



Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

Draft contribution on behalf of AIFO/RIDS

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To foster an exchange of experience between North and South DPO's corresponding with the CRPD.

Specific contribution of AIFO/RIDS:

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Global, regional, national and individual experience of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

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When the Tsunami stroke South-east Asia on 26 December 2004, the most fragile victims were the persons with disabilities. Indeed, natural or man-made disasters hit the most of persons with disabilities with a mortality rate that is the double of the general population:

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For this reason it is essential that, in all contexts and geographic areas, Disable People's Organizations be prepared to face disasters and be fully involved in the emergency response. These principles have been expressed in numerous occasions, specifically art.11 of the CRPD and just one year ago the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risks Reduction.

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This reasoning bring me to the point that the involvement of associations for people with disabilities in planning measures and in their implementation phases is essential for responding to their needs and rights. The more is invested in DPOs, the more we will be able to face disasters and respond to emergencies.

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In the province of Aceh NAD, in Indonesia, severely hit by the Tsunami, AIFO has run training courses for health personnel and for community volunteers on Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) with specific topics related to disabilities.

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Through community volunteers introducing progressive changes within the communities, AIFO ensured that PWDs were able to maximize their physical and mental abilities and to motivate communities to promote and protect their human rights.



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The volunteers were identified by the communities as being already care givers for the families with persons with disabilities. They played a crucial role in motivating the communities to promote and protect the human rights of PWDs .

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Inclusion of persons with disabilities in socio-economic activities to re-build their communities is a key objective of emergency and recovery programmes. The Community Based Rehabilitation approach, as defined by WHO, "is a multi-sectoral approach working to improve the equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of persons with disabilities".

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The collection of data in areas hit by disasters is also a key activity of any emergency response programmes. We need to know where peoples with disabilities are, what they need and with whom they are. An early data collection exercise was conducted by AIFO in the area hit by the Tsunami to orient rehabilitation programmes with regards to: Barriers, Onset of Disability and Impact on the livelihood of the households.

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The results of the survey conducted in Aceh NAD, Sumatra, are showing that physical barriers and inaccessible environments are still limiting the livelihood opportunities for PWDs. All these factors create vulnerability and dependency on their families. The work of CBR volunteers and the mainstreaming of disability is crucial to avoid isolation and stigma, enhance self-sufficiency and contribute to re-building the society,

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This action was implemented under the project "Disability and Emergency", funded by the Italian Cooperation.

The Italian Cooperation has created in 2011 a specific working group on "Emergency and Disability" in collaboration with the Italian Network of Disability and Development (RIDS), including AIFO, DPI Italy, EducAid and FISH. The "Italian Development Cooperation Disability Action Plan" was adopted in 2013 and a "Vademecum" or "Operational Guidelines" on Humanitarian Aid and Disability was approved by the Steering Committee of the Italian Cooperation on 19 November 2015.

The Vademecum is intended to provide a benchmark for aid workers in order to make their actions in emergency situations more respectful of the rights of people with disabilities, with careful attention to their needs and inclusion.



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A concrete experience we would like to share is the one that EducAid and AIFO have conducted in the Gaza Strip for the empowerment of DPOs promoting the rights of Women with Disabilities. The initiative was conducted despite the escalating armed confrontations and the bombings of July and August 2014. As you all know, the Gaza Strip is facing constant threats of disruption of basic services, mobility and economic activities that call for PWDs to get organized to ensure a decent livelihood and in many cases the survival.

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The project INCLUDE, implemented by EducAid and AIFO, with funding from the European Union, has a component on "Emancipatory Disability Research" (EDR) conducted by women with disabilities, as a pathway to promote empowerment that increases awareness and self-confidence and monitor respect of human rights.

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EDR is a comprehensive strategy for women with disabilities to engage actively in identifying, understanding and overcoming some of the barriers and initiate joint actions on the opportunities. This process aims at social transformation and initiating policy changes .

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In the West Bank the Emancipatory Disability Research process was conducted with three DPOs. Two of the groups involved were composed by Women with Disabilities (in Beith Sahour and Ramallah) and one, in Nablus, composed by mothers and sisters of women with disabilities and by local CBR volunteers.

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It is interesting to note that three main themes emerged from the research: i) the education and the problems identified within the education system; ii) the problems that lead to the lack of access to job opportunities; and iii) the lack of social networks for women with disabilities.

It is interesting to notice that the participants "isolated" macro-contextual factors (such as the military occupation) that are able to influence everything but cannot be directly impacted by policies centred on disability.

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In the Gaza Strip, investment on the CBOs and DPOs was also important. In particular strengthening the DPOs ability to communicate through media. A dedicated web site (~~include ps~~), the publication of a Magazine and videos were produced by the DPOs having received specific training of these subjects, the skills upgrade and the technology required.



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With regards to the Empowerment of Gazawi DPOs in order to improve their capacity to respond to WWDs needs, the following results were achieved:

- a. The number of PWDs involved by DPOs has increased to 22.000
- b. CBOs were trained on the social inclusion of WWDs.
- c. WWDs got trained on "how to do" a Radio Programme.
- d. media activists, got trained on social media skills and consequently trained 120 WWDs in the CBOs and DPOs.

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But advocacy is not all.

Through the Social Fund 34 micro-enterprises were funded. The call for proposals was disseminated through CBOs and DPOs, and 47 WWDs have participated to the training course to enhance their managerial skills. Overall, all grantees increased significantly their income and in some cases employed other WWDs in their enterprise.

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Finally, the inclusion of persons with disabilities should be the core of an effective humanitarian action. A strong message was sent by International NGOs to the World Humanitarian Summit, that will be held next May in Istanbul, to "correct the neglect of persons with disabilities, to ensure that their specific needs are met and enable them to participate to decision making". We fully share this initiative.

Thank you