Vulnerability Assessment Framework

DISABILITY SIGNIFICANCE TO THE VAF

Reliable data on persons with disabilities (PwD) in Jordan is limited but critical to ensuring the provision of specialized care to a group of people with special needs. According to a Government of Jordan census from 2004, 1.23 percent of the population in Jordan has a disability, while the Higher Council of Affairs of Persons with Disabilities' estimate is 13 percent (not including refugees). The World Health Organization (WHO) puts the average worldwide prevalence of disabilities at 15%. As of 13 October, 2016, UNHCR has recorded 2.36 percent of refugees registered in Jordan with a disability. In the context of Jordan, where hundreds of thousands of civil war refugees reside, the number with disabilities is expected to be significantly higher.

Reasons for limited data on persons with disabilities can be attributed to a number of factors. First is the use of outdated tools for collecting data on persons with disabilities, and a lack of consolidation of data between national actors. Notably tools that define disability as a health issue ignore other aspects of disability, and do not allow for accurate identification of persons with disabilities.

With a view to addressing this gap, this paper advocates for humanitarian agencies providing direct services to refugees in Jordan to: 1) Use the Short Set of Questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics as a tool for screening and flagging disabilities, 2) Partner with UNHCR in becoming users of the (a.) Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) and (b.) Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS).

Objectives and achievements of the inter-agency Disability Task Force (DTF)
The DTF, co-chaired by UNHCR and Handicap International, was established in 2015 with two key objectives: 1) to improve identification and consolidate information on refugees and vulnerable host populations with disabilities in Jordan, and 2) to improve this groups' access to quality specialized services. Following the Disability Task Force (DTF) meeting 6th June 2016, consensus emerged on a plan to improve identification.   Upon the recommendation of the DTF, UNHCR has endorsed the Washington Group questions as an effective tool for identification of PwD. The Washington Group questions are a set of six questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Measurement, as a tool for identifying persons with similar types and levels of limitations in basic activities regardless of nationality or culture. It is specifically designed for screening and flagging disabilities, and is easily used by staff not specialized in disability identification. It is not recognized as a needs assessment tool.

The Sector and UNHCR have successfully:

A.) Incorporated the Washington Group questions into its Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) Questionnaire, and by doing so will be ensuring that thousands of Syrian households are screened for disabilities. The VAF is a tool developed by the VAF Steering Committee in 2014 to 'facilitate better analysis and targeting of Syrian refugees with humanitarian assistance', on the basis of established vulnerability criteria. Through home visits conducted by UNHCR and its partners, refugees' vulnerability is assessed and the information gathered using a Home Visit questionnaire is used to 1) establish a profile of vulnerability across Syrian refugee households and enable monitoring of changes in vulnerability over time; 2) target assistance in a more efficient and equitable manner, based on the application of common vulnerability criteria; and 3) strengthen the coordination and decision-making of the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The average number of home visits conducted by UNHCR-implementing partners is currently around 5000/month. By advocating for humanitarian agencies to become VAF partners, consolidation of information on PwD across agencies would be achieved making it possible to capture and assess the vulnerability and special needs, of hundreds of thousands refugees.

(For more information on the VAF please see: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/vaf.pdf)

B.) UNHCR piloted the Washington Group questions in ninety-eight registration interviews. The results of the pilot project yielded a 25% increase in identification of disabilities among persons of concern to UNHCR, up from 2.36 % to 27.55%. From the cohort of 98 households that were screened for disabilities using the Washington Group questions, 27 individual cases of PwD were identified. UNHCR registration staff reported that the Washington Group questions were useful in identifying 'hidden' disabilities, those that are not visible to the eye or self-reported by the interviewee. Moreover, the neutrality of the questions, and particular avoidance of negatively-loaded terms, was also said to be useful to encourage disclosure of disabilities. Information collected by UNHCR registration staff is recorded in UNHCR's corporate data management system and data collection tool, ProGres, a desktop application used to protect and track refugees worldwide. Data stored in ProGres is specifically used for (a) referring refugees to appropriate service providers (b) identifying refugees with specific protection risks, including special needs, for resettlement (c) fund raising for humanitarian assistance and (d) statistical reports. It is thus critical that data on refugees with specific needs is accurately captured in ProGres.

As a next step, UNHCR will be training its registration staff country-wide in using the Washington Group questions during registration interviews.

To improve PwD access to quality specialized services in Jordan, the DTF has developed technical guidelines for prioritization of disability-specific services for refugees and other vulnerable populations in camp and non-camp settings. The guidelines highlight areas of intervention necessary for a holistic scope of specialized health services. They provide a set of minimum standards for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of specialized disability services.

A final deliverable of the DTF to date, is the mapping of disability-specific services for persons with disabilities in Jordan. Information on available disability-specific services for PwD enables humanitarian agencies to identify programmatic gaps by comparing available services to the DTF guidelines. In line with improving refugees' access to quality services, UNHCR is advocating for humanitarian agencies to partner with UNHCR in using the Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS). RAIS enables organizations to record, coordinate and report on the assistance provided to refugees. RAIS partner agencies are able to enter data on services provided to refugees, as well as monitor services down to the individual level that are provided by other agencies. This allows agencies to coordinate their efforts and ensure that limited resources are targeted in an efficient and transparent manner to the most vulnerable refugees, minimizing duplication of assistance and effort.

UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

The Disability Universal Indicator is used to ensure identification and initial flagging pre-needs assessment. It is built on the Washington Group Questionnaire. The Washington Group was established by the Un Statistical Commission to develop a uniform disability measurement. The Washington Group Questions (WGQ) are adapted from the WHO 2010 International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)[1] and focus on basic activities to increase participation in environments which are less permissible,

As disability is stigmatized in many cultures, the WGQ does not directly refer to this term and uses neutral language. WGQ is designed for children above 5 and adults (an adapted version is being validated for children under 5). Originally developed for census-taking, *disability* is often characterized by a diversity of situation. PwDs will have different needs as well as common difficulties. Even those with similar impairments may not have the same needs. Consequently, individual case management for assistance is required. The Disability Universal Indicator provides information on disability prevalence among Syrian refugees, and the data may be used to inform strategic and programmatic planning, identification, targeting and response.
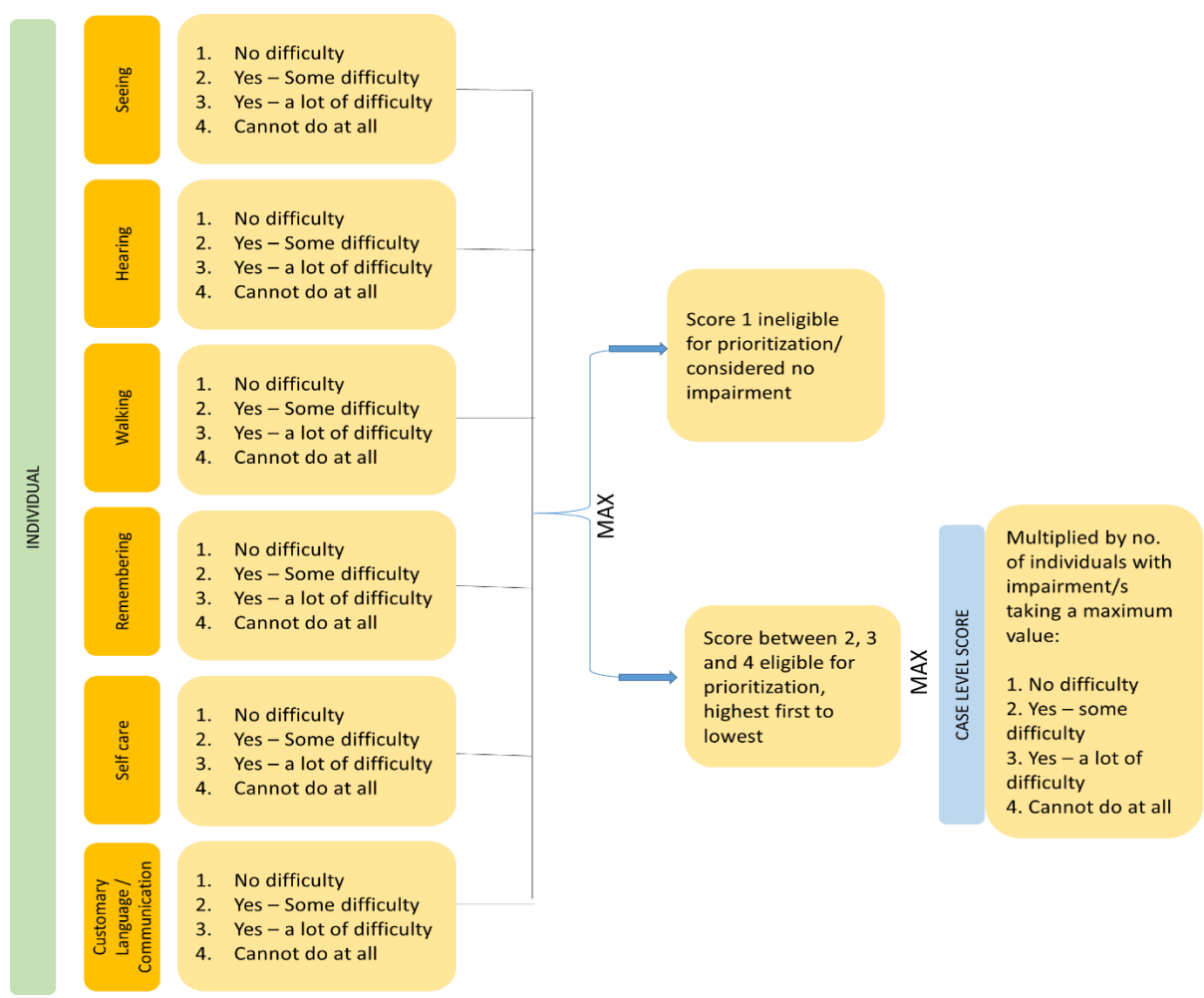
The WGQ is articulated around a set of 6 questions corresponding to 6 domains of functioning, which capture the majority of impairment types present within a population. These six questions have been included into the VAF questionnaire:

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[1]https://www.google.jo/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&ved=0ahUKEwiHp6KDsZvQAhVJOBoKHSXMAYUQFg g8MAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.who.int%2Fclassifications%2Ficf%2F&usg=AFQjCNFY6mrtAK2OaEe79mMVjaD8pGgqlA&bv m=bv.138169073,d.d2s

	No difficulty	Some difficulty	A lot of difficulty	Cannot do at all
Do you have difficulties to see, even if wearing glasses?	1	2	3	4
Do you have difficulties to hear/listen, even if using a hearing aid?	1	2	3	4
Do you have difficulties to walk or to climb stairs?	1	2	3	4
Do you have difficulties to concentrate or remember things?	1	2	3	4
Do you have difficulties (with self-care (such as) washing all over or dressing?	1	2	3	4
Using your usual language (native language) do you have difficulties to communicate for example understanding or being understood by others?	1	2	3	4

1	Low	No – no difficulty
2	Moderate	Yes - some difficulty
3	High	Yes – a lot of difficulty
4	Severe	Cannot do at all

Data disaggregation: Each type of disability/ impairment is able to receive a score within the VAF questionnaire which will also flag individuals with multiple impairments for prioritization. Individuals which return scores between 2- 4 in any of the impairment categories are to be prioritized level 4, then level 3, and level 2. In some cases level 2 moderate vulnerability cases may need to be referred to Health depending on individual circumstance and needs assessment result.

WHY IS DISABILITY A UNIVERSAL INDICATOR?

Disability affects all aspects of life. Based on discussion amongst sector members it was more appropriate to frame Disability as a universal indicator rather than a standalone sector decision tree. The basis of this decision is that the disability universal indicator above will be used in initial identification/ flagging of cases for further needs assessment and response from the Disability Task Force members based on technical expertise: needs assessment, provision of assistive devices, therapy and counselling and so on. However beyond this role that the members of the Disability Task Force can play, it is also necessary to integrate additional criteria and indicators for specific sector responses where the Disability Task Force is not the appropriate lead to intervene.

As a result and in consultation with the WASH, Shelter and Education sectors additional disability relevant indicators have been introduced to ensure PwDs are not excluded in sector level response or prioritization.