



Policy Paper

Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction: Moving forward in DiDRR across Europe and Central Asia

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Overview

Persons with disabilities make up at least 15% of the global population¹, yet continue to be among those **most impacted by disasters**² and **more likely to be excluded from** emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction (**DRR**) and related **decision-making** processes.³ Research also shows that the **mortality rate** among persons with disabilities tends to be **two to four times higher** than that of the rest of the population, as demonstrated during the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami, and hurricane Katrina in the USA.⁴

Europe and Central Asia are no exception, with COVID-19 being one of the most recent examples of this. For instance, UK statistics from early 2021 already show that **persons with disabilities accounted for six in 10 COVID-19 related deaths**⁵, the fact strongly corroborated by evidence of discrimination from across the continent. Similar trends are observed in other crisis situations, including [flooding](#), [extreme weather related incidents and wildfires](#).

In humanitarian contexts, women and girls with disabilities are particularly at risk of exploitation and violence, including gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual abuse. They will also experience more barriers accessing support and services. In addition, women and girls with disabilities and their representative organizations are often not consulted during policy-making and management.

In preparation for the 2021 European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR), the European Disability Forum (EDF) has worked on the **first-ever**

¹ [World Report on Disability](#). WHO and World Bank (2011)

² [IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#) (2019)

³ Twigg, J. Kett, M. Lovell, E. [Disability inclusion and disaster risk reduction: Overcoming barriers to progress](#) (2018)

⁴ [Panel Discussion](#) on Disaster resilience and disability: ensuring equality and inclusion. ECOSOC Chamber, UN (2013) (accessed on 27 October 2021)

⁵ [European Human Rights Report](#). Impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities. European Disability Forum (2021)



review⁶ of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) policy and practice across countries of the Europe and Central Asia region.⁷

The aim of the review was primarily to provide a baseline of information for this region on the current state of disability inclusion in DRR-related policies and practices, so this will be a 'living' document, but it is also hoped that it will support consistency of reporting on disability inclusion in DRR across the rest of the regions of the world.

This review may also help inform the upcoming Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the [Sendai Framework](#) for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the EDF alternative report for the second review of the EU by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

During the DiDRR review, several European countries have been identified with positive examples of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction. These include existence of inclusive policies as well as a few practices of engaging Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs) in decision-making. Some of these relationships are informal, and at least two countries⁸ have DPO representatives engaged formally as part of the working groups at national level for disaster management. However, based on the results identified through this review, these good practice examples tend to be ad hoc, rather than common practice, and are often the result of a dedicated action of individuals, rather than being established in official systems and coordination mechanisms for DRR.⁹

⁶ The methodology of the review entailed the following: (i) desk review of over 650 documents (DRR and disability related laws, policies, strategies and action plans) from the 55 member states of the EFDRR that were available in English and Russian; (ii) online survey administered among the representatives of government and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs) from the shortlisted 22 countries based on the identified reference to disability in their policies and strategic documents; and (iii) key informant interviews with the stakeholders who have responded positively to the online survey and the request to participate in the interviews.

⁷ [The review, policy brief](#) and a [quick reference guide on DiDRR for practitioners in Europe and Central Asia](#) can be found at the EDF website: <https://www.edf-feph.org/>

⁸ Italy and Serbia

⁹ Due to the very limited response rate from the government representatives, the findings of the review had to be based primarily on the desk research as well as on the feedback from the DPOs. Therefore, the review does not exclude the possibility that there may be other positive examples of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction in the region which are not included here.



Key facts

The findings from the review of the DiDRR policy and practice in Europe and Central Asia point to an urgent need to accelerate action to reduce disaster and climate related risks and their disproportionate impact on persons with disabilities. This should be done through fast-tracked and contextual implementation of the Sendai Framework, in adherence with its Guiding Principles and in line with Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which obliges States to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

Figure 1. Key findings from the DiDRR policy and practice review in Europe and Central Asia

- The DiDRR review has found **no example of systematic data disaggregation** by gender, age and disability in national information systems related to disaster risk reduction and recovery. This is one of the main reasons for the disproportionate impact experienced by persons with disabilities in crisis situations, as without data, disaster risks cannot be fully understood and managed.
- Only **five¹⁰ out of 55** countries in Europe and Central Asia have demonstrated attempts in **developing disability-inclusive DRR policies** in line with the Sendai Framework.
- Only **six countries¹¹** across the region have **prioritized protection and safety of persons with disabilities** in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies by having included reference to Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in national policies, strategies and action plans related to disability.
- Only **one country¹²** in the region commits to **allocation of state budget for disability-inclusive civil protection** measures, which indicates a major gap in national investments and efforts for inclusive DRR.
- The review has found practically **no reference to disability** in country-specific **policies and plans** related to **climate change adaptation**.

¹⁰ Armenia, Georgia, Italy, Serbia and Tajikistan

¹¹ Armenia, Croatia, Finland, Italy, Spain and UK

¹² Croatia

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- **Rights-based approaches** are largely **missing** from policy and practice, and persons with disabilities continue to be seen as **'vulnerable groups'** rather than as key stakeholders and contributors to disaster risk reduction.

Priority gaps

The review of the DiDRR policy and practice across Europe and Central Asia has identified the following **five priority gaps** resulting from the **lack of awareness** and **prioritization** of disability inclusion in disaster preparedness, response and recovery:

Figure 2. Priority gaps identified from the DiDRR review in Europe and Central Asia

1. Lack of disability disaggregated data
2. Lack of representation, coordination and partnerships with 'representative' organizations of persons with disabilities
3. Lack of accessibility of crisis communication, risk information, critical infrastructure and services
4. Lack of expertise on disability-inclusive DRR
5. Lack of investments in disability-inclusive DRR

Despite the evolution of the human rights-based approach to disability as part of the global legal and policy frameworks, persons with disabilities **continue to be seen as 'vulnerable'** in the face of disasters rather than as key stakeholders and contributors to disaster risk reduction and recovery. For instance, of the 12 countries¹³ in the region identified through this review as referring to disability in their DRR-related policies and strategic frameworks, seven¹⁴ of these categorize persons with disabilities as 'vulnerable groups' and as recipients rather than being contributing stakeholders in DRR.

Lack of awareness also leads to **disability inclusion** being **overlooked in policy and practice**. For example, the limited response rate with only three governments reacting to the online survey administered as part of the DiDRR review could also be an indication of the **lack of prioritization** of disability inclusion in DRR across the region. Moreover, the recent events,

¹³ Armenia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and UK

¹⁴ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Norway, Turkey and UK



including COVID-19 and the July 2021 flooding in Europe, have revealed that persons with disabilities are often overlooked in preparedness and contingency planning and miss out on the humanitarian response. In [this 2021 example from Germany](#), persons with disabilities lost their lives as they were not evacuated on time following a heavy rainfall.

There is also a **misconception** that disability is a **'technical' concern** and should be dealt with only by disability-specific organizations. This is one of the major obstacles in mainstreaming disability in disaster risk reduction.

All **55 member states** of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction have **agreed to the Sendai Framework**, which clearly emphasizes the **importance of inclusion** in disaster risk reduction. The Sendai Framework specifically highlights the need for empowerment, leadership, and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in DRR policy-making and practice as well as the importance for collecting disability disaggregated data. These 55 countries have also formally agreed on the steps required for the Sendai Framework to be effective, which is reflected in implementation plans at various levels of governance across the region, and most recently, in the endorsement at the 2021 European Forum for DRR of the 2021-2030 EFDRR Roadmap for Europe and Central Asia.

Alongside the Sendai Framework, the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) are underpinned by the concept of 'leave no one behind', but perhaps most importantly, the majority¹⁵ of the countries in the EFDRR zone have **ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. This means that they are **obliged to ensure** that all persons with disabilities are **fully included** and **meaningfully participate**, through their representative organizations, in all activities that impact them. This is especially relevant for disaster risk reduction since persons with disabilities are repeatedly shown to be those most affected by natural hazards and climate change induced disasters.

Despite these developments, the EDF review of the policies and strategic documents related to disaster risk reduction, civil protection and emergency

¹⁵ All 55 member states of the EFDRR have either signed and ratified the CRPD or accessed it except Liechtenstein (signed on 8 September 2020 but not ratified) and Tajikistan (signed on 22 March 2018 but not ratified). Source: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=en#4 (accessed on 8 November 2021)



management across the 55 countries of Europe and Central Asia has found a rather **limited progress** on the **implementation of the Sendai Framework at national level** from the disability inclusion lens, whereas there was **no data available pertinent to the local level** in this regard.

The review has identified the following priority gaps:

1. Lack of disability disaggregated data

The establishment of an evidence base to inform risk-sensitive decision making is a necessary pre-condition for understanding disaster risk. This directly relates to the implementation of the Sendai Framework Priority 1 and is also closely linked with the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – “leave no one behind” – which calls for more granular and disaggregated data than currently available in most countries, in order to inform the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring process. Without credible and comprehensive disability disaggregated data, disaster and climate risk cannot be fully understood by the decision-makers and practitioners.

Despite the global commitments to disability disaggregated data as set out by the Guiding Principle 19(g) of the Sendai Framework and Article 31 of the CRPD, this does not necessarily translate into the regional or national-level commitments at policy and practice levels.

Neither the [EFDRR 2015-2020 Roadmap](#) for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework, **nor** the [European Action Plan](#) **explicitly mention that data should be disaggregated** by sex, age and disability as part of risk assessments and disaster loss databases. As for the [Central Asia and South Caucasus \(CASC\) Plan of Action](#), it states that “... by 2020 all eight countries in the CASC region should have established disaster loss databases and risk profiles, with sex, age and disability desegregated data, information and analysis.” However, while there is an anecdotal evidence of disability disaggregated data being collected selectively in response to some crises, the DiDRR review has found **no example of systematic data disaggregation by gender, age and disability** in national information systems related to disaster risk reduction and recovery. Only one country¹⁶ in the CASC region has committed to the creation of a database on persons

¹⁶ Tajikistan



with disabilities and to the inclusion of Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) as part of the vulnerability and risk assessments.

The review of the bilateral donor commitments to disability disaggregated data has identified only one donor committing to promote the routine, systematic collection and use of the disaggregated data using tested tools such as the [Washington Group](#) questions to understand the extent to which persons with disabilities are affected by specific crisis, and the key barriers to inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response and risk reduction practices.

The **data gaps** in the [Sendai Framework Monitor](#) also make it difficult to assess how countries are addressing data disaggregation as part of their disaster management information systems.

Furthermore, the review of the country profiles in the [INFORM Risk Index](#) has shown that the **methodology** for capturing the dimensions of risk (hazards and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacities) **does not consider disability disaggregated data**. This is a concern, as the information gaps related to sex, age and disabilities prevent risk-informed decision-making, leading to exclusion of persons with disabilities from DRR interventions.

2. Lack of representation, coordination and partnerships with 'representative' organizations of persons with disabilities

During the DiDRR review, several¹⁷ European countries have been identified with positive examples where Organizations of Persons with Disabilities are engaged in DRR-related decision-making. Some of these relationships are informal, and at least two countries have DPO representatives engaged formally as part of the working groups at national level for disaster management. However, it is clear that these **good practice examples tend to be ad hoc**, rather than common practice, and are often the result of a dedicated action of individuals, take place as part of the specific projects or are triggered by disasters, rather than being established in the official systems and coordination mechanisms for DRR.

¹⁷ Armenia, Italy and Serbia



Moreover, while disability advocates and DPOs can play a significant role in disaster policy, planning and interventions, disaster management agencies usually tend to have **limited interaction or collaboration** with them. There is also **lack of documentation on how states promote leadership** of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and recovery.

Limited representation of persons with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities has also been observed **in National Platforms** for Disaster Risk Reduction, where only one¹⁸ out of the 37 National Platforms across Europe and Central Asia has established a thematic working group for protection of persons with disabilities.¹⁹ However, the mandate of this working group seems to be limited to the protection of persons with physical disabilities, and safety of institutions for persons with physical and psychosocial disabilities, portraying persons with disabilities as recipients rather than being contributing stakeholders.

Under the CRPD (article 4.3 and general comment 7) governments are obliged to "... give particular importance to the views of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, support the capacity and empowerment of such organizations and ensure that priority is given to ascertaining their views in decision-making processes." Therefore, the development and ongoing governance of these mechanisms for disaster and climate risk governance must always ensure participation of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities.

3. Lack of accessibility

While some progress related to accessibility has been noted in the region, particularly with regards to the introduction of emergency call numbers²⁰ in several countries and developing accessible COVID-19 communication as a result of successful lobbying campaigns of DPOs²¹, **more needs to be done** to ensure that **critical infrastructure** as well as **risk information and crisis communication is fully accessible**, covering the diversity of disability, and is available in local languages and in sign language.

¹⁸ Republic of North Macedonia

¹⁹ [National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction](#). UNDRR (2020)

²⁰ Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden

²¹ The Netherlands



For instance, the review has identified cases where investments were made for making the school infrastructure earthquake resistant, however, at the same time, physical accessibility aspects were not considered, leaving students and adults with disabilities at higher risk as they would not be able to evacuate safely in case of a disaster. Furthermore, **lack of provision of reasonable accommodation** to respond to the specific access or functioning requirements of individuals with disabilities limits further their participation in disaster risk reduction and recovery on an equal basis with others.

4. Lack of available expertise on disability-inclusive DRR

DRR actors often have **limited hands-on experience and expertise** in disability, and advocacy for and uptake of inclusive approaches rely on the influence of individuals with a personal interest in this area. The DiDRR review has found that formal **mechanisms for promoting disability inclusion** and coordination across sectors and institutions, **such as disability focal points** within state agencies responsible for disaster risk reduction and management, are rather limited and mostly **nonexistent**. Practitioners also **lack the training or tools** to respond appropriately to the specific requirements of persons with disabilities in emergencies or to ensure effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.²²

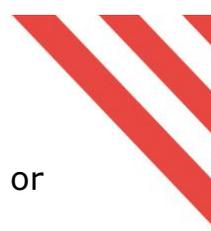
5. Lack of investments in disability-inclusive DRR

The DiDRR review has found **no specific provisions** at national and/or local levels **for funding disability-inclusive DRR** and recovery except for one country²³ in the region that has made a commitment to allocation of state budget as well as funds from local and regional governments for disability-inclusive civil protection measures as part of its national strategy on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The review has also found that **specific projects**, financed primarily by external donors, **occasionally address disability inclusion** in DRR, which was confirmed by the 11% of the respondents (representatives of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and governments) participating in

²² Twigg, J. Kett, M. Lovell, E. [Disability inclusion and disaster risk reduction: Overcoming barriers to progress](#) (2018)

²³ Croatia



the DiDRR survey. However, most of these initiatives **lack sustainability** or any tangible impact, as they discontinue as soon as the funding runs out.

Absence of the requirement for budgeting for the potential **costs of disability inclusion**, including provision of reasonable accommodation, indicates to a **major gap in national investments** and efforts for inclusive disaster risk reduction. This hinders resilience building, as investments cannot be considered resilient if they do not prioritize inclusion of persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups in climate action, disaster risk reduction and recovery. It also results in increased costs in the long-term, as retrofitting for accessibility is always more expensive.

Key recommendations

Highlighting the need for participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in building resilience, the European Disability Forum and its members call for governments to ensure implementation of the Sendai Framework and to fulfill their legal obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We ask to achieve this by prioritizing the development and implementation of fully inclusive DRR strategies (target E of the Sendai Framework), and promoting effective cross-sectoral partnerships through meaningful engagement with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in all aspects of climate action and disaster risk reduction, including preparedness, response, and recovery by capitalizing on the following:

Sendai Framework Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk

1. Prioritize disability, gender and age disaggregated data collection as part of disaster management systems (including climate and risk assessments, emergency needs assessments and disaster loss databases) at regional, national and local levels as well as national population censuses and surveys (art. 31 of the CRPD).
2. Integrate a disability, gender and age analysis in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) policies, strategies and programs to prevent the expansion of inequalities exacerbated by climate change.

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3. Ensure methodological consistency in data collection using a functioning approach²⁴ (for instance by adopting the Washington Group questions²⁵) together with appropriate tools, staff training and awareness raising on disability inclusion in climate action and disaster risk reduction.
 4. Ensure local, national and regional level targets and indicators include disability disaggregated data in coherence with the Sendai Framework, the CRPD and the SDG monitoring and reporting.
 5. Incorporate disability inclusion in the regular training schedules of staff of all stakeholders working on DRR and CCA, involving experts from DPOs as a 'cross learning' concept (art. 9, 19, 20, 21 and 29 of the CRPD).

Sendai Framework Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk

1. Ensure representation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations in disaster and climate risk governance as well as related coordination mechanisms i.e. National Platforms for DRR, and the humanitarian Cluster system (art. 4.3 of the CRPD).
2. Ensure that DRR and CCA related policies, strategic frameworks and plans of action are disability-inclusive.
3. Ensure that all disability-related policies, strategies and action plans consider protection and safety of all persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian crises in line with Article 11 of the CRPD.
4. Designate focal points for disability within the government units responsible for disaster risk reduction and climate action and invest in their capacity building in close collaboration with DPOs.
5. Ensure that all governance and decision-making bodies' measures towards protection and safety nets are fully inclusive of all persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities and that these are

²⁴ A functioning approach to disability is less concerned with categorizations and instead focuses on what a person is able to do in their lived environment. Understanding disability from a functioning perspective is directly relevant to DRR as it enables the disproportionate risk that persons with disabilities face to be readily identified and directly acted upon (Robinson A., Kani S. *Disability-inclusive DRR: Information, risk and practical action* in Shaw R & Izumi (2014))

²⁵ Developed by the [Washington Group \(WG\) on Disability Statistics](#), formed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.



developed together, collaboratively between all stakeholders including DPOs (art. 11 and 4.3 of the CRPD).

Sendai Framework Priority 3: Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience

1. Include specific requirements of persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities in leveraging investments for DRR and CCA, and ensure that all investment strategies and their end results are fully accessible to and participatory of all of society.
2. Invest in sustainable capacity building of DPOs in climate action and disaster risk reduction to foster more effective future participation that is based on a partnership of equals.
3. Ensure budgeting for reasonable accommodation, facilitating effective participation in climate action and DRR and recovery actions in individual situations where required.
4. Invest in critical infrastructure ensuring that it is fully accessible and is designed incorporating the principles of [Universal Design](#).
5. Identify and promote use of evidence linked with sustainability of disability inclusion in DRR and climate action as an investment rather than expenditure.
6. All DRR and climate action programs funded by the donor community should prioritize inclusion of persons with disabilities across the entire program cycle.

Sendai Framework Priority 4: Preparedness and resilient recovery

1. Ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in the development of emergency preparedness and contingency plans at national and local levels to fully address the specific requirements of all persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities and other groups of persons with disabilities that are most excluded in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11 and 4.3 of the CRPD).
2. Introduce specific measures to ensure gender-equity, promoting leadership of women with disabilities in all areas of disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness, in line with the Sendai Framework.
3. Identify, collaborate with and build capacity of DPOs at all levels in all climate action, DRR and emergency preparedness measures.
4. Ensure that risk information, including early warning, alert systems, and crisis communication, are inclusive and provided in formats



accessible for all persons with disabilities as well as is available in local languages and in sign language (art. 9, 11 and 21 of the CRPD). Consider guidance provided by the European Union of the Deaf for [accessibility of information and communication](#) for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

5. Ensure that all newly built critical infrastructure including schools, hospitals and shelters are made safe and accessible following relevant national guidelines and the principles of Universal Design.
6. Support studies on the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities and their families. Include the specific requirements of persons with disabilities in the contingency plans for pandemics (art. 11 and 32 of the CRPD).
7. Ensure that humanitarian response is inclusive considering specific requirements of all persons with disabilities, including persons with disabilities who are most excluded and face multiple forms of discrimination in line with the [Humanitarian Inclusion Standards](#) for Older People and Persons with Disabilities and the [IASC Guidelines](#) on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.
8. Ensure that search, rescue and evacuations are inclusive. Build capacities of early responders on their understanding of disability, both for existing as well as for people who have acquired disabilities as a result of any disaster.

Key opportunities and the way forward

Rights-based approaches have been advocated as having **the potential to lead to** a paradigm **shift in** institutional **policy** and **practice towards disability**. A human rights-based approach to disability sees persons with disabilities as persons with inherent rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions, as well as being active members of society.²⁶ The rights set out in the CRPD, and echoed in subsequent policy instruments, legislation, standards and guidelines, place a number of responsibilities upon duty-bearers: to ensure application of the principles of dignity, equality and non-discrimination to persons with disabilities; to promote and protect their inclusion and safety; to sensitize international and

²⁶ Twigg, J. Kett, M. Lovell, E. [Disability inclusion and disaster risk reduction: Overcoming barriers to progress](#) (2018)



national agency staff, and national and local authorities on the rights, protection and safety of persons with disabilities; and to ensure that persons with disabilities affected by crises know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them on an equal basis with others (Njelesani et al., 2012; ADCAP, 2018).²⁷

The European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction **provides opportunities** not only **to highlight the key gaps** in disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and **remind governments of their legal obligations**; but also **to inform** DRR and climate action **professionals on the** multitude of **guidelines and tools** that already exist, where and when to use them, and the huge potential that accessible solutions provide to improve their ongoing work.

To support this further, the European Disability Forum has put together a **[‘Quick Reference Guide’ for Practitioners in Europe and Central Asia](#)**, which provides a collection of tools, guidance and resources that will be of use not only to hands-on practitioners, but also to policymakers to improve disability inclusion in DRR. This toolkit can also be used by persons with disabilities and their representative organizations for policy advocacy and collaborative action for disability-inclusive DRR in the region.

Persons with disabilities and their representative organizations have specific **knowledge, experience, networks** and **resources** that are **valuable** not only **in supporting disability inclusion** in disaster risk reduction **but also in improving inclusion for** many **other** marginalized **groups** and for society as a whole.

The **benefits of** more **inclusive programming extend to all members of society**, and prioritization of **budget towards accessibility, reasonable accommodation and capacity development** of DPOs is an **investment that benefits everyone**. For instance, the application of accessibility standards and universal design to early warning systems increases the ability of these systems to warn persons with and without disabilities about potential threats. This is also helpful for other at-risk groups including older persons. New information and communications technologies, such as online mapping, crowdsourcing and social networking tools, also have the potential

²⁷ Ibid.



to engage, support and protect persons with disabilities during disasters.²⁸ However, such technologies must be fully accessible to all persons with disabilities, including the most-marginalized groups, and should be available in different languages, otherwise those without such access will be marginalized further.

A number of countries outside the region have already started to disaggregate data by disability, and tools exist to do this in a way that is comparable and effective. More **methodological consistency in data collection can be achieved**, for instance **by using the Washington Group questions**²⁹ together with appropriate tools, staff training and awareness raising on disability inclusion. Such practices should be replicated and scaled up in the region.

Inclusion and partnership need to be addressed well before the disaster occurs. This means representation of persons with disabilities in decision-making at all levels and forging meaningful and sustainable partnerships with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. **International institutions** such as UNDRR as well as **national governments** and **platforms for DRR** play a **convening role** in bringing together persons with disabilities, DPOs and DRR actors to create synergies through knowledge-sharing, networking and joint actions.

The priority gaps and opportunities identified in this document will best be met and embraced through **strengthening ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders**, including DPOs, national and international civil society organizations, local and national governments, and international coordination bodies.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Developed by the [Washington Group \(WG\) on Disability Statistics](#), formed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Document credits

This document was commissioned by the European Disability Forum and developed by Nino Gvetadze, an independent consultant.



The European Disability Forum

The European Disability Forum is an independent NGO that represents the interests of 100 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organization of persons with disabilities from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families. We are a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

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