

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Report No: 79

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1. Overview

On 24th February 2022, Russian forces invaded Ukraine. Intense fighting is ongoing across several major cities including the capital Kyiv, Mykolaiv and Mariupol, while pre-existing hostilities in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have significantly intensified ([OCHA, 2022a](#)). As of 10th March, an estimated 4.2 million people have been forcibly displaced, including 2.3 million refugees who have fled to other countries, as reported by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and an estimated 1.85 million people internally displaced, as reported by the Ukraine Protection Cluster ([OCHA, 2022b](#)). Ukrainian authorities estimate that as many as five million people could flee the country ([OCHA, 2022a](#)). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports at least 1,506 civilian casualties, including 549 killed ([OCHA, 2022b](#)).

There has been conflict at the Ukrainian-Russian border in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts since 2014. The humanitarian situation in the Donbas region, even prior to the current escalation, was dire ([OCHA, 2022a](#)). Prior to the invasion, around 2.9 million people were in need of humanitarian

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assistance, more than 3,000 people had been killed and more than 7,000 injured. Since the invasion on 24th February, the overall humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate across Ukraine (WHO, 2022).

In January 2020, there were 2.7 million registered persons with disabilities in Ukraine but this is likely to be an underrepresentation, with the real number of persons with disabilities likely to be more than 6 million ([UN, 2020](#)). **Since the invasion, many persons with disabilities and older persons have been unable to evacuate or seek refuge in shelters** due to a lack of accessibility communications, transport, and shelters ([IDA, 2022](#)). Persons with disabilities are more likely to remain in their home village, towns and cities even with conflict ongoing ([Mercy Corp, 2022](#)). During conflict, women and girls with disabilities, particularly women and girls with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence ([EDF, 2022](#); [Global Protection Cluster, 2022](#)). There are shortages in essential supplies, including food and medicines ([UN, 2022](#)). Ukraine has one of the highest rates of institutionalisation of persons with disabilities in the world ([UNICEF, 2021a](#)). Adults and children with disabilities who live in institutions face risks of abandonment and barriers to evacuation. Armed hostilities increase the risk of more people acquiring disabilities; people have been badly injured or burnt by the bombs and missiles, without proper and immediate medical care, they are likely to suffer long-term disabilities.

2. Key facts on disability in Ukraine

- > Ukraine ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its optional protocol in 2010.
- > There were 2.7 million registered persons with disabilities in Ukraine in January 2020 (State Statistical Services, 2020, in [UN, 2020](#)). Approximately 6% of Ukrainians are registered persons with disabilities.
- > The actual number of persons with disabilities is likely to be higher as several barriers to registration exist, including physical and financial obstacles to passing the necessary medical examinations and an evaluation by a socio-medical commission, lack of identity documents and homelessness (ibid). An estimated 15% of the world's population is estimated to have a disability (WHO, 2011). If this is the case in Ukraine, there would be at least 6 million persons with a disability ([UN, 2020](#)).
- > As of March 2021, persons with disabilities made up 4% of the 1.5 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine ([UNHCHR](#))
- > UNICEF ([2022a](#)) estimates that nearly 100,000 children in Ukraine live in institutions, approximately half are children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are more likely to be placed in specialised boarding schools or institutions due to stigma, lack of specialised support services and physical inaccessibility ([UNICEF, 2021b](#)).
- > A HelpAge International ([2020](#)) survey in Eastern Ukraine in May 2020 found that 41% of older persons reported at least one significant or total disability according to the Washington Group questions, however, only 4.8% had their disability status formally recognised.
- > Unemployment among persons with disabilities is high: in 2020, 776,000 people with disabilities were in employment, 48.5% of whom were women ([Government of Ukraine, 2020](#)). Whilst there has been some progress made, discrimination is prevalent and enforcement of non-discrimination legislation is limited.

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- > 1.4 million people live on disability allowance as their key source of income. As this payment amount (2499 UAH or \$92 per month) is lower than the minimum subsistence level calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy (3846 UAH or \$142 per month), they live in poverty ([UN, 2020](#)).
- > Whilst law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual and mental disabilities, however, this is not effectively enforced ([U.S. Department of State, 2020](#))
- > Persons with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by measures taken against COVID-19, including suspension of public transport and social distancing measures ([UN, 2020](#)). Information about COVID-19 and lockdown measures have not always been accessible for persons with disabilities. Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) reported that they did not receive government support, and some had to suspend operations.
- > Much of the built environment remains inaccessible to persons with disabilities, despite the establishment of a permanent working group on accessibility for persons with disabilities, transport and road infrastructure in 2017 ([Government of Ukraine, 2020](#)).
- > Aside from humanitarian concerns, key priorities of OPDs include institutionalisation, lack of access to decent work and inclusive education, and a lack of accessible infrastructure.

3. What are the risks and impacts of the current Ukrainian invasion for persons with disabilities in Ukraine?

Persons with disabilities are experiencing barriers to fleeing danger

There is a lack of accessible information on evacuation. Essential information on emergency evacuation and how to seek assistance has not been provided in accessible formats, creating barriers for persons with disabilities including people who are blind, persons who are deaf, persons with deafblindness and intellectual disabilities ([IDA, 2022](#)).

There is a lack of transport options available for persons with disabilities. Anna Landre from the US Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies said that “vast majority” of persons with disabilities “facing difficulties evacuating, or cannot at all” ([Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)). Many people have evacuated from unsafe places in Ukraine by foot, however this option is not available to many persons with disabilities, particularly as many roads have been destroyed or blocked impeding safe passage ([Inclusion Europe, 2022](#)). Some persons with disabilities are being left behind including due to a lack of accessible transport for persons who use wheelchairs or who need to be transported lying down.¹ Some children with disabilities with high support needs or complex medical conditions have been unable to be evacuated and are living in basements ([Inclusion Europe, 2022](#)).

Train stations and bus terminals are very crowded, which increases risks for persons with disabilities. Public transport infrastructure was inaccessible to many people with disabilities before the conflict, and the increased crowds has exacerbated this ([Ozymok, 2021](#)). There is no official priority boarding for persons with disabilities ([Fight for Right, 2022](#)). Overcrowding is also dangerous and overwhelming for autistic persons and persons with

¹ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies and Yulia Boyko, EMAUC.

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intellectual disabilities, who may experience intense emotions due to crowds and noise.²

Covid-19 remains a serious concern for many persons with disabilities, especially those with disabilities that place them a high risk of serious infection. Due to the risks they face they may be unable to be in crowded transport, rail or bus stations, or other crowded locations.³

Men with disabilities face particular challenges due to military service requirements.

Men between 18 and 60 years old are not allowed to evacuate Ukraine. Men with disabilities are exempt from military service, but OPDs report that some men with disabilities are being stopped at the border, with attempts to draft them into military service ([Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)). Fight for Right ([2022](#)), a Ukrainian OPD, flagged that men with disabilities and men who are personal assistants to persons with disabilities may have issues leaving Ukraine if they do not have supporting documentation of their role as essential caregivers. This also means that those who rely on caregivers who are not allowed to leave have been compelled to remain in Ukraine, including women and girls with disabilities.⁴

Inaccessible shelters are increasing risks for persons with disabilities in Ukraine

Essential information on the location of shelters and how to seek assistance has not been provided in accessible formats. This creates barriers for persons with disabilities including persons who are blind, persons who are deaf, persons with deafblindness, and persons with intellectual disabilities ([IDA, 2022](#)). Reliance on auditory alarms, including air raid sirens that signal people to go to shelters, creates barriers for persons who are deaf or have other hearing disabilities.

Persons with disabilities have faced barriers to accessing shelters, including those in bunkers, basements, and metro stations ([IDA, 2022](#)). People who cannot walk without support have been unable to leave their apartment blocks to access shelters in underground car parks ([Kottasova, 2022](#)). Shelters are also not always accessible for persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with Down Syndrome, and autistic persons, who have faced challenges accessing and staying in shelters ([Down Syndrome International, 2022](#); [Inclusion Europe, 2022](#); [Kottasova, 2022](#); [Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)). The spread of Covid-19 in crowded places is a serious concern for persons with disabilities at high risk of complications from Covid-19 infection.

Due to the inaccessibility of shelters, persons with disabilities have been forced to remain in their homes. The VGO Coalition reported that families with children with disabilities were living in their bathrooms or basements to protect themselves from attacks ([Inclusion Europe, 2022](#)).

Persons with disabilities who are unable to leave Ukraine are facing shortages of shelter, supplies, and electricity and disruption to communications

Disruptions to water, food, and power supplies are creating unsafe conditions.

² Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

³ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.

⁴ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.

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According to ICRC Director General Robert Mardini, the organisation is already seeing “long-term disruptions in regular water and electricity supplies” and “people calling our hotline in Ukraine are desperately in need of food and shelter” ([ICRC, 2022](#)). In Mariupol, for example, there are severe shortages of water ([HRW, 2022a](#)), food, heating, and power supplies ([MSF, 2022](#)) ([Briggs, 2022](#)). The situation in Sumi is similarly dire ([HRW, 2022b](#)). As a result of these shortages, many persons with disabilities who have been unable to evacuate are living in unsafe conditions, especially given the cold weather. OPDs in Ukraine have also heard reports from parents of children who need mechanical respiratory support who are concerned about their children dying if power supplies are disrupted.⁵

Persons with disabilities are also facing disruptions to essential communications. Internet and phone services have been cut off in many locations ([MSF, 2022](#)). Persons with disabilities who remain at home may be unable to use their phones to call emergency services or for other help.

The supply chains for medicines, medical supplies, and common goods have been disrupted in Ukraine, creating urgent need. This includes lifesaving and essential medicines, such as oxygen and insulin ([WHO, 2022](#)). Milan Šveřepa, Director of Inclusion Europe, said that it had become “impossible” to access medication, such as epilepsy pills ([Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)).

Persons with disabilities are facing increased difficulties in accessing services and support. Essential services, such as health services and day centres for persons with disabilities are no longer operating in many areas.⁶ Education is suspended across the country ([HRW 2022b](#)). Some persons with disabilities no longer have essential support, as their support persons have evacuated ([HRWa, 2022](#)).

Adults and children living in institutions are at increased risk

UNICEF Director Catherine Russell has expressed deep concern about the safety and well-being of children, including children with disabilities, in institutions ([UN, 2022](#)). UNICEF ([2022a](#)) estimates that nearly 100,000 children, half of whom are children with disabilities, live in institutions, however, national advocacy groups estimate that this number might be higher than 200,000 ([DRI, 2015](#)). There are high levels of stigma and ignorance against persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities, which is likely to increase during the conflict ([IDA, 2022](#)). This puts persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities at higher risk of being left behind in evacuations and/or experiencing violence and abuse.

Institutions have been directly affected by the conflict. A school for children who are blind has been shelled and one child was injured, and there are media reports that a psychiatric hospital has been taken over by Russian troops ([Reuters, 2022](#); [HRW 2022a](#)).

People in institutions in conflict areas are facing shortages of food, medicine, and are not getting essential support, reports Anna Landre of the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies. For example, 101 children in an orphanage for Kherson are running out of food

⁵ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

⁶ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

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and diapers and have no heat.⁷

Children living in institutions during the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2015 faced increased risks of harm, including trafficking, which are likely to be intensified during the current conflict ([DRI, 2015](#)). Children were at risk of disappearing from institutions or being abandoned in them. There were also cases where institution staff fled the conflict, leaving children to be looked after by whoever was available, presenting safeguarding risks. Disability Rights International (DRI) found evidence of trafficking for forced labour, sex, or bodily organs, as well as sexual exploitation, forced work, early pregnancy, forced abortion, and violence against children with disabilities in institutions. During previous conflicts, thousands of children were reportedly evacuated out of war zones into different facilities, many of which were cramped and overcrowded ([DRI, 2015](#)). This further isolates children with disabilities from their communities.

It is not clear whether there have been state efforts to evacuate adults with disabilities in institutions to safer areas. Adam Zawisny from the Polish Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability and OPDs in Ukraine reported that they had not seen evacuations from adult institutions. This would affect adults with disabilities, including persons with psychosocial disabilities and intellectual disabilities. The Government of Ukraine has issued [directives](#) to childcare facilities, including residential care and boarding schools, on how to organise necessary evacuations ([UNICEF, 2022b](#)).

There may be legal obstacles to evacuation and fleeing for adults and children in institutions: Some residents of institutions who have wanted to evacuate on their own have not been able to because they are under the legal guardianship of the institution. Children with disabilities may not be able to be evacuated because of the absence of identity and other documents.⁸ Sudden changes in routine and places of residence can be challenging for persons with intellectual disabilities and autistic persons, particularly if there are difficulties in understanding what is going on and why changes are necessary.⁹ At least one person with an intellectual disability has been arrested for being in violation of curfew when taking a walk that was part of their daily routine ([Parkkari, 2022](#)).

Some adults and children with disabilities in institutions have been able to leave Ukraine. Zawisny reported that thousands of children and young persons from children's institutions have been evacuated to Poland to avoid the dangers of shelling and because there were no staff in institutions to care for them ([Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)). Children with disabilities have also evacuated from institutions to Zahony, Hungary by train ([Spike, 2022](#)).

OPDs in neighbouring countries are mobilising to assist adults and children in institutions, however, they have raised concerns over the resources available to support them, as there is already a lack of resources and support services in neighbouring countries for adults and children with disabilities.¹⁰

Armed hostilities increase the risk of more people acquiring disabilities

⁷ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.

⁸ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies.

⁹ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC.

¹⁰ European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) event, '[Aiding Ukraine: What are neighbouring support services doing?](#)', on 4th March.

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Russian attacks have resulted in heavy civilian casualties. The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Gerard Quinn, and Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Claudia Mahler, raised concerns that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas would have a “long lasting impact on persons with disabilities and older persons by exacerbating pre-existing disability, disrupting essential services like healthcare, and significantly impacting their mental and psychological health” ([UNOHCHR, 2022](#)).

Conflict related trauma and injuries exacerbated by a lack of access to health facilities, staff and medicines can exacerbate existing disabilities or lead to disability ([WHO 2022](#)) The WHO also notes that “exacerbation of chronic mental health problems and high levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and anxiety are likely among affected population of all ages”. Research conducted by HelpAge International ([2022](#)) in Ukraine after the 2014 conflict found that 96% of older people surveyed experienced conflict-related mental health issues.

4. What are the risks and impacts of the current Ukrainian invasion for Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons with disabilities moving in the region?

Internally displaced persons with disabilities are facing difficulties accessing basic needs and services

There is no centralised response for internally displaced people so community groups, including OPDs, are leading the response and working with social services to respond to their needs.¹¹ Some OPDs in conflict-affected regions are also reaching out directly to OPDs in other areas to request support for internally displaced persons with disabilities who will be arriving in their area. Other internally displaced persons are being referred to OPDs when they arrive at transport hubs.¹²

OPDs in non-conflict areas are actively providing essential support, including temporary housing, food, assistive devices and other supports on an ad hoc basis whenever possible to internally displaced persons with disabilities. They are also supporting persons with disabilities to flee to other countries. They report that there are insufficient staff to meet all requests for support and assistance.¹³

Many internally displaced persons with disabilities are travelling without mobility aids, and shortages mean that they are unable to access these when arriving in other areas. There is also a lack of psychosocial support services available.¹⁴

There is a lack of appropriate, accessible housing for internally displaced persons with disabilities. OPDs report a shortage of housing in areas such as Lviv, which has received many internally displaced persons. Many schools have been converted to into shelters for

¹¹ Expert contribution from Anna Landre, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies and Yulia Boyko, EMAUC.

¹² Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

¹³ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

¹⁴ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

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internally displaced persons, however many lack accessibility features. Some schools for children with disabilities have also been converted to general internally displaced persons shelters, so these facilities are not available for any children with disabilities.

Support services for persons with disabilities in many areas was stretched prior to the conflict, so there is limited support available for the large number of internally displaced persons with disabilities arriving in some areas including Lviv.¹⁵

Refugees with disabilities are likely to experience barriers to meeting their basic needs while moving in the region or upon resettling

OPDs in bordering countries have raised concerns about whether there are sufficient resources available to ensure refugees with disabilities receive a proper welcome and reception when crossing borders. Reception centres are facing huge surges of demand for their services. At an event organised by EASPD on 4th March, organisations from Moldova, Poland and Slovakia reported that there was little targeted government support for refugees with disabilities and that much of this work was being conducted ad hoc by OPDs and volunteer networks. Persons with disabilities who are not officially registered in Ukraine are also facing barriers to accessing the support that they need.¹⁶

Buses provided to transport people from the border to reception centres are not always accessible for persons who use wheelchairs. In some cases, persons who use wheelchairs are lifted onto buses, but this is not always feasible. There are also obstacles to accessible housing and shelter for persons with disabilities in neighbouring countries ([Thomas and Bulman, 2022](#)).

Some neighbouring countries face shortages of assistive technology for persons with disabilities, which will restrict the access of refugees with disabilities.¹⁷ For example, in Slovakia there is a shortage of wheelchairs available for children.¹⁸ **There is also insufficient inclusive education** for children with disabilities in neighbouring countries receiving refugees ([UN, 2012](#); [UN, 2016](#)).

5. Organisations working on disability-inclusive response

There is an active disability movement in Ukraine, with more than 100 OPDs. A number of organisations are currently operating in Ukraine:

- > [National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine \(NADP\)](#) represents more than 100 organisations of persons with disabilities in Ukraine. They released a [statement](#) on behalf of their members on 1st March.
- > [All-Ukrainian NGO Coalition for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities \(VGO Coalition\)](#) met on

¹⁵ Expert contribution from Yulia Boyko, EMAUC

¹⁶ Catherine Naughton, European Disability Forum at EASPD event on 4th March.

¹⁷ Marta Sokolowska, Lower Silesian Federation of NGOS, Poland; Maria Machajdikova, Socioforum, both at EASPD event on 4th March.

¹⁸ Maria Machajdikova, Socioforum, Slovakia at EASPD event on 4th March.

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22nd February 2022 to develop a joint action plan on the safety of children and adults with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. The proposal can be found [here](#) in Ukrainian. A list of NGOs and public institutions that are members of the Coalition can be found [here](#).

- > [Fight for Right](#) is a disability-led organisation working to provide support to persons with disabilities impacted by the ongoing invasion. They have established a hot line for emergency cases. They have also developed some practical information for persons with disabilities who are seeking to evacuate Ukraine, available [here](#).
- > [EMAUC](#) and [Dzherelo Rehabilitation Center](#) are supporting people with disabilities who arrive in Lviv from other parts of Ukraine, especially with housing and services.
- > [Кожен Може](#) (Everybody Can) supports children with disabilities and older persons.
- > [HelpAge International Ukraine](#) has ceased active programme work but has developed a plan for continued outreach to those at risk and remains in active contact with those it supports through its staff and network of volunteers.
- > [Humanity and Inclusion](#) has deployed an exploratory mission in Ukraine and neighbouring countries including Romania, Poland, and Moldova. It consists of two teams focusing on humanitarian needs, security, access and operational context, response possibilities and partners identification.
- > [Ukrainian Red Cross](#) volunteers are helping to evacuate persons with disabilities.
- > [US Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies](#)- coordinating evacuations, connecting persons with disabilities with services in Ukraine, Poland, and other countries.
- > [Caritas](#) are supporting evacuations of children with disabilities from institutions.

There are also many OPDs operating in neighbouring countries. The following organisations have been active in responding to the needs of refugees with disabilities:

- > [Polish Association for People with Intellectual Disabilities \(PSONI\)](#) is supporting refugees with disabilities and their families.
- > Stowarzyszenie [Mudita](#) (Association Mudita), Poland is supporting refugees with disabilities and their families.
- > [The Polish Association of the Deaf](#) is running a database to support refugees with disabilities with accommodation, transport, groceries, medicine and other areas. They are also running a video helpline with Ukrainian sign language.
- > The [Niepełnotykni.pl](#) portal, the largest information service in Poland on disability, has created a [list of organisations providing support](#) to refugees with disabilities.
- > [Keystone Moldova](#) has established a free 24/7 hotline for refugees with disabilities to provide information and psychosocial support.
- > [Tenenet](#), Slovakia, established a support line (phone, email, online chat) for persons with disabilities to provide psychological support. They have also established a database that lists accommodation, volunteer support, and material aid available, with a section for persons with disabilities.
- > [Socioforum](#), Slovakia is providing support to refugees with disabilities in Slovakia and are coordinating with institutions in Ukraine that are evacuating.

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Recommendations from Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

OPDs have shared several priorities and recommendations for the humanitarian response¹⁹:

- > Evacuation of persons with disabilities, including those in institutions, who are unable to evacuate without support.
- > For those who remain in Ukraine, including in institutions, ensuring delivery of food, water, medicines, and other essentials.
- > For internally displaced persons and refugees: accessible communications, accessible shelter and housing, accessible food, water, health services, psychosocial support services, education, personal assistance, and assistive devices.
- > Pay particular attention to children and women with disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, and persons with high support needs.
- > Include persons with disabilities in planning and interventions.

6. How can the humanitarian response be disability-inclusive?

All partners in the humanitarian response should be guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which both Ukraine and Russia have ratified, especially Article 11: [situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies](#); Article 32: [International Cooperation](#); and Article 4(3): [Consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities](#). All partners and parties should also be guided by UN Security Council [Resolution 2475 \(2019\)](#) on persons with disabilities in armed conflict.

FCDO can take the following strategic measures and actions to ensure the humanitarian response is disability inclusive. These have been adapted from the [IASC guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action](#).

- > **Evacuation:** Ensure information about evacuation is provided in accessible formats through effective channels, including via social media and OPDs. Ensure that evacuation procedures, including transportation, are accessible to, and inclusive of, persons with disabilities and that staff responsible for evacuation are aware of accessibility requirements.
- > **UN Security Council:** Work with the UN to ensure that persons with disabilities and their needs are included in all UN security council resolutions related to the situation in Ukraine.
- > **Consultation and involvement:** Engage with persons with disabilities and OPDs in Ukraine and those who have left Ukraine to secure their expert advice on how to support Ukrainians with disabilities who remain in Ukraine or who are on the move in the region. Encourage and support OPDs and disability-focused NGOs that represent the diversity of persons with

¹⁹ Compiled from expert coordinator inputs, Inclusion Europe, [2022](#).

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disabilities²⁰ to become involved in humanitarian interventions and coordination mechanisms.

- > **Planning:** Ensure that disability inclusion is mainstreamed within the humanitarian cluster system, for example by establishing a disability working group to ensure that persons with disabilities participate in all processes to assess, plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate the humanitarian response, in all phases and at all levels.
- > **Data:** Ensure all humanitarian partners collect accurate, comprehensive, disability-disaggregated data on refugee populations using the Washington Group Short Set of Disability Questions, which are now available in [Ukrainian](#), and the UNICEF-Washington Group Child Functioning Module and use this data to design, monitor and implement services. Consult with persons with disabilities on the design and implementation of data collection. Encourage humanitarian partners to share official information about persons with disabilities.
- > **Services in the region:** Promote the [IASC guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action](#) with humanitarian partners in the region to ensure that services are accessible to and inclusive of refugees with disabilities (including information, health, mental health and psychosocial services, education, shelter, gender-based violence services, food assistance, and WASH). Ensure personal assistance for those who require it and provide assistive devices that meet the needs of individuals.
- > **Women and girls with disabilities:** Respond to the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, who are [often left out of the humanitarian response](#) and peace and security efforts, despite facing higher risks during hostilities and displacement. Ensure services for survivors of gender-based violence²¹ as well as health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, accessible to women and girls with disabilities and responsive to their specific needs.
- > **Children with disabilities:** Respond to the specific needs of children with disabilities, who face particular risks during conflict and displacement, including risk of abandonment and family separation, and are more likely to be left out of education and other services provided in humanitarian contexts.
- > **Evaluation:** Commission evaluations of the extent to which persons with disabilities in all their diversity can access assistance and protection, with the objective of improving their inclusion. Include in all evaluations a component that examines equal access, participation and protection of persons with disabilities. Ensure that persons with disabilities participate in evaluations and that evaluation recommendations on disability inclusion are implemented. Share lessons learned and good practice on disability inclusion with other donors and partners.
- > **Funding:**
 - Include meaningful criteria and policies related to disability inclusion in calls, proposals and contract agreements.
 - Ensure humanitarian partners' staff are trained in disability inclusion, that a dedicated disability focal point is appointed, and that disability inclusion guidance is provided.
 - Provide funding that supports capacity development of OPDs and other humanitarian

²⁰OPDs and disability-focused NGOs are listed above.

²¹ The Gender - Based Violence Area of Responsibility Helpdesk has produced a review of GBV resources and materials that can support GBV humanitarian response, which is available in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#).

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stakeholders to include persons with disabilities in the response.

- Require humanitarian partners to design and include strategies on disability inclusion as part of funding requirements – and assist partners to develop these strategies.
- Use a disability marker along with other relevant markers, such as the gender and age marker, to assist selection and monitoring of proposals.
- Create incentives for disability-inclusive programming in line with global participation commitments.
- Ensure funding appeals are accessible to OPDs that represent the diversity of persons with disabilities. Adapt funding criteria, where required, to make local OPDs eligible.
- Monitor and assess partners' reports and performance on disability inclusion.

Additional tools include:

- > CBM – [inclusive post-disaster reconstruction: building back safe and accessible for all – 16 minimum requirements for building accessible shelters](#)
- > European Disability Forum – [Toolkit on the inclusion of refugees with disabilities](#)
- > International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with Handicap International and CBM – [All Under One Roof: Disability Inclusive Shelter and Settlements in Emergencies](#)

7. Expert contributors

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Helpdesk services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations and individual experts on disability, including Social Development Direct, Sightsavers, Leonard Cheshire Disability, ADD International, Light for the World, Humanity & Inclusion, BRAC, BBC Media Action, Sense and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Expert advice may be sought from this Group, as well as from the wider academic and practitioner community, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk or any of the contributing organisations/experts.

For any further request or enquiry, contact enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk

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