



Influencing Government-led 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
- Partnerships to enable disability inclusive disaster risk reduction and
- Using evidence to inform and monitor disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.

This guidance note focuses on influencing government-led disability inclusive disaster risk reduction.

Priority Issues for Influencing

- 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.
- People with disabilities and their priorities are not always identified in community-based disaster risk mapping processes, and their requirements are frequently absent in national disaster response plans.
- Participation of people with disabilities in national disaster coordination mechanisms is limited, resulting in disaster response plans which exclude their needs and priorities.
- Working with government can influence change more broadly across the disaster risk reduction sector.

Raise awareness of the rights and situation of people with disabilities

- Positive attitudes towards people with disabilities amongst stakeholders at all levels – including decision-makers - are a precondition for their inclusion in mainstream disaster risk reduction efforts.
- Collaborate with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and people with disabilities to raise national awareness of the issues faced by women, men, boys and girls with disabilities during disasters, and their right to inclusion in preparedness and response.
- Demonstrate and promote how disability inclusive disaster risk reduction meets national policy commitments.

Influence government-led disaster preparedness coordination mechanisms to be more disability inclusive

- Where NGOs already have a relationship with national coordination stakeholders, invite DPOs to join the discussion.
- Advocate alongside DPOs for membership of national and sub-national disaster management committees by people with disabilities. Seek to ensure disability inclusion is a standing agenda item.
- Demonstrate and promote the positive impact of representation by people with disabilities on community disaster committees.
- With DPOs, provide technical advice and training to support disability inclusion in national and sub-national disaster management committees.
- 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.

Influence government-led assessment processes

- With DPOs, advocate and provide technical support and training for the use of questions and methodologies which locate people with disabilities and identify their requirements and priorities¹ in national preparedness and response data collection efforts. Ensure the priorities of diverse people with disabilities are identified – including men, women, girls and boys with a range of disabilities. Engaging people with disabilities as data collectors can encourage discussion about disability inclusion.
- Share disability information with government stakeholders (in accordance with ethical considerations).
- Support national disaster committees to draw on evidence to mainstream the priorities of people with disabilities into national disaster plans.

Influence government-led disaster risk reduction activities

- Advocate for the engagement of DPO representatives and people with disabilities in drills and simulations, recognising and supporting the particular inclusion requirements of people with disabilities¹. Support resulting lessons regarding disability inclusion to inform national plans.
- Support mass communication strategies, including early warning systems, that will reach everyone. Develop and use standards which guide the use of sign language interpreters to convey information to deaf people, captions on television advertisements, and the provision of verbal information for people with low vision. Advocate for the provision of disaster and evacuation information in plain language or pictorial form, in vernacular where possible. Advocate for the use of communications as an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disability, depicting people with disabilities as participants in their households and communities, and using positive, non-discriminatory language.

¹ The Washington Group Short Set is recommended for use to identify disability status and enable disaggregation by disability.

- Support the integration of disability inclusion messages into national disaster risk management legislation, policies and tools to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of disability, such as Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Manuals.
- Advocate for evacuation centres that apply reasonable accommodations to safely welcome and shelter people with disabilities and their support personnel alongside others, using accessible design principles to ensure new or renovated buildings to be used as evacuation centres are accessible to all (See DFAT, 2013). This will benefit older people and parents of small children as well as people with disabilities.
- Map government and civil society disability support services and referral networks, including for services that provide assistive devices which might be needed by people with disabilities to enable them to move around independently and safely evacuate. Develop a referral guide that can be provided to people with disabilities.
- Support joint work with people with disabilities and DPOs to develop and disseminate specific messages for people with disabilities, for example information regarding disability support services including DPO contact details.
- Support the pre-positioning of assistive devices so that people with disabilities have rapid access to replacement devices that might be lost during a disaster.
- Advocate for rights-based psychosocial services that reach and include people with disabilities and their support personnel.
- Advocate for the incorporation of the perspectives and requirements of women with disabilities in disaster preparedness planning by involving women at all stages. This includes in strengthening of sexual and reproductive health rights and gender-based violence programs so that the inclusion requirements of women with disabilities are identified and met.

Further information

- DFAT (2013) Accessibility Design Guide: Universal design principles for Australia's aid program: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/accessibility-design-guide.pdf>
- Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2017) Disability inclusion in disaster risk management: Promising practices and opportunities for enhanced engagement: http://www.didrrn.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GFDRR-World-Bank_Disability-inclusion-in-DRM-Report.pdf
- IASC Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019) Guidelines: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/documents/iasc-guidelines>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2015) All under one roof: https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Shelter/All-under-one-roof_EN.pdf

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