

Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

Leaving No One Behind: Towards Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

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SENDAI FRAMEWORK
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Disasters

- Total of 6,342 responses from 132 countries, indicated limited progress in last 10 years.
- 84% (5,322) of people with disabilities reported not having a personal preparedness plan for disasters.
- Even with sufficient advance warning, 17% would face a lot of difficulties evacuating, and 6% would be unable to evacuate independently at all.
- 56% reported not being aware of or not having access to disaster risk information.
- 86% reported no participation in community-level DRR decision-making and planning, but 57% indicated they were willing to participate



Insights from the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework

- Since 2015, efforts have been made to understand disability-inclusive disaster recovery by identifying principles, data requirements, enabling policies, institutional mechanisms, and financing.
- Ensuring that all decisions are supported by robust evidence, including the reporting of data disaggregated by age, gender and disability, must be a defining feature of countries' DRR strategies towards 2030.
- The right to participate in the DRR-related planning and decision-making process has been supported by international human rights obligations, including the CRPD.
- Member States have called for better identification and inclusion of the disability specific needs of both adults and children before and after disasters, as well as greater collaboration with organizations dedicated to persons with disabilities to prepare and implement disability-inclusive DRR and response activities in line with the CRPD and the Sendai Framework.

Useful Reports, Tools and Guidance

- Inclusive early warning early action: [Checklist and implementation guide](#)
- [Thematic report](#) on disability inclusion in the Pacific.
- Persons with disabilities in situations of risk: A [scoping study](#) on Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Gender-responsive and disability-inclusive early warning and early action in the [Pacific region](#).
- [DIDRR E-learning course](#).
- Advancing disability inclusion in local disaster risk reduction: [Analysis and recommendations](#) from the pilot implementation of the disaster resilience Scorecard for cities.
- Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities – [Annex for Inclusion of Persons with Disability](#)



Our Focus Today

- UNDRR and ATscale conducted a global study in early 2025 to examine **how AT users' rights and needs are addressed in DRR and climate systems.**
- The study engaged nearly **300 stakeholders** across **90 countries** through a global survey, interviews, and consultations.
- **More than half of participants** were assistive technology users, including persons with disabilities and older persons.
- The findings build on and complement the 2023 UNDRR Global Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters, reinforcing persistent gaps.

“Only 20% of countries include assistive products in emergency preparedness regulations”

- WHO & UNICEF, 2022

POLICY BRIEF

Leveraging Assistive Technology for Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action





*A man with a **prosthetic leg** walks along a rural path carrying firewood on his shoulder, smiling. A damaged building and green crops are visible in the background.*

Photo credits: China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF).

Key Global Survey Insights

- Majority of respondents reported problems with the **reliability and suitability of their assistive products** issues present in daily life and often worsened during disasters, along with ongoing concerns about cost, information and availability.
- Only **13%** said their assistive product fully met their needs in emergencies.
- **9% experienced failure of their assistive product** during a disaster.
- Inputs from **300 stakeholders across 90 countries** reveal major **gaps in inclusive policy, planning, and services**.
- Only **23%** felt the assistive products provided in emergencies were appropriate for their **local context and needs**.
- Nearly half had problems with **maintenance and repair**.
- Only **15%** had adequate **access to local support services**.
- Several respondents described assistive technology provision as **fragmented, inconsistent and poorly coordinated**.



*A man using a hand **powered tricycle** navigates through a flooded street in-front of small shops during heavy rain*

Photo credit: Mukesh Kumar Jwala, IDA

Key challenges faced by Assistive Technology users (1)



Photo credits: Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.

*In the aftermath of a winter storm, a Red Cross volunteer communicates using **sign language** with a woman in a wheelchair inside an emergency shelter set up in a gymnasium due to a power outage.*

- **Loss or damage of assistive products:** “My assistive device broke during evacuation, and there was no way to replace or repair it. I had to rely on others for everything” – Survey respondent, Philippines
- **Limited access to repair and maintenance:** “Maintenance is a luxury. Once something breaks, we either improvise or give up using it” – OPD representative, Ethiopia
- **Inaccessible infrastructure and disrupted functionality:** “The wheelchair I use is not designed for rough terrain. During floods, I cannot move at all. I feel trapped” – Woman who is deaf with mobility impairment, Kenya

Key challenges faced by Assistive Technology users (2)

- **Inaccessible communication, risk information and early warning systems:** “I never receive early warnings in a format I can understand. Sirens do not help me as a person who is deaf” – Survey respondent, Colombia
- **Psychosocial impacts and exclusion:** “The worst part was not knowing what was happening and no one explaining anything. I thought I would die there” – Assistive technology user, Africa
- **Financial barriers:** “I had to wait for three months to get a new crutch after mine was damaged in the cyclone. I could not afford to buy one myself” – Assistive technology user, Pacific

Key challenges faced by Assistive Technology users (3)

- **Disrupted support networks:** Caregivers and family members are often displaced or unavailable during disasters, leaving users without critical assistance for movement, communication or daily tasks.
- **Stigma and lack of awareness:** Invisible disabilities (e.g. cognitive or psychosocial disabilities) are often unrecognized or misunderstood, leading to exclusion from planning and services.
- **Intersectional risks:** “As a woman with a disability, I feel invisible in shelters. There is no privacy, no support. We are always last to be considered.” – Female assistive technology user, Asia
- **Data and inclusion gaps:** Many assistive technology users are not identified or included in humanitarian assessments. The absence of national data on AT users further compounds this invisibility.

What needs to happen now?

- **Governments:** Embed assistive technology in DRR, climate, early warning, preparedness, and social protection systems.
- **Humanitarian, DRR & climate actors:** Integrate assistive technology into coordination, assessments, stockpiling, and inclusive response planning.
- **Donors & development partners:** Finance assistive technology through dedicated budgets, indicators, and anticipatory action mechanisms.
- **Assistive technology users & OPDs:** Lead co-design, preparedness, monitoring, and accountability based on lived experience.
- **Health & rehabilitation services:** Ensure continuity of assistive technology provision, fitting, repair, and follow-up during crises.
- **Private sector & research actors:** Co-design durable, context-appropriate solutions and generate evidence to scale what works.

Key priorities : A Call for Action

- Access to assistive technology is a **recognized right**, not an optional add-on.
- Inclusive prevention is not a luxury—it is a **necessity**, starting with **proactive measures** from foreseeable risks and disruptions.
- It **saves lives** in emergencies *only* when **delivered with other essential inclusion measures**.
- It is a **humanitarian and development priority** to build resilience, inclusion and independence in everyday life, not just during disasters.
- Governments are encouraged to ensure assistive technology is **available, accessible** and **affordable for all** who need it.
- Assistive technology users must lead, supported by **political will, sustained financing** and **meaningful systems change**.
- Governments and key sectors must be **co-designed with OPDs and users**, especially women and girls with disabilities embedding solutions across preparedness, early warning, and risk communication systems.
- **Disasters don't discriminate—but exclusion does**. Failing to include assistive technology users puts lives at risk. Immediate action is not optional.

Thank you

“Leave no one behind” Inclusion is not optional – it’s essential for resilient communities.



A person in a wheelchair carefully descends a staircase by holding onto the handrail, illustrating the lack of accessible infrastructure.

Photo credits: Nadiia Doloh.



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