussions with staff, partners, and community members spanning six distinct humanitarian contexts. Processing this evidence base manually, at the pace and depth required, would have constrained both the breadth and the rigour of the evaluation. This created a clear methodological opportunity: to explore whether artificial intelligence (AI) tools could enhance the work of experienced evaluators, and whether they could do so responsibly. The report also included analysis of the extent to which humanitarian principles, humanitarian minimum standards, human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, climate action, personal data protection, and social and environmental standards are integrated in UNFPA's humanitarian programming.

More information and report can be found here

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Please share any feedback you may have on the content and format of this Newsletter with us. You can send any material you want to be included in the next issues of the Newsletter by the last Monday of the month via email info@disabilityreferencegroup.org.

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