



13. Include DIDRR in your lobbying for disability rights

Tetyana Barantsova, Representative to the Prime Minister of Ukraine in disability matters, speaking at the conference, "How today's experience will help build Ukraine's future". ©CBM/SUSTENTO

A core component of community development work is advocacy. Mainstreaming DIDRR means expanding the remit and directions of existing advocacy to account for disasters²². For example, it means expanding lobbying for equitable livelihoods opportunities to include livelihoods that are disaster resilient. It also implies lobbying for inclusive education that is disaster-informed and ready, and that can protect children with disabilities.

Mainstreaming DIDRR needs action on two fronts:

1. Targeted advocacy with those responsible for DRR and DRM to include persons with disabilities as a question of rights: advocacy is required at all levels, starting off from national government and any bodies or departments working on DRR, through to regional and local government, INGOs, local and national NGOs and any other stakeholders who may be engaged directly or indirectly.
2. Advocacy with disability stakeholders, including those working in CBID to include and ideally mainstream DIDRR in their work: the more organisations, donors and key actors consider DRR as pivotal in community development, the greater the alliances and the arguments to mainstream it within your own organisation!

REMEMBER!

The more disability inclusion there is in mainstream DRR, the greater the need for disability expertise that you as a community development expert can provide, to make this possible.

The key message here is that one needs to effectively understand where the power centres are, to then be able to bring them on board right from the beginning.

TIP! TIMING YOUR ADVOCACY

Timing is of the essence, and introducing DIDRR is best done straight after a disaster, when the memories are still fresh among everyone and there is still a sense of urgency. This is the time to pull in information from your data generation exercises above! Your own organisation will be doing some reflection too, so synthesise some key points that you can communicate easily and quickly. Remember to use language that can be understood by everyone.

²² For more on the power of advocacy see CBM (2018) [Saving Lives and Leaving No One Behind: The Gaibandha Model for disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction](#). CBM

The objectives of DIDRR advocacy are multiple:

- Convince the disability sector, including those working in CBID that DIDRR is not only relevant, but needs to be prioritised and mainstreamed.
- Impart why excluding or marginalising persons with disabilities will compromise DRR efforts and even enhance costs²³.
- Join efforts with those working in other areas (e.g. gender) to lobby for better and more inclusive disaster management efforts. This can strengthen the cause and help place disability in other advocacy efforts.
- Invite government officials and journalists to witness realities on the ground while supporting OPDs in articulating their demands.
- Sensitise and educate national and international staff and local authorities on the rights, protection, safety and requirements of persons with disabilities in disasters: this can be an extension of your routine advocacy work.
- Harness willingness and commitment by powerful stakeholders to support over the long term by including disability in the core policies, priorities, practices, and critically, the budget. This can facilitate the mainstreaming of DIDRR in your own programmes.
- Promote an inclusive legislative framework and a recognition that the exclusion of persons with disabilities constitutes a violation of rights, including commitments made nationally and internationally (for example the UNCRPD).

To accommodate all of these objectives, work must go into changing the attitudes of your own organisations, your donors, government departments and organisations working in DRR, because *real change happens when there is willingness to change structures and systems.*

²³ For some incisive points on these, see Uzair, Balog-Way and Koistinen (2021) [Integrating disability inclusion in disaster risk management: the whys and hows](#). World Bank Blogs.