

Youth with disabilities and Sexuality

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Dance4Life Experience 2020

27 October 2020

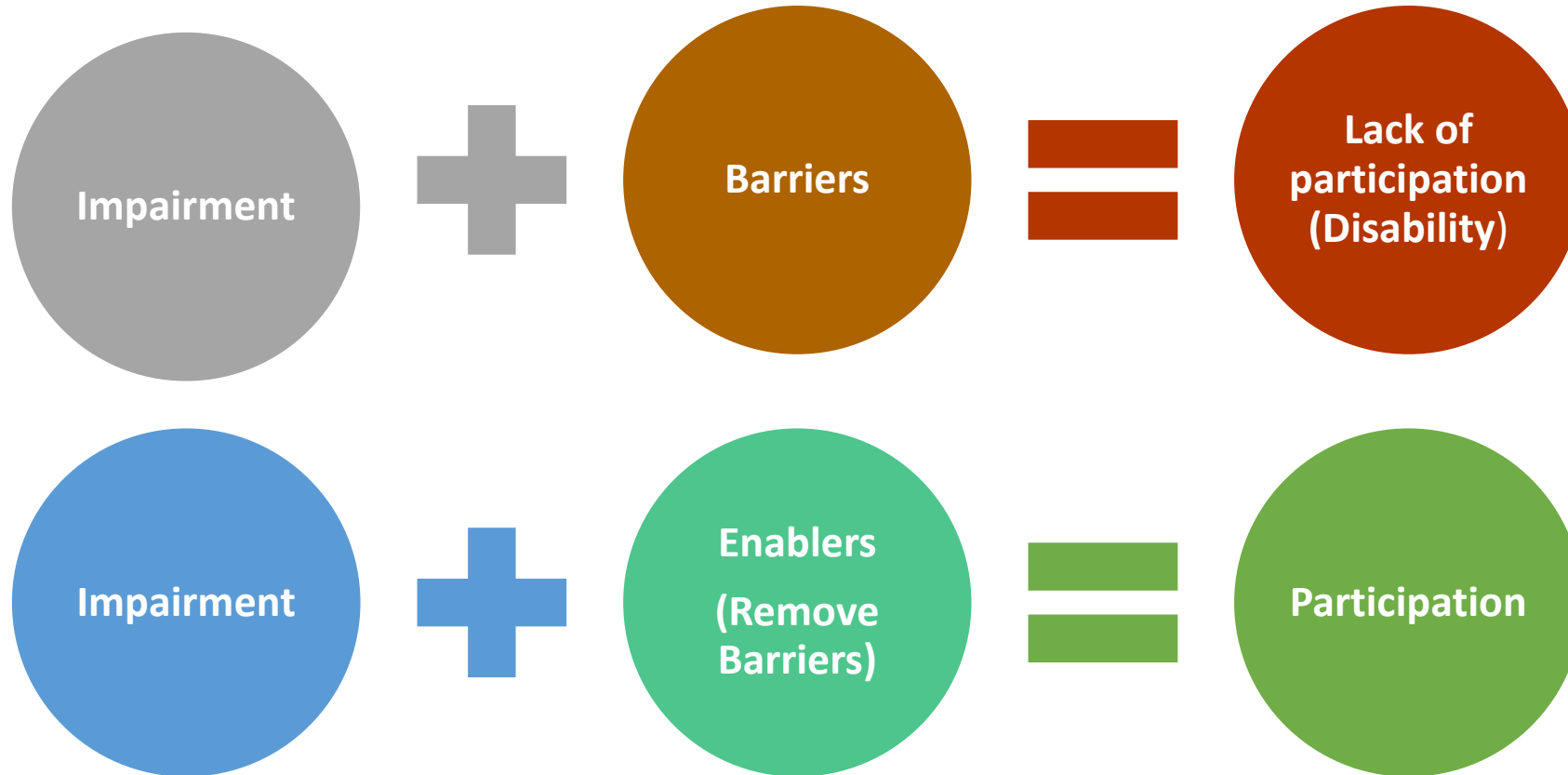
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Youth with disabilities

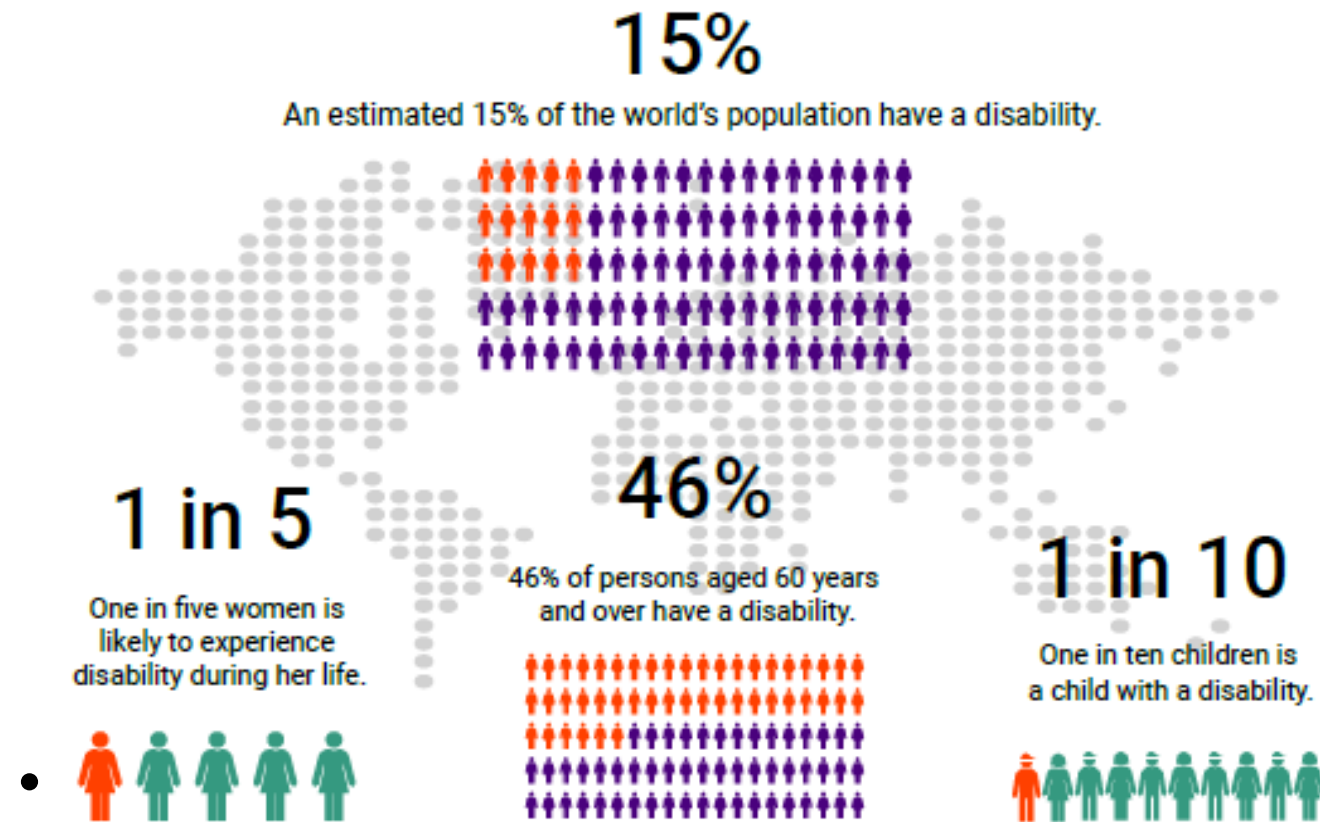
Youth with disabilities are young people with physical, sensory, intellectual and mental **impairments**, which in interaction with **barriers** (physical, communication, institutional, attitudinal) can prevent their full and effective **participation** in society on an equal basis with others.



Disability illustrated

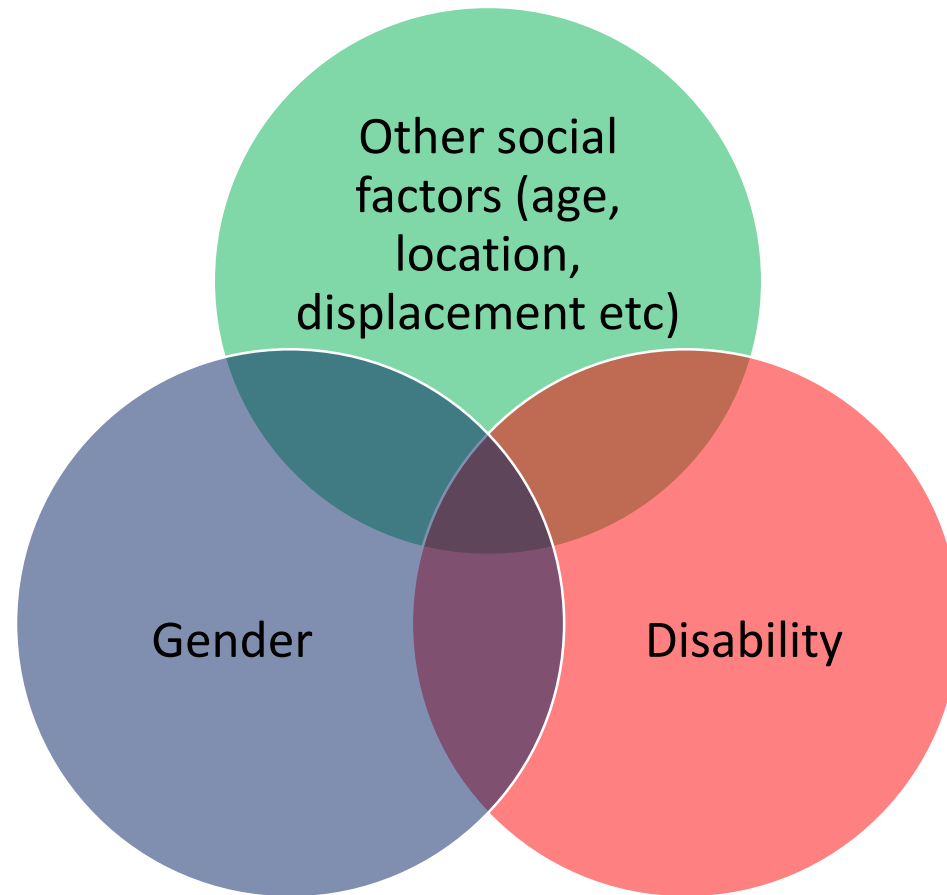


Too large a group to overlook!



- 1 in 7 billion people globally
- 1 in 5 of the poor has a disability
- 80% of persons with disabilities are in low and medium income countries
- Literacy level is 3% (1% in females)
- Persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group
- Gender, age, geographical location, displacement influence how persons experience disability

Intersectionality



Disability and sexuality

- Disability does not take away sexual desires
- Young people with disabilities have the same sexual development as their peers without disabilities
- Young people with disabilities are humans, and have the rights to explore their sexuality and the rights to sexual health
- Most often, their sexual health needs are not met

Vulnerability of young people with disabilities to SRH challenges

- Low knowledge of sexuality and sexual health, resulting in lack of life skills and inadequate social/relationship skills
 - Negative attitudes towards sexuality of young people with disabilities – e.g., asexuality
 - Cultural / traditional beliefs and stigma
 - Denial of sexuality education
 - Inaccessible sexuality education and information
- Girls with disabilities are often targets of sexual gender-based violence
 - Perpetrators perceive them as ‘weaker’ preys
 - High dependence on perpetrators – financial, physical
- Lack or non-implementation of disability-inclusive sexual and reproductive health and rights policies

What we can do to improve access to sexuality education/information for youth with disabilities

Apply the following principles at every stage of your project cycle – design/planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reporting

- Accessibility – identify and remove barriers that prevent access to sexuality education and information by making such information, including feedback mechanisms, available in accessible formats (Braille, large font, easy-to-read language, sign language)
- Meaningful participation – consult young people with disabilities; listen to their needs and priorities; include them as trainers & project committee members; consult them for feedback on the project
- Empowerment – expose youth with disabilities to sexuality education, information and rights; build capacity of SRH and gender actors in disability inclusion
- Intersectionality/diversity – pay attention across age, gender, impairments
- Data – disaggregate your project data by disability, age and gender

Online platforms

- The online platforms can be useful to include youth with disabilities who ordinarily may find it difficult to attend the physical events/meetings for accessibility reasons.
 - Choose platforms with accessibility features e.g., live captions on MS Teams for the Deaf
 - Explore the accessibility features of the current online platforms you use to deliver your programme
 - Identify more online platforms with accessibility features to accommodate youth with different types of disabilities e.g., WhatsApp is great for groups that include Deaf youth
 - Sub-title of videos or use of videos with superimposed sign interpretation
 - Describe images in your presentation or posts for the benefits of the Blind
 - Use contrasting colours and large font size in your presentations
 - If you want to share documents for reading, ask persons with vision impairments for their accessibility requirements
 - When you have a sign interpreter onboard, do not be too fast with your speech
 - It is also good practice to share your presentation with sign interpreters a few days ahead

