UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Persons with Disabilities

January-December 2023

Inclusion: UNHCR is committed to ensuring that its activities are inclusive of persons with disabilities, taking into account their specific needs and capacities.

Participation: UNHCR recognizes the contributions persons with disabilities can make to humanitarian responses and promote their active engagement in decision-making and program design.

Accessibility: UNHCR is committed to delivering humanitarian assistance that is accessible to all, identifying and eliminating environmental, communication and institutional barriers for those with disabilities.

POPULATION STATISTICS

As of December 2023, 100,494 refugees from Ukraine resided in the Republic of Moldova. Of these:

60% were females

47% were children

17% were older persons

From MSNA 2023 data on disability:

6% of refugees were with disabilities

14% of HHs have a member with disabilities

Among which:

4% had visual impairments

2% had a hearing impairment

2% had a physical impairment

KEY FIGURES

Individualized support: Since the beginning of the refugees response, UNHCR and its partners supported more than 3,177 persons with disabilities with cash assistance, MHPSS services, housing services, distribution of Assistive Devices and NFIs, and information sharing.

Community Support Initiatives: UNHCR supported five initiatives that targeted refugees and Moldovans with disabilities in different parts of the country, including a sports day, hikes for people with visual impairments, and renovation of a gym for rehabilitation services.

Capacity building: with the support of the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, UNHCR organized capacity building and awareness sessions for more than 675 humanitarian and government staff on inclusive humanitarian action. Within the capacity building session in December 2023 were conducted 2 sessions for humanitarian partners to improve their capacity to collect and analyze data disaggregated by gender, age and disabilities

HIGHLIGHTS

Dialogue on Disability

In December 2023 UNHCR organized a 2-day event on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the refugee response in Moldova, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), national Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and the European Disability Forum.

Accessible Temporary Protection Info Campaign

Together with the AAP Task Force, UNHCR adapted the information campaign on Temporary Protection to ensure that its materials were accessible, including through the use of sign interpretation for videos and use of appropriate colors, contrast, and text size for written materials.

Sports and Disability

In 2023, with the participation of 130 persons with disabilities, UNHCR organized an event to promote the inclusion through sports of refugees and Moldovans with disabilities. UNHCR partners also offered different services such as workshops for children organized by a psycologist.

Partnership with Private Sector

In 2023, together with Luxottica Foundation and the local partner Low Vision, UNHCR organized an eye care outreach campaign in Chisinau, providing ophthalmologic visits and eyeglasses to over 800 refugees and Moldovans with visual impairments.

INDIVIDUALIZE ASSISTANCE

UNHCR, together with its partners have supported people with disabilities with individualized assistance based on the needs, including through distribution assistive devices. The photo show the distribution of a wheelchair for an older refugee with disabilities in Transnistria Region supported by UNHCR partner CDA.

Operational Response

- **Promote meaningful participation:** UNHCR seeks to ensure the inclusion of refugees with disabilities in all aspects of the refugee response. This includes facilitating their participation in activities like Community Support Initiatives, FDGs and structured dialogues with service providers. By actively involving refugees with disabilities, the response can be tailored to their specific needs and ensure their voices are heard.
- **Remove barriers:** UNHCR works to ensure that information and services provided in the refugee response are accessible to all, including persons with disabiities. Assessments of Refugee Accommodation Centers and Community Service Centres were conducted to identify and address barriers that may hinder access for persons with disabilities. UNHCR has worked with the government and partners to ensure that information on rights and services is provided in accessible formats, such as sign interpretation, large and easy to read print, or audio recordings. Mobile home visits have been offered for essential services like cash assistance for those with physical impairments.
- **Empowerment and capacity-building:** Working with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) is essential to the empowerment of refugees with disabilities. Through capacity building initiatives, OPDs are able to more effectively participate in the humanitarian coordination system. By strengthening the role of OPDs, the refugee response can leverage their expertise to ensure a truly inclusive environment for all.
- **Disaggregated data for monitoring inclusion:** UNHCR collects disaggregated data on disabilities using the Washington Group Set of Questions throughout different assessment and monitoring exercises. With the Disability and Age Task force, UNHCR conducted a training for all partners of the refugee coordination forum on how to collect and analyze disaggregated data on SADD (sex, age, disability and diversity) with more than 60 participants.

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works with Keystone Moldova and HelpAge Moldova to co-lead the work of the Disability and Age Task Force (DATF).
- UNHCR engages with DATF partners, to map available services and coordinate referrals.
- UNHCR works with OPDs supporting their participating in the coordination mechanism and engaging in different operational activities.
- UNHCR collaborates with other Sectors and Task Forces to mainstream disability inclusion across the refugee response.
- UNHCR partner Keystone Moldova implements a Hotline for refugees with disabilities which provides information about services available.

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DIALOGUE ON INCLUSION OF REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES

UNHCR organized together with European Disability Forum and Moldovan OPDs a dialogue to discuss how to better include refugees with disabilities

REFUGEE COORDINATION FORUM

UNHCR co-leads the DATF together with Keystone Moldova and HelpAge Moldova, involving more than 23 active organizations. The TF works to mainstream disability within the response and coordinate efforts.

In 2023, a joint assessment was conducted with the Basic Needs WG on WASH and Accessiblity in all Refugee Coordination Centres, the results of which informed renovations and improvements conducted by different partners.

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