



About Handicap International

“Handicap International is an independent and impartial international aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster.

We work alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, taking action and bearing witness in order to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.”

www.handicap-international.org

About this policy brief

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Authors

Véronique Walbaum
Disaster Risk Management
Technical Advisor
Julien Fouilland
Disaster Risk Management
Deputy

Editor and Layout

Stéphanie Deygas
Innovation and Knowledge
Management Unit
publications@handicap-international.org

This Brief is a summary document of the Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR) Policy Paper published in 2017. It provides a global overview of the ‘IDRR’ sector of intervention. We encourage you to read the [complete version](#).



Key messages

Disaster risks are highly significant due to increased vulnerabilities and less capacities to cope with natural and man-made hazards. In the last two decades, **218 million people each year** were affected by disasters; at an annual cost to the global economy that now exceeds \$300 billion¹. Disasters are likely to become more frequent. Indeed, **climate change increases the intensity and the upward trend** in the numbers of weather events, especially among coastal town, where the major part of the world’s population lives.

When disaster strikes, **the most at risk groups including persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected**. For example, according to the UN, only 1 person with disabilities in 5 from all over the world is in capacity to evacuate without difficulty in the event of disaster². Disaster usually means higher mortality for **women** than men and **children, young people and elderly** make up a large proportion of those affected. For instance, following the tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004, mortality among children under five was double than for adults over 50³. Moreover, such disasters may cause damages and casualties.

Fully aware of this situation, Handicap International has been active in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for 15 years. Its interventions expanded in the mid-2000s in Asia and are now also deployed in more than 20 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the years, HI learned from its experiences, using different modalities, all of which contributed to strengthening our strategy of inclusive DRR.

This Brief presents the HI inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (iDRR) purpose, methods of intervention and process, all resumed in the Policy Paper. The document also explains the transversal approach of the iDRR sector and demonstrates the need for a better account in hazard –prone areas. In addition to the Policy paper, an [iDRR toolbox](#) is available and provides a thematic support to all the staff members wishing to better manage disaster risks or at least to find precise references.

¹ World Humanitarian Summit, [Synthesis of the consultation process](#), 2016

², UNISDR, [Living with Disability and Disasters](#) (Survey), 2014

³ HI, CBM, IFRC, et al., [Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action](#), 2016

From disasters to risk reduction



Definitions

- **Disaster:** a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, or environmental losses and impacts which exceeds the ability of the affected community to cope using only its own resources.
- **Hazard:** a potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.
- **Natural hazards:** rapid or slow onset events such as geophysical (earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic activity), hydrological (avalanches and floods), climatological (extreme temperatures, drought and wildfires), meteorological (cyclones and storms/wave surges) or biological (disease epidemics and insect/animal plagues).
- **Man-made and technological hazards** such as conflicts, industrial and transport accidents are caused by humans and occur in or close to human settlements. This can include environmental degradation, pollution and accidents and have strong consequences of famine, displaced populations etc.
- **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.

Source: UNISDR. [Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction](#). 2009

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) consists in analyzing and managing the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and poverty, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events (UNISDR).

Hazards may be inevitable, but disasters can be prevented and their negative impacts can be lessened. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) consists in identifying, assessing and managing the causal factors of disasters. It supposes to reducing the **vulnerabilities** related to natural, man-made and technological hazards and to increasing **capacities** to deal with such hazards.

In fact, reinforcing the ability of people, organizations and systems, using available skills and resources, to face adverse conditions or emergencies is as much important as reducing the circumstances (from various physical, social, economic and environmental factors) that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

In this sense, risk is only considered as a probability of harmful consequences (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human induced hazards, the vulnerability conditions and the capacities of the group concerned.

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Exposure to Hazards X Vulnerabilities}}{\text{Capacities to cope}}$$

The objective of anticipating and reducing the potential impact of hazards lies on a global process to build resilience of people and communities, involving at least **three stages: risk reduction, emergency response and recovery**.

DRR practices reflect the major shift from the traditional emphasis on disaster response to disaster reduction, focusing on risk factors to prevent the onset and limit the impact of disasters. **This is no longer about 'reactiveness', we need to be 'proactive'**.

Risks need to be fully integrated in development and emergency programming. Although often used interchangeably with DRR, Disaster Risk Management can be considered as the implementation of DRR, since it describes the actions that aim to achieve the objective of reducing risks.

Disaster Risk Management does not start with a disaster.

- More information on DRR purpose on: [10 things you should know about disaster risk reduction](#) (video – 5'30), HPN, 2015

Why does Handicap International intervene in iDRR?



In summary

Hazards may be inevitable, but disasters can be prevented and their negative impacts can be lessened.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) consists in identifying, assessing and managing the causal factors of disasters.

“Investing in disaster risk reduction measures prior to disasters is far more (cost) effective than funding disaster response after a disaster” (Source: NGO Voice. [Funding Disaster Risk Reduction](#), 2013)

“Every dollar spent on preparing for disasters saves around seven dollars in economic losses” (Source: UNDP: [# Act Now - Save Later](#)).



A few statistics

- 77% of the person who were killed in North Aceh, following the tsunami in Indonesia, in 2004 were women. (Source: Oxfam. [The Tsunami's Impact on Women](#), 2005)
- In 2011, following the Great East Japan earthquake, 89% of the post disaster-related deaths corresponded to persons aged 65 and over. (Source: WHO. [World Report on Ageing and Health](#), 2015)
- During the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami, the fatality rate among persons with disabilities was twice than for the rest of the population (Source: UN. [Panel discussion on Disaster resilience and disability](#), 2013).

With the support of the DRR sector, HI is tackling both poverty and disaster situations (before, during and after the hazard occurs). HI is also contributing to improving living conditions on the long-term, and promoting basic human rights and specific inclusion issues. Finally, the principles of DRR interventions perfectly fit with HI mission and principles of intervention. HI's target groups are understood by the DRR community as the “most-at-risk groups”.

Several opportunities address Inclusive DRR as a main focus of interest within HI Federal Strategy for 2016-2025. In the first Priority actions: Inclusion of people with disabilities and vulnerable populations. In the second priority action, as part of the LRRD continuum and finally, in the third priority action: Solutions adapted to each context and facilitating the linkages between emergency and development.

Over the past 15 years, the mandate of HI in terms of inclusive DRR (iDRR) strategies and networks evolved. HI became an inclusive DRR practitioner, directly implementing inclusive DRR projects and building DRR actors capacities. Internally, HI country programs are integrating DRR as a component within development and humanitarian projects. HI also became part of an international advocacy around inclusive DRR.

In fact, DRR worldwide actions need to be more inclusive. Facing the same hazards, some individuals have less capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact. Hence, disasters have a stronger impact on vulnerable groups including people with disabilities. And disasters exacerbate vulnerabilities as well as social exclusion.

However, DRR practitioners are considered being not enough “inclusive” to make sure at risk groups including people with disabilities are fully engaged in DRR practices and would be less affected by disasters. By the time of disasters, they tend to be invisible in emergency registration systems and excluded from disaster management efforts. A 2013 global survey amongst 5,450 respondents with disabilities from 126 countries demonstrated that only 20% of respondents could evacuate immediately without difficulty (Source: UNISDR, [Global Survey of Persons with Disabilities](#), 2013).

HI, as a leading actor promoting and ensuring inclusion is then intervening in DRR. Considering that particularly groups (based on age, gender and disability) are at higher risk to disasters, Inclusive DRR is an effort to reduce vulnerabilities of the most excluded ones and to increase their capacities to reduce the risks.

To strengthen Inclusive DRR projects and DRR actors, HI outlined four main indicators that need to be assessed and improved:

- Ensuring the full participation in decision making of all at risk groups (based on age, gender and disabilities) and individuals including people with disabilities in identifying and reducing risk.
- Promoting diversity (of people, risks barriers, sectors and level of intervention).
- Appreciating and encouraging tailored approaches in link with “do not harm” ethics and “leaving no one behind”.
- Contributing to resilience for everyone by removing barriers that keep excluded people out.

How does Handicap International intervene in iDRR?



Several opportunities address Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction within HI Federal Strategy for 2016-2025

In the first Priority action:

- **1.1.2 Inclusion of people with disabilities and vulnerable populations:** In fact, improving access to mainstream services, access to specific services, and to improve the social participation of people with disabilities, to ensure they are offered equal opportunities can be implemented in emergency, post-emergency and development contexts.

In the second priority action, as part of the LRRD continuum:

- **2.4 Volume of activity doubled** through external growth and alliances.
- **2.4.3 Position ourselves as the strategic “disability-age-gender” partner of choice** for major emergency response actors.

DRR positioning in “disability-age-gender” can support HI intervention in response and strengthen the global approach around risk: from risk reduction stage to emergency and recovery.

In the third priority action:

- **3.5 Solutions adapted to each context** and facilitating the linkages between emergency and development.
- **3.5.2 Develop reference approaches** which ensure the relevance and impact of our projects on the whole emergency-development cycle.

To ensure the full and equal participation of at risk groups in DRR, Handicap International uses a twin track approach in its DRR projects:



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Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction consists in building capacities of local, national and international DRR stakeholders to integrate the most at risk groups including persons with disabilities in their mitigation, prevention, preparedness and relief programming. This is done through:

- **Assessing the level of inclusion in their DRR practices** (by referring to the 4 factors mentioned above)
- **Supporting them through awareness, information sharing, training, collection and dissemination of good practices, advocacy, and coaching** of DRR practitioners, by referring to the [AIATAC](#) process.
- **Empowering the most-at-risk groups**, using a personalized approach, providing individual and family social support and promoting specific services like specific evacuations support to people with disabilities in case of emergency.

In fact, access to services for people with disabilities and vulnerable people is central in the HI's theory of changes and the IDRR sector usually draws attention on 3 main actors to improve the services' access: the national level, the service providers and the civil society.



Intervention modalities



International references

The [Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2030](#) involves every individual and community in moving towards the goals of reducing the loss of lives, socio-economic setbacks and environmental damages caused by natural hazards. Thanks to the advocacy of HI and its partners, the document establishes people with disabilities and DPOs as major players in any DRR action.

The [2016 World Humanitarian Summit](#) strongly encouraged DRR objectives. The Summit reaffirmed the objective of “leaving no one behind, including most at risk groups and people with disabilities”.

The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals](#) recognizes the Sendai Framework and the importance of DRR all over strategies, indicators etc.

The [UN Framework on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) and its near-universal membership of 195 parties, considering that Investments in DRR can play an important role in supporting societies to adapt to climate change.

The [United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) covers a number of key DRR areas in the Articles 11 and 32. The recent adoption of the Dhaka Declaration on Disability and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) also establishes a close link between inclusive DRM and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) explains how to protect children to disasters: “Life, survival and development. Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child’s survival and development”.

The [Charter 14 Older people](#) focuses on the adoption of three key principles of an inclusive approach to DRR, that often insufficiently respond to older people’s disaster risks.

The [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) is currently elaborating a general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate.

There are two main entry points to work on Inclusive DRR in a HI program. Some of them are exclusively dedicated to the implementation of specific iDRR activities, but most of them promote an integrated approach, making good use of others sectors of interventions to promote resilience at every step of the risk management.

iDRR targeted Project: Direct intervention sector as IDRR actor and expert in consortium

A **designing and inception phase** is systematic: before starting any Inclusive DRR project in HI, after the key phase of documentation, information and analysis (See iDRR Toolbox: Exploratory mission analysis), the level and nature (field/extent/content) of the intervention need to be defined.

Then, there are **three intervention modalities** in HI iDRR-targeted projects (Note that all projects should consider expected results, indicators and activities, see details in [Policy paper](#)).

1. Strengthen inclusive DRR system and services. Here are just some examples of activities:

- Set up a DRR community task force including most-at-risk groups at local level
- To adopt and implement local, national, regional inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies and plans
- Integrate post-disaster reconstruction into the economic and social sustainable development of affected areas.

2. Empower most-at-risk groups and people for active participation in DRR initiatives. Here are just some examples of activities:

- Identification, information, referral of vulnerable households (personalized approach)
- Develop income generation strategies that address barriers and meet the needs of at risk groups (especially when basic need are not covered)
- Specific support (material/financial/architectural) to mitigate risks of most-at-risk individuals and households (mobility aids, home modification, etc.)

3. Understand disaster risk, disseminate and advocate. Such knowledge can be used for risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response. Here are just some examples of activities:

- Collecting data’s on hazards, using mapping and GIS; Publication of Inclusive VCA results etc.
- Production and broadcasting of accessible radio public service announcement
- To build the Inclusive DRR knowledge of government officials at all levels.

Intervention modalities (continued)



Perspective for 2016-2025

The main objectives for DRR are defined and supported by the Federation's strategy. Their aim is to:

- Strengthen and consolidate existing IDRR projects in order to improve the impact on vulnerable populations and move to bigger higher project scales through partnerships;
- Encourage the development of new projects in at risks areas, including in chronic drought areas;
- Help people adapt to a world of new challenges that increase the risk of disasters, such as climate change, population shift, and urbanization, and to help strengthen the resilience of populations in general;
- Develop sector-based linkages between DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA); and develop innovative inclusive pilot approaches;
- Encourage and strengthen DRR components in the organization's other thematic projects in order to foster the continuum/contiguum and increase the resilience of populations;
- Help develop an internal Disaster Risk Management strategy (before, during and after the disaster) aimed at strengthening coherency between Handicap International's DRR work in the field supporting populations and local actors during the first few hours of a disaster, its emergency responses to small, medium or large-scale disasters and its activities during the reconstruction phase.

After the inception phase, any Inclusive DRR project involves a strong monitoring and evaluation process, although evaluating DRR activities is a delicate task because, after all, the success of a project is only measurable as a whole when a disaster occurs.

IDRR as transversal approach and a support to encourage continuum

DRR is a common approach to reduce risk and build resilience in all context of HI intervention:

- Take into consideration risks in the analysis of the context in the **Operational Strategies for HI's Programs or Missions**
- Take into consideration risk reduction in **the project cycle management phases**
- Take into consideration risk reduction to ensure **the continuum in others HI sectors.**

Hazard-related risks should be considered both in general **development and humanitarian programming**, beyond DRR targeted projects. Vulnerability to natural hazards is complex and multi-faceted and needs to be addressed in an integrated manner.

More generally, DRR should be **an integral part of the project cycle management in hazard-prone areas.**

DRR can be easily mainstreamed in many HI sectors of intervention, ensuring the continuum by sector and building resilience of populations. Among these sectors, the [Policy paper](#) highlights a specific correspondence with the following in different phases of the disaster risk management cycle: risk reduction / emergency/ reconstruction ones:

- Physical Rehabilitation
- Health
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
- Protection and Community Security
- Livelihood
- Social Protection
- Education
- Urban Planning, Housing and Shelter
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Armed Violence Reduction

The [Policy paper](#) explains in detail the main reasons for associating all these sectors with DRR, and the way of proceeding during the risk reduction stage, the emergency response stage and the recovery stage. These references are not supposed to be exhaustive but should contribute to build HI 'culture of risk' in development and emergency.