



Challenges faced by People with Disabilities

People with Disabilities may also face additional physical challenges associated with evacuations, which can make health impacts worse, especially if local emergency response plans do not adequately anticipate and address the special needs of these populations. Example, Hurricane Gita include the inability to meet demand for wheelchairs- accessible transportation, challenges associated with maintaining adequate supplies of prescription medication or access to necessary medical equipment like oxygen, and lack of evacuation shelters with appropriate facilities, equipment and trained staff to meet the various needs of people with disabilities.

Extreme events can also cause outages that can affect electrically powered medical equipment and elevators leaving some people with disabilities without treatment or the ability to evacuate.

LAVAME'A TA'E'ILOA DISABLED PEOPLE ASSOCIATION



**LAVAME'A TA'E'ILOA DISABLED PEOPLE
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATION**

FWC Fasi moe Afi 'o Tungi
Nuku'alofa
Tongatapu

Phone: 7755878/ 8825810
Email:
lavamea.taeiloa1984@gmail.com

Tel: 7755878/ 8825810

**NOTHING ABOUT US
WITHOUT US**

Climate Change and the Health of People with Disabilities

Understanding the threats that Climate Change poses to human health can help us work together to lower risks and be prepared.

Climate Change threatens Human Health, including mental health, access to clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food, and shelter. Climate Change affects everyone at some point in his or her lives. Some people are more affected by Climate Change than others, because of factors like where they live, their age, health, income and occupation, and how they go about their day to day life.



What is climate change and why does it matter for health?

We've all heard of it, but what exactly is climate change?

Greenhouse gases act like a blanket around earth, trapping energy in the atmosphere. Human activities especially burning fossil fuels for energy increase the amount of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere and cause the climate to warm. Climate is the typical or average weather for an area. Climate change is any change in average weather that lasts for a long period, like warming temperatures. Climate Change affects the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink.

It also leads to extreme weather events like flooding, droughts and wildfires. All of these impacts affect human health.

People with Disabilities and their families, neighbors, caregivers can start taking steps now to protect themselves against the negative impacts of climate change. For example, social connections, especially through faith-based organizations, family networks, and work connections, can help people with disabilities plan ahead for and cope with extreme weather events.

Community members and people with disabilities can also take part in local decision-making, especially emergency and urban planning. Discussions like these raise awareness and can help communities address the needs of all residents.

Types of Disabilities

Approximately 10-15% of the world population are people living with disabilities, which is 1 in 7 people has a disability. This includes about 850 millions in Asia and the Pacific and according to our Tongan census in 2016 is about 10,100 or 10.6% of our population has a disabilities.



People with disabilities are a broad and diverse community, and their needs differ depending on individual circumstances like their age or ability to live independently within their communities. In general, however, climate change-related health

impacts may affect people with disabilities more than others. People with disabilities often face barriers in accessing healthcare services and in receiving timely public health or emergency information in an accessible format. Additionally, many people with disabilities experience high rates of social risk factors that contribute to poor health, such as poverty, unemployment, and lower education. For example, people with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed than those without disabilities. People with limited incomes may not be able to afford air conditioning in their home during heat waves, increasing their risk of heat stroke.

Extreme Events

Climate Change will increase frequency or intensity of some extreme events, such as extreme heat events, flooding related to heavy rains, hurricanes and coastal storms) droughts and wildfire. During heat waves, certain risk factors can make some people with disabilities especially susceptible to heat-related illness and death. These include having dementia, depending on others for assistance in activities of daily living, having limited mobility (especially if they confined to bed or not having access to transportation. These factors can increase health risks during hurricane and severe storms.

People with disabilities have had high rates of illness, injuries, or death from these types of events.

If an extreme event requires evacuation, people with disabilities have high risk of both physical and mental health impacts. People with Disabilities may have reduced ability to receive or act on emergency information or instructions to communicate their needs in an emergency or evacuation situation.

Messages about extreme weather or other emergency information (such as warning to boil contaminated water) are not always designed or delivered in a way that reaches individuals with disabilities like, those who have hearing loss, low vision, or reduce mental capacity.