What we did
We explored the experiences of older people with disabilities in different humanitarian contexts.

Reviewed
literature and humanitarian guidelines.

Analysed
data from population-based surveys.

Interviewed
older people with disabilities in Western Tanzania and Eastern Ukraine, and humanitarian actors.

What we found
In humanitarian crises older people with disabilities face barriers to accessing:

- **Income**
  - Less opportunity to work
  - Too low pensions
  - Restrictive systems for claiming social protection

- **Health**
  - More health problems
  - Out-of-reach services
  - Unaffordable treatment
  - Shortage of medicines
  - Lack of rehabilitation services
  - Mixed attitudes of staff

- **Psychological wellbeing**
  - Lower quality of life
  - Social isolation and loneliness
  - Poorer mental health
  - Stigma and discrimination

- **Protection**
  - Difficulty escaping danger
  - Unsuitable housing
  - Risk of theft

- **Participation**
  - Less included in decision-making processes
  - Barriers to inclusion in society
  - Difficulty with daily activities

5 ways forward

1. **Demonstrate leadership and institutional will**
   - Use the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities.
   - Strengthen alliances between disability and age-focused organisations.
   - Ensure that NGO senior staff are accountable for the inclusion of older people with disabilities.
   - Support humanitarian response work only where data that is fully disaggregated by sex, age and disability is used.

2. **Strengthen evidence and data**
   - Routinely collect, analyse and use data on sex, age and disability throughout the programme, including data on mental health and cognitive impairment.
   - Identify the specific experiences, needs and capacities of older people with disabilities.

3. **Promote participation and empowerment**
   - Support humanitarian actors to better understand protection risks for older people with disabilities.
   - Invest in activities to tackle age and disability discrimination.

4. **Put inclusion principles into practice**
   - Support non-specialist organisations to include older men and women at all stages of the response.
   - Support welfare state departments and service providers to make services accessible, for example any existing social protection schemes.
   - Remove barriers that may limit older people’s participation, and advocate for low-cost adaptations to enable safer, more independent living for older people with disabilities.

5. **Change attitudes and approaches**
   - Recognise the rights, participation and capabilities of older people with disabilities.
   - Support older people, their families and carers to advocate for rights and to understand the value of enabling older people with disabilities to participate in society.
   - Use existing tools, training and guidance to include older people with disabilities in all stages of humanitarian response.

Learn more at helpage.org/missingmillions

Things that work
- Assistive devices
- Accessible infrastructure and transport
- Inclusive social activities
- Inclusive aid distribution systems
- Support from family and neighbours
- Home visits by support services

About humanitarian actors
What’s working now
- Some collaboration between age and disability organisations
- Training and awareness raising

Gaps in response
- Disconnect between age and disability
- Efforts to be inclusive not always successful
- Challenges to being participatory
- Mixed approaches on data collection
- Lack of long-term funding for this work

Income

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Participation

- Less included in decision-making processes
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“Sometimes I tighten a rope around my stomach and sleep on my stomach because I’m so hungry.”
62-year-old woman, Tanzania

“When people lower their voice at a meeting, I can’t hear them. I’m not involved.”
81-year-old man, Ukraine

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This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.