



This section explains the very important difference between the concept of exclusion and the concept of vulnerability, and how both relate to forms of power. This section works as a prologue to the framework, as it conceptually sets the scene for readers to speak a common language on inclusion.

# WHAT ARE EXCLUSION AND VULNERABILITY?

## EXCLUSION

Exclusion is when some people are “left aside”. That is, they do not have the possibility to engage with others, to have a say on an issue, or to take part in joint action. It is like being out of a ‘circle’. There are many such circles in society, and each of us might be, willingly or unwillingly, excluded by some and included in others.

For example, one can be included and even lead a group of peers, and yet be excluded in decision making in the neighbourhood. Or, viceversa, even local leaders might be excluded by the “circles” formed by minorities or dissidents. The first step is to identify what circle matters for Disaster Risk Management. Circles can be local and small. Or can be as big as the governance of a nation.

People are out from different kinds of circles because they face some barriers to be into them. These barriers are created by their environment. Barriers and exclusion arise when their characteristics – such as sex, age, caste, ability, wealth, and many others – translate into less power and entitlements. Sometimes barriers are not openly created by the environment, but by the excluded people themselves. Issues of self-perception, lack of confidence, amongst others, might be all factors that lead people to exclude themselves from some circles. For example some people with disability might have interiorized the fear and the shame of “being different” and might not be willing to engage with others, even when others would welcome their participation.

The characteristics that translate into different forms of power are as varied as there are people out there. People can be born with these characteristics (like their ethnicity) or have acquired them through their lives (someone becomes a refugee). Some of them can be permanent (such as a physical disability) or potentially temporary (someone working as a prostitute). How these characteristics translate into different forms of power - and make someone excluded from a circle as a result - will depend on each very specific context and circumstances. Not all people with a common characteristic will necessarily have the same power, and be necessarily excluded from the same circles, or to the same extent. Local norms, attitudes, beliefs will matter. The toolkit contains practical examples of how different characteristics can translate into exclusion, both in the cartoon section, and in the video catalogue.

Exclusion is indeed very dynamic. Characteristics alone seldom capture the dynamics of inclusion. So it is important to distinguish “excluded from what”, “excluded by whom”, when we speak about it. For example, of two women, one can be poor and the other one better off. Depending on this, they will have different power, face different barriers, and be in or out of different circles. These dynamics will also be altered depending on what other characteristics they have. For example, what happens if the rich woman is a low-cast? In some cases her wealth might make her included and cast will not matter much. In some other circumstances belonging to a lower cast might exclude her. How this will happen will depend on her very specific context, as well as on her personality and life story. And will these two women always be more excluded than men? It varies. For example, in some community a poor, but high cast woman might be less excluded than some men. In another, the well off one might held power because of her wealth.



### *Exclusion*

- From what? (from what circles?)
- By whom? (by others? By themselves?)
- Because of what? (characteristics, barriers)
- How does this all interplay?

## VULNERABILITY

hazards. This is, as the UNISDR definition would say, because they have “characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that make it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard”.

As for inclusion, the characteristics that make people and communities vulnerable are diverse and we will not go into detailing them here as there is no standard list of factors and conditions. But it is important to understand that broadly, vulnerability relates to:

- The exposure to a hazard (the fact that a hazard can reach people is the first condition, as otherwise they will not be vulnerable to it)
- The capacity and power (or lack of) these people have to reduce the impact of the hazard on their lives, livelihoods, assets (that is, when they are exposed, what is it that makes them susceptible to suffer consequences, and what can they and others can do to stop or reduce this)

Because different people are exposed to different threats, we must ask “unsafe from what”, “vulnerable to what”:



### **Vulnerable...**

- To what? (what hazards?)
- Because of what? (what conditions makes them susceptible, what capacity / power is lacking?)

## HOW EXCLUSION AND VULNERABILITY RELATE TO POWER

### ***The interplay of vulnerability and inclusion***

Vulnerability and exclusion are two different concepts, and it is important to understand their difference:

- Vulnerability is about “being at risk”.
- Exclusion is about “being out”.

It is also important to understand how they interplay: It is for example possible to be vulnerable, yet included in DRM decision-making process (for example, as it happen to communities leaders living in a flood prone area). And, viceversa, it is possible to be excluded from the DRM decision making process, but not vulnerable to the main threats that a community face (e.g. excluded people who nevertheless live in “safe areas”). The table below illustrate some of the key implications of this distinction.

EXCLUSION (FROM DRM CIRCLES)

**Not vulnerable  
Excluded**

We might at first think: "if people are not vulnerable, then it does not matter if they are excluded from a DRM activity". Yet the fact that they are excluded bears the question: will they start facing vulnerabilities because they are not part of the process? Can they know that decisions taken without consulting them will not generate new risks for them? If they become vulnerable, will the DRM processes be able to identify them? Are they actually really not vulnerable, or is it that the risks they face are not appreciated or invisible?

**Not vulnerable  
Not excluded**

These groups might not be the priority for action on DRM, because they are likely to be safe. But leaving them aside on this base means that we are only focusing on vulnerabilities and not on the capacities that they could contribute with. Also, because they are included, they can be powerful and therefore capable of influencing development and DRM processes through other means. This is an opportunity because they could address issues for the common good; when all members are safe, a community is also more prosperous, and it is in the interest of everyone to achieve this

**Vulnerable  
Excluded**

People in this quadrant are the people at risk sidelined by DRM processes who can therefore not raise issues related to the risks that matter to them. This means that the solutions that are proposed might not be suitable and relevant to them. For example, an evacuation plan might be in place, but might not cater for the specific needs or circumstances of excluded people. Or it can be useless to address risks that threaten them much more.

**Vulnerable  
Not excluded**

People in this quadrant are the ones who are more likely to fully participate in DRM processes (or that can be more easily brought along): they have a stake in what is discussed and they are able to participate. This can become a problem when they are taken as the representatives of all the vulnerable people. Because they will advocate for a particular set of measures that respond to the risks they themselves know, because they are the ones they themselves face, and not necessarily all risks that threaten a community. As it often happens, it is when disaster strikes that we realise that these vulnerable people we were working with, were not all vulnerable people, because we missed the excluded ones.. we missed the excluded ones..

**VULNERABILITY (TO A SPECIFIC THREAT)**

**Not all circles matter**

No one will be in each and every circle that exist and be therefore 100% included. They might not want to, or they might not be allowed to, as a teenager being stopped from joining an elderly's self-support group. This is not an issue, if the circle is not relevant to the person's safety from disasters. This is why in the context of this framework, when we speak about "circles" in which people have to be included, we mean the circles that matter for DRM. For example, when we ask "can people be active and have a voice on issues related to risk reduction?", we are asking if they have a voice in circles that matter to their safety from disasters.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/LcyU22uz2IQ>



**"WE WERE NOT CONSULTED AND NOW WE HAVE A BIG PROBLEM"**

This representative of the business sector speaks about the complicated situation in which people involved in stone extraction in Nepal are now in. A report highlighting the risk of landslides related to stone extraction in the hills was released. The government decided to ban the extraction. Many workers have been affected. They were not consulted and we were not given different options. She says everybody has a right to food and a livelihood. There was a strike in protest for the ban when this interview took place.

### ***Circles are broader than formal DRM institutions***

Formal institutions such as village development groups, or national platforms are only some of the circles in which excluded people should be represented and able to demand accountability. In some cases formal DRM groups might not exist, and DRM related decisions are taken by other formal and informal groups.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/ojYiAqMxebo>



#### **"WE CAN SPEAK WITH THE LINE DEPARTMENTS NOW"**

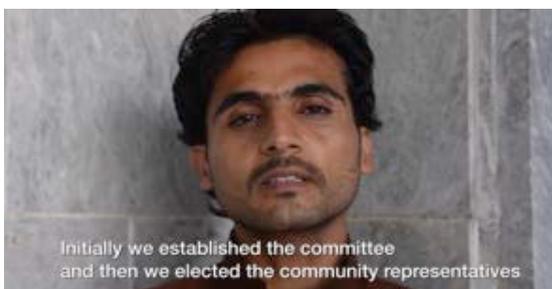
This member of the local disaster management committee says that NGOs provided us government contacts of line departments and arranged meetings with government departments relevant when there are floods. They were provided with all the contacts for these departments and after recent flash floods they contacted them and they came and supported them.

Local institutions and dynamics, informal set ups, social norms, attitudes and belief can be expressed in different types of institutions. All of them should be identified and paid attention to, as they can be equally influential in people's safety.

### ***Formal and direct participation is not always needed or meaningful***

Some individuals might not want to participate formally in the institutions that exist. However they can be included through their linkages with those who are actively participating, or be represented by someone else. And this can be enough to consider him/her included, if strong accountability mechanisms exist. Conversely, some individuals might formally attend meetings, and yet be excluded, as their voices are not heard.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/bcuXJIArooo>



#### **"WE HAVE A REPRESENTATION SYSTEM"**

This member of a local disaster management committee explains that they first they set the local DRM committee up and then selected representatives. If the neighbours have a problem they can issue a complaint. Then there would be an enquiry and the representative could be removed. Their elders gave them this idea.

## WHAT KIND OF VULNERABILITY?

If inclusion means that people can have a say on DRM, then they shall be the one to define what vulnerability and which hazards matter. And this is why inclusion matters from the onset: when excluded people do not have a say on what makes them vulnerable, the hazards they are exposed and that have an impact on them can become invisible. As a consequence, resources and energies are spent dealing with disaster that are important, but for those who have the power to decide. Likewise, when excluded people do not have a say in what makes them vulnerable, their vulnerability might be misunderstood, and their capacities overlooked. What makes them vulnerable, and in what context, needs to be defined by people themselves. Otherwise they will continue unsupported to face the disasters that affect them, or disempowered as "victims", in a vicious circle that further contributes to marginalising them.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/4V1z07UmdUo>



### "WIDOWS HAVE ADVANTAGES"

A widow from a community that observes the "purdah" – custom whereby women are not allowed to leave their house without the company of a male relative or their permission – states she is better off than other women during floods. In her community, widows are considered more vulnerable to disasters. Yet when the water rises to dangerous levels she can leave her house whenever she needs to go to a safe place. Other women in her community do not.

## WHAT POWER?

### *But how is that power, and lack thereof, expressed in practice?*

It should be clear from the discussion so far that both exclusion and vulnerability are different concepts, and it is very important to be able to distinguish this difference. However, they also have things in common: ultimately, both vulnerability and exclusion depend on the power that people have to be "in" and to "be safe".

#### Power TO

Individual capability to act to be "in" and to reduce risk, also deriving from having access to resources and services



Unequal access to circles, resources, lack of access to services and provisions (e.g. education, health care, employment, welfare, relief), lack of assets and infrastructures to reduce risk...

#### Power Within

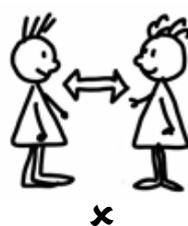
Power deriving from the sense of self-worth and self-knowledge



Lack of knowledge, awareness and skills re: threats; beliefs, superstitions; self-perceptions and personal attitudes...; lack of awareness of the right to be safe and how to achieve it; lack of confidence to participate in decision making,

#### Power with

Power deriving from connection with others, mutual support, from having a collective strength



Lack of linkages with other individuals / groups (isolation, marginalization); lack of support and allies, low capacity for collective action and mobilization...

#### Power over

The power of people vis-à-vis their institutions (e.g. within the family, within a community, within the state)



Unresponsive institutions, lack of access to space for decision-making; low accountability of duty-bearers; poor policies, plans; existence of social norms exposing people to threats or weakening their capacity to act on them

## DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS, DIFFERENT POWER

The work done by the INCRISD consortium had shown how some characteristics are often associated with reduced power. For example, being a child, or having a disability, can translate into having less autonomy to take decisions that affect their own lives, or less capacities to access services if these are not designed to facilitate being accessed by them, or responsive to their needs. Adults (including parents, teachers or authorities) might disregard children's perspectives and knowledge as irrelevant. Migrants can be seen as outsiders to a community, without a right to influence decisions on local governance. Depending on laws, cultural norms, beliefs and traditions, people's characteristics will affect their power. As highlighted below, these characteristics can be included as highlighted below, sex, impairment and disability, age and caste, amongst many others. Many practical examples on how individuals and groups with these characteristics can be sidelined in DRM processes (or can be brought in by conclusive DRR) are provided in the video catalogue linked to this toolkit.

### **Sex and gender**

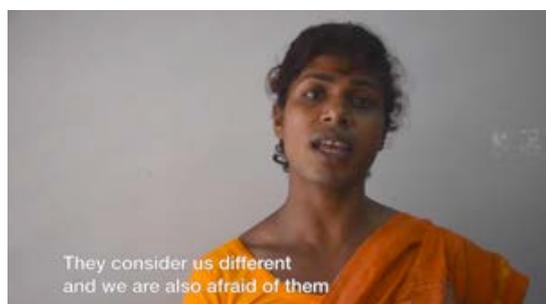
Sex is one of those characteristics that can translate into different power. Sex refers to the physical differences between males and females that are determined by biology. However, these characteristics are translated into different social attributes and opportunities for males and females. These attributes, opportunities and relationships, that apply to males and females and are socially constructed, learned, and changeable over time is what we call "gender".

Gender inequality is a fundamental problem for disaster risk management and development as a whole. Gender roles and gendered power relations directly influence who has access to and control over which resources and opportunities, and who makes decisions. This can render woman more vulnerable than men to the impacts of disasters. Understanding how gender relations (i.e. power) shape women's and men's lives, vulnerabilities, capacities and what threats they are exposed too, is therefore critical for inclusive DRM.

#### **"YOU ARE THE ONES WHO MAKES US DIFFERENT"**

This transgender explains why they are as afraid of people, as people are afraid of them. She tells about her experiences of people treating her differently, like when other people tell her to move away. She explains that because society started treats them differently, they are afraid. This is why they are unfriendly to others too.

Link to video: [http://youtu.be/V4BbX8I\\_kbl](http://youtu.be/V4BbX8I_kbl)



#### **"I DID NOT LEAVE BECAUSE I HAD NO PERMISSION"**

This young woman tells her story during the last big floods in 2010. She was at home with her mother, sister and female in-laws and children. They could see the water rising and rising but her mother said they had no permission from her father/brother to leave the house. Eventually, after spending the night on their roof, the cousin and brother went to get them and they were able to go to a safe place. The brother took the livestock and left her behind.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/es6QBQBGcVo>



### **Impairment and disability**

Like the concept of "gender", disability is also a construct that emerges out of the combination of several factors. These factors have partly to do with a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that a person can have, and with how that and other characteristics translate into what people with impairments can and cannot do (their power).

The result depends both on the person that has the impairment, and on his/her environment. The impairment compounds with the aptitudes and attitudes of the person to determine to what extent it becomes a "disability" (less power). Likewise, the environment will create opportunities or barriers for someone with an impairment to be included into the circles that can be relevant to him/her. Disaster risk management is part of the environment that can create additional barriers for persons with a disability. Therefore, making the distinction between impairment and disability – and acknowledging and addressing the barriers that lessen the power of people with impairments – is also essential to inclusive DRM.

### “I NEED SUPPORT”

This girl has a leg impairment. She can walk on her own, but she says she needs support [during floods]. She explains that the road gets really slippery and it is harder for her to reach the safe place when the road is slippery with mud. When the interview was done, she looked very active in the village and could move around freely without help.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/j-yqyMjJLGE>



### ***Other characteristics leading to exclusion and vulnerability***

The experience of INCRISD had shown that other characteristics are often linked to an increased likelihood of vulnerability and exclusion, for example:

- Caste
- Ethnicity
- Chronic diseases (e.g. HIV/AIDS)
- Age (e.g. children, older people, youth are exposed to different dynamics of exclusion)
- Economic status
- Geography (where people live)
- Political affiliation
- Life stories and circumstances (e.g. prostitution...)

All these characteristics can lead to exclusion in certain contexts. Yet not necessarily in all of them, or to the same extent. Likewise, we must realise that people will have a number of characteristics and not just one. And this combination is what will determine its power relations with the rest. A woman will never be “just a woman” but a woman of a certain age, ethnic and religious background, economic status, and she will live in a place in which all this will mean something specific to that context. Likewise, a fisherman can be better or worse off depending on whether he belongs to the dominant religious group in his community. Bottomline is that we need to analyse how these characteristics translate into different forms of power before we can identify who is vulnerable to disasters and/or excluded from DRM processes.

### “WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?”

This government advisor on DRM says it is important to be careful when identifying what are the groups that need to be included. For example in his province there are almost 4 million IDPs and refugees, but the draft INCRISD Guidelines on inclusive DRM had a list that did not mention them.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/UM-e7Cz3akM>



## LESSONS FROM INCRISD AND PARTNERS

Whatever power dynamics drive exclusion, DRM needs to pin them down and address them to be “inclusive”.

Lessons from INCRISD and partners highlight three areas of work to address exclusion in DRM, and make recommendations within each of these:

- A. Understanding the root causes of exclusion in disaster contexts, identifying excluded groups, and involving them meaningfully in reducing their disaster risks
- B. Creating a conducive and enabling policy environment that recognizes the causes of exclusion and promotes inclusive strategies and allocation of resources
- C. Creating an implementation architecture that involves all stakeholders and ensuring community resilience through accountable risk governance

### ***a. understand the root causes of exclusion in disaster contexts, define excluded groups, and involve them meaningfully in reducing their disaster risks***

1. **Exclusion is not an isolated process and excluded persons are not mere beneficiaries.** Excluded persons need to be defined better from a change agent perspective, exclusion needs to be recognised as a driver of risk specifically in the South Asian context; and excluded persons need to be seen as proactive participants and leaders in the resilience process. The political perspective needs to be considered for this purpose, with in depth power analysis in the complete disaster risk management cycle.

Link to video: [http://youtu.be/B-5sy93UP\\_4](http://youtu.be/B-5sy93UP_4)

#### “WHAT ROOM FOR A DIFFERENT STRUCTURE?”

The chair of a local village disaster management committee says they think they could adapt the structure of the DMC is they wanted to. He says that to do so, they could raise their voice to the government administration (eg the line departments). They could also use the DRR Forum [of civil society organisations at the district level].



2. **Existing policies need to deliver better results.** For this, policies need to be responsive to regional learning and disaggregated knowledge related to different kinds of excluded groups, for which creation of regional and national databases is required. Progress needs to be tracked based on inclusive indicators linked to this data and the HFA2 monitor needs to be inclusive and responsive to such progress.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/UBNcWiNopfl>

#### “IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE DATA”

This local practitioner says that the DRR Forum [at the district level] needs to have data on the local communities. His organisation works with people with disabilities and they collected data on more than 6,000 people. In the interview he also explained that they linked up with the Social Welfare Department who are using this data to provide assistance.



3. **Inclusion needs to go beyond explicit measures related to disaster management,** and include specific areas that require customised solutions, such as appropriateness and safety of built environment, cross-cutting disaster mitigation measures for day to day stresses, and slow onset disasters and climate change. Detailing of requirements within each of these has to be carried out. For example, it needs to be ensured that universal design for disability is understood in a broader context than mere building of ramps.

***b. create a conducive and enabling policy environment that recognizes the causes of exclusion and promotes inclusive strategies and allocation of resources***

4. **It has been proven time and again how emergencies affect excluded people much more than others.** Emergency response needs to trigger inclusive risk reduction in the post disaster context from day one. Aid has to reach the excluded people who cannot reach aid on their own and inclusive DRR has to be triggered from there on, moving on to subsequent phases of the disaster management cycle.

“WE LEARNT WHO THE VULNERABLE AND EXCLUDED ARE IN THE LAST FLOOD”

This local disaster management committee member explains that in the big floods they had in 2010 some groups experiences many problems and were neglected. Especially IDPS, refugees, old people and women. He feels that they are now better able to organise themselves because of the training they received. He believes that this is now why they are able to receive help. In the discussion he explained that because of this experience, they know who the excluded people are.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/FID1QQJgJjk>



5. **Meaningful participatory processes are needed to give voice to the concerns of the excluded groups** and promote their leadership. Done with an understanding of economic and exclusionary contexts, this needs to be institutionalised for influencing policies and practices in an ongoing manner.

“A SPACE WHERE WE CAN RAISE OUR ISSUES”

This man represents an indigenous tribe in the Local Disaster Management Committee (LDMC), a government institution in between the district and the ward level that comes below. In this instance, community disaster management plans are aggregated and a plan for a broader area is developed. He sees the LDMC as a space to raise their issues. They made their plans and through the LDMC they got a bit of money to work on “air and water change” [climate change]. For example, doing training and orientations for school children, campaigning and involving political parties. They would like to raise their status to be equal to other groups.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/WJzTKNhziA>



6. **Implementation of inclusion provisions in existing policies, legal instruments and enshrined rights is a primary need. Gaps need** to be identified and addressed through appropriate provisions. Policies need to be followed up with legislation, administrative apparatus, planning and allocation of financial and human resources.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/XvpDKJZX51w>

“THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POLITICIANS NEED TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE”

This head of a local NGO says that a lot of people are affected by disasters. They try to manage them with local DRM committees but budget is scarce. Their plans are submitted to higher levels but there the voices of the marginalised communities are not listened too. Their activities require money but they are not supported. Their requirements might not even be known. He says if the people from the government and the politicians would listen to the people in the communities it would be different.



**c. Creating an implementation architecture that involves all stakeholders and ensuring community resilience through accountable risk governance**

7. **Programmes and projects need to coordinate and collaborate with each other closely and meaningfully, mainstreaming inclusiveness across themes.** Experiences need to be brought on board using platforms and networks involving institutions and movements working on inclusion. The approach also needs to recognise prevailing social structures and target the strengthening of positive and enabling community based systems, practices and policies.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/TS052fFKSHQ>

“WE ARE STRONG TOGETHER BECAUSE WE TRUST EACH OTHER”

This local NGO practitioners says that the DRR Forum they formed with other NGOs is an effective space for DRM collaboration. He says they trust each other. The forum gives them an instance to coordinate with each other and to jointly approach the government to solve their problems. In the interview he said that it helped a lot that the forum build on previous collaboration started during the 2010 floods.



8. **An accountability framework needs to be put in place** to ensure inclusive service delivery for risk management, through instruments related to risk governance, building community resilience and sustainable development that also address climate change. Inclusive social audits need to be institutionalised, covering allocations, deployment and outcomes.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/bWGkiKrAQd8>

“WE DID A SOCIAL AUDIT”

This member of the community disaster management committee says he knows how much money was allocated for the embankment constructed by his village. They did a social audit and they know how much money was in the budget for it and how much money was spent. He has all the information in the meeting minutes and the register.



9. **Academia needs to be engaged and efforts need to be made to include validated and replicable indigenous knowledge, local innovations and science** as vehicles for strengthening inclusive DRR in research, training and education. Data sharing across stakeholders and sectors needs to be built using academic spaces. Long-term capacity building measures are needed towards this, with appropriate resource for research, dissemination and advocacy made for this purpose.

10. **The private sector needs to be sensitive and responsive, fulfilling its responsibility and sharing its expertise towards inclusive DRR through playing a partnership role** that includes imparting skills, supporting livelihoods, and developing assets through infrastructure and development. The business case for inclusive DRR needs to be recognised, acknowledging that excluded people have a role to play in the economy, and that DRR is an essential part of good business.

Link to video: <http://youtu.be/exdg5cXMieKA>

“THERE ARE MANY SMALL THINGS WE CAN DO”

This business woman says that the DRM training inspired her to think about the many small things that they could do. Before she used to think disasters were always about big things, but they can work with the business people to do small things that can contribute to reduce disasters. Like reducing the use of plastic that blocks the drainage and causes more floods. She explains that in her region the flooding is mostly because the drainage systems gets blocked. In the interview she mentioned that they could work with companies like Coca Cola on this.

