

# Mapping and Analysis of Online Humanitarian Information and Resource Sharing Platforms (2024)

Autors: Selena I. Hodzic, James L. Warnken, Piotr Zrolka

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acronyms.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Key Terms and Definitions .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Mapping and Analysis of Platforms .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Accessibility Assessment – Summary of Findings.....	13
Review of availability of resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action .....	15
Cluster-Specific Findings .....	16
Humanitarian actors' perspectives on accessing and using disability-inclusive resources.....	20
Perspectives of users with disabilities in crisis-affected countries: access to humanitarian resource platforms.....	25
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex 1: Detailed Technical Accessibility Assessment.....</b>	<b>31</b>

## Executive Summary

Accessible information and resource-sharing platforms are critical for meaningful participation of and access to humanitarian action by persons with disabilities. Accessibility ensures that international organizations, NGOs, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and local actors can access key resources. Existing efforts by clusters, agencies, and the Disability Reference Group (DRG) remain fragmented, making it difficult to operationalize the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. To date, no platform has fully consolidated essential materials, including guidelines, case studies, and best practices. **This study, commissioned by Handicap International e.V./ Humanity & Inclusion (HI) in partnership with CBM Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V. and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) of Ruhr-University Bochum maps and analyzes humanitarian resource platforms, assessing their structure, accessibility, and relevance to disability inclusion.** The study is part of the „Phase 3 – Leave no one behind!“ project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

The study used a multi-phase methodology: (1) an accessibility assessment of selected websites against WCAG 2.2 standards; (2) a desk review of key humanitarian platforms across major clusters; (3) a survey of 79 humanitarian professionals on platform use and accessibility; and (4) in-depth interviews with a diverse group of individuals, primarily persons with disabilities, including staff of humanitarian organisations and representatives of national and local OPDs in Somalia, Cameroon, and South Sudan. The interviews explored barriers to accessing information and resources essential for participation in humanitarian action.

All findings are based on data collected during the second half of 2024. However, the humanitarian landscape is ever-evolving, and broader shifts in policy and funding may impact the current relevance of some platform features or practices, particularly in rapidly changing operational contexts.

## Key Findings

### Accessibility Assessment:

The accessibility assessment of twelve (12) major humanitarian platforms revealed significant disparities in compliance with WCAG 2.2 (A & AA standards). Five platforms demonstrated strong accessibility support (above 80%), while three had moderate accessibility (50%-80%), and four fell below 50%, indicating major barriers. The highest-scoring platforms were Relief Web, Disability Reference Group, and the Global Food Security Cluster, while the Global Protection Cluster, Global WASH Cluster, and Global Shelter Cluster require urgent improvements, particularly in keyboard interactivity, navigation structure, and colour contrast, critical for users with disabilities. Findings highlight the need for targeted improvements, particularly in predictability, input method flexibility, and structured content presentation to enhance digital inclusion.

### Summary of Accessibility Recommendations

A phased approach is recommended for all platforms:

- Short-term recommendations include correcting contrast issues, improving keyboard navigation, and adding alt text and skip links - changes that can be made with existing resources.

- Mid-term recommendations include verifying that fixes have been correctly implemented and making adjustments based on user feedback
- Long-term recommendations should focus on embedding accessibility as a core part of digital design and content updates, in line with evolving WCAG standards.

### **Availability of Information on Persons with Disabilities in Cluster Platforms**

Some platforms, such as the Nutrition and Shelter Clusters, include resources or updates related to persons with disabilities, often through active technical working groups. However, most clusters lack structured systems to ensure visibility of such content. This results in fragmented access, reliance on informal tools, and missed opportunities to improve response quality through better integration of disability data and guidance.

### **Twin-Track Approach to Strengthening Resource Platforms on Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action**

As part of a twin-track approach to improve access to disability-inclusive humanitarian resources, 69% of respondents supported both the development of a dedicated disability resource hub and the systematic integration of disability-related materials across existing platforms.

#### **1. Strengthening the DRG Website**

The DRG plays a cross-sectoral coordination role in curating tools and guidance on disability-inclusive humanitarian action. While the DRG website is recognized as one of the more accessible platforms, further improvements are needed to enhance usability and navigation.

- **Short-term recommendations** include improving content structure and categorization, providing clearer submission guidelines for partners, and ensuring that interactive elements are keyboard-friendly and accessible.
- **Medium-term recommendations**, subject to available resources, include expanding DRG linkages with platforms like ReliefWeb and promoting knowledge exchange through curated updates or learning sessions.

The DRG's future long-term priorities should focus on facilitating access and collaboration, not centralizing content management, and should remain aligned with its mandate and available resources.

#### **2. Improving Access to Sector-Specific Resources via Cluster Websites**

Many users search for disability-related materials on individual cluster websites. However, the organization and accessibility of such resources vary widely.

- **Short-term recommendations** include improving labeling, tagging, and platform usability so that users can more easily locate sector-specific guidance on disability inclusion.
- **Mid-term recommendations** involve enhancing the visibility of relevant data, clarifying document types, and improving the accessibility of uploaded content.

Strengthening how each cluster presents its materials will support better access to information for humanitarian actors, OPDs, and affected communities, without requiring new coordination structures.

These recommendations will help create more structured, user-friendly, accessible, and inclusive humanitarian resource platforms, ensuring that humanitarian actors, OPDs, and affected communities can effectively access, navigate, and contribute to disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

## Acronyms

AGD	Age, Gender, and Diversity
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
DRG	Disability Reference Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HI	Humanity & Inclusion (previously known as Handicap International)
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFHV	International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict IFHV
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusive Strategy
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WFP	World Food Programme
WGQs	Washington Group Questions
WHO	World Health Organisation

## Key Terms and Definitions

**Accessibility (Key Points):** According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Article 9, States Parties are required to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications (including digital systems), as well as other public facilities and services, by identifying and eliminating obstacles and barriers to accessibility.<sup>1</sup>

**Organization of persons with disabilities:** Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are those that are led, directed, and governed by persons with disabilities, with a majority of members and decision-makers being persons with disabilities themselves. These organizations aim to promote and defend the rights of persons with disabilities and are distinct from service providers or organizations “for” persons with disabilities. OPDs may include organizations of women with disabilities, children with disabilities, cross-disability groups, and umbrella bodies. Their core role is to ensure self-representation and active participation in decision-making processes at all levels.<sup>2</sup>

**Persons with disabilities:** Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>3</sup>

**The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action:** These Guidelines provide a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring that humanitarian responses are inclusive of persons with disabilities. These guidelines emphasize the importance of integrating disability considerations throughout the humanitarian program cycle.<sup>4</sup>

**The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy:** This Strategy serves as a guiding framework for integrating disability considerations into the UN's work, promoting an inclusive approach that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals.<sup>5</sup>

**Twin-Track Approach:** Including two types of tracks:

- **Mainstreamed:** Programs and interventions are designed and adapted to ensure they are inclusive of and accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.
- **Targeted:** Programs and interventions accommodate the individual requirements of persons with disabilities, including in emergency and recovery responses.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9: Accessibility, available at: <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-9-accessibility>

<sup>2</sup> For the full definition and explanation, see: United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 7 (2018), available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3899396?v=pdf>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1: Purpose, available at: <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-1-purpose>

<sup>4</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* (2019), available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-guidelines-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action-2019>

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Disability Inclusion Strategy* (2019), available at: <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

The twin-track approach aims to implement projects and strategies that ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equitable access to emergency and recovery responses.<sup>6</sup>

**Web Accessibility:** Web accessibility, as defined by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative, refers to the design and development of websites, tools, and technologies that ensure usability for persons with disabilities. This concept emphasizes that individuals should be able to perceive, understand, navigate, interact with, and contribute to the web.

In practice, web accessibility means that content must be accessible to all users, regardless of their disabilities, which may include visual, auditory, motor, and cognitive impairments. By promoting an inclusive online environment, web accessibility promotes equal access to information and functionalities, empowering everyone to engage fully with the web.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Definition of the Twin-Track Approach based on: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* (2019), available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-guidelines-on-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-humanitarian-action-2019>

<sup>7</sup> World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), available at: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>



## Introduction

In humanitarian action, accessible information and resource-sharing platforms are essential for enhancing organizations' capacity to deliver timely and effective responses that reach all, including persons with disabilities. They aim to provide, on the one hand, relevant and practical tools, guidance and standards, and on the other hand, timely and quality information on the situation of affected populations, including persons with disabilities and humanitarian operations. This is to help humanitarian stakeholders to deliver a principled, effective and coordinated response that saves lives and ensures protection of all.

Persons with disabilities remain among the most marginalized in humanitarian response, often facing barriers accessing essential information and resources. As noted in recent research, there is a pressing need for training materials and resources to be made available in local languages and accessible formats to ensure meaningful participation (Hill et al., 2020). This study aims to contribute by identifying ways to improve access to such resources and support more inclusive humanitarian action.<sup>8</sup> To redress marginalization in the response and in decision-making processes, accessible information on persons with disabilities and resources on disability in line with humanitarian standards are key for humanitarian actors, including OPDs.

Additionally, accessible platforms that provide information on persons with disabilities as part of the affected population have the potential to empower humanitarian workers, including those with disabilities, to deliver effective humanitarian action that reaches all.

Humanitarian actors rely on inter-agency and sector-specific platforms, such as <https://reliefweb.int/>, <https://humanitarianaction.info/> - or cluster websites, to access information on the affected population, other operational actors, guidance, tools, and best practices. While various platforms contain some resources relevant to persons with disabilities - including tools, guidelines, and case studies - there is no single consolidated platform that brings these together. This gap, similar to those seen for gender and children, has been widely recognized. Efforts are underway by different actors to improve the inclusiveness of cluster websites in terms of content, though accessibility for persons with disabilities remains largely unaddressed.<sup>9</sup>

Some clusters, agencies, and the Disability Reference Group (DRG) have initiated steps to improve access to disability-related resources. However, awareness and their non-systematic presentation remain a challenge for users. Rather than proposing a single consolidated platform as the only solution, this research highlights the need for both decentralized improvements - enhancing the accessibility of existing platforms and increasing the visibility of available resources - and continued development of a technically strong and well-recognized platform, such as the DRG website.

**This study aims to map and analyze existing humanitarian information and resource-sharing platforms<sup>10</sup>, assessing their structure and accessibility.** The findings will

---

<sup>8</sup> Humanitarian Policy Group (2020). Humanitarian Exchange, Issue 78: Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response, available at: [https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/HE-78\\_disability\\_WEB\\_final.pdf](https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/HE-78_disability_WEB_final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), "Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action," 2019, available at [link](#)

<sup>10</sup> The list of assessed platforms: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), HumanitarianAction.Info, Global WASH Cluster (GWC), Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCCM) Cluster, Global Education Cluster (GEC), Disability Reference Group (DRG), Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), Global Protection Cluster (GPC), Global Health Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC), Global Food Security Cluster, and Reliefweb.int

contribute to ongoing efforts to bridge this gap, including the development of a dedicated DRG website as a central repository for disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

The foundation of accessibility in humanitarian action is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which, under Article 9, recognizes accessibility<sup>11</sup> as a fundamental right. Complementing this, the

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** provide international standards for ensuring digital accessibility, enabling meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response efforts. Together, these frameworks guide humanitarian actors in building inclusive digital environments.

As part of broader system-wide efforts, the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS)<sup>12</sup> advances a coordinated approach to mainstream disability inclusion across UN agencies. Launched in 2018, it emphasizes the proactive identification and removal of accessibility barriers, making accessibility a core performance indicator for UN entities. The strategy underlines the importance of coherence, coordination, and knowledge management, ensuring that effective disability-inclusive expertise, tools, and resources are captured and shared at global and country level.

Further, **the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019) outline four key must-do actions, including the removal of barriers.** This involves addressing attitudinal, environmental, and institutional obstacles to ensure meaningful participation and access to humanitarian assistance. The Guidelines also highlight the need to remove barriers to participation in both physical and digital environments - for example, ensuring that online information, tools, and learning spaces are accessible to persons with disabilities.<sup>13</sup>

This is a key focus of the present study which was commissioned by Handicap International e.V. / Humanity & Inclusion (HI) as part of the project „[Phase 3 – Leave no one behind!](#)“ that is implemented in partnership with CBM Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V. (CBM) and the Ruhr-University Bochum’s Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.

The findings and recommendations will contribute to discussions on sustaining and improving knowledge-sharing solutions and strengthening an inclusive, responsive humanitarian system that ensures no one is left behind.

---

<sup>11</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Article 9: Accessibility,” available at [link](#)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, “United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy,” 2019, available at [link](#)

<sup>13</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action* (2019), p. 20, available at: [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2020-11/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20the%20Inclusion%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action%2C%202019\\_0.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2020-11/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20the%20Inclusion%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20in%20Humanitarian%20Action%2C%202019_0.pdf)

## Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of accessibility and availability of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action, this methodology was designed with multiple, complementary phases. After initial preparatory meetings with technical staff to define objectives, scope, and resources, the assessment proceeded with an integrated approach that includes an accessibility assessment, desk review, survey, and interviews.

**The structured methodology applied a twin-track approach, examining both mainstream and specific humanitarian web-based platforms.** By evaluating each platform's alignment with accessibility standards and availability of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action, this approach provides a holistic view of current practices and gaps. The following phases outline the steps taken to gather, analyze, and validate data, ensuring that the findings offer actionable recommendations for creating more inclusive, accessible platforms in the humanitarian sector.

### 1. Accessibility Assessment

The Accessibility Assessment was conducted on twelve (12) selected platforms based on their current levels of accessibility. Each platform was assessed against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.2, specifically at the A and AA levels. To streamline analysis and facilitate actionable recommendations, seven (7) accessibility criteria groups were developed based on WCAG principles:

- **Interaction methods and modalities:** Evaluates usability across different interaction options, including keyboard, touch, voice, and assistive technologies.
- **Navigation and wayfinding:** Assesses ease of navigation, logical structure, and wayfinding tools like breadcrumbs or landmarks.
- **Predictability and consistency:** Ensures interface behavior follows predictable patterns.
- **Timing and preservation:** Reviews session timeouts and whether user input is preserved during disruptions.
- **Movement and flashing:** Identifies excessive animations, movement, or flashing content that could trigger seizures or distractions.
- **Visual and auditory alternatives:** Examines the availability of text alternatives for non-text content.
- **Contrast and legibility:** Measures text contrast and readability for visually impaired users.

The assessment provided insights into both platform-wide and group-wide accessibility challenges, identifying critical gaps and best practices.

### 2. Desk Review

This phase, conducted in July 2024, and in parallel with the survey, complements the findings and begins with a desk review of selected humanitarian web platforms to systematically document the availability of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action. The review assessed

the ease of locating information, the number of resources available, the frequency of document updates, and the types of content provided.

**The platforms analyzed were selected for their comprehensive coverage of humanitarian needs, specialized focus areas, and relevance to disability-inclusive humanitarian action.** They included platforms run by clusters that are covering humanitarian sectors such as CCCM, Education, Food Security, Nutrition, Health, Protection, Shelter, and WASH. Additionally, these platforms emerged as the most frequently identified sources in the survey, reinforcing their significance in humanitarian response.

### 3. Survey

The survey on the accessibility and availability of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources was conducted from the middle of July to the end of September 2024, to gather insights on how humanitarian actors access and utilize these web platforms. It was distributed among members of the DRG and through LNOB project channels, including mailing lists, country teams, and partner organizations. **The survey targeted humanitarian actors in various roles, including program managers, technical advisors, and coordinators, to capture diverse perspectives.**

The findings provide valuable insights into how humanitarian actors navigate existing platforms, their preferred search methods, and the perceived effectiveness of current resource-sharing mechanisms, contributing to ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and usability of those web-based platforms for those seeking information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources.

### 4. Key informant interviews

In-depth key informant interviews (KIs) were conducted with eight individuals, primarily persons with disabilities, including staff of humanitarian organizations and representatives of country-level OPDs. One participant without disabilities who works closely with OPDs also shared relevant insights. **The interviews explored user experiences with humanitarian platforms, focusing on barriers and enablers to accessing disability-related information in crisis-affected settings.** This qualitative data provides grounded perspectives on both the practical use of such platforms and the broader accessibility challenges they present.

The twin-track approach provided a comprehensive review of mainstream and targeted humanitarian platforms. Triangulating data from multiple sources ensured accuracy, while the methodology raised awareness of accessibility barriers and promoted effective use of information to enhance platform usability and inclusivity.

# Mapping and Analysis of Platforms

## Accessibility Assessment – Summary of Findings

This chapter provides a summary of the web accessibility assessment carried out across twelve humanitarian platforms. The full list of platforms is available in earlier chapters of the report, and detailed findings, including the methodology, scoring breakdown, and individual platform analysis, are presented in Annex 3.

The chapter is structured as follows:

- A brief explanation of the assessment process
- Summary of scoring and severity levels
- Key findings and trends across platforms
- Conclusion and link to recommendations

### Assessment Process

The accessibility evaluation was guided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.2, specifically at levels A and AA. The evaluation focused on how well each platform supports accessibility for users with disabilities, including those using assistive technologies such as screen readers, keyboard navigation, and alternative input devices.

To structure the analysis and highlight recurring patterns, the criteria were grouped into seven thematic areas:

- Interaction Methods and Modalities
- Navigation and Wayfinding
- Predictability and Consistency
- Timing and Preservation
- Movement and Flashing
- Visual and Auditory Alternatives
- Contrast and Legibility

Each platform was reviewed using a combination of automated tools, manual testing, and simulations with assistive technology. Scores were assigned per group, converted into percentages, and categorized into severity levels:

- **Green (81–100%)** – Good accessibility compliance
- **Yellow (51–80%)** – Medium severity; improvements needed
- **Red (≤50%)** – Critical issues requiring immediate attention

### Key Findings

The assessment revealed several trends and areas where improvement is needed:

- **Higher-scoring areas:** Most platforms performed well in areas related to predictability, consistency, and interaction methods. This suggests developers are increasingly aware of the importance of consistent design and basic keyboard navigation support.
- **Critical gaps:** Two thematic areas – Timing and Preservation and Movement and Flashing – scored the lowest across the board. These features were either

absent or lacked user controls, posing significant barriers for users who require extended time or need to manage moving content.

### **Accessibility leaders:**

#### **The platforms with the highest overall scores were:**

- ReliefWeb (98.6%)
- Disability Reference Group (91.4%)
- Global Food Security Cluster (88.6%)

These platforms demonstrated strong adherence to accessibility standards across nearly all evaluation areas.

### **Platforms with the lowest scores:**

- Global Protection Cluster (45.0%)
- Global WASH Cluster (46.4%)
- Global Shelter Cluster (46.7%)

These sites had multiple barriers, particularly in navigation, alternatives for visual content, and sufficient color contrast.

- Commonly unmet criteria:

Several WCAG success criteria were frequently not met across platforms, including:

- 1.1.1 Non-text content (alt text for images and media)
- 1.4.1 Use of color (color not used as the sole means of communication)
- 2.1.1 Keyboard operability
- 2.2.2 Pause, Stop, Hide (for moving content)
- 2.4.1 Bypass blocks (skip links)
- 2.4.3 Focus order
- 2.4.7 Focus visible
- 1.4.3 / 1.4.11 Contrast requirements for text and non-text elements

These findings suggest that while accessibility awareness is growing, technical implementation often remains inconsistent, especially in more dynamic or visual elements of web platforms.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Out of twelve platforms assessed:

- 5 scored in the green range ( $\geq 80\%$ )
- 3 scored in the yellow range (51–80%)
- 4 scored in the red range ( $\leq 50\%$ )

The main accessibility barriers identified are likely to impact persons with visual, cognitive, and mobility-related disabilities, as well as deafblind users.

This summary serves as a high-level overview for general readers. Full details per platform, including scores and technical references to each WCAG criterion, are provided in Annex 3.

Recommendations for addressing these barriers and improving platform accessibility are outlined in the chapter "[Recommendations](#)". These recommendations cover both immediate remediation and longer-term improvements in digital accessibility practices.

## Review of availability of resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action

This review examines the availability, structure, and characteristics of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action across humanitarian clusters. According to the IASC Guidelines, effective humanitarian action relies on sectoral and intersectoral coordination to enhance inclusivity, accountability, and partnerships. Each cluster - CCCM, Education, Food Security, Nutrition, WHO Health, Protection, Shelter, and WASH - plays a role in ensuring that persons with disabilities are considered within humanitarian response efforts.

**The review assesses the integration of disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources within clusters under the IASC framework<sup>14</sup>**, focusing on the lead agencies coordinating each cluster, the types of resources available - such as tools, guidance, research, training, or lessons learned - the availability of research or data specific to persons with disabilities within the sector, and the frequency of updates, whether regular or on an ad hoc basis. It also highlights examples of available resources within each cluster to illustrate how disability inclusion is incorporated into existing clusters' resource platforms.

A structured keyword search using "disability inclusion" was conducted to assess how disability-inclusive resources are organized within each cluster. **An initial search on the IASC main site yielded approximately 1,900 resources related to the topic.** However, variations in content layout and structural organization across platforms may have led to some resources being overlooked or difficult to locate, highlighting potential gaps in the visibility and accessibility of information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources.

Additionally, <https://humanitarianaction.info/> website provides insights into humanitarian response efforts, including some references to disability inclusion. A good example is the "HRP Key Figures" article (published on 24 January 2024; keywords: Nigeria, HRP), which presents clear data on persons with disabilities, noting that they comprise 1.18% of the total population and 0.94% of people in need (Humanitarian Action, 2024).<sup>15</sup> However, such visibility is not consistent across country pages. For instance, although Nigeria is highlighted in the HRP Key Figures article, its 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (published on 23 January 2025 and coordinated by OCHA) contains no specific data on persons with disabilities (where previously "XX% of persons with disabilities" had been noted as a placeholder), highlighting ongoing gaps in the systematic integration of disability data on the platform.<sup>16</sup>

A further example is the Cameroon 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan<sup>17</sup>, which incorporates disability-specific figures, reflecting growing awareness of inclusive data needs (ReliefWeb,

---

<sup>14</sup> For a summary of available disability-inclusive resources across humanitarian clusters, see Annex 2.

<sup>15</sup> Humanitarian Action (2024). *HRP Key Figures* (published 24 January 2024; keywords: Nigeria, HRP), available at: <https://humanitarianaction.info/article/hrp-key-figures>

<sup>16</sup> Nigeria 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (published 23 January 2025; coordinated by OCHA): <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1274/document/nigeria-2025-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan/article/13-people-need-breakdown-3#page-title>

<sup>17</sup> Cameroon 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-2024-humanitarian-response-plan-april-2024>



2024). CBM's case study, "*Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans – The Case of Cameroon*"<sup>18</sup>, details ongoing efforts by OPDs, UN agencies, and humanitarian actors to embed disability inclusion within the 2023 and 2024 HRP. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to improving data collection and planning. However, despite such efforts, there is still a notable gap in ensuring that disability data is systematically and visibly presented on public-facing platforms like the <https://humanitarianaction.info/> website. **Clusters vary widely in how they approach disability inclusion and organize related resources on their websites.** While some, such as the Global Protection Cluster, the Nutrition Cluster, and the Food Security Cluster, have dedicated pages or clearly defined thematic categories related to disability, others provide materials in a more scattered or ad hoc manner. The level of integration ranges from targeted thematic pages and mainstreamed Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approaches to sporadic inclusion within broader sectoral documents. These differences reflect the diversity of entry points and institutional priorities, as well as the varying degrees to which disability inclusion has been systematically embedded across clusters. The following cluster-specific summaries provide an overview of available resources, thematic organization, and update trends.

## Cluster-Specific Findings

### 1. CCCM

**Lead agencies:** Co-led by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) and International Organization for Migration (**IOM**), coordinates protection and services for IDPs and other affected populations

The CCCM Cluster demonstrates a relatively clear thematic integration of disability inclusion within its resource structure. On its global website, **disability and inclusion are identified as one of 22 thematic areas** under its resource library, helping users locate relevant tools and guidance with minimal navigation effort. This structured approach reflects the cluster's growing recognition of the importance of inclusive site management and services that respond to the diverse needs of displaced populations, including persons with disabilities.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **12 disability-related resources** were identified (2018-2022), with **sporadic updates** and peak activity between **2021 and 2022**.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [Tipsheet on disability inclusion in HNO & HRP, GCCCM \(2022\)](#) – Provides practical guidance on integrating disability inclusion into Humanitarian HNOs and HRPs within the CCCM framework.
- [Disability inclusion in CCCM Toolbox \(2023\)](#) – A toolkit offering structured guidance and tools to incorporate information on the situation of persons with disabilities into CCCM programs.

### 2. Global Education Cluster

**Lead agencies:** UNICEF and Save the Children

---

<sup>18</sup> CBM (2024). Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans – The Case of Cameroon, available at: <https://www.cbm.org/our-work/what-we-do/humanitarian-action/iha-resources.html>



The Global Education Cluster does not currently display a distinct disability-specific thematic entry on its global platform, and resources appear limited in number and scope.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of two resources were identified (2022-2024), with sporadic updates and gaps in disability-inclusive humanitarian action-specific materials.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [2022-2023 Rapid Response Team Support Overview](#) – Summarizes the activities of the cluster's rapid response team, including information on the situation of persons with disabilities in Somalia's humanitarian action plan and how to gather this relevant information.

### 3. Food Security Cluster

**Lead agencies:** Co-led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) and the World Food Programme (**WFP**), coordinates food security interventions in crisis.

The Food Security Cluster displays a stronger integration of inclusion principles through its dedicated "Diversity and Disability" page. This website highlights efforts to integrate inclusion principles into food security responses. It provides

- guidance,
- reports, and
- tools that focus on addressing the requirements of diverse populations, including persons with disabilities.
- The page emphasizes a cross-cutting approach, ensuring that food security interventions consider age, gender, and disability factors to enhance accessibility and effectiveness.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **30 resources on disability/inclusive of disability were identified (2015-2024)**, with a noticeable **increase in uploads during 2020 and 2021**, reflecting a growing focus on inclusive food security interventions.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [Guidance on Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans](#) – Outlines key steps for ensuring food security interventions are inclusive and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- [Tip Sheet for Monitoring a Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19 in Humanitarian Settings](#) – Provides practical recommendations for assessing and improving disability inclusion in food security programs.

### 4. Global Nutrition Cluster

**Lead agency:** Led by **UNICEF**, coordinates nutrition-related interventions in humanitarian settings.

Disability inclusion within the Nutrition Cluster is driven by the work of the [Disability Inclusion Working Group](#), which plays a central role in promoting inclusive nutrition responses. The group supports the development of technical guidance, facilitates collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and advances capacity-building across

partners. These efforts contribute to ensuring that disability is consistently integrated as a cross-cutting consideration in coordination, planning, and implementation.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **13 disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources** were identified within the cluster's **129 available resources (2002-2023)**, with a noticeable increase in uploads during 2020 and 2021.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [Cross-Cutting Issues in Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNOs\) and Humanitarian Response Plans \(HRPs\) for Nutrition Cluster/Sector Coordination Teams](#) – A checklist to guide Nutrition Cluster teams in integrating cross-cutting issues, including disability inclusion, into HNOs and HRPs.
- [Disability Inclusion in HNOs and HRPs – Tips for Nutrition Chapters \(2023\)](#) – Provides specific recommendations on integrating disability inclusion into nutrition-focused humanitarian planning.

## 5. WHO Health Cluster

**Lead agency:** Led by the World Health Organization (**WHO**), coordinates health responses in humanitarian settings.

**Unlike some other clusters, the Health Cluster does not feature disability as a clearly labeled thematic area on its global website.**

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **two key disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources** were identified (published between 2019 and 2022).

**Examples of Available Resources:**

- [HelpAge International – Partner Support](#) – Provides technical support on health issues affecting older persons with disabilities, advocating for the collection of disaggregated data by age, sex, and disability to improve health response planning.

## 6. Global Protection Cluster

**Lead agency:** Led by **UNHCR**, coordinates protection responses in humanitarian settings.

The Global Protection Cluster addresses disability inclusion thematically through its **AGD approach**, which promotes the systematic integration of intersecting identity factors into protection work. Within this framework, **disability is treated not as a standalone silo, but as a cross-cutting dimension** addressed through the **Community of Practice on Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion (GDI)**. This ensures that the protection needs of persons with disabilities are considered alongside those related to gender, age, and other factors, supporting more inclusive, context-sensitive humanitarian responses.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> For more information on how the Global Protection Cluster addresses disability within the Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach and the Community of Practice on Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion, see: [Global Protection Cluster – Age, Gender and Diversity](#).

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **20 resources (2019-2024)** were identified, with notable updates in **March 2019, October 2020, and March 2024**, indicating periodic rather than consistent updates.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [Guidance on Strengthening Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Response Plans \(2020\)](#) – Outlines key considerations and practical steps for ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in HRPs, focusing on assessment, planning, and implementation. It provides tools and guidance rather than explicit recommendations.
- [Guidance for Adapting Protection Assessment Tools to Become More Disability Inclusive \(2024\)](#) – Supports humanitarian organizations in making protection data collection more inclusive, based on the IASC Guidelines. It includes review grids, sample tools, a question bank, a checklist, and additional resources such as a How-to Note, a webinar recording, and presentation slides.
- [User Guidance: Age and Disability Inclusion Matrix \(2023\)](#) – Provides structured instructions for using the ADIM tool to integrate age and disability considerations in humanitarian programming. The guidance outlines how to apply the matrix across project design, implementation, and monitoring, helping actors identify and address gaps in inclusion.

## **7. Global Shelter Cluster**

**Lead agencies:** Co-led by **UNHCR** and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (**IFRC**), coordinates shelter and

Disability inclusion within the Shelter Cluster is supported through the [Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Shelter Programming Working Group](#), which acts as

a central platform for technical collaboration and knowledge exchange. The group plays a key role in consolidating best practices and producing targeted guidance to enhance the accessibility and inclusiveness of shelter responses in diverse humanitarian contexts. A dedicated online resource page ensures that tools and guidance materials are accessible to practitioners globally.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of 27 resources (2015-2024), categorized under the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Shelter Programming Working Group – Documents section, with notable updates in 2023 and 2024 reflecting an ongoing focus on disability inclusion.

**Examples of available resources:**

- [All Under One Roof: Disability-Inclusive Shelter & Settlements in Emergencies Guidelines](#) – A key reference document promoting inclusive practices in shelter responses, offering detailed recommendations for accessibility and adaptation.

## **8. Global WASH Cluster**

**Lead agency:** Led by UNICEF, coordinates WASH interventions in humanitarian settings.

**Quantity and update frequency:** A total of **two resources (2019-2022)**, reflecting efforts to integrate disability considerations into WASH programming.

**Examples of Available Resources:**

- [The Inclusion of Disability within Efforts to Address Menstrual Health during Humanitarian Emergencies: A Systematized Review \(2022\)](#) – Examines how menstrual health initiatives in emergencies incorporate disability considerations.
- [Rapid Review of Disability and Older Age Inclusion in Humanitarian WASH Interventions \(2019\)](#) – Provides a review of gaps and trends for integrating disability and older-age inclusion in WASH responses.

## UNICEF's Cross-Sectoral Role in Advancing Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action

UNICEF<sup>20</sup> offers a more structured platform for disability-inclusive humanitarian action, with resources such as:

- [Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action Toolkit](#) – Provides step-by-step guidance, checklists, and practical tools to integrate information on the situation of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action.
- [Inclusive Humanitarian Action Guidance](#) – Offers sector-specific recommendations and case studies to support the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in crises.

These tools primarily focus on the inclusion of **children and adolescents with disabilities**, and are designed to support **UNICEF implementing partners** in strengthening disability-responsive programming across sectors. While UNICEF co-leads the Education, Nutrition, and WASH Clusters, its efforts in disability inclusion extend beyond cluster responsibilities, encompassing global guidance, advocacy, and operational support.

The next section explores how humanitarian actors engage with these materials in practice and how effective current platforms are in supporting operational disability inclusion.

## Humanitarian actors' perspectives on accessing and using disability-inclusive resources

This section presents key findings from the survey, which aimed to capture the experiences and preferences of humanitarian actors regarding existing resource-sharing platforms. **A total of 79 responses were collected, reflecting a broad representation of humanitarian professionals engaged in disability-inclusive humanitarian action.** Participants held diverse roles, including directors, program managers, and technical advisors.

**Demographic data showed that 60.2% were male, and 39.8% were female, with 69% falling within the 25 to 44 age range. Additionally, 10 respondents identified having functional difficulties<sup>21</sup>,** providing firsthand perspectives on accessibility barriers.

Respondents shared their views on the effectiveness of current resources, highlighted gaps in available content, and provided suggestions for improving the accessibility and usability of

---

<sup>20</sup> For more information on UNICEF's broader work on disability-inclusive humanitarian action, including additional tools and guidance materials, see: <https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/emergencies>

<sup>21</sup> The Washington Group Short Set of Questions (WG-SS) was used to identify respondents with functional difficulties.

platforms. These insights contribute to ongoing efforts to ensure that humanitarian actors have structured, reliable, and easily accessible information to support disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

### **Search methods & Humanitarian actors' resource preferences**

The survey revealed that **59% of participants use a mix of general search engines and specific resource websites** when seeking information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources, highlighting the complexity of navigating available information. However, nearly 64% found their search methods to be only moderately effective, meaning relevant results could be obtained, albeit with some effort.

These insights transition into the next section, highlighting the preference for established platforms among humanitarian actors in their quest for reliable and accessible resources on disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

When asked about their preferences, survey findings show that humanitarian actors primarily rely on widely recognized platforms, while engagement with global and country-level cluster websites remains lower. This suggests a preference for established hubs, with potential gaps in awareness or accessibility of specialized resources.

#### **Most frequently used resource platforms:**

- **IASC Website (20%)** – A widely used platform for sector-wide disability inclusion resources.
- **DRG (19%)** – One of the most referenced sources for disability-inclusive humanitarian action.
- **Different humanitarian actors resource webpages (18%)** – Includes platforms hosted by CBM, HI, and other actors, reinforcing the importance of diverse knowledge hubs.
- **ReliefWeb (16%)** – Frequently consulted for humanitarian updates and reports, but not primarily for disability-specific resources.

#### **Lower engagement with cluster-specific platforms:**

- **Global cluster-specific websites (14%)** were consulted less frequently compared to broader humanitarian platforms, suggesting they may not be primary sources for disability-inclusive resources. For example, the **Nutrition and Protection Clusters** had several specific mentions, indicating that when clusters provide a dedicated space for disability (and related issues such as age and gender), they are more likely to serve as a useful resource hub for sector-specific disability-related guidance. While some actors seek sector-specific guidance, overall engagement with these platforms remains lower than with more widely used humanitarian knowledge hubs.
- **Country-level cluster websites (13%)** – Indicating moderate use, though engagement varies by country.

Some respondents referenced more specialized platforms hosted by individual humanitarian organizations, disability-focused networks, and regional initiatives. These platforms, while

used occasionally, contribute to the broader resource ecosystem supporting disability inclusion in humanitarian action.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, the survey results indicate a **clear preference among humanitarian actors for established and trusted platforms** when accessing information on the **situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources**.

#### Two main priorities emerged:

- **Content relevance (34.5%):** Humanitarian actors prioritize **practical, context-specific resources** that directly support their work. General information is not enough—resources must be applied to real-world challenges in different humanitarian settings.
- **Reputation of the platform (21.8%):** The credibility of a platform significantly influences its usage. **Widely recognized sources** (e.g., IASC, DRG, ReliefWeb, Humanitarian Info) are preferred over lesser-known or newer platforms. This reinforces the importance of **trust in resource reliability and accuracy**.

The survey findings indicate that humanitarian actors tend to rely more on platforms they perceive as comprehensive and user-friendly, such as IASC, DRG, and ReliefWeb. While global and country-level cluster websites are part of the recognized humanitarian infrastructure, lower engagement may stem from factors such as less visible or less structured disability-specific content. These findings suggest that both platform reputation and content accessibility play important roles in shaping usage patterns.

#### Motivations for engagement

Furthermore, **53.6% of respondents reported accessing these resources occasionally**.

Motivations for utilizing information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources include:

- Staying informed to effectively meet the requirements of vulnerable populations.
- Preparation of reports, concept notes, and proposals.
- Seeking programmatic advice or guidance.
- A desire to enrich knowledge and improve programming.

Participants with **extensive experience or leadership roles in disability-inclusive humanitarian action** demonstrated a **strong commitment to utilizing these resources**. Responses also indicated that specific project needs often drive engagement with these resources, with access typically highest during **project development or when immediate support is sought**.

However, the survey also revealed a **gap in general awareness of available platforms**, as some respondents indicated **they had not previously considered the available resources**. This lack of awareness highlights the need for increased outreach and capacity

---

<sup>22</sup> See Annex 1 for a list of specific websites mentioned by humanitarian actors in their work

development regarding information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources.

### **Key features and challenges in accessing disability-inclusive resources**

Survey respondents identified **critical features that make platforms for disability-inclusive humanitarian action resources** more user-friendly:

- **Robust search functionality** – Considered essential by 66.7% of participants for efficiently locating relevant materials.
- **Regularly updated content** – Ensures that practitioners can access timely and relevant guidance, policies, and best practices.
- **Well-categorized materials with detailed descriptions** – Help users understand content relevance and applicability.

At the same time, **47.6% of respondents** reported **barriers to accessing information**, citing **limited content availability and navigation difficulties**. These findings highlight the need for **more user-friendly and accessible platforms** to better support disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

### **Top three priority resources needed by humanitarian actors**

Survey participants expressed a strong need for specific resources to enhance their roles in humanitarian responses addressing the situation of persons with disabilities. They include resources on:

- **Data and statistics on disability in humanitarian contexts**, which are essential for informed decision-making;
- **News and updates on recent developments**, enabling practitioners to stay current and relevant; and
- **Collaboration platforms** to connect with other professionals, emphasizing the importance of shared knowledge.

### **Additional gaps in resource availability:**

While respondents identified the resources they need, they also highlighted key gaps in available materials that would improve their ability to access and use information on the situation of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

### **Key areas of concern include:**

- **Context-specific content:** Several respondents emphasized the need for resources tailored to specific humanitarian settings, including localized case studies and adaptable guidance to better align with operational realities. The absence of such resources limits the ability to develop contextually relevant and responsive approaches.
- **Research publications:** Respondents highlighted the need for more research-based materials that analyze the impact of disability inclusion, offer evidence-informed strategies, and support data-driven decision-making in humanitarian contexts.

- **Educational resources to address the diversity of requirements of persons with different disabilities:** Some respondents called for additional training materials, guidance, and case studies that address the varied barriers faced by different groups of persons with disabilities, and offer practical strategies for inclusive response.
- **Implementation, monitoring, and learning resources on disability inclusion:** Several respondents expressed a need for structured resources that provide clear steps for implementation, monitoring frameworks, and documented lessons learned from disability-inclusive approaches across different organizational and operational settings. The absence of such standardized materials was seen to contribute to fragmented efforts and inconsistent application.
- **Support and community building:** Some respondents emphasized the value of interactive platforms that promote peer learning and mutual support, allowing for the exchange of experiences between humanitarian actors and persons with disabilities.
- **Career development resources:** A few respondents noted the lack of resources supporting employment and career advancement for persons with disabilities, such as inclusive workplace practices, job search guidance, and access to professional training opportunities.

### Organizational contributions to resource platforms

The survey results also indicate **strong organizational engagement** in resource-sharing, with **60.9% of respondents confirming their organization's participation in disability-inclusive platforms**. This active contribution is crucial for expanding the **availability of disability-inclusive resources**, improving **overall platform effectiveness**, and ensuring humanitarian actors have access to **structured, accessible, and relevant information to support disability-inclusive humanitarian action**.

### Preferences for resource platforms:

A significant **69% of respondents** supported a **combined approach** that includes both:

1. A dedicated one-stop platform for disability-inclusive resources.
2. The integration of resources into existing platforms, leveraging familiar and trusted sources.

There was a slight preference for integrating disability-inclusive resources into established platforms, emphasizing the importance of credibility and accessibility. **Participants value the familiarity of trusted sources, suggesting that enhancing these platforms could be a strategic way to promote disability-inclusive practices in humanitarian action**. A combined approach - strengthening existing platforms while maintaining dedicated spaces - emerges as the most effective solution for the time being. One could imagine, that a centralized web-based resource platform, such as the DRG, will be less required if resources are integrated in existing cluster or cross-sectorial platforms.

### Key features for effective resource platforms

Survey responses emphasized that humanitarian resource-sharing platforms should:



- **Be compliant with web accessibility standards**, ensuring usability for individuals relying on **screen readers and plain language formats**.
- **Provide regular content updates** to keep information timely and relevant.
- **Offer multilingual support**, making resources accessible to diverse audiences.
- **Use clear categorization** for easy navigation and efficient access to relevant materials.
- **Include interactive features** to enhance user engagement and knowledge sharing.

## Collaborative Tools and Interactive Features

Respondents also highlighted the importance of collaborative tools to improve resource-sharing and engagement, with 76.3% specifically mentioning discussion forums as a valuable way to exchange ideas.

These suggestions reflect a broader need for **accessible and user-friendly features** across both **existing and dedicated platforms** supporting disability-inclusive humanitarian action.

## Perspectives of users with disabilities in crisis-affected countries: access to humanitarian resource platforms

The interviews revealed a diverse range of practical experiences with humanitarian platforms. While participants came from different roles - including staff of humanitarian organizations and OPD representatives - they all reflected on how digital platforms support or hinder their ability to access and use relevant, timely, and rights-based information in crisis contexts. Their insights point to both systemic and everyday challenges in navigating these platforms effectively. **Experiences of staff with disabilities accessing online platforms:** An employee with visual disabilities shared their experience with online training platforms, stating, "I find the International Disability Alliance website to be fully accessible, but have encountered issues with other platforms that are not designed with accessibility in mind, such as an online training platform that was inaccessible to them. To overcome these challenges, I actively engaged with the trainers to discuss my difficulties and seek solutions that would allow me to participate effectively in the training." This feedback highlights the importance of organizations prioritizing accessibility in their digital offerings to ensure equitable access for all users.

**Ensuring regular updates and standards alignment in resources:** A recurring concern identified in the survey relates to the representation of persons with disabilities, portraying them primarily as passive recipients of aid in some training materials, with some online resources. This issue has previously led to the development of the DRG training modules<sup>23</sup>, as many existing resources were outdated and did not fully incorporate a rights-based approach. To address this gap, training materials should be regularly updated and informed

---

<sup>23</sup> For additional training materials and practical tools on disability-inclusive humanitarian action, see: [Disability Reference Group – Training Materials](#).

by user feedback mechanisms, ensuring they strengthen the accuracy of the provided information.

**Awareness gaps among OPDs on available resources:** Many OPDs reported being unaware of available resources that could aid their advocacy efforts for more disability-inclusive practices. This lack of awareness severely limits their capacity to promote disability inclusion effectively.

In addition to awareness challenges, participants also noted that their organizations often face practical barriers such as poor internet connectivity, which further hampers their ability to access important online information and resources.

This reliance on organizational support highlights the need for targeted training and practical guidance to help OPDs and their members effectively access and navigate available resources. Strengthening these skills is essential to ensure that OPDs can make full use of existing materials and contribute to developing new ones as needed.

**Insights on the implementation of accessibility guidelines:** The experience shared by another employee highlights the importance of creating accessible content and the challenges faced in implementing accessibility guidelines. In this context, the accessibility guidelines are designed to improve the usability of its digital products. However, the implementation of these guidelines can vary across different departments. Also, there is a clear demand for educational content that instructs designers and developers on inclusive design principles, facilitating the creation of accessible digital products.

**Limited guidance on using accessibility features effectively:** Several interviewees highlighted a lack of clear, accessible guidance on how to navigate certain humanitarian platforms using assistive technologies, particularly screen reader software. While screen readers themselves are external tools used by persons with visual impairments, they rely on properly structured and coded websites to function effectively. Participants expressed a need for platforms to provide clearer orientation, such as dedicated accessibility statements or help pages, that explain which accessibility features are supported and how content is structured for screen reader compatibility. This reflects an ongoing need not only for improved accessibility compliance in web design but also for user-facing support materials that help individuals understand and benefit from available accessibility functions.

## Conclusion

This review highlights how humanitarian actors access and use information related to persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, with a focus on web-based resource platforms. It emphasizes the role of these platforms in either enabling or limiting the visibility of disability-related issues, depending on how information is structured, categorized, and updated.

While established platforms such as the IASC and DRG websites are most frequently used due to their perceived credibility and relevance, respondents noted persistent challenges. These include inconsistent updates, limited sector-specific guidance, and navigation difficulties, especially for users with disabilities or those working in crisis-affected regions. Awareness gaps were also observed, particularly among OPDs in countries such as Somalia, Cameroon, and South Sudan, pointing to a need for more targeted outreach and support.

Some clusters - such as Nutrition and Protection - provide more structured and accessible resource spaces, including dedicated sections for disability, age, and gender. These help elevate the visibility and relevance of disability-related content within sector guidance and coordination tools. Improving the accessibility and organization of such platforms and enabling content uploads at the country level could enhance information flow and learning.

While this review does not measure technical coordination directly, the availability of well-maintained cluster pages and dedicated thematic sections suggests that some sectors have invested more in information-sharing mechanisms than others.

A dual approach that reinforces disability-specific sites like the DRG while integrating practical, implementation-focused tools across sector platforms would support more consistent uptake of disability-inclusive practices. Ultimately, strengthening web based platforms is not only a matter of information management - it is a gateway to ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are effectively reflected in humanitarian programming.

## Recommendations

### 1. Improving the Accessible Experience Across Platforms

Across the 12 platforms reviewed, several accessibility barriers limit the user experience, particularly for persons with disabilities. Enhancing the accessible design and navigation of humanitarian resource platforms is foundational for ensuring equitable access to disability-related information.

#### Short-term actions (low-cost improvements applicable immediately):

- Remedy key accessibility issues following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Improve keyboard focus visibility, color contrast, and logical navigation order.
- Ensure all interactive elements are operable via keyboard and not dependent on mouse usage.
- Add skip buttons for repetitive content and text alternatives for images and visuals.
- Eliminate reliance on color alone to convey information or trigger actions.
- Allow users to pause or stop any moving/animated content.

#### Mid-term actions (after initial remediation):

- Conduct a second accessibility review to confirm that initial fixes did not introduce new barriers.
- Address any remaining or newly identified barriers through an iterative improvement process.

#### Long-term actions (dependent on team capacity and sustained commitment):

- Shift from basic compliance to optimizing user experience through a mature accessibility process.
- Stay current with evolving accessibility standards and user expectations to maintain a high degree of usability over time.

### 2. Twin-Track Approach to Strengthening Resource Platforms on Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action

This approach balances improvements to the DRG-hosted platform<sup>24</sup> with better integration of disability-related content across sectoral cluster websites.

#### Track 1: Improve the DRG Website as a Cross-Sectoral Access Point

---

<sup>24</sup> Note: The DRG's role is to facilitate visibility and coordination of disability-inclusive resources, not to manage sector-wide knowledge or serve as a comprehensive repository.

The DRG website plays a valuable role in hosting tools and guidance on disability-inclusive humanitarian action. While it is not intended to serve as a centralized platform, its structure and usability can be enhanced to better support users across sectors.

**Short-term recommendations (no additional funding required):**

- Refine structure and categorization to improve navigation.
- Provide clearer instructions and templates for partners to submit and update content.
- Add lightweight interactive features (e.g., tagged updates or pinned announcements) where feasible.
- Ensure resources represent different ages, gender, and groups of persons with disabilities, particularly children and adolescents.

**Mid-term recommendations (depending on funding and collaboration):**

- Strengthen alignment with platforms such as ReliefWeb and HumanitarianResponse.info for increased visibility.
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing via online exchanges or technical briefs linked to cluster-level platforms.
- Expand DRG visibility campaigns to inform OPDs and field-level actors about available tools.

**Long-term recommendations (only feasible with dedicated funding and mandate clarity):**

- Enhance interactivity with structured peer-learning or Q&A spaces.
- Maintain accessibility and usability standards over time.

**Track 2: Enhancing Cluster Websites for Better Access to Disability-Related Resources**

While users access disability-inclusive guidance through disability-specific platforms such as the DRG, many also seek sector-specific information via humanitarian cluster websites at global and country levels. However, the structure, visibility, and accessibility of such resources vary significantly across clusters. A clear opportunity exists to improve how existing materials are organized, labelled, and presented - without requiring new coordination mandates or inter-cluster mechanisms.

**Short-term recommendations (Cluster teams at global or country level, within existing capacity)**

- Improve tagging, categorization, and content structure so users can quickly identify and access disability-related resources (e.g., guidance, tools, case examples) relevant to each sector.
- Highlight good practices from clusters with better-organized content (e.g., Nutrition or Food Security) as inspiration for other clusters, without implying coordination mandates.
- Clarify resource types and intended users, helping actors distinguish between guidance, assessments, tools, training materials, or case studies.
- Ensure platforms meet basic accessibility standards (e.g., alternative text, logical navigation, keyboard accessibility) to improve usability for a broader range of users, including persons with disabilities.

### **Mid-term recommendations (Feasible with modest support and time)**

- Improve visibility of sector-specific data and evidence on the situation of persons with disabilities, where such information exists (e.g., embedded in assessments or planning documents).
- Enhance usability and accessibility of uploaded documents, ensuring they are readable, searchable, and aligned with accessibility standards.
- Promote a more structured approach to organizing resources chronologically or thematically, with filters or keyword search where possible.
- Where country-level platforms exist, support more consistent uploading and labeling of resources, so that local users can find both global and national-level materials in one place.

### **Long-term vision**

- Improving the structure and usability of individual cluster websites will support a more inclusive and user-centered resource experience, allowing humanitarian actors, OPDs, and affected communities to more easily navigate and apply sector-specific information on persons with disabilities. As websites evolve, maintaining clear, accessible, and consistently updated disability-related content will help mainstream inclusion without requiring new structural mandates.

Long-term improvements will depend not only on technical design but also on predictable funding, clear mandates, and sufficient human resources.

In fast-changing humanitarian environments, platform adaptability and sustained capacity are critical to ensure continued relevance and usability.

By implementing these recommendations, humanitarian actors can improve the accessibility, visibility, and integration of disability-inclusive resources across all levels of coordination. Strengthening both the DRG as a central knowledge hub and embedding disability inclusion within cluster mechanisms will enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response efforts, ensuring that persons with disabilities are meaningfully included in all aspects of crisis preparedness and response.

## Annex 1: Detailed Technical Accessibility Assessment

### Overview

A set of twelve (12) platforms was selected for a comprehensive accessibility evaluation against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Version 2.2) at the single and double A levels, to determine and assist in facilitating alignment with the global WCAG standards and producing accessible content that all users can perceive, operate, understand, and interact with, including various user agents and assistive technologies.

### Platforms Evaluated, the second half of 2024

1. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/>
2. Humanitarian Action, <https://humanitarianaction.info/>
3. Global WASH Cluster (GWC), <https://washcluster.net/>
4. Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, <https://www.cccmcluster.org/>
5. Global Education Cluster (GEC), <https://www.educationcluster.net/>
6. Disability Reference Group (DRG), <https://disabilityreferencegroup.org/>
7. Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), <https://www.sheltercluster.org/>
8. Global Protection Cluster (GPC), <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/>
9. Global Health Cluster, <https://www.who.int/health-cluster/en>
10. Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC), <https://www.nutritioncluster.net/>
11. Global Food Security Cluster, <https://fscluster.org>
12. Reliefweb.int, <https://reliefweb.int/>

### Testing Guidelines and Procedures

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are divided into four main principles, Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust. Within these principles, there are guidelines that are supported by various levels of success criteria that range from single A to triple A, with single A being the baseline and triple A being the highest level of conformance possible. These principles, guidelines, and success criteria have become the global benchmark for measuring digital products and services for accessibility. Thus, these guidelines directed the evaluations and were simplified into seven (7) groups to assist with designing processes, procedures, and policy more efficiently and effectively.

### The Seven (7) Groups

1. **Interaction Methods and Modalities** - Evaluates the variety and usability of interaction options, including support for keyboard, touch, voice, and assistive devices.
2. **Navigation and Wayfinding** - Assesses the ease of navigation, logical structure, and support for wayfinding tools like breadcrumbs or landmarks.
3. **Predictability and Consistency** - Ensures interface behavior is predictable and follows consistent design patterns.
4. **Timing and Preservation** - Evaluates features like session timeouts and preservation of user input during disruptions.
5. **Movement and Flashing** - Reviews content for excessive movement, animations, or flashing elements that might cause seizures or distraction.
6. **Visual and Auditory Alternatives** - Checks the availability of text alternatives for images, videos, and audio content to ensure accessibility.

7. **Contrast and Legibility** - Examines text and interface contrast ratios to ensure legibility for users with visual impairments.

### **Calculating and Awarding Scores**

After completing the comprehensive evaluation, each of the seven (7) groups was then awarded points based on how much or little they met the criteria within each group. Each group had a potential of earning a maximum of two (2) points. In total, a platform could receive a maximum score of fourteen (14) points. If a group was deemed as not applicable, the total number of points was adjusted accordingly. Once all points were scored, a percentage was then calculated to determine how much or little each platform conformed to the best practices within each group.

Further annexes and more detailed results are available upon request:  
[leavenoonebehind@deutschland.hi.org](mailto:leavenoonebehind@deutschland.hi.org).