

What does climate change have to do with poverty and disability?

The situation

CBM has consulted on environmental issues with self-help groups of people with disabilities and their families in rural areas, and with other development organisations.

People from Cambodia and India generously gave of their time and local expertise to describe the issues that impacted them most.



Self-help group in India

Some of the issues

- More extreme weather conditions – Cyclone Idai a recent example
- Very hot days, longer periods of drought
- Flooding washes away crops, livestock and good farming soil
- Flooding also destroys homes and infrastructure and brings disease
- There is less water for drinking and washing – and it is more likely to be dirty/unsafe

The impact

When climate change impacts communities experiencing poverty, people with disabilities become even more disadvantaged. How?

For one, it is likely that health conditions that lead to impairment will increase with climate change.

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The impact

Many community members have been forced to move to 'low income settlements' because their land is no longer productive. But people with disability often don't make this move for a number of reasons. This means they can be left behind in places where there is little clean drinking water.

Lack of toilet facilities and water for personal hygiene causes hardship and significant security risks. This is especially true for women, children, and people with disability at night or in isolated bush areas.

"I feel very frightened and unsafe going to the toilet in the bush. I don't know who may be there."

Young woman with vision impairment

CBMs response

Through programs using Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID), we work with people with disabilities and their communities so they can:

- Improve their food security and incomes
- Access climate adapted farming and gardening programs
- Access sources of energy for cooking and lighting
- Benefit from and lead disaster risk reduction initiatives in their communities so they are better prepared for severe weather events

We are also part of programs and advocacy aimed at improving access to:

- Clean water
- Accessible, safe toilet facilities
- Hygiene activities that also help prevent diseases that lead to disability

CBM provides inclusive relief and recovery following severe weather events like Cyclone Idai.

We work to ensure that people with disabilities are fully included in international programs seeking environmentally sustainable development. E.g. some people with disabilities in countries we work with are active on their local forest preservation committees.



Today

These changing weather patterns and extremes continue, and are consistent with observed climate change.

Learn more about CBM and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development :

<https://www.cbm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CBM-Strengthening-Environmental-Sustainability.pdf>

Locals in rural areas of Zimbabwe with CBM staff after Cyclone Idai

