



Partnerships to Enable Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

Thematic Guidance Note

February 2021

Background

In 2020, an independent, comprehensive evaluation of disability inclusion within the DFAT-funded Disaster READY program was conducted. Based on the findings, practical guidance has been developed for disability inclusion within disaster preparedness activities.

This suite of thematic guidance includes:

- Strengthening disability inclusion in community-based disaster preparedness
- Influencing government-led disability inclusive disaster risk reduction and
- Using evidence to inform and monitor disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.

This guidance note focuses on partnerships to promote disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.

Priority Issues for Partnerships

- Underlying disadvantages, such as higher risk of poverty, stigmatising attitudes, exclusionary policies and an inaccessible built environment further marginalise people with disabilities in disaster preparedness and response.
- People with disabilities are disproportionately disadvantaged by disasters and are more likely to be injured or die during a disaster than people without disabilities.
- The requirements of people with disabilities must be included in mainstream disaster preparedness activities, as well as addressed by specific supports.
- Partnerships amongst non-government organisations and with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) are fundamental to creating change.
- DPOs are usually small non-government organisations with access to limited financial and human resources.
- DPOs have cross-sectoral responsibilities and may need assistance to build specific technical expertise in the humanitarian sector.
- While partnerships with DPOs are in place at the national level in some countries, these need to be strengthened at the sub-national and community levels.

Partner with DPOs to make disability inclusion happen

- Develop trusting, respectful, long-term relationships between NGOs and DPOs. Establish agreed values, and ensure communication between NGOs and DPOs is clear, timely and respectful. Agree that disability inclusion is an integral part of the program, rather than a "tick box" exercise, and requires dedicated time, resources and leadership to be effective. Work with DPOs as partners rather than service providers.
- Work with DPOs at all stages. Plan activities with DPOs to ensure a disability inclusion perspective is built across mainstream activities, and that disability-focused initiatives are planned to complement these. Identify opportunities for DPOs to lead or support implementation. Involve DPOs in the development of monitoring tools and in monitoring activities, such as visits, workshops and data collection.

- Provide adequate resources to DPOs to support their operations as well as their activities, including human resources, rent, electricity and internet costs as well as activity costs. This will relieve pressure on DPOs and maximise the time and attention available for disaster risk reduction partners.
- Support reasonable accommodations to enable inclusion. DPO personnel may require additional supports to enable them to undertake their roles. These could include personal assistants, sign language interpreters or other supports. These supports are known as reasonable accommodations and are mandated by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to enable participation of people with disabilities on an equitable basis with others. Discuss with DPOs the reasonable accommodations required to enable their engagement in program activities and incorporate the costs of these into budgets.
- Maximise capacity of DPOs. While DPO representatives are the experts in their own priorities, needs and rights, depending on their experience they may need assistance to develop their sectoral skills and confidence. DPOs are more likely to be able to target their advice for partners if they fully understand the program objectives, plans and budget. Partners should discuss and determine the need for preparatory support with DPOs when planning work programs and allocate budgets and technical assistance accordingly.
- Seek to engage with a range of diverse people with disabilities through DPOs. Consider the intersections of gender, age, disability type, sexuality and geographic location, and seek to consult with a range of people with disabilities who bring various perspectives.
- Work with DPOs to identify stakeholders at the sub-national level with whom NGOs can work, if DPOs are not present there. For example, these might include community organisations and individuals with disabilities.

Broker partnerships between DPOs and others

- Facilitate the engagement of DPOs in governance structures (such as the Country Coordination Committee meetings for Disaster READY). Ensure these are held in accessible venues and locations, and that DPOs are provided with ample notice. It is critical that DPOs become standing members of Country Coordination Committees, and disability inclusion a standing agenda item. An open and collaborative space is required at committee meetings, where honest reflection and sharing is welcomed. Recognising that some DPO representatives may lack confidence or experience in committee membership, their engagement should be nurtured and facilitated.
- Centralise relationships between Country Coordination Committees and DPOs through Shared Services¹. This reduces the burden on DPOs when managing contracts with multiple NGOs. Further, DPOs benefit from having a partnership through which they communicate with all Committee members.
- Broker partnerships between DPOs and other civil society and government partners. NGOs can act as brokers, facilitating linkages between other organisations – who may not have worked with a DPO before – and DPOs, to extend the reach of their disability inclusion work.

Seek partners to support disability specific services

¹ The shared resources allocated to the country committees to support their coordination, particularly in areas relation to gender equality and disability inclusion.

- DPOs across different countries have different mandates, and while some provide disability-specific services, others do not. Map disability service providers and partner with them, with an aim to improving access to these services for people with disabilities.
- Where access to disability specific services is limited, work with DPOs to advocate for the strengthening of these as a pre-condition to inclusion across a range of sectors.
- With DPOs, advocate and advise on the need to allocate budget to support disability inclusion in national disaster management plans.
- With DPOs, advocate and advise on disability inclusive monitoring processes, including the selection of appropriate indicators.

Further information

- ADCAP (2018) Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities: <https://www.helpage.org/resources/publications/?ssearch=humanitarian+inclusion+standards&adv=0&topic=0®ion=0&language=0&type=0>
- DFAT (2018) Creating a new 'business as usual': Reflections and lessons from the Australian aid program on engaging with Disabled People's Organisations in development programming and humanitarian action: <https://did4all.com.au/Uploads/CreatingANewBusinessAsUsualDPOEngagementInDevelopment.pdf>
- Humanitarian Advisory Group. Five ways to strengthen disability inclusion in humanitarian response: <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/five-ways-to-strengthen-disability-inclusion-in-humanitarian-response/#:~:text=1.,stages%20of%20the%20program%20cycle.&text=In%20a%20humanitarian%20crisis%2C%20DPOs,2>.

Cover image: World Vision