People with disabilities working in the Indonesian WASH sector
Obvious by their absence - a long way to go
FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY
This assessment on the situation of people with disabilities working in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector in Indonesia, aimed to understand the roles people with disabilities are currently undertaking in the sector and the barriers they face and to make recommendations to improve the situation going forward.

KEY LEARNING POINTS
1. Some people with disabilities have started engaging in the WASH sector through partnerships, mainly between organisations for people with disabilities (DPOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Most engagements have been in the area of advocacy, rather than as full partners responsible for programme implementation.
2. In the study area, no person with disabilities were found working as full-time employees in organisations working in the WASH sector, although a number of people with disabilities work in roles which cut across sectors, including WASH.
3. There are multiple barriers to people with disabilities taking up roles in the sector, including stigma and discrimination, limited access to education and lack of self-confidence, as well as misconceptions about their abilities and skills and that they would be a burden to the organisation.
4. We are missing many different skills, knowledge, expertise and opportunities by not employing people with disabilities in the WASH sector.
5. To be a sector committed to the integration of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GESI), WASH sector institutions and organisations, as well as WASH programmes and services should reflect this.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Government of Indonesia, has increasingly integrated issues related to people with disabilities into a range of laws, regulations and guidelines across ministries over a number of years.

Employment of people with disabilities in government and the private sector

A key law has been the law concerning people with disabilities (No 8, 2016), which includes articles related to opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. It states that the Government, Local Government, State-owned Enterprises and Local-Owned Enterprises are required to employ at least 2% of all employees, who are people with disabilities, and 1% in private companies. But the regulations for employment as Civil Servants in Indonesia by the State Service Agency (No 14, 2018), limits applicants to people under 35 years old and that they must have physical and mental health, to take up a position. The disability sector has advocated for this article to be removed from the requirements for employment as a Civil Servant, as it can act as a barrier for employment for people with disabilities.

The Regulation of the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing (No 14, 2017) on requirements for building convenience, provides specifications on accessibility requirements for all public buildings, including WASH facilities. This supports the employment of people with disabilities in public positions, through access to suitable WASH facilities in the workplace.
OTHER STUDIES ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WASH SECTOR IN INDONESIA

Global WASH sector
There are very few studies which focus on people with disabilities working in the WASH sector globally. One video has been produced by WaterAid of a person with a visual impairment working in the WASH sector in Timor-Leste and guidance has been prepared by Christian Blind Mission (CBM) on learning about working in partnership with organisations of people with disabilities. Other studies have focussed on how to improve programmes from the disability perspective, but not related to increasing opportunities and engagement of people with disabilities as employees in the WASH sector itself. So, this study from Indonesia is believed to be the first of its kind globally for the WASH sector.

Indonesian WASH sector
A study analysing the data on people with disabilities in Indonesia, was undertaken by the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance, which provides a useful profile of the population of Indonesia. A very important action-research was also undertaken by Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) Indonesia and the Philippines in partnership with the Working Group of Organisations of People with Disabilities in Palu, Sigi Donggala in Central Sulawesi. The Investing in Inclusive WASH (iiiWASH) Research, involved training people with disabilities as co-researchers to assess how well the WASH sector had integrated disability inclusion into its WASH facilities and humanitarian response in Central Sulawesi in 2018.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING IN WASH IN THE INDONESIAN WASH SECTOR

BENEFITS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING IN THE WASH SECTOR

Having people with disabilities working in the WASH sector will bring in new skills, knowledge and experiences. This includes increased awareness of the challenges that people with different kinds of disabilities may face related to WASH and to ensure that the sector is attentive to ensuring WASH services, and facilities and programmes are inclusive.

“When we talk about inclusion programmes, talking about people with disabilities, but not involving people with disabilities is nonsense” (Sub-national level stakeholder)

They will also be role models for other people with disabilities to inspire and increase confidence, that they can also take on professional roles. It will also help to negate discrimination and misunderstandings, both within the sector and within communities, of what people with disabilities can do.

ROLES IN WHICH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE EMPLOYED

Some WASH organisations have started involving people from organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in their work – in advocacy, as advisors, and a few in implementation. In the NTT province WASH Working Group, people with disabilities are involved as part of the Secretariat. Representatives from OPDs were also trained to engage in a WASH facility assessment, advocacy and advice in the Central Sulawesi humanitarian response. Two people with disabilities worked as trainers in humanitarian WASH for WASH sector and OPD representatives. A few people with disabilities were also identified working in broader roles, where they have some engagement in WASH programmes and services. For example, the Governor’s Special Expert Advisor on Disability in East Nusa tenggara or Nusa tenggara Timur (NTT) Province and the cross-section Focal Person for Disability in UNICEF Indonesia.

A Provincial Expert, Special Staff to the Governor on Disability has been appointed in NTT Province. She has significant experience of working with OPDs and herself has disabilities. She has responsibility for advising the Governor on issues related to disabilities across sectors. She has also been working through Garamin, an organisation for transformation for disabilities in NTT Province, and Pertuin, an organisation of people with visual disabilities, and the Social Affairs and Research and Development Department in NTT Province, to establish a directory of OPDs in NTT Province. This is called “Buku Profil Organisai Disabilities”, and will be a resource that the WASH and other sectors to know the OPDs and build linkages with them.

The box below also highlights an example, where a centre for people with psychosocial disabilities, supported its members to protect themselves against Covid-19.

Rehabilitation centre for people with psychosocial disabilities in Bali, Rumah Berdaya Bali

A rehabilitation centre in Bali supporting people with psychosocial disabilities, was co-established by I Nyoman Sudisa, who also has a psychosocial disability. The centre has established a range of partnerships with local health officials, other CSOs and the local private sector. Each contributed different kinds of support, to help the rehabilitation centre support its members to protect themselves from Covid-19, including through vaccinations and good hygiene practices. This included the provision of mobile hand-washing stations, masks, face shields and information on how to keep social distancing. The centre also benefits from being part of an Non Governmental Organization (NGO) Alliance in Bali, where information is shared between agencies.

ROLES IN WHICH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE LESS REPRESENTED

Some people with disabilities had been engaged in advocacy, as advisors, and a few in implementation as partners for specific programmes.

“We have partnerships with organisations, but not with OPDs. We are including people from OPDs in workshops, but not as formal partners” (Provincial-based stakeholder).

But no people with disabilities were identified working full-time for organisations working on WASH, including the organisations working to improve GESI at programme level. This is a significant gap considering that 4.3% of the population in Indonesia is estimated to have a disability. This is also likely to be an under-estimation, considering 15% of the population is estimated to have a disability globally. This implies that the WASH sector is missing a wide range of skills and experience including their insights that could help the sector better address inclusiveness.

POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN WASH

A few organisations have started focussing on involving more people with disabilities in their programmes, examples being Wahana Visi Indonesia, Yayasan Plan Indonesia International in its programme funded by the Water for Women Fund of the Australian Government and Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). Two web-based national trainings were run in 2021, involving WASH actors and OPDs. The main objective was to reduce risks from disaster events and negative impacts on health that people with disabilities should be aware of. The training was organized by UNICEF (co-Coordinator of the WASH sub-cluster), ASB (member of WASH sub-cluster & Disability & Older People sub-cluster), Humanity and Inclusion (co. Coordinators of the Disability & Older People sub-cluster), and RedR Indonesia.
Building capacities of people with disabilities to engage in WASH in humanitarian response

Humanity and Inclusion (HI), CBM, ASB and representatives from several of local OPDs, identified focal people to engage with each coordination mechanism in Central Sulawesi humanitarian response. The local OPDs involved in these activities came under the “Working Group of Pasigala OPDs”, which consists of several community-based OPDs in Central Sulawesi. This group was set up with support of ASB, to bring together people from different OPDs, which represent people with different kinds of disabilities. They were trained on how to do assessments and to interview people with disabilities and older people, who are affected by the emergency. They highlighted the need for accessible latrines and provided advice on inclusive design. They initially accompanied ASB as volunteers, as part of the capacity building process and then later became contracted staff and worked on the response with ASB.
Overcoming feelings of inferiority among persons with disability working in the WASH sector

A representative of an OPD who works in the WASH sector, explained about her feelings the first time she worked where her team members were all non-disabled people. “How can I be comfortable, how can I feel that we are the same, have the same rights, and I am not ashamed, not inferior. The first thing I do is I still have a commitment or principle, that understands that all people are actually the same, only we are different physically. Actually, we have the same potential. So, I’m still trying to be a person who doesn’t feel inferior. That is, we have these advantages and disadvantages together, so that they complement each other…?”

(District level respondent, who has a disability)
There is also a gap in understanding of the skills and capacities of people with disabilities, with their skills often being under-estimated.

“It’s not easy to involve people with disabilities in decision-making as they lack the necessary skills” (District level respondent)

The image of the WASH sector as one requiring mobility is also a barrier, along with the fact that not many people with disabilities train as engineers or in other technical roles and they lack WASH knowledge. People with disabilities also face discrimination with regards to recruitment and employment, as there is an expectation that staff with disabilities would be a burden on an organisation. There may also be a lack of easy access to offices and meeting rooms in government and other buildings and inadequate access to accessible WASH facilities in most organisations.

In humanitarian responses, there are many clusters and sub-clusters, and limited numbers of people with disabilities and OPDs working in the response. Hence there is a lot of demand on the time of people with disabilities and OPDs for advice and engagement across sectors.

Women with disabilities face even more challenges to employment than males with disabilities, as women with disabilities face a double layer of barriers, from being females as well as having disabilities. See the companion Technical Brief on: ‘Women working in the WASH sector’ for further information on the barriers that women face in the sector.

See the box below - for an overview of the situation of people with disabilities working in the WASH sector in Indonesia.
RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WORKING IN THE WASH SECTOR

1. Broaden experience, increased capacities and confidence of people and organisations of people with disabilities through engagement in assessments, advocacy, implementation, monitoring and training.
2. Support capacity building activities aimed at improving skills and building confidence of people with disabilities to become leaders in the WASH sector.
3. Partner with OPDs, as full-partners for implementation and not only in occasional advisory roles. “We need to encourage local government and non-governmental agencies to have direct partnerships with OPDs, so that they manage programmes, rather than just being accompanying partners, only encouraging them to participating in workshops or to undertake research” (Provincial-based stakeholder).
4. Map and share the details of OPDs across of Indonesia with WASH sector organisations for potential engagement.
5. Build WASH sector capacities to respect, value and understand good practices of working and engaging with people with disabilities.
6. Encourage WASH sector organisations to employ people with disabilities as staff members. “The main issue for us to solve is how to establish chances for people with disabilities and how to ensure exclusivity of these chances for them” (District level stakeholder, with a disability).
7. Encourage people with disabilities to apply for positions in the WASH sector and provide support during the recruitment process.
8. Engage with youth with disabilities in WASH sector interventions to further their interest in the sector and be suitable to apply for jobs in future.
9. Establish minimum quota for employment of people with disabilities in WASH sector organisations and establish a mechanism to monitor the progress of engaging more people with disabilities in the sector.

Acknowledgements
The People with Disabilities Working in the WASH Sector study was facilitated by Dr Sarah House, an Independent Consultant, supported by the PT Myriad Research team (which was led by Dr Eva Zhoriva Yusuf and Ellan Dirgantara). The overall study and development of the reports was guided and managed by Preetha Prabhakaran (WASH Specialist, UNICEF Indonesia), with additional guidance from Kannan Nadar (Chief of WASH, UNICEF Indonesia).

Sincere thanks to all key stakeholders representing the Government of Indonesia at national, provincial, district, sub-district, health facility and community levels, who provided valuable information and data to enrich the development of this document. Sincere appreciation also to civil society organisations; development partners; and private sector/professional membership organisations for their useful contributions. huge thanks also to the UNICEF team members (Rostia La Ode Pado, Muhammad Kurniawan, Eko Widodo, Maria Katherina Gnadia Liandy, I Made Wikandana) who made linkages with colleagues, supported translation of KIIs and FGDs, and supported data gathering related to employment in the WASH sector and on government regulations.

Citation
Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia and UNICEF (2022) People with disabilities working in the Indonesian WASH sector – Obvious by their absence, a long way to go. Published by UNICEF Indonesia. Jakarta. 2022