Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR)
We know from many tragedies that without careful planning and foresight, disability can be determinant factor between life and death in a disaster situation.

Mami Mizutori
Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR
Disasters undermine the lives of those most at risk

Given no warning to evacuate, 12 people with disabilities drowned when flash floods hit their residential home in the German town of Sinzig in July 2021.

An assessment post-Albania earthquake in 2019 found that collective accommodation, including tents and hotels, were exposing people with disabilities to new risks as they were not equipped to meet their needs.

Persons with disabilities are often disproportionally affected by disasters and have different and uneven levels of resilience and capacity to recover.

Source: Louisa Yasukawa (2021), *When disasters strike, people with disabilities must not be left behind*. 

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Persons with disabilities are massive and diverse

16% of the world's population (1.3 billion people) are living with disabilities – as of 2021

1/5 are women

1/10 are children

46% of people over 60 live with a disability

What is disability?
Disability is an evolving concept resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments and an environment filled with barriers that prevent their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Disability concept

Impairment

- Seeing
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Concentrating
- Communicating

Environmental barriers

- Physical - inaccessible facilities and infrastructure
- Programmatic - unsupported policy
- Attitudinal - stigma

‘Disability’
Unable or obstructed to fully participate in community activities
Challenges faced by persons with disabilities in risk management

Analysis Phase – not part of the planning process, no disaggregated data on persons with disabilities in risk information

Preparedness & Response Phases
- Information and communication systems are inadequate and not accessible → Excluded from the warning and alarm systems, emergency plans and capacity development processes
- The specific needs of persons with disabilities are not considered in the evacuation processes → Temporary shelters often lack the basic conditions for accessibility

Recovery phase – excluded from decision making and their specific needs are ignored

Source: Latin American and Caribbean Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Management Network (LAC DiDRM Network)
Disability Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai Framework
A global guidance for member states and their stakeholders in implementing actions aimed at reducing disaster risk, through the four priorities:

1. Understanding disaster risk
2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to ‘Build Back Better’ in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction
Guiding Principle D

Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest.

A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organized voluntary work of citizens.
Persons with disabilities as DRR stakeholders

Article (a)(iii) on Role of Stakeholders:

Persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing plans tailored to specific requirements, taking into consideration, inter alia, the principles of universal design.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- The CRPD is an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, adopted in 2006.

- The CRPD calls for the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

Article 4.3 calls on States to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organizations.

Article 11 calls on States to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.
Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)

- OPDs are non-governmental organizations that are led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities also compose a clear majority of the OPD membership.

- OPDs advocate for the rights and interests of their members and play a critical role in representing the viewpoints of persons with disabilities.

- Persons with disabilities and OPDs are best placed to know what is needed to be fully included and the best courses of action to achieve it.

‘Nothing about us without us’ Consultation and participation are keys supporting this motto.

Source: UN Disability Inclusion Strategy – Putting Words into Action online training course.
Two surveys were conducted in 2013 and 2023 to understand the progress made in disability inclusion in DRR

- 2013: 5,717 responses from 137 countries.
- 2023: 6,342 responses from 132 countries.

The results show limited progress in disability inclusion over the past 10 years, with no significant differences across the regions.
Key findings from persons with disabilities - 1

- Not having a personal preparedness plan for disasters. This was less than in the 2013 survey.
- Not being aware of or not having access to disaster risk information in accessible formats.
- Face a lot of difficulties evacuating or not able to evacuate independently at all.
Key findings from persons with disabilities - 2

- 14% Reported being aware of subnational DRR plans (11% for national DRR plans).
- 8% Reported that local DRR plans addressed the specific needs of persons with disabilities.
- 86% Reported no participation in community DRR decision-making and planning.
- 57% Indicated the willingness to participate.

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Key recommendations - 1

- Persons with disabilities should be included in all policymaking and implementation for disaster resilience, compliance with international law (UNCRPD) and/or national disability laws.

- Ensure equity between persons with and without disabilities in all measures to reduce and prevent disaster risk.

- Ensure diversity in representation and decision-making, including by impairment type – recognize the different needs of persons with disabilities.
Key recommendations - 2

- Prioritize disability inclusion as a key policy concern and objective for DRR – build internal institutional capacities and expertise on disability inclusion and foster diversity in leadership and **build partnerships with Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)** and external organizations and experts.

- **Support applied and action-oriented research** and learning to identify actions that can reduce disaster risk for persons with disabilities and with complex support needs.
Inclusion in Disaster Risk Management

“To speak of inclusion in Disaster Risk Management is to move from a welfare perspective to processes, where people with disabilities are seen as objects of protection and rescue to a totally inclusive one, where people with disabilities are part of the generation of policies, plans and procedures, from consultative, operational and managerial spaces.”

- Juan Ángel De Gouveia, President, Latin American Network of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), 2023
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Thank You