



## **The work of the WG in the development of valid, cross-nationally comparable disability statistics: history and accomplishments**

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The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) is a United Nations (UN) sponsored City Group commissioned in 2001 to improve the quality and international comparability of disability measures. The main purpose of the WG is the promotion and co-ordination of international co-operation in the area of health statistics focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. The major objective is to provide basic necessary information on disability which is comparable throughout the world. To that end the WG has developed a short set of disability measures, suitable for use in censuses, sample-based national surveys, or other statistical formats, for the primary purpose of informing policy on equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities. The WG has also developed an extended set of survey items on functioning to be used as components of population surveys or as supplements to specialty surveys.

The WG chose to use the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) as the conceptual framework for the development of question modules. The WG selected questions that reflect a functional approach to operationalizing disability; identifying basic activity or functioning domains where respondents may experience difficulty functioning in their environments.

The short set of questions developed by the WG was intended primarily for the adult population, and though certain questions may be suitable for some child/youth sub-populations, the set was not developed with children in mind. The WG has recognized the need for a set of questions on child functioning and disability that would produce internationally comparable data.

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