


World Institute on Disability (WID)

One of the first global disability rights organizations continually led by people with disabilities, the World Institute on Disability (WID) was founded in 1983 by disability-rights activists and leaders of the Independent Living Movement in the United States, Judy Heumann, Ed Roberts, and Joan Leon. WID's mission is to advance the rights and opportunities of over 1.3 billion people with disabilities around the world. WID envisions a world in which people with disabilities live freely where access, inclusion, equity, and resilience are embedded throughout every global community.

To accelerate our mission and vision, WID's work focuses on remediating systemic obstacles and finding solutions to address 3 of the most significant barriers that disabled people face in every community:

1. **Emergency, Disaster and Climate Resilience:** As global leaders in disability-inclusive emergency and disaster preparedness, response, recovery and risk reduction, our team works with small and large organizations and businesses, local, national, and international governments, and international leaders. WID understands that disability inclusion and inclusion of multiply-marginalized people in all phases of disasters and in all facets of emergency response and humanitarian aid is imperative so we bring culturally competent leadership, innovation, and expertise to all engagements in all phases of the disaster life-cycle.
2. **Community Inclusion:** We provide training, technical assistance, and online tools to facilitate cross-cultural opportunities for people with disabilities, multiply-marginalized people with disabilities, and those who support them to make decisions about their employment, benefits, housing, and inclusive living goals. Each year, over a million people access WID's benefits tools, in their efforts to find pathways for competitive employment, accessible housing, and equitable community engagement in all facets of daily living.
3. **Accessibility and Universal Design:** WID eliminates barriers to inclusion and creates equitable environments in policy, practices, physical and digital spaces. We provide accessibility expertise in all situations and environments from daily operations of small organizations to large corporations and events. Our expertise includes subject matter experts with recognized training, over 1000 disabled testers with an array of expertise and lived-experience, a rich background in qualitative research. By applying universal design principles, and accessibility strategies WID is creating equitable communities.

Of particular note is WID's nationally and internationally recognized expertise providing emergency and disaster training and technical assistance to enact systemic change in the policy, and practices that impact outcomes for people with disabilities in disasters. WID's team



includes experts with over 40 years of combined experience in the field, and who are individually and collectively recognized as the nation's experts in disability-inclusive emergency management, accessible disaster services, and a whole community inclusive response to disaster case management, incorporating accessibility, equity, and inclusion throughout local, state, and national public health, emergency management, first response, community resilience, and climate justice.

The 1.3 billion people with disabilities in the world cross all societal sectors and are disproportionately represented in communities with elevated levels of risk and hazard, fewer resources and higher needs before, during and after a disaster. People with disabilities are consistently on the front lines of the climate crisis and are two to four times more likely to be injured or die in disaster due to political, socio-economic, health and medical systems, lack of inclusive planning, and absence of disability leadership in decision-making around the world. WID is leading efforts to address the systemic failures that contribute to these persistent untenable outcomes by influencing policy at the highest levels, executing model programs, and creating opportunities for disability-led solutions in emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and environmental resilience.

The Global Alliance for Disaster Resource Acceleration (GADRA) is one example of this work. GADRA demonstrates the value and impact of disability-led organizations in disaster and crises within and across nations. WID understood that by combining the expertise of disability-led organizations of all scope and size with innovative technology, global resources can be connected directly to where they are needed most and can be used most effectively. WID's approach to GADRA is founded on the knowledge that when disability-led organizations are provided the support and opportunity to receive and contribute to common goals, a global network with the capacity to change disaster outcomes can be created.

WID understands that systemic change is multi-faceted and progressive. Simultaneous and complementary to GADRA, WID executes programs that address the diverse barriers and challenges to operationalizing equity in disasters. These efforts include unique and individualized emergency operations assessment and remediation programs for corporations and government entities providing solutions to internal and external barriers; policy development for international entities to drive universal and whole community inclusion priorities, locally-led solutions focused task forces to address root causes for disability exclusion, and creating culturally competent education for the variety of industries involved in response and humanitarian aid to pave the way for ongoing improvements and a more inclusive equitable future for people with disabilities and disability-led organizations in the US and around the globe.