

Investing in Inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):

Lessons for disability and older age inclusion from the Central Sulawesi response

Research Snapshot

Background

Despite the existing international standards and guidance for disability and older age inclusive humanitarian response, evidence of practice including in WASH programming remain limited. Literature documenting inclusion in WASH mainly focuses on the types of barriers from the standpoint of people with disabilities and older people, such as difficulties in accessing and using WASH services. However, there is limited evidence assessing the barriers from the standpoint of WASH service providers. This research aims to understand the barriers that hinder disability and older age inclusion in WASH humanitarian programming, using the case of the 2018 Central Sulawesi humanitarian response.

How the research was conducted

The research used mixed methods combining a quantitative online survey with qualitative semi-structured interviews in Central Sulawesi from 2020-2021.

Research questions

The research sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the experiences of older people and people with disabilities in accessing and participating in WASH services following the 2018 Central Sulawesi earthquake, tsunami and liquefaction?
- What were the barriers and enablers faced by WASH actors in providing inclusive WASH services in Central Sulawesi following the disaster?
- How did the implementation of WASH following the Central Sulawesi disaster adhered to the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards (HIS)?



Research participants	Tools
30 older people and 29 people with disabilities in 9 villages in Central Sulawesi affected by the disaster.	Semi-structured interviews conducted in person.
26 WASH actors from government agencies, local NGOs, localised INGOs, and donors. 9 WASH actors were chosen based on purposive sampling for interviews.	Online survey and semi-structured interviews.

The research used Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities (HIS) as a basis for guiding the analysis.

Key findings from older people and people with disabilities

- No older people and people with disabilities reported they had been identified in any needs assessment, as well as being involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of WASH services.
- Older people and people with disabilities reported they received some WASH assistance. However, there was no specific assistance provided to them. As a result, their access to assistance was dependent on having caregiver/support persons.
- Older people were to be more likely to participate and be included as contributors to WASH activities than people with disabilities. Older men were more likely to be included as contributors than older women.
- Older people and people with disabilities were not aware of their rights to provide feedback and complaint. They were not aware that their feedback was expected.

Key findings from WASH actors

- Only a few WASH actors collected data on disability and/or older age. WASH actors did not identify and partner with Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) or Older People's Associations (OPAs) in the needs assessment and joint response.
- There was a narrow view of inclusion that only focuses on improving physical accessibility ("hardware" component), in which the practices were also still limited. Other important aspects of inclusion such as meaningful participation was not considered.
- Practices of collecting feedback and complaint were still limited, and the mechanism in place did not specifically target older people and people with disabilities.
- Disability and older age inclusion was not seen as a shared responsibility during the response because for some, inclusion is not within their organisation's main focus or mission. As a result, WASH actors did not allocate enough time, resources, and knowledge to ensure inclusion in their programming.

Opportunities for disability and older age inclusion in humanitarian WASH programming

There are some existing good practices on inclusion led by disability and older age specialised organisations that can be improved and replicated by WASH actors.

Donors' commitments to inclusive WASH are indicated by their existing guidelines for inclusion. However, their commitments can further be manifested by providing resources and introducing reporting requirements on disability and older age inclusion.

Older people and people with disabilities are keen to be involved in WASH response. WASH actors need to focus on the capacity, not the vulnerability, of older people and people with disabilities to play active roles and be involved in the humanitarian responses.

Inclusion is already recognised by WASH actors as an important issue. Further mainstreaming efforts across organisations can be optimised.

About the research team

This research was conducted in a collaboration between Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) Indonesia and the Philippines, the Working Group of Pasigala Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in Central Sulawesi, and the Center of Health Policy and Management of Gadjah Mada University (CHPM UGM).

Keywords

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); inclusion; disability; older age; humanitarian response; Central Sulawesi

Further reading

Outputs and further links can be found on ASB's site: <https://bit.ly/inclusivewashresearch>



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