Nepal. A training with all district level stakeholders, government agencies and representatives of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities in Dolakha district. It was facilitated by a representative of a member of the National Federation of the Disabled.
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Nepal

Building Expertise on Disability-Inclusive Design in Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Efforts

1. Context

The devastating 2015 earthquake disaster in Nepal damaged or destroyed more than 712,000 houses, leaving some 2.6 million people homeless and displaced.[1] Over 22,000 people were injured and disabled by the disaster.[2] Although persons with disabilities were severely impacted, they often lacked sufficient information about institutional recovery and reconstruction processes or were excluded entirely.[3]

Insufficient dialogue and cooperation between disability sector actors and representatives from the public and private sectors further hindered the inclusion of persons with disabilities in government and disaster response agencies' policy and planning processes.[4] Consequently, the capacities of persons with disabilities, and their respective organizations, have been underrecognized in Nepal, leaving them to face physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers to participating in decision-making processes related to disaster reconstruction.[5]

2. Description of the practice

In 2016-2017, the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) trained 17 leaders of Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) on emergency shelter and settlement standards to ensure that all phases of disaster management, from preparedness to "building back better," were disability-inclusive.[6] The project was implemented in collaboration with government agencies, other OPDs and partners, including Christian Blind Mission (CBM) International.

The OPD leaders then trained 270 stakeholders from eight earthquake-affected districts, including other OPD members, district and municipal officials, members of local disaster management committees, representatives from the police, army and media, as well as humanitarian actors.[7] The trainees subsequently formed a Resource Pool that continues to work together as a community of practice in the Kathmandu valley, promoting accessibility standards based on the Principles of Universal Design.[8]

How to promote participation and equal opportunities in shelter programming

Overarching recommendations from the "All Under One Roof" manual (IFRC, CBM, HI, 2015):[9]

− Ensure persons with disabilities and their respective organizations are able to actively participate throughout the programme cycle.

− Provide information in multiple accessible formats.

− Plan meetings to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, including accessible facilities, provision of reasonable accommodations, and transportation to the venue

− Ensure monitoring and feedback mechanisms are accessible

− Shelter design, including toilet facilities, should follow principles of Universal Design

Members of the Resource Pool have contributed to cross-sectoral, cross-government dialogues at national and local level to inform efforts to provide more inclusive and accessible shelter, housing, settlements, and services for and with displaced persons with disabilities. For example, the Resource Pool's activities have included conducting over 150 accessibility audits. Such audits verify, among other things, that people with different types of disabilities can participate in daily activities and move within and from housing or shelter sites. Assessments also consider cross-sectoral issues, such as accessible building design, topography, the layout of sanitary facilities and public services, as well as opportunities to access services and jobs outside the shelter or settlement area. Resource Pool members have also contributed expert advice on development policy and guidelines, supported the sensitization of construction personnel, and provided technical capacity building support to government bodies.[10]

3. Why this is a good example to share

One criterion of adequate housing is that it should be accessible to those entitled to it. Thus, to safeguard equal rights, housing design should consider the specific requirements of particular groups of IDPs, including those with disabilities.[11] IDPs are best placed to advise on their specific needs. Thus, ensuring the meaningful participation of IDPs in the design and promotion of emergency shelter and settlement standards can be a key factor in developing appropriate responses following disasters. This practice highlights the importance of giving space, recognition and support to the leadership and expertise of local OPDs, and ensuring that technical experts, policymakers and practitioners from across different sectors and levels of government are also well-versed in disability-inclusive disaster reconstruction practices.

Endnotes

1   Shelter Cluster, 'Nepal Factsheet' (Shelter Cluster 2015) <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/nepal_3.pdf> accessed 24 June 2020; IDMC, 'Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2016' (IDMC 2016) 17–18 <https://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/> accessed 24 June 2020.

2   Austin Lord and others, 'Disaster, Disability, & Difference: A Study of the Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Post-Earthquake Nepal' (UNDP Nepal, Social Science Baha and National Federation of Disabled-Nepal 2015 2015) 37 <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/2016/Disaster-Disability-and-Difference_May2016_For-Accessible-PDF.pdf>.

3   CBM International, Handicap International and International Disability Alliance, 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action: Case Studies Collection' (CBM International, Handicap International, the International Disability Alliance 2019) 29 <https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Case_studies_Inclusion_of_persons_with_disabilities_in_humanitarian_action_CBM_HI_IDA.pdf> accessed 24 June 2020.

4   Lord and others (n 2).

5   ibid 32.

6   The "All Under One Roof" manual was used as a technical guide, covering the inclusion of people with disabilities in all phases of disaster management from preparedness to recovery. See IFRC, CBM and Handicap International, 'All Under One Roof: Disability-Inclusive Shelter and Settlements in Emergencies' (IFRC, CBM and Handicap International 2015) <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/Shelter/All-under-one-roof_EN.pdf> accessed 24 June 2020.

7   ibid.

8   The seven Principles of Universal Design are: equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use. Bettye Rose Connell and others, 'The Principles of Universal Design' (Center for Universal Design, NC State University 1997).

9   See also the task cards on shelter in CBM's Humanitarian Hands on Tool (HHOT) for aid workers. CBM, 'Step-by-Step Practical Guidance on Inclusive Humanitarian Fieldwork' (*CBM*) <https://hhot.cbm.org/en/topic/shelter> accessed 3 August 2020.

10   CBM, Draft Case Study Template for the IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, Draft Case Study Template (unpublished, on file)

11   OHCHR and UN HABITAT, 'The Right to Adequate Housing' (United Nations 2014) 21 (Rev.1) <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21_rev_1_housing_en.pdf> accessed 4 November 2020."plainCitation":"OHCHR and UN HABITAT, 'The Right to Adequate Housing' (United Nations 2014