



## 12. Support OPDs in leading on DIDRR



Members of Quang Ngai OPD at the opening of a new cultural centre and emergency shelter, as part of a project from CBM and Action to the Community Development Institute (ACDC). The OPD was involved in all stages of the project cycle. ©CBM/ACDC

The role of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) or a variation of these (e.g. self-help groups or informal associations) is critical at all levels in the inclusive community development/DIDRR nexus. They are important repositories of expertise and the platforms for persons with disabilities to become leaders of change. OPDs also have a multiplier effect in influencing other partners to become inclusive of persons with disabilities<sup>20</sup>.

Strengthening OPDs is key. However, mainstreaming DIDRR means the need to provide measures that can orient and strengthen the capacities of these organisations to incorporate DIDRR within their remit and practices not as a mere add-on. This necessitates multiple supportive actions. The box below can spark some ideas on how to provide this support.

### BACKING OPDs FOR DIDRR

Support people to get organised in the first place: do not assume that OPDs exist, are registered and can run projects.

Provide spaces to discuss and learn from their own concerns, including disasters and their impacts on their community development programs, their families and communities.

Discuss their own solutions, for example on how to make community development projects more disaster resilient.

Take measures so there is an adequate gender balance within these as well as consideration of intersectional issues (e.g. migration, childhood, age etc.).

Support organisations so they are present in official talks and platforms with the authorities and other stakeholders in regard to DRR. Frequently this requires financial backing.

Provide avenues for organisations to participate in developing contingency plans to ensure these are disability inclusive, while contributing to regional and local action plans.

Ensure there is synergy between OPDs and try to minimise fragmentation and/or competition.

Help in strengthening networks of OPDs and umbrella organisations and federations to have a stronger unified voice.

Harness their ability to influence governments and other key stakeholders to move away from charity and other disabling approaches and shift towards more rights-based ones.

Support capacity building of OPDs so they understand and are able to cope with disasters, building on existing experience and knowledge.

Support with establishing a clear role for OPDs in government DRR activities.

Facilitate increased visibility of these OPDs in crises-related and response activities, for example in food distribution, as well as regular community development activity to work on changing community attitudes towards persons with disabilities and perceptions regarding their contributions to the whole community.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the potential of OPDs in community development see USAID (2020). [Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development. Implementation Tips for USAID Partners](#). Inclusive Development, 7.

It is important to stress, though, that OPDs often need training to do much of this, and this training can be provided directly or indirectly by supporting access to learning opportunities offered by others too.

But even more basically, work is needed to back up these OPDs and also local partners in engaging with powerful stakeholders, including government authorities, DRR departments etc. It may be unrealistic to expect that in contexts of scarcity and low social and cultural capital that these organisations may be able to navigate these corridors of power on their own and without support<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the problems faced by these OPDs on the ground, see ASB et al. (2021) [Including Persons with Disabilities in Disaster Risk Reduction: A Research Study from Eight Countries of Africa, Asia and South/Central America](#).