An Inclusive Response to COVID 19: 10 recommendations from the International Disability Alliance

March 19, 2020

COVID 19 is a global pandemic. A pandemic is when a disease spreads through continents or around the world.

People with disabilities are especially at risk from COVID 19.

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) is a group made up of networks of organisations of disabled people. (OPD)

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) heard from its members all around the world about the pandemic and what is happening for people with disabilities.

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) has made a list of recommendations on how to support people with disabilities during this pandemic.

These recommendations can be used to help organisations advocate and ask for help on the risks that people with disabilities face.

We can use these recommendations in our cities, in our countries, in our regions and at a global level.

International Disability Alliance 10 Key Recommendations

1. People with disabilities must receive information in a way that is accessible for them.

   People should get information about;

   - How to protect ourselves from being infected
   - What plans there are for stopping people meeting in public
   - What services are in place to help people

2. For some people with disabilities, governments must put extra measures in place to keep them safe.

   For example, extra testing and support for people with disabilities who are more likely to be infected because of respiratory (breathing) problems or other health problems.

3. Government workers and people who are giving services, like health care workers, must be trained on the rights of people with disabilities and how to support to people with disabilities

4. All plans must be inclusive of women with disabilities. All plans must be accessible to women with disabilities

5. People with disabilities must not be placed in institutions. People with disabilities must not be abandoned. This means left behind or alone. Institutionalization or abandonment is not acceptable in any situation.

6. A quarantine is when a person or a group of people are stopped from moving around freely. A quarantine helps to stop the spread of a disease like COVID 19.

   During a quarantine a government must make sure that support services, personal assistance, physical accessibility assistance and communication assistance are all still available for people with disabilities.

7. Many countries and governments are stopping people from meeting up in groups in public. Some ways that governments are doing this is by closing shops and restaurants or asking people to work from home. These plans help stop the spread of disease.

   When governments are putting these plans in place they must consider people with a disability. For example, governments must make sure people with disabilities are still able to get the food they need or the medicines they need.

8. People with disabilities who have the disease COVID19 and need health services may face discrimination. People with disabilities must get equal treatment as other people. People with disabilities should not be prevented from getting help just because they have a disability.

9. Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) can and should work to raise awareness of people with disabilities and their families.

   For example, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) can help to prepare information on COVID19 in accessible formats in local languages; or organize training on inclusion and disability for health service workers

10. Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) can and should speak up and advocate for governments to respond to the COVID19 crisis in an inclusive way.

    For example, Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) can contact authorities like the health system, or the national media to share information about how the pandemic may impact people with disabilities and how services can support people with disabilities.

If you have any information on how COVID 19 is affecting people with disabilities in your area of work, or want to share any good practices or lessons learnt, please contact IDA Inclusive Humanitarian Adviser Ms. Elham Youssefian via emailing eyoussefian@ida-secretariat.org

For updated resources on how people with disabilities are being included in the prevention and response to COVID 19 prevention please check the webpage by the International Disability Alliance at http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/covid-19