

GPDRR 2019 – Concept Note Innovation Platform

Title of the proposal *

Promoting inclusion and leadership of persons with disabilities in Humanitarian Response and DRR

Short description of the proposal * max 500 words

Disasters strike all, however persons with disabilities are often at disproportionate risk due to cognitive or physical limitations, unavailability of supportive infrastructure as well as marginalisation and stigma they are facing. For instance, the absence of accessible DRR information might impact their capacity to access potentially life-saving information or how inaccessible infrastructure could hinder persons with disabilities to evacuate to a safe location.

Article 11 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stresses the need to “ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk”. In this context, the objectives of this proposal is to promote the active engagement and leadership of persons with disabilities in inclusive DRR and Humanitarian Response. And further, to showcase realisation of effective and efficient humanitarian actions and DRR through the application of inclusion standards. One key component within ASB’s wider strategy is to build the capacities of local Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) to act as first responders in case of disaster. This includes the training of DPOs on key humanitarian standards such as SPHERE and Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), the provision of training on rapid needs assessment as well as the provision of technical trainings e.g. in the field of WASH. In addition, ASB is familiarising its DPO partners with the humanitarian system, linking them with relevant humanitarian stakeholders and supporting their active engagement in key coordination mechanisms such as the cluster system. ASB’s engagement with DPO partners goes beyond training. ASB closely mentors its partners during the implementation of Humanitarian Response, supports the dissemination and exchange of learnings as well as promotes partner-led advocacy work in the field of inclusive DRR and Humanitarian Response.

The before mentioned approach has been applied in various disaster settings. Most recently ASB collaborated with five local DPOs following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi, Indonesia. ASB’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) trained and facilitated the direct involvement of persons with disabilities in the rapid needs assessment, identifying gaps in inclusion particularly in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. Subsequently DPO representatives were trained to lead the installation, operation and maintenance of SkyHydrant water filtration units.

The ASB's approach not only ensures that the specific needs of persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups are taken into account in the event of a disaster. In addition, it aims to ensure that these population groups themselves become key humanitarian actors, providing needs-based humanitarian aid in their communities in the event of a disaster and passing on their specific expertise in the inclusive implementation of measures to other humanitarian actors.

Relevance of the topic:

1. Describe why it is important to present this innovation at the Global Platform *max 300words

Persons with disabilities are often hidden populations within their communities. This is partly due to social stigma or just neglect. As a consequence, they are lacking involvement in DRR related planning, decision-making and implementation of measures such as simulation exercises. Further, specific needs of persons with disabilities are not sufficiently taken into account in case of disaster. Examples include the lack of accessibility of early warning systems, evacuation routes, emergency shelters or relief distributions.

Persons with disabilities themselves are best placed to counteract this, as they are most familiar with the access barriers they face. Accordingly, it is key to actively involve persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of DRR and Humanitarian Response programmes. In addition, the active involvement and leadership of persons with disabilities is much more likely to raise awareness among other actors regarding the importance of inclusion and the capacities of persons with disabilities to make an important contribution to their communities in the event of a disaster.

The SFDRR calls for empowerment of women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches. Despite this strong commitment, efforts to promote the leadership of persons with disabilities in DRR and Humanitarian Response are still limited and piecemeal. This is mainly due to a lack of practical examples on the “how to” of empowerment of persons with disabilities, as well as a wide-spread thinking that such an approach to empowerment is very complex and resource-intensive. ASB aims to refute this assumption and to provide practical guidance to GPDRR participants on how SFDRR commitments towards empowerment of persons with disabilities as well as inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation can be put into practice.

2. Does your proposal create an environment conducive to awareness-raising, behavior change, and to facilitate shared learning? How? max 300 words

One key aim of the proposal is to change other stakeholders' perception of persons with disabilities. While persons with disabilities are often perceived exclusively as recipients of aid, the proposal will demonstrate, that they can be important resources and change agents within their communities. Accordingly, good practices of active engagement and leadership of persons with disabilities are going to be displayed during the GPDRR.

Furthermore, practical approaches on how to identify persons with disabilities and their self-help organisations as well as on how to successfully engage with them before, during and after disaster are going to be displayed. This will also include the presentation of practical tools for collection of disaggregated data, such as the Washington Group Questions on Functioning (WGQ).

3. Does it provide stimulating opportunities for experiential learning? How? *max 300words

The presentation will be delivered through short introduction on the topic, interactive role play, and reflective conclusion. Key presenters and role players will be persons with disabilities who have first-hand experiences in inclusive humanitarian action and DRR. The audience will be invited to join the role play and reflect on their experiential practices using

some tools and approaches tested and relevant to disability inclusion in humanitarian action and broader DRR. To conclude the presentation, broader audience will be invited to share their observations on the role play. The presenter will direct specific observations on the issues, approaches and solutions demonstrated in the role play and encourage the audience to share their impressions on how that solutions can be applied in their works or organisations to be more inclusive.

4. Does the application foster new knowledge and approaches in DRR, with an emphasis on the development and use of more effective products, processes, services, technologies, or business models? How?

By working through trained local self-help organisations and DPOs, which are well rooted within the communities affected by disaster, the affected population can be mobilised much easier. Furthermore, it can be ensured that inclusive humanitarian assistance, considering the specific needs of at-risk groups, will be provided. Due to the local DPOs' excellent knowledge of the local context and their extensive networks in the target area, they can easily consult relevant stakeholders in order to improve coordination and make use of synergies. Through mentoring and coaching the DPO partners are enabled to disseminate inclusion related good practices, findings and recommendations and to advocate for more inclusive humanitarian assistance and early recovery. With their local knowledge and networks as well as skills gained through training and continuous mentoring, the DPO partners are in a position to provide technical support in the area of inclusion and accessibility to other actors on the ground, thus leading to an increased awareness on the importance of inclusion as well as on practical approaches to inclusive planning and implementation of measures.

5. Does it ensure inter-disciplinary cross-fertilization of ideas, and to reach out beyond the more specialized DRR community so that new partnerships can evolve? How? *max 300words

A key aspect of ASB's approach is to link "mainstream" DRR and Humanitarian stakeholders with DPOs as well as other self-help groups of most at-risk populations. The very simple idea behind this is that DPOs learn more about DRR and Humanitarian Response while DRR actors learn more about disability/inclusion of at-risk groups. For instance, disability is often mistakenly perceived as something complex and technical which is why many DRR and Humanitarian stakeholders refrain from including persons with disabilities in their work. However, disability inclusion is rather a social or collaborative concern. DPOs are well-placed to provide the disability perspectives that most DRR and humanitarian actors lack and seek. Accordingly, such collaborations are mutually beneficial and are neither technical nor high-cost.

6. Does the application identify new ways to develop cost-effective DRR interventions? How?

The application identifies new ways to develop cost-effective DRR interventions by establishing/strengthening partnerships between Humanitarian/DRR actors and DPOs (see 5.) as well as by establishing inclusive mechanisms of locally-led Humanitarian Response. By working through local self-help organisations such as DPOs it can be ensured that the specific needs of most at-risk populations are taken into account and local capacities are strengthened.

A key aspect is the provision of capacity building on disaster management and rapid needs assessment to local DPOs. Subsequently DPOs are mentored to identify needs and gaps on

inclusion in Humanitarian Response through implementation of inclusive rapid needs assessments. Furthermore, local DPOs' are encouraged and guided to involve in command post and relevant cluster coordination meetings. In order to raise awareness of the risks of people being left behind during Humanitarian Response, the DPOs are provided with opportunities for networking with humanitarian actors as a way of influencing a more inclusive Humanitarian Response. This includes the provision of practical recommendations on how to reach "hidden populations" during response operations and dissemination of assessment findings and relevant recommendations amongst key humanitarian stakeholders.

The beauty of the aforementioned approach is that sustainable local response capacities are created, which take into account the needs of most at-risk population groups and which, through continuous exchange and learning with other humanitarian actors, generate an overall awareness of the importance of inclusive approaches.

7. Does the application propose new ideas to implement and advance the Sendai Framework? How?

The proposed application provides guidance on how to practically implement inclusion related commitments from SFDRR. This in particular relates to the following references to persons with disabilities made in the SFDRR:

"Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective in all policies and practices; and the promotion of women and youth leadership; in this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organized voluntary work of citizens." (p.8)

"Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches are key" (p. 17)

"Persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing plans tailored to specific requirements, taking into consideration, inter alia, the principles of universal design" (p.20)

Tools and strategies are demonstrated on how to identify and engage at-risk groups incl. persons with disabilities, how to provide tailor-made capacity development meeting the needs and capacities of these groups and how to promote their leadership in DRR and Humanitarian Response.

8. What is your organization's expertise? Max300 words

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) is a non-political and non-denominational German relief and social-welfare organisation. In Germany ASB has roughly 1,3 million members and is providing civil protection, rescue services and social welfare services through its more than 200 local and regional branches.

At global level ASB is working in 25 countries mainly in the fields of Humanitarian Response, DRR, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation as well as Socio-Economic Development.

In all its work ASB is committed to improving meaningful access and participation of at-risk groups such as persons with disabilities. ASB is a founding member of the Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN/ www.didrrn.net). DiDRRN is a leading network for collective efforts to promote field evidence regarding the importance and 'how to' of disability inclusion as cross-cutting sector in DRR at regional and global level.

9. Do you qualify your proposal as creative? Why? Max300 words

Disability-inclusion is a basic and practical approach, yet it is often being overlooked by most DRR and humanitarian actors. Advocating for inclusion and leadership role of persons with disabilities is an effort of drawing DRR and humanitarian action to its fundamental principles which are reaching all of the society and to leave no one behind. DRR and humanitarian actors need to go 'outside the box' to see what is lacking in the inside. With an interactive method as mentioned in section 3, participants would be able to transform their routine DRR and humanitarian works into more impactful and holistic efforts.

10. Do you think that the proposal attracts or motivates others to use it and is it affordable?

The objective of the proposal is to motivate other stakeholders to replicate the demonstrated approaches. Accordingly, practical guidance will be provided on how to identify and engage with at-risk groups such as persons with disabilities before, during and after a disaster. ASB will present practical tools, success stories from its previous work as well as challenges faced. In addition, ASB will be open to extend its scope and guidance to interested actors beyond the scope of the GPDRR.

11. Does the proposal target a specific group of people or segment of users that are seeking new or better ways of doing things and how would it relevant to them?

If yes, please explain. Max300 words

There are two primary target users of this approach. First, the DRR and humanitarian actors from any sector (government or non-government) who are: (1) committed to implement SFDRR's commitment of 'all of society' engagement; (2) interested to learn and improve their ability to work with the disability sector; (3) looking for ways to improve their work to be more inclusive in a way that is effective and efficient; and (4) wanting to achieve more impactful results not only for the most at risk groups but also the wider community. Second, this approach also targets the persons with disabilities and their representing organisations who are: (1) committed to take part in decisions that affect their lives and meet the 'nothing about us without us' principle; and (2) interested to know how they can engage and actively contribute in DRR and humanitarian response.