Fundación ONCE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSIVE

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY



grupo social ONCE



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Introduction

This document brings together a set of practical, clear, and actionable recommendations, designed as a reference tool for public and private entities, as well as civil society organizations.

Its objective is to contribute to ensuring that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is systematically and effectively integrated into all phases of humanitarian crisis management (preparedness, response, and recovery), guaranteeing full respect for their rights and appropriate attention to their specific needs.

Emergencies affect the population as a whole and can generate situations of panic, disorientation, social isolation, breakdown of support networks, and additional risks for certain groups, such as persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and older persons. In addition, unwanted loneliness constitutes a cross cutting risk factor in crisis and emergency contexts. Adopting an inclusive and intersectional approach makes it possible to guarantee adequate protection and attention for all people, without exception, while strengthening the overall effectiveness of response systems.

The following are the eleven most notable recommendations:

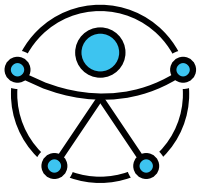




1. Inclusion from the initial planning stage

Include persons with disabilities and the organizations that represent them in crisis management from the earliest planning phases. This approach should integrate variables such as gender, age, and territorial context, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive vision.

It is also necessary to take into account that many people experiencing isolation or unwanted loneliness are not linked to organizations or formal participation spaces. Specific mechanisms must therefore be established to identify them, communicate with them, and ensure their needs are considered in planning processes.



2. Accessibility as an enforceable right

Incorporate universal accessibility as an enforceable right in internal regulations, strategic plans, and protocols, in alignment with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Universal accessibility not only benefits persons with disabilities but also improves the effectiveness of response systems for the entire population, especially in diverse and changing contexts, while helping to reduce situations of isolation and exclusion during emergencies.



3. Inclusive operational protocols within organisations

Ensure that public and private entities, as well as civil society organizations have emergency response protocols that explicitly integrate accessibility and inclusion, involving people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the design stage.

For example, these protocols must ensure:

- Compliance with accessibility requirements in the physical environment.
- Availability of accessible evacuation routes.
- Implementation of alarm systems that are perceivable and understandable for everyone.
- Clear, understandable, and accessible signage.

Protocols must be adapted to different operating contexts, incorporate an intersectional approach, and consider the specific characteristics of rural and urban environments



4. International and multisectoral partnerships

Promote international and multisectoral partnerships among public authorities, stakeholders from the technology industry, and civil society organizations to co-create solutions that respond to the real needs of persons with disabilities in crisis and emergency contexts. This includes solutions aimed at strengthening community networks, social support, and the prevention of unwanted loneliness



5. Community engagement plans

Develop plans that promote collaboration and communication among persons with disabilities, social entities, and public entities before, during, and after an emergency. These plans should also reinforce the value of community networks, support mechanisms, and community reference figures as key elements in preventing and addressing unwanted loneliness.

Plans must guarantee accessible information and clear coordination with emergency services and State security forces.

They should recognize the diversity of needs and contexts (rural and urban), ensure the availability of accessible resources and assistive products, and rely on trained professionals. They should also provide clear information and basic training to help anticipate risks and understand how to act in an emergency.



6. Specific and guaranteed Budget allocation

Allocate dedicated funding within emergency plans to guarantee accessibility, the provision of assistive products, and specialized care across all humanitarian response plans.



7. Mandatory training for humanitarian staff and organisations

Implement mandatory training for personnel involved in emergency management on disability-related issues, including inclusive communication, diversity of disabilities, and differentiated support based on specific needs.

Training must also include the detection of situations of unwanted loneliness, extreme isolation, and emotional distress, as well as basic guidelines for support and referral to assistance resources, which are particularly relevant in contexts of crisis.

It is also essential to promote specialized training for judges, lawyers, and legal professionals on disability, digital and physical accessibility, and structural discrimination, ensuring effective access to justice in contexts of crisis.



8. Alternative identification and communication systems

In emergency situations where physical documentation may be lost or unavailable, it is essential to have alternative and accessible identification and identity-verification systems that do not rely exclusively on physical documents.

At the same time, inclusive crisis communication plans should be developed to ensure the use of accessible channels (websites, applications, accessible documents), the use of clear and plain language, and the dissemination of information in multiple formats (visual, audio, easy-to-read, among others).

Lack of accessible information can generate “informational loneliness,” increasing fear, feelings of abandonment, and isolation, especially among persons with sensory or intellectual disabilities, and people experiencing digital barriers.



9. Organization of regular emergency drills

Carry out emergency drills on a regular basis that actively include persons with disabilities and address different scenarios and specific needs.

These exercises make it possible to evaluate the real effectiveness of protocols, identify unforeseen barriers, and improve organizational response capacity.

Drills should be designed from an inclusive perspective, involving staff, users, and other stakeholders, and promoting continuous learning.



10. Continuous evaluation and adaptation

Periodically evaluate and adapt crisis management policies, plans, and tools to ensure their effectiveness in real situations and their capacity to respond appropriately to different types of disabilities.

Evaluations should incorporate indicators related to the restoration of social ties, community support, and the prevention of isolation and unwanted loneliness following an emergency, as part of a comprehensive recovery process.



11. Inclusive and adapted insurance

Promote the development of accessible and inclusive insurance products and services that respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities in emergency situations, facilitating economic protection, recovery, and continuity of essential supports. Information about these products must be accessible to facilitate understanding and correct purchase by people with disabilities.

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