

To What Extent are People with Disabilities Considered in Humanitarian Aid?

'Disasters are Always Inclusive'
Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Emergency Situations
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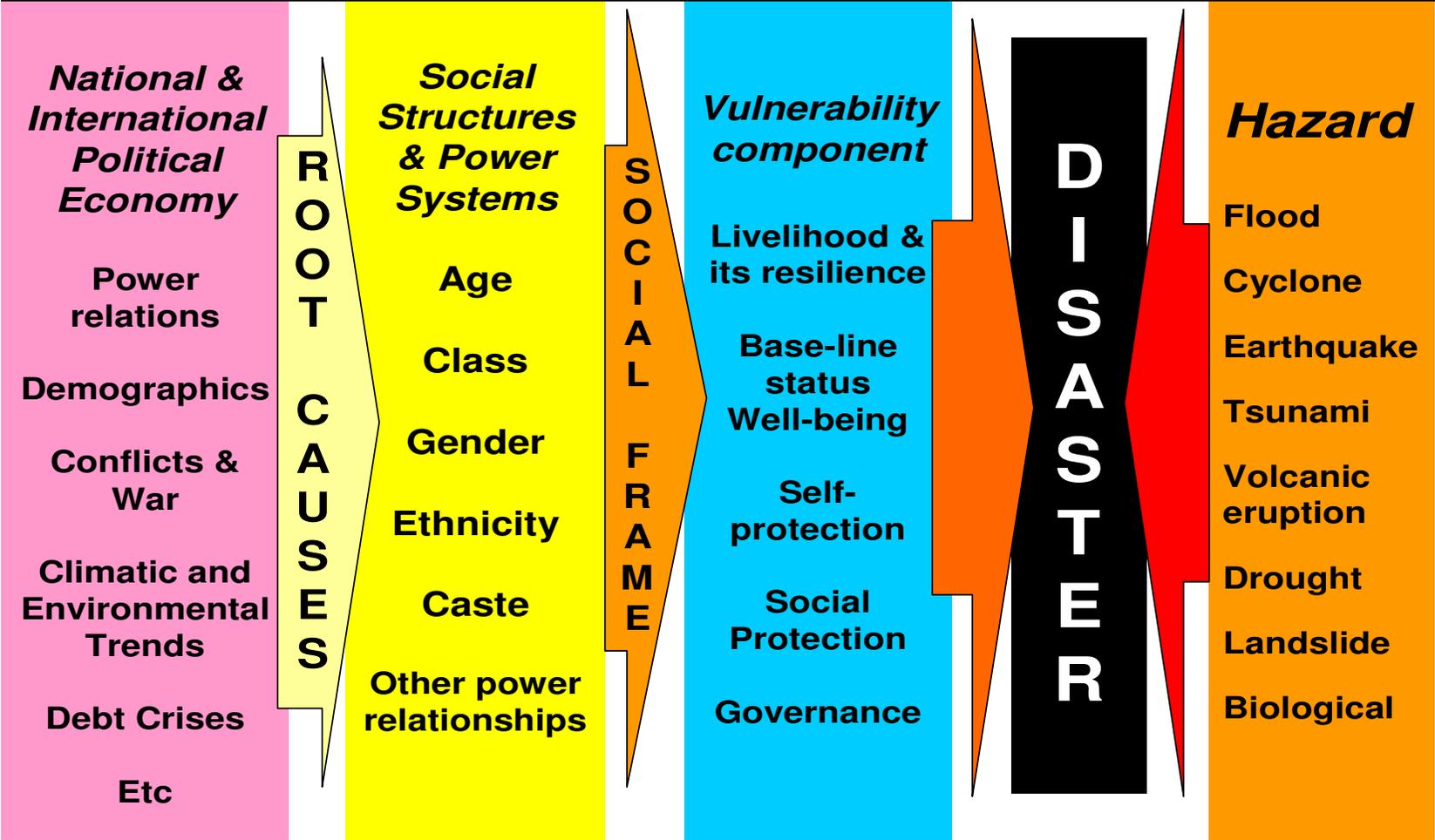


Situations that necessitate humanitarian intervention

- Population displacement
- Failure of states to protect citizens (including situations of violent conflict)
- Resource scarcity/famine
- Disasters (including loss of homes, livelihoods)
- Epidemics
- Large scale accidents (i.e. industrial)



“Crunch” Pressure and Release (PAR) model



Adapted from Wisner (2004) with kind permission of Nick Hall, Plan-UK



Barriers...

Disabled adults and children continue to be among the most marginalised and excluded within communities and within programmes. Barriers include:

- Social
- Cultural
- Physical
- Attitudinal
- Environmental
- **POVERTY**



Social Status

- Vulnerability is often linked to social status – i.e. war heroes.
- Other issues i.e. PTSD



Issues to be aware of:

- Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by disasters and conflict
- Conflict and disaster situations can be a significant cause of impairment due to increased rates of injury, lack of medical care and disruption of medical health care services.
- In the aftermath of a conflict or disaster, people with disabilities may find their situation exacerbated by the loss of assistive devices, the loss of family members or carers, as well as lack of medication or healthcare.
- People with disabilities and their families may experience further upheaval and may be moved to temporary housing or shelter, loss of mobility and other aids, and difficulty in accessing information, food, water or sanitation sources and lack of other infrastructure.
- Persons with disabilities, especially women and children, are particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and sexual abuse.
- In stressful situations people who have experienced trauma may developed psycho-social episodes which could develop into mental health problems.

Who Intervenes?

- UN
- INGOs
- NGOs
- Civil society groups
 - And many more besides...

Not only **WHO** & **WHAT** but also **HOW**

What do we mean by Inclusive Humanitarian Assistance?

“The full and equal participation, involvement and assistance to, persons with disabilities in all aspects of the humanitarian intervention process. To achieve disability inclusion, pro-active methods are needed to seek out and locate persons with disabilities living in the poorest communities where they are often hidden away by their families or are invisible for the simple fact that they are socially excluded and/or less independently mobile than non-disabled persons in the community.”

Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004

- Sri Lanka 2004 Over 37,000 people killed
- Over one million people made homeless
- Over 60 mobile medical teams and field hospitals (with over 500 medical staff)
- Over 700 temporary camps set up in the immediate aftermath



Response to Tsunami

- Unprecedented public response – but little of the money went specifically to disability issues or inclusion.
- Huge relief effort by international NGOs – again, limited awareness of disability issues



Conclusions...

- Disabled people frequently among worst affected, but needs ignored. Need a more collaborative and inclusive approach to address the issues effectively.
- Inclusion of disabled people limited to distribution of relief materials, rather than in planning, decision-making and implementation
- Widespread lack of understanding regarding the social model and inclusion
- Consultation and participation can endorse dominant view - there should be more analysis of power issues and how these affects responses.

Recommendations

- Continued pressure is needed on relief agencies if reconstruction is to be accessible
- Care needs to be taken to avoid the rhetoric of inclusion giving credibility to policies that are in fact deeply destructive to many communities, including disabled people
- Alliances need to be built between disabled people and others affected by the tsunami to ensure that reconstruction is really based on **everyone's** needs
- Effective lobbying is needed to ensure rights of disabled people are acknowledged regardless of situation

Hurricane Katerina 2005

- Disability was largely addressed through medical model
- DPOs were not utilised
- Emergency information was not given in accessible formats
- Lack of service coordination
- Lack of 'cross' training
- Loss of equipment
- Resettlement issues

(SNAKE)



SNAKE Recommendations

- Better utilisation of DPOs and other CSOs
- Replace equipment, and rebuild community and family support as soon as possible
- Assessment of disability needs during evacuation and intake
- Long term planning
- Links with National Disaster Response Plans
- Increase service coordination and training
- Accessibility and housing
- Fines for those that do not comply with state regulations
- Stockpile equipment

Barriers to Inclusion

- Lack of awareness of needs
- Organisations and agencies
- Loss of institutional memory
- Lack of referral/communication between ALL levels
- Lack of legislation and lobbying
- Lack of data
- Cost?



The challenges...

- Inclusion
- Remove barriers
- Increase resilience
- Acknowledge diversity
- Broaden concept of community
- Broaden expectations
- Diversify education and skills



Some Successes...

- **Creation of IDDC task group on conflict & emergencies**
- **Number of other national, regional and international initiatives**
- **World Bank e-forum (and other initiatives)**
- **UN/INGO attention**
- **Specific guidelines and resources**



What is being done...

- Rights based approaches
- Involvement of DPOs
- Role of International and national organisations – but new ways of aid delivery?
- National and International legislation - UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (specifically Article 11)



Article 11 - Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

“States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, 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.”

What Article 11 means in practice:

- Children and adults with disabilities must be considered as a key target group across all intervention processes from identification, assessment and planning, delivery of support programs, monitoring and evaluation.
- DPOs, parents, and NGOs working in the field of disability should be involved and consulted by humanitarian agencies to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are recognised.
- Humanitarian aid agencies must pro-actively seek-out persons with disabilities to ensure they are registered and supported in humanitarian situations as they are often hidden away and/or not easy to identify.
- Donor agencies should include, in their funding guidelines, information about systematic universal design for all reconstruction projects including temporary shelters and camps.
- Sectoral agencies must include the needs of persons with disabilities, including access, in their operations (including shelter, water and sanitation, food distribution, health activities, education).
- Funding for post-conflict and post-disaster interventions needs to include persons with disabilities in a more tailored way, both to support persons with disabilities as beneficiaries of assistance and also as a means to enable persons with disabilities to be included as part of the community response to the disaster or the emergency.

Issues to be aware of:

- The potential of persons with disabilities to actively participate and to advise emergency relief workers and to give support in emergency and humanitarian situations is often overlooked.
- It is far more cost effective to make all aspects of disaster and conflict recovery and rehabilitation inclusive from the start.
- Lack of coordination and awareness among all organizations and agencies dealing with disaster response/relief and those dealing with disability issues.
- Need to improve inclusion of disability issues in relief and development continuum
- Community engagement



Role of Community Organisations in Conflict and Disaster Responses

- Act as advocates for whole community
- Build on opportunities that arise
- Need to build up community networks and strengths to develop a more powerful voice
- Peace-building capacity



How to increase resilience and ensure disabled people are included in humanitarian and emergency situations?

- 3 C's: capacity, capabilities and capital
- Build on strengths (i.e. community cohesion)
- Ensure DPOs, disabled adults and children are included in all levels of planning, mitigation, relief and recovery programmes
- Facilitate better links between DPOs and other CSOs
- More mainstreaming of disability issues in programme work
- More engagement with disability movement in conflict and emergency programming
- Legislation – including UN Convention
- International guidelines/standards
- Awareness and inclusion of marginalised groups
- Acknowledge diversity but unify approach to lobbying/advocacy

Thank You

