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# Mainstreaming Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in Community Based Inclusive Development

A Situation Analysis

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**Title page photo:** Monsoon floods ravaged large parts of Pakistan in September 2022. CBM visited Matiari district, Sindh to meet flood affected communities and be the part of emergency response in collaboration with Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Hyderabad - The health department, Government of Sindh © CBM/Jamsyd Masud

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## Executive Summary

The situation confronting people with disabilities in disaster contexts remains dramatic, not only because of their vulnerability in volatile contexts, but critically because mainstream disaster risk reduction (DRR) continues to marginalise or flagrantly exclude them. Recent years have seen increasing attention devoted to Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR), backed by policy initiatives and frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). A number of organisations are also taking policy-level measures to aid this process, including through the mainstreaming of DIDRR across their community based inclusive development programmes (CBID).

This study takes stock and reviews the situation and the extent to which this mainstreaming of DIDRR in CBID is happening in practice, the barriers in place and the opportunity areas that can be tapped into to facilitate this process. Reporting on interviews held with practitioners from 13 countries working specifically in Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID), the findings highlight a rather challenging scenario, with implications for broader community development. In practice, despite the changes in rhetoric, DIDRR has a way to go before it is mainstreamed, not least because CBID and DIDRR continue to largely operate as siloed areas. The landscape is haunted by multiple and often interacting barriers, becoming more intense at a local level, including: absence of basic knowledge and training on disasters and DIDRR; a reactive approach to disasters; lack of flexibility and bureaucracy; lack or absence of funds, including contingency funding (e.g. crisis modifiers) and other anticipatory disaster financing mechanisms; overstretched and under-resourced implementing local partners and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs); lack of data; and extraneous factors cutting across the policy, physical, cultural and socio-economic terrains.

The report presents a substantial number of recommendations traversing the conceptual, organisational, strategic, capacity building and notably the financial spheres. A key message is that organisations engaged in CBID and community development more broadly need to step up work on the DIDRR/CBID nexus, to make this clear at planning stage, to put up the funds to make this possible without cutting corners, and to provide clear guidance for all. The recommendations also highlight, among other things, the need to open up to human induced disasters in increasingly turbulent globalised times; the need for well-resourced in-person capacity building and training, including on research; and to ensure that local resources, including partners are actually in place and equipped to deliver.

## 1. Introduction

The linkage between disability and disasters in the global South has been recognised in recent years, not least because people with disabilities are disproportionately exposed and vulnerable, including in climate related crises. They are two to four times more likely to be injured or to perish in a disaster event (UNESCAP, 2016) and often face extraordinary barriers when it comes to timely and accessible warning signs and evacuation (UNISDR, 2014; GFDRR, 2018), health care, medication and also food (Twigg et al., 2011, 2018). Overall, this situation is propagated by the exclusion or marginalisation of disability from mainstream disaster risk management (DRM), including DRR (Gvetadze and Pertiwi, 2022). The vulnerability of people with disabilities to disasters is not borne of impairment-imposed obstacles or lack of agency, but of contexts, systems and structures that often combine to weaken their resilience and effectively disable them. This includes disproportionate levels of poverty and inequality, lack or absence of social protection, exclusion from development activities (see Grech, 2019; Mitra, 2018) as well as discrimination and negative social attitudes and responses at multiple levels, from communities all the way up to service providers. People with disabilities are also far from homogeneous, which means that people are differentially impacted, for example women and children with disabilities, those from racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and also refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs).

Overall, climate related and human-induced disasters continue on the rise at a dramatic rate in an increasingly unstable and volatile globalised world, impacting those in the weakest positions, among them people with disabilities in the global South. As a result, recent years have seen shifts in discourse and also policies calling for disability inclusive disaster risk reduction, meaning a process that effectively includes the voices and demands of people with disabilities at all levels of DRR, and that works towards removal of barriers that disadvantage and disable. The premise here is that building resilience to disasters, including climate change, is most effectively achieved when those lingering on the margins are actively included and targeted, because this benefits everyone (CIEL, 2019).

Policies and frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and most notably the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR) (UNISDR, 2015) have supported the push for DIDRR. The Sendai Framework, in particular, focuses on the critical role of people with disabilities and their representative organisations in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and to ensure that all conditions are in place for their effective participation and empowerment. Inclusion also cross-cuts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals) and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Organisations, donors, the UN and other stakeholders have pronounced themselves too in support of DIDRR. The key message is clear: the inclusion of disability in DRR is a human right and the needs and demands of people with disabilities, their voices and concerns need to be heard and included in all aspects of disaster risk management as well as community development.

While DIDRR is still in its infancy, both conceptually and as an area of practice, it has found a home, at least at the level of discourse in approaches and programmes working on disability in the global South. One of these places has been within Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID), a people-centred, community driven and human rights-based approach working to ensure that people with disabilities are leading, respected and included in their communities on an equal basis

in all areas of life. Some international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are taking a lead role in mainstreaming disability inclusive disaster risk reduction (DIDRR) in community development, including Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) programmes. As climate-related crises, in particular, continue on the rise, there is a concerted push to reorient practices in ways that infuse disasters as a cross-cutting concern, to focus on the building of inclusive and disaster-resilient communities, echoing broader calls for collaborative action and community preparedness as key approaches in disaster risk reduction and climate action (see Pertiwi, 2019; Haque et al., 2022). Contemporaneously, alongside such efforts are targeted ones aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities are included in mainstream disaster risk reduction and response, while strengthening health, education, livelihoods, social welfare, social protection & disaster risk reduction systems in the process.

The need to mainstream DIDRR in CBID stands to reason, given that disasters impact development gains made, with the implication that infusing resilience across all levels is not a matter of choice, but one of avoiding collapse or interruption. Mainstreaming DIDRR also supports key rights and frameworks such as the SFDRR and the CRPD, while serving as a consistent reminder that communities have the duty and obligation to protect those most exposed and vulnerable to disasters. Importantly, inherent in mainstreaming is a corresponding need to reflect on our own practices, in this case CBID and more broadly community development practice, to ensure they are genuinely disaster-sensitive-ready and responsive.

However, and in spite of these positive discursive changes, there is still little information as to what the mainstreaming situation actually is on the ground, and where the gaps and opportunity areas are, including training. This situation is accentuated by the lack of a coherent strategy as to how to go about mainstreaming DIDRR in CBID, backed by a concrete lack of research and documentation on the subject. In the absence of this, there is a risk of a pronounced disjuncture between rhetoric and practice. Such barriers to an extent reflect the obstacles in the inclusion of disability in mainstream disaster risk reduction and management (see EDF, 2021).

This study responds to these concerns and seeks to take stock, to assess the level of engagement with disasters and DIDRR within mainstream CBID with a view to identifying the key barriers and opportunity areas to effective, responsive and disaster sensitive CBID. The main objectives of this study are to:

- Understand the perceived relevance, linkages and importance of disasters, climate change and DIDRR in CBID work
- Assess the state of integration of DIDRR in CBID
- Explore and articulate the level of understanding of disasters, including climate related ones, their impacts on people with disabilities and their families and DIDRR approaches among those involved in CBID
- Understand what resources and measures (including in policies) (if any) are in place to prepare for disasters in CBID
- Gauge the extent of understanding of structures, processes and stakeholders in DIDRR (e.g. humanitarian and emergency organisations, government departments etc.)
- Critically understand the main barriers to effectively including disasters and DIDRR in CBID
- Identify key knowledge and skills gaps on disasters and DIDRR
- Identify main training needs

Through this, this study hopes to provide some key recommendations for those working in CBID and more broadly community development, to inform an evidence-based mainstreaming process that is sensitive to disasters, that can genuinely have impact, where DIDRR is not a mere add-on, but indeed a transformative practice in CBID.

## 2. Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted with the objective of prioritising the views and perceptions of those engaged directly in CBID work. Sampling was purposive, and the main methods employed were in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 stakeholders working specifically in CBID at a management level in 13 countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Sudan, Zimbabwe). To be clear, the objective was not a focus on DIDRR-specific programmes or mainstream DRR programmes with a disability focus, but on mainstream CBID ones.

Interviews were conducted online by the lead researcher and author. Interviews encouraged reflection on the state of mainstreaming of DIDRR within CBID, with a view to not simply describe the situation, but to engage in thinking on where the main perceived problematic areas are and to explore avenues for potential change. This study is not meant to generalise across all CBID everywhere, but instead seeks to provide a snapshot that can inform future planning and practice.

The study adopted thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as an effective inductive approach toward fleshing out and organising the main emerging themes. The process involved a reading of the transcripts, followed by a coding of the data, and generation of the key themes, which are presented as key findings below.

The study was ethically reviewed and cleared by the Human research Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town. All standard ethical procedures were followed, including informed consent and the respective rights and obligations including confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw from the study. All names have been purposefully removed as well as key references to any country, specifically to protect participants.

### 2.1 Limitations

Interviews were conducted only with English speaking participants, which means that many other voices and perspectives from multiple and very different contexts and countries are not covered by this study. Importantly, these are the voices of management personnel, often speaking about and on behalf of local partners, including OPDs as well as communities. This limits the scope, depth and breadth of this analysis and excludes what are perhaps the most critical components in the CBID equation. This exclusion was borne of resource limitations.

All interview participants were in senior roles in programme development. None of them, however, had personally participated in specific training in DIDRR, DIDRR mainstreaming or on the implementation of internal contingency funding mechanisms. Often CBID practitioners have no or limited interaction with the teams working on DIDRR in the country.

## 3. Findings

The sections below present the main findings of the study and are separated into: the current situation; barriers to mainstreaming; and conclusions and recommendations.

### 3.1 The current situation

#### 3.1.1 Disasters and climate change: relevant but not core issues in CBID

The first key finding was that disasters and climate change are pertinent issues in context, not least because they impact most activities to varying extents, for example sustainable livelihoods, crop or property, especially without preparedness. There was a shared understanding between participants that disasters are relevant, but this was mostly because they are inevitable and impossible to ignore and because they do destroy development gains made by CBID programmes. The poverty caused by disasters and which in turn causes vulnerability to more crises seemed to be a critical connector between CBID and DIDRR as areas of potential cross-over. It was also clear that disasters and climate change are areas of concern in contexts typified by higher frequency and intensity of events such as floods and drought to the extent that some or other attention to these is inevitable. They are also of increasing importance in places characterised by conflict and forced migration, including when these are a result of climate change and/or other natural disasters posing an extraordinary strain on resources and survival such as via food insecurity. This was not quite the case in other contexts where disasters are less frequent, expressing less interest in these subjects. In a similar fashion, Whitmarsh (2008:351) speaks about the ‘intangibility of climate change as a key impediment to personal engagement’.

However, and while the majority of participants felt that disasters and climate change are relevant to CBID work, it was clear that this relevance is consequential, and are not seen as core or cross-cutting areas in their portfolio. In this regard, they are conceptually and practically not always planned for, marginally visible when they hit, and then fade back again. Some commented that, in fact, disasters are a concern only when they actually do happen, while in those that are not so disaster-prone, it is just a ‘pure CBID approach’. At best, some mapping exercises may be done or other quick-fix activities not part of a broader strategy and approach, but these are far from enough or satisfactory.

In this regard, participants felt that there are multiple gaps that contribute to this situation, starting from the absence of disasters and climate change from key tools such as the CBR matrix, which, despite its dated limitations, continues to be an important resource in many local contexts. One participant explained how the matrix is often adopted as a tick-box exercise by some local partners and OPDs, and anything not in there, is flatly not addressed. More clearly, disasters are not infused or ingrained themes within CBID activities such as livelihoods or advocacy, and are in this regard understood and approached as something extraneous, especially by partners. In fact, most of the participants interviewed felt that they themselves lack sufficient technical knowledge on disasters and climate change, a gap that cascades to and becomes even more dire among implementing partners, OPDs and the community. A number attributed this marginality to the lack of guidance on how to mainstream DIDRR alongside funding limitations. These issues are discussed in more depth below.

#### 3.1.2 CBID and DIDRR: Siloed Approaches



The emphasis on building resilience in CBID, it was evident, is perhaps the only connector between this and DIDRR, especially in contexts that are not so disaster-prone or exposed to the effects of climate change. Some CBID programmes are infusing elements of DIDRR, for example those working towards resilient livelihoods to minimise losses (and costs) through stresses and shocks. In a small number of places, there may be a DIDRR project running concurrently with ordinary CBID activities, but there appears to be no established pattern and little coordination. One participant explained how it is cheaper to prevent than to manage a disaster, and therefore that it is obvious as to why DIDRR may be important in CBID. In others, it was a question of demand and necessity in the context they operate in. Indeed, factoring in components such as conflict and inter-ethnic issues is critical in some places, even if this does not mean active engagement in DIDRR or systematic programming. One example in particular stood out whereby DIDRR was included in a CBID programme with the objective of improving disaster preparedness in education.

However, evidence from the study clearly suggests that despite all efforts, the current situation is a siloed approach where DIDRR is still perceived as a separate area of intervention from CBID. In parts, this situation is similar to the problems encountered in the mainstreaming of disability in international development, whereby the two parts may be dichotomised or only occasionally come together (see Grech, 2022). In fact, in the study, there frequently appeared to be a reference to disaster-specific work that may be being done, for example a DIDRR project, as opposed to disaster concerns and DIDRR being infused within CBID. These are two very different things. Indeed, it is clear that DIDRR is far from being mainstreamed in CBID. In most of the countries interviewed, findings highlight how DIDRR is perceived as a specialist area they lack knowledge in, requiring human resources they do not have, and costs they cannot cover. This confronted the reactive approach to disasters highlighted above- and then picking up the pieces and moving on, with the implication that there is hardly any investment in informed and resourced preparation and system strengthening across all levels. This reactive approach is discussed further in the next section. One participant stressed how while in practice partners have participatory processes, and OPDs are part of planning, they are focusing on existing challenges as opposed to forecasting or preparing. Climate change, as this participant stressed, 'becomes relevant when its actual impacts are felt in the present, but they (partners) lack skills to consider unseen disasters in the CBID programme- they rely instead on the existing scenario'. Another participant summarised the situation in detail:

It is a very new topic...embedding DIDRR in CBID is very little...it is not included...even the knowledge about it at the country, partner, community, persons with disabilities level, is not enough- it is not something we are including systematically...not in the development programme...we only react...not proactive.

In some cases, it may well be too late. This process is made harder when communities themselves are not so aware of or knowledgeable of how to prepare for and respond to climate related crises which feeds into the cycle of exclusion (see below).

A small number of participants felt they were left to their own devices, seeking help from humanitarian organisations when disasters actually hit as opposed to preparing for them. Others commented how in many instances, DIDRR is viewed as someone else's responsibility, notably the government, as opposed to being a cross-cutting and multi-sectoral theme and in which CBID has a direct stake and contribution. This appears to contribute to misunderstandings about the extent to which DIDRR is relevant to CBID, and which then leads to gaps in how CBID programmes are designed and what they actually include.

Overall, mainstreaming DIDRR within CBID programmes looks unlikely without concerted change in strategic, human, informational, economic and capacity building areas and a change in mindset that DIDRR is a constitutive part of CBID. These gaps, as will be highlighted briefly, are frequent, intense, complex and operate at all levels, beyond the country offices.

### 3.2. The challenges to mainstreaming

The following subsections address the barriers that maintain this situation in practice and that contribute to the fissure between CBID and DIDRR documented by participants. It was evident from the study that these barriers cut across conceptual, programmatic, structural, organisational, technical, financial and also social and cultural domains. They are also not mutually exclusive, are often operative together, and impact to different degrees in different contexts, becoming more complex and intense at partner and community levels.

#### 3.2.1. A reactive approach to disasters: no planning, strategy, coordination or harmonisation

Participants were clear in articulating that substantial problems emerge at an organisational level and how disasters are approached (or otherwise) in CBID, planned for, and if there is genuine willingness to invest to make the inclusion of DIDRR possible in CBID in ways that actually do respond to the needs in context beyond mere rhetoric.

Those from disaster-prone areas, were clear in addressing the requirement to be proactive immediately after a disaster and to then immediately plan for DRR, but were even more specific that this requires resources backed by planning and a budget. However, the reality they presented was very different to this. It was one characterised by lack of resources (highlighted below), little to no focus and investment in prevention (especially in areas that are costly), lack of guidelines on how to include DIDRR, and weak to no deliberate and focused planning to incorporate disasters and climate change in CBID. One participant stressed how disasters are on the rise, yet her organisation still struggles to incorporate forced migration and the needs of internally displaced people. There is a concrete need to strengthen the response especially when it comes to conflict-related crises in such turbulent times because they do impact CBID activities. Instead, participants suggested, there is sometimes a pattern of moving on with development activities most of the time with no real responsiveness to real life crises. One participant recounted how they were operating in contexts that are bordering highly volatile and dangerous spaces, but there was little to no consideration and provisions within the organisation to account for issues of staff security, rapid evacuation, what to do in cross-fires, and how to support refugees.

One concern raised was that at a ground level it is not always clear that DIDRR is and needs to be a core component of CBID at a programme planning and design stage, that it requires mainstreaming at all levels, and there is still a lack of guidance as to how to go about this. Instead, it keeps on being seen as something separate, an exclusion that starts at programme ideation stage. Consequently, DIDRR is perceived as a standalone or separate project or even area of practice. The connection cannot be assumed at all. Another issue raised is that people writing proposals for funded projects do not always pay attention to DIDRR, which means that it is then excluded at all levels.

One participant explained how there is no routine organisational approach to emergency priming, how they cannot tell what the potential scenarios are or to map the hazards, how they are unable to develop a response plan or target an area for intervention. He went on to articulate how the result is an approach to DIDRR that is either one of panicked response or an isolated project as opposed to a planned mainstreamed approach that cross cuts CBID.

Another interviewee expressed how the country structures of the INGO continue to miss out on opportunities resulting from the lack of a hybrid and integrated approach and how they do not know how to leverage resources. It was suggested that whether disasters and climate change are included or not, depends on whether head office pushes for effective inclusion, with the implication that when it is not, DIDRR slips out of focus, not least because funds will not be made available. This is critical when projects are aligned with where the money is.

The findings also highlight lack of clarity as to what country INGO structures are required to do in relation to DIDRR specifically in CBID, how to go about doing it, and what this necessitates. It was clear that the process seemed vague and some had no idea where to start off from. This participant explained the situation:

On one side there is talk about Inclusive DRR, but we do not really know how...and we need the advisor to tell us...and partners even worse, you need to tell them...be clear what to do...and we do not have the tools.

Probed further as to why they believe this gap exists, participants noted that it may be because DIDRR is still a new area, or because it does not feature in the CBR matrix or because there are still no effective guidelines available to them.

Critically, there is a lack of a harmonised strategy and approach across CBID and DIDRR. This, it would appear, feeds back into the siloed approach documented above. For a number of participants, this scenario was maintained by an organisational approach to CBID that may look for cheaper alternatives and/or does not always respond to the particular needs within local contexts, especially those that are more volatile and require resources quickly and with few obstacles, such as those in conflict situations (see below):

You get many messages at the same time, but one thing we know...to do this well you need resources... a lot... and you need to be quick and comprehensive...instead what we do is like patching, a bit here, a bit there and we move on.

Participants also mentioned difficulties coordinating with other thematic areas on account of a lack of interagency coordination, for example between inclusive education and disasters. It was clear that there isn't a shared approach, including how the priorities of local partners fit or otherwise into the immediate priorities on DIDRR of the organisation and how to go about pulling these together. One participant noted how even within one organisation, there may be lack of collaboration between DIDRR and CBID personnel during proposal writing, a process which reinforces the disjuncture.

### 3.2.2. Lack of flexibility and cumbersome bureaucracy

Realities and situations often change quickly especially in volatile contexts, for example when there is violence after an election. Incidents such as these impact CBID work at any point and without warning. However, as participants went on to note, the way that CBID programmes are planned,

structured and executed, often leaves little to no flexibility to quickly shift things around in an unexpected situation. This not only does not help with averting a crisis but is a source of crisis in itself, because the inability to respond often leads to concrete interruptions in core CBID activities and gains made. The feedback in this study was that not only is there little accounting for disasters at the level of planning, but how this is compensated by a sluggish approach in times where quick response is required. While this may be more related to humanitarian response than DRR per se, it reinforces the status quo and the mentality that preparing for disasters, as one interviewee put it, 'is ultimately not our business in CBID'. One other person noted how there was a difference between demanding that DRR is included in the CBID portfolio, and providing local stakeholders with the resources to do this, including efficient, flexible and responsive structures.

Another point that was mentioned was the slowness and bureaucracy involved in attempting to prepare for and/or react to a disaster. Participants articulated how donor procedures, too, may be cumbersome and unresponsive. One participant documented how in the midst of crisis situations, they have had to rewrite proposals, try and find a budget, get the proposal evaluated and authorised, which meant consistently responding late or not responding at all. Bureaucracy can be so cumbersome that it acts as a disincentive to engage with disasters and incorporate DIDRR in the first place. This same participant emphasised how 'it is important to address needs as they come, so you do not go through all of these things', but instead, this 'rigidity in process is rigidity in the boundaries of CBID programming', boundaries not quite permeable as it seems. One participant was very direct:

...we are not in place with the internal processes, to go through proposals quickly, to get funds quickly, and to go back to areas, identify partners, partner assessment process etc. so we cannot make things happen quickly...these processes are not lending themselves to good DRR or humanitarian. I think we need to re-evaluate how we do things.

Another summarised the situation concisely: 'Sometimes a disaster comes and goes and the donor organisation is still trying to work things out'.

### 3.2.3. No contingency funding built into CBID programmes

The major barrier for the bulk of participants was the virtual absence of what they called 'contingency funding' or crisis modifiers at the level of programming, followed by the complexity and tardiness of attempting to obtain funds in times of crises (see above).

It was abundantly clear that the fact that contingency funding is not included in CBID programming, reinforces the mentality that disasters and DRR are in actual fact no business of CBID, simply because it is impossible to react, strengthening further the siloed approach. As one participant put it:

It is little use to tell us that IDRR is to be mainstreamed in CBID and then not make money available to prepare for or to react to disasters...what message are we sending?

The barriers are not only interpretive, but also practical. The absence of crisis modifiers in planning and budgeting, means that programmes in practice, do not have the capacity to prepare or respond:

...so we need to respond to disasters on top of all the work we do, and then we tell donors 'here is a disaster coming and we need money to avoid a disaster, and then the door is closed...so what is the point?'

While admittedly COVID provided an exception to the rule, participants feared that this was a one-off, it was far from enough, and that money needs to be made available in a reasonable amount, quickly and efficiently for every country. As another participant emphasised, 'If we are going to mainstream DIDRR in CBID, then contingency funding should become mandatory...full stop'.

This situation becomes even more critical in crises such as conflicts and displacement, reflecting a stronger focus in CBID on slow onset natural disasters, and a corresponding tendency to ignore human disasters that follow, for example those migrating and resulting in conflict as they search for food, including for their livestock. These are core concerns that dominate some programme contexts more than others.

### 3.2.3.1 Other funding bottlenecks

Compensating this situation are lack of funds to infuse DIDRR projects within CBID, for example to invest in disaster resistant housing or schooling. Probed further as to why this is the case, most participants noted that it is borne of a mentality towards CBID as a more development rather than disaster-oriented practice that has to work with little money, meeting practical and other limitations.

Other funding bottlenecks, it was noted, result from donor conditionalities that may not always respond to what the actual needs are on the ground, which means continued design and implementation of programmes and projects that are in turn not quite contextualised or localised.

One recurrent constraint documented by participants is that operating budgets are often not enough to take on more programmes on board. One participant commented that there is sometimes hardly enough to do routine CBID activities, let alone to add on something else. Another explained how CBID funds are often limited to only one budget cycle (approx. 3 years), which affects if and how anything else can actually be included in the present and the future. Another highlighted how, at best, ongoing CBID programmes may have a basic component of DIDRR such as awareness-raising on DRR in intervention areas and among stakeholders such as government, but these are minimal in practice and with dubious impact. Funding may be so scarce, that as one participant noted, there is no funding to even 'do proper risk assessments or capacity building for partners' with the result that there is an even scarcer capacity to engage with DIDRR effectively.

### 3.2.4 "There is only as much as we can do, with so little time, with such a heavy workload and with so little"

The quote above is rather self-explanatory. The scenario described by participants was one of local stakeholders, including OPDs that are already over-stretched with regular CBID activities and which leaves little space and time for DIDRR activities, especially without additional funds and training. Within systems that are already struggling, the inclusion of DIDRR activities may be perceived as an added burden or competing demand that they are not equipped to deal with. As a result, and perhaps inevitably, many choose to proceed with the normal CBID projects they are tasked with. Contemporaneously, it pitches DIDRR as a separate or specialised area or field. This quote captures the scenario:

We are at breaking point with what we already have, because we are trying to see how to do all and...with so little...and we cannot go to partners, who are already exhausted to tell them 'you have to do DRR work now on top of all that'... Something has to give, and we understand that.

### 3.2.5 Extraneous factors

Barriers documented by participants included a number of extraneous factors, often working in combination.

#### 3.2.5.1 Ineffective policies

For those engaged fluidly in DIDRR, even at the margins, one major concern were the inefficiencies in policies on DRR within their respective countries. Participants commented how the policies may be there, for example on the inclusion of vulnerable populations in disaster risk management, but in practice there is little to no implementation and much less enforcement. They recounted how these policies become even more invisible and ineffective at a local level. Awareness and also initiatives are scarce. Together, all of these barriers translate into concrete disincentives to even attempt engaging in DIDRR and to focus instead on at least trying to maintain gains made in generic CBID projects. This participant was emphatic: 'in this place where policies do not work...better at least try to achieve something in our normal work. We cannot be too ambitious'.

#### 3.2.5.2 Infrastructural, political and socio-economic environment

From inaccessible or inexistent evacuation routes and early warning systems to transportation problems, trying to include a DIDRR component is complex. Participants commented how basic infrastructure (for example roads) are hard to navigate by people with no disabilities, becoming inaccessible for people with disabilities, especially in a situation of emergency. The infrastructure itself is an extraordinary challenge on its own. It also impacts the ability of partners to mobilise, to conduct CBID activities, interact with policy makers, and so on.

A host of political and socio-economic hurdles come to the fore, the bulk of which are out of the control of those working in CBID, but which impact the extent to which DIDRR can even be considered. Insecurity, for example, makes access to information really difficult, while wars, conflict and ambushes impact participation in projects, a number of participants noted.

Relationships with local authorities (e.g. the secretariat or department on DRR), participants stressed, are also complicated because politically they are powerful, but in practice may not be inclusive at all, have no idea what to do with people with disabilities, or may not even be interested. They may have little to no knowledge of disability rights or laws and also do not want to learn, and they may be resistant. As one participant succinctly put it, 'the government is for the majority...and they will say 'there is no money for this or that because they do not want to do anything. You cannot expect anything'. Others commented how government attitudes towards disability (e.g. charitable or medicalised) distil notions of rights that people and communities should have, including those to effective DIDRR policies and practices. A key message here is that advocacy efforts meet insurmountable barriers, ranging from indifference to resistance to outright rejection, at the local

level in particular. One interviewee explained how so much effort is invested in advocacy with the local mayor to try and provision some or other support for disability, which is then lost with each local election and a change of government. One final point here is that even with goodwill and some or other commitment to the cause, authorities too often do not have the resources to mobilise themselves in a disaster situation, let alone cater for people with disabilities. More basically, as one interviewee put it, 'there is a wide space between what we hope to do...unrealistically at times...and what the reality of what we can do actually is'.

Indeed, one key message from this study was that there are too many variables out of the control of those working on the ground and that constantly impact CBID efforts, making the struggle to stay afloat persistent. The economic conditions of communities themselves, notably chronic and often grinding extreme poverty are too relevant here, because basic and immediate needs come to dominate. Once again, in a scenario of constrained resources, these come to compete with those required for anticipatory DIDRR activities, so CBID programmes are forced to prioritise.

It was also noted how local partners frequently do not really consider how disasters affect their development priorities, and hence focus on existing scenarios, so if harvesting for example is going well, then they do not consider potential drought in the next cycle. Once again, this signals a fissure between development and DRR, and between present concerns and forecasting the future.

The current economic crisis, including inflation and high food and utility prices are also having grinding effects. Participants noted how increasing poverty is making it very difficult for people with disabilities and also OPDs to merely survive, impacting not only their livelihoods, but also their participation in CBID. Those interviewed, documented how higher prices and unemployment are having their impacts on OPDs, the bulk of which are composed of volunteers, themselves in conditions of poverty. Members, one participant documented, are struggling to participate in CBID projects because they cannot even afford to turn up for meetings because their time is almost wholly taken up searching for work to simply stay alive. Probed further on this, participants noted how the absence of safeguards such as contingency funding in CBID to try and cushion some of these impacts (e.g. rising food prices), means that interruption can be relentless and participation in debates or processes on DIDRR virtually impossible. This is discussed further below.

### 3.2.5.3 Cultural and intersectional dimensions

Cultural, spiritual, religious and other beliefs frame how disability is understood, but also impact how others respond to it (Classens et al., 2018). In sum, they affect if and how disability may be constructed as a blessing or a burden and also determine responses, be they positive or negative (Grech, 2015). A small number of participants emphasised how these beliefs extend to nature and disasters too, especially among indigenous populations (see also Sachdeva, 2016). They may have certain beliefs about the role of nature and why it responds in the way it does, which are not be scientific, but which influence behaviours such as the cutting of trees (and how this is interpreted), alongside understandings of climate change. In this regard, drought or floods, for example, may not be understood as outcomes of climate change, because climate change itself is not always intelligible as a narrative in a local context. Interviewees stated that it is often difficult to work with communities that have such different beliefs, who may not quite see the problem for what it is, and may not be willing to prepare for disasters.

It was also noted that certain community practices may also be contributing to the problem, notably environmental damage. Specifically, basic urgent needs and attempts at mere survival may contribute to deforestation, which makes it very difficult to then try and educate towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices and tougher to try and plan for disasters, becoming practically impossible to do this in disability-inclusive ways.

These dimensions become even more complex, when one brings intersectional dimensions into the mix, to include race, gender and ethnicity among others, and the tensions that emerge from these. Participants in a number of countries stressed how racial and ethnic divisions are cause for conflict within their CBID areas, with the implication that these constantly need to be factored into CBID operations.

### 3.2.6 Local CBID providers and OPDs: limited capacity and coordination

Much literature on DIDRR (see Pertiwi et al., 2019), including the DIDRR good practices report recently published by CBM (Grech, 2022), highlights the importance of equipped and strong OPDs and local partners to not only participate, but indeed to lead on DIDRR. However, as participants noted, in practice, this is far from the case. Instead, what participants presented was a landscape of weak local partners, struggling economically and politically, that lack capacity and are ill-equipped. The obstacles are multiple:

- OPDs may not always exist and/or may not be legally registered
- Local CBID providers frequently do not have adequate structures in place, for example to pay salaries or to receive funds, let alone to manage or work on complex CBID/DIDRR projects or advocacy
- Many of these OPDs are composed of people living in poverty giving their time voluntarily which means that survival takes over as priority (see above)
- Local partners do not always have the skills to coordinate and/or manage or run projects.
- They are short on financial, social and linking capital, and therefore have limited contact or access to key stakeholders such as policy makers, and which in turn limits their lobbying capacity.
- OPDs and CBID providers are over-stretched (see above): as one participant stressed ‘their mandate does not cover DIDRR, so it is seen as an add-on they just cannot take on’.
- Lack of coordination: local partners are frequently operating in silos and/or are fragmented or geographically dispersed, do not come together and do not speak as one voice. This distils their influence and power at all levels.
- Basic disaster and DIDRR knowledge is scarce, a situation accentuated by the absence of contextualised training on the subject (see below).
- Low levels of education: they cannot always read or understand policy papers such as the CRPD or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR).
- Disability focus: local partners and OPDs may have an excessively restricted focus on disability and fail to grasp how disasters and DIDRR are relevant to and impact their work.

### 3.2.7 Lack of knowledge and training: from technical issues to complex intersections



One of the major barriers to effective mainstreaming of DIDRR in CBID was lack of DIDRR related knowledge across the board, becoming more intense at local partner level, OPDs and communities. Participants described multiple gaps in knowledge, including conceptual, policy, institutional and also technical ones, for example how DIDRR interfaces with CBID and how it can be effectively mainstreamed. This was bound to the virtual absence of training on DIDRR as well as exposure to such activities in practice. As one participant in the study stated, ‘DIDRR is often not discussed at any level from project development through to implementation, and there is no training on DRR, and if you are not working on a programme with a DRR component, then you probably do not know much about it...partners very low’. Knowledge gaps identified by participants were multiple:

- Lack of clarity and understanding of what DRR and DIDRR actually mean.
- Scarce awareness and knowledge, for example on periods of disasters, locations, frequency, impacts and so on within context.
- Unclear or little information on how disasters impact people with disabilities and how to use this information, for example for advocacy and in CBID.
- Lack of knowledge on how disasters interact with and impact normal CBID activities and programmes and how DIDRR fits into mainstream CBID
- Scarce technical knowledge in relation to how normal CBID activities can be made more disaster- resilient, for example by using drought-resistant crops in a livelihoods project or including disaster concerns (such as floods) in a gender-based violence project.
- Poor understanding of the connections between natural and human disasters, reinforced by lack of resources on how to intervene: for example, drought pushing people and herders in search of more fertile pastures, leading to inter-ethnic conflict between different people from different religions, spiralling into crisis.
- Little to no technical understanding of the basics of DRR and DIDRR (e.g. early warning systems, evacuation routes etc.).
- Weak or no knowledge of policies such as the Sendai Framework and what they mean, interconnections with other frameworks such as the CRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), what their implications are for CBID, and how they can be effectively used, for example for advocacy purposes.
- Patchy understanding of governance structures, who the main stakeholders are, for example government authorities engaged in DRR, where they are located, and how to approach and work with them.
- Lack of basic research skills, including for documentation purposes (see below).
- Poor disability awareness among those working in mainstream DRR: this serves to diminish contact and interaction between both areas even further, impacting any transfer of knowledge.

### 3.2.8 Lack of data and problems in accessing or creating it

The need to generate quality data that can be used for advocacy and implementation is a core component of effective DIDRR, especially when this data generation is steered by local OPDs (see Villeneuve et al., 2021). However, the situation in practice in many local contexts is one typified by fragmented or absent disability disaggregated data which impacts not only advocacy with external stakeholders, but also ‘internally’ to highlight the importance of DIDRR within CBID. The barriers documented in this study, are multiple:

- Scarce data on the impacts of disasters on people with disabilities and the numbers left with an impairment or who perish
- Fragmented or unavailable official data on disasters
- Scarce to no information on early warning systems, evacuation routes, where these are located, whether they are accessible or not.
- Incomplete information and mapping of people with disabilities who are vulnerable to disasters and where they are located within communities.
- Lack of data on an area, including numbers of IDPs (also with disabilities).
- Information gaps on how many people with disabilities in disaster contexts are included or excluded in CBID and in mainstream DRR programmes.
- The gaps and barriers faced by people with disabilities in disaster contexts and why they need targeted support

Participants commented how information bottlenecks are common in CBID, but become accentuated when it comes to useable and accessible information on disasters. The obstacles are many, including unavailable formal sources of data (e.g. government records), records that are not disaggregated by disability, or sources of information (e.g. media) that either bypass or are not accessible to persons with disabilities. This meets a situation where there is scarce local capacity to generate data, for example by extrapolating from records that do exist, or to engage in primary data collection.

#### **4. Key messages and recommendations**

Drawing recommendations from this study highlights a scenario whereby action to mainstream DIDRR in CBID is needed at multiple levels and contemporaneously. These recommendations are inductive and emerged largely from participants and their own ‘solutions’ to the current state of affairs. They are presented here to illustrate their breadth:

- More research is needed to understand the barriers to mainstreaming at all levels, especially among implementing partners and OPDs on the ground. These need to be heard, including their own ‘solutions’.
- Organisations working in CBID can do with a (self)reflexive exercise to understand what it is about their own policies and practices that may actually be working against or hindering the process of mainstreaming.
- There is a need for deliberate efforts at including or mainstreaming DIDRR in CBID, and this needs to be clearly communicated across the organisation and partners: it needs to be made clear that DIDRR is part and parcel of CBID and not an afterthought or a separate area of practice.
- The process of mainstreaming starts from strategic development, planning and design, and any project proposal on CBID needs to reflect this: a possibility is to include DIDRR as a prerequisite across all projects.
- Provide clear, concise and realistic guidelines on how to mainstream DIDRR in ways that are responsive to the heterogeneity of context and that cover all levels. Importantly, communicate that this is not carved in stone and that there is no one size fits all approach to DIDRR.

- Develop work on the CBID/DIDRR nexus and tools along the lines of what we can call a ‘Disaster-Inclusive CBID’ guiding CBID programme development and implementation on the mainstreaming of DIDRR.
- Explore the possibility of ‘model programmes’ that include DIDRR and implement them as a pilot and use them as platforms for learning and adaptation.
- Ensure buy-in by communities: involve community leaders, get them to participate and own DIDRR, get their ideas, and importantly their legitimization.
- Include DIDRR alongside climate resilience as conditions for funding: this will hopefully impact project design
- Encourage joint projects and collaborative proposal writing in ways that integrate CBID and DIDRR approaches, objectives and projects.
- Garner experience and work in DIDRR that can then be harnessed as an entry point onto inter-agency platforms, especially those operating in DRR and related areas.
- Work is needed to support local partners to engage 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, these may be able to navigate these corridors of power on their own and without back-up.
- Mainstreaming DIDRR in CBID requires solid resources: without adequate funding, little can be achieved. DIDRR will also not happen by default or by banking solely on advocacy by already weakened, overstretched and often impoverished local partners and OPDs. A number of points require emphasis:
  - Contingency funding needs to be actively in-built into all CBID programmes and be part and parcel of budgeting: this will not only protect development gains, but help inculcate DIDRR as a cross-cutting concern. Crisis modifiers, for example, are inevitable in volatile contexts in globally unstable times.
  - Ensure that funds are in place for the logistics of mainstreaming: including working with local partners and communities, equipping them with knowledge, training and resources and importantly a wage so that any DIDRR work is not seen as an added burden that strains them even further. Funds are also needed to attend meetings especially with DRR stakeholders and to help get OPDs together. It would also be helpful to have funds to bring key stakeholders (for example authorities, OPDs, communities, local partners, politicians, persons with disabilities) at local or national level together and to work on DIDRR advocacy and awareness-raising.
  - Invest in partnerships with stakeholders and organisations that have actual expertise in disasters and emergency to collaborate with and support CBID work.
- CBID needs flexibility and to be proactive: the need to kick into action immediately after a disaster to then plan for DRR is critical and this needs flexibility and resources e.g. to build resilient housing
- Advocate and push for a lessening of complex processes: concepts notes, Project Process Agreements (PPAs) and others related to normal fundraising and which take enormous amounts of time are not harmonious with situations where speed and responsiveness are of the essence. In contemporary globalised times where there are several risks, DIDRR too, needs swift response and adjustments.

- Move beyond simply focusing on natural disasters to incorporate human-made disasters: conflict cannot be bypassed not least because it impacts CBID programmes, while human movement reframes programmatic priorities towards a more dynamic approach. CBID needs to be equipped to deal with conflict, for example to include projects such as peace building and rapid evacuation as part of the CBID portfolio, to ensure that all staff are safe.
- Knowledge building and training on DIDRR: this is critical at all levels all the way to OPDs and communities. Themes of relevance include, among others (see table below):

<b>Potential topics for training</b>
Conceptual basics of disasters and disaster risk reduction and climate change, for example hazards, risks, exposure, vulnerability etc.
Who does and is responsible for what (government authorities, humanitarian organisations, voluntary emergency personnel etc.) in the DRR and humanitarian chain and to map these.
How disasters impact communities and people with disabilities: emphasis needs to be placed on areas that may not be so disaster prone, but where climate change is affecting everyone, so this may be an effective entry point. For example, when drought is causing less production of maize, lack of water and also health problems.
The disaster cycle: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery
The effects of disasters on CBID and how these interrupt or reverse development gains, and why DIDRR needs to be infused within CBID.
Communities and their roles in DIDRR (because they are the first ones to actually respond).
How to conduct a rapid risk assessment using local resources.
How to generate basic disability data.
How to track and communicate disaster information in accessible ways to people (e.g. radio, television, social media etc.) especially those in more remote areas
How to identify and map people with disabilities in vulnerable situations, how to keep an up to date list, and how to communicate this with first responders.
Understanding and assessing early warning systems and evacuation routes for accessibility and how to advise authorities responsible for these
How to integrate DIDRR in all CBID programmes, for example by combining a focus on inclusive early warning systems and coordination with authorities responsible for evacuation within a programme on inclusive education; or how to prepare for the possibility of drought across livelihoods activities.
Ways of communicating with and lobbying with those engaged in DRR and humanitarian sectors

- Provide training that is in-person, localised and country-relevant: participants were unanimous that CBID staff and partners do not have time to read reports. This becomes even more problematic with illiteracy or semi-literacy and lack of familiarity with the language of reports among local OPDs for example. Critically, the emphasis was on in-person training that was short and effective, starting from country offices and onto partners. Online training is often not a possibility especially for local partners on account of connectivity problems and/or the expenses for those dependent on intermittent data on their mobile phones. An approach could be training a DIDRR advisor and/or to adopt a train the trainer approach starting with a key CBID person on the ground. Another issue raised was the need for refresher training given the continuously evolving context of climate change and disasters, meaning that training should not be a one-off. Importantly, a common theme among participants was the importance of contextualising such training, of using local examples, and to include a practical component and to put the learning into practice, for example via simulations or case studies and concrete examples using localised language, terms and expressions. They also spoke about the importance of collaborative learning that would help partners identify gaps in their practices and how to better reflect DIDRR in their activities.
- Identify key practitioners and multipliers in programme planning and implementation to participate in training to ensure that those trained are the ones to effectively implement DIDRR as part of any CBID interventions. Training only individual DRR or humanitarian officers who are only responsible for projects specifically in these areas, may not be sufficient to achieve DIDRR mainstreaming.
- Equip CBID personnel and all partners with the skills and resources to generate data and research and to analyse it: this can range from primary data collection on disability in disasters such as rapid assessments, or research on early warning systems and their accessibility, or collation and extrapolation from secondary sources. There is a space here for support by academia within the national and regional context.
- Build back better and do this with adequate resources: investing in adequate DIDRR needs concrete actions and funds, for example in working on disaster resilient housing.
- Make DIDRR a community project: Participants stressed that this needs time and resources, including human resources, and how this interaction is critical in constantly making the community aware. They suggested activities including simulations run by OPDs so that they own DIDRR and it becomes streamlined in their daily activities.
- Open channels to communicate and work with the national DRR systems: this will not merely happen by training OPDs on advocacy and needs resources.
- Ensure OPDs do exist and are resourced: in relation to the above, CBID programmes need to ensure that OPDs are in fact in place, have adequate structures (for example to receive funds) and have the resources to include, manage and implement DIDRR-related activities. Some need support with getting organised, getting a board together, to coordinate, develop umbrella associations, elect leaders, shape up accounting structures etc. They also need capacity building, including on the basics of organisational management, advocacy, and also rights-based approaches to shift away from charity-based ones.
- Support all partners to come on board to work on the mainstreaming of DIDRR in CBID: and prepare them to work in and across multiple sectors to be able to respond.
- Government systems need training and strengthening: as part of routine CBID advocacy, lobbying for effective DIDRR within such systems requires sensitisation and information on

disability, why it needs to be prioritised and how to go about working on inclusive DRR systems and processes. Support can also be provided to government on how to integrate DIDRR in the existing policies. This requires time and also resources and cannot always be done by ill-equipped local partners or OPDs.

- Educate emergency and other stakeholders on disability and how to assist and work with people with disabilities
- Train persons with disabilities directly on how to prepare for a disaster as part of routine CBID activities, for example to have an emergency bag ready with medication, clothing and other items, to know where evacuation routes are, how to access transportation and so on.
- Document lessons learnt and share good practices in an easy to use format

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