

Global Resilience Challenge Solution Statement

Disability and Disasters: Empowering people and building resilience to risk



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1 Project tile and team members

Title: Disability and Disasters: Empowering people and building resilience to risk

Region: South-East Asia with a focus on Thailand, Philippines and Cambodia

Lead Organization: University of Sydney, Australia

Team members: Listed in Table 1 below

Table 1: List of team members

Team Role	Name	Title	Organization	Email
Team Lead	Emma Calgaro	Dr	University of Sydney	emma.calgaro@sydney.edu.au
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Scientific Advisor	Dale Dominey-Howes	Prof	University of Sydney	dale.dominey-howes@sydney.edu.au
Project Manager/Researcher	Karlee Johnson	Miss	Stockholm Environment Institute–Asia (SEI)	karlee.johnson@sei-international.org
Thailand in-country Team Lead	Parichatt Krongkant	Dr	KPC Consultant Co. Ltd	pkrongkant@gmail.com
Philippines in-country Team Lead for Deaf Community Project	Nick Craig	Mr	Craigs Consultants International (CCI)	mrnickcraig@gmail.com craigsconsultants@gmail.com
Philippines in-country Team Lead for DiDRR Mainstreaming Project	Jerome Zayas	Mr	Inclusive Development and Empowerment Agenda (IDEA)	jeromebzayas@ideaforall.org
Cambodia in-country Team Lead	Alexandra Gartrell	Dr	Monash University	Alexandra.gartrell@monash.edu
Collaborating Cambodia Partner	Ngin Saroath	Mr	Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO)	Director@cdpo.org

2 Innovation and Impact Pathway

2.1 Solution Statement and Theory of Change

The Problem this project will address: People with disabilities (PWDs) are unseen, unheard & unaccounted for in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) [1]. This affects 650 Million people who have disabilities in South East Asia alone.

The Causes ([click here for video link for overview](#))

- *PWDs are amongst the poorest in society* and are subject to disempowering stigmas, discrimination and marginalization that perpetuate existing cultural norms and beliefs [2];
- *Women and girls with disabilities are at greater risk* of violence, physical abuse and sexual exploitation after disasters due to displacement and unsafe shelters and public spaces [3-5];
- *The physical and social isolation of PWDs hampers participation in everyday life* - encouraging passivity and them being seen as *objects of care*, limiting access to education, social networks and risk knowledge [1, 6];
- *There is little empirical evidence on the challenges PWDs face when responding to hazards and disasters* [7];
- The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)** mandates stronger inclusion of PWDs in DRR. Yet pathways to achieving these new targets and their feasibility remain unclear and fragmented due to a lack of disaggregated data on PWD needs, an ongoing disconnect between DRR policies and practices and disability rights-based laws and a lack of robust guidelines on how to mainstream disability-inclusive DRR (DiDRR) [8-12];
- *DRR stakeholders have little knowledge on how to support DiDRR and lack the skills and capacity* needed to mainstream DiDRR and measure DiDRR achievements and there are few platforms to link DRR stakeholders with those who have the skills and knowledge they lack – specifically, Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) and PWDs themselves [8, 13-16].

Our 10-year vision: *Inclusion to be at the center of DRR and disaster responses in SE Asia for the benefit of all.*

Inclusion and DiDRR is a human right - disability is not a medical or charity issue [17, 18]. This requires shifts in DRR *strategy* and *practice*. First, PWDs and DPOs must be actively included at all stages of DRR from inception to delivery to ensure that DRR plans and practice are tailored to specific requirements and honor the principles of universal design [12]. DiDRR demands full integration - disability can no longer be an “add on” to existing DRR approaches. Second, it requires the empowerment of PWDs and DPOs. ***Our goal is to strengthen the voices of PWDs in SE Asia (focusing on Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines) and provide them with the institutional and social support needed to respond effectively to hazards and disasters and to be champions of resilience and change.***

Taking a systems approach, we will create change via three interconnected pathways: Placing PWDs at the center of DRR requires a systems approach. Systems approaches demand multiple solutions that simultaneously engage with the interlinked components of the coupled human-environment system that drive vulnerability and resilience [19, 20]. Focusing on individual components of the system in isolation does not lead to fundamental shifts and often results in inappropriate or ineffective resilience-building practices [21, 22]. We will affect three changes:

1. **Knowledge & skills:** We will create a knowledge-base on the challenges and needs PWDs have when responding to risk that next users can use to underpin effective resilience-building strategies; engage PWDs, their households and DPOs as co-producers of risk solutions and share the new knowledge in accessible formats; and develop innovative training methods and toolkits to (i) empower PWDs and DPOs to increase their resilience to risk based on solutions identified by them, (ii) demonstrate how to be strong community champions, and (iii) train DRR stakeholders on the needs of PWDs and how best to support them in partnership with DPOs;
2. **Attitudes & belief systems:** Using workshops and training exercises, we will: (i) work with PWDs and DPOs to build trust and self-belief among PWDs, empowering them to see themselves as active participants of change and resilience in their own lives (instead of passive recipients of help and charity); and (ii) encourage direct interactions between PWDs, DPOs and DRR stakeholders to facilitate a change in the way DRR stakeholders perceive and engage with PWDs (from ‘stigmatized’ to ‘capable actors’);
3. **Inclusive governance:** Create supportive spaces and mechanisms where PWDs feel empowered to express their challenges, aspirations and needs; examine and improve linkages between DRR stakeholders, DPOs and PWDs (via trainings and multi-stakeholder advisory committees) to create more supportive governance processes that can better facilitate DiDRR; and provide DPOs and DRR organizations with indicators to measure how inclusive DRR plans are.

Together, these actions and processes will create the foundations needed to support effective and durable DiDRR and will provide a model of best practice for other countries in SE Asia and beyond to follow and adapt.

2.2 Impact Pathway Diagram

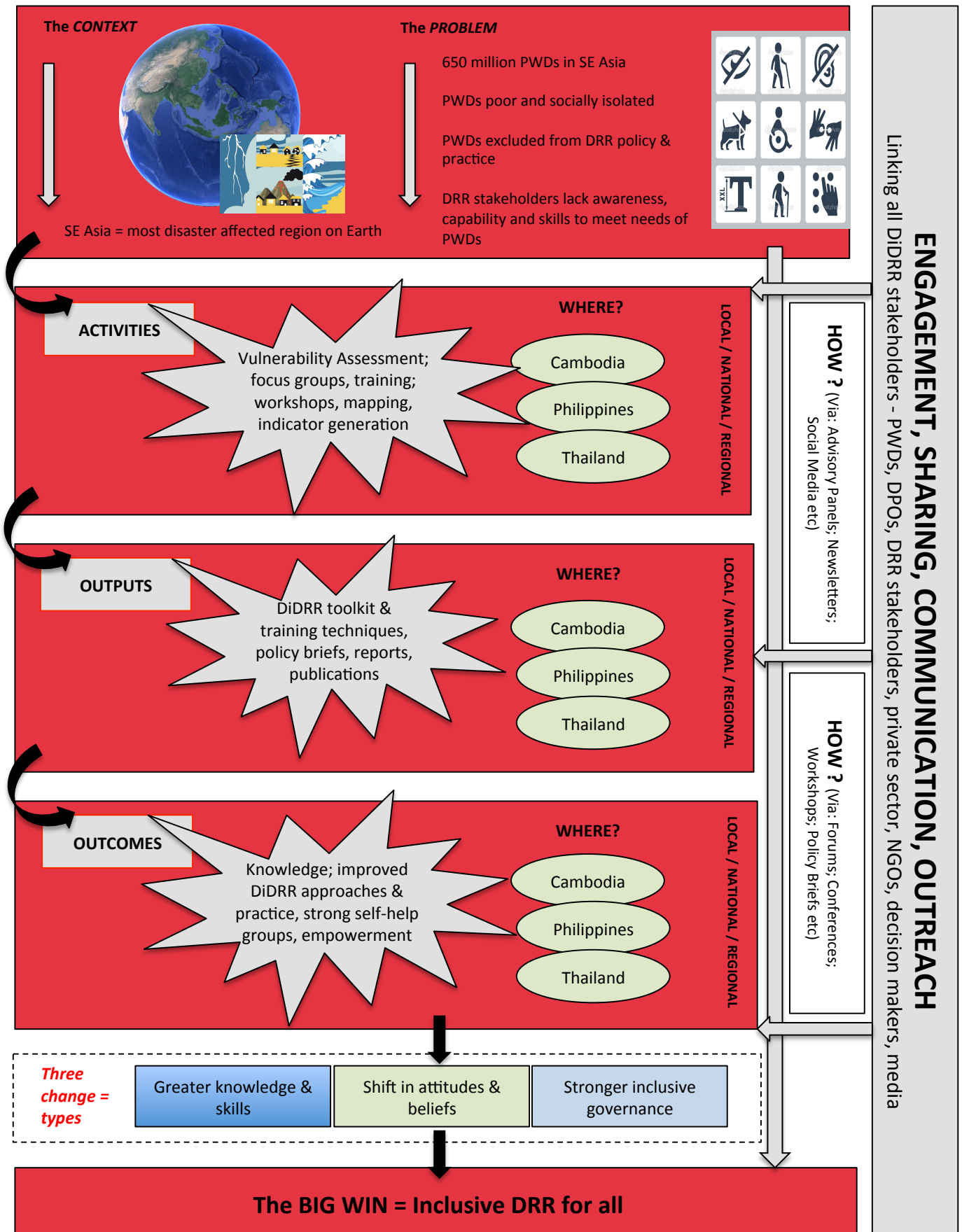


Figure 1: Impact Pathway for achieving inclusive DRR

2.3 Innovation and Impact

Our project demonstrates three innovations

1. ***We are disability inclusive:*** From the start, *PWDs are the centerpiece of our approach*. Disaster resilient communities cannot become a reality without full inclusivity of PWDs who are among the poorest and most vulnerable to natural hazard risk. First, our inclusion of team members that have disabilities (two Deaf people and one with mobility limitations) and a DPO (CDPO in Cambodia), harnesses cultural relevance and expertise (insights that fully-able people cannot understand), empowers PWDs by providing them with the opportunity and knowledge to be DiDRR champions and builds further capacity. Second, our capacity-building activities (via training workshops and multi-stakeholder advisory committees consisting of next users (i.e. PWDs, DPOs, key DRR stakeholders and academics who are DRR and disability specialists) will not only enable the co-creation of grounded DiDRR solutions, but will also facilitate greater ownership by next users and create DiDRR champions, trainers, advocates, allies and educators that promote durability beyond the project's funding period.
2. ***We take a systems approach:*** We aim to achieve a fundamental shift in how DRR is conceptualised and operationalized via policy and practice to ensure that DRR is inclusive. Focusing on one aspect of the system will not bring about the whole-system change required. Consequently, we simultaneously focus on achieving three types of change in the below areas through multiple and complimentary activities and actions:
 - i. Increase knowledge & skills;
 - ii. Foster changes in attitudes and beliefs - from passive receivers of charity to knowledgeable champions; and
 - iii. Facilitate inclusive governance processes that support DiDRR.
3. ***We demonstrate DiDRR best practice:*** We will not only develop a DiDRR toolkit in collaboration with next users (to ensure relevance, effectiveness and sustained impact beyond the two years of project funding) but we will also demonstrate *how* to do DiDRR in practice by testing and refining the toolkit and methods with next users throughout the project. This will provide DRR and disability next users with working examples of DiDRR in action and will ensure the participation of PWDs in planning, implementation and evaluation phases of DRR.

We will maximize impact for inclusive DRR via four complimentary pathways:

1. Focusing on three countries with different socio-political and developmental contexts increases impact in three ways. First, it creates a broader knowledge-base on the natural hazard-related challenges PWDs face and offers multiple examples of DiDRR successes and failures that next users across the world can use to create more effective DiDRR practices. Second, our focus on different disability types - deaf people, those with visual impairments, those with mobility limitations and women with disabilities - will enable us to develop a DiDRR toolkit that pairs general good practice applicable to all disabilities with disability-specific content. This will create an evidence-based, comprehensive and highly transferrable DiDRR toolkit (output) that can be easily shared and adapted by multiple next users within and beyond SE Asia to suit different circumstances. Third, the development of standardized indicators that DPOs and DRR stakeholders can use to measure how inclusive DRR plans are is a universal output that can be applied to all organizations and contexts.
2. We will include next users - PWDs, DPOs (e.g. CBM and CDPO), major DRR stakeholders with local, regional and international reach (e.g. Australian Red Cross and UNISDR), and DiDRR academic specialists - from the project's inception. This inclusive process ensures the relevance of our outputs and facilitates greater next user ownership and buy-in across all scales (local, national, regional and international). We will do this by creating two levels of advisory committees to inform and steer our project: (i) an overarching Strategic Advisory Committee comprised of international DRR stakeholders (e.g. Australian Red Cross, Plan International) DPOs (e.g. World Federation of the Deaf, International Deaf Emergency, CBM), and DiDRR academic specialists (e.g. University of Sydney and University College London) and four in-country advisory committees that draw from localized DRR and disability stakeholders (including government representatives) and civil society (including the media and private sector where applicable).
3. We will extend the impact and reach of our work (up-scaling our impacts) by leveraging and mobilizing the established and wide-reaching networks of our next users to: (i) widely disseminate information on the natural hazard-related challenges PWDs face and DiDRR best practice; and (ii) promote the distribution and use of our products (our DiDRR toolkit and standardized Inclusive Resilience Scorecard) in different locations and contexts.
4. Capitalizing on our team's existing media connections, we will collaborate with the media to disseminate information on how PWDs can best prepare for future hazards and raise DiDRR awareness. We will also explore how to best use social media (Facebook and text messaging) to widely disseminate DRR preparedness advice to PWDs.

2.4 Outcomes

We seek to bring about simultaneous change in three key areas: 1) Increasing the knowledge and skills of PWDs, DPOs, and DRR stakeholders; 2) Changing attitudes and negative stereotypes towards PWDs by empowering them to become active agents of change; and 3) Strengthening inclusive governance. This will help achieve inclusive DRR for all (this includes PWDs and women) and increase community resilience to future disasters. The key outcomes our project will achieve in order to bring about change in these three areas are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1: Key outcomes classified by change type

Greater knowledge and skills

- Improved empirical knowledge-base on the challenges PWDs face in responding to natural hazards and disasters, their needs and the resilience-building strategies they find most effective - this can be used by DRR stakeholders and DPOs to co-design effective resilience building strategies;
- Greater awareness and capacity of DRR stakeholders and DPOs at multiple levels to support PWDs to respond to natural hazards and disasters;
- The production of natural hazard risk and disaster response information that is made available to people with a range of different disabilities in accessible formats (e.g. braille and audio material for the Blind; sign language videos for the Deaf);
- PWDs gain a better understanding of natural hazard risk and more knowledge on the resources they need to better respond to hazards and know how to access those resources; and
- DRR stakeholders are sensitive to inclusion and gender and are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed support PWDs in their activities.

Shifts in attitudes in beliefs

- PWDs are empowered with the DiDRR knowledge, skills and confidence needed to directly participate in DRR activities and are recognized as active agents of change within their communities and by DRR stakeholders;
- PWDs are confident in voicing their needs before, during and after disaster to DRR stakeholders, DPOs and their communities;
- Disabled DRR trainers and champions engage in DiDRR advocacy with the support of DPOs; and
- DiDRR champions take ownership of DiDRR and advocate for inclusion and resources from DPOs and DRR stakeholders.

Stronger inclusive governance

- Strengthened DiDRR networks and improved institutional coordination for DiDRR activities among DRR stakeholders, DPOs and local and national governments;
- Improved cross-country knowledge sharing and mutual learning on DiDRR for DRR stakeholders, DPOs and governments through the Strategic Advisory Committee;
- Increased trust and engagement between DRR stakeholders, DPOs, PWDs, governments and local communities through greater number of joint activities;
- DPOs and DRR stakeholders co-develop and co-implement DiDRR to make activities more inclusive; and
- Strengthened partnerships between women's representative organizations (e.g. through the in-country Advisory Committee), DPOs and DRR stakeholders that support gender-sensitive DiDRR for truly inclusive DiDRR.

2.5 Next Users and Use

Next users in DiDRR in Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines: Inclusive DRR requires [12]: (i) active engagement and collaboration by all society members i.e. PWDs, DPOs, local stakeholders, government, civil society (including the media and the private sector) and multiple sources of expertise in DRR, DiDRR, community-based resilience-building techniques and community engagement (particularly with PWDs) at the local, national and regional level; and (ii) access to strong, trusted networks that have the potential to reach a broad spectrum of people and experiences in focal countries. Our team includes some of these next users:

- **Cambodia:** *CDPO* is the overarching DPO for Cambodia and has the reach, knowledge and networks required to support our vision in the Cambodian context. *Monash University* (via Dr Gartrell) adds research expertise in gender-specific community engagement and disabilities in Cambodia and works closely with CDPO;
- **Philippines:** *CCI* (via Nick Craig) have experience working on disability (particularly Deaf) issues in Australia and was instrumental in establishing Deaf Disaster Assistance Team-DRR (DDAT-DRR) in the Philippines. *IDEA* (via Jerome Zayas) has a decade of advocacy experience working on disability-inclusive initiatives in the region (in DiDRR and health);
- **Thailand:** *KPC Consultant Co. Ltd* (via Dr Krongkant) is one of the key instigators of DiDRR activities in Thailand and has reach to key DRR actors (including the national government), DPOs and PWDs; and
- **Regional DRR expertise:** *SEI-Asia* has supported DRR research, policy engagement and capacity building in the region for 10 years and will work closely with in-country partners and the Team Lead to inform research and capacity building activities.

Our team will use this solid foundation of connectivity and experience to engage and encourage buy-in with a broad spectrum of next users that will gain direct benefit from our project. These next users are mapped out in Figure 5 (Stakeholder Map) located in Appendix 1.

Evidence of demand for the project outputs: International non-governmental organizations working in DRR (Plan Norway and the Australian Red Cross), DPOs (World Federation of the Deaf, International Deaf Emergency, CBM) and academic institutions (University of Sydney and University College London) have expressed strong interest in our project and its outputs.

Incentives and barriers for next users in using our outputs

Incentive 1: The Sendai Framework for DRR advocates for inclusive DRR policies. Whilst non-binding, this Framework does give legitimacy to the push for DiDRR and can be used to influence policy decisions. Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines are also signatories of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), which states that signatories must ensure the protection and safety of PWDs in emergency and disaster situations and provide equal access to resources and assistance for all (Articles 9 and 11) [18].

Barrier 1: Despite demand for inclusive DRR, many DRR stakeholders do not know *how* to do DiDRR and lack the knowledge or skills needed to effectively support PWDs. **Solution:** Firstly, we will provide these stakeholders with clear tools - DiDRR toolkit and clear training methods that bring PWDs and DRR stakeholders together in the same training session - to give them an easy step-by-step guide on how to do DiDRR and verse DRR stakeholders in what PWDs need to better respond to natural hazards. Secondly, we will develop and test these tools in partnership with DRR stakeholders to ensure their relevance. This will facilitate greater DRR stakeholder ownership and buy-in of both the process of DiDRR (which we will be demonstrating as we work with them) and the tools (products) we will collaboratively produce and hand over to them at the end of the project. This process of co-development and co-production of tools will also create an incentive for them to use the tools that they themselves have helped to create.

Barrier 2: There are few platforms to link DRR stakeholders with those who have the skills and knowledge they lack, namely DPOs and PWDs themselves. **Solution:** Our training techniques will create a platform for PWDs, DPOs and DRR stakeholders to learn from each other. PWDs and DPOs will learn what they need to do to better respond to natural hazards and where to access the help they need from DRR stakeholders. DRR stakeholders will learn from PWDs what PWDs need from them in terms of support and the forms this support should take to ensure greatest accessibility. This will also create a platform for developing stronger linkages between DPOs and DRR stakeholders (as support providers) and the people they assist (PWDs).