Gender, Disability and Disasters

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1. **Definitions**
   - What are they?
   - Why do they matter?
   - Intersectionality
   - Vulnerabilities and resilience

2. **The international environment**
   - Domestic and international policy context

3. **Human Rights**
   - UN Conventions

4. **Impact of humanitarian disasters**

5. **Steps to inclusion**

6. **Recommendations**
First...some light reading....

https://www.independent.co.ug/disabled-are-the-hidden-victims-of-south-sudans-long-war/
‘Defining’ gender?

- Differences between sex/gender:
  - Cultural
  - Contextual
  - Relational (power)

→ a continuum
The Convention defines discrimination as:

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (CEDAW, 1979)
What is disability?

The Preamble to the CRPD acknowledges that disability is “an evolving concept”… but also stresses that

“disability results from the *interaction* between persons with impairments and *attitudinal* and *environmental* barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

It goes onto note that:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”
What about vulnerability?

• Vulnerability can be compounded by range of factors, including pre-existing or new disabilities…

But also need to consider:

• Resilience
• Intersectionality
• RIGHTS
Why do definitions matter?

- Fundamentally about **power** – how people are labelled becomes how they are ‘defined’; these definitions – and social norms - are socio-cultural constructions – **stereotypes** - who is ‘old’, who is ‘disabled’; what gendered expectations and norms exist?

- Often fundamentally linked to issues of power, legitimacy and agency

- Contrasting understandings of these labels determine who sets the agenda and priorities (e.g. for public services health, education, social) - therefore aim is to shift balance of power – **transformative** agenda

- Different views, policies and experiences - and different models of understanding - can and do co-exist – this can lead to challenges, misunderstandings and misinterpretations

- Exclusion often linked to poverty

- Therefore fundamentally a **human rights** issue

- Awareness and advocacy has increased with civil rights movements – from UK, USA and elsewhere
What else could be added?

"overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination."
Barriers to inclusion…
Addressing inclusion is as much about attitudinal change as it is technical knowledge:

- Changing mind-sets of policy-makers, service providers, communities, families, friends and neighbours
- Dismantling deeply entrenched physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers to effective social inclusion
- Increasing levels of social capital and relational bonds for marginalised and excluded individual/groups
- Ensuring adequate resources – including governance infrastructure for effective implementation of services
- Supporting rule of law and effective implementation of human rights principles
- Improving knowledge about what works – including improved data
So how does this translate into emergency situations?
Key Issues to address

- The world has seen a significant increase in both the severity and frequency of disasters, and the link between climate change and extreme events is increasingly being recognised (IPCC, 2012).
- These are compounded by ongoing social, economic and political challenges, resulting in humanitarian crises.
- Persons with disabilities constitutes 15% of the world’s population (WHO/WB 2011) – and demographic shift.
- This population is at disproportionate risk to be impacted by the negative aspects of disaster (Twigg and Kett, 2007; Fujii 2012).
- Need for an inclusive integrated approach to climate change adaptation, humanitarian response and international development work.
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.”
“The humanitarian system is poorly equipped to ensure an equitable response for the most vulnerable. Whilst issues specific to children, age, old people, women and those with disability are widely written about, there are few mechanisms to deal with them.”

(DFID Humanitarian Emergency Response Review 2011)
Disability Inclusion...

“Disability is the result of the interaction between an impairment limiting or altering a person’s capacities and that person’s environment”

(Preamble, UNCRP)

In Emergencies there are structural changes that can affect this:

- Physical environment
- Social support network
- Poverty
- Knowledge
- Political
Disability & Humanitarian Emergencies

- An estimated 6.7 million persons with disabilities are forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations (WRC 2014)

- Armed conflict will be 8th most common cause of disability worldwide by 2020 (WHO)

- Around 10% of an affected population will develop serious psychological trauma (UN)
Impact of disability on a household

- Increased risk of poverty and social exclusion
- Lack of access to food/jobs/healthcare/other essential services
- Lack of security (physical and psychological)
- Increased risk of displacement/separation
- Exclusion/discrimination
- Effects on children and families

→ Compounded by disasters and conflict
Impact of conflicts or disasters on persons with disabilities

- Poor environments and poor people are disproportionately affected by disasters and emergencies
- Persons with disabilities are very often the least visible in emergencies, and sustain disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality
- Persons with disabilities often unable to access emergency aid
- Increased vulnerability (to violence and abuse; loss of support structures; issues of accessibility and exclusion etc.)
- Increased susceptibility (to secondary disabilities through conditions, including lack of medical care, loss of infrastructure, lack of rehab facilities etc.)
Gendered Effects of Conflict and disasters…

1. Demographic shifts – from loss of life, migration/displacement
2. Poverty
3. Violence – domestic and national
4. Unequal distribution of resources, e.g. property distribution
5. Reduced access to education
6. Loss of support networks/carers’
7. Lack of employment
8. Reduced access to healthcare
9. Long term effects – may be intra-generational
Barriers to inclusion (I)

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
Barriers to Inclusion (II)

- 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?
Development of protective factors - resilience

- Intergenerational poverty – role of education
- Inclusion of all members of community in preparedness
- Identifying points of vulnerability – and capacity
- Acknowledging strengths and weaknesses
- Support local solutions
- Build on opportunities
- Peace-building capacity
Definition of protection

“... all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language or gender).”

(ICRC 2001)
Social protection mechanisms

• Legislative and regulatory frameworks: address discrimination and establish minimum standards. Role of international community?

• Social assistance: non-contributory cash and in-kind transfers to the poor (i.e. pensions, fee waivers, disability allowance)

• Social insurance: individual or household contributions that spread risk from economic or other shock or negative change in circumstance through financial support (i.e. health insurance)
The Sustainable Development Goals

- The SDGs provide the institutional framework for all overseas development assistance for the next 15 years (replacing the Millennium Development Goals, which made no explicit reference to disability whatsoever)
- Highly influenced by the “leave no one behind” agenda adopted by the UN High-Level Panel of Experts on Sustainable Development, co-chaired by David Cameron.
- There are 17 goals and 169 targets, and for each of the indicators will have to be developed.
- Of these, five goals and seven targets specifically mention disability;
- And it is alluded to three goals and six targets
- **A twin-track** approach (DFID, 2004; HI, 2009; CBM, 2013).


- **Accessibility** - embedded across the physical environment, in communications, and in reconstruction to remove barriers that restrict mobility and communication and that actors recognise reconstruction is an opportunity to ‘build back better’ in line with principles of universal design (Handicap International, 2009; CBM, 2013; UNESCAP, 2014; Lord et al, 2016)

- **Technology** - such as GIS has the potential to play a greater role in helping to prepare and protect people with disabilities during disasters (Alexander et al., 2012)

- **Non-discrimination** and **addressing stigma** is integral. (CBM, 2013; MCCR, 2015).

- **Capacity building** and **Effective advocacy** on disability rights, and of people with disabilities and their respective organisations (Lord et al., 2016, DiDRR Network, 2014; Lord et al., 2016).

- **Coordination and collaboration** is required between the diverse range of actors in disaster and humanitarian response, the government, and people with disabilities and their representative organisations (CBM, 2013; MCCR 2015; Lord et al., 2016).
So, a gradual shift to inclusion?

- CRPD (and other national legislation)
- Disability as a cross-cutting issue in Sphere Standards (and INEE companion standards)
- ADCAP standards
- DFID Disability Framework
- SDGs
- Disability standards and guidelines across other agencies (including Red Cross Movement; NGO-specific and/or context specific Guidelines/Toolkits
- Integrated assessments
- Advocacy and awareness raising
- Training
- Increased research around disability inclusion in disasters and humanitarian emergencies
ADCAP (Age and Disability Capacity Building Programme), on behalf of the Age and Disability Consortium, a group of seven agencies working to promote age and disability inclusive humanitarian assistance: CBM, DisasterReady.org, Handicap International, HelpAge International, IFRC, Oxford Brookes University and RedR UK.

The Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action are intended to inform humanitarian organisations about the actions needed to ensure their responses are as inclusive as possible.
Ongoing Challenges.

- Definitions

- Little internationally comparable data

- Lack of coordination

- Costs?

→ post crisis potential for inequalities to grow
...And some opportunities?

- Timing of interventions
- Increased visibility (including CRPD)
- Funding – Costs?
- ‘Build back better’
Some final thoughts for discussion…

• How can we focus policy and prevention messages on multiple and diverse experiences (e.g. of people with disabilities)?

• Can we integrate marginalised and excluded groups into existing policies, programmes and monitoring mechanisms (including human rights frameworks, SDG monitoring etc)

• How can policy and prevention methods work across sectors and domains?
Questions?

Thank You!
Selected references


