

# INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2013

## LIVING WITH DISABILITY & DISASTER

### Children living with disability in disasters should be a priority



As the world dedicates a day to consider the plight of people living with disability during disasters, the Child Centred Approach to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction programme is adamant, that challenges facing children living with disabilities need urgent attention.

“Children are already vulnerable to climate change and climate change related disasters and the susceptibility is higher when a child is living with a disability.” said Ms Roshni Chand, Child Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA) Program Manager at Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International.

According to Ms Chand, the focus of the International Day for Disaster Risk is People Living with Disability and on many occasions’ issues like accessibility, participation, social inclusion, and contribution are barriers that people living with disabilities face every day and it is even greater for children living with

disability.

“We have children who suffer serious problems of mobility in their legs and hands, children who have other forms of disabilities associated with learning, hearing and sight or seeing and these need to be considered when we are observing the International Day for Disaster Reduction.”

“We need to be more understanding to children with disability and view their disability as being differently abled,” Ms Chand said.

The role of society and the community is essential in supporting children living with disability in disasters.

“At the same time our children who live with disabilities have the ability to contribute meaningfully through sharing their lived experiences on how evacuation plans and responses can be developed that best suits their needs and that they can adapt to,” she added.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction notes that “some one billion people around the world live with some form of disability.” And this represented one-fifth of the world’s population.

“The 4CA programme wants to have a child centred focus in particular children living with disabilities and we want to emphasise the important message that in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) the aim is to reduce the damage caused by natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, droughts and cyclones, through an ethic of prevention and in doing all these we need to consider that in our midst are children who are vulnerable and with disabilities who we often forget to consider,” Ms Chand said.

The Fiji 4CA Program Officer Mr Lalavanua from Partners in Community Development Fiji added that they had made concerted effort in ensuring that disabled people not only participated in the evacuation drill exercise but in its development at Nakorovu and Narikoso village in Mataso district in Ra which is their project site.

The UNISDR said persons living with disabilities have unique contributions, often overlooked, to help reduce the risk of disasters and build resilient societies and communities.

“The IDDR 2013 is aimed to amplify this critical issue of including the needs of persons living with disabilities now and for the future and more so for children who are often forgotten in discussions, planning and even in mapping responses,” Ms Chand said.

The 4CA program targets and formulates activities that help to reduce the vulnerability of children to the impacts of disasters and climate change.



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**IDDR 2013**

INCLUDE DISABILITY IN DISASTERS....

Make it your **BUSINESS**

By ensuring...

- ALL disaster early warnings are heard, seen and understood by ALL
- ALL evacuation centres can be used by ALL
- ALL disaster relief response is for ALL
- ALL collated information for disasters is for ALL
- ALL laws regarding disasters are for ALL
- ALL members of community understand and support the disaster needs for ALL

**ALL services are for ALL**



For more information contact Fiji Disabled Persons Federation on 3311203

[www.fdpf.org.fj](http://www.fdpf.org.fj)