



COSP statement by Championing for Inclusive Communities-Kenya (CIC-K) at Civil Society Forum

Session 2 – COSP theme 2: Barriers Faced by Persons with Psychosocial disabilities in Humanitarian Situation

Persons with psychosocial disabilities, already marginalized to the most severe extent of not having personhood, are disproportionately affected and excluded in actions and plans before, during and after humanitarian crises and disasters. In our and peers' experiences and as evident in disaster situations and conflicts around the world have confirmed that people with psychosocial disabilities, especially those incarcerated inside institutions and asylums are abandoned during crisis situations. There are several instances of accidents and deaths in such places. In situations of emergencies, families and communities seek safer ground, while those institutionalized perish inside custody. During preparedness activities, there are a number of capacity building initiatives taken by humanitarian organizations however individuals with psychosocial disabilities and our organizations are not included in capacity building and training initiatives. During disasters, people with psychosocial disabilities are also not included in the data collection processes.

The Guidelines on De-institutionalization, building on General Comments 1, 5, 6 among others, provides detailed guidance for state party actions during humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, by providing multi-pronged actions on [1] enabling legal frameworks; [2] preparation for living life in the communities and leaving institutions; [3] support systems and support services that should be available in communities; [4] and finally, access to a range of mainstream services. Additionally, communities must be supported by State parties to be inclusive, during times outside of emergencies and disasters. A culture of community inclusion must prevail in society in general, with comprehensive awareness programs on disability inclusion and disaster preparedness. This will ensure that during times of emergencies and disasters, no one is left behind.

An effective response mechanism should involve OPDs at all levels from policy formulation to project inception so that all emergency response mechanisms can resonate with the provisions of the international, regional and local mechanisms that observes rights-based strategies.