Access to humanitarian aid by women and men, girls and boys with disabilities

Challenges and Recommendations

A review of the access to humanitarian aid for women and men, girls and boys affected by Cyclone Idai, Mozambique
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Introduction: General impact of disasters

General impact of disasters on women and men, girls and boys with disabilities:

• Left out, ignored or abandoned from emergency response
• Lose essential medications and assistive devices
• Increased dependence on caregivers
• Injury and impairments → creates greater numbers
• **15 March 2019:** tropical Cyclone Idai

• **Massive destruction:** winds of 200 km/h, torrential rains causing floods

• **1.85 million people** affected

> **100,000** women and men, girls and boys with disabilities

• **Aid 4 weeks after** – only 1% had received aid

• **Aid 6 months after** – increased to 4.5%
Problem

• The failure to address the needs of persons with disabilities:
  • Lack of **capacity and know-how** on how to include persons with disabilities in their response activities.

• The existence of only anecdotal information on persons with disabilities:
  • Lack of **empirical evidence** on the situation of persons with disabilities in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai.
Objective & Research question

- Generate empirical evidence
- Contribute to policy development and improved practice of inclusive humanitarian response

Research question:
What are the common barriers experienced by women and men, girls and boys with disabilities in relation to accessing humanitarian aid – provided in response to Cyclone Idai – in Sofala province, Mozambique?
Methodology

Scope of the study
- Sofala province: Beira and Dondo districts
- Communities and resettlement sites

Qualitative design
- 30 in-depth interviews with women and men with disabilities and caregivers
- 6 Focus Group Discussions with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs)
- Various meetings with staff members of resettlement sites, government and non-governmental actors involved in humanitarian response

Sampling
- Purposive selection based on geographical location and demographical features
Locations of aid distribution

- Community setting
- Transition from home to accommodation centre
- Accommodation centres
- Resettlement sites
Challenges within the community setting

- Aid distribution seemed generally unclear and unstructured
- No accurate information on the upcoming cyclone and aid response
- Physically unable to reach or access aid
- Inability to use the received aid
- Women and men, girls and boys with disabilities felt unsafe
Challenges in transition from home to accommodation centre

- Persons with disabilities did not transition to accommodation centres as they felt discriminated
- Accommodation centres were often too far away to be reached
- Accommodation centres were often too crowded
Challenges at accommodation centres

- Food distribution was unorganised and aggressive
- WASH facilities were often inaccessible for persons with disabilities
- Lack of information on resettlement process
Challenges at resettlement sites

• **Inability to use** the distributed goods
• **Shelters** are inadequate
• Feelings of **insecurity** and **discriminated**
• Inappropriate **information** and **communication** methods and channels
Challenges at resettlement sites

- **Distance** to services within and outside resettlement sites are too far
- Available **services** are **inaccessible**
- Lack of (access to) specialised **healthcare services**
- **Caregivers** are concerned about their ability to provide support for their disabled family members
Bottlenecks in aid provision

- Different definitions of ‘persons with disabilities’
- Limited knowledge (of enumerators) on the ‘typology of impairments’
- Various vulnerability criteria used by different humanitarian organisations
- No follow-up on data collection
- DPOs are not involved in data collection and identification processes.
Recommendations

1. **Involve DPOs** in emergency response mechanisms
2. Provide **capacity building** to staff members of accommodation centres and resettlement sites
3. Create **inclusive distribution systems** of food and non-food items
4. Ensure **communication and information channels** reach out to women and men, girls and boys with disabilities
5. Install disability-specific **community structures**
6. Include women and men, girls and boys with disabilities in existing **resettlement structures**
7. Design accessible shelters, services and **camp layout**
8. Ensure access to **rehabilitation services** for women and men, girls and boys with disabilities
Follow-up

Immediate for this study:
• Result dissemination within Humanitarian System in Mozambique
• Participatory analysis sessions with various participant groups
• Develop learning briefs and publish case studies based on research

Further need for research on:
• Specific challenges and recommendations for:
  • women and girls with disabilities
  • and boys and girls with disabilities in humanitarian response
• Disaggregation of data and use of Washington Group Questions