

Advocacy toolkit case studies

DEVELOPING POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN MYANMAR

THEMES:

Disability
Disaster management

ADVOCACY APPROACH:

Government officials: meeting with

One Tearfund partner in Myanmar works with people living with disability, who are one of the most poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups in the country. When Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar, it soon became clear that people living with disability were a low priority in the government response.

However, the partner saw the potential opportunity presented by the disaster. Almost immediately after the cyclone, the partner approached the government and talked with them about the needs of people living with disability who were suffering after the cyclone. This was possible because they had previously developed a relationship with the officials concerned for disability issues, so it was not difficult to knock on their door with this request.

As a result of the talks, the government agreed to work with the partner, with inputs from organisations for people living with disability and others, to develop a national plan of action for people with disabilities who were affected by the cyclone, which the partner then implemented.

They did such a good job of drafting the plan that the government later asked the partner to develop longer-term policy and guidelines concerning the needs of people living with disability in the event of a disaster. The government also funded a nationwide survey of the needs of people living with disability, in order to provide the evidence base for the plan. The cyclone had triggered their advocacy, but the work then went national.