

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness and risk reduction



SERIES

#4

Together promoting safer neighbourhoods

Toolbox on earthquakes for community work in urban contexts



Credits

Nicaraguan Red Cross

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The content of this document has been developed by the Nicaraguan Red Cross and does not necessarily reflect the official view of the European Union.

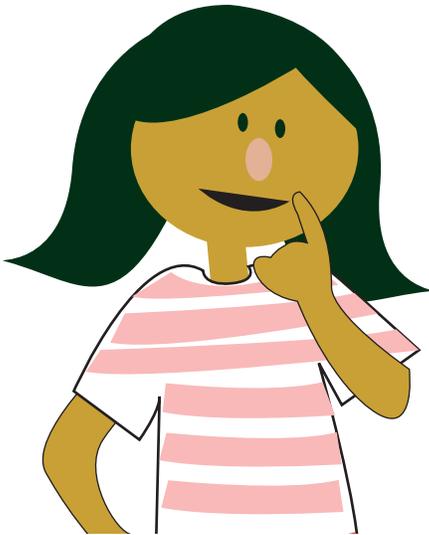
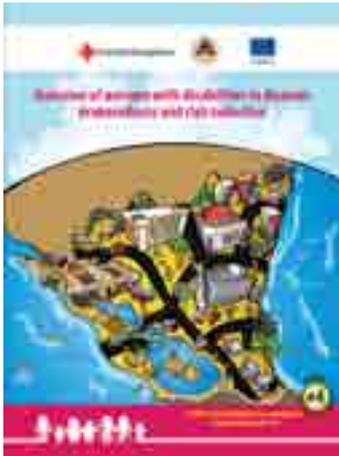


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Introduction



Earthquakes and tremors are part of the Earth's dynamics and our country is susceptible to their recurrence. In Managua, earthquakes have occurred that remain etched in our memory, such as the earthquakes of 1931, 1968 and 1972. These phenomena can occur in Managua and/or other cities in Nicaragua's Pacific region, and although they cannot be predicted, it is important to live with this threat.

The series 'Together promoting safer neighbourhoods' is presented, which consists of four booklets on seismic risk, developed within the framework of the 'Strengthening capacities for preparedness and response to earthquakes in urban areas of Managua's district IV' (DIPECHO VII), implemented by the Nicaraguan Red Cross and funded by the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and the consortium of Spanish Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross and Italian Red Cross.

The series 'Together promoting safer neighbourhoods' is the result of the efforts of professionals from various institutions that form part of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Management (Spanish acronym 'SINAPRED'), which has contributed their knowledge and experience with earthquakes during the DIPECHO VII project. These institutions include (but are not limited to): Civil Defence, INETER, SE-SINAPRED, MTI, Mayorality of Nicaragua, UNI and the CRREC of the IFRC.

The brochure 'Inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness and risk reduction' is intended for local and municipal authorities, Neighbourhood Committees for the Prevention, Mitigation and Attention to Disasters (Spanish acronym 'COBAPRED') and families, as well as permanent staff and volunteers of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, members of other organizations that work on disaster risk reduction and the community in general.



1. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness and risk reduction

People with disabilities form part of the community's neighbourhood, and for that reason we must promote their participation in activities developed by the COBAPRED.



This material possesses information that will serve to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in community efforts on disaster risk reduction.

Recall that in Nicaragua we have the Law 763 (reform of the Law 202), which talks about the rights of persons with disabilities. We also have the Nicaraguan Mandatory Technical Standards of Accessibility, and we demand their implementation...

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

*UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1, 2006.



A Basic Manual for Inclusive Development. Handicap International. 2007 Nicaragua



2 How can we incorporate persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness activities?

When all community members find themselves in a vulnerable situation, persons with disabilities may face even greater challenges. For that reason, adequate and timely preparation is necessary that provides answers to any situation that may present itself.



- **Integrated into neighbourhood committees (COBAPRED)**
Persons with disabilities form part of the community, and their active participation will result in greater assurance that their needs are met.
- **Training**
Trainings must be adapted so that they are accessible to everyone. The methodology must make necessary adjustments for different types of disabilities, such as message accessibility and physical accessibility, amongst others.
- **Risk and resource mapping**
The involvement of persons with disabilities in the development of the community risk map is important because they can help identify potential architectural barriers during a disaster situation. For example, persons with disabilities can identify what barriers must be overcome to improve the accessibility of the evacuation.
- **Preparedness and response plan**
The preparedness and response plan is a valuable and strategic tool for timely decision making in disaster situations. For example, incorporate into the plans the number of persons with disabilities and those responsible for helping them during an evacuation.
- **Drills and simulations**
Drills and simulations are used to test the performance of the preparedness and response plans. During these exercises, we must promote the active involvement of people that represent different types of disabilities.



■ **Early warning systems**

An early warning system is optimal when all members of the community collaborate. Therefore, the participation of people with disabilities is essential when designing the alert and the alarm system.



3. Definition and examples of types of alarms

Disability	Examples of types of alarm / signalling	
Visual impairment		System of audible signals. Audible announcements. Signs written in large letters and with contrasting colours.
Hearing impairment		Visual signalling system (green, yellow and red flags). Photographs, images. Turn lights on and off following a fixed pattern.
Intellectual disability		Visual signals - Coloured flags or predetermined signals. Clear and specific announcements from rescuers. System of audible signals.
Physical disability		Television, radio announcements.



Remember that regardless of the type of alarm that is used, people should understand their meaning in advance. People must be trained!



4. Tips for ensuring the timely and safe evacuation of people according to their type of disability

DISABILITY	DIFFICULTY	TIPS
<p>Visual impairment</p> 	<p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the physical environment hinder their usual orientation. Loss or damage of technical assistance (white cane, protective eyewear). Do not identify the voice of the rescuer. 	<p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convey calm and confidence from the beginning. Identify yourself to the visually-impaired person by touching them softly and telling them who you are and why you are there. Describe the surrounding environment to them. The visually-impaired person should support himself/herself on the rescuer's shoulder or forearm to be properly oriented
<p>Hearing impairment</p> 	<p>Auditory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to scream if trapped. Unable to hear the rescuer's call, but can see it. Loss of hearing aid (if used). Rescuers do not know how to give instructions in an alternative fashion (sign language). 	<p>Auditory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While facing the person, express yourself in a slow, clear and simple manner, articulating your words so that they can read your lips. Use common gestures and signals. Avoid expressions, as well as threatening behaviour and impositions.



DISABILITY	DIFFICULTY	TIPS
<p>Physical disability</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limitations to escape or reach shelter. ■ Loss or damage of technical assistance: cane, crutches, wheelchairs, prostheses. ■ Difficulty to free themselves if trapped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear the evacuation route. ■ Ask the person what the best way to lift or carry them is. ■ Ensure technical aid according to disability (canes, crutches, wheelchairs, amongst others). ■ Move the affected using stretchers, if possible.
<p>Intellectual disability</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ They may not understand evacuation guidelines. ■ They may become stressed, shut down and behave violently. ■ Rescuers may have difficulty communicating with the affected person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Convey calm and confidence from the beginning. ■ Use simple language. ■ Rely on relatives that may know the person. ■ Clearly explain the situation that is taking place. ■ Avoid expressions, as well as threatening behaviour and impositions.



During the evacuation and rescue, it is recommended to rely on relatives or close acquaintances of the people with disabilities that are affected.



5. How to care for people with different disabilities in shelters?

Impairment, Disability	Difficulty, Risk	What to do
Physical disability (difficulty moving or getting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drop in body temperature ■ Ulcers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Blankets / warm clothing, mattresses, cotton pillows, dry place, hygiene kit. ■ Support staff. ■ Technical assistance. ■ Adapted physical environment (ramps, handrails, amongst others).
Visual impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulty accessing help. ■ Difficulty orienting themselves. ■ Lack of access to information. ■ Discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tactile signage (such as routes to the bathroom, dining room). ■ Installation of handrails. ■ Support staff. ■ Adequate lighting. ■ Separate lines to access food, water, toilets.
Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulty being served by others. ■ Difficulty accessing information on the shelter's operations. ■ Discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visual aids. ■ Communication through images (photos) and common signs. ■ Rely on people that know them (relatives, neighbours). ■ Separate lines to access food, water, toilets.
Mental disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pressure due to an unknown situation and the accumulation of people, which can cause more stress. ■ Discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trained support staff. ■ Supply of medicine, if used on a consistent basis. ■ Family support.



5. Some recommendations for actions to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in the rehabilitation and reconstruction processes

A disaster is an opportunity to initiate or improve processes that address the needs of people with disabilities, such as:

- A.** Improve prevention, relief and preparedness plans for future events.
- B.** Institutions recognize the rights of people with disabilities.
- C.** Develop or improve disability policy nationwide.
- D.** Include people with disabilities in economic activities.
- E.** Apply techniques to build or improve infrastructure by renovating buildings, public places and the environment, such as:

- Construction of ramps.
- Construction of toilets and wide doors.
- Renovation of transportation.
- Access to important information.
- Renovation of bridges, piers, shelter, warehouses, amongst others.

DIRECTORY OF EMERGENCY INSTITUTIONS

Nicaraguan Red Cross: 128
Fire Department: 115/911
Police: 118
Electricity: 125
ENACAL ('Nicaraguan Water and Sewerage Enterprise' in English): 127
Civil Defence: 2280-9917
2280-9927
Green Line – ALMA ('Managua Mayor's Office' in English): 135
SINAPRED ('National System for the Prevention, Mitigation and Attention to Disasters' in English) Executive Secretariat: 2280-9910

Make note of the telephones from your district and neighbourhood:

Distrito IV of the Managua Mayor's Office:

Telephone of the person responsible for the neighbourhood's COBAPRED ('Neighbourhood Committees for Disaster Prevention' in English):

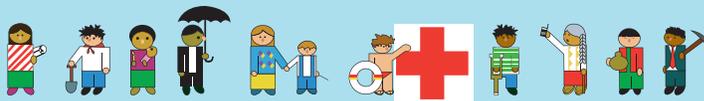




The Netherlands  Red Cross



 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



"It's better to prevent..."

