



WOMEN'S
REFUGEE
COMMISSION

Refugees with Disabilities: Increasing Inclusion, Building Community

A discussion tool on improving access & inclusion for displaced persons with disabilities



Refugees with Disabilities: Increasing Inclusion, Building Community is a tool for raising awareness among community workers, volunteers and displaced people about increasing access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in refugee and displacement contexts. It can be used by staff of organizations working with refugees and displaced persons, as well as community leaders and disability associations conducting sensitization with the wider refugee community. The tool illustrates common barriers experienced by persons with disabilities in displacement contexts, as well as positive practices or approaches to promote inclusion. Suggested questions provide a guide for facilitators of the discussion, but should be adapted according to the context and audience. The tool is intended to facilitate conversation about concerns and ideas for change at field levels, but is not a comprehensive catalogue of either barriers or solutions in these contexts.

This tool was developed by the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) with the support of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). It is based on field assessments conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission in refugee and displacement contexts in eight countries: India (New Delhi), Uganda, Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal, Ethiopia, Philippines (Mindanao) and Lebanon.

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Additional reports and resources about disability inclusion are available at:
<http://womensrefugeecommission.org/programs/disabilities>

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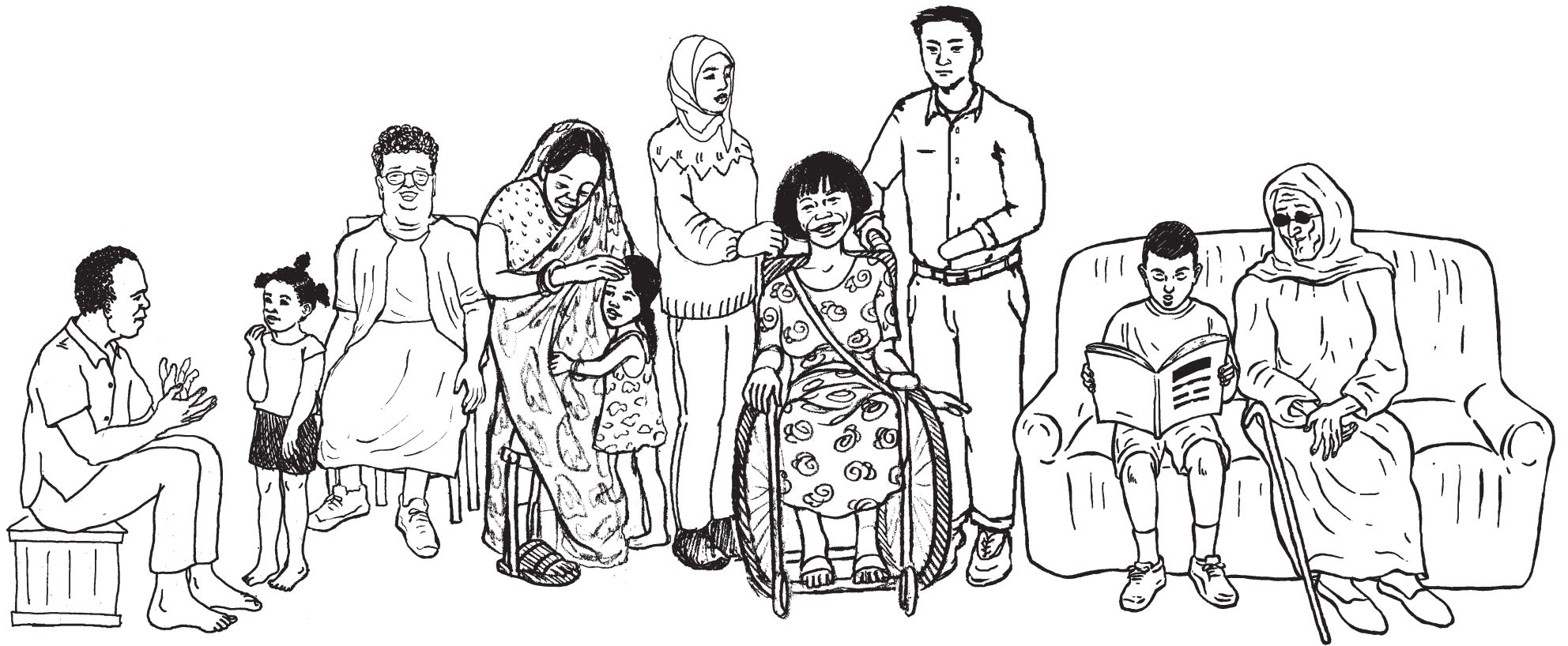
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Persons with disabilities in our community

Persons with disabilities live in our community. People may have different types of disabilities, including physical, mental, intellectual, vision and hearing disabilities. Some disabilities can be seen, but others may be less obvious.

What types of disabilities do people in our community have?



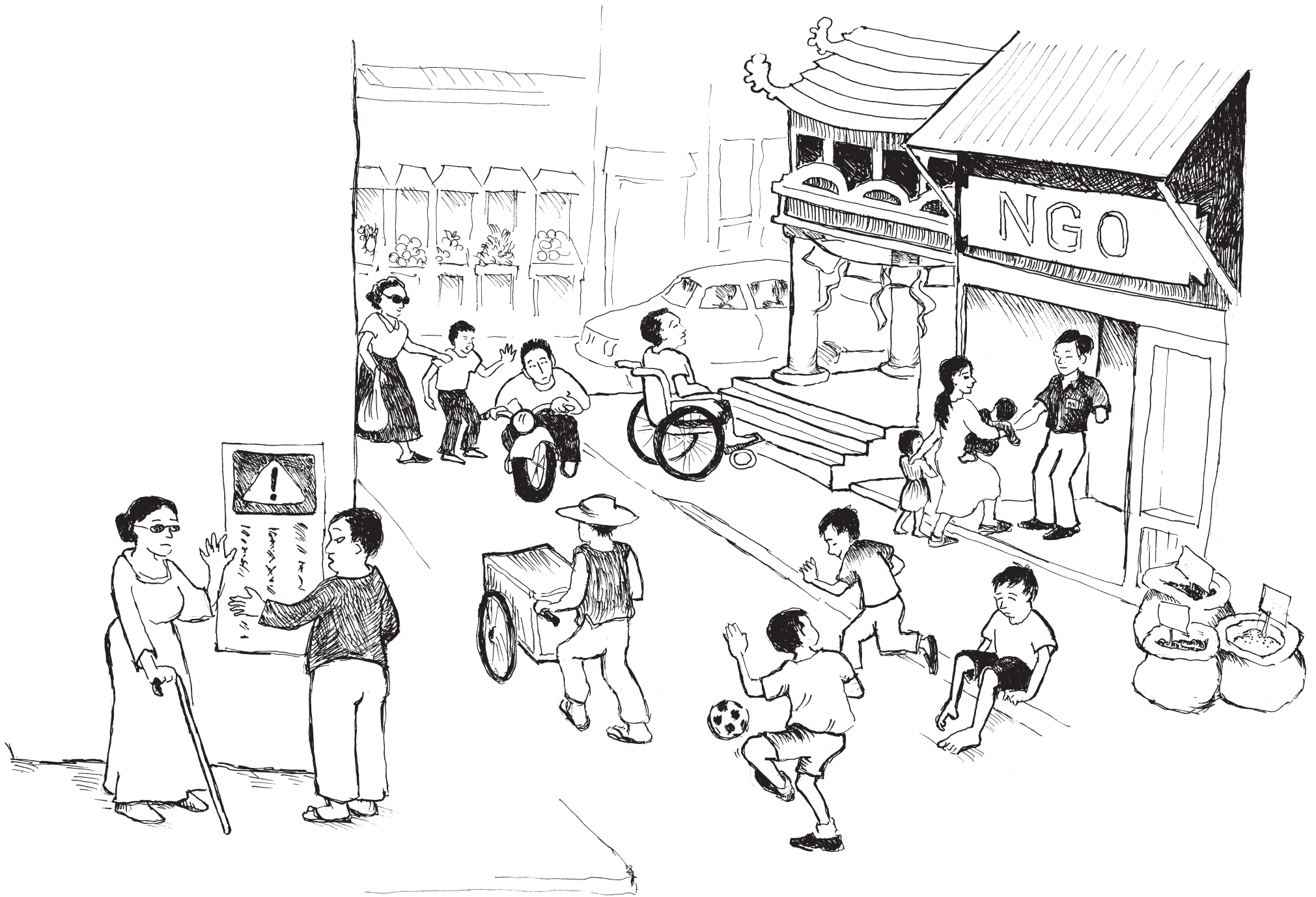
Barriers to access and inclusion in our community

Persons with disabilities may face barriers in society that limit them from participating on an equal basis with others. These barriers include:

- **Physical or environmental barriers**
(for example, buildings, roads, distance and terrain may make it difficult to reach places or activities)
- **Communication barriers**
(for example, information may be too complicated for people with intellectual disabilities, or it may not be available in Braille and sign language)
- **Policy barriers**
(for example, the rules and procedures of our organizations and programs may reduce opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate)
- **Attitudinal barriers**
(for example, social stigma and negative stereotypes may result in persons with disabilities being excluded from community activities)¹

Persons with disabilities have the same rights as anybody else to participate in programs. We need to remove barriers and adapt our activities so persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to access services and participate in the community as others do.

What barriers do persons with disabilities experience in this community?



Involve persons with disabilities in decision-making

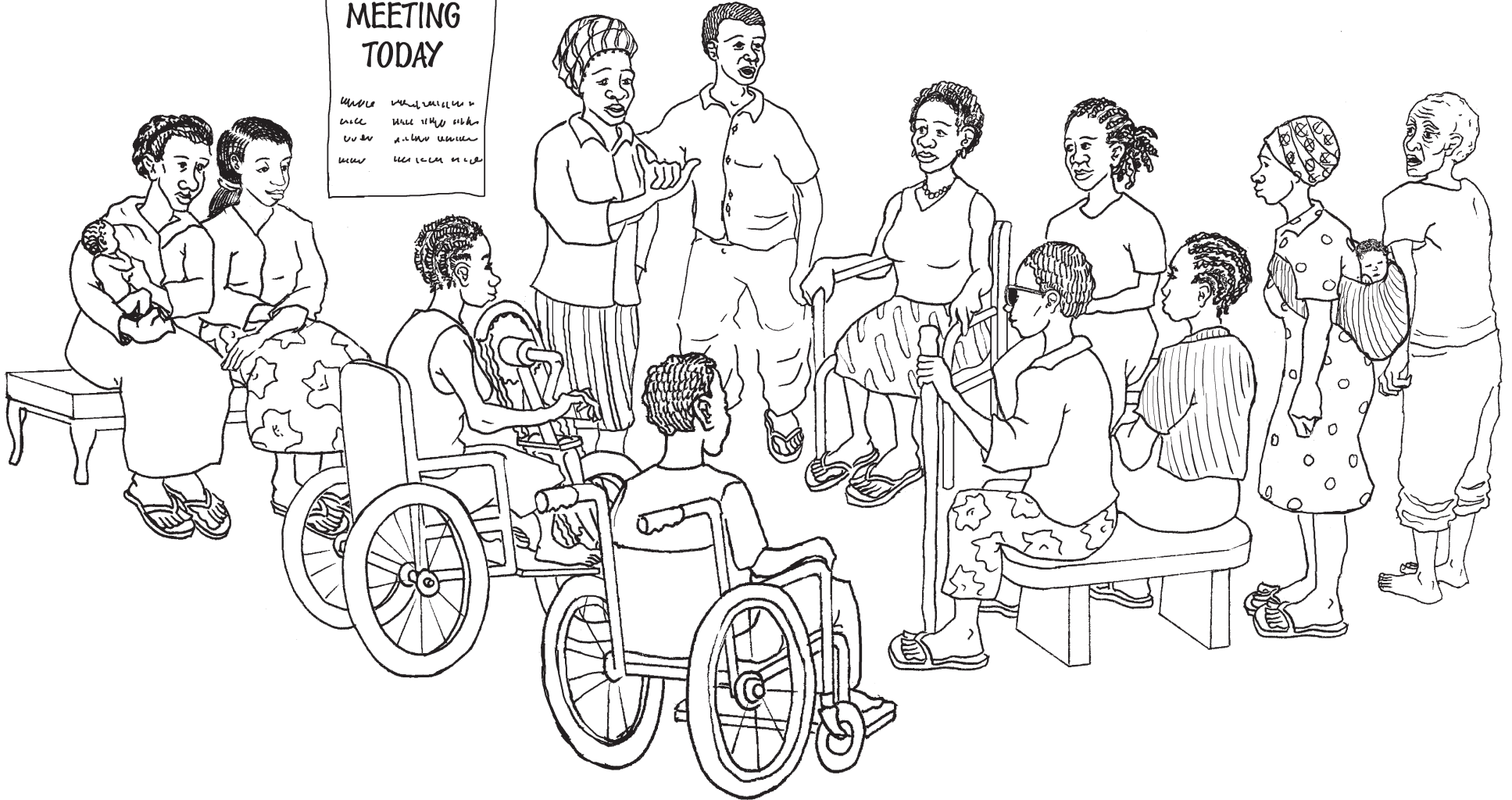
Consult with and involve persons with disabilities when designing, planning and running programs and activities. Engage them as partners in these projects, not just beneficiaries.

How are decisions made in this community?

What could be done to strengthen the participation of persons with disabilities in decisions about programs and activities in the community?

MEETING
TODAY

NAME	ADDRESS
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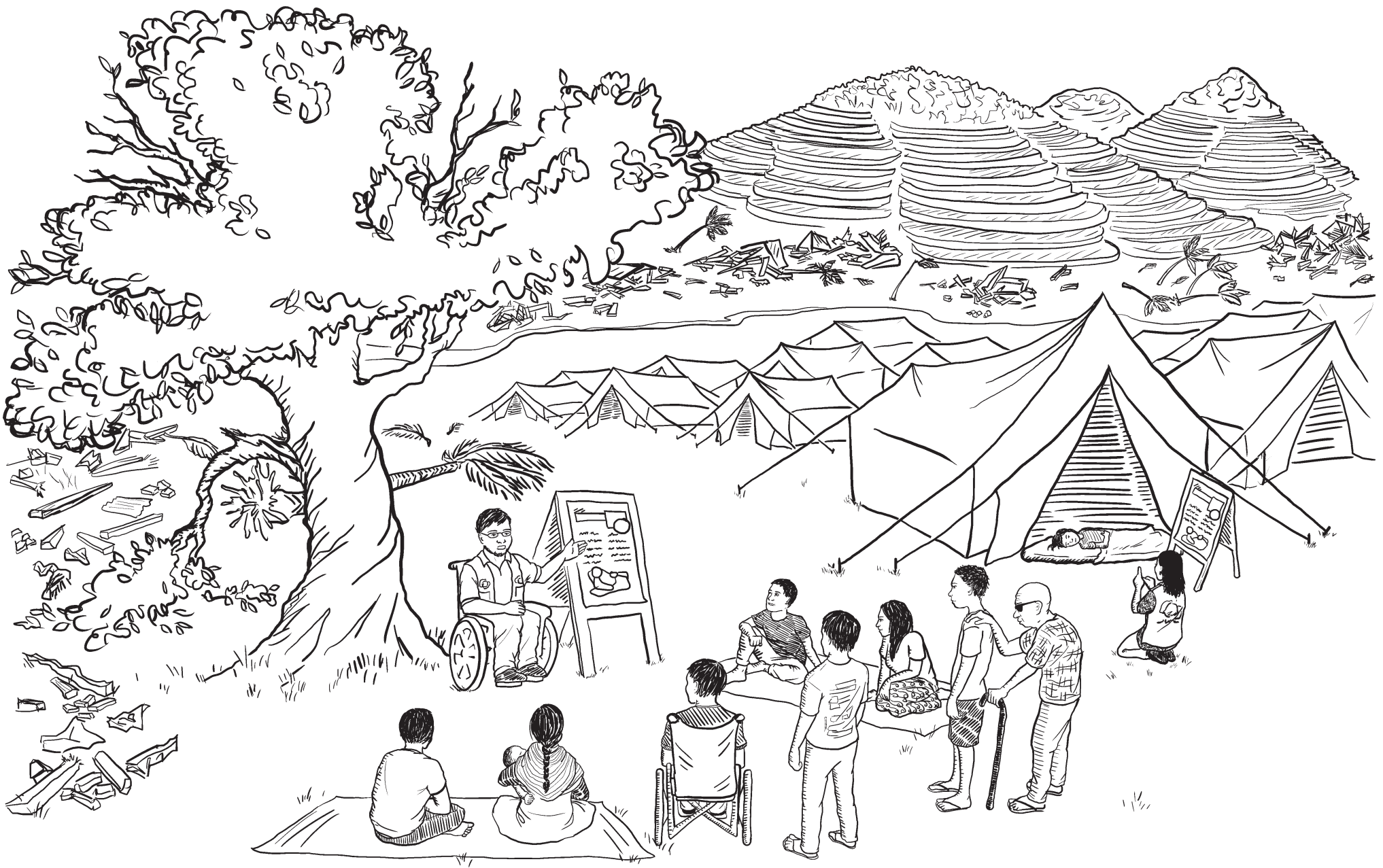
Reach persons with disabilities with information

It is important to use a variety of different ways to communicate information. Persons with intellectual disabilities may need information shared in simple formats, with time to discuss and ask questions. Also consider picture formats and visual demonstration, sign language for deaf persons, and radio broadcasts and discussion groups to reach persons with vision disabilities. Encourage outreach workers to identify individuals that need assistance to reach community meetings, and to provide information through house-to-house visits as required.

How is information shared in this community?

Who might miss out on this information?

What other methods of communication should be used?

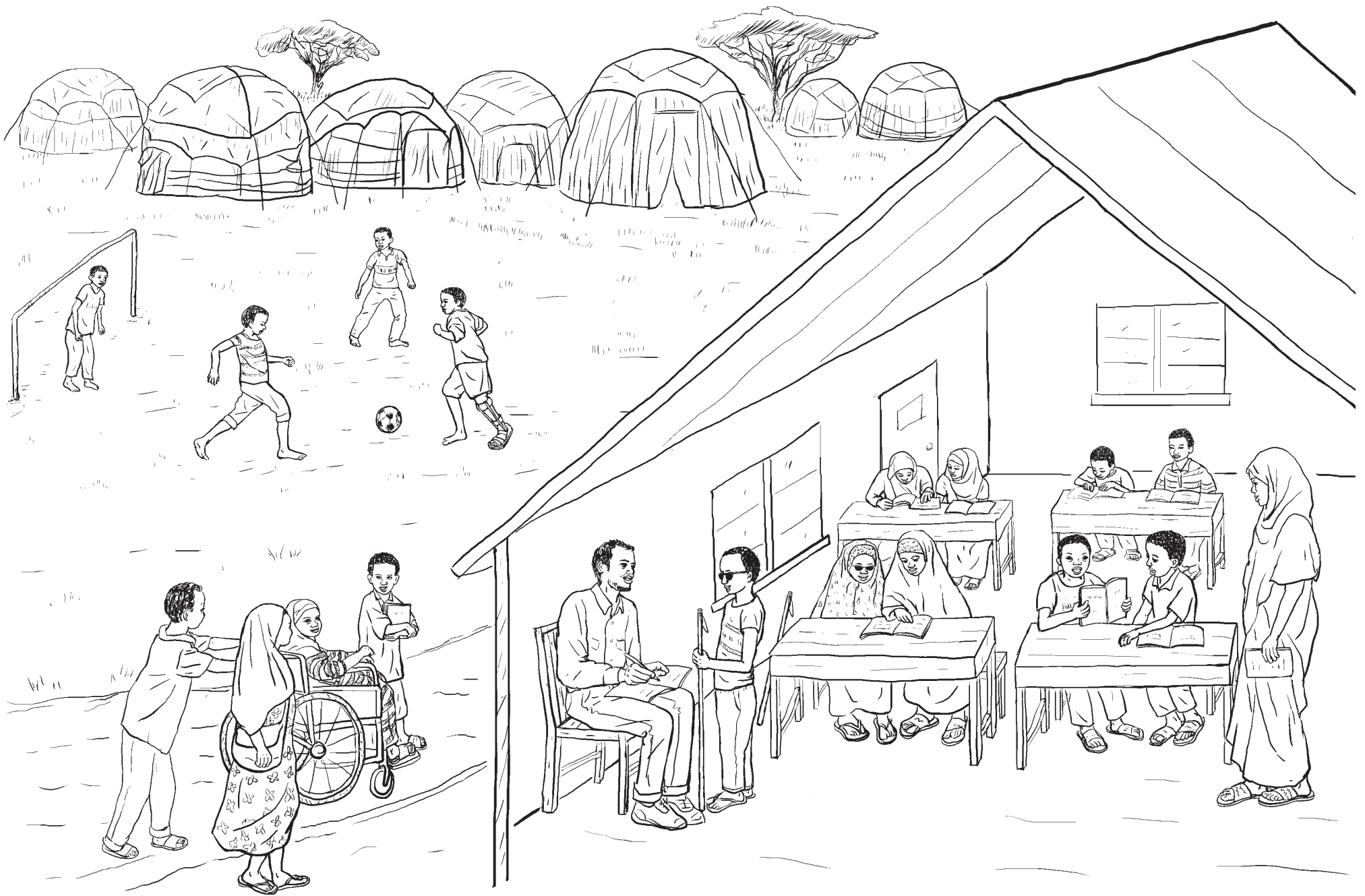


Make education inclusive

All children are able to learn. Identify barriers to school attendance and learning for children with disabilities and develop community-level actions to address them. Involve school children as agents of change.²

In this community, what factors support children with disabilities in participating in education?

In this community, what factors prevent children with disabilities from participating in education?²



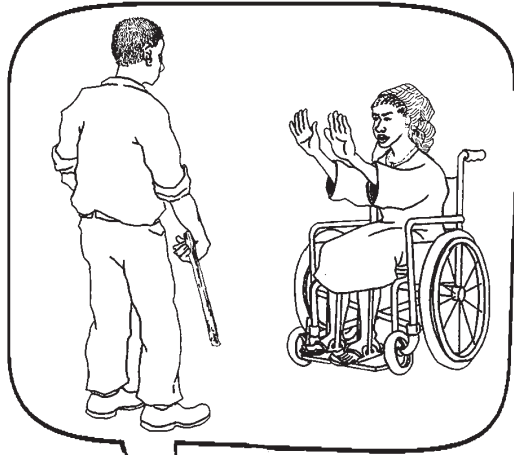
Prevent and respond to gender-based violence

Women and girls with disabilities are vulnerable to all types of gender-based violence – including physical, sexual, psychological/emotional and economic violence.

Consult women and girls with disabilities and care-givers to identify protection concerns faced by persons with disabilities. Include women with disabilities in women's associations and recruit them as community mobilizers and volunteers. Inform and train persons with disabilities, as well as families and care-givers, on how to recognize, avoid and report instances of violence, exploitation and abuse.²

Are persons with disabilities included in our women's and girls' activities or groups?

What skills and capacities could women and girls with disabilities contribute to these activities?



Make distribution of food and non-food items suitable

Persons with disabilities may find it difficult to carry heavy food parcels, reach distribution points or wait there for extended periods. Some people with disabilities need additional non-food items, such as extra blankets, soap and cloth. They may also require different food items, for example, soft and easily digestible foods. Consider separate queues, transportation support, smaller parcels or door-to-door distributions. Monitor the distributions to detect any exploitation, discrimination or abuse.²

How do distributions currently consider the needs of persons with disabilities?

What could be done differently to improve access for persons with disabilities?



Include persons with disabilities in livelihood and skills training programs

Support persons with disabilities to use and to build their capacities, both as beneficiaries and leaders. Like all people, persons with disabilities need to earn a living and want to feel useful. They have skills to contribute and the ability to learn new skills. Include them in language and skills training programs. Aim to have 15%³ of income generation and job placement opportunities, including refugee incentive staff positions, filled by persons with disabilities. Identify their skills and ask them for suggestions on how to adapt the program environment and/or job functions.

What examples are there in this community of persons with disabilities engaged in livelihoods and/or skills development?



Persons with disabilities have skills and capacities to contribute to our community

Look at what persons with disabilities can do, not just at what they can't do.

Who do you know in your community who is a good role model for persons with disabilities and others?

Starting today, what is one thing we can do to better include persons with disabilities in our activities?



REFERENCES

- ¹ CBM, *Inclusion made easy: A quick program guide to disability in development*, 2012, available at: http://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/78851/CBM_Inclusion_Made_Easy_-_complete_guide.pdf [accessed April 4, 2014].
- ² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Handicap International, *Need to know guidance: Working with persons with disabilities in forced displacement*, UNHCR, 2011, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec3c81c9.pdf> [accessed April 4, 2014].
- ³ This is based on findings from the World Report on Disability that an estimated 15% of any population will be persons with disabilities. World Health Organization and the World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2011). www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/

