



Building capacity for disability inclusion in gender-based violence programming in humanitarian settings

Northern Caucasus – December 2013

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) are currently conducting a two-year project to contribute to the evidence base on effective strategies for disability inclusion in gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response in humanitarian contexts. This project is being implemented in IRC humanitarian programs in four countries – Ethiopia, Burundi, Jordan and Northern Caucasus. This paper describes the findings from the first phase of this project which is being piloted in IRC Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE) activities in the Northern Caucasus program.

Consultative meeting with the Chechen Women's Network

The IRC's GBV program in Chechnya seeks to enhance the protection and empowerment of women and girls by supporting and strengthening the Chechen Women's Network (an umbrella group of non-governmental organizations). In November 2013, the WRC and IRC facilitated a consultative meeting with representatives from twelve organizations in the network to brief partners on the project, gather their expectations and initial ideas for the project and engage them in the development of follow-up actions.

Skills and capacities for disability inclusion in GBV prevention and response

The consultative meeting identified a number of skills and capacities across the Chechen Women's Network that might promote disability inclusion in GBV programs:

- As a network they have a wide array of partnerships, which helps them to reach persons with disabilities, and also to advocate for their access to aids and devices and other services that support inclusion in the community.

*"We don't have to look for persons with disabilities – they are referred to us."
(Participant in consultative meeting – November 2013)*

- Many staff of the member organizations have personal experiences with women and girls with disabilities in their families and communities.
- Some organizations have experience in targeted programming for women and girls with disabilities, including using alternative communication and education methods to teach blind and hearing impaired girls about violence.

Learning goals

Participants in the consultative meeting expressed a desire to learn more about:

- Communicating, interacting and engaging persons with disabilities in their activities with women and girls.
- Identifying and addressing barriers to participation of women and girls with disabilities in their activities.
- Different experiences and methods used both within and outside their network to address these barriers.

“Three wishes for the project” – Potential pilot actions

Three key fields of work were identified by the participants as potential actions which the Chechen Women’s Network could consider in the scope of this project:

- (i) Identifying the needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities through research and assessments;
- (ii) Training persons with disabilities to train others on issues of violence; and
- (iii) Coordinated advocacy on inclusion of women and girls with disabilities, including access to services.

Next steps

Over the next 6 months, WRC and IRC propose to support the Chechen Women’s Network to strengthen disability inclusion in their collaborative actions by:

- Sharing tools and resources on communication with persons with different types of disabilities;
- Designing and piloting a simple assessment tool to identify barriers to participation in women’s and girl’s activities;
- Facilitating further consultative meetings to exchange information and experience between members of the Network; and
- Conducting training and action planning workshops on disability inclusion to strengthen disability inclusion in collaborative advocacy activities.

For more information about the project, please contact:

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