



Impairment groups

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Acknowledgement

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Purpose, audience and objectives

Purpose	Related closely to the guide on defining disability, this short guide underscores the importance of having an awareness on different impairment groups, their specific accessibility requirements, as well as reminding the reader that some impairment groups often face a risk of being left out of youth programming. A list of different impairment groups is presented to offer the reader a picture of the diversity there is of impairment groups.
Audience	It is one of a series of short guides developed by Sightsavers, within Futuremakers by Standard Chartered , and specifically written with Youth Business International programme partners in mind. While advice included in the document is more targeted towards YBI's youth entrepreneurship programme, we have tried to make these relevant to all Futuremakers projects.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To build greater disability confidence of the reader and how partners can better include youth with disabilities in their Futuremakers projects.2. To give specific examples, advice and simple steps on how to adapt projects to be more inclusive of youth with disabilities.

Introduction

An impairment refers to an injury/illness/condition that causes a loss or difference of function to an individual. An awareness of different impairment groups can support a programme to collect disaggregated data which allows more detailed data analysis to understand inequalities between and among different impairment groups.¹

The disability movement, like other social movements, is not homogenous.² There are some groups that have traditionally been underrepresented or harder to reach such as persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, and persons with albinism. It can also include those who are less engaged in decision making such as women, children, older people, and indigenous persons, as well as

¹ A Human Rights-Based Approach to data: Leaving no one behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Guidance Note to data collection and disaggregation, OHCHR, 2018

² <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/intersectionalities>

faith, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation, or gender identity minorities.³ This will be different in different countries and contexts.

To leave no one behind, development programmes must recognise these diversities and intersectionalities to ensure they reach out to include more excluded groups.

Impairment groups

The following summarised guidance from Sightsavers⁴ offers an overview of diversity of impairment groups. Please note that this is not a complete list. The reader is reminded that a disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments (physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory) and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

People with sensory impairments

- Blind person
- Partially sighted person
- Person with low vision
- Person with visual impairment
- Deaf/deaf person
- Person with hearing loss
- Person who is hard of hearing
- Person who is deafblind

People with physical impairments

- Person who has a spinal cord injury
- Person who is a wheelchair user/person who uses a wheelchair
- Person with cerebral palsy
- Person with restricted growth/short stature/dwarfism/little person
- People with facial disfigurement

People with cognitive impairments

- Person with dementia/Alzheimer's

People with intellectual impairments/disabilities

- Intellectual disability is used in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) when referring to a person with impairments or limitations in intellectual functioning (for example, learning, reasoning, problem solving) and adaptive behaviour (for example, conceptual skills such as language and literacy, money, time, social skills, practical skills). The term is used when these limitations first appear in childhood
- Person with Down Syndrome

³ ibid

⁴ <https://www.sightsavers.org/style-guide/disability-inclusion-language/>

Neurodiversity

- This is a concept where neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation. This term is used by some to contrast notions of ‘normality’ and the framing of specific conditions as ‘disorders,’ and promote the idea that all our brains are wired differently, and that the emphasis must be placed on support systems. This term is closely linked to the social model definition of disability, where disability is created by barriers and stigma in society. These differences can include people labelled as having dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD, dyscalculia, autism (or being on the autistic spectrum), Tourette syndrome, and others
- Autistic person/person with autism/on the autism spectrum (the term autism is used to refer to people with a lifelong developmental disability impacting on their communication, social skills, self-regulation and so on. Autism is a spectrum rather than a single condition, as different people will experience it and manifest it in different ways. Autism is not an illness, is not caused by vaccines and cannot be cured)
- Person with Asperger’s syndrome
- Person with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

People with neurological impairments

- Person with epilepsy

People with psychosocial disabilities

- When mental health conditions, in interaction with barriers in society, become disabling it is referred to as a psychosocial disability

People with developmental disabilities

- ‘Developmental disabilities’ is an umbrella term to refer to long-term conditions appearing before adulthood and impacting different areas (for example cerebral palsy or autism). For Sightsavers’ purposes it may be particularly useful in education programmes

People with chronic health conditions/illnesses

- This term is often used to refer to people with energy-limiting chronic illness and long-term health conditions causing physical fatigue, mental fatigue, and pain

Now that I know, what do I need to do?

- Ensure that young people with different impairment groups are benefitting from interventions across the programme cycle.
- Understand different accessibility requirements for different impairment groups to ensure their meaningful participation within youth programmes
- Ensure that programmes identify groups that are more likely to be left out of programming or are underrepresented, and find solutions in consultation with them
- Ensure that mobilisation at community level includes accessible and participatory processes so that young people from more marginalised impairment groups are actively engaged

Further Reading

The World Report on Disability 2011 has some useful information on the diversity of disability in Chapter 1: Understanding Disability: <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

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