



16. Pay attention to intersectional areas

Monsoon floods ravaged large parts of Pakistan in September 2022. CBM met affected communities in Matiari district, Sindh and was part of the emergency response in collaboration with Sindh Institute of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Hyderabad and the health department, Government of Sindh. ©CBM/Jamsyd Masud

As you will have likely learnt from your community development work, the population of persons with disabilities is highly heterogeneous. This means that we should neither simplify nor generalise them or their experiences. The process of mainstreaming DIDRR itself must attend to these different situations, needs and demands.

Persons with disabilities experience different intensities of discrimination and exclusions (including from DRR) on the basis of multiple intersecting factors, which often combine and translate into greater and more intense barriers. These include (not exclusively):

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Caste
- Class
- Migratory status (e.g. refugee status)
- Type of disability
- Religious or ideological beliefs or grouping

Every context is different, so we are sure you will have others to add or subtract from this list. The message is simple: some have it harder than others! So, consequently they need informed and targeted attention. Let's take the example of gender. Women and girls with disabilities often face double discrimination bound to their disability and their gender, especially within male dominated cultures characterised by misogyny and machismo. They may be devalued as human beings, and even ill-treated and be exposed to violence. In disaster situations and contexts, women and girls need additional attention:

- They are at greater risk of injury and death on account of gender-based discrimination as well as gender roles that limit their ability to evacuate on time and seek safety, or for them to be included in disaster preparedness measures. Remember that women and girls are well overrepresented in mortality rates when disasters strike.
- Restrictions in certain cultures mean that women may not know how to swim because they are discouraged or prohibited from doing so, with the consequence that in a flooding situation or a tsunami they cannot save themselves. In some cultures, they cannot leave the house without a male companion, meaning they cannot respond to early warning signs and evacuate on time.
- Women, the world over, carry the bulk of the workload when factoring in market activities alongside household tasks and caregiving (of children as well as other family members).

Disasters augment this load as women have to assume greater responsibility for clearing rubble or queuing for relief²⁹.

²⁹ For more on gender impacts see GFDRR (2021) [Gender Dimensions of Disaster Risk and Resilience](#). GFDRR

Accounting for these, means adjustments in your own work:

- Be mindful of the additional workload that your own projects may pose on women and make provisions for support that can help alleviate the load.
- Work on cultural dimensions that oppress women and limit their freedoms (for example in evacuation) as part of your regular projects.
- Inform, alert and educate first responders in locating and prioritising women with disabilities and how to work with them in culturally and gender sensitive ways.
- Establish measures that guarantee the protection of women and girls with disabilities in disaster situations as a core part of your work.
- Learn from women and their own 'solutions' and provide active support for them to play an active role and to lead in disaster risk reduction.
- Ensure data generated is disaggregated by gender.

Things are complicated not only for women, but also those from racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous people who may suffer the brunt of racism and xenophobia. Internally displaced persons as well as refugees and asylum seekers, confront multiple other barriers which can lead to conflict, violence and even death³⁰.

The message is clear here: focus on the aspects that tie us together as human beings while accounting for the factors that may be perceived to separate us. In the box below, we provide some tips on how to address displacement and the linkages with DIDRR.

³⁰ For more on intersectionality see Chaplin et al. (2019) [Intersectional approaches to vulnerability reduction and resilience-building](#). Braced.

INFUSING DISPLACEMENT IN CBID VIA DIDRR

Make displacement a core consideration of CBID at a par with gender and other priority areas. Displacement is defined as ‘The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters’³¹.

Educate yourself, including your CBID staff and partners about displacement, including that happening in other parts of the country you operate in. This includes also some basic legal knowledge regarding legal status, claiming rights etc³².

Understand the connection between natural and human disasters e.g. how a natural disaster may lead to displacement, which in turn can trigger situations of conflict.

Seek out and speak to displaced people e.g. Internally Displaced People (IDPs) or refugees in your area because they might not always be visible: try to understand and learn about their cultures, their customs, their needs and demands and reflect on your own practice. Where are the gaps?

Adopt a dynamic approach to be able to address the needs of displaced people: crises, including mass human movement can happen without warning and at very short notice. This calls for a DRR that is adaptive and responsive also to factors such as conflict.

Generate data on the situation of different displaced people such as IDPs and refugees, including their level of exposure to crises as part of your CBID work.

Use your knowledge of local communities to anticipate tension and sensitise communities you work in about the vulnerability and difficulties faced by displaced people, to address issues such as racism and xenophobia.

Help act as a buffer to diffuse tension between displaced people and local communities together with village leaders.

Ensure that any DRR information reaches migrant communities too and is accessible to them (e.g. language, terminology, cultural factors etc.). Consider simplifying this information by getting migrants themselves to consult and lead on this.

Understand and build on the knowledge and resilience of these displaced people: there is much to build on here! And involve them in your DRR and CBID activities, including any drills. This will help render them more visible and also humanise them in the communities you work in.

Engage with organisations supporting displaced people and migrants and inform them and educate them on disability.

Build connections between organisations working with displaced people, persons with disabilities (including OPDs), and those engaged in DRM, and ensure there is coordination between them.

Support the formation of organisations of displaced people who can represent themselves and their own interests and demands³³.

³¹ IOM (n.d.) [Key Migration Terms](#). IOM

³² See IOM (2019) [Glossary on Migration](#). IOM

³³ For more on displacement in the context of disasters see UNDRR. [Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience](#).