

Challenges of Victim Assistance in the Afghanistan Conflict

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Disability statistics in Afghanistan



National Disability Survey 2005: Approximately 2.7% of the population had severe disabilities and this jumps to 4.7% when less severe disabilities were also considered.



There has been no update on statistics of PWDs since 2005 but we can say this number has increased due to the circumstances of the last 13 years.



The Asia Foundation is undertaking a national disability survey which will be published in May which will provide more clarity.

Causes of increasing numbers of people with disabilities

Disabilities in the country are a result of :

- war
- Mine/ERW explosions
- suicide attacks
- inadequate healthcare
- accidents
- malnutrition
- diseases



Causes of increasing numbers of people with disabilities

In 2018, 55% of the mine action victims in Afghanistan were due to 'improvised mines' (also referred to as victim operated improvised explosive devices).

2018 mine/ERW casualties

Killed/Injured	Women	Men	Girls	Boys	Total	Percentage of total
Death	28	219	38	211	496	35%
Injured	48	304	85	482	919	65%
Total	76	523	123	693	1,415	

Accessibility services for people with disabilities

- Persons with disabilities still do not have physical accessibility to schools, hospitals and ministries (including MoPH and Authority of Martyrs and Disabled), voter services, etc.
- Persons with disabilities are at risk of becoming poor, living in poverty due to barriers to access to health, education and livelihood opportunities.
- Currently, by policy, three per cent of all Ministry staff should be persons with disabilities, but the government fails to meet this and are often not in influential roles (cleaners, guards, etc.).

Accessibility services for people with disabilities

- Still, a large percentage of Afghans live too far away to access healthcare services.

HI report - 2017 report

	3-9km	10 - 20 km	21-30 km	31 - 40 km	41 - 50 km	> 51 km
Number of villages	239	678	479	146	65	26
As a percentage	15%	42%	29%	9%	4%	2%

- Travelling is not always possible: A leading cause of these incidents is travelling by road, foot or bicycle - thus, requesting patients to travel long distances for health care is both risky, and may be traumatizing.

Accessibility services for people with disabilities

- In recent years the Afghanistan government has taken steps to improve policy and laws relating to disability rights and to improve the rehabilitation and accessibility services for people with disabilities but benefits have yet to be realized as we had expected.
- The government does not have complete services for persons with disabilities and most of the services are actually provided by Civil Society.

Sustainability

- As victim assistance is implemented by civil society and due to insecurity sometimes health partners have to close clinics for short or long durations while they resolve tensions with armed groups.
- Whilst some health actors have more experience in negotiating for re-opening and advocating for humanitarian space, such as the ICRC and its relationship/dealings with the Taliban.
- Accordingly, we can see that this is not very sustainable.

Funding Shortages

- Currently, 0.01% of the health budget goes towards VA.
- Whilst precise data is lacking, the need remains very obvious and high. Sustainable funding is needed in this sector.
- If the government isn't prioritizing victim assistance, it's difficult for donors to fund victim assistance.

Thank you