



Around 15 percent of the world's population, or about one billion people, live with a disability, making people with disabilities the world's largest minority. In DRC, 13 millions peoples with disabilities, do not have access to water. Disabilities are often seen as shameful, even a punishment from God. People with disabilities face barriers that prevent them from realizing basic human rights such as access to clean and safe drinking water. These barriers and the many rights they interfere with make disability inclusion a human rights. According to HNO/HRP 2023 estimates, of the 15% of the global population of people with disabilities in DRC, 4,8M are in humanitarian need in the DRC and 1.8M are targeted for an inclusive humanitarian response for this year 2023.

Access to safe and clean water and sanitation facilities is a basic right of all people, including people with disabilities, the denial of which can have serious implications on their well-being. For example, inaccessible toilet and water facilities are major contributing factors for school dropout among children with disabilities, especially girls.

The access to clean water and basic sanitation is a right also guaranteed under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Article 28 in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focuses on the right of persons with disabilities "to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families; this includes State Parties duty to ensure equal access to clean water services".

## Why is Disability Inclusion Important in WASH?

### Education:

Accessible WASH at school contributes to children with disabilities staying in school. Children with disabilities, girls especially, are often not able to attend school because they do not have access to a toilet, which makes it impossible to make it through a full school day – especially for a girl who is menstruating.

### Community :

- Accessible WASH at home supports a child's acceptance in society. When a child is not able to care for his or her hygiene, the child is unlikely to be welcomed by peers or to participate in school. This, in addition to the negative attitude towards persons with disabilities, can be a further marginalization factor for a person with disabilities.

### Health :

Access to sanitation has important cultural and social implications for women. Not having access to safe and adequate WASH facilities usually means women must navigate unsafe terrain, often alone, and usually at night, to find a private place outdoors to take care of their sanitation needs.

If toilets are not accessible, women and girls with disabilities will continue to remain at risk of Violence

-National offices learn whether the government has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international human rights treaty and an instrument imperative to a national government's commitment to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. This will require collaboration amongst WASH, disability teams and advocacy teams.

- Persons with disabilities are able to participate fully only when infrastructure, services and systems are accessible and when the community has a welcoming attitude. Furthermore, even if current data shows there are no persons with disabilities, people may be injured or become ill temporarily or permanently. People age, or babies can be born with disabilities.



Congo Handicap aims to meet the basic needs, increase self-reliance of individuals, and provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to the family and community in DRC.

This can be done by: Having a clear understanding of the disabilities within the target population; Inclusion of the specific needs of people with disabilities in access and use of WASH facilities and services;

Advocacy and support to policy development and capacity building of WASH professionals in recognizing and responding to the specific needs of people with disabilities;

Pay specific attention to disability in WASH in school s programmes: Effective WASH in Schools programmes seek to remove barriers by promoting inclusive design. Toilets and washstands, for example, need to be customised to meet the wide range of needs of children with disabilities;

- Build awareness: Collaborate with disabled peoples' organisations (DPO) to conduct disability sensitisation workshops in programme areas and with World Vision staff.
- Implementation resources: The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres revise existing WASH frameworks to ensure disability inclusion, and consult with Congo Handicap

UN Partnership disability advisor, develop WASH resources that can be contextualised for disability inclusive WASH.

- Donor engagement: Support offices identify and engage potential donors to support disability inclusion in WASH; and support and UNCT grant acquisition teams are aware and accountable for including allowable cost allocations for disability inclusion from donors.

