

Amount of Humanitarian Aid Going to Disability-Led Organizations

People with disabilities – over 1.3 billion people or 16 percent of the global population – are disproportionately impacted by disasters yet receive only a tiny fraction of disaster-related humanitarian aid. Research suggests that people with disabilities are between two and four times more likely to die during disasters when compared with the general population.¹ This is not to mention the myriad other adverse outcomes faced by people with disabilities during disasters due to inaccessible early warning systems, transportation, and shelters, the exclusion of people with disabilities from evacuation, resource distribution and public communication plans, a lack of disability competency among humanitarian service providers, and innumerable other environmental, socio-economic, and systemic barriers.

The routine failure of humanitarian organizations and governments to effectively include disabled people in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience efforts grossly contributes to the disproportionate impact, yet those organizations continue to receive billions of dollars in donations for disaster and humanitarian assistance. Indeed, despite comprising a substantial portion of the global population, only a small percentage of humanitarian assistance is allocated to disability-inclusive initiatives, while the remaining supports programs and services that are expressly exclusionary. The solution to this is simple – ensure that the inclusion experts in disability-led organizations are given adequate and

¹ Izutsu T. *Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Action: An Urgent Global Imperative: United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Progress.*; 2019. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/03/Final-Disability-inclusive-disaster.pdf>

commensurate access to humanitarian aid before, during, and after disasters.

Local disability-led organizations, who are best equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities during disasters because they already deal with the challenges faced by their communities on a daily basis, are almost never provided with access to humanitarian relief during disasters. Instead, billions of dollars are funneled into any number of humanitarian organizations without consideration for the needs of people with disabilities or the capacity of their representative organizations. In fact, just one penny out of every \$10 USD in grantmaking goes to disability rights and social justice, and only 4 percent of foundation giving for disability goes towards disability rights and social justice (with the remaining 96 percent going to disability services and supports).

The disproportionate impact faced by people with disabilities during and after disasters is directly related to the disproportionate amount of funding allocated to non-disability-led organizations, and organizations who lack disability competency. Research from Candid and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy revealed that in 2020 alone, disaster-related giving totaled over \$121 billion, including \$5.2 billion in funding by foundations and public charities, and \$3.6 billion in funding from corporate giving programs (it is worth noting that disaster-related costs have been steadily rising and disaster related giving in 2020 was far higher than in previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Yet despite representing 16 percent of the global population, and the population that is most significantly impacted by disasters, disability-led organizations receive less than one percent of humanitarian aid and disaster assistance funds.

Addressing this funding imbalance is crucial if we are to ensure that disabled people are never again left behind in disasters. But investing in disability-led organizations is not just a matter of equity, and it is not just good for people with disabilities. Rather, financially empowering disability-led organizations is necessary for ensuring that disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience plans are inclusive and accessible to all. By centering the people most impacted by disasters, disability representation will lead the way to building forward better.