Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction

Findings from a Research Study from Africa, Asia, and South/Central America

In 2021, a consortium of Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB), Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), Christian Blind Mission (CBM), International Disability Alliance (IDA), and Malteser International (MI) commissioned a study on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) policy and practice across eight countries of Africa, Asia, and South/Central America.

The study describes progress, gaps, and identified good practices in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 and concludes with recommendations to support improved disability-inclusive DRR.

The study design, data collection, and analysis were based on the 10 key inclusion criteria aligning closely with the Sendai Framework.

Figure 1. Key inclusion criteria for reviewing progress in disability-inclusive DRR

- Understanding disaster risk
- Strengthening disaster risk governance
- Investing in DRR for resilience
- Preparedness and resilient recovery
- Disaggregated data
- Inclusive risk assessment and planning
- Inclusive risk communication
- Supportive governance/policies
- Direct representation of persons with disabilities in DRR
- Investments in disability-inclusive DRR
- Accessibility
- Meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in DRR
- Leadership of persons with disabilities in DRR
- Inclusive partnerships

Timeframe of review period: 2015-2021

- Data collection/analysis: Oct. 2021-Feb. 2022
- Stakeholders engaged: 93 participants, including 27 persons with disabilities across governments, I/NGOs, UN agencies, persons with disabilities, and their representative organizations (OPDs)
- 300 country-specific and regional documents screened; 150 reviewed in-depth
- 39 interviews and 15 focus group discussions
- Carried out in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Indonesian, and Bangla

Disaggregated data
Inclusive risk assessment and planning
Inclusive risk communication
Supportive governance/policies
Direct representation of persons with disabilities in DRR
Investments in disability-inclusive DRR
Accessibility
Meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in DRR
Leadership of persons with disabilities in DRR
Inclusive partnerships
Key Findings

Understanding disaster risk

- Significant increase in awareness of the importance of disability inclusion
- Lack of practical knowledge and capacities on "How-to" implement disability-inclusive DRR
- No unified registry or systematic data disaggregation in national DRR information systems
- Disaggregated data rarely used to inform risk assessment and planning
- Lack of consideration of intersectionality
- Initiatives led mostly by non-governmental organizations
- Efforts largely reactive or project-based, resulting in poor sustainability

Policy commitments to disability inclusion introduced in all countries as part of DRR regulatory frameworks, strategies, and policies; though understanding of inclusion varies
- Persons with disabilities often viewed as "vulnerable" aid recipients, rather than DRR stakeholders
- Disability inclusion insufficiently prioritized and resourced as part of government, I/NGO, or donor agendas

Strengthening disaster risk governance

- Increased provision of accessible risk information and infrastructure, though gaps remain
- Limited availability and allocation of budgets, especially from governments

Investing in DRR for resilience

- Emerging leadership and varying levels of involvement of OPDs, depending upon:
  - Readiness and capacities of persons with disabilities to take on new roles as DRR actors
  - Socio-cultural context, barriers, availability of resources, and support of mainstream actors
- Positive examples of inclusive partnerships exist, though collaboration remains limited
- Governments and I/NGOs lack sufficient knowledge on how to engage with OPDs

Preparedness and resilient recovery

Key Recommendations

1. Accelerate collective action to reduce the disproportionate impact of disaster and climate risks on persons with disabilities considering the diversity of disability and intersecting identities.
2. Develop mechanisms to institutionalize commitments to DiDRR through collaboration with governments.
3. Establish DiDRR as a shared agenda across stakeholders applying a twin-track approach to disability inclusion, to the extent possible.
4. Allocate systematically resources to build capacities, institutions, and mechanisms for mainstreaming disability inclusion in DRR.
5. Strengthen capacities for systematic data disaggregation by sex, age, and disability (SADDD) in DRR.
6. Strengthen readiness for cross-sectoral collaboration by investing in multi-stakeholder partnerships among governments, I/NGOs, UN agencies, OPDs, and civil society.
7. Improve qualitative data analysis for understanding the key barriers and causes of the disproportionate impact of disasters on persons with disabilities.
8. Extend collaborations with trend-setting donors, under which mainstream DRR stakeholders align.

Twin-track approach to disability inclusion in DRR:

- Mainstreaming disability inclusion
  - Removing barriers to participation
  - Facilitating access to information and services

- Disability-specific initiatives
  - Capacity development
  - Individualized support and services

Equal rights and opportunities for all persons with disabilities in DRR

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