



Key recommendations on disability to the Government and RRP stakeholders

Persons with specific needs may face barriers that prevent them from fully enjoying their rights and accessing the services they need. They may face heightened risks of discrimination, abuse, violence, and neglect during displacement and in their country of asylum.

Persons with disabilities (also referred to as persons with functional diversity) have the same basic needs as other refugees but often face barriers to having these needs met and, therefore, may require specific attention and targeted interventions.¹ Partners working within the framework of the Refugee Response Plan for Slovakia should scale up their engagement based on the key principles of disability inclusion: (i) non-discrimination; (ii) awareness; (iii) participation; and (iv) accessibility. This requires close cooperation with national and local institutions and organizations working with persons with disabilities.

In Slovakia, 12% of refugee households interviewed by UNHCR and partners reported at least one household member with disabilities, including those with serious medical needs, older persons.

Data indicates that such households may have fewer resources and more limited access to support networks in Slovakia compared to other refugees. This includes limited access to information on services such as health care, and face constraints in accessing employment opportunities, including because of lack of day care opportunities.

Decisions

The Protection and Inclusion Working Group decides

1. To establish a Task Force to sustain focus on the rights of refugees with persons with disabilities, including to support Slovak institutions and organizations of persons with disabilities and organizations providing services for persons with disabilities;
2. To prioritise an assessment of the gaps in response to the needs and priorities of people with disabilities; and to recommend to the Information Management Working Group to initiate a comprehensive disability assessment in Slovakia in collaboration with all stakeholders, with a dedicated focus on adults vs children due to differences in their specific situation;
3. To advocate introducing the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) as a conceptual framework in Slovakia.
4. To stress that any public funding to refugee response should mainstream disability inclusion (i.e., the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)² as a mandatory horizontal principle.

¹ For further information on refugees with disabilities in Slovakia, see UNHCR, [Protection Brief No. 1](#), May-October 2022.

² As defined in UN Inter-agency Standing Committee IASC Guidelines, Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, 2019 | IASC (interagencystandingcommittee.org) and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.



Recommendations for the government and stakeholders

The Protection and Inclusion Working Group recommends:

5. The Government and other stakeholders to prioritise strengthening the capacity of the national protection systems serving people with disabilities, including refugees with disabilities, as well as communities and families with members with disabilities;
6. The Government, in collaboration with RRP partners if required, to provide timely, publicly available, and disaggregated data on the numbers of refugees with disabilities in education, healthcare, protection and other systems to facilitate evidence-based planning;
7. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MOLSAF) to consider accepting the validity of the Disability ID cards of refugees from Ukraine, thereby facilitating their access to benefits such as parking, transportation, etc.;
8. MOLSAF to guarantee inclusion and equal treatment of refugees with disabilities in national social protection programmes for persons with disabilities; and streamline the assessment of the disability carer grant applications and consider other assistance that could be availed to support refugees with disabilities;
9. MOLSAF to scale up employment services and programmes for refugees with disabilities, with support from Refugee Response Plan partners and disability inclusion NGOs;
10. MOLSAF to ensure monitoring of the conditions in which a person with disabilities lives and whether care is provided by the caregiver meets with a view of protecting from neglect or abuse, and provide guidance on submitting complaints in case of suspected abuse or neglect of care;
11. The Ministry of Transport to take into account the rights and needs of people with disabilities when registering accommodation capacities, adding into the records the criterion of accessibility for people with disabilities;
12. The Government to identify key stakeholders, including civil society and private sector entities, who are working on inclusion/disability agenda and forging consortia and partnerships with them;
13. All stakeholders to ensure a participatory approach, engaging refugees with disabilities and NGOs or community structures working on disability, and learning from their experiences, when developing policies, programmes, or activities;
14. Education stakeholders to support the inclusion of children with disabilities into the national education system in line with their best interests; avoiding segregation and prioritising inclusive access to mainstream education, and supporting reasonable accommodation and individualisation, and including by expanding the availability of school assistants for children from Ukraine;
15. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to address the lack of paediatric and specialized care, and insufficient complementary health care and health aids coverage; promoting long-term psychosocial support and prevention, and trauma-informed and disability-sensitive training for paediatricians;
16. To the managing body of OP Slovakia to support refugees as a target group, including those with disabilities in the new program period.



Recommendations for RRP partners

The Protection and Inclusion Working Group recommends the Refugee Response Plan partners:

17. To support and complement the national social protection and assistance mechanisms benefiting people with disabilities, and collaborate with the disability organisations and refugee communities in developing and implementing assistance programmes;
18. To ensure that persons with disabilities are informed about the possibilities and forms of support, available services, rights, and obligations, using appropriate forms of communication and formal and informal channels as well as social networks, including by employing text-to-speech, sign language and other relevant tools and means of communication;
19. To intensify cooperation with organizations dedicated to the support of persons with disabilities, and to ensure the referral of specific cases in need of assistance to specialized service providers, including access to assistive devices and rehabilitation provided by the Ministry of Health or health service providers,
20. To ground their programmatic responses on needs assessment, taking into account the opinions and capacities of persons with disabilities, by promoting participation of organisations of persons with disabilities and of refugees with disabilities;
21. Prioritise the employment of people with disabilities in their own programmes, including in job advertisements;
22. Based on existing assessments (for instance, Site Monitoring)³, prioritise improvement of disability accessibility in accommodation centres, and clear mechanisms for the provision of reasonable adjustments when accessibility is not in place or not addressing all barriers;
23. Ensure that all information for refugees are accessible to people with disabilities; and include interpretation into the sign language in all major events;
24. Mainstream the needs of children with disabilities through appropriate referrals and facilitation of access to specialized services, expanding availability of services for children with disabilities.

Protection and Inclusion Working group thanks to members of the Disability Task Force who helped to identify the most urgent needs of refugees and to issue this set of recommendations.

Disability Task Force members

Commissionaire for Persons with
Disabilities in Slovakia
<https://www.komisarpredzdravotnepostihnutych.sk/>

National Council for Citizens with
Disabilities
www.nrozp.sk

Platform for Parents with Children
with Disabilities
www.platformarodin.sk

Center for Legal Help
www.cpp.gov.sk

Human Rights League
www.hrl.sk

Go to:
Protection
and Inclusion
Working Group
(PIWG)



For further information:

Bülent Peker, UNHCR Slovakia, Co-chair,
Protection and Inclusion Working Group,
peker@unhcr.org

Miroslava Mittelmannova, HRL, Co-chair,
Protection and Inclusion Working Group,
mittelmannova@hrl.sk

Olga Pietruchova, Coordinator, Disability
Task Force, pietruch@unhcr.org

³ See UNHCR, IOM, Reach: [Slovakia : Site Monitoring and On-Site Needs Assessment](#) - October 2022; UNHCR, Reach: Slovakia: [Refugee Accommodation Sites - Mapping & Monitoring](#) | Update #2 (December 2022).