



Engaging women in the humanitarian response in Afghanistan

Perspectives from people with disabilities

January 2024



Overview

Between August and September 2023, Ground Truth Solutions and Salma Consulting spoke with almost 2,000 people across every province of Afghanistan to understand their views on the aid they need or receive. The quantitative and qualitative consultations sought to explore how people view humanitarian assistance, how they would like to participate in decisions around aid provision, and how they cope when aid is unavailable. We surveyed women (46%) and men (54%) in rural, urban, and peri-urban areas. Many of those who participated in the research (17%) identify as having a disability, as defined by the [Washington Group questions](#). The majority of those with a disability (10%) were women.

People with disabilities in Afghanistan are more likely to need aid but find accessing it more difficult. In this brief, we share their perceptions of humanitarian assistance.

Read the full report and methodology [here](#).

Who we talked to

1,897 people through face to face quantitative surveys and 68 people in ten focus group discussions (FGDs) and fifteen in-depth interviews (IDIs).

Quantitative sample (n=1,897)

 880 (46%) women  1,017 (54%) men

 652 (34%) 18-34 years old

 544 (29%) 35-44 years old

 701 (37%) 45+ years old

 399 (17%) persons with disabilities

 1,578 (83%) persons without a disability

Status

-  1,434 (77%) host community
-  286 (16%) Internally displaced people (IDPs)
-  56 (3%) refugees
-  76 (4%) returnees

Aid received

-  1,025 (54%) aid recipients
-  872 (46%) non aid recipients

Location

-  Balkh  Khost
-  Jawzjan  Kunduz
-  Kabul  Nangarhar
-  Nuristan

Key findings

People with disabilities find it much harder to access aid

Only 12% of respondents with a disability access humanitarian aid with ease, compared to 30% of people without a disability.

How easy or difficult do you find it to access humanitarian aid/services?

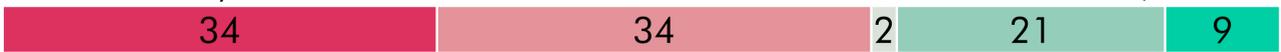
With a disability

mean=1.72, n=308



Without a disability

mean=2.36, n=1547

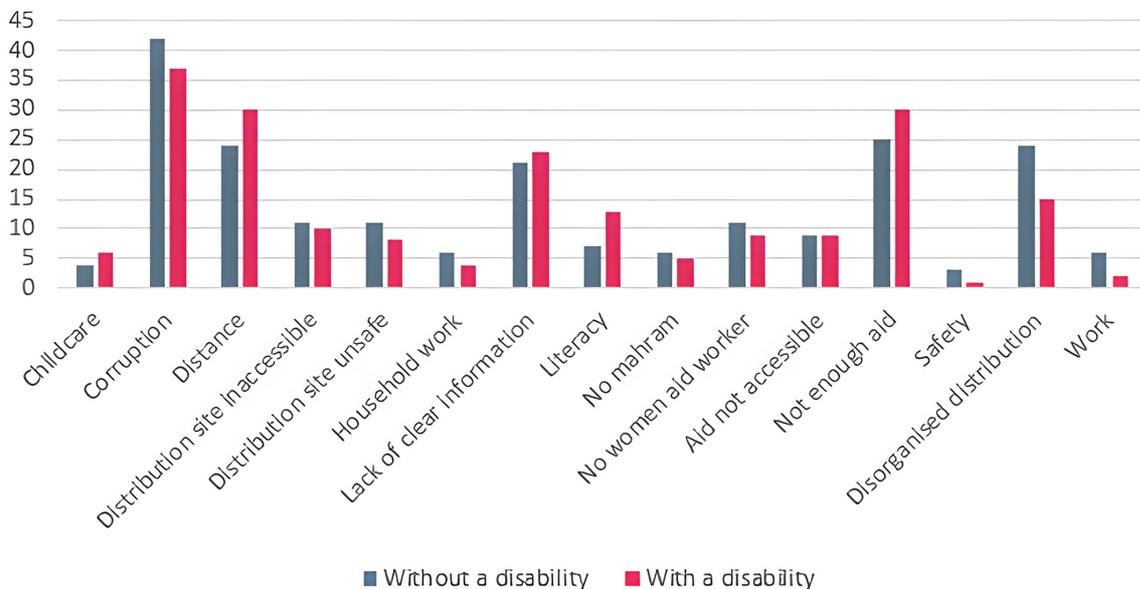


Results in %

● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes completely

People with disabilities report corruption (37%), physical distance from aid sites (30%), and a lack of aid (30%) as major access barriers.

What are the three biggest barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance? (Values in percentages)



* Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

People with disabilities are less aware of how and where they can register for aid or services

A vast majority (79%) do not have access to this information.

Do you feel informed about how and where to register for humanitarian aid/services?

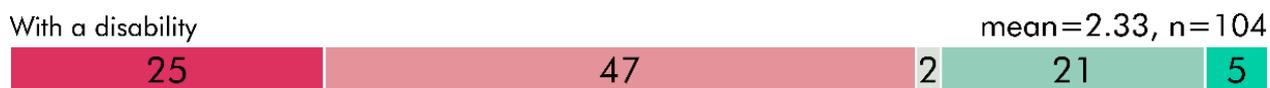


● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes completely

Results in %

Even after registering, people with disabilities disproportionately lack information about distribution times.

Do you feel informed about distribution dates and times?



● Not at all ● Not really ● Neutral ● Mostly yes ● Yes completely

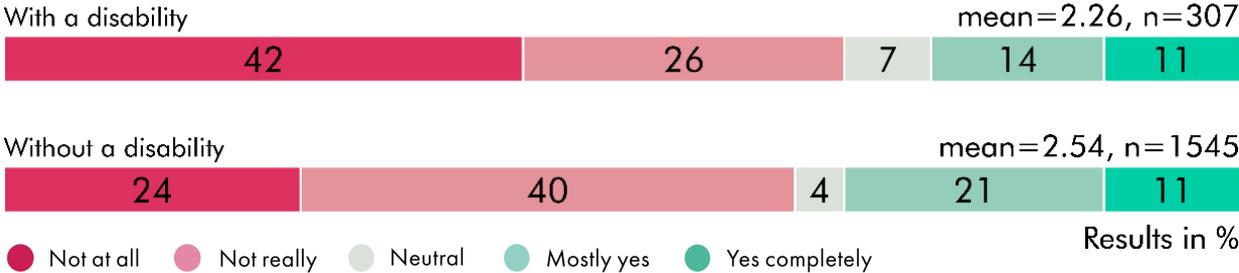
Results in %



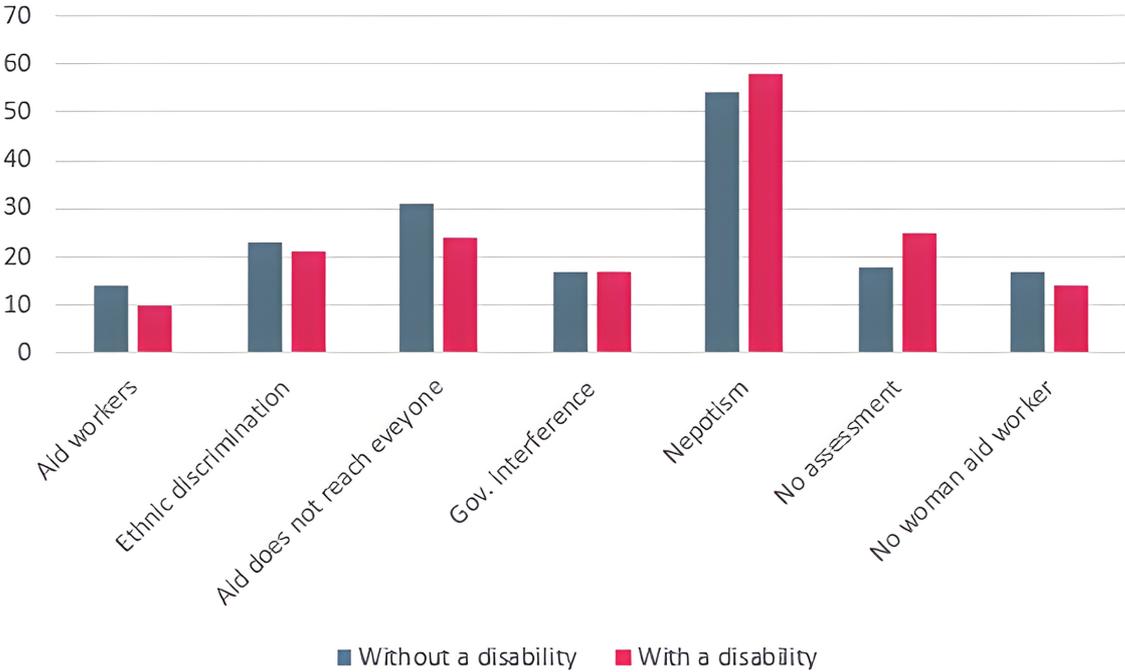
People with a disability are less likely to say that aid is provided fairly in their community

Only 25% say aid provision is fair. They most commonly cite nepotism (58%), aid not reaching everyone in their community (24%), ethnic discrimination (21%), and a lack of proper needs assessments (25%) as reasons.

Are aid and services provided in a fair way in your community?



In your opinion, what are the three main reasons that aid and services cannot be provided in a fair way?* (Values in percentages)

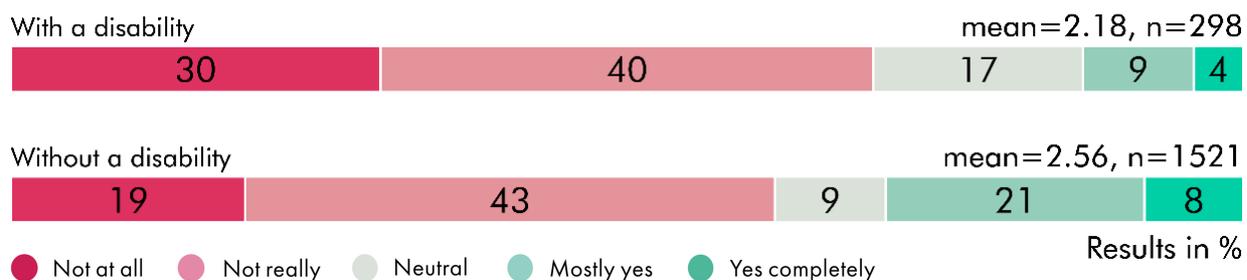


* Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Most people with disabilities believe that their feedback is disregarded by aid providers

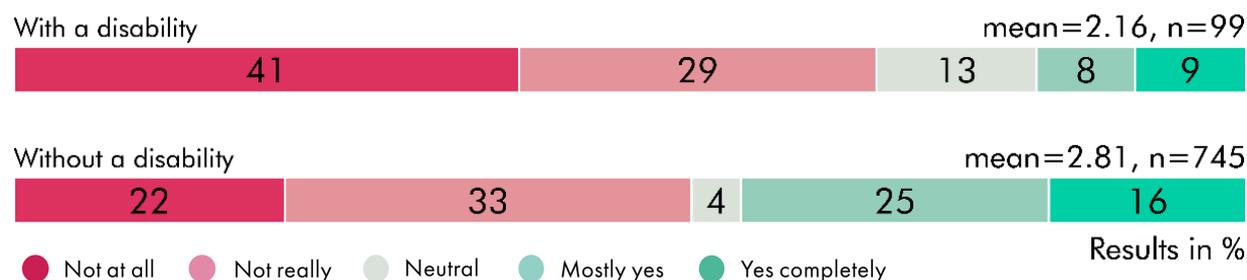
Merely 13% of individuals with a disability confirm that aid organisations actually consider their suggestions when implementing humanitarian activities, compared to 29% of people without a disability. They expect better from aid providers: 90% of disabled individuals expect organisations to integrate their views into humanitarian programmes.

Do aid providers act on/implement/make use of the suggestions your community shares?



Among people with disabilities, only 14% reported having had the opportunity to share their suggestions and concerns with aid providers, compared to 31% of people without a disability. This could be attributed to limited information available to people with disabilities regarding how to contact aid agencies and express their opinion. We see that only 17% of people with a disability know how to share their suggestions and concerns compared to 41% of people without a disability. When they were able to share their feedback, a mere 22% of individuals with disabilities received a response from aid organisations, in contrast to 50% of those without disabilities. However, among those who did receive a reply, a significant majority (84%) were satisfied with the response.

Do you know how to share suggestions or concerns with aid providers?



Recommendations

Humanitarian organisations should:

- 1 Prioritise accessibility and inclusion in all aspects of aid delivery. This includes ensuring that aid distribution sites are physically accessible for individuals with disabilities and providing accessible transportation options for those who may have difficulty traveling to the distribution sites.
- 2 Collaborate with government agencies, local organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to disability inclusion. Well-coordinated, collective efforts and resources will maximise the impact of aid delivery for women with disabilities.
- 3 Ensure more effective information-sharing about distribution times and how to register to improve access to aid for people with disabilities who tend to be less informed than others.
- 4 Adopt an inclusive approach that actively involves people with disabilities in decision-making processes and programme development. This means seeking their input, listening to their suggestions, valuing their perspectives and working to ensure representation of people with disabilities in programme teams.
- 5 Train staff and volunteers to raise on disability rights, inclusion, and effective communication with individuals with disabilities.
- 6 Establish and support community-based women's groups and identify and support women community volunteers who can act as a bridge between women in the community and aid agencies. Collaborate with these groups to better understand the needs and priorities and to facilitate aid access to women who have disabilities.





We are grateful to the thousands of people in Afghanistan who spoke to us and shared their views.

For more information about our work, please contact kai.kamei@groundtruthsolutions.org and lee@salmaconsulting.com, or visit groundtruthsolutions.org and salmaconsulting.com.

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Illustrations : Anina Takeff / UN Women

Read our report [here](#).