

From Recovery To Development: Our Journey in Disability Inclusion



Photo: Nepal Red Cross Society Tanahun District Chapter Members improved their knowledge and understanding about persons with disabilities in the pilot project in their region.

Persons with disabilities are often excluded from humanitarian response and recovery efforts. This is partly due to the marginalization of persons with disabilities in their communities and partly due to the lack of data and information on the situation of persons with disabilities. This Case Study Series provides examples of practices and learning on inclusion of persons with disabilities, on disaggregated data collection and its use, and on the impact of inclusive practices on both persons with disabilities in the affected communities, as well as within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement organizations.

BACKGROUND

On the 25th April 2015, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal, killing over 8,000 people and injuring another 22,300 individuals.¹ The pilot project, ***Empowerment and Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Earthquake Affected Communities***, conducted by Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) in partnership with Humanity & Inclusion, supports disability inclusive recovery and resilience-building in Lamjung and Tanahun Districts by:

1. Empowering persons with disabilities, through Self-Help Groups to raise community awareness and advocate for inclusion in community social services and response mechanisms.
2. Promoting an accessible environment in selected Village Development Committees affected by the earthquake, through reconstruction / up-grading of homes and public buildings.
3. Increasing livelihoods opportunities for persons with disabilities and their households, through a revolving fund provided to the Self-Help Groups and training on technical skills.

Humanity & Inclusion, a non-governmental organization working with persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations, provides expertise for training and capacity development on disability inclusion, with technical and financial support from Hong Kong Red Cross and Danish Red Cross.

Promoting protection, gender equality and social inclusion has been adopted as one of the four Strategic Aims in the NRCS 7th Development Plan (2016 – 2020), with commitments to improving the capacity of staff, volunteers and community members.² This pilot project has concurrently supported NRCS staff and District Chapter members to develop new knowledge, attitudes and practices about disability inclusion in their wider work.

“WHAT WORKS” – STRATEGIES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON DISABILITY INCLUSION

- Organizational mandate and mission for disability inclusion – District Chapter Members shared how the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement is committed to reaching and working with the “most vulnerable”, and that supporting persons with disabilities is part of the NRCS constitution.

“Being a part of the Red Cross has fostered my compassion and interest to work with persons with disabilities.” – NRCS Tanahun District Chapter Member

- Integrating disability inclusion into needs assessments – The Earthquake response assessments and the pilot project needs assessment highlighted how many people with disabilities are in the community, raising their visibility and issues.

“In the Village Development Committees, we collected data on persons with disabilities – this helped us to understand the scenario clearly.” – NRCS Tanahun District Chapter Member

- Partnerships and training – Project staff and District Chapter members described how training on Social Inclusion and Physical Accessibility, conducted by Humanity & Inclusion, supported them to have a better understanding of different types of disabilities, appropriate language and terms to use, and how to pay greater attention to accessible reconstructions.

“Before, we didn’t think about making buildings disability-friendly.” – NRCS Tanahun District Chapter Member

- Personal development – District Chapter Members described the importance of personal development initiatives, describing how meeting and interacting with persons with disabilities, watching videos of persons with disabilities “doing amazing things” and researching international and national frameworks and laws, supported their capacity development.

CHANGE IN OUR KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

The pilot project has promoted change in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of District Chapter Members:

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
<p><i>“Now I am asked to advise others on disability inclusion in Disaster Risk Management plans.”</i></p> <p>The numbers of persons with disabilities in communities with which they work.</p> <p>How to identify and select the “most vulnerable” persons with disabilities for services and assistance.</p> <p>Knowledge about different types of disabilities.</p>	<p><i>“I wasn’t expecting that persons with disabilities would be so willing to work hard and contribute to our activities, and that families would be so active and supportive.”</i></p> <p>Increased respect for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Recognizing the skills and capacities of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Valuing the contributions that persons with disabilities can make to the community.</p>	<p><i>“Now I try to meet them, and I think about my language.”</i></p> <p>Using disability-appropriate language.</p> <p>Educating and raising awareness in the community about persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Including persons with disabilities in vulnerability-capacity assessments and in the Disaster Risk Management plan.</p> <p>Constructing ramps and accessible toilets in schools and other buildings.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

- Pilot projects on disability inclusion can support staff, volunteers and community members to learn new strategies and approaches.
- Support reflective practice exercises and / or lessons learned workshops which identify challenges, but also successes, no matter how small.
- Include persons with disabilities in this process, so that staff, volunteers and communities are learning together.

“Persons with disabilities are more in the mainstream – If this continues then the future is beautiful.” – NRCS Tanahun District Chapter Member

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REFERENCES

1. Government of Nepal (2016) Nepal Earthquake 2015: Post-Disaster Recovery Framework 2016 – 2020. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PDRF%20Report_FINAL10May.pdf
2. Nepal Red Cross Society (2017) 7th Development Plan (2016 – 2020): Partnership and Coalition Building for Community Resilience.

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