



PROTECTION WORKING GROUP/DISABILITY TASKFORCE (DTF)

Meeting Details	
Date	23.12.2022
Time	11.00-13.00 am
Chair	Ludmila Malcoci, Executive Director, Keystone Moldova
Reporting	Ludmila Ciocan, DTF Secretariat Coordinator, Keystone Moldova
Email	lmalcoci@khs.org ; lciocan@khs.org ;
Agenda	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of participants and welcome coffee • Opening remarks. Objectives of the DTF meeting • Keystone Moldova needs assessment results. Ludmila Malcoci, DTF Chair, Keystone Moldova • Achievements and success of the DTF members in 2022 – experience sharing in providing support to refugees with disabilities • Challenges and barriers limiting refugees with disabilities from accessing services and resources • Refugee testimonials • Priority measures of the DTF for addressing the identified gaps in 2023 • Q&A, Concluding remarks 	
Information collection and relevant links	
Moldova operational data portal: https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA	
Participants	
Off-line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tatiana Cernomorit, OHCHR • Alberto Tonon, UNHCR/OHCHR • Virginia Rusnac, CRAP • Corneliu Tarus, IOM • Ala Ianenco, FCPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina Racu, Keystone Moldova • Elizaveta Stratulat, Keystone Moldova Mobile Team • Agnesa Gheorghita, SOS Autism • Adam Abubakarov, refugee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galina Climov, AOPD • Tamayo Haraguchi, Peace Winds • Rei Doi, Peace Winds • Mihaela Lavrov, Peace Winds • Tatiana Catarama, Keystone Moldova
On-line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ludmila Malcoci, Keystone Moldova 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ana Severin, Keystone Moldova • Valentina Toporeț, „MOTIVAȚIE”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olena Koval, UNHCR • Lama Kteich, Humanity and Inclusion



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ludmila Ciocan, Keystone Moldova • Dmitri Ceceli, civic activist, Transnistrian Region • Viorica Craievschi, Palladiul/D4I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniele Pedretti, HelpAge • Dania, INTERSOS • Aliona Ciobanu, CASMED • Oxana, refugee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Vremis, Palladium/D4I • Daniela Bordeianu, Voinicel • Valentina Suruceanu, LOW Vision |
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Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p>Opening remarks. Objectives of the meeting Tatiana Cernomorit, OHCHR</p>	<p>The DTF Co-Chair welcomed the participants to the last 2022 DTF hybrid meeting and presented the agenda points. She invited the participants to reflect on the achievements of the DTF and DTF member organizations in 2022 and to the barriers and challenges faced by refugees with disabilities to be approached in 2023.</p>	
<p>Needs assessment results Ludmila Malcoci, Chair of the Disability Taskforce, Keystone Moldova</p>	<p>The DTF Chair presented the results of the Needs Assessment of Refugees with Disabilities conducted by Keystone Moldova from September until November 2022. She explained the distribution of participants in the needs assessment by sex, age, region of residence, type of housing/accommodation, type and severity of disability. The assessment revealed the percentage of refugees that expressed their household needs, health and social needs as well the challenges and the type of support provided by Keystone Moldova to them in 2022.</p> <p>The presentation finished with a video reflecting a testimonial of a refugee on the assistance received from Keystone Moldova. The video can be accessed here.</p>	<p>DTF Secretary to share the PPT “Keystone Moldova Needs Assessment of Refugees with Disabilities” with members of the DTF.</p>
<p>Achievements and success of DTF members in 2022 – experience sharing in providing support to refugees with disabilities - discussion moderated by Alberto Tonon, Disability</p>	<p>The Disability Inclusion Specialist invited the organizations participating in the meeting to present the good results achieved in 2022 in terms of inclusion of persons with disabilities and in terms of mainstreaming disabilities in their activities. He mentioned that this would be a good start to discuss the remaining challenges and the necessary intervention for the next year.</p> <p>Several participants mentioned as key achievement of the DTF the coordination of actors and activities, information sharing, capacity building and joint approach of challenges and referral of refugees with disabilities to appropriate services using the DTF contacts.</p>	



<p>Inclusion Specialist, OHCHR/UNHCR</p>	<p>The DTF Chair highlighted that in 2022 the DTF focused more on advocacy and coordination of support for refugees with disabilities, while in 2023 it is necessary to focus on other aspects, too.</p> <p>Other particular achievements, mentioned by participating organizations were as follows:</p> <p>CASMED offered psychosocial services and rehabilitation services to refugees with disabilities in 2022 and will continue to provide them in 2023. The organization worked also with children and provided assistance to allow the parents to access different services. Another focus was on providing wood pellets and firewood for the cold season to host families and refugees located in the North region of the country. The DTF Chair proposed to exchange information between Keystone Moldova and CASMED teams on coverage of refugees and host families with wood pellets and firewood in the North region of the country and on suppliers/ providers of winterization items.</p> <p>Republican Center for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance (CRAP) supported de inclusion of about 1700 refugee children in Moldova general schools and kindergartens, however the number of children with disabilities included in educational system remain very low. CRAP launched a PSS program in 2022 that benefitted 800 refugee children focusing on emotional resilience; 50 school psychologists were trained to provide PSS in schools and kindergartens and PSS Guidelines were developed.</p> <p>The Alliance of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (AOPD) created a communication platform with financial support from IOM and EDF to facilitate the exchange of information between persons with disabilities from Moldova and refugees with disabilities from Ukraine. Organizations from Chisinau, Straseni and Falesti involved actively in supporting the Ukrainian refugees with disabilities by sharing their experience in accessing different services and solving specific disability-related problems.</p> <p>Humanity and Inclusion contracted training session on Washington Group Questions for humanitarian actors operating in Moldova, advocated for collecting and reporting disaggregated data by age, gender and disability, worked on the assessment of RACs to identify physical barriers and to address accessibility issues.</p>	<p>Keystone Moldova and CASMED teams to clarify the coverage of refugees and host families with wood pellets and firewood in the North region and to share the information on suppliers/ providers of winterization items</p>
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	<p>Refugee parents of children with severe disabilities mentioned during their testimonials, good practices in assisting refugees such as the Voucher system implemented by Keystone Moldova. This allowed them buying the necessary food and hygiene products, clothing and footwear products of their choice, without being constrained to accept the available products from donations that not always fit their specific needs.</p> <p>A refugee, father of a girl with severe disability thanked the Moldovan citizens for a warm welcome and for providing assistance to Ukrainian refugees in spite of a complicated situation in Moldova.</p>	
<p>Challenges and barriers limiting refugees with disabilities from accessing services and resources - group discussion moderated by Alberto Tonon, Disability Inclusion Specialist, OHCHR/UNHCR</p>	<p>The group discussion revealed the following remaining challenges that should be addressed by the DTF and other Sectoral Working Groups to ensure an inclusive refugees response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting and reporting data on refugees with disabilities by actors involved in the refugee response • Challenges and insufficient capacity for disability mainstreaming in all sectors, including needs assessment, types of support and impact assessment. The DTF Chair mentioned that a Checklist was developed by the DTF to support the member organizations of the Moldova Refugee Coordination Forum across various sector groups to address disability inclusion in the design and implementation of their activities. However many partners are not opened to use the indicators and to implement disability inclusive measures. • Limited and inaccessible information for OPDs and refugees with disabilities on the available assistance and services in Moldova. AOPD and CASMED representatives mentioned the persisting difficulties in identifying and referring refugees with disabilities to appropriate services when the service provider is not able to offer the necessary support. • Difficulties in reaching refugees with disabilities for exchange of information and linkage with local OPDs due to the lack of gadgets that would allow them to remain in contact with AOPD members • Limited access to medicines and health services (e.g. diagnostic services, specialized health services) of refugees with disabilities and serious chronic diseases. The participants provided examples of financially unaffordable medicines for refugees with serious chronic diseases and lack of equivalent medicines in Moldova as those prescribed by Ukrainian doctors. Additionally, Moldovan family doctors were not able to prescribe compensated or free medicines to refugees because of a lack of special program or budget line to cover 	



the costs of medicines. An issue remains limited resources allocated for procurement and distribution of medicines to refugees especially in rural areas. Keystone Moldova Mobile Team mentioned that many cases of refugees was referred to Keystone Moldova to find solutions for treatment and procurement of medicines. For instance, insulin treatment for type 1 diabetes is different in Moldova and Ukraine and the lack of appropriate insulin type in Moldova was challenging for Ukrainian refugees dependent on this medicine. Treatments for mental health prescribed in Ukraine was difficult if not impossible to access in Moldova in case of many refugees with psychosocial disabilities.

- **Difficulties in ensuring special nutrition for persons with disabilities.** The DTF Chair presented the case of the RAC managed by SOS Autism. She explained that the Governmental institution responsible for accreditation of RACs refused to accredit the canteen kitchen facilities of SOS Autism and the catering services were used to feed the beneficiaries. In such cases, flexibility is needed to accommodate better the needs as children with autism in many cases need a special nutrition, gluten free or sugar free that cannot be provided through catering services.
- **Insufficient assistive equipment** for persons with disabilities. The **low quality of the assistive devices** is another problematic issue. The DTF Chair provided an example, when the organization received plastic wheelchairs of bad quality as a donation. The wheelchairs were not durable, and were not adapted for our streets/roads. She stressed that it is important to ask partners to buy assistive devices of good quality for refugees with disabilities.
- **Inappropriate use of donated items** destined to refugees with disabilities by service providers (e.g. mobile toilets donated to RACs were not used by beneficiaries accommodated in the respective RACs).
- **Limited access to rehabilitation services** for refugees with disabilities and expensive rehabilitation that are not financially affordable for many refugees. The DTF Chair mentioned that rehabilitation services cost on average 8000 lei for a child per month.
- **Difficulties in ensuring inclusive education** for refugee children with disabilities. The CRAP Director mentioned the **lack of support services for refugee children and the lack of assistive equipment in schools.**
- Inability of refugee families to cover the **high costs of utilities for rented apartments/houses** was mentioned as a challenge by Keystone Moldova Mobile Team.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient support services for better inclusion of refugees with disabilities in open labor market . <p>Refugee parents that care for children with severe disabilities mentioned during their testimonials, also problems such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expensive rehabilitation services to be covered by parents; • lack of qualified specialists to provide rehabilitation services in certain areas; • problems in using the public transport when traveling with a child with severe disability and the need to use expensive taxi services; • high costs of special nutrition products and orthopedic footwear that require additional financial resources and put a big financial pressure on parents; • lack or insufficient opportunities for practicing interests-based learning activities in case of children with disabilities. 	
<p>Priority measures of the DTF for addressing the identified gaps in 2023 – group discussion moderated by Alberto Tonon, Disability Inclusion Specialist, OHCHR/UNHCR</p>	<p>Following the discussion on DTF priorities for 2023, the participants agreed to focus on the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue advocate for collecting and reporting data disaggregated by disability by using the Washington Group Questions; • To provide capacity building to different actors involved in the refugee response. The DTF Chair proposed capacity building activities on issues such communication with and about persons with disabilities and announced that Keystone Moldova has internationally certified trainers that can deliver such trainings; • To monitor how different actors (Government and partners) mainstream disability into the refugee response. The Disability Inclusion Specialist suggested to retake the Checklist developed by the DTF and to understand why the partners do not use it; • To review the ToR of DTF based on the meeting discussions that highlighted the challenges and gaps to be addressed in 2023; • To develop the DTF Action Plan for 2023 based on the challenged expressed by participants in the DTF meeting; • To conduct needs assessment of refugees with disabilities. The DTF Chair announced that in 2023 UN Agencies in cooperation with the DTF would implement a new project that has needs assessment as a key component; • To review the CASH programs by linking the financial assistance provided to refugees with their specific needs, taking into account the assessed needs of persons with disabilities; 	<p>Alberto Tonon to review the DTF ToR by the end of January 2023 and to share it with the DTF members for comments/inputs</p> <p>Alberto Tonon to review the share with the DTF members the DTF Action Plan for 2023 for comments/inputs</p> <p>Alberto Tonon to provide the DTF members with a draft service mapping to be completed by DTF members in 2023</p>



- **To use the case management approach** to design and offer services that would better respond to the specific needs of refugees with disabilities; This includes working with Government agencies to ensure the availability of services for refugees with disabilities in sectors such as education, health, employment etc.;
- **To extend in other districts (rayons) the communication platform** aiming at exchange of information between persons with disabilities and OPDs from Moldova and refugees with disabilities from Ukraine; AOPD will be responsible for the implementation of the measure.
- **To monitor the use of donated items destined to refugees with disabilities** by service providers, including RACs;
- **To continue working on inclusive education of refugee children.** This involves actions to be taken by CRAP in collaboration with DTF. The main measure would be the following:
 - Expansion of PSS program and its adaptation to the needs of children with disabilities;
 - Consolidation of collaboration between CRAP and NGOs for identification of refugee children with disabilities that need inclusive education services and assistive equipment;
 - Improvement of school's accessibility and ensuring the necessary assistive equipment to facilitate the inclusion of refugee children with disabilities in regular schools.
- **To continue working on employment of refugees with disabilities in partnership with OPDs.**

Humanity and Inclusion representative mentioned that in January-February 2023 they would launch a **Call for proposal for OPDs** to present projects on accessibility, inclusive education and work inclusion. They plan also working with universities to include accessibility standards for architects in their courses.

The Disability Inclusion Specialist proposed to continue working on **service mapping** for persons with disabilities and on **referral pathways** to find appropriate solutions for specific cases.

The DTF Chair emphasized the need to **enhance visibility of local NGOs that provide services and assistance to refugees with disabilities** by reporting their activities through ActivityInfo. This would increase their opportunities for applying to funds destined to the assistance of refugees.



Conclusion / AOB	<p>The Disability Inclusion Specialist announced that in 2023 the DTF would reduce the frequency of DTF meetings: from twice a month to once a month. This would allow more time for organization of meetings, for identification of key subjects to be discussed and for follow-up activities. He highlighted the importance</p> <p>The DTF Chair invited the local NGOs to delegate a representative of their organization to act as focal point in order to receive access to ActivityInfo and to report their activity related to the assistance of refugees. She mentioned that until 27 December all organizations are requested to introduce data on the activity performed until June 2022 and that in the next period it will be necessary to introduce data related to the assistance provided until the end of 2022.</p> <p>The DTF Chair congratulated the DTF members on their activity and achievements in 2022 and wished them a happy and peaceful Christmas.</p>	
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