

# 1. First things first: terminology matters



A training session in Community Based Inclusive Development at the CBM Country Office in Cameroon. ©CBM

The terrain of DIDRR has some complex terminology. While it is not necessary to get too technical, it is important to familiarise yourself with basic key terms to be able to use them effectively in practice, not least in communicating and advocating with critical stakeholders. Here are some key terms to get you started:

- **Disability:** is a complex term and there is no single universal definition. In this guidance document, disability is understood as the outcome of the interaction between barriers and a person with impairment that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Barriers combine impairment-related, physical, social, economic, attitudinal, cultural, ideological and other dimensions. A person with a disability is therefore also disabled by a society that excludes and marginalises and that does not confer the same rights as those conferred to others<sup>2</sup>.
- **Disaster:** refers to a critical disruption in the functioning of systems and communities, which results in human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts. These impacts are beyond the capacities of a community to handle them using its own resources, which means that it needs assistance.
- **Hazard:** a process, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation<sup>3</sup>. A hazard can be: **1. Natural:** associated with natural processes e.g. volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, wildfires; **2. Human:** induced partially or entirely by action or inaction by humans (e.g. desertification or drought); or **3. Socio-natural:** a combination of natural and human factors, including environmental degradation and climate change. There are 3 characteristics of hazards to be on the lookout for: **1. intensity** (the physical strength of a hazard); **2. frequency** (the probability that it occurs); **3. location** (where this may occur, because some areas are more vulnerable to stress or collapse).
- **Vulnerability:** relates to the physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions of a community, livelihood, or a particular asset and the propensity of any of these to be adversely affected by a hazard event. For example, homes built from adobe in areas of high seismic activity can result in increased levels of disaster risk, which makes them vulnerable. Poverty, including low access to services and information, financial assets, poor housing etc. are all preconditions for vulnerability. The higher the levels of these factors among persons with disabilities and their families, the more vulnerable they are.
- **Exposure:** the level of possible contact between a community, livelihood, infrastructure or an asset and a potentially damaging hazard. Checking for exposure means for example counting how many homes are located in floodplains. To be clear, a person or system can be exposed, but not necessarily vulnerable, for example when housing is earthquake-resistant.
- **Disaster risk:** the potential loss of life, injury, destruction or damage of assets for a system or community over a specific period of time<sup>4</sup>. The focus here is therefore on the likelihood that there can be a serious disruption in how a society functions because those impacted cannot manage using existing resources at their disposal. Disaster risk is often presented as the following equation: **Disaster risk=Hazard x Exposure x Vulnerability**. However, it is important to note that it is not only the intensity of a hazard that needs to be factored in and understood.

<sup>2</sup> See [Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

<sup>3</sup> IFRC (2021) [Hazard Definitions](#).

<sup>4</sup> UNDRR (n.d.) [Terminology: Disaster Risk](#).

In this regard, a community that is inadequately prepared - which is exposed, susceptible, and lacks coping and adaptive capacity - will be more vulnerable<sup>5</sup>.

**Resilience:** Disaster resilience is the ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to withstand stresses and shocks and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner. For example, a resilient livelihood is one that is not destroyed by a flood or drought and that can be resumed once the crisis is over. In contrast, a system that is vulnerable is weak and lacking in resilience. Resilience is therefore a key element and orientation to infuse in programmes.

- **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):** involves strategies and practices targeted at preventing new disasters and reducing the risk of existing disasters by decreasing the exposure and vulnerability of people to disasters. Together, such efforts contribute to strengthening resilience.
- **Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR):** is understood as the process of reducing barriers and strengthening enabling actions (enablers) to ensure meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities in community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) programmes, making them more visible and prioritised in disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery initiatives and to ensure all these levels are inclusive of persons with disabilities<sup>6</sup>.
- **Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR)** is the practice of DRR grounded in communities as key actors in the identification, analysis and assessment of disaster risks and the design and implementation of DRR strategies and measures as a community endeavour. CBDRR foregrounds communities as the key players at the centre of DRR providing their own vision and 'solutions' as opposed to an approach prioritising professionals and other powerful stakeholders.
- **Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID):** evolved from Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)<sup>7</sup> and refers to a process whereby communities, including persons with disabilities define, plan, manage and implement development activities in ways that ensure ownership and sustainability as well as empowerment. Overall, CBID is an approach to ensure persons with disabilities are respected and included in their communities on an equal basis in all areas of life<sup>8</sup>. In some contexts, CBR remains the dominant term and practice used.
- **Community Support System:** is understood in this guidance document as support organised and provided through community means at a community level informally via family (immediate and extended), community members, friends and acquaintances, organisations (e.g. local religious ones), associations, cultural groupings, self-help and other support groups among others and/or through professional services at a community level in areas such as social work, counselling, care and other fields of health and social development.

<sup>5</sup> Aleksandrova, M. et al. (2021) [World Risk Report 2021](#). Germany: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft Ruhr University Bochum – Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV).

<sup>6</sup> CBM (2020) [Inclusive Cash Transfers: A Case Study from the Earthquake and Tsunami Recovery in Central Sulawesi](#). Germany: CBM

<sup>7</sup> WHO (2010) [Community-Based Rehabilitation: CBR Guidelines](#). Geneva: WHO.

<sup>8</sup> See CBM (2021) [CBM's CBID Initiative Plan: Summary](#). Germany: CBM