People with Disabilities & Disasters
What does it mean in practice?

Sheila Purves
Advisor
The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation

Participation
“nothing about us without us”

Inclusion Saves Lives.mp4

International Day for Disaster Reduction Oct 13, 2013
Living with Disabilities & Disasters
http://www.unisdr.org/2013/iddr
And who are the disability experts?

Participation is a key issue:
“Nothing About Us without Us”

This is actually not such a simple issue as it seems:
especially for those of us from medical backgrounds

People with disabilities
& people with chronic disease

are boys and girls, men and women, of all ages and with a 
wide range of special needs

• 15% of world’s population live with disabilities (~ 1 billion people)
• 2-3% of people with disability have severe limitations in function
  (over 200 million people)
• Increasing elderly population & the epidemic of chronic disease,
  who are all more likely to face functional disabilities

WHO/World Bank: Report on Disability (2011)
Age and Disability Consortium: Minimum Standard for Age and Disability
People with disabilities are more likely to:

• Be poorer than others
• Have less opportunity to
  • attend school or receive other kinds of education & training
  • receive general health education, community information/public announcements or warnings, etc
  • work or access income generation openings
• Lack the appropriate assistive technology they require
• Live in social isolation even within their own communities
• Have fewer or no opportunities to have their voice heard
• Have decisions taken for them without consultation

People with disabilities resident in institutions are likely to have very little voice in decisions made about their own lives


What happens in disaster & emergency situations?

• 2004 Tsunami: Car Nicobar Island in India had about 700 people with polio disabilities: a doctor reported being unable to locate any of them after the tsunami and concluded they had all died

GOI UNDP (2008) Mainstreaming Disability in Disaster Management- a tool kit

• 2005: Hurricane Katrina, US: documented that several people died because they couldn’t contact their assistants for help to evacuate

Gibson, Hayunga (2006): We can do better: lessons learned for protecting older persons in disaster. AARP Public Policy Institute, Washington

• Japan Earthquake & Tsunami (2011): research shows that people with disability were twice as likely to have died than those without disabilities

(WHO, 2013: Guidance Notes for Emergency & Risk Management for Health)
• Do we give people with disability, chronic diseases, the elderly, a lower priority?

• Or are we just neglectful? Don’t learn from the past experiences? Think that it will never happen to us?

USA: recent law cases because

1) Evacuation of a shopping centre due to fire alarm:
   -- PwD left on 5th floor because all elevators & escalators turned off and no plans to assist them

2) School evacuated due to bomb threat, and a severely disabled child using a wheelchair was left behind

2012: Hurricane Sandy, New York

• Special vans for PwD stopped running in first few hours after evacuations ordered

• PwD unable to use public buses they would normally use due to large numbers of people; reported they were unable to advice from help lines

• People left behind in high-rise apartment without water, food, electricity, medical supplies, for 2-3 weeks post hurricane


International recognition of the need to ensure the needs and rights PwD included in all stages of disaster management

• UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008)

• Hyogo Framework of Action 2005 - 2015
• Incheon Strategy: “making the rights real”
• Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030
  • “disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective”
  • “persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing plans tailored to specific requirements.”
UNISDR 2013 Global Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters
(online; 5717 response from persons with disabilities)

• 85.57% of respondents from 137 countries: NOT participated in community disaster management and risk reduction processes currently in place in their communities
• 72.2%: have no personal plan if there is a disaster
• 14.29%: are aware of national disaster plan
• 17.32%: are aware of plan in their own community

UNISDR 2013 Global Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters

In case of a sudden disaster/ emergency, do you believe you could evacuate immediately?

20.6 %: without difficulty
38.1 %: with some difficulty
34.93%: with a lot of difficulties
6.3 %: would not be able to evacuate at all

If given sufficient time, percentages improve but 57.71% still feel they will have either some, or a lot of, difficulty; 4% would still not be able to evacuate.
The results of the UNISDR survey

“...reveal that the key reason why a disproportionate number of disabled persons suffer and die in disasters is because their needs are ignored and neglected by the official planning process in the majority of situations. They are often totally reliant on the kindness of family, friends and neighbours for their survival and safety” (p.12).


© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation. All rights reserved.

The Right to be Rescued (2015)

We know that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities to support, assistance and to live as others but in general, in all countries, urban & rural areas there is:

1) Under-planning for needs of PwD
2) In emergency and stressful situations, we give priority to some lives over others

© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation. All rights reserved.
But in practice:

After emergencies & disasters, it is common practice to write reports and make recommendations, but these are often not followed up

“Conventional emergency management approaches rarely go beyond acknowledging that people with disabilities need to be ‘helped’ by emergency response and support services when a disaster occurs”

Calgaro, Dominey-Howes (2013): Increasing the resilience of the deaf community in New South Wales to natural disasters

Approaches

1) Do nothing—prevalent in situations where there are few resources and many needs: people with disability are simply not given priority
2) Provide special services and arrangements for people with impairments or disabilities (medical model)
3) Participatory and inclusive approaches, that actively involve disabled people and their organizations in the process of assessing their vulnerability to harm and capability for self-protection in the face of hazards.

Calgaro, Dominey-Howes (2013): Increasing the resilience of the deaf community in New South Wales to natural disasters
庇护所可行的住宿
Reasonable Accommodations at Shelters

社区人员抬轮椅上台阶
Community residents carried in first year of practices; now a ramp has been built

Announcement is written down & displayed for deaf persons

轮椅使用者的坐便椅和帐篷
Chair type toilet and a camp tent for wheelchair users.

从：National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, Japan

便携式露营床和床垫显示压力很小
A portable camp bed and mattress was shown to have a low pressure.
Accessible manuals and evacuation drills: a work with persons with mental illness at Bethel House

From: National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, Japan

Multimedia DAISY manual can be used with Windows PC, iPad and iPhone.

Evacuation drills and accessible manuals: a work with persons with autism

http://www.rehab.go.jp/ri/fukushi/ykitamura/kitamurayayoi.html
http://www.rehab.go.jp/ri/fukushi/ykitamura/kitamurayayoi_e.html

All rights reserved.
Emergency preparedness as a continuous improvement cycle: Perspectives from a post-acute rehabilitation facility in Galveston, Texas

- Research demonstrates practice is essential to emergency planning and preparedness (iterative)
  Gebbie, Horn, McColom & O’Hara, 2009; Slattery, Syvertson, & Krill, 2009

http://search.proquest.com/docview/763258372?accountid=16210
http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0020599

© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation. All rights reserved.

New South Wales, Australia and people with hearing impairment

- Communication: how to get information & public announcements
  - TV: sign language
  - Visual (flashing lights for fire alarm)
  - Smart phone apps; texting, twitter
  - House to house (but not purely knocking on doors)
  - Mapping (registry)

- But during the disaster communication lines may be knocked out
  - Individual planning and actions
  - Training of emergency responders

Calgaro, Dominey-Howes (2013): Increasing the resilience of the deaf community in New South Wales to natural disasters

© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation. All rights reserved.
Promoting the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Disaster Management in Indonesia
Technical Report #3; Centre for Disability Research & Policy, Univ.Sydney, Australia (2015)

A disability inclusive disaster resilience (DIDR) tool for assessing resilience of PwDs, combining 4 components known to be fundamental to disaster risk reduction:
- the individual’s functioning status
- their level of participation in their communities
- physical vulnerability of their place of residence &
- individual risk predictors known to influence the behaviour of the general population before, during and after a natural hazard emergency.

Among results of the survey of PwD, which was carried out by trained people with disabilities

Perceptions of risk in relation to natural hazards
• 27% of participants had an emergency plan ready
• 9% had an emergency kit
• 20% of participants knew of the existence of a government agency in their area responsible for emergency management

• 80% had lived through a natural hazard emergency in recent 10 years and during that disaster:
  • 33% had received emergency messages
  • 62% had evacuated to an emergency shelter
(1) If we are inclusive in the way we prepare for disasters

we should be more likely to be inclusive in response

(2) People with disabilities themselves, through undertaking the survey:

- Raised their own awareness and made their own plans which appears to lead to increased resilience when disaster & emergencies happen
- Some of them have become experts, and state they will fight for universal access to their rights in the “build back better” stage


Non Verbal Communication for Earthquake Safety Tips (1).mp4

Planning for “being ready”, and also for what happens in the immediate response, short-term recovery and long-term reconstruction:

1) Temporary shelters: are they physically accessible?

2) Access to benefits that government provides on same basis: access to information

3) Getting the equipment & supplies needed: access to help for special needs

4) Welcomed & expected in early disaster response activities: (ex). Children have access to play, sports, education/school

5) Those injured in the disaster - access to early rehab & discharge planning/linking with community based rehab

6) Reconstruction: universal access design (build back better)

7) Livelihoods training: access to courses, loans, equipment

8) Social support systems: community based rehabilitation

adcap@helpage.org

Key Inclusion Standards
Sector Specific Standards

1) Protection
2) Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
3) Food Security & Livelihoods
4) Nutrition
5) Settlement & Non-food Items
6) Health
7) Emergency Education

© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation.
All rights reserved.

Principles for Disability Inclusive Disaster Management Policies

• Participation
• Twin track approach
• Comprehensive accessibility and universal design
• Build back better
• Non-discrimination
• Collaboration and co-ordination

www.DIDRRN.net
www.cbm.org

© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation.
All rights reserved.
The twin track approach for inclusive DRM

A twin track approach

Empower people with disabilities
- Improve capacity to cope with disaster
- Client centered rehabilitation support.

Making DRM system inclusive
- Appropriate policies (specific and crosscutting)
- Implementation and monitoring of policies (Coordination, capacity building, resource allocation)
- All DRM actions & activities should be accessible to people with disabilities
- Positive attitude

Support services
(Sign language, devices, personal assistance, adapted tools, etc.

Equality of rights and opportunities of people with disabilities

Some Suggestions:

1) Awareness of issues: own staff attitudes, knowledge & skills; (either disability related or disaster related)
2) Identify expert resources & train up; partner with local organizations
3) Staff with disabilities to lead /resource persons
4) Communication and skills for working with PwD
5) Community-based inclusive development (pre & post disaster)
   - Map the resources already in the community (Community-based Rehabilitation; expert disabled people; self-help groups, etc)
6) Twin track approach
   - Special needs and individual planning
   - Mainstreaming of actions
7) Budget – yes, some things will cost more
thank you
谢谢

sheila.purves@rehabsocty.org.hk
sheilapurves@yahoo.com
© 2004 Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation.
All rights reserved.