

Inclusive approaches — humanitarian programming that leaves no one behind

Beth Milburn, EU-CORD; Judith Baart, Light for the World; David Gál, Hungarian Baptist Aid; Agnes Kroese, Red een Kind; Joohi Haleem, Mission East; and We'am Daibas, Medair

Situations of protracted crisis impact the lives of all members of society. Humanitarian and resilience programming should therefore include all members of the affected societies, to ensure that no one gets left behind when disaster strikes.

Programming must take into account the needs of the most vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities, young people, women, ethnic minorities or pregnant mothers. EU-CORD member organizations have included these groups in their resilience programming. In situations of protracted crises such groups might otherwise have been marginalized and become increasingly vulnerable.

EU-CORD is an interdenominational network of European Christian relief and development non-governmental organizations comprising 22 member organizations that work alongside over 1,000 implementing partners worldwide. We are inspired by our Christian values to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. In the following

examples, EU CORD members share their experiences of working to ensure that vulnerable and excluded groups gain access to humanitarian services. This can be done through two approaches: by ensuring that they are included in humanitarian programming, or by working specifically with them so that they can ensure access to the services they need.

One thematic area of emphasis for EU-CORD is the inclusion of persons with disabilities. In the aftermath of the open conflict in South Sudan in 2014, Light for the World carried out an informal random appraisal in the Mahad and Gunbo internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, documenting the accessibility of services provided by various humanitarian agencies. The appraisal confirmed that the knowledge, competencies, vulnerability and needs of persons with disabilities were being ignored. Since then, Light for the World has worked with camp management teams and humanitarian agencies to provide an inclusive humanitarian response.

This began by ensuring that persons with disabilities were included as a category in the United Nations High



Image: Isti Madarász, (c) 2015 Hungarian Baptist Aid

Participant Ja Seng Pu (right) with trainer Dr Béla Szilágyi, vice president of Hungarian Baptist Aid in Yangon, Myanmar



Image: Mission East Afghanistan Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Lessons Learnt Unit

Majabin, a war widow, now has access to an income through participating in the training offered by Mission East, Afghanistan



Image: Jaco Klamer

Persons with disabilities can now access protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and food in Mahad and Gunbo camps, South Sudan

Commissioner for Refugees registration form, to collect data on the support required by new arrivals. The staff of five humanitarian agencies were trained on disability issues so they would understand how to minimize the risk of abuse and provide appropriate assistance. By gaining an understanding of the presence and vulnerability of persons with disabilities, humanitarian staff were able to work to ensure that aid and services were distributed in a way that did not exclude them. This included involving persons with disabilities in the design and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities to ensure accessibility; ensuring that health, hygiene and information messages were distributed using multiple communication methods such as Braille, sign language or drawings; and ensuring that sufficient (solar) lighting is provided in shelter areas to facilitate the safety and communications ability of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Working closely with camp management, and training IDPs from the camps to provide rehabilitation services, produced an effective balance between making structural changes in the camp and attending to individual needs through promoting participation.

Despite current interventions, a large gap remains in the knowledge and capacity of humanitarian actors to adequately address the needs of IDPs with disabilities. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan has therefore asked Light for the World to develop a capacity-development programme for emergency actors in-country. The first batch of humanitarian actors and government staff is expected to be trained in disability inclusion by July 2016.

Conflict increases the prevalence of disability, but humanitarian camps and services are often not adapted to address the needs of persons with disabilities. Light for the World has demonstrated that with some knowledge on disability, and slight adaptations to make services accessible, all internally displaced persons can benefit from the aid provided.

Management of IDP camps was also part of the training given by Hungarian Baptist Aid in Myanmar that enabled ethnic, religious and language minority group leaders to work on building the resilience of their communities. The Kachin State, underfunded and lacking investment, has a long history of conflict with the Government. Ja Seng Pu was a young teenager living in Kachin State when cyclone Nargis struck in 2008, taking the lives of 200,000 people and making half a million homeless. Three years later the Kachin war resumed in her home state, making her life even more vulnerable.

The humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality were taken up by faith-based organizations which worked to promote the inclusion of all ethnic, religious and language minority groups in their humanitarian work. Hungarian Baptist Aid responded to cyclone Nargis within 24 hours and since then has worked with local counterparts to provide humanitarian assistance, funding and capacity development. In 2014 Hungarian Baptist Aid organized a high-level disaster management training series for community leaders of the most vulnerable groups.

Eighteen different ethnic, religious and language-minority groups (including Kachin Ja Seng Pu as well as Bamar, Chin



Image: Red een Kind

Women of a self-help group in Rutovu Commune, Burundi

and Karen ethnic leaders) participated in the training series in disaster management and leadership. Representatives from each group attended the training and were able to share the knowledge they gained with their communities and take ownership for promoting resilience. Hungarian Baptist Aid and Myanmar Baptist Convention provided academic-level trainers, while the Hungarian Foreign Ministry offered co-sponsorship.

The training equipped the leaders to better protect their people and manage disasters. It comprised 35 theoretical and practical lectures, case studies and hands-on exercises, designed after consultations with local experts. It included topics such as early warning systems, human rights and humanitarian law, refugee and IDP camp management, and humanitarian standards and democratic transitions. Local trainers shared the knowledge they gathered responding to cyclone Nargis and other disasters. A leaders' network was formed to provide peer support in difficult times.

Today Ja Seng Pu is a leader instead of a victim. The knowledge she gained from the training empowers her to work with Kachin IDPs, and to respond effectively to natural disasters such as the Moekaung flood in July 2015. Ja Seng Pu now works to alleviate the suffering of victims and boost the resilience of her local community.

Training is also one way in which Mission East works to increase the resilience of women in rural communities in Afghanistan. The remoteness of north-eastern Afghanistan means that humanitarian and development programming does not suffi-

ciently reach the most vulnerable, especially the extremely poor rural communities that are farthest from roads, markets and basic services. In this region 47 per cent of children under five are moderately or severely stunted and improvements in food security and livelihoods are desperately needed.

Mission East Afghanistan is working to develop a context-specific resilience score or index. This will use various indicators to help measure the impact of interventions on increasing the resilience of a community or household, and determine when a community has become more self-reliant and less vulnerable to future crises and shocks.

Improvements in resilience will come through targeting the most vulnerable. Mission East's programme design involves selecting the most vulnerable communities and utilizing local knowledge to identify beneficiaries who are the most vulnerable people within these communities. This results in women being chosen as beneficiaries because few women own resources such as land and livestock, and they have fewer livelihood options than men. Very few activities are considered socioculturally appropriate for women, and few of these are sufficient to support a family.

Mission East has worked with women's self-help groups (SHGs) for many years in Afghanistan and is strengthening their role in the empowerment of women and the advancement of rights-based approaches. SHGs represent a non-threatening and culturally sensitive mechanism for mobilizing local resources, building self-reliance, facilitating social cohesion

and empowering rural women. Mission East's livelihoods and SHG programme has helped change traditional perceptions about women's social and productive roles in Afghan society. By giving them a shared platform to mobilize, congregate and share information, and improving their access to community-based finance, the programme has helped to empower women such as Majabin to improve their own and their households' lives and livelihoods.

In Burundi, Red een Kind (Help a Child) also uses a group approach to increase the socioeconomic potential, and therefore the resilience, of vulnerable people. Burundi has a long history of conflict and fragility caused by ethnic tensions, aggravated by poverty, scarcity of land and population growth. Lack of social cohesion and social contract is a root cause of this. In response, Red een Kind and local partners have implemented an integrated multi-year programme to strengthen social resilience through establishing community structures in Kirundu, Rutana and Bururi provinces. Red een Kind promoted the inclusion of young people in this programme because an estimated 60 per cent of the population in Burundi is below the age of 25, and job opportunities for youth are extremely limited.

To facilitate an inclusive design and promote ownership and sustainability, the programme began with a participatory integrated community-development assessment. This identified vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, so their positioning and participation in all phases of the programme cycle could be ensured. Based on the assessment, an integrated community action plan was developed with representatives of different groups in the community. A more refined version — based on the Burundian context — of the SHG approach was applied and community members (men, women and youth) were brought together in groups whose members shared specific self-defined characteristics with respect to their socioeconomic status, contributing to better internal bonding. Community leaders and parents helped to identify youth drop-outs, and youth groups were formed with a focus on vocational training and employment opportunities.

A community action plan was implemented with the SHGs, facilitated by integrated capacity-building interventions geared towards socioeconomic development. Working together in groups boosted participants' socioeconomic potential as they gained access to services and facilities that were formerly unavailable to them. Of particular significance was the way in which working together reinforced community cohesion and participation in an environment where lack of mutual trust is a major barrier to development and a root cause for instability.

The community groups functioned as a platform for discussion and dialogue, building trust and cooperation. Against the backdrop of the turmoil in 2015 evidence shows that this programme stimulated community cohesion and resilience. Comparison with other communities in the target area showed considerably less migration to Rwanda among those who were organized in SHGs than among those who were not.

Inclusive approaches towards humanitarian and resilience programming are transforming the lives of people around the world. The above examples show how participation, local community ownership and group approaches can ensure

Improving the resilience of families



Image: Medair - Weam Dalbas

Baby 'Sham', which means Syria, is the first born in Medair's cash-for-health project in Mafraq, Jordan

Medair works to improve the resilience of refugee families in Jordan through cash-based coverage of urgent health costs and care related to pregnancy.

When Heba, a Syrian refugee living in Jordan, was near the end of her first pregnancy, she needed emergency care and was rushed to a nearby hospital. Despite the risk to herself and the baby, the hospital refused to treat her because the delivery she needed didn't match its terms and conditions, and the couple couldn't pay the fees.

Heba's husband, Qasem, took her to a different hospital which agreed to provide the needed care for a price. Qasem was joyful when his new baby girl arrived. "I could have lost them both," he said. "But when I saw that they were healthy, I started jumping for joy."

Qasem collected money from neighbours and family members for the hospital fees, but he couldn't collect all the money needed and he gave the hospital his government identification papers to hold until he paid off his balance.

Through Medair's cash-for-health project Qasem was able to pay the fees and get his papers back. "I will also buy Heba good food and winter clothes, and get a heater for the baby," said Qasem.

Even though they continue to live as refugees, Heba and Qasem are now in a stronger position to meet their immediate needs as well as start building a better future for their children.

that programmes include and empower those who would otherwise be marginalized. Persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, youth and women are not simply groups of people. They are individuals such as Majabin and Ja Seng Pu, who until now had been either knowingly or unknowingly excluded from humanitarian and resilience programming. Such exclusion takes place despite existing legal obligations and frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which emphasize that the inclusion of these individuals should not be an optional feature of humanitarian and resilience programming. International frameworks give rights-based approaches to inclusive participation because all persons have the right to benefit from humanitarian work. Therefore, the EU-CORD network hopes that the World Humanitarian Summit leads to a more inclusive humanitarian community.