



Inter-Agency
Coordination
Turkey

National Protection Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Time & Location: Thursday, 25 November 2021, 14.00-16.45 hrs / Zoom

Chair: Lara Özügergin – Assistant Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

Participants: AAR Japan, ASAM, Bonyan Organization, CARE, Concern Worldwide, Danish Refugee Council, Flying Broom Women's Communication and Research Association, GIZ, HRDF, IBC, ICMPD, IFRC, IGAM, ILO, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, IOM, KADAV, Lider Kadın Derneği, Maan Organization, Mavi Kalem, MSYD, MUDEM, Mülteci-Der, Nirengi Derneği, NSPPL, Önder Organization for Cooperation and Development, People in Need, REALS, Refugee Rights Turkey, Refugee Support Center, Relief International, Sağlıkta Genç Yaklaşımlar Derneği, SAHİMSEN, SAMS, SENED Organization, SEVKAR, Small Projects Istanbul, TOHAD, TRC, Uluslararası Göçmen Kadınlar Dayanışma Derneği (UGKDD), UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UOSSM, Violet Organization, WALD, Welthungerhilfe, World Vision,

Meeting Agenda:

- I. Welcome and Introduction
- II. Access of Refugees with Disabilities to Human Rights
- III. Inter-Sectionality of Disability and Other Social Markers
- IV. Accountability Practices with Persons with Disabilities
- V. Overview of DRC & Relief International Assessment on Syrian Refugees with Disabilities' Access to Services in Turkey and the Impact of COVID-19
- VI. Overview of PwD Programming and Stocktaking
- VII. Discussion: Challenges & Gaps; Sector Capacity; Solutions
- VIII. AoB

Agenda Item #1: Welcome and Introduction

- The agenda of the meeting was introduced to the National Protection Working Group Meeting participants.

Agenda Item #2: Access of Refugees with Disabilities to Human Rights

- Ayşe Sarı, Chairperson of Disability Commission (SAHİMSEN) delivered a speech covering issues/problems observed in the field and recommendations/proposals for possible solutions addressing those issues.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. The Convention also marked the International Day of Disabled Persons. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities important legal framework, particularly Article 11.



- PwD are the world's largest minority group. 1/10th of the refugee population is estimated to be individuals with disabilities. However, there is no current/most recent up-to-date data on the number of PwD. They are subject to exclusion, isolation, sterilization, social prejudices, inability to participate in the workforce, forced marriage, etc., and multiple human rights violations. Disability is a part of human diversity and their rights should be protected by legal guarantees. Convention provides the legal basis on how to remove obstacles in enjoying these rights and it has also broadened the definition of disability, improving the foundation of advocacy.
- Deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Turkey leads to increasing visibility of and prejudice against refugees in Turkey. Ayşe Sarı especially emphasized the lack of targeted, disaggregated data and information on refugees with disabilities in Turkey which hinders effective programme design and implementation and policy development. Collecting disaggregated data (at minimum age and gender) to facilitate evidence-based programming, inform advocacy efforts and policy development if needed.
- It has been addressed that the refugees with disabilities, particularly women have limited information (and information dissemination efforts targeting PwD) on rights and services available in Turkey. PwD has limited access to health services (during migration journey and after entry to the country of asylum), changes in disabilities during the journey, limited inclusivity of health services. Challenges remain in refugee women's access to SRH services, including language barrier, ineffective/inaccessible raising awareness sessions. Discrimination and prejudice by service providers further create barriers in individuals' access to rights and services. Legislative and regulatory barriers also exist – some services not provided by refugees with disabilities (i.e. special education for children with disabilities). Therefore, it is an asset to include refugees with disabilities in emergency preparedness response programmes. Improving disability policy frameworks in reference to Convention and other international legal instruments is needed. The UN convention is in force in Turkey since 2009 and further advocacy to make this more visible is definitely needed.

Agenda Item #3: Inter-Sectionality of Disability and Other Social Markers

- Selen Doğan from Flying Broom delivered a speech on the current situation and addressed many unmet needs and barriers faced by persons with disability.
- Selen Doğan, during her speech, especially emphasized the importance of the recognition of diversity in/inter-sectionality of disability status, ethnic origins, sex, gender, and sexual orientation (etc.). It is crucial to adopt an inter-sectionality approach to address multiple vulnerabilities, protection concerns of refugees with disabilities.



- Especially in the current context, the empowerment and visibility of women with disabilities should be recognized. One of the biggest barriers to empowerment is being regarded as genderless, or non-sexual individuals. They are vulnerable to domestic violence, disadvantage in accessing information. Pandemic affected working status, almost majority of PwD respondents became unemployed. Women are more negatively affected in both participation in the labour market and in the reduction of household income. The majority relied on a negative coping strategy to deal with the pandemic, including cutting on food/hygiene products, borrowing money, cutting on medication/healthcare, spending savings, withdrawal from education etc.
- SRH access is very limited for women with disabilities and there is no support mechanism for women who want to have children. Limited information of refugees with disabilities, particularly women, (and information dissemination efforts targeting PwD) on rights and services available in Turkey.
- Older persons are at higher risk/more affected in conflict and crises. Combined with disabilities their needs increase. Disability natural aspect of aging and rapid aging resulting in more individuals with disabilities. Children with disabilities are often excluded, stigmatized, isolated, marginalized based on belief, poverty. Invisible to decision-makers and service providers. The exclusion of children with disabilities increases even more if they belong to another disadvantaged group. 68% of girls, 40% of boys with intellectual/developmental disabilities will be sexually abused before the age of 18. Refugee children are able to obtain disability reports, but they are not able to access special education. In the current context, as observed in many provinces, it is often challenging to obtain a disability health report. Social protection and assistance are available, including ESSN, support to children with disabilities, however, home care support is unavailable. Limited recreational opportunities are available, particularly for children.
- Accessibility should not only be interpreted as having yellow signs on streets and ramps, but they should include access to information, preventive health services, hygiene, diagnosis, treatment, birth control tools, secure food, devices that facilitate access to rights, and services. All of these are accessibility-related issues. The language barrier is even more prevalent for refugees with disabilities.
- It is noted that the shift from a charity approach to a human-rights approach in all interventions and programmes is crucial. Unavailability of sign language interpretation for persons with hearing impairments is one of the needs of PwDs.

Agenda Item #4: Accountability Practices with Persons with Disabilities

- Merve Renan Türkkulu, Community Resilience Department Manager at Turkish Red Crescent and as the chair of the Accountability to Affected Populations Task Force (AAP TF) delivered



a presentation on the Accountability Practices with Persons with Disabilities, which will be made available with the meeting minutes.

Agenda Item #5: Overview of DRC & Relief International Assessment on Syrian Refugees with Disabilities' Access to Services in Turkey and the Impact of COVID-19

- Saskia Llewellyn, Protection Specialist at Danish Refugee Council, delivered a presentation on the Overview of DRC and Relief International Assessment on the Syrian Refugees with Disabilities' Access to Services in Turkey and the impact of COVID-19, which will be made available with the meeting minutes.
- The research seeks to understand the impact of the protracted nature of the pandemic on accessing services in Turkey. It seeks to identify the challenges which have been presented, as a result of the pandemic, as well as opportunities, if any. Mixed-method data collection has been conducted for the research with 213 structured surveys; incorporating Washington Group Short-Set of Questions; 45 questions; Demography, WG-SS, the impact of the pandemic on access to services, and coping strategies employed throughout the pandemic; 13 in-depth interviews with SuTPs with a disability and service-provision workers. The data collection was made between July-August 2021 across Turkey (predominantly, Istanbul, Hatay, and Gaziantep). Further details with regards to the research are available in the shared presentation
- Given sensitivities around large-scale data collection in Turkey, interested participants who would like to access the report can kindly communicate with Saskia Llewellyn from saskia.llewellyn@drc.ngo

Agenda Item #6: Overview of PwD Programming and Stocktaking

- Nazlı Moral, Humanitarian Programme Manager at UNFPA, delivered a presentation on the increasing access of most vulnerable groups to protection and social services in Turkey, which will be made available with the meeting minutes.
- Refugees with Disabilities Component is funded by the European Union between 1 October 2020- 31 December 2021, however, an extension has been requested. There are three implementing partners of this project in the field namely, UNFPA, IOM, and SGDD-ASAM. The target group identified as refugees with disabilities and their support persons. This protection project aims to provide specialized protection services to the Rwd and their support persons under three different results.
- Within the scope of this project, Protection services, including GBV prevention and response services, are provided to Rwd and support persons according to their needs through specialized service units. Rwd service units serve as safe spaces for the most vulnerable

refugees to provide specialized protection services. Protection services, including psychosocial and legal counseling, as well as information-sharing help them enhance their coping mechanisms. Rwd Service Unit service providers prioritize giving specific importance to the identification of the barriers and enablers to providing more inclusive protection services to the beneficiaries.

- The Rwd Service Units were established in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in developing strategies to provide services in consideration of COVID-19 measures and Rwd's barriers in using technologies and limited internet. As a response, the beneficiaries were identified and their particular protection risks were assessed using telephone, conducting household visits by the outreach personnel whenever possible, and providing a Rwd vehicle to ensure their access to the services provided in the service units based on the different types of disabilities. For the Rwd beneficiaries with hearing and speaking difficulties, the support persons were included to the service provision through phone calls and voice messages. The group activities (awareness-raising and PSS) were planned in the open-air spaces to the extent possible.
- It is aimed that Rwd and their support persons are sensitized on protection issues including GBV and able to access information on their rights and obligations, availability of protection, social and other services in Turkey.
- In order to respond to the information needs of the Rwd and their support persons, awareness-raising activities are organized in-service units and/or online. These activities will be designed in consideration of the specificities of the target group.
- A short introduction video with regards to Rwd Service Units are available through this [link](#).

Agenda Item #7: Overview of PwD Programming and Stocktaking

- Aileen Voit, Programme Support Officer at IOM, delivered a presentation on IOM Turkey's Work with Persons with Disabilities, which will be made available with meeting minutes.
- IOM Turkey's work with PwD consists of the following components: Targeted Assistance which includes MHPSS, legal, education, community centers, recovery and stabilization support; Mainstreaming Assistance which includes community centers and emergency case management; Internal which includes access, capacity, funds, and outreach; External which includes education, recreation, legal, MHPSS, employment, medical care, and services. Further detail under each component is accessible through the PowerPoint Presentation.
- IOM announced that a study will take place on Disability Prevalence in the Southeast. A population-based survey will take place on disability prevalence and impact to better understand the prevalence of disability, the needs of persons with disabilities, and to facilitate disability-inclusive programming. The data collection to start in February for publication in July 2022 with approximately 2,400 individuals in Adana, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, and Şanlıurfa.

Agenda Item #8: Discussion: Challenges and Gaps; Sector Capacity; Solutions

- Due to the time limitation, agenda item 8 will be discussed in the upcoming National Protection Working Group Meeting on 15 December 2021.

Agenda Item #9:AoB

- Please find documents that have been shared by the participants during the meeting.
 - ILO Ankara is currently implemented a work-based-learning programme (WBL) for Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens, including persons with disabilities (differently-abled persons). In addition to wage and social security premium subsidies, there is additional financial support for persons with disabilities. The applications are now open in Gaziantep and will soon open in Bursa and İstanbul, please refer to the information below and further share deemed necessary. For any questions, please do reach out to kfwproject@ilo.org
 - [Press Release](#)
 - Brochure ([English](#), [Turkish](#))

Action Point:

- An advocacy paper will be drafted in light of this thematic monthly meeting of the National Protection Working Group. The advocacy paper will cover the current context, barriers, unmet needs and gaps, mitigation measures and capacities of sector partners, and recommendations and way forward.
- The advocacy paper will be shared with National Protection Working Group members for further feedback, once it is finalized.
- The upcoming National Protection Working Group Meeting will be focusing on persons with disabilities to cover the discussion session that could not be addressed in November's meeting due to the time limitations. Challenges and Gaps; Sector Capacity; Solutions will be discussed. The advocacy paper will be reviewed with the members during the meeting for further feedback and suggestions.