



Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Meeting Minutes – 26 October 2023

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	UNHCR; Open Krakow Coalition
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Małopolski Urząd Wojewódzki; Urząd Miasta Krakowa; Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej Kraków; Centrum Pomoc Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć; Fundacja Alight; Fundacja Kocham Dębniki; Fundacja Mission-U; Fundacja Widowisk Masowych; Fundacja Zero Camps; Patchwork; Project Hope; Stowarzyszenie Mudita; UNHCR; UNICEF; Voice Amplified; Wolno Nam; ZHP;
Agenda:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction from the co-chairs • Updates from UA and refugee led organizations • Updates from the Voivodship • Needs of persons with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short presentation on advanced findings from UNHCR 2023 participatory assessment with persons with disabilities (UNHCR) ○ Additional contributions from participants • Services available for persons with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation on services for persons with disabilities (Krakow Municipality Department of Social Policy and Health) ○ Presentation on services for persons with disabilities (MOPS Krakow) ○ Presentation on existing services and gaps (Patchwork) • Voluntary mapping of services for persons with disabilities • AOB

AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	<p>Participants were welcomed to the 25th Małopolska Coordination Group (MCG) meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR introduced the topic of the meeting as protection of persons with disabilities. The goal of the meeting was highlighted as examining the needs of persons with disabilities, existing services, and possible synergies. UNHCR further noted that persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group, are often at heightened risk of discrimination, exploitation and violence, and may face additional barriers to accessing assistance and services. • UNHCR recalled that the topic of the last meeting had been funding opportunities available to NGOs. In regard to the Call for Expression of Interest published by UNHCR for NGOs in Małopolskie and Dolnośląskie regions, ten concept notes had been collected by the deadline of 20 October and are currently under review. Results will be communicated to applicants by the 3rd of November.
Agenda point 1	<p>No updates were provided under the given agenda point.</p>
Agenda point 2	<p>The Representative of the Voivode provided updates about the situation in Małopolska:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of border crossings on the Poland-Ukraine border remains stable, with near equal daily numbers of entrances to and exits from Poland. • There are 18,512 places in the accommodation database maintained by the Voivodship. Of these about 11,000 are taken and 7,500 are available. Most available accommodation places in the Voivodship remain outside of Krakow city. Currently, places in Krakow are available for individuals with increased vulnerabilities, including elderly persons and those undergoing medical treatment. • The Voivodship is focusing on activities related to employment activation and encouraging individuals to take up employment. Separate employment activation projects are being undertaken with the Polish Red Cross and with UNHCR. • In response to a question about the status of the shelter on Wąwozowa street in Krakow, the Representative noted that this is not under the direction of the Voivodship, but rather the Municipality of Krakow, and that she does not have any further precise information. UNHCR further noted that communication had been received from the Municipality confirming that the shelter had been closed for reasons of efficiency, given that only 70 people were living there and the

capacity was much larger. UNHCR has received the list of shelters outside of Krakow to which the effected refugees had been sent and will conduct field visits. Wolno Nam Foundation added that the organization had recently been approached by numerous individuals from the Wąwozowa shelter looking for accommodation.

Agenda point 3

UNHCR shared advanced finding from the Participatory Assessment (PA) carried out in Krakow and in Wrocław in September and October 2023.

- As part of this exercise, three focus group discussions were held with persons with disabilities and their caregivers. One Key Informant Interview also took place. Findings from the discussions were organized around four different themes:
- Capacities and support systems: Different layers of support exist. Family plays an important role, after which comes community, and next support from public services providers such as MOPS and specialized NGOs.
- Social cohesion: Refugees with disabilities in general expressed that they were discriminated against on the basis of their disability by host community members. Some refugees felt that they had to compete with other refugees to access the limited specialized assistance opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Access to national services: The Polish authorities provide a comprehensive package of support for refugees with disabilities. However, some barriers were still noted. These included, for instance, lack of access to certain centers or public buildings for individuals with mobility impairments and difficulty obtaining a Polish disability certificate.

- Employment: Access to employment for persons with disabilities remains limited, in part because available job opportunities are not always suitable to certain types of disability. In regard to online work, opportunities may be limited.
- Patchwork highlighted the importance of consultations with refugees. These allow direct feedback and suggestions from the persons concerned.
- Mudita noted that the concerns raised during the participatory assessment mirror those reported by individuals seeking Mudita’s help. Mudita runs a reception point for refugees and makes efforts to fill some of the gaps in service that exist. However, without systemic solutions this is difficult. Together with Fundacja Zycie Pelna Mozliwosci, Mudita will also be organizing informational meetings at the reception point for newly arrived individuals with disabilities. Finally, Mudita noted that Polish families with individuals with disabilities can also face barriers to inclusion. It is important to keep this in mind so that additional tensions are not created between the host and refugee communities.

- UNICEF shared that together with Promyk Stońca Foundation in Wrocław a handbook has recently been published for families of persons with disabilities. It explains step by step the differences in obtaining a disability certificate in Poland and in Ukraine and which documents are needed. The handbook may be found online at the following link: [Handbook for the parents of children with disabilities who have come to Poland due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine](#)

Agenda point 4

Presenters shared information about services available to persons with disabilities, including refugees.

- The Division for Support of Persons with Disabilities of the Krakow Municipality Department of Health and Social Policy highlighted that the Division does not differentiate between persons with disabilities from Poland and those from Ukraine. As long as an individual has a disability certificate, they are eligible to receive assistance. The process of issuing disability certificates is handled by the Municipal Disability Assessment Team (Miejski Zespół ds. Orzekania o Niepełnosprawności w Krakowie) The rights, as well as the services and benefits, to which an individual is entitled depend upon the severity of the disability. The Division also produces annual information guides for individuals with disabilities. At the time being, these are available only in Polish and plans for translation into Ukrainian exist. The guide may be found online at the following link: [Informator dla Osób z Niepełnosprawnościami](#) The website [Krakow Bez Barrier](#) also contains further information.
- The Division for Support of Persons with Disabilities further shared information about the Krakow Card for Families with a Disabled Child. Refugee families with disabled children living in Krakow Municipality can also benefit from this program. The card is for children up to 16 years of age with disabilities and their families, and in some cases for individuals with disabilities up to the age of 25. Both the individual with disabilities, their parents and siblings can benefit from the program. The card entitles the holder to free public transport, discounts on museums and public events, and well as discounts from private businesses and institutions. More information is available at the following website: [Krakowska Karta Rodziny z Niepełnosprawnym Dzieckiem](#)
- The Social Benefits Center of Krakow Municipality (MOPS Krakow) shared a presentation on the role of MOPS in supporting individuals with disabilities. Among others, MOPS is responsible for assisting in the financing of equipment needed for rehabilitation, orthopedic equipment, and other items, including those related to making living spaces more accessible. It was noted that in the latter case, this type of support may be complicated for refugees who do not have a stable living location.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patchwork shared information about existing needs and gaps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus group discussions with different groups are important because of the diversity of the community of persons with disabilities. In some cases, they have been denied help by NGOs and feel doubly excluded. Some families have more capacity for independence and other will require ongoing support. ○ Patchwork highlighted that it is important to engage directly, also through surveys, to better understand needs. Currently Patchwork is working to supporting individuals with disabilities with their basic needs and specialized equipment, but also with social support, such as language classes and integration meetings, and with advocacy to mainstream protection of persons with disabilities into the work of other NGOs and actors working with refugees. Current challenges include the fact that there is currently uncertainty about the long-term status of refugees from Ukraine and it is unclear what will happen when support programs for refugees end. Many families containing individuals with disabilities would like to remain in Poland, but this uncertainty makes longer term planning difficult.
Agenda point 5	<p>UNHCR highlighted that one recommendation from the consultation with refugees was the fact that it would be useful to have an understanding of the services available for persons with disabilities. In this regard, information is being collected for a mapping document. Partners wishing to share their activities are invited to contact Sarah Arciszewska at arciszew@unhcr.org</p>
AOB	<p>There were no interventions provided under the given agenda point.</p>

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status (as of)
1.	Partners wishing to contribute to the service mapping for persons with disabilities can share the list of their relevant activities with Sarah Arciszewska at arciszew@unhcr.org	All partners	30/11/2023	New action
2.	A Małopolska service mapping for the persons with disabilities will be prepared on the basis of inputs from partners.	UNHCR	14/12/2023	New action