

Ensuring the Safety and Protection of Mine Survivors in Situation of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

Committee on Victim Assistance

I. Introduction

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction seeks to address the needs and rights of anti-personnel mine survivors and affected families and communities, known as *mine victims*. The Convention's Article 6 (3) requires *"Each State party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs."* This provision of the Convention is known as *Victim Assistance (VA)*. It is widely accepted that VA involves a vast range of activities at the policy and service levels. At the policy level, VA activities include strengthening national mechanisms such as laws, policies, inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial coordination, standards and plans to facilitate the provision and delivery of services such as healthcare, rehabilitation, psychological support and social and economic inclusion to landmine victims.

While progress has certainly been made in the implementation of Victim Assistance efforts, it is clear that persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, continue to be marginalized and increased efforts to guarantee their rights are necessary. Part of these efforts should be directed to guaranteeing the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies where they face disproportionate risks. Indeed, according to the Human Rights Council, persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected in situations of disaster and conflict. This is due in part to the many of the resources for humanitarian aid, shelter and assistance being inaccessible for them.¹ The States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention aim to address this matter.

At the Fourth Review Conference, the States Parties adopted the Oslo Action Plan 2019-2024 (OAP) which contains nine specific actions to be taken by the States Parties concerning Victim Assistance. Action #40 specifically addresses the matter of safety and protection by committing States Parties to ensuring that *"relevant national humanitarian response and preparedness plans provide for the safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, in line with relevant international humanitarian and human rights law and international guidelines."*

The States Parties also took the opportunity of the Fourth Review Conference to re-emphasise that States Parties' commitment to ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. The States Parties further recognised that, in order to be effective and sustainable, victim assistance should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, and to health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction in support of the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals. They also committed to endeavour to do their utmost to provide appropriate, affordable and accessible services to mine

¹ Statement of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on disability inclusion for the World Humanitarian Summit - Adopted during the Committee's 14th session, held, from 17 August to 4 September 2015 in Geneva

victims, on an equal basis with others.

This document aims to provide initial food for thought in the implementation of Action #40 highlighting existing frameworks, normative references and good practices to support those charged with the implementing and reporting of national victim assistance efforts.

VA does not require the development of new fields or disciplines but rather calls for ensuring that existing frameworks are adequate to meet the needs of all persons—including landmine victims.² The safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies is no exception. The document also looks at some of the steps that have been taken by States Parties with victim assistance responsibilities -Afghanistan, Colombia and Uganda- as described in the examples presented in this publication.

It is also important to highlight that while this document highlights some of the challenges and recommendations in implementation of Action #40 of the OAP, it does not intend to provide specific recommendation to States Parties, but to raise awareness on some of the issue faced in the implementation of Action #40 and examples of current practices to respond to them. With this said, the documents highlighted in the sections 4 “*Spotlight on Key Publications*” and 5 “*Relevant Resources*” contain various recommendations, methodologies, tools and guidance for States Parties to consider, based on in depth research and lessons learned by practitioners.

Finally, while it is recognised that situations of risk also include armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies, this document focuses primarily on situations of natural disasters because the three examples of practices proposed by State Parties are focused on this particular area. In this regard, it is important to highlight the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, which adopts a rights-based sustainable development agenda that calls for accessibility and for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction policies, all stages of disaster risk reduction planning, and data disaggregation by disability.³

II. Meeting the Safety and Protection Needs of Mine Survivors

Good practices, standards and guidelines suggest that the safety and protection needs and rights of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situations of risks, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, can be effectively addressed at three stages – pre, during and post-disaster⁴ that cover all aspects of mitigation and preparedness, rescue and response, and recovery and rehabilitation. Each of these stages require a high degree of awareness of the needs and rights of persons with disabilities and mine survivors as well as information on the barriers they face in ensuring their safety. These three stages can be succinctly presented from a practical point of view, as follows:

- a. **Pre-disaster, including risk assessments, prevention, mitigation and preparedness, among others:** Integrate all specific needs of persons with disabilities including mine survivors - through a human rights-based approach to disability – and accessibility measures into national and local mitigation and preparedness policies and plans. This is a crucial step to reduce the impact of hazards among persons with disabilities including mine survivors. The inclusion of the needs of persons with disabilities including mine survivors in preparedness and mitigation policies and plans is also crucial in order to ensure response, rescue and recovery efforts will be performed efficiently.

² APLC/CONF/2004/5.

³For more information on the *Sendai Framework* and versions in various languages, see: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>

⁴ See for instance: Disaster risk management systems analysis: a guide book. 2008. Baas, S.; Ramamasy, S.; Dey de Pryck, J.; Battista, F. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0304e/i0304e00.htm>.

- b. **During disaster, including early warnings, evacuation, medical response, emergency relief, immediate response and rescue:** In order to effectively and efficiently respond, measures need to be in place at the initial stage of development of preparatory plans. These measures include ensuring the availability and the use of disaggregated data on persons with disabilities including mine survivors and information on their location, specific needs, availability and accessibility of means of communication; availability of relevant and accessibility-trained rescue, health and rehabilitation professionals; accessible shelters; and protection against gender-based violence, among others.
- c. **Post disaster, including ongoing assistance, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction:** Preparations need to be in place to ensure that States can move forward efficiently and effectively into the recovery and next phases. In this regard, it is important to make sure national capacity is available including the rehabilitation professionals such as physiotherapists, psychologists, peer supporters, prosthetic and orthotic technicians and occupational therapists, and the resources required for long-term rehabilitation and social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities prior to the disaster, and of persons who may have acquired impairments during disasters. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts are guided by the principle of “*Build Back Better*”⁵ following accessibility standards and ensuring persons with disabilities including mine survivors have equal access to livelihood and other opportunities.

While Action #40 aims to integrate the needs of mine survivors into national risk management and humanitarian assistance frameworks, its ultimate objective is to ensure mine survivors enjoy equal access to risk management and humanitarian assistance services on an equal basis with others in their societies. Equal access can be achieved when equity is considered in accordance to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and mine survivors.

This box shows the various elements of disaster risk management framework, depicting the complexities in the sector. The Disaster Management Systems: A guidebook⁶

Box 1.2 Elements of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework
Pre-disaster
Ongoing development activities – Ongoing DRM aspects in development programmes
Risk assessment – Diagnostic process to identify the risks that a community faces
Prevention - Activities to avoid the adverse impact of hazards
Mitigation – Structural/non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact
Preparedness - Activities and measures taken in advance to ensure effective response
Early warning - Provision of timely and effective information to avoid or reduce risk
Disaster response
Evacuation - temporary mass departure of people and property from threatened locations
Saving people and livelihoods – Protection of people and livelihoods during emergency
Immediate assistance – Provision of assistance during or immediately after disaster
Assessing damage and loss – Information about impact on assets and loss to production
Post-disaster
Ongoing assistance – Continued assistance until a certain level of recovery
Recovery - Actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring infrastructure and services
Reconstruction - Actions taken after a disaster to ensure resettlement/relocation
Economic & social recovery – Measures taken to normalise the economy and societal living
Ongoing development activities – Continued actions of development programmes
Risk assessment - Diagnostic process to identify new risks that communities may again face

⁵ See for instance: World Bank/Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (2020). *Disability Inclusive Disaster Recovery*. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/559111587448620405/pdf/Disability-Inclusive-Disaster-Recovery-Guidance-Note.pdf> ; and Women with Disability Leap to Economic and Social Progress (2017). *Build Back Better: Making Inclusion Work in Disaster Recovery in the Aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320700392_Build_Back_Better_Making_Inclusion_Work_in_Disaster_Recovery_in_the_Aftermath_of_Typhoon_Haiyan

⁶ Disaster risk management systems analysis: a guide book. p.7, 2008. Baas, S.; Ramamasy, S.; Dey de Pryck, J.; Battista, F. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0304e/i0304e00.htm>.

III. Safety and Protection in the CRPD and its links to the Oslo Action Plan

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides significant guidance and a comprehensive framework for the implementation of Victim Assistance commitments of the AP Mine Ban Convention from a right based approach. States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention have widely embraced a disability rights approach to VA with 28 of the 30 States Parties with significant numbers of mine survivors being party to the CRPD.⁷

Article 11 of the CRPD states that “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.” The CRPD, including in this article, protects the rights of all persons with disabilities regardless of the causes of impairments. Therefore, it includes individuals impaired as a result of mines accidents or other explosive remnants of war.

Article 11 provides us with twofold benefits. On one hand, it strengthens States’ obligations on Victim Assistance to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters and on the other. As such, it requires International Humanitarian Law to be read through a human rights-based approach to disability.⁸

Action #40 of the OAP and Article 11 of the CRPD are mutually supportive. To comply with the CRPD, States Parties have to review and reform their laws, policies and programmes in the context of situations of risks and humanitarian emergencies in accordance with the provisions of Article 11. Likewise, Action 40 of the OAP calls on States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to ensure their policies and programmes in the context of situations of risks and humanitarian emergencies address the needs and rights of mine survivors. These are valuable commonalities and strengthen synergies between the CRPD and the work of the AP Mine Ban Convention.

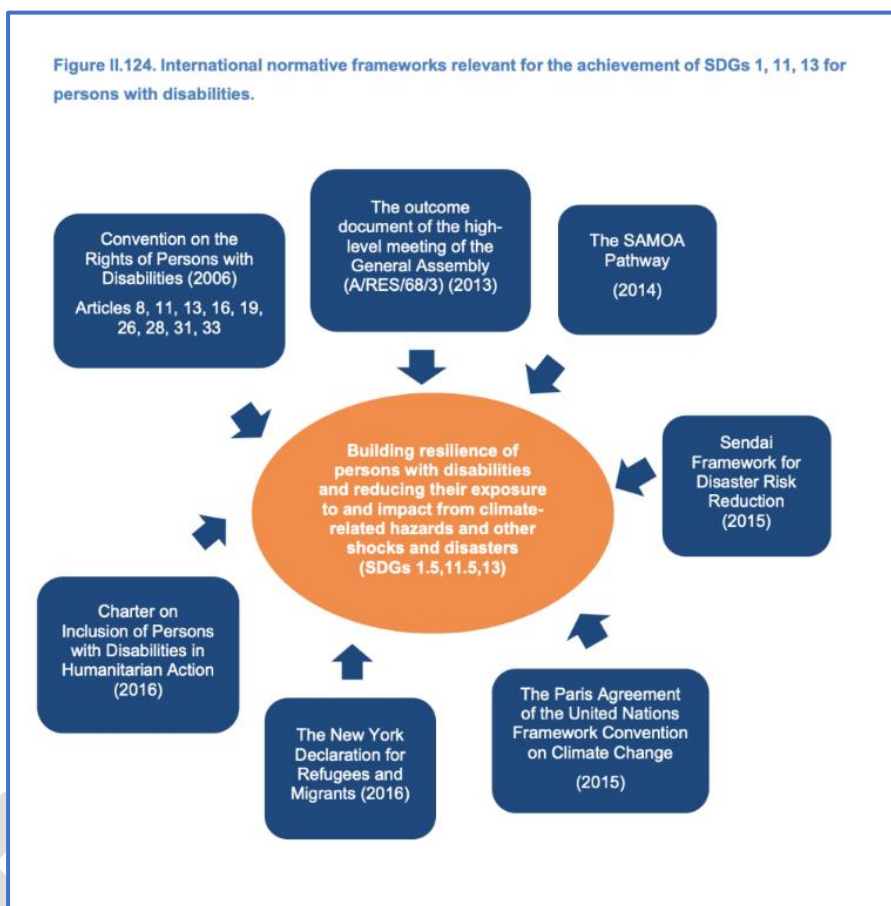
Like the CRPD, the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including the OAP, contributes significantly to preventing human suffering and to advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitment to “Leave No One Behind.”⁹ Protecting the safety of mine survivors in situations of risks and emergencies would particularly contribute to achieving goals of the SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, among others.

⁷ As of November 2020: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe

⁸ The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2015.

⁹ OAP, paragraph 3.

Figure II.124. International normative frameworks relevant for the achievement of SDGs 1, 11, 13 for persons with disabilities.



This diagram illustrates the international normative frameworks relevant to situations of risk (natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies and situations of conflict). Source: UNDESA (2018).¹⁰

IV. Safety and protection challenges

People with disabilities including survivors face the same challenges as everyone else in situations of risk. However, they also face additional challenges due to physical, communication, attitudinal, economic and other barriers. This is particularly acute if they live in rural or remote areas. In addition to this, it is important to take into consideration gender and age considerations with, for example, women and girls with disabilities being at a higher risk of gender-based violence than the rest of the population.

Generally, persons with disabilities are “only incidentally included in a list of vulnerable groups”;¹¹ but not enough measures are taken to ensure their safety and protection in situations of risk. Indeed, according to persons with disabilities and practitioners “persons with disabilities are often neglected in contingency planning, assessment, design and delivery of humanitarian relief”.¹²

¹⁰ UNDESA (2018). *Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities*. Section L. “Building resilience of persons with disabilities and reducing their exposure to and impact from climate-related hazards and other shocks and disasters (SDGs 1.5, 11.5 and 13)”. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2018/12/UN-Flagship-Report-Disability.pdf>

¹¹ Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities (2020). *Terms of Reference of the Thematic Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action (TG-DRRCA)*. <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sgpwd-drr>

¹² Handicap International (2015). *Disability in humanitarian contexts. Views from affected people and field organisations*.

In the words of mine survivors... - some of the risks faced in their communities

“The main risks we face are violence from armed conflict, flooding and landslides. Increasing rains and windstorms affect all of us. But those most at risk are the ones who live close to the river, who are also those displaced by conflict, and many of them are persons with disabilities. They live in irregular settlements. We have not heard of any risk management program”.

“In addition to natural hazards, we face many barriers because there is little infrastructure and mostly, it is not accessible. If there is an emergency, we cannot move around easily and quickly. Local authorities often do not understand our specific needs and the accessibility measures they should take.”

While there are many challenges to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, the following list provides some examples. The references in section five provide details on challenges and practices to address them.

Common challenges to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including survivors

- **Lack of efforts to identify, locate and analyse the situation of persons with disabilities** including mine survivors and taking into consideration those with different types of impairments, and those including those in rural and remote areas.
- Organizations and institutions in charge of disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance **do not systematically collect, consult or use existing data** on the location and situation of persons with disabilities including mine survivors.
- **The participation of persons with disabilities** including mine survivors and their representative organisations is not systematically ensured in all stages of disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance.
- **Persons with disabilities including mine survivors in rural and remote areas** face additional barriers because of lack of accessible transportation, fewer services, and insufficient capacities from local authorities to guarantee their safety and protection in emergencies.
- **Shortages of technical and financial resources to incorporate accessibility standards** in policies, practices, infrastructure and communications related to all aspects of situations of risk.
- **Not enough coordination** between stakeholders in charge of situations of risk and national instances responsible for the rights of persons with disabilities including mine survivors.

Focus on the needs and rights of women and girls: gender-based violence during emergencies

Women and children account for more than 75% of the refugees and displaced persons at risk from war, famine, persecution and natural disaster.¹³ In addition, women and girls in situations of risk face heightened risks of being victims of physical and sexual violence and often lack access to maternal and

¹³ UNFPA (no date). *Protecting women in situations of emergency*. <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/protecting-women-emergency-situations>

reproductive health services. Specifically, with regards to women and girls with disabilities, UNFPA estimates that they face at least three times more violence than those without disabilities.¹⁴

Women and girls, particularly those with disabilities, have also been at increased risk of domestic physical and sexual violence perpetrated by men in their own families during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵

In the word of survivors – additional risks of women and girls with disabilities in situations of emergency

“Women and girls with disabilities, particularly those in situations of emergency, are at high risk of sexual abuse, including in shelters and housing centres. Single women and women heads of household suffer sexual harassment in exchange of food. Additionally, women and girls often face lack of access to hygiene products during emergencies.”

“Survivors and persons with disabilities face many obstacles, particularly women and girls, because of patriarchal society in which live, and the lack of measures to guarantee their protection in all circumstances”.

For specific recommendations, see for instance: *Building Capacity for Disability Inclusion in Gender-Based Violence Programming in Humanitarian Settings* (IRC, WRC 2015).¹⁶

V. Examples of initiatives by State Parties to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situations of risk

This section presents initiatives from three countries that have taken steps to ensure that policies and strategies on disability, disaster risk management or humanitarian assistance take into account the safety and protection of persons with disabilities and mine survivors, through different approaches. This information is based on the contribution of VA experts from those countries and a review of relevant national and international policies and good practice.

The example of Uganda looks at how the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management includes gender and disability perspectives. The case of Afghanistan looks at how the *National Strategy on Disability* now includes a specific section on humanitarian assistance. Finally, the case Colombia looks at the inclusion of disability in the *National Disaster Risk Management Policy*; and, at the role of the *Office of the High Commission for Peace*, which has the responsibility for mine victims, in referring mine survivors to different emergency-related services.

¹⁴ UNFPA (2018). *Young People with Disabilities: Global Study on Ending Gender-Based Violence, and Realising Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Final_Global_Study_English_3_Oct.pdf

¹⁵ See, for instance: Joint statement by the Special Rapporteur and the EDVAW Platform of women’s rights mechanisms on Covid-19 and the increase in violence and discrimination against women (2020) available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26083&LangID=E> ; HI (2020) Women with disabilities at higher risk of domestic and sexual violence with Covid-19, available at <https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/news/blog-women-with-disabilities-at-higher-risk-of-domestic-and-sexual-violence-with-covid-19>. En español, ver: UNFPA, Humanity & Inclusion (2020). *Violencia contra niñas y mujeres con discapacidad: profundizando la respuesta desde modelos inclusivos*. Por ser publicada en diciembre 2020. <https://serviciosesencialesviolencia.org/centro-de-recursos/>

¹⁶ See UNFPA publications in *Relevant Resources* section for more information.

En español, ver UNFPA, Humanity & Inclusion (Op. Cit) y el webinar de UNFPA y HI para la Comunidad de Práctica de América Latina sobre Violencia contra Niñas y Mujeres con Discapacidad: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tnDLKICp7c>

i. Uganda

National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management

Department of Disaster Preparedness and Management

Ms. Agnes B. Nampeera, Senior Rehabilitation Officer/National Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Coordinator. Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Context

In Uganda, persons with disabilities represent 12.4% of the population. The majority of them are women with disabilities.¹⁷ According to the Landmine Monitor, by end of 2016 there were 2,792 casualties in Uganda, of which 533 persons were killed and 2,259 were injured.¹⁸

Hazards include drought, earthquakes, epidemics, flooding, landslides, environmental degradation, crop pest infestation, and livestock and wildlife disease epidemics.

The *National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management 2011* details mechanisms and structures for the effective and practical management of disasters through a comprehensive disaster risk management approach that includes vulnerability assessments, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, and recognizes that specific measures are needed to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster risk preparedness and management programmes.

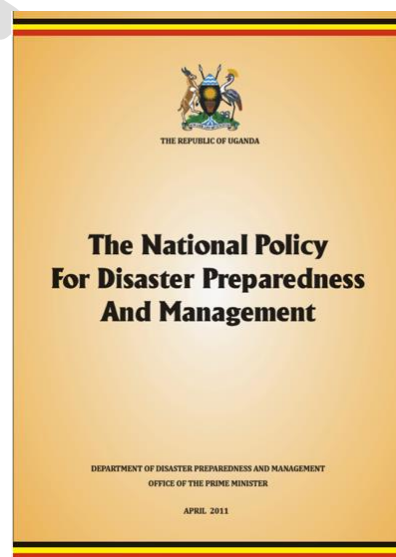
Including persons with disabilities in the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management

The *National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management* includes measures such as:

- Creating community awareness programmes on disaster preparedness and management.
- Providing food and non-food relief items to persons affected by disasters from the time of food shortages up to the following harvest seasons.
- Ensuring all government ministries, private sector bodies and local governments have stand-by disaster management teams available and adequately equipped for disaster preparedness and response. These teams should be trained regularly.

The *Policy* mentions that all measures should follow the Guiding Principles it establishes as cross-cutting issues, such as:

- Gender analysis should indicate how the impacts of a proposed programme or policy would affect women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities;
- Conscious efforts should be made to involve women, youths, and persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness and management decision-making.



¹⁷ Email from A. Nampeera, based on the Housing and Population Census, 2014.

¹⁸ Landmine Monitor, Uganda Chapter. Last updated 2018. <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2020/uganda/casualties.aspx> OR REPLACE BY "APPROXIMATELY 2000 VICTIMS" SOURCE: https://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/APMBC/clearing-mined-areas/art5_extensions/countries/Uganda-ExtRequest-Received-19Aug2009.pdf

Additionally, the *Policy* lays out a specific role for the Ministry of Gender, which is in charge of ensuring that the specific needs of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons in situations of risk are considered.

Gender and age considerations

The *Policy* includes special measures to include women, girls and boys, such as:

- Design disaster management programmes that involve and benefit women, children, and persons with disabilities.
- Facilitate the participation of both men and women in formal and informal education, training, public awareness campaigns, and decision-making on disaster management.
- Incorporate disaster risk management in education by, for instance, ensuring that schools are built in accordance with safe construction standards and that disaster risk management is part of the school curriculum.

Examples of steps that stakeholders in Uganda have taken to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors in disaster risk management

These are examples of activities implemented by Ugandan authorities and national and international partners:

- Take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities, especially those with hearing and visual impairments, can access relevant knowledge on the risks in their environments. For instance, televised news in public and private television have sign language interpreters.
- Prioritise persons with disabilities when carrying out immediate evacuation.
- Ensure that organisations of persons with disabilities and district councillors for persons with disabilities are always consulted during district meetings.

Important factors that contribute to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors

- Coordination of the different ministries, departments, and agencies to ensure a multi-sectoral approach to disaster risk management.
- Presence of, and contribution by, development partners.
- A multi-sectoral approach to disaster management, which can only be facilitated by having effective communication channels.

To enhance the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors, Uganda indicated efforts are required to:

- Ensure the availability of sufficient data on the location and situation of mine survivors to facilitate planning.
- Mobilize various authorities in districts where mine survivors are located.
- Carry out specific research on the needs of girls, women, boys, and men with disabilities, including mine survivors, in emergency situations.
- Allocate a specific budget to cover the costs of developing accessible material and accessibility measures to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in different emergency situations.

- Increase collaboration between ministries, departments, agencies, development partners, mine survivors, and organisations of persons with disabilities.

Photo: Focus-group discussion as part of the baseline study on the situation of persons with disabilities in risk and emergency situations (2016) Photo by Data Skills.¹⁹



Picture 3: The facilitator holding an FGD at Nametsi in Bukalasi Sub – county

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¹⁹ Dattel Skills (2016). *Baseline study profiling the status of persons with disabilities in risk and emergency situations in Uganda. "A case of disasters in Bududa"* <https://unapd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/FINAL-REPORT-Raising-The-Profile-of-PWD-in-Risk-Emergence-Situations.pdf> Kampala, Uganda

ii. Afghanistan

Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC)

Afghanistan Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

Inclusion of Humanitarian Assistance in National Disability

Mr. Habib Khan Zazai, Head of Victim Assistance

Context

The *Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan* indicates that 13.9% of adults and 3.5% of children have severe disabilities.²⁰

According to the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination, 39,236 casualties from explosive ordnance were recorded between 1978 and Nov 7th, 2020, of which: 2,353 girls, 2,211 women, 15,080 boys and 19,592 men.

Natural hazards in Afghanistan include droughts, earthquakes, epidemics, extreme temperatures, floods, insect infestation, landslides and avalanches.²¹ Afghanistan continues to face extensive humanitarian challenges caused by conflict and displacement, and the epidemic of COVID-19 is also affecting the population. By the end of 2017 there was an estimated 1.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), while hundreds of thousands of Afghan nationals returned from Iran and Pakistan.²²

According to the National Mitigation Policy (2010) the country's "*high level of poverty, lack of livelihood and income generating opportunities, chronic health problems, and poor state of the infrastructure all add to the burden of natural disaster on the people of Afghanistan*".²³

Concerning specifically persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, a study found that "*17% of shock-affected households were headed by a person with disability and those households were also less economically resilient to shock. The households headed by a person with disability reported being aware of, but unable to reach assistance in 20% of the cases, compared to only 10% for other households, the main barrier being travelling to the distribution site due to the distance (too far or lack of transport)*."²⁴

Linking Humanitarian Assistance with the National Disability Strategy and including disability in the Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

The *National Disability Strategy* (which includes victim assistance) is developed through a participatory approach, including organisations of persons with disabilities and mine survivors, to support the implementation of the *Law on the Rights and Privileges of Persons with Disabilities*. The *National Disability Strategy* is currently in the process of being updated.

This *Strategy* will include a specific section on humanitarian assistance that will set objectives and actions to ensure that persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, have access to humanitarian assistance and disaster risk management programmes on equal basis with others. It is being developed

²⁰ Akseer M., Akseer T., Kamali M. (2019). *Model Disability Survey of Afghanistan 2019*. The Asia Foundation.

²¹ *National Disaster Mitigation Policy in Afghanistan* (2010).

²² Protection Cluster Afghanistan, REACH (2018). *Afghanistan Protection Assessment of Conflict-Affected Populations Assessment Report*.

²³ *National Disaster Mitigation Policy in Afghanistan* (2010).

²⁴ "Shock-affected households" in this context include displaced households and households affected by conflict, natural disasters or both. OCHA, REACH (2019). *The Whole of Afghanistan Assessment II*. According to the same source "

with the active participation of at least fifteen NGO, ten government Ministries, organisations of persons with disabilities and mine survivors, donors and UN organisations.

The *Strategy* will address risk preparedness and response with measures such as:

- Improving data collection on the specific barriers that women, girls, men and boys with disabilities face to access disaster risk management programmes and humanitarian assistance.
- Encouraging stakeholders and service providers in disaster emergencies and humanitarian settings to take steps to improve the accessibility of their services to women, girls, men and boys with disabilities.
- Facilitate coordination between stakeholders and organisations of persons with disabilities including mine survivors.

Additionally, it is important to underline that the 2018 *Afghanistan Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* specifically mentions a gender, age, disability and cultural perspective. It requires the disaggregation of data by sex, age and disability and the dissemination of data in accessible formats, and complemented by traditional knowledge; the establishment of disaster loss databases and risk profiles with data disaggregated by sex, age and disability; and the coordination of capacity development and risk management plans with persons with disabilities.²⁵

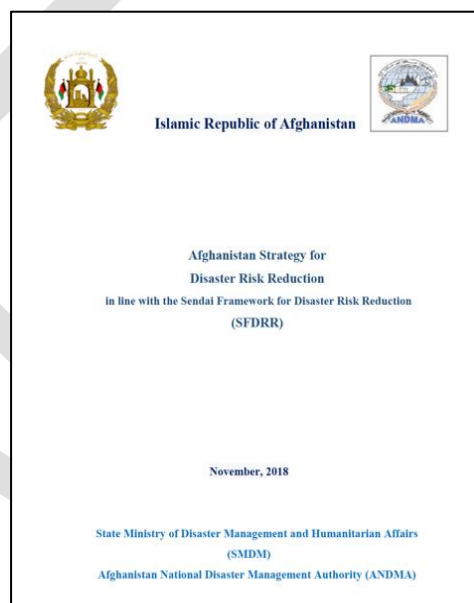
Gender and age considerations

The *Whole of Afghanistan Assessment II* identified that among shock-affected households, those with one or more of the following characteristics were more likely to experience multi-sectoral needs than other households: female-headed households, households headed by a person with disability, and lack of legal identification documents (*tazkira*).²⁶

To respond to these and other challenges, and to the specific barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities in situations of risk, the *National Strategy on Disability* will include specific measures to include women and girls with disabilities. The *Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction* also indicates that measures should be taken to ensure the inclusion of women, who face additional challenges in situations of risk; and that coordination and planification efforts should build on good practice to ensure the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities.

Examples of steps that stakeholders in Afghanistan have taken to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors in situations or risk

These are examples of activities implemented by Afghan authorities and national and international partners:



²⁵ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, State Ministry of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs and Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (2018). *Afghanistan Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*.

²⁶ OCHA, REACH (2019). *Ibid*

- Support victims of floods, including those with disabilities, in immediate response by providing aid packages (including food and non-food items) and cash assistance.
- Provide assistance to victims of floods and earthquakes, including those with disabilities, by facilitating access to emergency health services, support to reconstruct houses and provision of agriculture equipment.
- Organise inclusive, community-based disaster risk management plans in communities affected by flash-floods and landslides.²⁷
- Facilitate workshops in different regions to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in the development of the *National Disability Strategy*.
- Include humanitarian assistance in the *National Disability Strategy*.

Important factors that contribute to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors

- Creation of a call centre to enhance persons with disabilities' access to public services and organising participatory workshops in different provinces to learn about the priorities of persons with disabilities including mine survivors.
- Signature of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with all relevant ministries and non-government organisations to promote multi-stakeholder commitment and participation and facilitate coordination.
- Locating the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination within the State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, to facilitate coordination.
- Development of a *National Disability Strategy* that will include a specific category on humanitarian assistance with clear goals, actions and indicators.

To enhance the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors, Afghanistan indicated efforts are required to:

- Carry out a detailed assessment and monitoring of risk conditions in different provinces.
- Train stakeholders at national, provincial, and local offices in measures to include persons with disabilities in all risk management processes and in humanitarian assistance.
- Monitor and evaluate provincial and district level activities and how they reach and benefit persons with disabilities, including mine survivors.
- Ensure the relevant knowledge, technical and material resources are available in high risk areas. Develop risk management plans for safe schools and hospitals.
- Train of community assistants to raise awareness on preparedness and emergency response at local level.



Photo: Victims of earthquakes in Nahrin, Afghanistan, 2002.
Source: National Mitigation Policy, 2010.

²⁷ Handicap International. Disability Inclusive Community Based Risk Management. A toolkit for practice in South Asia. 2012

iii. Colombia

National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2015-2025; Referral System for Victims of Antipersonnel Mines

Martha Hurtado, Mine Action Group Coordinator
Óscar Javier Siza Moreno, Ministry of Health

Context

The 2018 National Population and Household Census found that 6.5% of the population lives with functional limitations. 6% of this group links these limitations to the armed conflict. Between 1990 and 31 October 2020, there were 11,947 mine victims. Of these casualties:²⁸

- 1,226 involved boys and girls under 18 years old,
- 11,274 were male,
- 629 were female.

The main factors that cause situations of risk and emergencies in Colombia are:

- Internal armed conflict.
- Use of antipersonnel mines by organized armed groups.
- Situations of migration.
- Natural hazards including rain, landslides, drought and earthquakes.

To respond to these challenges, some of the relevant laws, norms and plans at national level are:

Norm	Year	Relevance
<i>Law 1346</i>	2009	Approves the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
<i>Law 1448</i>	2011	Establishes measures to provide attention, assistance and comprehensive reparations for victims of internal conflict, among other provisions.
<i>National Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2015-2025</i>	2016	Defines the objectives, programmes, actions, responsibilities and budgets related to risk awareness, risk reduction and disaster risk management in the framework of national development plans.
<i>Notice No. 040</i>	2015	Provides health guidelines for temporary shelters and establishes measures to include persons with disabilities.

Including persons with disabilities in Disaster Risk Management plans

- a) **National Plan on Disaster Risk Management.** This strategy defines the objectives, programs, actions, budgets and institutions in charge of processes related to risk awareness, risk reduction and risk management are implemented. The *National Plan on Disaster Risk Management* incorporates an intersectional approach in its analysis, implementation and evaluation; recognizing the diverse characteristics and conditions of the population, including

²⁸ Source: IMSMA system managed by the Office of the High Commission for Peace in Colombia.
Note: There is no information on the gender in 44 of these cases.

persons with disabilities. For instance, there is an objective related to ensuring that evacuation routes in buildings are designed taking into consideration the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

- b) **Notice No. 040.** It establishes that Local Health Directions, in coordination with Disaster Risk Management Councils at various administrative levels and other stakeholders of the National Disaster Risk Management System, must identify the specific needs of persons with disabilities taking into consideration the barriers they may face taking into consideration physical, mental, visual, hearing, intellectual and multiple impairments.



Plan Nacional de
Gestión del Riesgo
de Desastres
Una estrategia de desarrollo
2015 - 2025

SISTEMA NACIONAL DE GESTIÓN
DEL RIESGO DE DESASTRES

Gender and age considerations

The *Statutory Law 1751* of 2015 defines as “subjects of special protection” in all circumstances:

- Boys, girls and adolescents, pregnant women, displaced persons, victims of violence and armed conflict, older persons, persons who live with orphan diseases and persons with disabilities. The health services they receive shall not be limited by any administrative or economic restriction.
- Measures shall be taken to ensure access to health services for pregnant women, and for women in the post-pregnancy period.
- Victims of any kind of sexual violence have the right to have priority access to psychological support and to anti-retroviral treatments.

Examples of steps that the OACP in Colombia has taken to ensure the safety and protection of mine survivors in disaster risk management

The *Office of the High Commission for Peace (OACP)* has provided technical assistance to the municipal and departmental offices regarding the implementation and update of the *Comprehensive Referral System for Victims of Antipersonnel Mines and Unexploded Ordnance* (“Ruta de atención” in Spanish). This system ensures access to services in the areas of health, physical rehabilitation, psychological and psychosocial support, socioeconomic inclusion and reparations.

On another hand, it is expected that the *National Network of Survivor Associations* will be created by end of 2020. Its main goal is for mine survivors to network and strengthen their organization, administrative, technical and operational capacities; and to implement activities that benefit mine survivors and their organizations.

Additionally, in situations of emergency, the OACP provides information and referral services to mine survivors when they are affected by different types of emergencies.

For instance, in 2020, during the health emergency due to COVID-19, the OACP identified the cases of two mine victims in situation of extreme vulnerability who were affected by COVID-19. The OACP provided them with information, support and referral towards relevant institutions through the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

In another instance, the OACP provided support to a mine survivor who lost his home due to flooding from a river. In this case, the OACP provided support and referral to the relevant authority at local level (mayor's office) and to the ICRC, which facilitated access to additional emergency support.

It is important to note that 100% of survivors, their families and local authorities have received information about how to access their rights in the framework of the referral system ("Ruta de atención"). In this framework, they are informed about the institutions that they should contact in different circumstances, including in situations of disasters or emergencies.

Important factors that contribute to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors

- Permanent coordination between national and local authorities in charge of disaster risk management.
- Linkages between different services, including those that are and those are not part of the referral system ("ruta de atención") and are in charge of disaster risk management.
- Include disability as a specific approach in the national policy on disaster risk management.
- Inform mine survivors and their families about the relevant institutions to contact in case of emergency.

To enhance the safety and protection of persons with disabilities including mine survivors, Colombia indicated efforts are required to:

- Mobilize human and financial resources to improve the accessibility of safety and protection programmes.
- Develop technological platforms that facilitate the access of persons with visual and hearing impairments to new technologies and information.
- Create accessible tools to raise awareness on prevention, mitigation, response and reconstructions at local and regional level.
- Increase and improve the specific measures to include persons with disabilities in throughout the disaster risk management cycle.

VI. Examples of relevant actions that VA stakeholders could take to strengthen the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors

“Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key”. - Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Underlying understandings

The actions proposed in this section are examples of what VA experts and coordination mechanisms could consider contributing to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situations of risks (disasters, humanitarian emergencies and conflict).

Detailed recommendations for inclusive policy and practice can be found in the *Spotlight on key publications* and *Relevant resources* sections of this document. The actions in the following pages aim to start discussions, more specifically, on the role of Mine Victim Assistance in larger risk management and humanitarian frameworks, in accordance to Action #40 of the Oslo Action Plan and based on existing good practice on Victim Assistance.

The proposed actions are based on **three key observations**:²⁹

- Although some good practices in data collection are being applied, in many cases **data is not disaggregated** by age, gender, disability and other diversity factors. This is essential for an evidence-based assessment of the inclusion and barriers faced by persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, to access risk management and humanitarian assistance programmes.
- In addition to the risks faced by everyone else, **persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, face additional barriers** due to discrimination, lack of physical accessibility and lack of information on risk management and humanitarian assistance in accessible formats, particularly in **rural and remote areas where many mine survivors live, and in areas in situations of violence and conflict.**
- Any efforts on victim assistance should be implemented on the basis of the **principle of non-discrimination**. Indeed, *“Victim assistance efforts should promote the development of services, infrastructure and policies to address the rights and needs of all women, girls, boys and men with disabilities, regardless of the cause of disability”*.³⁰

Good practice demonstrates that efforts should be based on a twin-track approach, which applied to safety and protection in situations or risk, could involve:

²⁹ See for instance UN Resolution 2475 (2019), CBM, HI, IDA (2019), Handicap International (2015); based as well on the testimonies of people with disabilities and mine survivors.

³⁰ Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit *Assisting Landmine and other ERW Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development*. <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/en/publications-about-the-convention/victim-assistance/>

Twin track approach applied to Action #40

Specific initiatives to ensure persons with disabilities including mine survivors know their rights and are empowered to participate in safety and protection policies and programmes



Inclusive safety and protection policies and programmes that take accessibility measures to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors

In the words of survivors.... These are relevant actions to ensure persons with disabilities, including survivors, participate in, and have access to, safety and protection programmes

“Persons with disabilities have to be identified clearly in the census and in their communities, with data disaggregated by gender, age, rural or urban setting, type of impairment... This data will help State design inclusive policies and programmes.”

“States parties should implement their international commitments: review legislation, design inclusive policies, allocate adequate budgets for accessibility measures. They should train authorities to include persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, to ensure their safety and protection.”

“States should be more inclusive in their risk management and humanitarian assistance programmes, taking specific steps such as training the local authorities on accessibility. They should carry out diagnostics of the risks and barriers that us people with disabilities including mine survivors face where we live.”

“I would like to know more about risk management and humanitarian assistance to train other persons with disabilities to protect themselves, and to do better advocacy on disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance”.

Example of Actions that Victim Assistance Experts and Coordination Mechanisms may implement to contribute to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, to fulfil their commitment to the Action #40 of the Oslo Action Plan

These are initial ideas that should be analysed according to the context and mandate of the Victim Assistance Experts or Coordination Mechanism in each country, with the participation of organizations of persons with disabilities including mine survivors, and other relevant stakeholders.

- 1. Encourage the disaggregation of data by age, gender, disability and other factors of diversity** by all stakeholders involved in safety and protection policies and programmes to identify gaps and facilitate monitoring and evaluation.
- 2. Assess the needs of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors,** in relation to their safety and protection in situations of risk.

3. **Facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors**, in all processes related to national and local policies and programmes on safety and protection in different situations of risk, at national local levels.
4. **Raise awareness on the barriers faced by persons with disabilities**, including mine survivors, amongst national disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance stakeholders; and on the need to include them throughout emergency prevention, mitigation, response and recovery policies and programmes.
5. **Contribute to the dissemination of information on: a) safety and protection in accessible formats**, such as using sign language, drawings, braille, dialogue with family members, easy language, and any other necessary means to make sure persons with disabilities have access to information related to their safety and protection; and **b) accessibility standards in infrastructure and communications** specifically in situations of risk, and including a diverse population.
6. **Coordinate with relevant national and local authorities** to identify the main challenges and provide recommendations **to integrate the safety and protection needs of persons with disabilities including mine survivors** into risk management and humanitarian assistance policies and programmes.
7. **Include risk management and humanitarian assistance** in Disability Action Plans, in coordination with relevant stakeholders in disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance. This will contribute to ensuring the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, is planned for with clear objectives, actions indicators and institutions in charge.
8. **Report on progress and challenges** on the integration of the safety and protection needs and rights of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, into national frameworks, and on their access to such services. This may be reported through the annual Article 7 Report of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; in conjunction with reports provided on the implementation of the CRPD, the Sendai Framework and other relevant instruments.³¹
9. **Promote the development of community-based risk management**, particularly in rural and remote areas and other where survivors are often located.
10. **Support the development of peer support** for persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situation of emergencies, particularly those who are isolated and may face increase in domestic violence. This may include the use of social networks, telephone or other available, innovative means of communication.
11. **Raise awareness among stakeholders in different sectors on the specific risks of gender-based violence** against women and girls with disabilities, particularly during disasters and humanitarian emergencies, and on how to address them; as well as on the additional barriers they face to access services for survivors of gender-based violence.
12. **Support the mobilization** of national and international resources including technical support; promote the documentation and dissemination of good practices and successful methodologies.

³¹ Indicadores de Art 11.

Key messages

1. **Unless specific accessibility** measures are taken to ensure that persons with disabilities including survivors participate in, and benefit from, safety and protection programmes in situations of risk, they will probably be excluded.

2. **Unless the safety and protection of mine survivors** is monitored, it will be difficult to assess to what extent they really participate in, and benefit from, all risk management and humanitarian assistance policies and programmes.

2. **Victim assistance experts can play a key role** in promoting and facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in all risk management and humanitarian assistance policies and programmes.

For reference, these are some examples of measures that mainstream stakeholders can take to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, in situations of risk³²

- Map existing services that refer and respond to urgent basic needs, and to the specific needs, of persons with disabilities.
- Train and recruit persons with disabilities in disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance teams.
- Ensure meetings and training sessions are in places reachable and accessible for persons with disabilities; and that information about such meetings is disseminated in accessible formats.
- Use easy visual presentations (maps, diagrams, drawings) to facilitate access to information of people with hearing or intellectual impairments.
- Ensure access to agricultural training programs for persons with disabilities to increase their awareness and ability to develop climate-resistant crops.
- Work with organizations of persons with disabilities and accessibility experts to ensure early warning systems are effective.
- Ensure persons with disabilities have roles and responsibilities in the design and implementation of risk management plans.
- Integrate and mainstream content about persons with disabilities in prevention messages.
- Discuss with women and girls with disabilities to identify their needs and priorities in situations of emergencies.
- Develop innovative peer support services via phone call and social networks to reach persons with disabilities in emergencies who may be isolated.

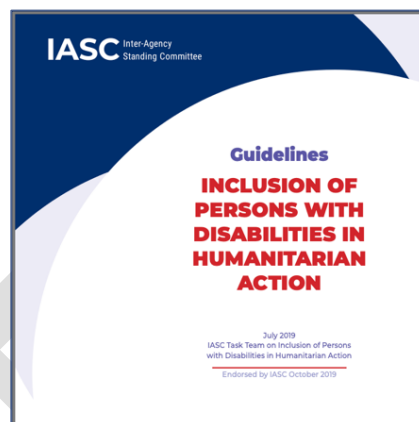
³² These are examples from: IASC (2019); Handicap International (2012); DIDRRN, CMB (no date); UNESCAP (2014); and CBM, Bensheim, HelpAge and Handicap International (2018); and UNFPA, HI (2020). Details about these publications and other technical advice may be found in the *Relevant resources* section.

VII. Spotlight on key publications

IASC (2019). **Guidelines. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action**

This publication describes the “essential actions that humanitarian actors must take in order to effectively identify and respond to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities, who are most at risk of being left behind in humanitarian settings”.

The guidelines cover a wide variety of humanitarian contexts — including those of natural hazards, situations of conflict, displacement, and political crisis— as well as slow and rapid onset crisis and protracted crisis. It also addresses specific sectors, such as camp coordination and camp management; education; food security and nutrition; livelihoods; health; protection; shelter and settlements; and water, sanitation, and hygiene.



In the words of mine survivors... these are the challenges faced in shelters and displacement camps

“Persons with disabilities in displacement camps suffer major obstacles, because camps are still not designed taking into consideration accessibility”.

“Shelters are not accessible to persons with disabilities, including the toilets in those shelters. The needs of women and girls with disabilities are not considered in those services either. The LGBTI+ community is highly discriminated as well and if they have a disability of course they will face even more discrimination”.

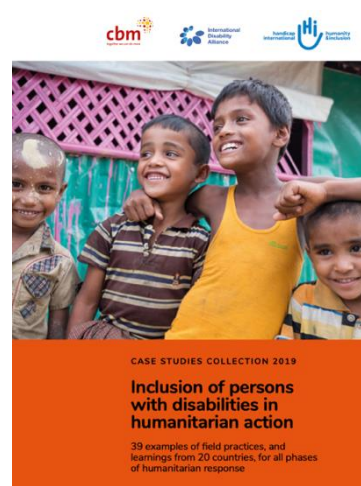
CBM, HI, IDA (2019). **Case studies Collection 2019. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action**

This report presents thirty-nine case studies on inclusive practices for persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.

It includes cases from Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean in the following five areas:

- Inclusive disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
- Collecting and using disability-disaggregated data for assessments and programming.
- Participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in humanitarian response and recovery.
- Removing barriers to access humanitarian assistance and protection.
- Influencing coordination mechanisms and resource mobilization to be inclusive.

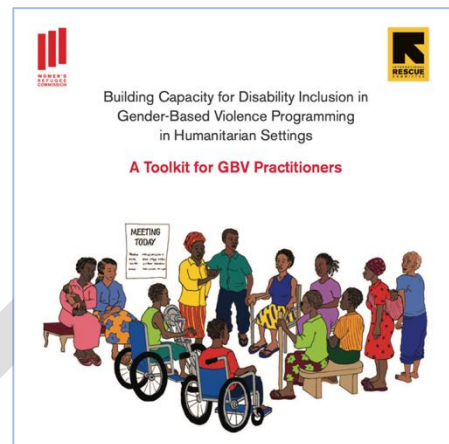
The report also includes cross-cutting lessons learned, and specific lessons learned in each of the five areas mentioned above.



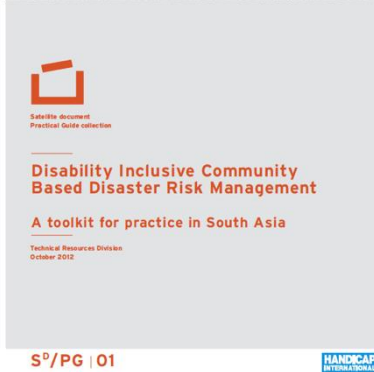
Women’s Refugee Commission, International Rescue Committee (2015). **Building Capacity for Disability Inclusion in Gender-Based Violence Programming in Humanitarian Settings. A Toolkit for GBV Practitioners**

For a few years now, gender-based violence has been recognized as one of the fundamental services in humanitarian response. However, where such services exist, they do not systematically take measures to include women and girls with different types of impairments. Yet, women and girls with disabilities face higher rates of physical, sexual and psychological violence by partners and family members.

This toolkit shares good practices, lessons learned and practical tools to identify the main barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities and how to overcome them. It is based on experiences in Ethiopia, Burundi, Jordan and the Northern Caucasus in the Russian Federation.



Handicap International (2012). **Disability Inclusive Community Based Disaster Risk Management. A toolkit for practice in South Asia**



According to this publication, in situations of disaster “*persons with disabilities face being identified solely as passive victims, their capacities overlooked and their right to participate in decision making ignored*”.

Asia is one of the regions most affected by disasters in terms of deaths and affected people. This publication provides practical guidance on how to implement and make community-based disaster risk management inclusive of persons with disabilities and includes a toolbox to support implementation, focusing on specific aspects such as shelters; household preparedness; and search, rescue and first aid.

Based on field practice from South Asia, this toolbox is definitely useful for practitioners in any region of the world.

More information is made available at: www.disabilityindrr.org

In the words of mine survivors... these are some of the challenges in rural and remote areas

“Survivors and other people with disabilities in rural and remote areas face additional barriers because of lack of accessible transportation, poor services in all areas and insufficient attention from local authorities to facilitate the protection of people with disabilities in the many situations of emergency we face.”

European Commission (2019). **DG ECHO Operational Guidance. The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations**



DG ECHO Operational Guidance
The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations

This guidance document was developed by the European Commission’s humanitarian affairs department as a tool to reach the goal of ensuring that “*all EU-funded humanitarian partners would be required to take the needs of persons with disabilities into account in their projects*”.

It builds upon international standards and principles and provides specific recommendations on how include persons with disabilities in programming, ensuring and measuring inclusion in humanitarian action (data collection and indicators) and key practical recommendations.

International, Handicap International (2018). **Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and persons with disabilities.**

This publication provides standards for practitioners to protect, support and engage older people and persons with disabilities at all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle.

They include specific recommendations to address the gap in understanding their needs, rights and capacities in areas including water, sanitation and hygiene; food security and livelihoods; nutrition; shelter, settlement and household items; health and education.



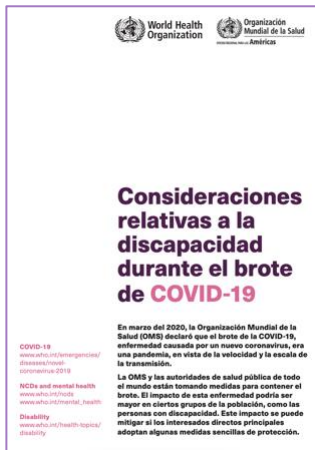
CORDES, FECONORI, ASB (2017). **Normas mínimas para la inclusión de las personas con discapacidad y adultas mayores en las emergencias y los desastres**



Esta publicación presenta normas mínimas para promover la inclusión de las personas con discapacidad y adultos mayores en los procesos de gestión integral del riesgo de desastres, y para mejorar la atención y respuesta humanitaria en situaciones de desastre o de conflicto.

Además, adopta un enfoque de género al considerar la afectación diferenciada de las situaciones humanitarias hacia mujeres, niñas, hombres y niños, y hacer propuestas para responder a sus necesidades específicas, su vulnerabilidad y sus capacidades. Incluye elementos conceptuales básicos, marco jurídico internacional y principios sobre discapacidad y edad en situaciones de emergencia, sí como normas esenciales y normas específicas por sector. Cada norma incluye un objetivo específico, acciones claves para cumplir la norma, y buenas prácticas.

OPS, OMS, Oficina Regional para las Américas. **Consideraciones relativas a la discapacidad durante el brote de COVID-19**



El impacto de COVID-19 podría ser mayor en ciertos grupos de población, como las personas con discapacidad. Este impacto se puede mitigar si se difunden y adoptan ciertas medidas de protección.

Esta nota de la OMS describe por qué es importante tomar medidas específicas para las personas con discapacidad y aporta recomendaciones específicas tanto para las personas con discapacidad y los integrantes de su hogar, como para los gobiernos, responsables de garantizar que las personas con discapacidad tengan acceso a protección y seguridad en igualdad de condiciones. Incluye también medidas para el personal de salud, los prestadores de servicios para personas con discapacidad y la comunidad en general.

In the words of mine survivors... These are the challenges faced during the COVID-19 health emergency

“When the pandemic started and the government announced that public servants had to stay home, the institution in charge of victim assistance stopped responding to the needs of survivors, including referrals to health and rehabilitation services. The National Council on Disability also closed. They should have disseminated prevention messages in accessible formats. We felt abandoned by the institutions in charge of providing services for us.”

“We are facing many challenges due to COVID-19: losing employment, domestic violence, no access to health and rehabilitation services, no access to prevention measures....”

“Many persons with disabilities have not received information to protect themselves from COVID-19 in accessible formats. This includes girls, boys, older persons, indigenous groups and migrants, who all face different barriers and discrimination to access services and information, particularly those with more than of these characteristics”.

Comité Permanent Inter-organisations (2020). Riposte à la COVID 19: messages clés sur l’application des lignes directrices du CPI concernant l’inclusion des personnes handicapées dans l’action humanitaire.

Cette note d’orientation s’appuie sur les lignes directrices de l’IASC pour proposer des mesures pour répondre aux risques accrus auxquels font face les personnes handicapées à cause de la pandémie de COVID-19. Elle décrit les conséquences sanitaires spécifiques aux personnes handicapées et des mesures clés pour lutter contre les conséquences sanitaires, sociales et économiques de la pandémie.



VIII. Relevant resources

English

- Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. *Assisting Landmine and other ERW Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development*. <https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GIChD-resources/rec-documents/Brochure-Assisting-Survivors-June2011.pdf>
- Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2016). <https://humanitariananddisabilitycharter.org>
- DIDRRN, CBM (no date). Disability inclusive disaster management. https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Disability_Inclusive_Disaster_Risk_Management.pdf
- Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network. <https://www.didrrn.net>
- DIDKSB, GFDRR World Bank Group, Disaster recovery guidance series. Disability Inclusive Recovery. <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/265011593616893420/pdf/Disability-Inclusive-Disaster-Recovery.pdf>
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Spanish

- CORDES, FECONORI, ASB, Ministerio Federal de Cooperación Económica y Desarrollo (2017). *Guía comunitaria sobre inclusión de personas con discapacidad y adultas mayores en la gestión integral del riesgo de desastres en Centroamérica*. <http://desastresydiscapacidad.net/sites/default/files/2018-12/Guia%20comunitaria%20GIRD%20VF%20%281%29-min%20%282%29.pdf>
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French

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IX. Conclusions

Action 40 of the Oslo Action Plan aims to ensure that policies, programmes and plans are inclusive of the needs and rights of mine survivors, the people who have been disproportionately affected by situations of disaster and humanitarian emergencies. Action 40 is also an important commitment as it draws attention to an area of victim assistance that has not been addressed as much as necessary while promoting integration into broader frameworks and recognizing synergies with other international humanitarian and human rights law and international guidelines.

The three case studies on efforts made by States Parties with significant numbers of mine survivors – Afghanistan, Colombia and Uganda – provide us with insights on integration of the safety and protection rights and needs of persons with disabilities including mine survivors into national frameworks. Each of the case presented take a distinct approach to furthering the aim of Action 40: Uganda highlights the integration of safety and protection measures in favour of persons with disabilities including mine survivors into its National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management; Afghanistan highlights its efforts on safety and protection by inclusion of humanitarian assistance into its national disability strategy; and Colombia incorporating an intersectional approach into its National Plan on Disaster Risk Management and recognizing the diverse characteristics and conditions of the population, including persons with disabilities. It is important to highlight that these are just small examples of ongoing efforts by these States and while each case is different, they demonstrate the continued importance of the strengthening inclusive frameworks.

It is also important to note that continued efforts need to be expanded to ensure implementation of Action 40. Safety and protection of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors in situations of risks and emergencies is an integral part of victim assistance. Making national disaster risk reduction policies and programmes inclusive requires ensuring, for example, the availability of disaggregated data on persons with disabilities including mine survivors, inclusion of mine survivors at policy and programme level and inclusiveness and accessibility at all aspects of risk reduction management. The implementation of Action 40 would greatly benefit from a continued national dialogue to ensure increased engagement by relevant stakeholders. Further efforts would need to be invested to explore more ways to meet the needs of persons with disabilities including mine survivors in situations of humanitarian emergencies and protracted conflicts, especially in rural and remote areas that are affected by mines and explosive remnants of war.

As mentioned at the outset, this paper does not suggest new methods or new frameworks. It highlights good practices and spotlights available guides and tools as resources that could be utilised for the implementation of Action 40. We do hope that this has been a valuable and useful document for those that have not participated in this area of work in the past.

Annex: Key definitions

Terminology relating to disaster risk reduction³³

Capacity. The combination of all the strengths, attributes and resources available within an organization, community or society to manage and reduce disaster risks and strengthen resilience.

Disaster. A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.

Disaster risk. The potential loss of life, injury or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazards, exposure, vulnerability and capacity.

Disaster risk management. The application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses.

Disaster Risk Management



When a **hazard** event (such as a drought, flood, **cyclone**, earthquake or tsunami) occurs, triggering a loss of life and damage to infrastructure, it highlights the reality that society and its assets are vulnerable to such events. When discussing **disaster** risk management, a disaster can highlight the following in a community:

- The geographical area where the community is settled is **exposed to such a hazard**.
- The society (including individuals) and its infrastructure, assets and other processes - as well as services which may have experienced damage or destruction - are **vulnerable**.

Source: United Nations Knowledge Portal.³⁴

Disaster risk reduction. It aims 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.

Hazard. 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. Hazards may be natural, anthropogenic or socionatural in origin.

Mitigation. The lessening of minimizing of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event.

Preparedness. 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.

³³ Source: United Nations General Assembly (2016). *Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction*. A/71/6544

³⁴ UN-Spider. Knowledge Portal. Space-based information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response. Website: <https://un-spider.org/risks-and-disasters/disaster-risk-management>

Prevention. Activities and measures to avoid existing and new disaster risks.

Reconstruction. The medium- and long-term rebuilding and sustainable restoration of resilient critical infrastructures, services, housing, facilities and livelihoods required for the full functioning of a community or a society affected by a disaster, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.

Recovery. The restoring or improving of livelihoods and health, as well as economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities, of a disaster-affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”, to avoid or reduce future disaster risk.

Rehabilitation. The restoration of basic services and facilities for the functioning of a community or a society affected by a disaster.

Resilience. The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

Response. Actions taken directly before, during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

Risk assessment. A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment in which they depend.³⁵

Vulnerability. The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.

Complex humanitarian emergencies. Complex emergencies are situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment. Complex emergencies combine internal conflict with large-scale displacements of people, mass famine or food shortage, and fragile or failing economic, political, and social institutions. Often, complex emergencies are also exacerbated by natural disasters.³⁶

Credits

Wanda Muñoz

With contributions from the following persons and organisations

- Afghanistan. Habib Khan Zazai, Head of Victim Assistance. Directorate of Mine Action Coordination. State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs. I.R of Afghanistan

³⁵ UNDRR (2009). Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction. <https://www.undrr.org/publication/2009-unisdr-terminology-disaster-risk-reduction>

³⁶ World Health Organization. *Environmental Health in Complex Emergencies*. 2002

- Colombia. Martha Hurtado. Coordinator of the Mine Action Group. Ruth Liliana Torres López and Diana Marisol Peñalosa Mesa, Advisors to the Mine Action Group. Óscar Javier Siza Moreno, Ministry of Health.
- Uganda. Agnes B. Nampeera, Senior Rehabilitation Officer/National Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Coordinator. Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
- Afghanistan Landmine Survivor Organisation, through its publication *COVID impacts on persons with disabilities in Afghanistan, 2020*
- Asociación de Sobrevivientes de MAP, MSE y TE de la Subregión de Abades. ASOV– ABADES. Colombia
- Asociación Huilense de Sobrevivientes de Minas Antipersonal. Colombia
- Association Sénégalaise des Victimes de Mines
- DONAKATI- An Inclusive Movement, Mozambique
- Fundación de Personas con Discapacidad de Cauca. Colombia
- Iraqi Alliance for Disability. Iraq
- SEHLAC. El Salvador

Note: The quotes of mine survivors throughout this paper are not attributed to specific individuals as per the request of some of them. We are thankful to all contributors for taking the time to share their experiences with us, particularly in the complex moments of pandemic.