

Disability Inclusion Key Messages for Emergency Preparedness

Summary of Key Points

- In 2020, disasters — mostly caused by storms and floods — displaced 30.7 million people within the borders of their own country. This is the highest figure in a decade and more than three times the number displaced by conflict and violence.ⁱ
- People with disabilities are up to four times more likely to die or be impacted during a disaster-related event.ⁱⁱ
- Over the last 50 years, there has been a five-fold increase in the number of weather-related disasters.ⁱⁱⁱ
- People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by disasters and humanitarian crises and are not yet systematically included in disaster preparedness efforts.^{iv}
- Up to 85 per cent of people with disabilities have never participated in emergency preparedness activities, and do not have information communicated to them in an accessible way.^v
- People with disabilities have been left even further behind in the response to COVID-19.^{vi}

Key terms and definitions

- ☑ A **Disaster** is a serious disruption which occurs when a threat or natural hazard and existing vulnerabilities compound, and overwhelm the local capacity's ability to adequately respond, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.^{vii}

threat/hazard + vulnerability = disaster

Figure 1. Disaster Equation

- ☑ **Vulnerability** refers to the conditions determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards^{viii} (for example, disability).

- ☑ **Disaster risk reduction** is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.^{ix}
- ☑ A **hazard** is a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.^x
- ☑ **Preparedness** is the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters.^{xi}
- ☑ **Climate adaptation** refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. Adaptation to the impacts of **climate change** may be undertaken across various regions, and sectors, and at various levels.^{xii}

What is emergency preparedness?

- ☑ WFP uses the umbrella term 'emergency preparedness' to encapsulate all actions aimed at building community resilience, preparing for and reducing the impact of disasters, and mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- ☑ Whilst technical areas including disaster risk reduction (DRR), disaster risk management (DRM), and climate change adaptation (CCA), are individual sectors with their own distinct approaches, ideas and methods, they can be combined to provide a holistic approach to making communities more resilient to the impacts of anthropogenic climate change and natural hazards.
- ☑ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030^{xiii} is the key international framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FRCCC)^{xiv} is the key international framework on climate change. Both key frameworks highlight the importance of including and partnering with people with disabilities.
- ☑ Article 11 of the CRPD mandates that states parties must do all in their power to ensure the protection and safety of people with disabilities in situations of emergencies or risks.
- ☑ Despite disasters being created by a threat/hazard + vulnerability, pre-existing vulnerabilities are rarely the focus of emergency responses. The largest, and most complex vulnerability is that of disability. Vulnerability is not inherent; it is created through exclusion in preparedness and response efforts.

What is WFP doing in this thematic area

- ☑ **Food for work, food for assets programmes** are often targeted at increasing resilience to disasters and building community assets which will make the community more resilient e.g., flood banks, water catchments.
- ☑ **Geographic information systems (GIS) tools** such as WFP's Automatic Disaster Analysis & Mapping (ADAM), map the extent of damage from earthquakes and cyclones for example, to enable faster and more comprehensive responses.^{xv}
- ☑ **Early Warning and Response Systems (EWRS)**, WFP works with local governments to improve the national EWRS and protocols such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) for responses to various disasters for which a particular country is prone.^{xvi}
- ☑ **Emergency simulations** with national governments to test and refine emergency procedures.^{xvii}
- ☑ **Anticipatory Humanitarian Assistance**, also called forecast-based financing. This is the provision of a cash transfer ahead of a predicted disaster event which enables people to prepare for the event. An example of this from Bangladesh was, in anticipation of a flood in July 2020, almost 145,000 people received the equivalent of two weeks' worth of food as an unconditional cash transfer to enable them to evacuate, stock up on food and medicines. This response has been independently evaluated and showed that not only did the households who received the transfer receive support 100 days earlier than a previous WFP response, but that it had wide reaching impacts on food security and preparedness action.^{xviii}
- ☑ **Anticipatory action on climate change** – WFP aims to improve resilience by enhancing the capacities of households and communities to better absorb and adapt to idiosyncratic or covariate shocks.^{xix}
- ☑ **Reducing waste and encouraging recycling** in food distribution operations e.g., in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.^{xx}
- ☑ **Shock-responsive social protection systems** in collaboration with national governments including climate risk insurance.^{xxi}
- ☑ **Sustainable energy services**, including fuel efficient stoves.^{xxii}
- ☑ **Landscape restoration projects**, including reforestation.^{xxiii}

Key Considerations for Inclusion

- ☑ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030^{xxiv}, recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but that responsibility is shared with all other stakeholders.

- ☑ The Sendai Framework was the first disaster-focused international framework to focus on disability inclusion. Sendai aligns with Article 11 of the CRPD and mandates the inclusion of people with disabilities in disaster resilience-building. The Sendai Framework represents a cultural shift from viewing people with disabilities as 'vulnerable' to considering them as 'active contributors' in disaster preparedness.
- ☑ The disproportionate impact on people with disabilities means that emergency preparedness initiatives must be disability-inclusive – this cannot be an optional add-on but is fundamental to good and effective practice.
- ☑ It is important to increase awareness among governments and their partners of the safety and security needs of people with disabilities, such as through implementing social protection schemes to prepare for, and respond to, disaster events ensuring equal access for people with disabilities.
- ☑ Emergency preparedness programs must strengthen the organisational capacity of all actors by: training staff, and through establishing effective partnerships with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations (OPDs).
- ☑ Information on disaster preparedness is often not available in a range of accessible formats (such as pictorial, simple text, Braille, or through sign language). Because of this, up to 85 per cent of people with disabilities have never participated in emergency preparedness activities.^{xxv}

Key Recommendations for Inclusive Practise in this thematic area for WFP inclusion in this

- ☑ Engage directly with people with disabilities (particularly women with disabilities) and their representative organisations, to understand the increased vulnerabilities and particular barriers they face and identify strategies to remove those barriers.
- ☑ Ensure people with disabilities are identified via needs assessments, by disaggregating data by disability, preferably utilising the Washington Group Questions.^{xxvi}
- ☑ Raise awareness of the rights and needs for people with disabilities, as positive attitudes towards people with disabilities are a precondition for their inclusion in emergency preparedness efforts.
- ☑ Ensure all information is inclusive, by providing multiple types of accessible communications to meet different needs (i.e., sign language interpreters, captions, pictorial forms).
- ☑ Ensure any infrastructure built is accessible and inclusive by embedding universal design principles.
- ☑ Support disability-specific requirements such as disability support services and referral networks, by partnering with OPDs.

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- ⁱ WFP, September 2021, Climate Action for People and Planet <https://www.wfp.org/publications/climate-crisis-overview>
- ⁱⁱ CBM International, Humanity & Inclusion and the International Disability Alliance. (2019). 'Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action'.
- ⁱⁱⁱ WMO. https://library.wmo.int/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=21930#.YXI8mRo7ZPY
- ^{iv} CBM (2012), *Technical brief for the post-2015 consultation process: Disability, sustainable development and climate change*.
- ^v UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). (2014). 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.', United Nations.
- ^{vi} International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Vol. 18., Hillgrove T., Blyth J., Kiefel-Johnson F., Pryor W., <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/18/9701>
- ^{vii} UNDRR <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>
- ^{viii} UNDRR <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>
- ^{ix} UNDRR <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>
- ^x UNDRR <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>
- ^{xi} UNDRR <https://www.undrr.org/terminology>
- ^{xii} UNFCCC <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/what-do-adaptation-to-climate-change-and-climate-resilience-mean>
- ^{xiii} <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>
- ^{xiv} <https://unfccc.int/>
- ^{xv} WFP: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2019-world-food-programme-emergency-response-and-preparedness>
- ^{xvi} WFP: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2019-world-food-programme-emergency-response-and-preparedness>
- ^{xvii} WFP: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2019-world-food-programme-emergency-response-and-preparedness>
- ^{xviii} WFP: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/acting-flood-protect-most-vulnerable-independent-review-wfps-anticipatory-cash>
- ^{xix} WFP, June 2021, Climate Change in Southern Africa <https://www.wfp.org/publications/climate-change-southern-africa-position-paper>
- ^{xx} WFP <https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfp-coxs-bazar-environmental-initiatives>
- ^{xxi} WFP, September 2021, Climate Action for People and Planet <https://www.wfp.org/publications/climate-crisis-overview>
- ^{xxii} WFP, September 2021, Climate Action for People and Planet <https://www.wfp.org/publications/climate-crisis-overview>
- ^{xxiii} WFP, September 2021, Climate Action for People and Planet <https://www.wfp.org/publications/climate-crisis-overview>
- ^{xxiv} <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>
- ^{xxv} UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). (2014). 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.', United Nations.
- ^{xxvi} <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>