

# **Disability and Climate Justice**

## **A Research Project**

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# Contents

Foreword .....	4
Authors' Note .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Acronym List.....	13
1. Introduction.....	14
1.1. Legal and policy frameworks.....	16
1.2. Definitions and understandings .....	18
1.2.1. <i>Disability</i> .....	18
1.2.2. <i>Climate justice</i> .....	20
2. Methodology.....	24
2.1. Literature review.....	24
2.1.1. <i>Inclusion criteria</i> .....	26
2.2. Interviews .....	26
2.3. Online survey .....	26
2.4. Limitations .....	28
3. Results.....	29
3.1. Poorly understood links between climate and disability.....	29
3.2. Common goals, but lack of coinciding agendas .....	29
3.3. The UN should be more proactive in this area, but to date has done little .....	30
3.4. Focus on DRR can be limiting .....	30
3.5. Rights-based approaches .....	35
3.6. Lack of representation of persons with disabilities in climate justice networks.....	38
3.7. Paucity of donor funding on climate-disability nexus .....	45
3.8. Lack of systematic engagement of climate groups with disability issues .....	45
3.9. Poor understanding and response to intersection of climate and disability issues .....	54
4. Conclusions.....	60
5. Recommendations.....	63
5.1. Improve intersectional understandings of climate-disability issues and advocacy .....	63
5.2. Develop a transformative rights-based view that explicitly connects climate justice to the rights of persons with disabilities .....	63
5.3. Climate justice networks and processes must include disability- focused representation .....	64
5.4. More research on climate-disability issues is needed .....	64



5.5.Donors should support climate groups to be truly transformational in their disability-inclusive efforts .....	64
5.6.Donors should target OPDs in their climate funding.....	65
5.7.Support disability activists to increase knowledge and leadership. ...	65
Appendix 1: Global frameworks .....	67
Appendix 2: Participant information sheet and consent form.....	85
Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview guide .....	92
Appendix 4: Online survey networks shared .....	95
Appendix 5: Literature review emerging themes .....	97
Appendix 6: Literature review content tags .....	99
References .....	100

## Foreword

This report appears soon after the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) where people with disabilities felt left out in many ways. Israel's Energy Minister, Karine Elharrar, was unable to attend because of lack of wheelchair access and the main speeches did not have sign language interpreters, so Deaf participants were unable to take part. These glaring omissions are symptoms of a deeper problem: people with disabilities remain on the fringes of the climate justice agenda and the climate movement has not been applying a disability analysis. This report is timely, therefore, in reaffirming the need for more intentional disability analysis in the climate discourse and more effective and systematic reciprocal engagement between the climate movement and the disability movement at all levels.

We commissioned this report in order to learn more about the interconnections between climate and disability, and to listen to practitioners on the ground around the world, with the aim of developing a set of recommendations to move the agenda of reciprocal engagement forward. While recognizing the extraordinary work that many young people have done in this area, we also wanted to honor intergenerational connections. For us the link between climate justice, democracy and open societies is clear.

In commissioning the report we wanted a team of consultants that included both those working on disability rights and those active on climate justice. We intentionally wanted to de-silo disability and climate and see academics and climate activists working together. We are extremely grateful to our lead consultant, Maria Kett, and to Gaya Sriskanthan and Ellie Cole for having accepted this challenge and having worked together across disciplines and continents. The consultants' task was to investigate what work was being done on disability by mainstream climate organizations, and what understanding and work on climate was being done by organizations of people with disability, with a focus on cross-cutting issues.

We hope this report will be used by donors and other actors in the disability and climate fields to learn not only that it is fundamental to look at climate issues always through a disability lens but also to understand how to support climate and disability leaders, and how to support collective leadership in this area.

**Rachele Tardi**, former director of the Youth Exchange

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## Authors' Note

This study would not have been possible without the inputs of all those we reached out to interview – we really appreciate everyone's time and support. We would also like to thank all those around the world who took the time to complete the online survey.

The team would also like to express their sincere thanks to our colleagues at OSF, in particular Rachele Tardi and Zachary Turk for all their excellent guidance and support throughout the project, and their colleagues Louise Olivier, Alison Hillman and Kimberly O'Haver.

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## Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the current state of work around climate justice and disability in order to support the work of donors and other actors working in these areas. To gain an overview of current analyses and approaches regarding disability, the climate crisis, and environmental justice, the authors of this report conducted a thematic literature review. The review was complemented by an online anonymous survey, with 75 respondents, as well as more than 20 semi-structured interviews with practitioners, academics, and others working in the field of disability and/or climate focused organisations. Due to the COVID pandemic, the authors conducted their research entirely online.—While using this format presented challenges, it also facilitated engagement that in-person interviews might not have allowed for. An online format can also be more accessible for people with disabilities and have a less negative impact on the environment.

Current discussions at all levels about the unequal impact of climate change on different vulnerable groups and communities owe much to understandings of vulnerability, equity, and critiques of global geopolitics that long precede international recognition of climate change. Similar to the role they have played in sustainable development processes, affected groups have lobbied for recognition in the field of climate change. Issues of gender, Indigenous rights, racial injustice, contrasts between high-, middle- and low-income countries, and even traditionally less considered topics such as intergenerational justice, are debated in climate change-related spaces. However, people with disabilities appear to have remained peripheral in this conversation (Kett and Cole 2018; CIEL 2019; Keogh 2020). To date, there has been little research that identifies what evidence there is to demonstrate how climate justice can address broader issues of systemic inequalities that impact people with disabilities, or where people are already working together on efforts for radical transformations to fully address systemic inequalities. This review is an effort to examine this gap and identify current efforts and potential future programme work in disability and climate justice.

The report first outlines the widely used definitions and understandings of these areas of work, as well as outlining convergences and gaps in international agreements, policies, and funding mechanisms.

The literature review revealed an increasing focus on the human rights aspects of climate change, and a key finding is the tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, such as the right to representation, rather than on transformative approaches (see pages 18-19 for the definitions of these terms).

It is clear that the broad aims of both the climate justice and disability movements, though developed in separation, coalesce around ideas of social transformation, reflected in the call for the ‘paradigm shift’ that is required for typically marginalised and excluded groups and movements to become centred in ‘mainstream’ frameworks and responses.

There is also a need for a more fundamental re-envisioning of mainstream responses to increase the participation and inclusion of these groups, usually through the channels of substantive and procedural justice. However, the review found little evidence that these two transformational agendas are intersecting. Yet climate justice issues present an enormous opportunity for comprehensive social change that reflects the transformative demands of different groups, including people with disabilities. It is clear that efforts to address issues of disability and inclusive climate justice have been growing, but it has been a slow process marked by varying degrees of success. Though there have been significant efforts to address the substantive rights of people with disabilities following the adoption of the UNCRPD, there is a gap around the application of these rights to a climate justice framework.

We posit that this is due to several reasons. The first is the limited representation of people with disabilities in climate fora, as identified both in the literature as well as in experiences on the ground. This pattern is rooted in a fundamental disconnect between the two movements. There is some progress being made towards this, and this research is timely in that this year's UNFCCC conference (COP26) may be the first to fully engage with the rights of persons with disabilities, rather than merely as a ‘vulnerable group’. Linked to this is the lack of any systematic engagement by climate-focused groups with disability issues. Connections, initiatives or activities often hinge on the interests and persistence of individuals prioritising this work. The channels of communication and collaboration are sorely lacking, from the grassroots to the international level. Even at the international level, engagement of people with disabilities is often tokenistic. The research has identified very few examples of effective partnerships between the environmental movement and the disability movement, and there is a need for more debate and investment into research and technology to find sustainable and inclusive solutions.

There was even less evidence of understanding around the intersectional aspects of disability inclusion, with many organisations stating they are working on intersectional issues, but it was unclear how, risking a nominal and ‘tick box’ approach, rather than a genuinely nuanced approach to the differing constituents.

A final and related point is the overall lack of consensus over prioritisation of issues. Given the lack of data, examples, and knowledge about the specific

impacts of climate change on the disability community, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is a lack of consensus about what the priority issues are for the community.

### Key Findings

1. The literature review revealed an increasing focus on the human rights aspects of climate change, and a key finding is the tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, rather than on transformative approaches.
2. The research has identified very few examples of effective partnerships between the environmental movement and the disability movement.
3. Given the lack of data, examples, and knowledge about the specific impacts of climate change by the disability community, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is a lack of consensus about what the priority issues are for the community.

On the one hand, there is a great need for education and capacity building among people with disabilities and their organisations around climate change and its impacts, and how these fit with the aims of the disability movement, particularly in terms of the wider social transformation agenda. On the other, there is also a great need of persons with disabilities to participate in existing and ongoing climate justice movements and to be part of the ongoing conversation. For many people with disabilities, systemic exclusion across all sectors of society has led to a focus on immediate priorities, rather than those which are seen as deferrable. But there is a dearth of research around these issues to understand the specific impacts on people with disabilities, or to understand how the perspectives of differing group can be bridged.

The overall disconnect between the climate and disability rights movements calls for more systematic engagement from both camps, from the international level all the way down to the grassroots. The need to integrate intersectional voices and considerations is critical, but it needs to be driven by people with disabilities themselves.

What is clearly lacking is a consensus and a framework of what disability demands should be within the context of climate justice. This is particularly the case beyond understanding substantive and procedural rights, such as the right to representation, with a paucity of discussion on how an equitable transformation of the economy and society towards a low carbon future can centre and support the rights and aspirations of people with disabilities in all



their diversity. There is a growing understanding, particularly from the disability rights community, that this disconnect has to be addressed, with a number of advances including more formal organising of disability rights groups around COP 26.

A second point is around capacity and knowledge of how to engage with the complex negotiations around climate, acknowledging the links with disaster risk reduction (DRR), but going beyond to the intersection of DRR and climate justice. More awareness-raising by the climate justice movement is needed to get organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) working on a wider range of climate projects.

Finally, there is a need to create a better, more resilient, and adaptive system to respond to climate impacts that do not (even unintentionally) exclude people with disabilities from these systems— this includes adaptations to transport, materials, and structures. At the same time, there is an overall lack of literature that really seeks to explore the specific impacts of climate change on people with disabilities, or the policies and interventions that support mitigation and adaptation and adjust for these impacts on people with disabilities, while acknowledging that they are not a homogeneous population.

**The report makes seven key recommendations:**

**1. Improve intersectional understandings of climate and disability issues and advocacy**

From this review, we can see that people with disabilities remain on the fringes of the climate justice agenda. Many people with disabilities do not have jobs in the first place, and because of this, there has been a tendency to exclude them from debates around issues such as green jobs. Partly because of this exclusion, the work has barely touched on the needs or rights of youth with disabilities, or gender, or wider intergenerational injustice issues.

Much work has been done to reframe understanding away from the term ‘vulnerable’ to focus on resilience, though for many groups, particularly those under-represented within the disability movement, such as people with intellectual impairments or psychosocial disabilities, this focus on resilience can lead to the conclusion that if one is not resilient, then it is because of some inherent fault of one’s own. There is promising work around resistance, yet so far this framework has not been applied to people with disabilities and climate (Thomas 2021). Women and girls are also under-represented within the literature, and often within the movements, as are older adults with disabilities, who have specific issues around a lack of

technology or ICT access, which increases their exclusion even within the disability movement.

## **2. Develop a transformative rights-based view explicitly connecting climate justice to the rights of persons with disabilities**

This report has revealed that there is a tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, rather than on transformative approaches. There is a need to gain consensus around what transformative, rights-based, disability inclusive climate justice looks like for persons with disabilities, acknowledging heterogeneity, but also shared—and universal—experiences. This includes the right to representation, and greater focus on how an equitable transformation of the economy and society towards a low carbon future can centre and support the rights and aspirations of diverse groups of people with disabilities.

## **3. Include disability-focused representation in climate justice networks and processes**

Related to the above, there needs to be more awareness of why people with disabilities have been marginalised within the climate movement, such as a perpetuation of the belief that they are a ‘vulnerable’ group, rather than finding commonalities of marginalisation and exclusion, as well as understanding the need for a paradigm shift that integrates the transformational demands of disability movements. Building alliances with, and gaining political power within, the climate movement would facilitate this. However, as with much of the work on disability inclusion, this will be incremental. Therefore selecting what—and how—to prioritise issues is crucial. A second point is around capacity and knowledge of how to engage with the complex negotiations around climate, acknowledging the links with DRR, but going beyond to the intersection of DRR and climate justice. More understanding of how to build strategic alliances and develop networks of support, and on how to connect disability and climate issues is needed.<sup>1</sup>

## **4. Conduct more research on climate-disability issues**

Given the paucity of information on climate-disability issues, particularly at the local level, research is another priority. There is a need to look for data and evidence to frame narratives about the impact of climate on the

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<sup>1</sup> An example of similar work done is the [Frida Fund](#) ‘climate boot camp’, which raised members awareness of the climate justice approach without imposing a particular framework.

lives of people with disabilities. For example, very little is known about the specific health impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities or relating poorer health outcomes to long-term disabilities. More research is also needed around the intersectional aspects of climate change, and how it affects different ages, genders, and impairments, as well as the intersections between DRR and wider climate change and climate justice issues.

**5. Transform disability and inclusion efforts by having donors support climate groups that genuinely include people with disabilities**

Given the limited knowledge and capacity around climate, donors may need to reconsider where there are entry points for funding; so, for example, DRR could be an entry point, particularly for donors who do not usually fund work in this area. However, this should be coupled with awareness-raising by the climate justice movement to get OPDs working on a wider range of climate projects, and vice versa. Once alliances are made, and capacity strengthened, then broader upstream climate-focused work may emerge. It is important that this is not seen as static, and messages, priorities and capacity will—and should—change over time. Funding needs to reflect this.

A related activity is to provide more targeted funding to grassroots individuals and networks to facilitate the leadership development of practitioners to work collaboratively. Leadership development can create a better understanding of the links between climate and disability and what that looks like in practice and how it can be truly transformative.

**6. Encourage donors to target organisations of people with disabilities in their climate funding**

Similar to recommendation five, donors need to provide more targeted funding to grassroots individuals and networks that may facilitate the leadership development of practitioners to work collaboratively to create a better understanding of the links between climate and disability and what that looks like in practice. This does not eliminate the need for institutional funding, but rather aims to facilitate inclusion more generally. A ‘top down’ approach from donors, such as mandating disability inclusion across climate programs, along with a ‘bottom-up’ approach, such as reporting against these requirements would be the optimal solution. This could include funding to help OPDs build their capacity and understanding on climate change and how it specifically links to the struggles that they are engaged in. This would help OPDs self-determine how they would like

to engage with climate activists and have solutions that they develop and that meet their need to be integrated into the climate movement.

Another opportunity would be to find spaces for reciprocal awareness-raising between both climate and disability-focused organisations, with donors funding disability groups to work around specific sectoral issues, such as transportation equity and disaster response.

## **7. Support disability activists to increase knowledge and leadership**

There is not a strong consensus amongst disability activists about how to build organisational expertise. Some advocate that climate-focused organisations should mainstream disability in their work, rather than the other way around. In order to strengthen consensus, disability activists need to increase their knowledge and leadership in climate. This will enable them to develop power and knowledge to work together with the climate movement (who also need to build their capacity). Related to this is the need to build the capacity of OPDs to understand how climate negotiations work, how to build strategic alliances, and how to develop networks of support. Finally, activists and their allies need to lobby CRPD committee members to issue a comment on Article 11 to be expanded to include climate action as an initial step.

## Acronym List

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
BINGOs	Big International NGOs
COP26	2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference
DICARP	Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Research Program
DPO	Disabled people's organisations (now known as OPDs)
DRAF	Disability Rights Advocacy Fund
DRF	Disability Rights Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPDs	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PCCP	Pacific Climate Change Portal
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PNGADP	Papua New Guinea Assembly of Disabled Persons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TGDRR-CA	Task Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WID	World Institute on Disability

# 1. Introduction

There is an active discussion of the unequal impacts of climate change on different vulnerable groups and communities that owes much to understandings of vulnerability, equity, and critiques of global geopolitics that long precedes international recognition of climate change. Much as they have in sustainable development processes, affected groups have lobbied for recognition in the field of climate change. Issues of gender, Indigenous rights, racial injustice, contrasts between the Global North and South, and even traditionally less considered topics such as intergenerational justice, are actively debated in climate change related spaces. However, people with disabilities appear to have remained rather peripheral in this conversation (Kett and Cole, 2018; CIEL 2019; Keogh 2020).

This research looks in-depth at this lack of attention through a systematic literature review and key informant interviews from both the disability and climate movements. It takes a more upstream approach to explore the extent to which disability issues have been considered in work around climate justice. To date, there has been little research that identifies what evidence there is to demonstrate how climate justice can address broader issues of systemic inequalities, or where people are already working together on efforts that may lead to the radical transformations needed to fully address systemic inequalities. This review is an effort to address this gap and identifying current work in this field, as well as identifying future programme work.

The overall aim of this review is to understand the state of play of work around climate justice and disability to identify areas of convergence, as well as where there are gaps.

The report first outlines the definitions and understandings of these areas of work, current overlaps and convergences in international agreements, policies, and funding mechanisms. It then moves on to identify key themes emerging from the review, before making a series of recommendations as to how these gaps might be narrowed or closed.

In order to achieve this aim, the report set out to explore the following questions:

**Mainstream organizations working on climate:** What work do these organizations do around disability justice? How are they conceptualizing climate justice and its links to disability justice/rights and its links to climate? If they are working in this area, what made them embrace the climate justice/disability framework initially? To what extent is the work of these organizations inclusive of children and youth with disabilities? Are there any

good examples of indigenous people's disability groups that are actively engaging in climate justice?

**For groups and organizations of people with disability:** What work do they do on climate justice? How are they conceptualizing previous areas of work and climate justice? What are the main barriers for people with disabilities to connect with climate justice discourse and activism?

**Cross cutting issues:** Are generational aspects of climate justice discourse being explored and practiced—for example, are there discussions about intergenerational injustice? Are there efforts to support intergenerational activism? To what extent is disability and climate justice activism gender sensitive or gender transformative? Are there particular efforts made to engage women and girls in action and advocacy initiatives, and to support leadership of women and girls? Are there specific political opportunities in the present or on the horizon (e.g., to revise legislation or pursue or align with international frameworks such as the SDGs)?

**Advocacy questions:** What advocacy techniques and tactics emerged through the research? What is working and not working? How and why? How are various actors measuring (or planning to measure) the impact of their campaign, programming, or other work?

The Open Society Foundations recognize that the global climate crisis is symptomatic of wider systemic inequalities, including economic frameworks that exacerbate, rather than alleviate, inequalities. It has been argued that some groups, in particular people with disabilities, are even more marginalised and excluded by society, and this exacerbates their experiences of climate-related changes:

*For the most part, the greater vulnerability of persons with disabilities to the impacts of climate change is best explained by disabling environments, policies, and cultures. Disability is most prevalent among vulnerable populations and persons with disabilities are typically among the most marginalized and 'resource poor' within a community, due to their limited access to education, income, social forums, and decision-making authorities. As a result, persons with disabilities are neglected in the development of policies and programs for climate adaptation and face barriers in receiving services and information in a timely manner and accessible format. (Jodoin et al 2020:10).*

Such sentiments are even more timely in that these inequalities have been further exacerbated by the current coronavirus pandemic (Armitage and Nellums 2020). Given the systemic and entrenched nature of these

inequalities, a systemic—and radical—approach is needed. Such an approach should be fair, inclusive and participatory, and one which has social transformation at its heart.

Climate justice is one such systemic approach, and links to other human rights and social justice frameworks that support equity and inclusion for people with disabilities, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD; UN 2006). Directly related to this, in 2019, Human Rights Council resolution 41/21<sup>2</sup> led to a report which focused on the promotion and the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in the context of climate change, which was presented at the 44th session of the Human Rights Council.<sup>3</sup>

The report, entitled *Analytical Study on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of Climate Change* highlights the need for a human-rights based approach to address a number of issues, including the need to address the specific concerns of people with disabilities (which will obviously differ depending on where they are), while at the same time acknowledging that what works for people with disabilities may also benefit the wider population. The study makes a number of key recommendations to states and other stakeholders, some of which codify existing rights, while others address more disability-specific issues.

### 1.1. Legal and policy frameworks

In order to situate this work in context, it is necessary first to outline how human rights, which are universal, are accounted for in major climate action processes. First of all, within the **Paris Agreement**, human rights are mentioned only in the preamble. This is a contentious issue, as discussed by Ferreira (2016). While proponents of the inclusion of human rights explore how disability rights are currently recognised in climate-related law and policy frameworks regard this as an opportunity to strengthen the guarantees of the agreement, states that are opposed consider that including language around human rights ‘*could be interpreted as tacitly opening the doors to legal liability mechanisms for human rights violations related to lack of climate action under the UNFCCC regime*’ (ibid: 5). It is of note that the only country in the ‘Global North’ that advocated for the inclusion of this language in the operative part of the agreement is Canada.

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2 [A/HRC/RES/41/21](https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/41/21)

3 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/HRAndClimateChange/Pages/PersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>



In appendix 1, we summarise the extent to which disability issues are included in frameworks for global environmental, climate, legal, and financial policies (appendix 1, table 1), before moving on to examine the extent to which climate issues are addressed in global disability-focused frameworks (appendix 1, table 2).

While the tables show the range of frameworks around both climate and disability, they also highlight the limited convergence between the two fields, the tensions between the global frameworks and national/state interventions, and the paucity of means to actually monitor their implementation. These gaps are borne out in the empirical research presented later in the report. There is also scope for states to (re)interpret these frameworks at the national level, which can result in different measures and understandings of, for example, vulnerabilities that were intended in the international convention and policies. States may adopt all these frameworks and face a plurality of targets and indicators against which they must report—some of which may actually be contradictory or have limited or no funding or resources allocated to deliver them. There is also very little discussion of why there has been such limited inclusion in country climate action plans. This may in part be due to the lack of targets and indicators globally to demonstrate inclusion, but it may also be related to the relatively limited accountability states are held to with regard to both disability inclusion and climate justice (Epp et al 2016; Archer and Colendrander 2017).

However, an outcome of all these frameworks is that all UN and other multilateral and bilateral donors, including the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO<sup>4</sup>), as well as other philanthropic and other major donors, do include a focus (either mainstreamed or specifically targeted) on disability and/or climate concerns in their funding requirements.

The EU's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (ECHO) has made a commitment to disability inclusion in all funded projects and has developed an operational guide titled 'The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations'<sup>5</sup> which provides guidance and advice for staff and programmes on disability inclusion. The FCDO's [Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) does reference climate change as a pressing issue for persons with disabilities, but the associated delivery plan only has specific targets related to humanitarian action (e.g., there is a target

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4 The FCDO is the replacement agency for the Department for International Development (DFID).

5 [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/dg\\_op\\_guidance\\_inclusion\\_gb\\_liens\\_hr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/dg_op_guidance_inclusion_gb_liens_hr.pdf)

that by 2021, the FCDO expects a [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) in programming). The plan also cross-references other tools, including the Inter-agency standing committee (IASC) guidelines. USAID has an [Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive](#) (AAPD 04-17) *Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements* (2004).<sup>6</sup> The Nordic Development Fund (NDF), a joint finance institution between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, aims to facilitate climate change investment in low-income countries.<sup>7</sup> Despite the Nordic donors having longstanding commitments to disability issues,<sup>8</sup> the NDF does not have any projects that specifically target people with disabilities, though it prioritises 'vulnerable groups'. However, a recent report by the Atlas Alliance states that climate change is a cross-cutting issue for several of the Nordic states, including the Swedish and Norwegian governments, though it does not give more specific examples of projects it has funded.<sup>9</sup> While the UNCRPD provides a framework for work in this area, there has been very little work to date explicitly exploring the connections between both these areas of concern from a rights-based perspective. It is also worth noting that the focus of Article 11 of the UNCRPD is mainly around risk and humanitarian emergencies and is mainly focused on man-made or [natural disasters and emergencies](#), rather than specifically addressing climate risks. We return to this point in detail below.

## 1.2. Definitions and understandings

The following definitions and understandings were used to shape this review.

### 1.2.1. Disability

Disability is a heterogenous term that means different things in different contexts. These have been categorised into models, such as the medical model, which seeks a 'cure' for the 'problem' of disability; the charity model, which seeks to provide external assistance to people with disabilities; the social model, which sees the inherent problems for people with disabilities as external; and the biopsychosocial model, which takes elements of all of these approaches and sees disability as an *interaction* between the body and the environment. For the purpose of this review, we will use the UNCRPD definition to form the basis of our approach. This rights-based approach

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<sup>6</sup> The directive, however, does not have a specific focus on climate related issues.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ndf.fi/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://nordicwelfare.org/en/disability-issues/nordisk-handlingsplan-om-funktionshinder-en/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://atlas-alliansen.no/news/disability-inclusion-in-nordic-foreign-aid/>

understands disability as an '*evolving concept*', based on a dynamic interaction between a person's long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment and environmental, attitudinal and other barriers that '*hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others*'. (UN 2006). It can be argued that this understanding of disability moves us further towards addressing issues of social justice based on 'parity of participation', when a society is just only when it enables this through three things: economic redistribution, cultural recognition and political representation (Fraser cited in Mladenov 2016).

In many climate-focused programmes, because of different understandings of disability (medical or charity models in particular), people with disabilities are categorised as a 'vulnerable group'. Equating persons with disabilities with vulnerabilities is not a rights-based perspective, nor is considering all persons with disabilities as vulnerable. There is a great deal of literature disputing the notion of vulnerability within the DRR context (Blaikie et al. 1994), and it should be acknowledged that persons with disabilities can be made more vulnerable by a lack of disability inclusive planning, policy, and action, rather than their impairments per se (see for example the social vulnerabilities framework outlined in Peek and Stough 2010). Addressing equality of access also means that one group should not be made more vulnerable than others by a process or situation, therefore there is a significant body of work that both tries to address the view that people with disabilities are inherently 'vulnerable' to all aspects of climate change, rather than they are made vulnerable by their lack of access to shelters, or information, etc. Interventions are therefore designed to address these vulnerabilities, either through climate change mitigation or through the protection of specific population groups. Moreover, a focus on vulnerability denies people with disabilities any agency or even rights, so more recent work has shifted the perspective to focus on resilience. In this view, resilience is more dynamic and can actually lead to transformational change (Manyena et al. 2011; Pelling and Manuel-Navarrete 2011). However, it has been recognised that resilience itself is not equally distributed, and in fact, resilience for one group can both positively or negatively affect the resilience of others. It can also lead to perpetuation of systems that themselves need to change. An over-emphasis on resilience can also be problematic when it is used to shift responsibility and blame for any failure on the individual rather than examining shortcomings or failures within the system. There is a need to dismantle what the medical anthropologist Paul

Farmer calls the ‘structural violence’ that spurs a need for resilience (or indeed resistance) in the first place.<sup>10</sup>

Power—and who has it—is hugely important in both resilience and vulnerability, and in turn is affected by existing social divisions and inequalities, based on age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors. Finally, focusing on individual or community resilience can leave local actors facing problems that are national and global in origin—and as such need national or global responses (Smith et al. 2017: ). Environmental issues, in particular climate issues, are such problems.

### 1.2.2. Climate justice

The term ‘climate justice’ is used to focus on the political, ethical, and justice dimensions of climate change. At the treaty level, the idea of climate justice refers to the distinct features of climate change as a crisis that has unequal impacts and uneven origins. Higher-income countries, and indeed higher-income groups within those countries, are seen to bear greater historical responsibilities for causing climate change, while poorer people and countries are set to be the most impacted despite contributing the least to global emissions. Within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this is most clearly acknowledged in ideas of common but differentiated responsibilities dating back to treaty texts from 1992 (Mickelson 2009).

However, the imbalance of who is most responsible for climate change and who suffers the consequences of it goes much deeper than this. As the academic Cynthia Moe-Lobeda points out, ‘*We do not have conceptual frameworks for holding ourselves accountable for the cumulative impact of complex historical dynamics that continue into the present, benefit us, and have terrible impacts on others and on future generations yet involve no individuals' actions that are deemed either criminal or morally wrong*’ (2016: 32).

Ideas underpinning various interpretations of climate justice are derived from a longer history of tying environmental issues with concepts of human rights and social justice. These issues include legal aspects, based on human rights and environmental law, to labour rights, to ideas of inter-generational justice as well as other social, economic, and racial justice issues (Schlosberg and

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<sup>10</sup> Farmer, P. (2004) ‘An Anthropology of Structural Violence’ *Current Anthropology* Vol. 45, No. 3: 305-325

Collins 2014). They outline the evolutionary progression of ideas of climate justice from multiple tracks:

- **Academic** theories examining how to approach differentiated responsibilities, looking at ideas of compensating loss and damage, and examination of human rights implications of climate change and climate action.
- **International-level civil society** discussions on climate justice that have been largely spearheaded by larger, non-grassroots organisations. These tend to be preoccupied with the development rights approach, a related right or need to industrialise, a negotiated North/South approach, a human rights approach, and an interest in carbon markets.
- **Grassroots** demands around climate justice focus on ideas around a holistic, just transition out of a carbon-heavy economy, as well as Indigenous and community rights to self-determine development. They also directly take on the inequitable impacts of the oil industry, at all stages of production and use, and demand corporate accountability as well as challenge the suitability of the current dominant economic system. Grassroots actors have attempted to coalesce around common, international understandings of climate justice, notably the [Bali Principles of Climate Justice](#), adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit. More recently, the [People's Demands for Climate Justice](#) laid out six climate justice demands backed by almost 400 civil society organisation and 300,000 individuals, which were launched during the UNFCCC COP24 in 2018. Both of these understandings cover the intersectional issues of ensuring women's rights, Indigenous rights, and engaging youth as equal partners; however, the issue of disability is rarely, if ever, mentioned. There are also growing grassroots movements critiquing market capitalism and neoliberalism as fundamentally incompatible with rapid and equitable action to tackle climate change. There are different demands that can be broadly seen as 'anti-capitalist'. The most explicit are socialist and other left-aligned movements calling for much greater public climate finance and public investment that should not be funnelled to private interests and instead spent to achieve multiple social and environmental goals via institutions subject to democratic public ownership, control, and oversight (e.g., national, municipally or co-operatively owned businesses or sectors). These groups also emphasise the need for the expansion of workers' rights as part of a just transition and for the costs of the transition to be fairly borne by the wealthy rather than shifted the poor and working people. Other related demands include those from Indigenous movements, rejecting regimes of private property forced upon their lands in favour of traditional, collective land ownership and management. Peasants' and land

rights movements are mobilising against the corporate takeover and conversion of land and agriculture from a source of livelihoods, local food security, and locally owned assets into privately held assets managed for profit to shareholders. These movements often call for more climate-friendly ecological, small-scale agriculture based on local farming to be promoted and preserved, rather than high-input industrial farming.

Pursuing a rights-based analysis, it is possible to explore the building blocks of climate justice by dividing them into procedural, substantive, and distributive justice, as well as transformative approaches (McCauley and Heffron 2018; Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Although there is considerable overlap between these categories, it is useful to separate the component concepts of climate justice to provide a sense of where the Open Society Foundations may want to direct their focus in relation to its programmatic priorities.

- ***Procedural justice*** includes ideas of inclusion, participation, transparency, and autonomy in decision making (Schlosberg and Collins 2014). These are reflected in demands for Indigenous peoples and local communities to represent their own concerns and for the communities most impacted to have a leading role in decision-making around climate action. Procedural justice is also intimated in calls, including the Bali Principles and the People's Demands for Climate Justice (cited above), for a rebalance of power in decision-making, including the removal of the influence of transnational corporations in decision-making. While procedural rights are hugely important for people with disabilities, it could be argued that on their own, they do not lead to the paradigm shift that the UNCRPD states is necessary to ensure the full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.
- ***Substantive rights*** refer to fundamental rights underpinning human needs and dignity, such as the right to a healthy environment, food, and life (Bodansky 2010). In addition to safeguarding fundamental rights to clean air, land, water, food, and healthy ecosystems, the reviewed climate justice principles and demands include the right for communities to be free of climate change, as well as access to sustainable energy and the protection of land rights for Indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Ideas of ***distributive justice*** focus on re-balancing the relative burden of countries and communities relative to responsibility for causing climate change versus the severity of climate impacts. In doing so, climate justice frameworks take the common and differentiated responsibilities ideas outlined in the UNFCCC treaty text and expand upon them. As such, the focus is on concepts of the ecological debt of industrialised countries and

corporations and the provision of international funding or reparations to countries most affected but least responsible for climate change. Common calls for intergenerational justice in climate justice frameworks also fall under this category. Grassroots and leftist demands for the wealthy within countries of the Global North to pay their fair share, and to avoid the costs of a transition falling on the poor and middle class, can also be viewed as a form of distributive justice. Interestingly, there is also a dividing line between grassroots movements and international civil society as to whether this distributional remedy should be carried out by neo-liberal uses of markets or through societally managed redistribution and other fundamental economic interventions that can blur with transformative justice approaches. Roughly speaking, big international NGOs (BINGOs) tend to favour the former approach and grassroots movements the latter (Schlosberg and Collins 2014).

- ***Transformative approaches*** to climate change can be understood as calling for more fundamental change. Transformative adaptation calls for adaptive measures that are based on deeper social and economic change rather than the incremental adjustment of current systems (Park et al. 2012), tackling root causes and overlapping with notions of sustainable development. Relative to climate justice, just transition concepts are particularly concerned with transformation. Notably, how the grassroots interpretations of climate justice have also provided checklists of ‘false solutions’ to avoid what is viewed as ‘business as usual’, and thus oppositional to transformative agendas. Transformative approaches also heavily feature principles of local self-determination that appear to call for a break from the commodification of communities and natural systems.

To explore how these issues impact across the disability and climate sectors, we undertook a thematic review of the literature and an empirical study of key individuals and organisations already working in the areas of disability rights and/or climate justice. This is detailed in the next section.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Literature review

To gain an overview of the current state of the bodies of literature around disability and climate justice, including environmental justice,<sup>11</sup> a thematic review of the literature was undertaken. This enabled a broader scope for the questions asked of the literature and included a wide age range—including children and youth, as well as older people. The review considered literature published from 2015 onwards to coincide with the commencement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their increased commitment to climate justice.

The review protocol followed an agreed methodology to ensure consistency. The first was an online search of the following academic databases, journal catalogues, and online libraries:

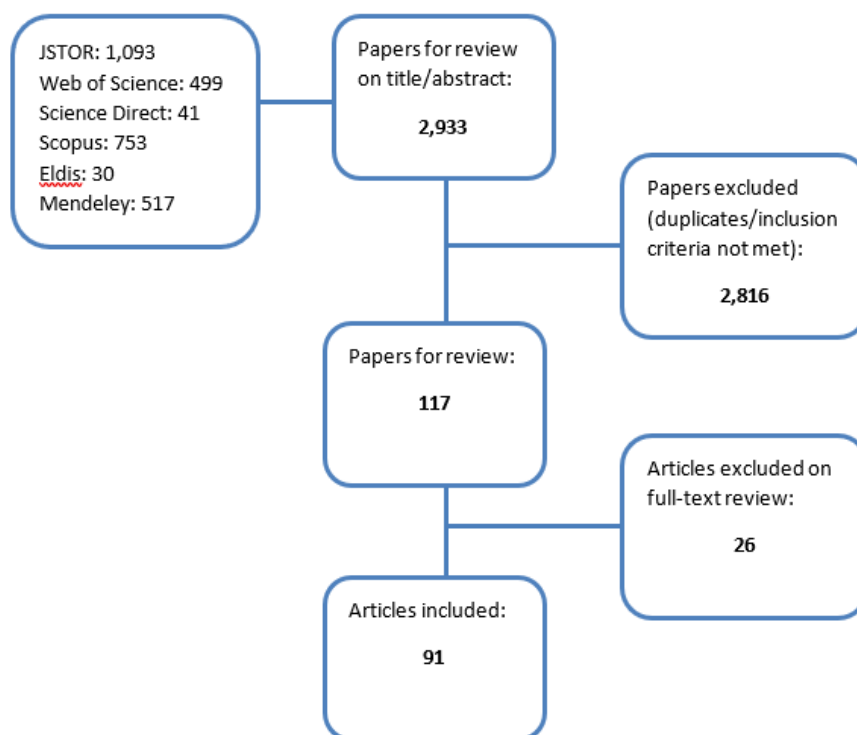
1. [JSTOR](#)
2. [Web of Science](#)
3. [Science Direct](#)
4. [Scopus](#)
5. [Eldis](#)
6. [Mendeley](#)

Searching these databases resulted in a total of 2,933 returns. Of these, 2,774 were excluded on title and a further 42 results were excluded on abstract. A total of 117 results are included for review of the complete text. Subsequently, a further 26 were excluded upon full-text review, resulting in a literature review of 91 articles.

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<sup>11</sup> **Environmental justice** refers to movements to address the disproportionate impact of environmental issues on the health and livelihoods of communities that are poor and/or constitute minority communities. For instance, the siting of toxic waste dumps or polluting power stations only in areas where poorer communities live. **Climate justice** draws from this movement, expanding the notion to climate change and its disproportionate impact on poorer communities, particularly communities in the Global South. It considers the vulnerability of these groups to the impacts of the climate crisis or the likelihood of these groups having to unequally bear the costs of climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation measures that aren't designed with equity in mind.



Figure 1: Literature  
Review Process.

An additional search was undertaken of relevant UN, and other multilateral, and bilateral organisations to substantiate findings, and these have been noted in the body of the text.<sup>12</sup> Mendeley reference manager was used to store, share and tag all papers identified through the literature search.

We used the initial search terms ('disab\*' or 'disable\*' or 'disabilities') AND ('climate' or 'climate justice' or 'climate change') as these should include all documents, which have a more specific focus. We only include book chapters that were available online, as there is no physical library access in the current pandemic. Using these terms, the total number of articles is:

**Table 1- Search Results by Database**

Term	Web of Science	JSTOR	Science Direct	Prevention Web	Scopus	Eldis	Mendeley
('disab*' or 'disable*' or 'disabilities') AND ('climate' or 'climate justice' or 'climate change')	499	1,093	41	1,501	753	30	517

<sup>12</sup> Please note a wider range of organisations are included in the scoping review, as many of the organisational outputs were not included in the search.

### 2.1.1. Inclusion criteria

- Papers in English
- Published since 2015—five-year timespan (SDGs 2015-2030)
- People with disabilities focus

All search returns were screened and included/excluded first on title and then on title and abstract. All papers were tagged with key words for ease of searching and reference.

The full report on this thematic literature review is available on request, but for brevity it has been incorporated with the empirical data collected.

## 2.2. Interviews

In order to address the wide-ranging questions that this report sought to answer and as outlined in the introduction, the team also undertook a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the fields of disability and climate justice, complemented by an online survey (see section 2.3). A total of 21 semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with practitioners, academics, and others working in the field of disability and/or climate focused organisations were undertaken. It should be noted that people were interviewed for their views, rather than their organisations. Due to coronavirus restrictions in place, all interviews were conducted remotely via secure, UCL-approved platforms (e.g., Teams). Ethical approval for the study was sought and approved by the UCL Ethics Committee (19025/001). To ensure data security, all personal data has been anonymised or pseudonymised and stored in UCL-approved platforms. Copies of the questionnaires, information sheets, and consent forms can be found in appendix 2. The SSI data was interrogated using theme content analysis

## 2.3. Online survey

The online survey collected data on individual and organisational practices around the linkages between disability and climate justice. It was collected using OPINO, a UCL-approved online survey tool. The link was shared with invited participants via email or through gatekeeper networks (see appendix 4 for list of where it was originally shared, though please note respondents have also shared the links with their networks, so the exact destinations of the survey are not known). The online survey elicited a total of 75 completed responses with an additional 20 partially completed (total n=95). Survey data was analysed through SPSS/OPINO and descriptive statistics are presented here.

A total of 35 respondents from climate-focused organisations commenced the survey, with a total of 24 completing (completion rate 69 percent). For the disability-organisation focused survey, 60 began the survey, with 51 completing fully (completion rate 85 percent). Due to the small sample sizes involved, both full and partial responses are presented below, and care must be taken in their interpretation. A quarter of disability organisations reported operating in North America (25 percent), with the next most frequent region being Asia (22 percent). For the climate organisations, the regions reported were evenly split between Africa and Asia (both 23 percent) and North America (20 percent).

**Table 2- Region of Work**

Region	Disability organisations	Climate organisations
Africa	9 (15%)	8 (23%)
Asia	13 (22%)	8 (23%)
Pacific	2 (3%)	1 (3%)
Europe	9 (15%)	2 (6%)
Australasia	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Central/Latin America	7 (12%)	2 (6%)
North America	15 (25%)	7 (20%)
Global	9 (15%)	6 (17%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>64 (100%)</b>	<b>35 (100%)</b>

*NB: respondents could select multiple regions—therefore percentages may sum to more than 100 percent.*

The impairments that disability-focused organisations worked on were evenly split across all impairment types, with physical impairments being the most frequently reported (59 percent).

**Table 3- Disability organisations impairment focus**

Impairment	Frequency (%)
Physical	33 (59%)
Sensory	25 (45%)
Intellectual/cognitive	26 (46%)

<b>Communication</b>	25 (45%)
<b>Other</b>	23 (41%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>56 (100%)</b>

*NB: multiple responses possible, sum of percentages is therefore more than 100 percent.*

Just over a third (39 percent) of the respondents from disability organisations reported working with multiple (or all) types of impairments.

## 2.4. Limitations

One of the main limitations to this work is that has been entirely online—though this may have also facilitated engagement that in-person interviews may not have. It is also a more environmentally aware approach. However, it does mean that although the survey was delivered in four languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian), the interviews were conducted in English.

Survey invitations were shared with established networks and colleagues. The results are therefore not necessarily representative of the wider picture of the cross-over of organisations in working in climate and disability fields.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Poorly understood links between climate and disability

#### Key Learning Points

1. The climate justice movement and the disability movement share a common goal of social transformation but in practice their respective agendas do not yet coincide.
2. The UN should be more proactive in this area, e.g., through the Committee of the CRPD, which to date has done little to address issues of climate change.
3. Much of the work that has been done is in DRR and humanitarian emergencies, with disability experts often coming from that field, and this has restricted the vision of the potential links and synergies between the disability movement and climate justice movement, which are much broader and more transformational.

### 3.2. Common goals, but lack of coinciding agendas

It is clear that the broad aims of both the climate justice and disability movements, though developed in separation, coalesce around ideas of **social transformation**. These aims are reflected in the call for the ‘paradigm shift’ that is required for typically marginalised and excluded groups and movements to become centred in mainstream frameworks and responses. For this shift to take place, there is a need for a more fundamental re-envisioning of what the ‘mainstream’ is in response to the more active participation and inclusion of these groups, usually through the channels of substantive and procedural justice. Yet, there is little evidence that these two transformational agendas are intersecting, or that there is a shift in thinking about what—or who—is ‘mainstream’, given the need to be more inclusive and diverse. The realm of climate justice should present an opportunity for broader societal transformation to reflect the transformative demands of different groups, including the demands of people with disabilities. While it is clear that efforts are now being made to address issues of disability-inclusive climate justice, these have been slow off the mark and have varying degrees of success, and though there have been significant efforts to address the substantive rights of people with disabilities following the adoption of the UNCRPD, there is a gap around the application of these rights to a climate justice framework.

### 3.3. The UN should be more proactive in this area, but to date has done little

The recently appointed UN Special Rapporteur for Persons with Disabilities, Gerald Quinn, has indicated that climate justice will be a key issue for him. He sees climate change as an ‘existential’ threat that requires intensive multilateral approaches and solutions, such as those that the UN can broker—so there is a clear role for them here. He postulated that there is a need to look for common solutions and the representation of persons with disabilities in the climate debate is a fundamental and critical step.

To date, the lack of active leadership on this issue from major disability rights bodies contributes to the absence of clear rights frameworks that could drive the uptake of disability issues by groups pushing rights perspectives around climate, and who have had some success around constituencies such as Indigenous peoples and women. Of the various UN human rights treaty bodies, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the body monitoring the UNCRPD, has been one of the least active committees on climate change. Between 2016 and 2020, the committee put in only five recommendations on climate change to country reviews of CRPD implementation, a far lower amount than other human rights committees, indicating a lack of prioritisation of climate issues—as well as a lack of knowledge and understanding, resulting in less tangible outcomes compared to other comparable committees that have a higher level of engagement on the issue.

Much of the work done around disability inclusion to date has been framed in DRR or humanitarian contexts, and though the UN has recommended that post-disaster reconstruction should be seen as an opportunity to ‘build back better’, including the participation of people with disabilities to ensure that the infrastructure is inclusive (Mosberg 2015), such an approach may still result in other forms of exclusion and inequalities unless these are specifically addressed. Moreover, as one prominent U.S.-based activist noted: “...*how about if we build forward better? I really I don't wanna build back...*”

### 3.4. Focus on DRR can be limiting

The focus on DRR seems to stem from the overall focus of international frameworks (including the [Sendai Framework](#)), which the disability community successfully advocated for inclusion within. The Sendai Framework is largely focused on DRR, and though DRR is inevitably linked to climate change, a focus on DRR, even one that takes a holistic perspective (including prevention, mitigation, etc.) into consideration still risks missing the attention on structural inequalities that a broader justice and equity lens might have.

International frameworks offer an opportunity to concretely identify and organise around areas of natural overlap, as a respondent from one of the climate-focused donor organisations notes:

*There is an opportunity, [the] Sendai Framework. Most countries don't have much in the way of legislation despite signing the convention so that's an important opportunity for climate movements to step in and say this is important and we can make our climate policies consistent with these international frameworks to broaden the climate movement.*

However, without specific targets or indicators within projects or programmes, or mandatory reporting requirements, in some cases, much of this work rarely extends beyond engagement to actual inclusion, let alone fundamental system change ('Build back better'). Members of the disability movement are rarely invited to participate in meetings such as cluster meetings<sup>13</sup>, or even on occasions project partner meetings, but they need to be present at these various decision-making tables, without feeling at the mercy of the actors involved, or to potentially lose funding.

In some respects, climate action might be seen as being in competition with DRR or wider humanitarian action, partly due to the way funding is awarded, and partly due to the siloed nature of these themes. Within most bilateral and multilateral donor organisations, humanitarian funding is separate from development funding, and climate change is likely to have fallen under the general development stream rather than the emergency funding stream. Until it is an emergency.

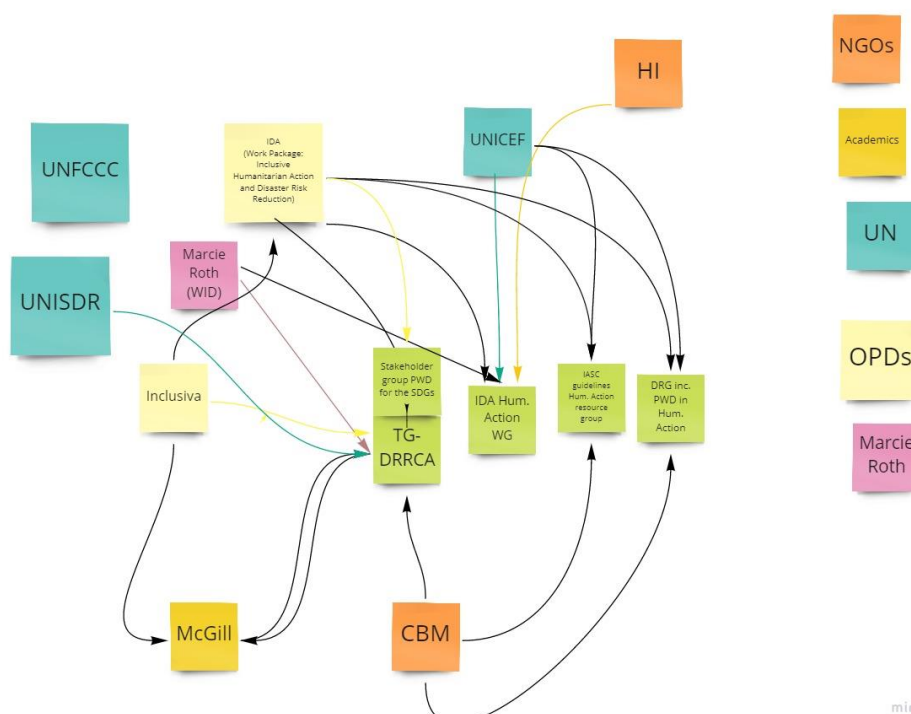
A second, and related point, is that many of the same actors involved in these negotiations are also involved in the work on climate and disability as an evolving focus of work. This engagement did result in some positive outcomes, including the [Dhaka Declaration](#), [Humanitarian Charter](#), and eventually even the [IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#), which includes DRR but not climate-related issues.

Given the limited understanding of disability and climate change, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are relatively few experts or organisations working in this issue, and most of those that are emerged from the existing groups working on DRR, including those that worked on the Sendai Framework, which may also explain why there is less focus on reducing emissions etc., and more focus on DRR.

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<sup>13</sup> UN Cluster System ([What is the Cluster Approach? | Humanitarian Response](#))

**Figure 2:**  
**Disability/Climate**  
**Organisations**  
**Interconnectedness**



The Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Research Program DICARP project, led by Professor Jodoin out of the McGill Faculty of Law has been instrumental in bringing together activists and advocates around the climate agenda, including presenting at a UN Panel, which significantly highlighted the issues.<sup>14</sup> The 17-member advisory panel for DICARP includes most, if not all, of the key players identified for this research, and also overlaps with other disability and climate groups, including the IDA Task Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action (TGDRR-CA).

The diagram above (Figure 2) tries rather simplistically to illustrate the interconnectedness of individuals and organisations, as well as drawing attention to the gaps in these connections (for example there are currently very limited links to the UNFCCC). It also emphasises that many of the activists emerged from the DRR field and have worked with each other on other similar projects and in similar fora. The McGill team have also been collaborating with national-level activists on climate and disability who understand the ground-level realities. As an activist working on intersectional issues of disability and Indigenous women and climate in Nepal notes:

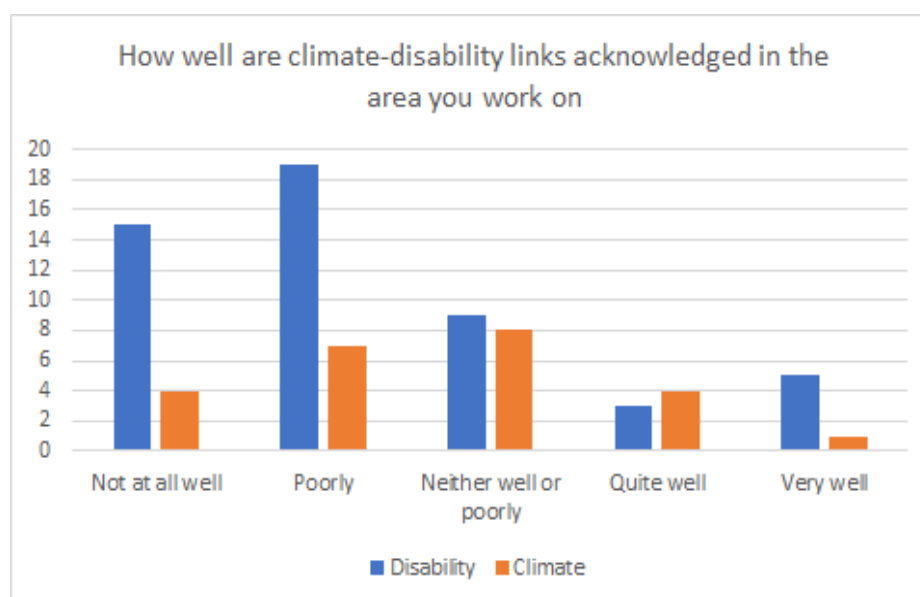
<sup>14</sup> <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/panel-session-climate-change>



*We have been engaged in understanding how to frame these issues at the UNFCCC. We work with McGill...who are integrating climate change into disability rights perspectives at the international level. I'm in the Asia steering committee for the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action Research Programme, bringing the experiences from the ground and linking them to the international level. We will be working on this over 2021 to ensure people with disabilities are included in the UNFCCC process and that we have a disability constituency at the negotiations.*

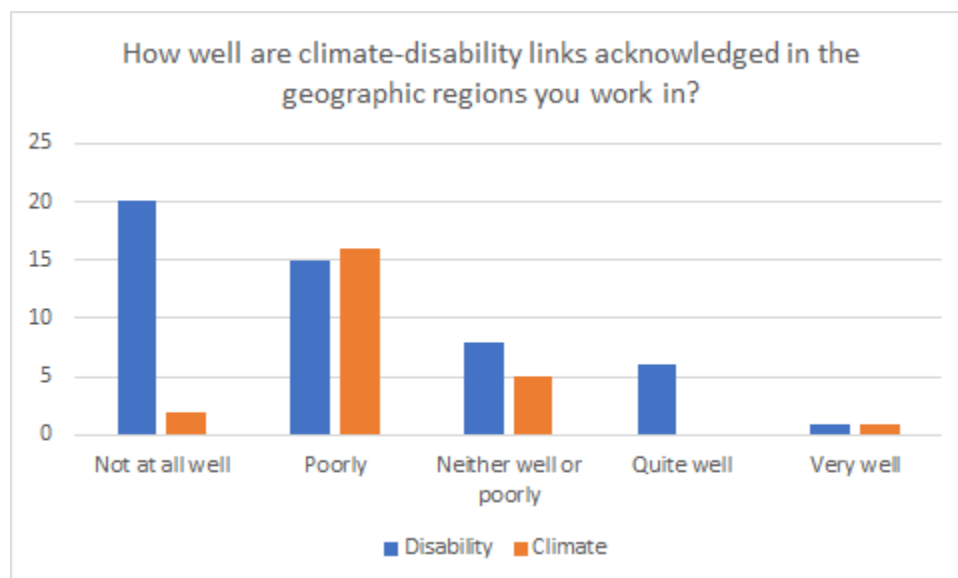
This collaboration has resulted in an active network but one that still tends to view and prioritise issues from a DRR perspective. There is an urgent need to understand what the climate-disability issues and needs are across a range of countries and contexts. There is also a need to support organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to understand and act on issues in a way that is both relevant to their context, and commensurate with the level of capacity that they have, and to help build alliances where they do not have the capacity. Beyond Sendai, wider climate-disability links are not well understood. The results of the online survey can help shed light on why this might be so. For example, more disability focused organisations than climate focused ones felt that the links between climate and disability were not well acknowledged in either the thematic or geographical focus of their work (figures 2 and 3). This is discussed in more detail below.

**Figure 3: How well are the climate-disability links acknowledged in the thematic area where you work?**



Mean: climate organisations 2.63 disability organisations 2.29

**Figure 4: How well are the disability-climate links acknowledged in the geographic region where you work?**



Mean: climate orgs 2.25 disability orgs 2.06

Responses to the online survey do give some ideas as to why the nexus not being well understood (see table 4 below). Disability organisations indicated there was not enough representation of people with disabilities in climate-focused work, limited funds for them to undertake climate-focused work, and a lack of prioritisation or knowledge for them to do work around climate and disability. Climate-focused organisations were primarily divided between lack of skills and lack of representation.

**Table 4 - What are the major challenges in including issues on climate change/disability in your work?**

Issue	Disability organisations	Climate organisations
It's not a priority for us	11 (22%)	0 (0%)
Too expensive	8 (16%)	3 (13%)
Don't have the skills	8 (16%)	10 (42%)
Not enough representation	24 (47%)	10 (42%)
No funds to include them	19 (37%)	4 (17%)

Don't know/haven't thought about it	10 (20%)	2 (8%)
None of the above	5 (10%)	2 (8%)
Other	7 (14%)	7 (29%)
Total	<b>51 (100%)</b>	<b>38 (100%)</b>

*NB: respondents could select multiple regions—therefore percentages may sum to more than 100 percent.*

Overall, within both groups there is a distinct lack of representation, which indicates a need for stronger collaboration or exchanges between the groups. There is an opportunity here for OPDs to work with climate organisations to build skills and confidence in disability-inclusion within climate programmes (and vice versa). However, while that would address the issue of representation, it does not address the knowledge gap.

There is a need to look for data and evidence to frame narratives of the impact of climate on the lives of people with disabilities:

*Funders and donors have to start finding organisations working on climate change who have some experience with disability issues, but also need to build the capacity of DPOs [disabled people's organisations] to work on climate change. Investment in research is very important—we need more studies that raise up ground level issues to inform priorities and activities.*

### 3.5. Rights-based approaches

Pursuing a rights-based analysis, it is possible to explore the building blocks of climate justice by dividing them into procedural, substantive, and distributive justice, as well as transformative approaches (McCauley and Heffron 2018; Schlosberg and Collins 2014). There has been an increased focus on the human rights aspects of climate change, but with little specific attention to the rights of persons with disabilities, and with an emphasis on substantive (e.g., the UNCRPD) and procedural rights (the process through which substantive rights are realised—so how the UNCRPD is interpreted and implemented at the international and national level), rather than on transformative approaches (which address more fundamental challenges within societies and systems and seek measures that address these structural inequalities). The literature reviewed revealed an increasing focus on the human rights aspects of climate change, but with some notable exceptions, the bulk of the literature does not focus specifically on people with disabilities.

These issues have been magnified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (see Box 1). The pandemic has highlighted gross inequalities and inequities across the world, including climate-related—in the ways we work, access healthcare, receive education, and support those who are seen as most vulnerable. Some argue for a new world order based on the pandemic, one that redresses these inequities,<sup>15</sup> and while everyone agrees that the post-COVID world will be very different to the one we lived in before,<sup>16</sup> the burning question is what will it look like? We are at a pivotal moment, but it remains to be seen what happens next—will it really be better?

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/impact-covid-19-all-down-inequality/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cognitiveworld/2020/05/22/are-we-ready-to-embrace-a-new-world-order/#6f27efdd2d9e>

**Box 1: COVID-19, climate justice, and disability**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a range of issues related to climate justice and disability. The unintended outcomes of the pandemic have surfaced questions about how we should respond to needs for change in a way that can engender positive change as well as expose underlying inequities that people with disability face.

The shutdowns that have been enacted across the world have negatively impacted upon a number of industries, including high-carbon ones like the airline industry. Moves to bail out these industries have raised criticisms regarding who is really being bailed out—investors or workers—with climate justice advocates pointing out that a just transition approach would repurpose bail-out money to help workers move out of a carbon heavy industry into secure climate-positive work.<sup>17</sup> Reductions in carbon emissions from transportation, partly caused by working-from-home policies, have led activists to renew their calls for increased remote working as a way to cut emissions from commuting traffic.<sup>18</sup>

In the United Kingdom, in addition to significant challenges for many people with disabilities, some have experienced some (unexpected) benefits, such as offers of help (to pick up shopping, prescriptions, etc.) from neighbours to those who are unable to leave their homes; as well as a shift in thinking about working from home and the availability of online participation, rather than travelling long distances to meet in person. Future travel may also be more inclusive as there is likely to be more spacing between people in train carriages, etc. There have also been reports of an increased connection to nature. It remains to be seen whether the newfound connections and neighbourliness will remain in the ‘new normal’, and whether these new ways of living and working extend beyond a limited number of people in jobs that can be done remotely. It could be argued that these benefits have at least initiated a dialogue of possibilities for people with disabilities that was not so readily opened up before. But most of these options are only really available to people in higher income countries, and the long-term impacts remain to be seen.

The [COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor Report](https://COVID-drm.org/en/) make a series of recommendations based on findings from a global survey, all of which underscore the need to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are upheld regardless of the situation; that they are protected, not discriminated against in terms of access to treatment, resources or prevention measures on the basis of disability; inclusion in response and recovery plans; and notes specifically that ‘emergency responses are disability-inclusive and take into account the diverse and individual needs of persons with disabilities, in particular those experiencing intersectional forms of discrimination and marginalisation such as women and girls with disabilities, persons living in rural or remote areas, deaf and hard of hearing persons, persons with deafblindness, persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, and persons with autism’. (Source: <https://COVID-drm.org/en/>)

### 3.6. Lack of representation of persons with disabilities in climate justice networks

There is insufficient representation of people with disabilities in climate fora, as identified both in the literature as well as in experiences on the ground. This pattern is rooted in a fundamental disconnect between the two movements. As a representative of a climate-focused donor organisation noted, ‘*disability rights activists know that climate justice movements don’t talk about them and therefore are reluctant to get involved in the movement*’. A number of the climate-focused groups interviewed recognised the liability this lack of representation presents to the climate movement. This needs to be addressed for more transformative approaches to begin.

The good news is that there is some progress being made towards greater representation, and this research is timely in that this year's UNFCCC conference (COP26) may be the first to fully engage with the rights of persons with disabilities in their own right, rather than as a ‘vulnerable group’. The International Disability Alliance (IDA) has made a number of calls ahead of COP26,<sup>19</sup> including around the Doha work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE). Article 6 of UNFCCC (the Doha work programme),<sup>20</sup> focuses on education and training, and specifically states:

*[A] goal of education is to promote changes in lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour needed to foster sustainable development and to prepare children, youth, women, persons with disabilities and grass-root communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.*

Member states can nominate national focal points for ACE—and in many countries, these are often located in environment ministries.<sup>21</sup> A set of guidelines has also been produced, which specifically mentions people with disabilities as an excluded group, which should be explicitly included when planning activities, including oversight mechanisms.<sup>22</sup> However, as a recent

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<sup>17</sup> Greenpeace: <https://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/issues/climate-energy/2735/five-demands-just-transition-aviation-de-growth-clean-transport/>

<sup>18</sup> Walden, S. (2020). *Scientific American*: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/telecommuting-could-outlive-the-pandemic-lowering-emissions/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/climate-change>

<sup>20</sup> <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/eng/08a02.pdf#page=17>

<sup>21</sup> <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-outreach/focal-points-and-partnerships/ace-focal-points>

<sup>22</sup> [https://unfccc.int/files/cooperation\\_and\\_support/education\\_and\\_outreach/application/pdf/action\\_for\\_climate\\_empowerment\\_guidelines.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/education_and_outreach/application/pdf/action_for_climate_empowerment_guidelines.pdf)

ACE report highlights, progress towards these goals has been rather slow across many countries.<sup>23</sup> This area of work may then prove a useful focus for IDA (and other organisations), along with calls for a specific constituency for persons with disabilities. However, it can be argued that in this focus on education and training, the Doha provision is centred more on the substantive and/or procedural rights of persons with disabilities, rather than on the more transformational aspects.

Several of the key players interviewed noted the lacuna of knowledge about climate impacts—and how to engage with climate justice processes—among OPDs. The main focus for many OPDs is on vulnerabilities and lack of representation. Despite the clear need, many agree that the focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities as a ‘vulnerable group’, rather than a specific constituent group has hampered progress. As noted above, one reason for this might be the continued focus on DRR, with many of the same people and organisations engaging since the Sendai Framework in 2015. It may also be due to institutional arrangements. IDA only recently added climate action to the work of the Technical Task Group on DRR (now ‘Technical Task Group on DRR and Climate Action’). This group led the disability caucus at the Sendai negotiations in 2015, which were widely seen to be successful, and the group has consolidated around these actions with a specific mandate and terms of reference.<sup>24</sup> As noted above, there is a great deal of overlap between these individuals and organisations that were already working on DRR. IDA is developing a policy position and is also in the process of applying for Observer status at UNFCCC and COP26. They are also having discussions with both the gender and Indigenous constituency groups to learn from their experiences, both as ‘learning forums and as inclusive forums’, but there are still a number of ‘political’ issues to overcome, mainly based on reciprocity and allegiances, but this is an ongoing process of dialogue.<sup>25</sup> IDA is currently in the process of mapping national governments with strong voices in the climate and disability field (notably the U.K. and Nordic countries); they note that while other more immediately and frequently affected countries such as Fiji and Bangladesh are doing a great deal of work in these areas, they have less power and influence on the global stage. Nevertheless, they do provide some examples of the potential for good practices around disability inclusion.

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<sup>23</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2020\\_09E.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2020_09E.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/terms\\_of\\_reference\\_tg-drr\\_final\\_version.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/terms_of_reference_tg-drr_final_version.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> There do not appear to be any disability-specific groups listed as ‘non-party stakeholders’ to the UNFCCC.

The lack of climate-specific focus may also have been due to a lack of expertise around climate change, and in particular the UNFCCC negotiations. The degree to which climate issues have been prioritised by members also varies according to locations and individuals, with affected areas placing more emphasis on this work. Examples of where this has happened include Nepal and Chile and the Pacific Disability Forum. The Government of Fiji has mentioned disability in its climate policy. However, it is unclear if this was driven by OPDs in Fiji, or the donor (Australian Government). Nevertheless, the consensus was that until people with disabilities have their own platform within the UNFCCC, these discussions will remain challenging.

Similarly, in Papua New Guinea (PNG), there are already a few conservation-focused NGOs that are including people with disabilities in their work, either through OPDs or individuals in affected communities, though it is unclear if this is an ad-hoc or systematic approach to inclusion. The PNG National Disability Policy<sup>26</sup> does mention climate change, though it uses the (now outdated) Biwako Millennium Framework,<sup>27</sup> rather than the more recent [Incheon Strategy](#). Either way, it is unclear to what extent it is being implemented, given ongoing work around climate-related relocation. While the numbers are increasing, the PNG Climate Change Report does not disaggregate population data by disabilities, so it is unclear how many people with disabilities are affected.

In Chile, the issue of climate justice is inextricably linked with the issues of environmental justice and Indigenous rights. Community-based organisations such as Comunidad Indígena Atacamena de Quitor have active links with Indigenous communities in Chile and work with them and their leaders to develop their strategies in engaging with the state, renewable energy companies, and investors using the Energy Policy of Chile. Indigenous communities have also made numerous legal challenges to the government and industry about the creation of new electrical dams.

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<sup>26</sup> [https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/02/PNG\\_National\\_Disability\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/02/PNG_National_Disability_Policy.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.unescap.org/resources/biwako-millennium-framework-action-towards-inclusive-barrier-free-and-rights-based-society#>



The Government of Chile abandoned hosting COP25 in 2019<sup>28</sup> as at the time it was experiencing significant civil unrest and protests against neoliberal exploitation and inequality, climate-linked drought, and extraction of natural resources, including water. The response to the protests was severe, and it has been alleged that hundreds of people were injured and possibly impaired as a result of these injuries during these protests.<sup>29</sup> OPDs and other disability activists continue to fight for recognition in the new constitution (the existing constitution was enacted under the Pinochet government). Incorporating issues around climate justice is considered a key factor in constitutional reform, but despite their ambitions to be consulted about the reforms, they believe it is unlikely due to a historic lack of engagement (see box 2).

### **Box 2: Case Study: Chile**

In Chile, Carlos Kaiser (CEO of the Chilean OPD Inclusiva) has been a prominent activist in the field of DRR, as well as being increasingly engaged with wider climate focused work. Inclusiva is well-connected, partnering with a range of high-profile organisations. Kaiser is the global focal point of the DRR target group on the advisory group for McGill University's DICARP. Inclusiva has developed a database of people with disabilities to support an inclusive disaster response. However, while the regional government responded positively to this, it was not taken up at the national level. Kaiser clearly sees a link between DRR and climate: 'When you talk about disasters you can't take apart its relationship with climate. Otherwise it's a misunderstanding of what's happening. When there isn't rainfall it's a disaster, but also climate'.

Chile is at severe risk of climate-related water stress. The country has experienced a 'mega-drought' for more than a decade, caused by a perfect storm of weather change and anthropogenic forcing (greenhouse gases concentration increase, and stratospheric ozone depletion), affecting the intensity and longevity of the drought. In 2019, Chile declared water scarcity in three regions, which included more than 50 communities, as well as an agricultural emergency in more than 100. The country is expected to encounter the greatest water stress in the Western Hemisphere over the next four decades (NRCD, 2019). As Kaiser notes: 'Who gets the water is related to justice, and when we talk about exclusion, we talk about people with disabilities'.

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<sup>28</sup> The event went ahead in Madrid.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/chile-protest-police-deaths-eye-injury-bullets-tear-gas-a9211946.html>

***Box 2, Continued***

Chile is aiming to reach neutrality in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, according to the country's 2020 Nationally Determined Contribution and the draft Climate Change Framework Law currently being discussed in the National Congress. Chile has a National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático, 2014), which replaced the National Action Plan on Climate Change (Plan de Acción Nacional de Cambio Climático 2008-2012). However, while 'vulnerable groups' are mentioned in the Adaptation plan, disability issues and people with disabilities are notably absent from the text.

Chile signed the CRPD in 2007 and ratified it in 2008. The government has passed several laws that are intended to provide rights and inclusion for people with disabilities, including the National Disability Law (Ley Nacional de Discapacidad, LND) which was enacted in 2010. This law makes no reference to the impact of climate change on people with disabilities. A pillar of the LND was to establish a National Disability Service (Servicio Nacional de Discapacidad, SND). The SND coordinates all policies regarding people with disabilities to ensure that their rights enshrined by law are upheld. However, SND is not well-funded and the campaign for the registration of people with disabilities in order to access services is unpopular. The SND conducted a National Disability Study in 2015, using the WHO Model Disability Survey questions (one of the first countries to do so). The results found that 16.7 percent of Chileans—more than 2,800,000 people—live with some form of disability.

When considering why there has been a lack of engagement by persons with disabilities in many countries, one activist reminded us of the 'privileges of inclusion', echoing debates in the wider disability movement around justice and how issues are prioritised (e.g., for many persons with disabilities, immediate issues such as getting enough food to eat take precedent, rather than remote working). She also made the point that negotiating access, inclusion, participation, etc. are everyday realities for most persons with disabilities, and these skills could be applied to other more environmentally focused aspects within communities, including planting trees, protecting the environment, and maintaining connections with the environment. This would also draw attention to commonalities and areas of shared understanding—and shared exclusions—across the groups.

Many of the interviewees discussed the (lack of) capacity of OPDs around climate issues, and how this might be resolved, for example through placements or exchange programmes or grants for capacity building and knowledge building, as well as scholarships for education and training opportunities. Persistent challenges include the lack of funding, and

conversely, a lack of capacity to absorb large sums of money; limited networks or partners within the climate movement to develop skills and build capacity (which in turn would give local disability organizations something more attractive to offer the climate justice organizations, e.g., knowledge, skills, expertise, leadership).

Both the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) and Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRAF) have noted the dearth of work by OPDs in this specific area. While DRF and DRAF are open to projects that specifically focus on climate change, very few OPDs actually apply for funding in this area. Those that do, tend to work on DRR and have limited understanding of the intersections between DRR and wider climate change and climate justice issues, and that more awareness-raising by the climate justice movement is needed to get OPDs working on a wider range of climate projects. Nevertheless, there is an increasing appetite from these—and other—organisations to learn more. As noted above, donors and philanthropic organisations such as OSF can also do more to raise awareness and create partnerships.

Yet, as can be seen from the responses to the survey in table 5 below, the main areas of focus for both disability-focused organisations (which do not necessarily have the same agenda as OPDs) and climate organisations is around addressing basic intersectional inequalities, participation and representation (in the case of disability-focused organisations), rather than more fundamental issues of increasing political and social power of people with disabilities and addressing deeper structural inequalities such as land rights, social protection or legal reforms.

**Table 5 - Which of these best describes your work on disability and climate change?**

Issue	Disability organisations	Climate organisations
Addressing basic and intersectional inequalities (e.g., gender, age, minorities, Indigenous peoples, disability issues) as part of your climate work	29 (62%)	16 (70%)

<b>Carrying out research or collecting disaggregated data on people with disabilities in the context of climate action</b>	13 (28%)	5 (22%)
<b>Including people with disabilities as a key group in just transition campaigns and activities (e.g., advocacy for a Green New Deal)</b>	18 (38%)	9 (39%)
<b>Working actively with climate/disability organizations in grassroots coalitions around disability and climate justice</b>	13 (28%)	2 (9%)
<b>Increasing the participation of people with disabilities in climate change decision-making</b>	24 (51%)	5 (22%)
<b>Improving social protection measures for people with disabilities with regards to climate impacts</b>	18 (38%)	7 (30%)
<b>Reforming legal and policy frameworks for climate change to include disability interests</b>	16 (34%)	6 (26%)
<b>Advocating for people with disabilities so that they do not disproportionately pay the costs for climate action</b>	19 (40%)	5 (22%)

Increasing political, economic and/or social power of people with disabilities in the context of climate change	20 (43%)	5 (22%)
Increasing access to land and resources for people with disabilities as part of your climate work	12 (26%)	2 (9%)
Other	7 (15%)	3 (13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>47 (100%)</b>	<b>65 (100%)</b>

*NB: multiple responses possible.*

### 3.7. Paucity of donor funding on climate-disability nexus

As noted above, to date, efforts to include people with disabilities have not been systematic. Some feel that donors could do more to address this. As Sébastien Dyuck from the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) notes:

*Donors who work on disability rights should look at the momentum around climate justice to bring more visibility to the issues being championed by disability rights. Conversely, climate justice donors should diversify the voices they listen to, including disability rights, and climate advocates should speak to that constituency.*

Given the focus on DRR, it could actually be used as an entry point, particularly for donors who do not usually fund work on climate. However, many of the emergency funding streams are siloed and it may be difficult to align the priorities but could be a starting point for broader upstream climate-focused work

### 3.8. Lack of systematic engagement of climate groups with disability issues

The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) focuses on rights and climate change and convenes human rights and climate change groups around the climate negotiations, trying to bring climate change considerations to the

UN human rights bodies, as well as human rights considerations to UN climate bodies. CIEL looks across constituencies, including women and Indigenous people, examining what rights-based advocacy around climate change at the international level looks like. Disability rights, however, have not been very prominent in discussions around climate change at this level and generally limited to being mentioned under lists of vulnerable groups with few robust links to the Sendai Framework and the UNCRPD, as analysis carried out on disability rights in the context of the UNFCCC has revealed (CIEL, Inclusiva, and Council of Canadians with Disabilities 2019).

This lack of integration is reflected in climate justice groups on the ground. Keya Chatterjee from the Climate Action Network (CAN) in the U.S. noted a personal commitment and practice of reaching out to groups that represent people with disabilities as part of CAN's work, but this constituency hasn't intentionally or proactively been engaged in leadership or activities: '*We haven't gone as far as we should to build allyship*'. This was echoed by Abby Bresler from the Sunrise Movement, who stated that '*for the most part, the inclusion of people with disabilities is not prioritised*'. Global Green Grants (GGG) are one of the few groups that are more systematically integrating disability rights into their climate programming. Peter Kostishack from GGG noted the following:

*This took off a few years ago. The first year was internal capacity building with consultants with lots of disability rights experience, coaching and workshops. We're now making 40 small grants per year; most are to disability rights groups with climate and environment work, but some are also to climate and environmental groups trying to engage with people with disabilities. These are for organisations in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia.*

Most of the disability activists working at this interface felt that it was necessary to '*[bring] the disability agenda to the climate movement*', and not the other way around. To date, the research has identified few examples of effective partnerships between the environmental movement and the disability movement. In fact, some of the decisions made (e.g., banning of single-use plastic straws, which are necessary for many persons with disabilities to use to drink with, and alternatives such as paper are often inadequate) or promoting cycle lanes to the detriment of blind and visually impaired persons,<sup>30</sup> have often felt antagonistic. There is a need for more debate and investment into research and technology to find sustainable and inclusive solutions. If the discourse around such adaptations shifted to that of climate adaptations, rather

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-london-53670087>

than disability focused adaptations, then there may be a broader shift, such as the EU's [Renovation Wave for Europe](#) for greening buildings, creating jobs, and making policies that improve lives by putting sustainability and accessibility at its heart.

Viewed from a wider lens, other adaptive strategies, such as climate migration<sup>31</sup> are not always available to persons with disabilities, and can actively impinge on their rights, such as relocation and immigration restrictions to countries such as Australia or Canada, which can mean that persons with certain impairments are unable to migrate.<sup>32</sup>

Even at the international level, engagement of people with disabilities is often tokenistic. The Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group is a multi-agency coalition that seeks to '*bring together civil society advocates and experts seeking to strengthen the recognition of the human rights dimension of climate change, and to secure adequate legal remedies for those impacted*'.<sup>33</sup> The group has a few resources on disability rights and climate change available via the [website](#), but there is no specific OPD or other disability-focused organisation listed as a partner, and the OPD representative that attends the meetings, notes:

*I mean I participate there, but it's not really their interest, they aren't actively inviting you to that table...It's not good enough at the UN level. Now you know there is a Convention. No other UN agency would get away with not thinking about how they could include disability because it's a requirement, it's their mandate. So, is that the problem, that we are waiting to be included...I mean we just can't wait on this one.*

One of the reasons for the apparent lack of interest by all sides may be because of the way disability has been discussed within the climate movement, for example, often in terms of rights versus vulnerable groups. Inclusion is often driven by 'champions', without systematic or strategic goals, who move onto other areas or organizations without leaving any structural changes. On the other hand, within mainstream groups, such as youth groups, even those that could be a champion or a role model—for example Greta Thunberg—have not embraced that role. Thunberg does not identify as a person with a disability,

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31 <https://weblog.iom.int/migration-adaptation-strategy-climate-change#:~:text=When%20people%20decide%20or%20are,or%20improve%20their%20overall%20lives.>

32 Such restrictions are unduly harsh and not in line with international law.

33 <https://climaterights.org/about/#:~:text=The%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Climate,legal%20remedies%20for%20those%20impacted>

but rather neurodiverse,<sup>34</sup> leading one disability activist to accuse her of creating further exclusion:

*[S]he's in a position of choosing, but still, that does not give her the credentials to make an ableist movement...we respect your position of not [wanting] to be identified, but that doesn't mean that you are going to leave behind all the youth with disabilities.*

### **Box 3: Case Study: USA**

Through interviews with prominent climate networks and disability rights groups in the U.S., it was clear that the inclusion of people with disabilities in climate justice spaces was ad hoc and not extensive enough. Specific issues that were raised by U.S. disability rights advocates included consideration of people with disabilities in disaster response, how people with disabilities can be supported in climate-induced migration, recognising the intersectional dimensions of people with disabilities in the context of climate change, and the issue of the effective inclusion of people with disabilities in climate organising and movements.

Abby Bresler from the youth-led climate advocacy group, the Sunrise Movement, noted how she was involved in recent efforts to set up a Disability and Accessibility Volunteer Team to try to bridge this divide.

*For the most part Sunrise doesn't center persons with disabilities. Sunrise's reasons for not involving persons with disabilities is because they haven't prioritized and thought about it. Disability is different to other kinds of inclusion: it requires different skill sets. We haven't seen any other teams doing this work, they seem to be in uncharted territory. Sunrise has not included OPDs in their planning, though sometimes they've involved our internal Disability and Accessibility Volunteer team to review logistics guide for in-person meetings when it's safe to. But often access issues were not considered. We believe persons with disabilities should be involved from the beginning of the planning process, which will improve our programs, campaigns and events.*

Keya Chatterjee, Executive Director of the U.S. wing of the Climate Action Network (US-CAN), a national network of close to 200 different organisations across the U.S. active on climate change, highlighted a similar lack of systemic engagement of disability issues, noting that the disability-related work that they do engage in is largely driven by the dedication of individuals rather than organizational priorities:

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/drnancydoyle/2019/11/10/is-greta-thunberg-disabled-or-a-superhero-two-sides-to-neurodiversity/?sh=46c8419923bf>



**Box 3, Continued**

*We don't do anything explicitly on disability rights. When we see devastating climate impacts, persons with disabilities are a group that we are most concerned about, and it's important that public officials are aware of the need to take into account this group. In our policy work, we try to be careful to avoid ableism. We name ableism alongside racism and other forms of discrimination in our justice work. But we haven't gone as far as we should to build allyship. There is some collaboration with the Center for American Progress. We are looking at COVID recovery that is climate friendly and have sought input from their director on disabilities issues to integrate disability concerns. This is more informal than it should be, but there is currently interest in public transportation and other overlapping interests. The obsession with straws has driven a wedge when it could have been addressed with accommodation.*

The member-led response to this lack of integration of disability rights within the Sunrise Movement was a strong attempt to redress this and create embedded capacity within the organisation. As Bresler outlined:

*We found that Sunrise needed to center disability justice. We got together with other members and decided to start a Disability and Accessibility Volunteer team, which is un-funded and voluntary, to work on these issues. This was formed in direct response to ableism in the movement, we have a tight team mandate—for true justice, we need to include disability justice and dismantle our own ableism. The leadership of the team is 100 percent persons with disabilities, and the team is mixed ability. Persons with disabilities should not be burdened with emotional labor, **Error! Bookmark not defined.** which is why we have a mixed ability team for everything they do. We support the movement as it does its own work and everyone holds responsibility to build an anti-ableist culture, develop resources for anti-ableism guides and hold each other accountable. The Disability and Accessibility Volunteer team is working with the Partnerships and Communications team within Sunrise to interview persons with disabilities in order to integrate their perspectives into our work. Other members have to implement resources and keep learning and growing. We are also doing accessibility and disability justice work with the movement internally. We did an event with Adapt Community Network that serves frontline communities and will be working with them and more partners over 2021. We also want to center queer and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) persons with disabilities to build a strong foundation.*

**Box 3, Continued**

The Sunrise Movement had a clear additional emphasis on recognising the importance of considering and raising up the intersectional identities of persons with disabilities in the movement and placing LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC people with disability in leadership positions to drive the work in a way that is truly inclusive.

The grave need to include people with disabilities was brought up by both US-CAN and the Sunrise Movement. Not just as a matter of principle but also to strengthen the climate justice movement. As Chatterjee noted, *‘Persons with disabilities are a big asset we’re missing from the community—we’re losing climate activists that we haven’t included. I have a lot of friends in activist circles who are Deaf and, having been marginalized, they are very radicalized and would be an asset to the movement. We’re lucky to have a big Deaf population in Washington, D.C., and not including them in organizing would be a loss. We need to tie this with the legacy of racism. When your organizing isn’t inclusive, people can say that your tactics are not inclusive or are ableist.*

*We do have deaf advocates for public transit and can counter these arguments, but not having persons with disability more fully included in the climate movement is a liability’.* Bresler echoed similar sentiments, noting that *‘persons with disabilities have a lot to offer in terms of leadership and how to survive and adapt’.*

Chatterjee reflected on the great potential for overlapping agendas and collaboration between the climate justice and disability movements:

*“So much of climate policy is about infrastructure, and “investment justice” thus there’s a huge overlap of interest around, for example, transportation, roads and other built infrastructure, these are core issues for persons with disabilities and for climate action. Medicare and Medicaid are relevant to disability rights policies, so in pushing those through a Green New Deal health policy is an overlap. I see collaboration in large multi-issue places where it’s relevant to both. If you get deep in transportation or disaster response you start to see people with overlapping expertise at the technical level, but there is less of this at the advocacy level.”*

**Box 3, Continued**

Chatterjee emphasised how at the practical, ground level they do see close collaboration between climate and disability actors on concrete issues such as city planning, but this tangible and positive overlap of interests and collaboration does not seem to be connected to dialogue and advocacy at higher levels. The majority of climate-disability conversations seem more focused on disaster response and including people with disabilities. However, there is an untapped potential to re-envision a just, green transition that is truly inclusive of people with disabilities that could redress a historical lack of consideration of people with disabilities more broadly in society in a manner that could potentially be quite transformative. In a reimagining of how society is designed to include all groups, people with disabilities should be included in the creative process to determine how society should look.

Bresler drew an explicit link between the underlying values of society and how they are important in understanding how we approach this work: *‘I understand disability as the social model of disability. All bodies are different, but we have a society that is built with certain bodies in mind. Disability is something constructed by society—it is linked to capitalism and white supremacy and ideas of worth and productivity. My disability is only a disability because of the way that society is structured’.*

She linked this directly to the current orientation of climate justice groups in the U.S. to the framework of a Green New Deal: *‘The vision for a Green New Deal is usually associated with images of able-bodied people and a focus on work. We don’t want to replicate those messages. We have to consider issues like Medicare for all and how that includes persons with disabilities. We’re hoping to use our work to bring disabled people into that visioning process, to create a more compelling and effective Green New Deal.’*

Essentially, any work towards climate justice needs to critically examine and take on old paradigms, and the perspective of people with disabilities is as crucial as that of other marginalized groups active in the climate justice dialogue, such as low-income communities of color and Indigenous peoples, who are pushing for their priorities to be included in a vision for a just green society and economy.

The question of how to ensure that OPDs have the resources and capacity to engage in these discussions to articulate their contribution to the vision of a just and inclusive low-carbon future is critical. Chatterjee described US-CAN’s experience:

**Box 3, Continued**

*In our network we have faith groups and other local grassroots groups. When they are very busy with their issues, it is hard to ask them to spend time on yet another network or issue. It comes down to relationships and investing in relationships. If we had one to two disability rights advocates active in the climate space this would add a lot to our network. I have seen changes following Black leadership in the climate movement over recent years. Donors could fund disability groups to join our network and climate justice groups to join disability networks and could fund them around specific sectoral issues, for instance transportation equity and disaster response. In any urban area with public transit issues, transportation justice and equity programs will be good places to look for overlap. Disaster response is another good place to see the overlap, particularly geographies where there are consistent, repeated impacts. For example, areas in Louisiana, and places impacted by large fires. We could get collaborative work going on both of those areas.*

In terms of how donors could support more integration of disability rights, Chatterjee outlined how providing ODPs with the resources to fully participate in climate networks was key.

Valerie Novack, a Fellow for the Center for American Progress's Disability Justice Initiative, made a case for direct funding to local initiatives:

*Funders and donors need to fund the people on the ground. There is a desire to give to organisations with a record of success and outcomes. This overlooks people coming up with a lot of the real solutions, but who don't have resources to make those solutions known. Hyper local-level funding is needed as the impact of climate change will be hyper local. The way that funding is usually given is at state or national level, but it should be built out from community level, because what we end up with now is high-level solutions that don't keep people safe or work.*

**Box 3, Continued**

Bresler outlined the opportunities for funders to accelerate the pivotal contributions persons with disabilities could make to the climate movement:

*Disability justice can be a road map towards climate justice and give tools that won't leave anyone behind. This is a place to invest if you want to have an impact. The barriers to climate justice are not going to be technology, the challenge is how we go about this to embody the change we need. We have to bring everyone along and not replicating the mistakes of the past is critical. For example, if we have a solar industry polluting and harming people in other countries, that is not a real solution. People pay attention to what gets funded and what gets donated to, so donors can help change public perception. There needs to be a cultural shift and change in messaging through funding projects that include the voices of persons with disabilities, identifying their needs and giving them ownership.*

Jen Deerinwater, an indigenous, disabled writer and Founding Executive Director of the social media platform Crushing Colonialism, had more holistic critiques of reforming philanthropy as an industry “that’s very pro capitalism, redistributing a bit of wealth from mainly white men who made their wealth causing harm along the way’.” She noted that donors should “stop cherry picking who they work with and give money to, which are always the same convenient movements and organisations. They need to listen to people who may not have the same beliefs that they do, such as tribal sovereignty’.”

However, as the U.S. has not yet signed the UNCRPD, they are not part of many global discussions; for example, no U.S.-based OPDs are part of IDA, and are therefore not at some of the key discussions around these issues on a global level.

Another opportunity would be to find spaces for reciprocal awareness-raising between both climate and disability-focused organisations, for example, the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) is considering inviting Global Greengrants to address their grantees, raising awareness of climate justice issues, with the ultimate aim that Global Greengrants would fund more OPDs in their grant making, as well as in high-level operations.

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<sup>35</sup> While the U.S. is not a signatory to the CRPD, it can be engaged as an observer via IDA and other mechanisms.

### 3.9. Poor understanding and response to intersection of climate and disability issues

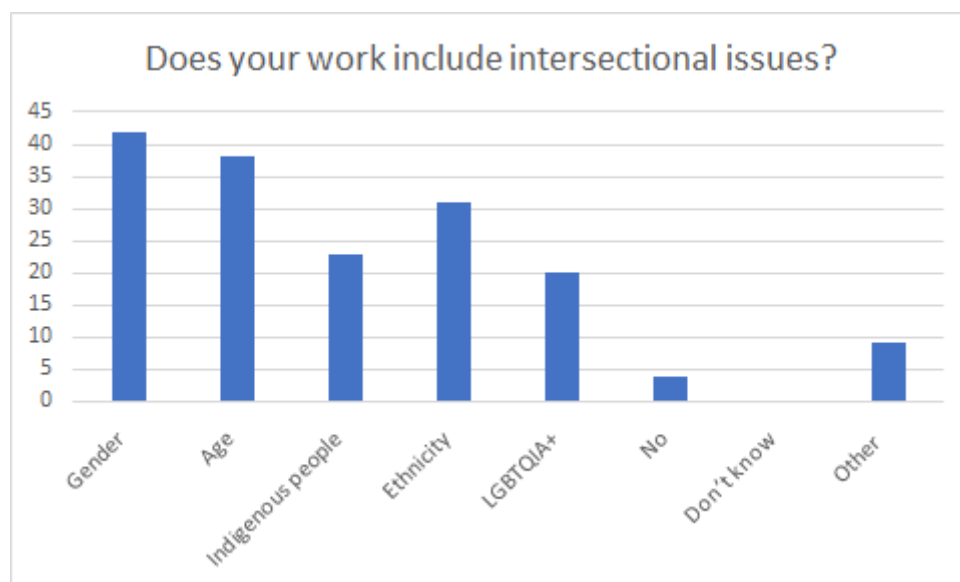
From this review we can see that there has been hardly any focus on the needs or rights of children and youth with disabilities, or even gender and wider intergenerational injustice issues. This needs to be addressed urgently.

If the climate-disability links are poorly addressed, the intersectional aspects of disability inclusion in climate change response are particularly misaligned. In the U.S., recent debates around ‘disability justice’ and intersectionality have led to a growing divide within the movement based on age, sex, and race, with many of the older, white persons (with disabilities) in leadership roles being seen as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. The focus on disability justice focuses on addressing historical and current intersection of race, class, sexuality, and other multiplicities of identity.

There are constituencies that are attempting to bridge the intersectional divide. Joan Carling, Co-convenor of the Indigenous People’s Major Group (IPMG) to the SDGs, notes that the IPMG includes people with disabilities as representatives and their issues are integrated into the IPMG’s key reports. Through the IPMG’s work, they also look to include Indigenous peoples with disabilities into other relevant fora, such as the SDG Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities:

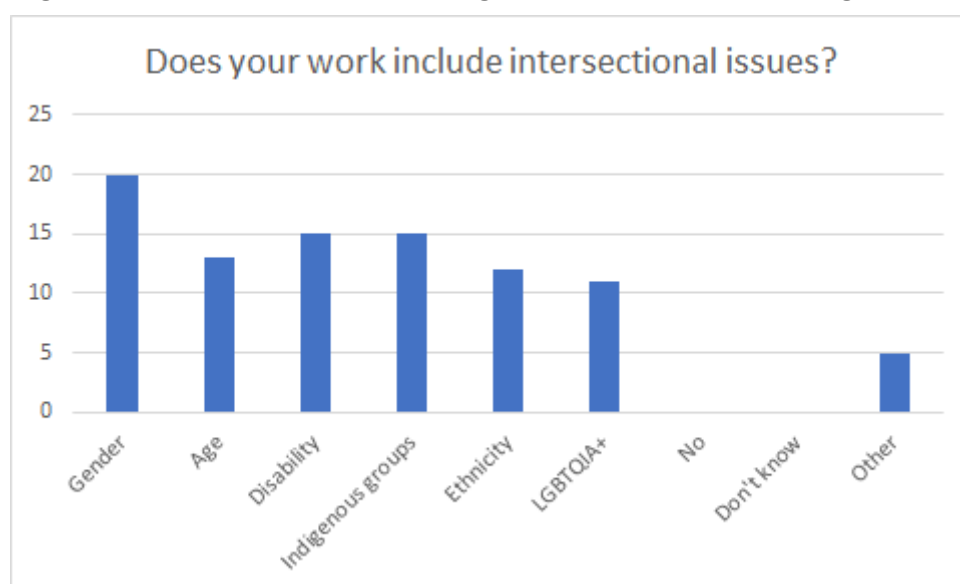
*The IPMG partners with Indigenous peoples’ organisations and institutions as a priority to push for their rights. We are building alliances with other rights holders we have common agendas with around human rights, social equity, and ending discrimination to fight against climate injustice. This includes women, persons with disabilities, farmers, workers, and youth organisations.*

Another issue, highlighted in the responses to the online survey, is that while organisations may state they are working on intersectional issues, it is not clear how they include them. This risks a ‘tick box’ approach, rather than a genuinely nuanced approach to the differing constituents.

**Figure 5: Intersectional issues in general work in disability organisations**

*NB: respondents could select multiple options*

Disability organisations reported working on a range of intersectional issues, most frequently gender, age, and ethnicity. Climate organisations reported including intersectional issues, mainly gender, disability, and the needs of Indigenous groups.

**Figure 6: Intersectional issues in general work in climate organisations**

*NB: respondents could select multiple options*



Professor Sébastien Jodoin and his research team are at the very beginning of their [DICARP project](#) research, which aims to explore the intersections of the climate, gender and Indigenous justice movements to learn from their history and how they grew in order to understand alliances and allies, capacities and needs. Carlos Kaiser from Inclusiva argued that a ‘European’ concept of environment is about resources, whereas Indigenous communities have a different understanding and conceptualisation of the environment as being deeply intertwined with the spiritual and cultural understanding of who we are as humans with a strong sense of responsibility to steward nature as something that is not separate from us. This leads to unequal power dynamics between European and Chilean understandings, including around what climate justice is and what actions need to be taken.

Pratima Gurung, president of National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN), noted that there were numerous barriers to linking disability rights and climate issues in Nepal (see box 4). She does not believe that any meaningful conversations between the disability rights community and the climate change sector in the country have really started, as there are structural barriers and silos separating the two fields. As with the other countries, OPDs and others focusing on disability rights generally have a lack of understanding about climate issues and a poor understanding of what is happening at the global and national levels regarding climate change. There is a paucity of research linking climate and disability concerns that could allow people with disabilities to better understand its relevance to them. Meaningful representation of people with disabilities in national climate change processes and organizations is also currently lacking in Nepal, as with other countries. There is a large gap, in particular, in understanding how the intersectionality of disability and identity is integrated into a climate justice perspective. In some respects, there is a confluence of problems faced by different identity groups that come together to make inclusion and response to intersectional concerns even less likely in climate response. For instance, despite the very progressive recognition of Indigenous peoples’ rights in Nepal’s constitution, the implementation of these rights on the ground is another matter. Moreover, Indigenous women with disabilities face triple discrimination, being even less likely to be consulted on climate policies or to have interventions accommodate the specific issues that they face.



**Box 4: Case Study: Nepal**

Nepal has seen a number of advancements over the last two decades at the national level when it comes to disability rights and policy. The UNCRPD was ratified there in 2008, and in 2010 it came into effect nationally with the goal of ending discrimination against people with disabilities. In 2017, the Disability Rights Act was passed by parliament as a measure to implement the UNCRPD nationally along with the incorporation of a disability-related provision in Nepal's constitution. However, environmental and climate justice have never been seen as a core issue for people with disabilities, even if it has direct material impacts on them. None of the national environmental or climate change legislation consider people with disabilities, nor has there been development partners and government support to facilitate these interconnections (unlike other parts of the region, for example in the Pacific).

The prevalence of people with disabilities in Nepal is disputed with figures ranging from 2-15 percent (DRCKU 2018). A large proportion of the Nepal's population is comprised of Indigenous peoples, up to 50 percent by some estimates (IWGIA 2020). Indigenous peoples with disabilities are known to face more acute discrimination, with Indigenous women with disabilities suffering even more disproportionate discrimination (IASG-IPI 2014). In addition to this, these groups are more likely to be vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. Though not a climate-related event, the case of the 2015 Nepal earthquake illustrates the potential connections between intersectional identities and disabilities. Of the 2,200 people who were injured, the majority were from vulnerable groups such as Indigenous peoples, women, Dalits<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>, children, and the elderly. Dalits and Indigenous peoples with disabilities were particularly vulnerable, with less access to public services, and women within these groups were highly vulnerable (AIWN 2017).

NIDWAN was established after the 2015 Nepal earthquake to respond to the increased prevalence of violence and abuse against women in affected areas that had many Indigenous communities. In engaging with the 2015 climate talks around the Paris Agreement, NIDWAN became involved in negotiating with different government departments and other stakeholders to include consideration of Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities. NIDWAN subsequently held consultations on how disability and climate change intersect over results indicated that the impact of climate change is more adverse for people with disabilities, and uniquely so for Indigenous peoples and women with disabilities. However, national OPDs are not engaged on the issue at all and tend to be focused on other rights issues such as health, education, livelihoods, and political participation. The National Federation of OPDs is doing very little, if anything, on climate change. The UNDP is one of the few organisations in the country doing some limited work on climate-disability linkages, but this is in its very initial stages

**Box 4, Continued**

NIDWAN is undertaking research to open discourse and debate around how climate change intersects with disability, gender, Indigenous and other social categories and how these impacts are connected with policies that protect the lives of these groups and integrates into global debates. Large hydropower projects, which are being presented as a renewable power alternative, can intersect with floods precipitated by climate change to pose specific problems. New man-made dams are increasingly being sited farther upstream closer to glacial lakes that may periodically breach their own natural ice or rock barriers that normally act to contain these bodies of water. Such glacial lake outburst floods can be incredibly destructive, impacting areas as far as 100 kilometres downstream, wreaking havoc on settlements, which can result in death and disability. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of such flooding through accelerating ice melt into glacial lakes and/or increasing precipitation, thus increasing the likelihood of overflow. Yet, these risks are not being considered by hydropower projects and communities lack early warning systems (Schwanghart et al. 2016). Other impacts include changing the availability of fresh water. Indigenous communities living near forest areas now have to walk longer to get water and this adversely impacts women with disabilities more, increasing their burden of work and the quality of land for production has been significantly reduced. Indigenous women have limited access to forests and other natural resources which is further exacerbated when they have a disability or have disabled family members. Pratima Gurung noted:

*“For people with disabilities, environmental or climate justice has never been a part of their issues, even if it impacts them adversely in their daily lives. This is not being discussed within the disability movement and broader climate change debates from a rights-based perspective because they are not aware of what climate justice means for them how it impacts their lives.”*

A final, and related, point is the overall lack of consensus over prioritisation of issues. Given the lack of data, examples, and knowledge about the specific impacts of climate change by the disability community, it is perhaps unsurprising that that is a lack of consensus about what the priority issues are for the community. There is a great need for education and capacity building among people with disabilities and their organisations around climate change and its impacts, and how these fit with the aims of the disability movement, particularly in terms of the wider social transformation agenda. For many

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<sup>36</sup> Dalits are the lowest caste in the South Asian caste system.

people with disabilities, systemic exclusion across all sectors of society has led to a focus on immediate priorities, rather than those that are seen as deferable. But there is a dearth of research around these issues to understand the specific impacts on people with disabilities, or to understand how the differing group perspectives can be bridged. This includes broader issues such as access to livelihoods and education, as well as more specific health effects, such as increased risk of heat stroke for those with spinal cord Injuries.

There is already a significant body of evidence around the health effects of climate change (Rocque et al. 2021), but very little of this work focuses on the disabling effects of climate change (for example if people have to shift to more precarious employment and are injured), or how it can exacerbate existing impairments. Most of the evidence to date notes the poor impact of health outcomes (ibid).

## 4. Conclusions

As yet, there is very little research around the specific impact of climate change on people with disabilities, though there is increasing awareness that the impacts of climate change affect the most marginalised and excluded groups, so it may be assumed that these will include people with disabilities (Kett and Cole 2018; Keogh 2020). But the specificities of these impacts (e.g., on livelihoods, access to education, health impacts, relocation, etc.) are poorly understood, as are the impacts of the mitigation and adaptation measures introduced to address them. According to the IPCC: *‘Adaptation and mitigation responses are underpinned by common enabling factors. These include effective institutions and governance, innovation and investments in environmentally sound technologies and infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods, and behavioural and lifestyle choices.’*<sup>37</sup>

This lack of detailed knowledge and sustained participation in climate justice dialogue has led to a tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, rather than on transformative approaches. Transformative approaches to climate change address more fundamental challenges within societies and systems and seek measures that address these structural inequalities. This is because it is argued that some of the ‘solutions’ presented under the other forms of justice merely replicate existing structures of oppression (Moe-Lobeda 2016). This is especially relevant for people with disabilities, as it aligns with the ‘paradigm shift’ advocated for by the UNCRPD (UN 2006).

The use of social protection methods to manage climate risks could be viewed as a transformative approach that is equally relevant to both climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Social protection hinges on structural interventions such as safety nets around sectoral themes like food security (HelpAge 2015), social insurance, social services (including disability services), and even changes in the labour market, touching on issues of change focused more on shifting power such as changing labour standards (Costella et al. n/d) that may exclude people with disabilities and/or their careers. Social protection is related to considerations of minimizing how much those seen as ‘vulnerable’ pay the cost for a transition away from a fossil fuel economy and should be part of a just transition. This includes the need to identify and mitigate unintended impacts that a transition may have by including the voices of people with disabilities. For instance, the winding down of the coal industry has profound implications for the tax base of coal-dependent communities that

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<sup>37</sup> [https://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch/topic\\_adaptation.php](https://ar5-syr.ipcc.ch/topic_adaptation.php)

lead to the depletion of local public budgets that disability services may be dependent on.<sup>38</sup>

The overall disconnect between the climate and disability rights movements calls for more systematic engagement from both camps, from the international level all the way down to the grassroots. The need to integrate intersectional voices and considerations in this is critical, but it needs to be driven by people with disabilities themselves. As the research has highlighted, this lack of positioning has led to a gap in the overall climate movement and the voices of people with disabilities have only recently begun to be heard. It could be argued that this is because of a lack of constituency at the negotiating table, but it also raises questions as to why other groups (e.g., women's or Indigenous peoples) were less inclusive—perhaps in part because they want to ensure that their specific issues were on the table for discussion first before bringing in other intersectional aspects that could ‘risk’ diluting their messages. Others interviewed argued that there has been slow progress toward inclusion in the climate agenda, in part because of ongoing ableism, and lack of insight about issues for people with disabilities by those involved. Developing a shared understanding of the urgency to address these issues for all—and the transformative potential of climate justice—would help identify solutions to bring the groups together and advance climate justice for all.

What is clearly lacking is a consensus and a framework of what disability demands should be within the context of climate justice. This is particularly the case beyond understanding substantive and procedural rights, such as the right to representation, with a paucity of discussion on how an equitable transformation of the economy and society towards a low carbon future can centre and support the rights and aspirations of people with disabilities. There is a growing understanding, particularly from the disability rights community, that this disconnect has to be addressed, with a number of advances including more formal organising of disability rights groups around COP26. A second point is about the capacity and knowledge of how to engage with the complex negotiations around climate, acknowledging the links with DRR, but going beyond to the intersection of DRR and climate justice. More awareness-raising by the climate justice movement is needed to get OPDs working on a wider range of climate projects. Another challenge is the need to create a better, more resilient, and adaptive system to respond to climate impacts while at the same time not unintentionally excluding people with disabilities. The example of the climate change migration relocation plan in Fiji to potentially (but unintentionally) exclude people with disabilities is relevant here. At the same

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<sup>38</sup> ILSR (2020). ‘Coal Plant Communities Seek a Just Transition’. <https://ilsr.org/coal-closure-communities-just-transition/>

time, there is an overall lack of literature that seeks to explore the impacts of climate change, as well as policies and interventions to mitigate, adapt, and adjust, on people with disabilities. Much of the literature also overlooks a range of impairment types and has little acknowledgement that people with disabilities are not a homogeneous population. The interviews and research conducted provide insights into how this progress can be accelerated and what donors in particular can do to contribute to this.

## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1. Improve intersectional understandings of climate-disability issues and advocacy

From this review we can see that people with disabilities remain on the fringes of the climate justice agenda. Many people with disabilities do not have jobs in the first place, and because of this, there has been a tendency to exclude them from debates around green jobs, etc. Partly because of this exclusion, the work has barely touched on the needs or rights of children and youth with disabilities, or gender, or wider intergenerational injustice issues.

Much work has been done to reframe understanding away from the term ‘vulnerable’ to focus on resilience, though for many groups, particularly those under-represented within the disability movement, such as people with intellectual impairments or psychosocial disabilities, this focus on resilience can lead to the conclusion that if one is not resilient, then it is because of some inherent fault of one’s own. There is promising work around resistance, though as yet this framework has not been applied to people with disabilities and climate (see for example Thomas 2021). Women and girls are also under-represented within the literature, and often within the movements, as are older adults with disabilities, who have specific issues around a lack of technology or ICT access, which increases their exclusion even within the disability movement.

### 5.2. Develop a transformative rights-based view that explicitly connects climate justice to the rights of persons with disabilities

Finding here highlight the tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, rather than on transformative approaches. There is a need to gain consensus around what a transformative, rights-based, disability inclusive climate justice looks like for persons with disabilities, acknowledging heterogeneity, but also the shared – and universal – experiences. This includes the right to representation, and much more focus on how an equitable transformation of the economy and society towards a low carbon future can centre and support the rights and aspirations of people with disabilities in all their diversity.

### **5.3. Climate justice networks and processes must include disability-focused representation**

Related to the above, there needs to be more awareness of why people with disabilities have been marginalised within the climate movement, such as a perpetuation of the belief that they are a ‘vulnerable’ group, rather than finding commonalities of marginalisation and exclusion, as well as understanding the need for a paradigm shift that integrates the transformational demands of disability movements. Building alliances with, and gaining political power within, the climate movement would facilitate this. However, as with much of the work on disability inclusion, this will be incremental. Therefore selecting what – and how - to prioritise issues is crucial. A second point is around capacity and knowledge of how to engage with the complex negotiations around climate, acknowledging the links with DRR, but going beyond to the intersection of DRR and climate justice. More understanding of how to build strategic alliances and develop networks of support, and on how to connect disability and climate issues is needed.<sup>39</sup>

### **5.4. More research on climate-disability issues is needed**

Given the paucity of information on climate-disability issues, particularly at the local level, research is another priority. There is a need to look for data and evidence to frame narratives of the impact of climate on the lives of people with disabilities. For example, very little is known about the specific health impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities or relating poorer health outcomes to long term disabilities. More research is also needed around the intersectional aspects of climate change, and how it affects different ages, gender, impairments etc, as well as the intersections between DRR and wider climate change and climate justice issues.

### **5.5. Donors should support climate groups to be truly transformational in their disability-inclusive efforts**

Given the limited knowledge and capacity around climate, donors may need to reconsider where there are entry points for funding; so, for example, DRR

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<sup>39</sup> An example of similar work done is the [Frida Fund](#) ‘climate boot camp’, which raised members awareness of the climate justice approach without imposing a particular framework.



could be an entry point, particularly for donors who do not usually fund work in this area. However, this should be coupled with awareness-raising by the climate justice movement is needed to get OPDs working on a wider range of climate projects, and vice versa. Once alliances are made, and capacity strengthened, then broader upstream climate-focused work may emerge. It is important that this is not seen as static, and messages, priorities and capacity will – and should – change over time. Funding needs to reflect this.

Linked to this, more targeted funding to grassroots individuals and networks may facilitate the leadership development of practitioners to work collaboratively to create a better understanding of the links between climate and disability and what that looks like in practice, and how to be truly transformative.

## **5.6. Donors should target OPDs in their climate funding**

Linked to the above, more targeted funding to grass roots individuals and networks may facilitate the leadership development of practitioners, to work collaboratively to create a better understanding of the links between climate and disability and what that looks like in practice. This does not remove the need for institutional funding, but rather aims to facilitate inclusion more generally. A ‘top down’ approach from donors, such as mandating disability inclusion across climate programs, along with a ‘bottom-up’ approach, such as reporting against these requirements would be the optimal solution.

Another opportunity would be to find spaces for reciprocal awareness-raising between both climate and disability-focused organisations, and that donors could fund disability groups to do work around specific sectoral issues, for instance transportation equity and disaster response.

## **5.7. Support disability activists to increase knowledge and leadership**

Related to the above point, while there is not a consensus amongst disability activists as to where or how organisational expertise should be built, with some advocating for climate-focused organisations to mainstream disability in their work, rather than the other way around, there is a need for disability activists to increase their knowledge and leadership in climate, and to build the power and knowledge to work together with the climate movement (who also need to build their capacity). Related to this is the need to build the capacity of OPDs to understand how climate negotiations work, how to build strategic alliances and develop networks of support. Finally, activists and their allies

need to lobby CRPD committee members to issue a comment on Article 11 to be expanded to include climate action as an initial step.

## Appendix 1: Global frameworks

**Table 1: Global Climate and Environmental Frameworks**

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
<p><b>UN Framework Convention on Climate Change</b></p> <p><i>Note:</i></p> <p><i>The Convention itself does not have a unified target and indicator framework. It has a framework and targets for reporting GHG emission reductions and a social safeguard framework, but the SDGs provide corresponding targets and indicators.<sup>40</sup></i></p> <p><i>Namely, SDG 13 which calls to ‘take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’ acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.<sup>41</sup></i></p>	<p><b>3.1 References in the Paris Agreement</b></p> <p><i>Preamble</i></p> <p>Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of Indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, <b>persons with disabilities</b> and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,</p> <p><b>Compilation of Other Relevant Mandates and Decisions</b></p> <p><i>Action for Climate Empowerment</i></p>	<p>Domesticated, and potentially included in national climate action plans, etc.</p>	<p>Domesticated, and potentially included in national climate action plans, etc.</p> <p>The SDGs note that all indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.</p> <p>Beyond this, there is no explicit mention of disability issues in any of the indicators. However, one of the indicators includes the ‘number of</p>	<p>Set up in 2014 by the foremost multilateral climate body, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the largest stand-alone global fund dedicated to serving the implementation of the Convention and supporting developing countries reduce greenhouse gases and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Current pledges to the GCF are at around \$10 billion<sup>6</sup> and spending is overseen by a Board and its priorities guided annually by the Conference of</p>

<sup>40</sup> [https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review\\_Eng.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Please note that overall, we have tried to focus on global-level agreements, therefore some of the newer region-specific agreements (e.g., The Escazu agreement, which focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean) are not included here, but will be picked up at the country level as appropriate.

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><u>2012</u></p> <p><i>Decision 15/CP.18 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention</b></p> <p><i>Also recognizing that a goal of education is to promote changes in lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour needed to foster sustainable development and to prepare children, youth, women, <b>persons with disabilities</b> and grassroots communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change,</i></p> <p>[...].</p> <p><i>Also reaffirming the importance of taking into account gender aspects and the need to promote the effective engagement of children, youth, the elderly, women, <b>persons with disabilities</b>, Indigenous peoples, local communities and non-governmental organizations in activities related to Article 6 of the Convention,</i></p> <p>[...].</p> <p>9. Implementation of Article 6 of the</p>		<p>countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030’, thus the adoption of the Sendai Framework and its associated commitments to disability rights are implied.</p>	<p>Parties to the UNFCCC.</p> <p>Disability issues are considered in the following policies:</p> <p><b>Indigenous Peoples Policy</b><sup>42</sup></p> <p>Activities proposed for GCF funding must implement ‘a management system to manage the risks and impacts associated with the activities, including meaningful and inclusive multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement throughout the project cycle with Indigenous peoples, taking into account the particular situations of other vulnerable groups and populations (including women, children and people with disabilities)’.</p> <p>Activities designed solely to</p>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/ip-policy.pdf>

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p>Convention has a broad range of stakeholders, including, governments, the private sector, IGOs, NGOs and others international organizations, decisionmakers, scientists, the media, teachers, the general public, youth, women, <b>people with disabilities</b> and Indigenous peoples among others.</p> <p><u>2013</u></p> <p><i>Report of SBI 39 (Subsidiary Body for Implementation)</i></p> <p><b>Summary report on the Dialogue on Article 6 of the Convention</b></p> <p>193. The SBI recalled decision 15/CP.18, which reaffirms the importance of taking into account gender aspects and the need to promote the effective engagement of children, youth, the elderly, women, <b>persons with disabilities</b>, Indigenous peoples, local communities and non-governmental organizations in activities related to Article 6 of the Convention.</p> <p><u>2014</u></p> <p><i>Decision 19/CP.20 (Conference of the Parties</i></p>			<p>benefit Indigenous peoples, there must be consultations “with the Indigenous peoples as to the cultural</p> <p>appropriateness of proposed services or facilities and will seek to identify and address any</p> <p>economic, social or capacity constraints (including those relating to gender, the elderly, youth and persons with disabilities) that may limit opportunities to benefit from, or participate in, the Project.”</p> <p>Adverse impacts on Indigenous peoples will be avoided to the maximum possible extent. The appropriate mitigation measures to minimize impacts and for appropriate compensation will be determined</p>

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><b>The Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising</b></p> <p><i>Reaffirming</i> that public participation, access to information and knowledge are crucial for developing and implementing effective policies to combat climate change and adapt to its impacts, as well as to engage actively, as appropriate, all stakeholders, including children, youth, the elderly, women, <b>persons with disabilities</b>, Indigenous and local communities and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of these policies,</p> <p><u>2015</u></p> <p><i>Decision 15/CP.21 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Terms of reference for the intermediate review of the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention</b></p> <p><i>Reaffirming</i> the importance of taking into account gender aspects and the need to promote the effective engagement of children, youth, the elderly, women, persons with disabilities,</p>			<p>with the full and effective participation of affected Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous women, youth, the elderly and disabled people.</p> <p>‘Where compensation occurs on a collective basis, as far as practicable, mechanisms that promote the effective distribution of compensation to all eligible members, or collective use of compensation in a manner that benefits all members of the group, including women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities, will be defined and implemented in consultation with affected Indigenous peoples’.</p> <p>When meaningfully consulting with Indigenous peoples “Take into</p>

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p>Indigenous peoples, local communities and non-governmental organizations in activities related to Article 6 of the Convention.</p> <p><b>Adaptation</b></p> <p><u>2018</u></p> <p><i>Decision 9/CP.24 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Report of the Adaptation Committee</b></p> <p>8. Encourages Parties to apply a participatory approach to adaptation planning and implementation so as to make use of stakeholder input, including from the private sector, civil society, Indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children and youth, <b>persons with disabilities</b> and people in vulnerable situations in general.</p> <p><b>Capacity Building</b></p> <p><u>2011</u></p> <p><i>Decision 2/CP.17 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term</b></p>			<p>account the interests of community members who are particularly affected and marginalized, especially women, youth, Indigenous persons with disabilities and the elderly, including being cognizant of traditional cultural approaches that may exclude segments of the community from the decision-making process. Additionally, spaces should be created to allow for their direct participation in consultation and in the decision-making process.”</p> <p>Eligible activities to ‘strengthen consideration and participation of Indigenous peoples in the climate change actions’ may include initiatives designed to ‘foster the meaningful inclusion and participation of Indigenous women and other marginalized</p>

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><b>Cooperative Action under the Convention</b></p> <p><i>Further reaffirming the importance of taking into account gender aspects and acknowledging the role and needs of youth and <b>persons with disabilities</b> in capacity-building activities.</i></p> <p><i>Decision 13/CP.17 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Capacity-building under the Convention</b></p> <p><i>Also reaffirming the importance of taking into account gender aspects and acknowledging the role and needs of youth and <b>persons with disabilities</b> in capacity-building activities.</i></p> <p><b><i>Loss and Damage</i></b></p> <p><u>2012</u></p> <p><i>Decision 3/CP.18 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>Approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to</b></p>			groups, such as persons with disabilities’.



Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><b>enhance adaptive capacity.</b></p> <p><i>Noting resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, Indigenous or minority status, or <b>disability</b>.</i></p> <p><b><i>Participation</i></b></p> <p><u>2011</u></p> <p><i>Report of SBI 34 (Subsidiary Body on Implementation)</i></p> <p><b>Organization of the intergovernmental process</b></p> <p>170. The SBI recognized the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, national, and local levels, be they government, including subnational and local government, private business or civil society, including youth and</p>			

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><b>persons with disability,</b> and that gender equality and the effective participation of women and Indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change.</p> <p><i><b>Shared Vision</b></i></p> <p><u>2010</u></p> <p><i>Decision 1/CP. 16 (Conference of the Parties)</i></p> <p><b>The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the Work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention</b></p> <p><i>Noting</i> resolution 10/4 of the United Nations Human Rights Council on human rights and climate change, which recognizes that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by those segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, gender, age, Indigenous or minority status, <b>or disability.</b></p>			

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p><b><i>I. A shared vision for long-term cooperative action [...]</i></b></p> <p>7. Recognizes the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, national and local levels, be they government, including subnational and local government, private business or civil society, including youth and <b>persons with disability</b>, and that gender equality and the effective participation of women and Indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change.</p> <p>(CIEL 2019)</p>			
<p><b>The Sendai</b></p> <p><i>Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction guiding principles highlight the need to consider and include persons with disabilities in strategies that prevent and reduce vulnerability to disasters, enhance disaster preparedness, and foster resilience. In its preamble, the Sendai Framework encourages a ‘people-centered’ preventive approach to disaster risk reduction that empowers persons with disabilities and their organizations to assess risk, and to lead and promote disaster response, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction policies.</i></p>	<p>I. Preamble, 7: Governments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including persons with disabilities.</p> <p>III. Guiding Principles, 19</p> <p>(d): A disability perspective should be integrated in all DRR policies and practices</p> <p>(g) DRR requires a multi-hazard approach and inclusive risk-informed decision-making based on the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data, including by disability.</p>			

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	<p>IV Priorities for Action, Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, 32: Empowering persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key.</p> <p>V Role of Stakeholders, 36, (a), (iii): Persons with disabilities and their organizations are critical in the assessment of disaster risk and in designing and implementing plans tailored to specific requirements, taking into consideration, inter alia, the principles of universal design.</p>			
Hyogo Framework for Action	(g) Strengthen the implementation of social safety-net mechanisms to assist the poor, the elderly and the disabled, and other populations affected by disasters. Enhance			

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	recovery schemes including psycho-social training programmes in order to mitigate the psychological damage of vulnerable populations, particularly children, in the aftermath of disasters.			
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>  <i>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</i>	No specific mention of disability in SDG 13 global targets and indicators though these may be adapted at national level. Disability is specifically mentioned in goals four, eight, ten, eleven, and seventeen	<p>No disability-focused targets in SDG 13, but target <b>13.B: Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities</b> - though there is no definition of who may be marginalized, this is likely to include persons with disabilities.</p> <p>There are also specific targets across other SDGs. May also be adopted into country</p>	<p>No disability-focused indicators in SDG 13, but indicator <b>13.B.1: Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.</b></p> <p>Again, depending on interpretation, this could include</p>	Financed through country development plans

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
		development plans.	persons with disabilities.  There are also specific indicators across other SDGs. May also be adopted into country development plans.	
<b>Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement–2018)</b>	<p>Does not mention people with disabilities, but does note that:</p> <p>‘Above all, this treaty aims to combat inequality and discrimination and to guarantee the rights of every person to a healthy environment and to sustainable development. In so doing, it devotes particular attention to persons and groups in vulnerable situations, and places equality at the core of sustainable development’.</p> <p>It defines ‘Persons or groups in vulnerable situations’ as ‘those persons or groups that face particular difficulties in fully exercising the access rights recognized in the present Agreement, because of circumstances or condition identified within each Party’s national context and in accordance with its international obligations’.</p>	None developed yet.	None developed yet.	A voluntary fund has been established for the implementation of the Agreement but it is still being discussed.

Framework	Disability addressed?	Targets	Indicators	Financing frameworks
	The only time it illustrates who these vulnerable persons or groups are, it refers to Indigenous peoples and ethnic groups, and many of these provisions for vulnerable groups relate to provision of information in appropriate languages/ formats.			

**Table 2: Global Disability Rights Frameworks**

Framework	Climate Mentioned	Targets	Indicators	Finance frameworks
<b>UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)</b>	No specific focus on climate justice, but according to Article 11, Member States must take ‘...all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters’.	Domesticated, and potentially included in national disability action plans, etc.	Domesticated, and potentially included in national disability action plans, etc.	Overseen by the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)—a collaboration between UN entities, governments, disabled people’s organisations and the broader civil society to advance disability rights around the world. The UNPRPD is supported by the UNPRPD Fund, a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) established to mobilize resources for the Partnership. There is no specific funding mechanism for climate-related work, and none has been funded to date. ( <a href="http://www.unprpd.org/our-programmes-global">http://www.unprpd.org/our-programmes-global</a> )
<b>Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2016)</b> commits States to ensuring that humanitarian actions be inclusive of persons with disabilities through their greater participation in planning and implementing humanitarian programs and by ensuring the	No specific mention of climate, but strong focus on rights-based approach to inclusion across humanitarian settings, does not specify definition of types.	No specific targets	No specific indicators	No specific funding



removal of barriers to accessible relief, protection, and support. The Inclusion Charter consists of five steps, on participation, data, funding, capacity and coordination that humanitarian actors can take to ensure assistance reaches those most in need and supports them to move out of crisis and on to a path toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ( <a href="http://www.inclusioncharter.org">www.inclusioncharter.org</a> )				
<b>Verona Charter on the Rescue of Persons with Disabilities (2007)</b> —Declaration of the participants in the Consensus Conference held in Verona on 8, 9 November 2007 in the framework of the European co-financed project: ‘Rescuing Injured Disabled Persons in case of Disasters—Civil Protection’s Challenge in the Challenge	Focus on natural disasters—UNCRPD, and the European Parliament Resolution ( 04/09/07) on natural disasters Article 19: ‘Stresses the need to take special care in cases of natural disasters of the specific needs of people with disabilities in all actions undertaken using the Civil Protection Mechanisms’.	No specific targets	No specific indicators	No specific funding mechanism
<b>Incheon Strategy’ to ‘Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities’ (2012).</b>	Only passing reference: <i>Goal 7 - Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management - The Asia-Pacific region is the region that is most adversely</i>	No climate specific targets – but <i>Target 7.A Strengthen disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction planning Target 7.B Strengthen implementation of measures on providing timely and</i>	<i>No climate specific indicators, but core indicators 7.1 Availability of disability inclusive disaster risk reduction plans 7.2 Availability of disability-inclusive training for all</i>	No specific funding mechanism

	<p><i>affected by disasters, including those caused by climate change. Persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are at higher risk of death, injury and additional impairments, as a result of exclusion from disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes</i></p>	<p><i>appropriate support to persons with disabilities in responding to disasters.</i></p>	<p><i>relevant service personnel 7.3 Proportion of accessible emergency shelters and disaster relief sites Supplementary indicators 7.4 Number of persons with disabilities who died or were seriously injured in disasters 7.5 Availability of psychosocial support service personnel that have the capacity to assist persons with disabilities affected by disasters 7.6 Availability of assistive devices and technologies for persons with disabilities in preparing for and responding to disasters.</i></p>	
<p><b>Dhaka Declaration on Disability and Disaster Risk Management (2015 - Asia and the Pacific region)</b></p>	<p>Mentioned in relation to SDGs and poverty</p>	<p>No specific targets</p>	<p>No specific indicators</p>	<p>No specific funding</p>
<p><b>IASC Guidelines of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action</b></p>	<p>No specific mention of climate, but strong focus on rights-based approach to inclusion across humanitarian settings, does not specify definition of types.</p>	<p>Yes, but not climate specific, though could be relevant for climate-related emergency.</p>	<p>Yes, but not climate specific, though could be relevant for climate-related emergency.</p>	<p>No specific funding but linked to Humanitarian Action Plans</p>

**Table 3: How climate justice outcomes can be realised for people with disabilities**

Climate Justice Outcomes	How these can be realised for people with disabilities
<p><b><i>Substantive Rights</i></b></p> <p>Human rights and rights to development</p>	<p>To improve understanding of the differentiated human rights impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities, States and other stakeholders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Collect disaggregated data, paying particular attention to disability and its intersections with characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity;</li> <li>(b) Develop disability-specific indicators;</li> <li>(c) Map the effects of climate change on poverty and persons with disabilities;</li> <li>(d) Identify priority areas to support persons with disabilities and enhance access to benefits. (OHCHR 2019)</li> </ul> <p>To address and prevent discrimination and abuse against persons with disabilities in the context of natural disasters, States and other stakeholders should promote the disability-inclusive design and implementation of humanitarian, migration and disaster risk reduction plans and policies. (OHCHR 2019)</p> <p>States and other relevant stakeholders should continue to emphasize the need to respect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities as part and parcel of effective climate action at the Human Rights Council, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and at other relevant forums, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development. (OHCHR 2019)</p> <p>When designing climate change policies and actions, States and other relevant stakeholders should engage with ministries for social and/or human rights affairs, or their equivalent, to advance disability-inclusive climate action. (OHCHR 2019)</p>
<p><b><i>Procedural Justice</i></b></p> <p>Inclusion of people with disabilities in decision making</p>	<p>In all climate action and decision-making processes, States and other relevant stakeholders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Take more ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation action to limit the impacts of climate change on all persons, including on persons with disabilities;</li> <li>(b) Secure the meaningful, informed and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in climate change mitigation and adaptation at all levels;</li> <li>(c) Strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities to respond to climate change by ensuring their access to information about climate change and its impacts, their participation in related decision-making processes and their enhanced social protection and climate resilience. (OHCHR 2019)</li> </ul> <p>Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, States and other stakeholders should take measures within relevant bodies and processes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Ensure disability-inclusive, rights-based mitigation and adaptation;</li> </ul>

	<p>(b) Ensure the accessibility of the meeting venues of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and related negotiations;</p> <p>(c) Include the rights of persons with disabilities in future decisions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in line with commitments under the Paris Agreement and international human rights law;</p> <p>(d) Consider creating a constituency for persons with disabilities at the climate negotiations;</p> <p>(e) Support diversity and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the composition of national delegations to processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;</p> <p>(f) Support capacity-building for persons with disabilities to maximize their voice, confidence and negotiation skills. (OHCHR 2019)</p>
<p><b><i>Distributive Justice</i></b></p> <p>Differentiated responsibilities and loss and damage/Adequate support for adaption</p>	<p>To ensure that climate funds benefit the countries and people that are most affected by climate change and systematically integrate human rights and disability–inclusion into governance structures, project approvals, implementation processes and public participation mechanisms, States and other stakeholders should:</p> <p>(a) Conduct ex ante and ex post human rights impact assessments;</p> <p>(b) Report on the implementation of disability-inclusive policies throughout the project cycle, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators;</p> <p>(c) Develop guidance for disability-inclusive stakeholder consultations and facilitate the participation of organisations representing persons with disabilities. (OHCHR 2019)</p>
<p><b><i>Transformative Approaches</i></b></p> <p>System change and just transition</p>	<p>As a means of empowering persons with disabilities as economic, social, human rights and climate actors, workers and employers, and to enhance their capabilities to cope with climate change, States and other stakeholders should:</p> <p>(a) Promote equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities in the labour market;</p> <p>(b) Strengthen education and vocational training for persons with disabilities, including on issues related to sustainable development, environmental degradation and climate change;</p> <p>(c) Ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities in schools and work places;</p> <p>(d) Include persons with disabilities as an integral constituency in the development of the new green economy. (OHCHR 2019)</p>

## Appendix 2: Participant information sheet and consent form

### **Participant Information Sheet For Organisational Representatives (semi-structured interview)**

UCL Research Ethics Committee Approval ID Number: 19025/001

#### **YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of Study: Climate Justice and Disability Research Project**

**Department: Epidemiology and Public Health**

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s): Dr. Maria Kett**  
[m.kett@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.kett@ucl.ac.uk)

**Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher: Dr. Maria Kett**  
[m.kett@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.kett@ucl.ac.uk)

#### **1. Invitation paragraph**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. This a collaborative project between OSF and UCL and OSF is the main sponsor. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If anything is not clear, or you would like more information, please contact us. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this information sheet.

#### **2. What is the project's purpose?**

Climate change, arguably the greatest challenge of this era, has profound implications for human rights and disproportionately affects those who are already vulnerable and disadvantaged. The aim of this project is to identify: 1) how organisations working with people with disabilities address issues of climate justice; and 2) how climate-focused organisations address disability issues.

#### **3. Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because of your professional experience. The views that you will be asked to give will be your own, not as an official representative of your organisation. For this component of the research

study, approximately 30 people will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview to gather in-depth information about organisational practices around disability and climate justice. The other part of the research project involves an online survey where around 100 people will be invited to respond.

#### **4. Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you can keep a copy of this information sheet. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and we will not use the information that you have shared with us. You can withdraw your consent for up to two weeks after the interview. After this point you will not be able to withdraw the information you have given us.

#### **5. What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part in this research, you take part in an interview by phone or over Teams. This interview will last around one hour. Your consent will be recorded by a consent form that you will be emailed and you will sign and send back to us before we start the interview. No personal information will be taken and you will be giving your own views, not responding as a representative of your organisation.

#### **6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?**

We will record the interview for transcription purposes. No other use will be made of the recordings and we will not share it with anyone outside of the project. No personal or sensitive questions will be asked during the interview. The recording will be securely destroyed at the end of the project. If you do not wish to be recorded during the interview, you will be able to state this on the consent form and we will not make a recording.

#### **7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We do not foresee any risks to participating in this research. However, any unexpected disadvantages or distress should be brought to our attention immediately using the contact details above.

#### **8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there are no direct benefits to taking part in this research, it is hoped that results will contribute to understanding of the linkages between disability and climate justice in organisations' practices and help shape future research.

#### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you have any complaints about the research project you should contact Dr. Maria Kett at the email above. However, if you feel that your

complaint has not been handled properly, or if you have a serious concern about your treatment or other serious issue about the research (during or following your participation), you can contact the chairperson of the UCL Research Ethics Committee – [ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@ucl.ac.uk)

#### **10. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

We may want to use your real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words you have said. If you are not comfortable with this, we can present the information you have given us using your role/affiliation only or anonymised. Please let us know which of these you would prefer, and you will be able to sign the consent form to confirm your choice.

#### **11. Limits to confidentiality**

If you choose to have your information anonymised, confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases, the university may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

#### **12. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

Data collected from this survey will contribute to a research report on the linkages between climate justice and disability. The results will also be published as a journal article. These will be emailed on request. Data from your interview will be stored for the duration of the project and will then be securely destroyed.

#### **13. Local Data Protection Privacy Notice**

Notice:

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click [here](#)

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The categories of personal data used will be as follows:

Name, location, organisation

The lawful basis that would be used to process your *personal data* will be performance of a task in the public interest.

The lawful basis used to process *special category personal data* will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

*Your personal data (name only) will be processed so long as it is required for the duration of the research project.* If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, as requested, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk).

***Data will only be shared with researchers for the project, including outside of the EEA (USA). While no personal data will be gathered and shared other than your name as representative of your organisation, secure and appropriate channels will be still be put in place.***

#### **14. Who is organising and funding the research?**

This project is being sponsored by the Open Society Foundations.

Dr. Maria Kett is participating as part of a group of international scholars and advocates lending their expertise to this project on a voluntary basis.

#### **15. Contact for further information**

For further information, you can contact Dr. Maria Kett. [m.kett@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.kett@ucl.ac.uk)

You can keep this information sheet and you can keep the copy of your signed consent form.

**Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering participation in this research study.**



**CONSENT FORM FOR Organisational Representatives (semi-structured interview) IN RESEARCH STUDIE**

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

**Title of Study: Climate Justice and Disability Justice Research Project**

**Department: Epidemiology and Public Health**

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s): Dr. Maria Kett**

[m.kett@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.kett@ucl.ac.uk)

**Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher: Dr Maria Kett**

[m.kett@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.kett@ucl.ac.uk)

**Name and Contact Details of the UCL Data Protection Officer: Alex Potts**

[data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: Project ID number: 19025/001

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I confirm that I understand that by ticking/initialling each box below I am consenting to this element of the study. I understand that it will be assumed that unticked/initialled boxes means that I DO NOT consent to that part of the study. I understand that by not giving consent for any one element that I may be deemed ineligible for the study.

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\*I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study. I have had an opportunity to consider the information and what will be expected of me. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered to my satisfaction *and would like to take part in the interview*

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\*I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to two weeks after the interview.

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\*I consent to participate in the study. I understand that my personal information (name, organisation, location ) will be used for the purposes explained to me. I understand that according to

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data protection legislation, 'public task' will be the lawful basis for processing.

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Anonymity is optional for this research. Please select from the following 3 options:

I agree for my real name and role/affiliation to be used in connection with any words I have said or information I have passed on.

I request that my comments are presented anonymously but give permission to connect my role/affiliation with my comments (but not the title of my position).

I request that my comments are presented anonymously with no mention of my role/affiliation.

---

\*I understand that my information may be subject to review by responsible individuals from the university for monitoring and audit purposes.

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\*I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any personal data I have provided up to that point will be deleted unless I agree otherwise up to two weeks after the interview.

---

No promise or guarantee of benefits have been made to encourage you to participate.

---

I understand that the data will not be made available to any commercial organisations but is solely the responsibility of the researcher(s) undertaking this study.

---

I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future.

---

I understand that my research data (anonymised as requested) will not be used for future research and will be destroyed at the end of this project.

---

I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I wish to receive a copy of it. Yes/No

---

I consent to my interview being audio/video recorded and understand that the recordings will be destroyed immediately following transcription.

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**To note: If you do not want your participation recorded you can still take part in the study.**

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I hereby confirm that I understand the inclusion criteria as detailed in the Information Sheet and explained to me by the researcher.

---

I am aware of who I should contact if I wish to lodge a complaint.

---

I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

---

I understand that data I have provided in the survey will be held by authenticated researchers for the duration of the research project. After the project is completed, the information I have given will be destroyed.

I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to my anonymised data.

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#### **Overseas Transfer of Data**

*I understand that my personal data (name only) will be shared with researchers outside of the EEA (USA). I further understand that no personal data other than my name, location and organization will be gathered and shared, and that this information will be secured and destroyed upon completion of the project.*

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## Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview guide

### Semi Structured Interview

#### **Introduction**

Date of interview: [\_\_|\_\_:\_\_|\_\_]

Name of interviewee:

Organisation:

Position:

1. What is the mandate and main responsibilities of your organisation/position?
2. What, if any, groups are considered vulnerable in your work?
3. How are these groups included in your work? (e.g., included in networks you work with, integrated into workstreams, etc.)
4. What do you understand by the term ‘climate justice’?
5. What, if any, work do you do in this area?
6. Who do you partner with for this work?
7. What is your understanding of disability?
8. What, if any, sort of work do you do related to persons with disabilities?
9. Who do you partner with for this disability-focused work?

10. Have you involved any disabled people's organisations and disabled people in your planning, implementation and evaluation processes? (if yes, please give details [at what stages?]; if no, please state the reasons why).
11. How do you think your work links to national climate-related policies?
12. How do you think your work links to national disability policies?
13. Do you know about any specific policies or legislation in place for ensuring inclusion of persons with disability in [country?]?
14. How effective are these policies in your opinion? Why do you say that?  
Any suggestion for improvement?
15. Do you know of any specific policies or legislation in place around climate change?
16. How effective are these policies in your opinion? Why do you say that?  
Any suggestions for improvement?
17. What, in your opinion, are the biggest challenges/barriers that disabled people face in your country?
18. What, in your opinion, are the biggest climate challenges people face in your country?
19. Do you think climate challenges these affect one group more than another, and if yes, which group(s)?
20. Have any actions been taken to address this by your government or any other groups in your country? (If yes, please briefly outline them; if no, do you know why not?)
21. Are there any groups or networks working on climate justice AND disability in your country, or other countries that you know of?

- 22.** Are you aware of any funders or donors working in the climate justice AND disability space?
- 23.** (If yes, please give details)
- 24.** What, if any, role could funders or donors have in the climate justice AND disability space?
- 25.** Do you have any other comments or suggestions for us about organisations or individuals who are relevant to climate-disability issues?

## Appendix 4: Online survey networks shared

	Organisation/Network	Date email sent	Response received
1	UCL International Disability Research Centre	20/11/20	20/11/20
2	GDI Hub	20/11/20	23/11/20
3	International Centre for Evidence in Disability – LSHTM	24/11/20	
4	IDDC	24/11/20	
5	IDA	23/11/20	
6	UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction	24/11/20	25/11/20
7	EDF	23/11/20	24/11/20
8	Thematic Group on DRR (IDA)	24/11/20	25/11/20
9	Australian Humanitarian Partnership	24/11/20	25/11/20

10	Pacific Climate Program (DFAT- managed by Whitelum Group and Palladium)	24/11/20	25/11/20
11	ICCCAD	24/11/20	25/11/20
12	Climate Change Professionals LinkedIn Group (24K members)	26/11/20	26/11/20
13	IISD Climate-L listserv	25/11/20	
14	IASC Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action	27/11/20	
15	Co-Executive Director of the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, Germán Luis Parodi	27/11/20	
16	Co-Executive Director   The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies UNDRR Focal Point for Persons with Disabilities in the Américas Shaylin Sluzalis	27/11/20	
17	iiDi	27/11/20	
18	Argentinain activist	27/11/20	
19	Indigenous and disabled youth activist	27/11/20	
20		27/11/20	
21	Human Rights and Environmental Activist	27/11/20	



## Appendix 5: Literature review emerging themes

### Emerging Themes

While tagging of articles is ongoing, several themes are beginning to emerge. The most frequently cited tags are highlighted and underlined below

#### Aspect: climate threat

1. Air pollution – 1
2. Changing weather patterns – 6
3. Emissions – 4
4. **Extreme weather – 22**
5. Flooding – 8
6. **Heat stress – 13**
7. Sea-level rise – 6
8. Water scarcity – 3
9. Food scarcity – 2

#### Aspect: climate impact

1. Agriculture – 3
2. Coastal – 3
3. Environment – 6
4. Erosion – 1
5. **Health – 24**
6. Livelihoods – 5
7. **Migration-displacement – 9**
8. Poverty – 2
9. Property damage – 4
10. Salination – 1

#### Aspect: climate response

1. **Adaptation – 17**
2. **DRR – 24**
3. Governance – 1<sup>2</sup>
4. Information – 2
5. Justice – 7
6. Mitigation – 9
7. Knowledge – 1

- 8. Participation – 2<sup>2</sup>
- 9. Policy – 1
- 10. Religion – 2
- 11. Repatriation – 1
- 12. Resilience – 14**
- 13. Technology – 2

**Aspect: population type**

- 1. Age – 11**
- 2. Children – 10
- 3. Gender – 16**
- 4. Indigenous people – 4
- 5. Minority populations – 11**
- 6. Older adults – 9
- 7. Rural – 6
- 8. Women – 1
- 9. Urban – 13

**Aspect: impairment/difficulty**

- 1. Cognitive – 1
- 2. Communication – 1
- 3. Mental health – 2
- 4. Mobility – 1
- 5. Self-care – 1

**Aspect: geographic region**

- 1. Caribbean – 1
- 2. East Asia – 5
- 3. Europe – 5
- 4. Latin America – 3
- 5. Middle East – 1
- 6. North America – 18**
- 7. Pacific – 5
- 8. South Asia – 8
- 9. South East Asia – 5
- 10. Sub-Saharan Africa – 9**

## Appendix 6: Literature review content tags

### Initial content tags

- Excluded on abstract
  - excluded
- Type of literature
  - background
  - grey
  - academic
  - reference
- Country/region
  - europe; middle-east; north africa; sub-saharan africa; central asia; east asia; south east asia; south asia; pacific; north america; latin america; caribbean; australasia
- Population type
  - urban
  - rural
  - migrant
  - children
  - older adults
  - idp
  - refugee
- Impairment type
  - mobility; vision; hearing; cognition; communication; self-care; mental health
- Climate threat
  - erosion, salination, sea-level rise, extreme weather, changing weather patterns, heat stress
- Intervention type (if relevant):
  - adaptation, mitigation, drr, resilience, justice, reparation, technology
- Climate impacts:
  - livelihoods, migration-displacement, health, environment, land rights, food scarcity, water scarcity, conflict, agriculture, property damage
- Intersectional issues:
  - gender, indigenous peoples, age, religion, lgbt people, minority populations

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