

Disability Statistics for Tracking Inclusive and Sustainable Development (Self-Paced E-Learning course)

Concept Note

1. Background and rationale

According to the World Health Organization¹, in 2021 more than 700 million people in Asia and the Pacific lived with some form of disability, which accounted for 16 per cent of the population. Persons with disabilities encounter social and economic barriers and bias in all aspects of life. Disability statistics enable tracking socioeconomic indicators related to persons with disabilities, therefore understanding better their needs to participate in society on an equal basis and identifying policy gaps to ensure disability-inclusive development.

Within the framework of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), disability inclusion in the development process has been increasingly crucial, necessitating the need to improve disability-disaggregated data to monitor disability-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. At a regional level, the [Incheon Strategy to 'Make the Right Real' for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific](#), the regional development goal to promote disability inclusion, reinforces the importance of disability-disaggregated data to measure progress against its targets and indicators.² Disability data as a critical instrument to advance disability-inclusive development was reaffirmed by the adoption of the [Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032](#). Underscoring the continued implementation of the Incheon Strategy, the Jakarta Declaration urges regional stakeholders to take measures to close disability data gaps and strengthen statistical capacities.

Nonetheless, limited statistical capacities at the national level often hinder national statistical offices and other data relevant ministries/ departments from producing internationally comparable, reliable, and quality disability statistics. The findings of the final review³ of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022 show that, while 16 of the 20 government respondents to a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) survey⁴ had collected disability data or planned to do so in their upcoming censuses, only 9 could produce and report on more than one third of the [Incheon Strategy indicators](#) based on their most recent censuses or surveys. Moreover, only 5 of the 20 respondents used

¹ WHO, [Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities](#) (United Nations publication, 2022)

² Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real adopted by ESCAP resolution 69/13 comprises 10 goals, 27 targets, and 62 indicators.

³ Reports of the review were captured in the reports and information documents: [Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022: key achievements, priorities and challenges](#) and [Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific](#)

⁴ UNFPA, [Are persons with disabilities included in the efforts to leave no one behind?](#) (UNFPA Asia-Pacific Regional Office, 2022)

or planned to use the Washington Group questions on functioning.⁵ Disability statistics for designing, implementing and evaluating data-driven national public policies concerning persons with disabilities are often unavailable or incomplete.

Strengthening capacities to produce and use disability statistics is critical to closing the existing disability data gaps. To that end, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Social Development Division (ESCAP SDD) is partnering with the Statistical Commission for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and Center for Inclusive Policy to deliver training on disability statistics for data users and producers in the Asia-Pacific region.

This overall objective of this self-paced e-learning course is to strengthen the capacity of member States to regularly produce reliable, timely and comparable disability data and statistics for use in formulating and evaluating evidence-based policies as well as reporting on disability-related SDG goals and targets and Incheon Strategy indicators. The course encompasses basic concepts, methodologies and frameworks required to close the disability data gap.

This e-learning course is expected to help address the existing data gaps, and in part, respond to the urgent call for accelerated action to “close[sic] disability data gaps and strengthening progress-tracking of disability-inclusive development, building on synergies with monitoring the Sustainable Development Goal progress” articulated in the Jakarta Declaration.

2. Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be expected to:

1. Understand the importance of disability inclusion within the national statistical system and its relevance to policy
2. Comprehend the key concepts, definitions, regional and global frameworks, tools and methodologies for disability measurement in quantitative data, according to existing international standards
3. Appreciate and apply good practices in the collection of disability data and the production of relevant indicators for disability inclusive analysis
4. Apply a disability lens to construct relevant indicators for disability-inclusive policy analysis and programming

3. Target Participants

This e-learning course targets statisticians and practitioners who work in the field of disability and disability-related statistics. National Statistics Offices and relevant line ministries whose responsibilities lie with data collection, analysis and dissemination are encouraged to participate in the course. The course is also open to decision- and policymakers who want to understand applicable tools and

⁵ ESCAP, *A Three-Decade Journey towards Inclusion: Assessing the State of Disability-Inclusive Development in Asia and the Pacific* (United Nations publication, 2022).

frameworks for tracking disability-related SDG indicators and improving disability policies and programmes through data collection and analysis. There are no prerequisites for this course, however, familiarity with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would be an asset.

4. Course design and content

The e-learning course comprises 5 interactive modules that are hosted on the SIAP e-learning platform. Each module consists of interactive slides and explanations. Each module can be completed in an average of 60 minutes. After all modules are completed, participants must complete a final test covering content from all 5 modules. The content of the modules is as follows:

Course content	
Module 1: Introduction to Disability Statistics and Measuring Disability	– What are the purposes of disability data collection? – Identifying persons with disabilities – The functional approach to identifying persons with disabilities – Aligning disability measurement with the purpose of data collection – The Washington Group Short Set (Its strengths and limitations) – Assessing the quality of disability statistics
Module 2: Collecting disability data	– Diverse sources of disability data – Implementing surveys and censuses – Recommendations/ good practices for ensuring coverage of persons with disabilities in censuses and surveys
Module 3: An Inclusive Data System	– Washington Group Question Sets beyond the Short Set that identify the population with Disabilities – Coordinating and harmonizing data collection in the national statistical system – Different approaches to measuring the environment
Module 4: Data analysis, interpretation and effective planning, monitoring and evaluation	– Calculation and interpretation of disability prevalence rates from Washington Group questions, by type and degree of disability – Disaggregation of indicators by disability status – Moving beyond disaggregation
Module 5: Disability Inclusive Policy Analysis and Programming	– The concept of disability-inclusive development – Use of indicators in these development frameworks – Moving beyond the indicators of the Incheon Strategy and SDGs – Making linkages between data and policy interventions and programmes – Case study – Poverty

In total, it is estimated that the course will take up to 20 hours (review of interactive modules and reference materials; and complete final assessment and feedback form). As a self-paced course, the time required can be flexible and accommodated to participants' individual schedules.

5. Evaluation

The course will include several integrated assessments aimed at reinforcing participants' learning and understanding of the material in each interactive module. Upon completion of all 5 modules, participants will be required to: (i) take a final test and attain a minimum grade of 70 per cent on the test; and (ii) complete a course evaluation/ feedback questionnaire, to receive a certificate.

Participants may take the final test up to three times and retain their best score. Participants may not work together on the test. The course organizers reserve the right to deny course certificates to participants suspected of cheating on the final test.