

Disability and Disasters

Empowering people and building resilience to risk in Southeast Asia

Introduction – the problem and goals of our project

People with disabilities (PWDs) are four times more likely to die when a disaster strikes than those without disabilities. Yet PWDs remain unseen, unheard and unaccounted for in DRR. This affects 650 million PWDs in Southeast Asia alone.

There are multiple causes:

- **PWDs are often poor and are subject to dis-empowering stigmas**, discrimination and marginalization that perpetuate existing socio-cultural norms and beliefs;
- **Women and girls with disabilities are at greater risk** of physical and sexual abuse after disasters due to displacement and unsafe shelters and public spaces;
- **The physical and social isolation of PWDs hampers participation in daily life** – encouraging passivity and

them being seen as objects of care, limiting access to education, social networks and risk knowledge;

- **There is little empirical evidence on the challenges PWDs face** when responding to hazards and disasters;
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction mandates stronger inclusion of PWDs in DRR. Yet **pathways to achieving these new inclusion targets remain unclear** and fragmented due to a lack of disaggregated data on PWD needs, a disconnect between DRR strategies and disability rights-based laws and a lack of robust guidelines on how to mainstream disability-inclusive DRR (DiDRR);
- **DRR stakeholders have little knowledge on DiDRR and lack the skills and capacity** needed to mainstream DiDRR. There are few platforms to link DRR stakeholders

with those who have the skills and knowledge they lack – specifically, Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs) and PWDs themselves.

Funded through the Global Resilience Partnership, our multi-partner project (comprised of PWDs, DRR specialists and DPOs) aims to address these challenges and fulfil our overarching goal – inclusion for all.

Our goal

To strengthen the voices of PWDs in SE Asia (focusing on Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines) and provide them with the institutional and social support needed to respond effectively to hazards and disasters and to be champions of resilience and change.

Steps needed to achieve DiDRR

Placing PWDs at the centre of DRR requires a systems approach that simultaneously targets change in 3 vital and interconnected areas:

- Knowledge & skills;
- Changes in attitudes and beliefs about PWDs – from passive receivers of charity to knowledgeable champions; and
- Facilitating inclusive governance processes that support DiDRR.

Figure 1 demonstrates how we will achieve greater inclusion in DRR.

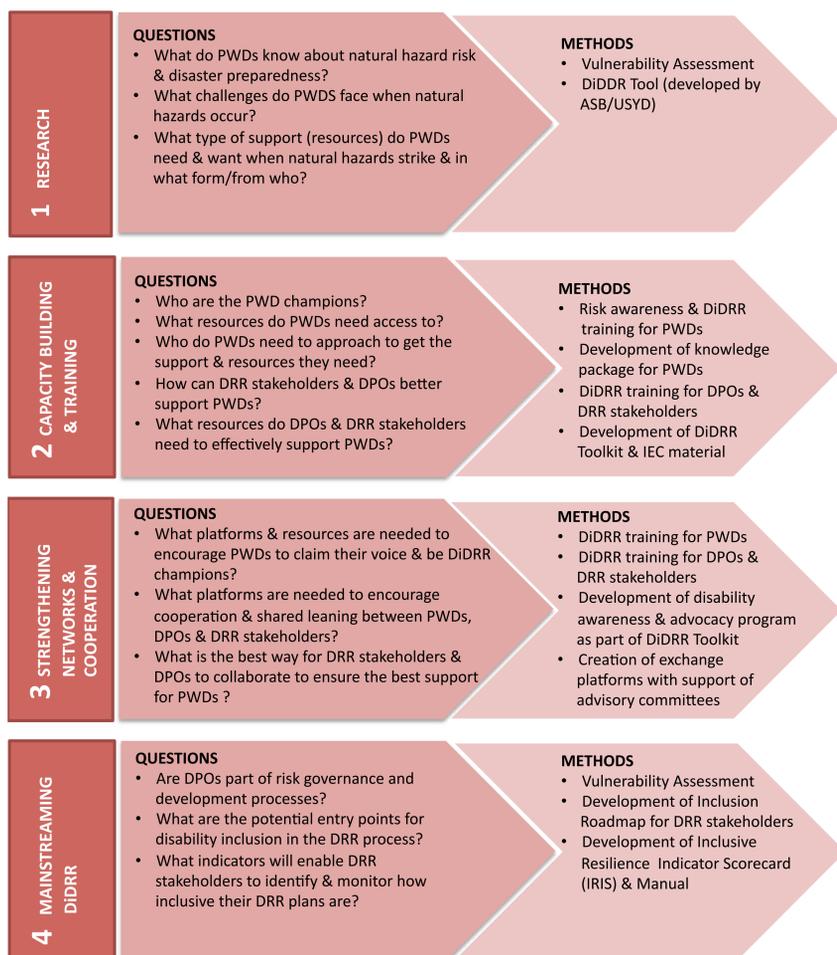


Figure 1. Pathways to DiDRR success

Achieving DiDRR requires collaboration between all actors

Achieving DiDRR requires a fundamental shift in DRR *strategy* and *practice*. DiDRR demands full integration – disability can no longer be an “add on” to existing DRR approaches. This requires collaboration and input by all main DiDRR stakeholders (Figure 2).

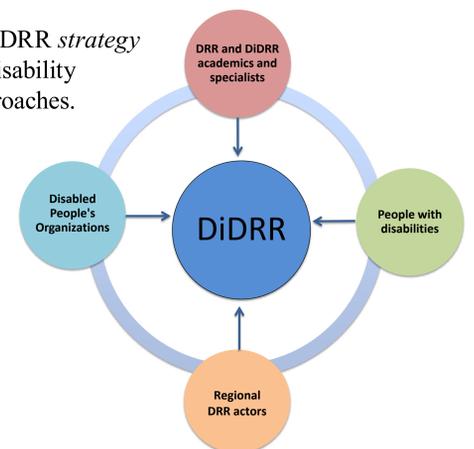


Figure 2. An all actor approach to DiDRR is needed

Our contributions to realizing the Sendai Framework targets

The rights of PWDs to be fully supported by DRR actors in disasters is recognized by the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and UNESCAP’s Incheon Strategy (2013–2022). The Sendai Framework for DRR (2015–2030) explicitly mandates stronger inclusion of PWDs in DRR.

To help contribute to this goal we will:

1. Increase knowledge & skills by providing empirical knowledge on what support PWDs need and how DRR actors can work with PWDs to ensure this support;
2. Foster changes in attitudes by empowering PWDs and DPOs to become champions in their communities and to work directly

with PWDs and DRR actors to facilitate shared learning;

3. Facilitate inclusive governance processes that support DiDRR (via trainings and workshops); and
4. Demonstrate DiDRR mainstreaming best practice by developing DiDRR toolkits that have been tested and refined by next-users and providing next-users with working examples of DiDRR.

Together, these actions and processes will create the foundations needed to support effective and durable DiDRR and will provide a model of best practice for other countries in SE Asia and beyond to follow and adapt.

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