



Inclusive By Design: Including People with Intellectual Disabilities in Emergencies

People with disabilities are being left behind in situations of risk and crisis. People with disabilities are often the most affected by climate-related disasters, armed conflicts, and public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. They are also amongst the most likely to be underserved by humanitarian assistance.

People with intellectual disabilities as a marginalised group among people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable during emergencies due to barriers in place during humanitarian crises:

Lack of easy to understand information about the crisis

Inaccessibility in camps, shelters, and other services

Mobility barriers may impact ability to safely evacuate

Loss of access to medicines or health care needed

Discrimination impacts access to scarce resources like food

Lack of accessibility knowledge among humanitarian workers

Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has State Parties commit: **“all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of humanitarian risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and the occurrence of natural disasters,”** but this is not yet a reality for people with intellectual disabilities.

The exclusion gap is growing, as the voices of people with intellectual disabilities and their families continue not to be heard in emergency response and disaster risk preparedness planning.

OPDs say....

Inclusion International network members told us:

Not enough is being done to connect people with intellectual disabilities in camps to services and humanitarian activities that could be useful to them.

Burkina Faso

Families need humanitarian actors to listen to their needs so that they can be directed to the most appropriate support.

Lebanon

People with intellectual disabilities are made more vulnerable when humanitarian organisations fail to communicate what is happening in an accessible and inclusive way.

Colombia

Exclusion in Humanitarian Action by the Numbers:

- ✘ Less than 30% of organisations who do humanitarian work consult and engage with adolescent girls with intellectual disabilities, according to a survey from the International Rescue Committee.¹
- ✘ 50% of emergency response programmes that claim to include people with intellectual disabilities are actually violating their rights as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, according to Official Development Assistance analysis by Inclusion International.²
- ✘ In the last 10 years, no significant progress has been made in disability inclusion within the sector.³

¹ International Rescue Committee. Inclusive and Accountable Project Survey of Humanitarian Actors. 2024.

² Inclusion International. Excluded from the Excluded: People with Intellectual Disabilities in (and out of) Official Development Assistance. 2020.

³ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2023 Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters. 2023.



How OPDs Ensure No One Left Behind in Crisis

Where people with intellectual disabilities and their families are being excluded from humanitarian action, Inclusion International members step up and deliver supports and services in crisis themselves.

In partnership with the International Rescue Committee, Inclusion International collected a snapshot of the experiences of how OPDs in our network respond to crisis in their countries through surveys and focus groups.



Inclusion International members engage in humanitarian action by:

Providing Humanitarian Services to Fill Gaps

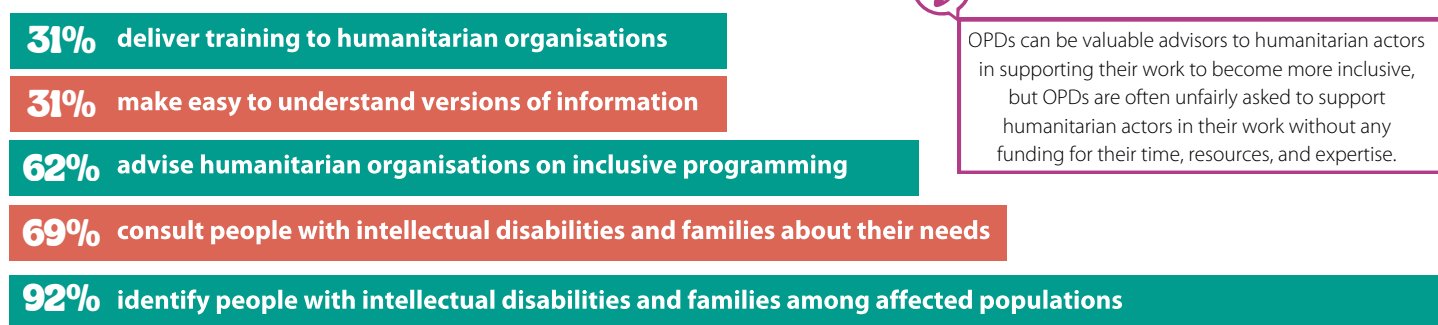
Where humanitarian organisations are leaving people with intellectual disabilities behind, Inclusion International members are stepping up to fill gaps and support affected families. Among our members engaged in humanitarian action in their countries:



Being forced to fill gaps in service delivery when people with intellectual disabilities are being left behind impacts the ability of OPDs to deliver their day to day work - one Inclusion International member estimated that 60% of their work has had to shift towards camp-based emergency response work.

Supporting Humanitarian Organisations as Advisors & Consultants

In addition to provide direct support to the families being left behind, Inclusion International members active in humanitarian action supplement their work on direct support and service provision with supporting humanitarian organisations to be more inclusive:



OPDs can be valuable advisors to humanitarian actors in supporting their work to become more inclusive, but OPDs are often unfairly asked to support humanitarian actors in their work without any funding for their time, resources, and expertise.

What needs to change?

Inclusion International members call on humanitarian actors to better include people with intellectual disabilities in crisis:

- Include people with intellectual disabilities and their families in every stage of planning, through their OPDs**
- Work with OPDs as advisors and delivery partners, and ensure that partnerships are appropriately resourced**
- Use OPD-created tools to help make programming more inclusive, like the Listen Include Respect guidelines**