




National Assembly of
People with Disabilities
of Ukraine



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ON THEIR RIGHTS: EVERY VOICE MATTERS

INFORMATION MATERIALS

The left side of the page features a vertical blue banner. At the top, the Ukrainian text 'КОМБЕ' and 'США ООС 3 А' is visible. Below it is the United Nations logo, a white emblem on a blue background. The rest of the banner is a solid blue color.

In preparing the information materials “People with Disabilities About Their Rights: Every Voice Matters,” the results of research, monitoring, surveys, and interviews with women and men with disabilities, legal representatives of people with disabilities, children and youth with disabilities, and veterans conducted by the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine in recent years, as well as official information from state institutions, were used.

The gathered material was utilized in the preparation of the Alternative Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The activities were carried out within the project “Ukraine War: OPD-led Disability Inclusive Response and Recovery (Phase 2),” implemented by the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine with the support of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the Christian Blind Mission (CBM).

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National Public Association of People with Visual Impairments “The Generation of Successful Action,” Kyiv city

Zhytomyr Regional Public Organisation of People with Disabilities “Youth. Woman. Family,” Zhytomyr city

Zaporizhzhia Regional Organisation “Autism. Conscious Parenting,” Zaporizhzhia city
“Special Children,” Odesa city

Kharkiv Regional Union of Afghanistan War Veterans with Disabilities, Kharkiv city

Association for the Protection of Rights and Assistance to People with Disabilities “Open Hearts,” Vinnytsia city

Chernivtsi Regional Organisation of People with Disabilities “Leader,” Chernivtsi city

Lviv Regional Organisation “Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities,” Lviv city

Nova Odesa City Organisation of the National Union of Persons with Disabilities of Ukraine, Nova Odesa, Mykolaiv region

“Initiatives of Slobozhanshchyna,” Sumy city

Centre for Social Adaptation of People with Disabilities “The Ocean of Goodness,” Dnipro city

“The Path of Kindness,” Uman, Cherkasy region

Kharkiv Association of Blind Lawyers, Kharkiv city

“AirLight,” Kyiv city

Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Lviv city

Poltava City Public Association of Persons with Disabilities “Vira,” Poltava city

Rehabilitation and Pedagogical Centre “Strumok,” Brody, Lviv region

Kharkiv Regional Organisation of the All-Ukrainian Organisation of Persons with Disabilities, Kharkiv city

All-Ukrainian League of Organisations of Persons with Visual Impairment “Modern Look,” Kyiv city

Kyiv city branch of the All-Ukrainian Public Association of Freelance (Public) Inspectors of Architectural and Construction Control, Kyiv city

Poltava Regional Organisation of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind, Poltava city

Stryi City Association of Persons with Disabilities, Stryi, Lviv region

Ukrainian Society of the Deaf, Kyiv city

Ukrainian Society of the Blind, Vinnytsia city

Ukrainian Society of the Blind, Dnipro city

Ukrainian Society of the Blind, Lviv city

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Abbreviations

CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
IDP(s)	Internally displaced person(s)
OPD	NGO / public organisation of people with disabilities
MinSocPolicy	Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health
MinHealth	Ministry of Health of Ukraine
NAPD	All-Ukrainian Public Association "The National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine"
PFU	Pension Fund of Ukraine
Fund	Social Protection Fund for Persons with Disabilities

ARTICLE 1. Purpose

Following an advocacy campaign conducted by the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine¹ in 2012-2015 to eliminate the term “an invalid” from usage in the Ukrainian language and amend the translation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities², as well as the publication of the Concluding Observations on Ukraine’s Initial Report³ – in which the CRPD Committee recommended that the state party remove references to “invalids” or “persons with restricted physical abilities” from all legislative and policy documents and adopt CRPD-compliant terminology – the issue of discriminatory terminology usage remains acute.



The Ukrainian legislation, especially by-laws, still uses such categories as “an invalid,” “a person with restricted abilities,” “person with life activity limitation,” etc.⁴

This creates one of the obstacles to the CPRD implementation, discriminates persons with disabilities, and supports the medical model of disability, particularly when developing and implementing policies, programmes, and strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure the use of uniform CRPD-aligned terminology on disability in all areas, including healthcare, legislation, programmes, policies, classifications, and medical protocols.

¹ Hereinafter, the abbreviation NAPD is used.

² Until 2015, the name of the document was the Convention on the Rights of the Disabled. It was ratified by the Parliament of Ukraine in 2009. Hereinafter referred to as CRPD.

³ September 04, 2015. CRPD/C/UKR/CO/1

⁴ The terminology used in the text of the information materials is in accordance with the current legislation of Ukraine. The authors do not always agree with the use of terms that contradict the CRPD.



ARTICLE 4. General obligations

National legislation has declarative norms, in particular, related to liability for violations of the rights of persons with disabilities, providing for it, but not specifying offences and crimes and liability for their commitment.⁵

The Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for criminal liability for deliberate actions aimed at direct or indirect restriction of rights or the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens based on disability.⁶ However, due to the fact that the relevant legislative provision falls under the category of private prosecution cases, the number of persons with disabilities who have filed court complaints regarding discrimination or whose rights have been restored remains unknown.^{7,8,9}



Moreover, the issue of distinguishing between administrative and criminal liability for unlawful acts related to discrimination based on disability or multiple discrimination, including on the grounds of disability, remains unresolved. The settlement of this issue would contribute to the realistic enforcement of liability for such actions.

⁵ For example, according to Article 42 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine,” “persons guilty of violating the requirements of this Law shall bear material, disciplinary, administrative, or criminal liability established by law.”

⁶ [The Criminal Code of Ukraine](#)

⁷ [Information on the status of the criminal proceedings under Article 161 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine](#) “The violation of equality of citizens based on their race, nationality, region, religious beliefs, disability and other grounds.”

⁸ [Kuvila O. I. Statistics and practice of appealing to the court by persons with disabilities](#) // Legal novels. Helvetica Publishing House. No. 20, 2023. P. 16 – 22.

⁹ A case study of Yurii Chereda v. Bank. A blind Kharkiv resident decided to buy a household appliance on credit. The man chose a suitable appliance and tried to obtain a consumer loan from a bank employee. However, the bank representative demanded that he bring a guarantor due to his severe disability. In the absence of such a guarantor, the bank refused to issue the loan. The Kharkiv Regional Appeal Court upheld the decision of the first instance court to protect consumer rights and recognize the refusal to grant a loan as discrimination on the basis of disability and compensate for non-pecuniary damage. The court ruled that the bank’s actions were unlawful and ordered it to pay compensation to the victim. The court found that the man was denied a loan solely on the grounds that he was a person with a disability. [The Main Aspects of Work and Interaction of Lawyers with People with Disabilities: a Manual for lawyers and employees of Centres for free secondary legal aid.](#) RGF Law and Democracy, 2019. 32 p.

The level of awareness among persons with disabilities regarding their rights and opportunities for their realization remains extremely low.^{10,11} At the same time, even when such awareness exists, it often does not enable these individuals to exercise their legal guarantees due to the lack of clearly defined responsible government bodies, subordinate regulatory legal acts with clear and non-bureaucratic implementation mechanisms, and/or funding. Moreover, recent years have seen a tendency toward the reduction of the rights of persons with disabilities.^{12,13}



Andrii, Lviv city

We have a lot of norms prescribed by law, but unfortunately, they are 'dead'. They do not work. Moreover, the state restricts existing constitutional rights specifically for people with disabilities. It is desirable that the laws work in the state. That's all we need...

The state does not pay sufficient attention to the training of civil servants and employees of entities providing various services to the population on disability issues, which leads to a lack of understanding of this issue and, as a result, to the development of strategies, plans, programmes without taking into account or with inadequate consideration of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.

For example, the section on the public services portal Diia – “Diia. Barrier-Free”, the educational series “Barrier-Free Literacy” and “State without Barriers”, as well as numerous conferences, seminars and trainings, despite the existence of clear legislatively defined algorithms, do not ensure proper awareness raising and implementation of accessibility in practice.

The relevant information and awareness-raising activities are carried out mainly by public organisations of persons with disabilities.¹⁴

Expenditures from the state and local budgets do not cover the needs of persons with disabilities in various areas of their life.^{15,16} For the most part, guarantees for such people are funded from the central budget, and in the absence of appropriate funds at the local level, disability-related issues are funded and addressed on a residual basis. In addition, the farther a person with a disability lives from a regional centre, the worse the situation with their rights.

¹⁰ A survey of 168 persons (children) with disabilities and their legal representatives showed that 51.8% of respondents (87 people) were familiarised with the catalogue of rehabilitation aids when applying for such aids. 29.2% (49 respondents) were informed about the compatibility of rehabilitation aids, 3.6% (6 people) were given a compatibility table, and 12.5% (21 people) were informed about where to find the relevant information. However, the majority of respondents (92 people, or 54.8 %) did not receive the relevant information. [The Analytical Report on the Results of a Survey of Persons with Disabilities, Legal Representatives of Persons \(Children\) with Disabilities who Applied in 2021-2022 for Rehabilitation Assistive Devices \(technical and other rehabilitation equipment: wheelchairs, prostheses, orthoses, orthopaedic shoes, walkers, canes, crutches, means of communication and information exchange, etc.\) manufactured at the expense of the budget. Kyiv, NAPD, 2022.](#)

¹¹ The results of a survey among 1,316 persons with disabilities and their legal representatives conducted by the NAPD showed a critically low level of awareness of the right to receive certain services and the mechanism for its implementation. For many respondents, rehabilitation and social services, provision of medical devices, medicines, and rehabilitation equipment are identical issues. [The Analytical Report on the Results of the Survey on Access to Various Types of Assistance and Services for People with Disabilities at Their Permanent Place of Residence During the Martial Law, 2022.](#)

¹² [To the NAPD members and partners and everyone concerned](#) with the violation of the rights of persons with disabilities affected at work.

¹³ [It is time for Ukrainians to step out of their comfort zone](#): Minister Zholnovych announces revision of social benefits.

¹⁴ The abbreviation OPD(s) is used throughout the text.

¹⁵ According to the [Accounting Chamber's Report on the results of the audit of the effectiveness of the use of state budget funds](#) to provide certain categories of people with technical and other rehabilitation equipment, approved by Order No. 23-1 of 24 October 2023, the total amount of non-fulfilment of the budget programme in terms of quantitative indicators for the provision of technical rehabilitation equipment in 2021 was 104.8 thousand units (315.2 thousand units vs. 420 thousand units), or 25% of the planned amount, and 95.1 thousand units in 2022, or 24% (302.4 thousand units vs. 397.5 thousand units). As a result, the needs of some persons with disabilities for rehabilitation facilities were not met in a timely manner, and their right to social adaptation was delayed, which prevented them from taking an active part in public life.

¹⁶ According to a survey of 1,316 persons with disabilities and their legal representatives conducted by the NAPD, the following issues were detected: family doctors often refuse to prescribe necessary medicines; lack of or delays in the supply of necessary medicines to pharmacies; lack of funding; inability to seek treatment in rural areas due to the lack of relevant entities and pharmacies; limited dispensing of medicines in pharmacies (for example, a tablet instead of a pack), etc. [Analytical Report on the Survey of Access to Various Types of Assistance and Services for People with Disabilities at Their Permanent Place of Residence during Martial Law, 2022.](#)

**Oleksandr, Volyn region**

I want the authorities to pay attention to us. At least once every six months, the head of the district should come and see how the veterans live. It is necessary not only for the blind. It is important for all veterans.

There is no systematic participation of OPDs in the development of decisions by state authorities and local self-government bodies that directly or indirectly affect persons with disabilities.¹⁷ Mainly politically loyal civic institutions are involved in the development of public policy. NGOs of persons with disabilities are concerned that participation in decision-making processes is formal.

**Maria, Kherson**

They invite us for a tick, for a photo. No one asks us how best to do it. We have experience of disability and life knowledge, and we can tell you how and what will be best for the benefit of the whole community. Take our experience and do good for all people – that's what inclusion is all about.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 3, of the CRPD on the participation of PWDs in decision-making processes that affect them in the development, implementation of policies and strategies in all areas.
- ✓ Ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account at all stages of policy development and implementation in various fields.
- ✓ Ensure that the development and implementation of policies, humanitarian response strategies and recovery plans take a rights-based approach to disability issues, as well as disability mainstreaming.
- ✓ Define in legislation the status of CSOs as “organisations established and led by persons with disabilities or their legal representatives” and ensure their institutional support.
- ✓ Provide training for civil servants and professionals in various fields on the rights of persons with disabilities and awareness of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

¹⁷ For example, to avoid coordinating draft legal acts with OPDs, public authorities write in explanatory notes that such acts do not concern the rights of persons with disabilities (draft laws of Ukraine [No.10293](#) “On Amendments to the Fundamentals of the Legislation of Ukraine on Health Care to Improve Restrictions for Medical, Pharmaceutical, and Rehabilitation Workers in Their Professional Activities,” [No.10399](#) “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Financing Higher Education and Providing State Targeted Assistance,” and others. By its [Resolution No. 1054 of 06 October 2023](#), “On the Amendments to Clause 13 of the Regulation on State Registration of Regulatory Legal Acts of Ministries and Other Executive Bodies,” the Government cancelled the ban on state registration of acts against which associations of persons with disabilities are opposed.

ARTICLE 5. Equality and non-discrimination

Legislative guarantees do not ensure an adequate level of access to justice for persons with disabilities and, accordingly, protection and redress of violated rights, as due to the low level of legal awareness of a significant number of persons with disabilities, and the barriers in the external environment, including courts, such persons rarely apply to the courts. There is no official statistics to confirm this, but it can be inferred from the analysis of court reports on cases.^{18,19}

It was only in 2017 that incapacitated persons were granted the right to apply to the court in person for the restoration of their legal capacity.²⁰ And only in 2023, such persons and persons with limited legal capacity were granted the right to apply for free primary legal aid.²¹ However, this applies exclusively to issues for which they are allowed to go to court, and only during the course of the case in court. This restriction has a negative impact on the ability of people deprived of or with limited legal capacity to exercise their right to access justice, as it prevents them from receiving appropriate legal services at the pre-trial stage.



No state body keeps statistics on the number of appeals, complaints, applications for discrimination on the basis of disability and the number of cases resolved in favour of persons with disabilities. Very limited information on this issue is available in the public domain.^{22,23,24}

Attempts to improve the legislation, including by introducing a new form of discrimination – for refusing reasonable accommodation – have not been implemented and remain at the level of draft laws.²⁵

¹⁸ [No. 1-c. Report of the courts of first instance](#) on the consideration of cases in civil proceedings.

¹⁹ [No. 10. Report on collection, exemption, and refund of court fees](#) in local and appellate courts.

²⁰ [On the reform of procedural codes.](#)

²¹ Articles 7 and 10 of the [Law of Ukraine "On Free Legal Aid."](#)

²² [Overview of strategic court cases](#) against disability discrimination.

²³ [Decision of Ternopil District Court](#) of 13 October 2020 in case No. 500/1717/20.

²⁴ "The court emphasises that it is the state, represented by state bodies, that, in order to guarantee a person the possibility of enjoying all human and civil rights and freedoms, must provide a mechanism for the exercise of such rights and freedoms, which in this case the defendant failed to do so, as the plaintiff was not provided with the opportunity to exercise the right to vote in elections by secret ballot as a person with a visual disability. The relevant procedure had not been developed and implemented, as required by Article 62 of the Electoral Code of Ukraine." [Decision of Kyiv District Administrative Court](#) of 18 August 2021 in case No. 640/11812/21.

²⁵ [Draft Law No. 3501, dated 20 November 2015](#), "On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine (to harmonise legislation for preventing and combating discrimination with the law of the European Union)."



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Strengthen the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities by introducing additional liability for discrimination, including administrative liability, for, inter alia, refusal to provide reasonable accommodation; the relevant amendments should be introduced to the legislation of Ukraine.
- ✓ Introduce a system for monitoring the situation with the observance of the rights of persons with disabilities through regular collection and analysis of data on court appeals.

ARTICLE 6. Women with disabilities



Yulia, Kyiv

...There are fewer and fewer men, they are mobilised and taken away in martial law, and a woman has to be strong to support her family, support the military, support her children, bring them up...

There is no systematic approach to taking into account the issues of women with disabilities, elderly women, and women raising children with disabilities when planning strategies and programmes, including those related to the reconstruction of Ukraine.



Women and girls with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, are unable to exercise their right to access healthcare services due to inaccessible buildings, lack of information in alternative formats, inaccessible medical equipment, lack of transport, etc. These issues have been significantly exacerbated by the war, which has forced women/girls with disabilities to leave their homes and become internally displaced persons (IDPs), losing all social ties.

The situation with elderly women and women with high support needs, single women who were forced to seek shelter in institutional facilities and hospitals due to the lack of accessible accommodation for IDPs with disabilities is of high concern.

**Valentyna, Mykolaiv region**

In territorial communities, villages, when we talk about a sanitary room, there may be a toilet somewhere, but it is not suitable for women and men with disabilities at all: neither in a wheelchair nor with crutches. In general, the healthcare system is inaccessible, pharmacies are inaccessible. If there is a ramp, the doors do not meet the standards or the cash register is too high... Hygiene products that healthcare should provide are also inaccessible to people. If you take every item related to healthcare, everything is inaccessible or partially inaccessible.

**Liudmyla, Kyiv**

Today, representatives of the deaf community in medical institutions try to provide services through an interpreter using a system such as the UTOH [Ukrainian Society of the Deaf] service, but there are problems here too. Not all medical institutions, let's say, want to communicate with an interpreter using this application. Not all doctors and not all deaf patients can use this app. We deaf people are different. There are elderly people among us and also bedridden people. It is very difficult for the deaf and blind. The problem is getting medical services, especially for the deaf and blind. Calling 112, calling an ambulance, does not work perfectly, not in all regions. The situation is very difficult, especially in the frontline areas: there are deaf people who have remained there, who do not want to leave or cannot...

A lack of understanding of disability issues and the problems of women and girls with disabilities leads to distorted policies and additional financial costs. For example, 15 years after Ukraine ratified the CRPD, an order was issued "On Amendments to the Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine of 04 November 2010 No. 951"²⁶ requiring the mandatory availability of a "gynaecological chair for persons with disabilities" in obstetric and gynaecological departments of healthcare facilities. This is a purely Ukrainian know-how, as other countries use universal gynaecological chairs, instead of special "gynaecological chairs for persons with disabilities."

**Iryna, Ivano-Frankivsk**

Now our offices will have two chairs – a gynaecological chair and a gynaecological chair for people with disabilities.

**Valentyna, Chernivtsi**

To be honest, there have been improvements in terms of medical services. At the same time, women with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs, still need to be examined – gynaecological chairs, mammography machines, X-ray machines, other devices, couches, and toilets. If a healthcare facility has a ramp, it is often not in compliance with the regulations, and it is impossible to climb without help, and narrow doors and thresholds are also an obstacle. If you are treated in a medical facility, there are very few, if any, adapted and equipped rooms for people with disabilities, and no anti-decubitus mattresses in the wards.

²⁶ Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine No. 904, dated 16 May 2023, "On Amendments to the Order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine No.951, dated 04 November 2010."



Uliana, Lviv region

I want to share a positive experience... Our main referral hospital is fully accessible physically, there are lifts that work, wards are accessible. Our family doctor always asks if we are doing well. Because we commented on the steepness of the ramp, and it was redesigned...

Women and girls with disabilities are often discriminated and cannot always exercise their rights.²⁷ This is especially true for women with mental and intellectual disabilities who are in social care institutions or in families and experience violence, abuse and mistreatment, without the ability to defend their rights on their own. Unfortunately, ill-treatment and violence against women who are currently in the temporarily occupied territories in institutional settings has not been documented and is not being documented.

There are no official statistics on the number of women and girls with disabilities who have become IDPs and moved to other countries.



Vira, Luhansk region

The war has changed everyone's life. Mine and my family's... This is the second time we have changed our place of residence. First time it was in 2014, now again... We lost our apartment, I lost my job, school, access to services... Every day starts with the thought of what to do next. It is hard. There is no solution yet...

Women with disabilities who lead civil society organisations or work in civil society organisations report insufficient involvement in decision-making during the war, particularly in humanitarian response. This leads to the fact that women with disabilities, women raising children with disabilities, IDP women, and elderly women are often left out and do not receive adequate support during war and humanitarian emergencies.



Iryna, Poltava

There is a stereotype that we can't do anything and we don't solve anything... But who knows how we work? We do daily housework, raise children, cook, and we have to look good because we are women, and we work for a common victory...

RECOMMENDATIONS:

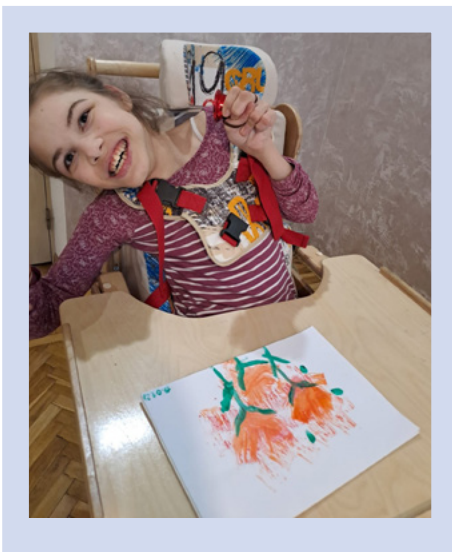
- ✓ Develop and implement programmes aimed at ensuring the safety and rehabilitation of women with disabilities who have experienced domestic violence, taking into account their specific needs.
- ✓ Introduce monitoring of ill-treatment and violence against women and girls with disabilities in institutional settings, including in the temporarily occupied territories.
- ✓ Ensure the involvement of women with disabilities and organisations representing their interests in the development of policies, strategies, and programmes for humanitarian response and recovery.

²⁷ Every year in Ukraine, the number of women raising children with disabilities on their own is increasing: in 2015, there were 154,000 of them, and in 2017, there were already 160,000. These women are raising their children alone and, therefore, do not have the opportunity to work fully. Assistance from the state is scarce, with no funds for the rehabilitation of a child with a disability allocated in community budgets. In total, there are 2.8 million people with disabilities in Ukraine, more than 1 million of whom are women of working age. Only a third of them are employed, while the rest need to be employed. Therefore, this is a problem concerning their material well-being and socialisation in society. Women with disabilities are primarily dissatisfied with the inaccessibility of medical care. Among them, 65% visit a doctor less than once a year, 11% self-medicate, and 76% cannot see a gynaecologist at all because the office is located above the first floor and there is no lift. [Parliamentary hearings](#) "Preventing and Combating Discrimination against Women from Vulnerable Social Groups," 10 October 2018.

- ✓ Ensure accessibility of services for women with disabilities at the place of residence, including medical and reproductive health services.
- ✓ Provide support to the “vulnerable among vulnerable groups” of women with disabilities to improve their situation and empowerment.
- ✓ Allocate the necessary financial resources for the implementation of appropriate community-based services to eliminate the isolation, segregation and institutionalisation of women with disabilities.

ARTICLE 7. Children with disabilities

The issue of realisation of the rights of children with disabilities living in families or in institutional settings requires a more systematic approach from the state. Despite the already adopted legal documents, including strategies and programmes to protect children’s rights in various spheres of life, their rights are violated for a number of reasons: the declarative nature of these documents, insufficient communication between ministries and agencies dealing with children’s rights, including those with disabilities, lack of adequate funding for state policy in this area, a formal approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of state programmes, lack of information for users, etc.



The reform of the institutional care system does not fully address the needs of children with disabilities. Positive trends and negative consequences of the National Strategy for Reforming the System of Institutional Care and Education for 2017-2026²⁸ are not assessed.

Poor quality services and rehabilitation programmes, inadequate qualifications of staff providing services and support to children with disabilities result in such children remaining on the margins of society. The issue of children in institutional care has been exacerbated by the war and the humanitarian situation – the relocation of institutional care facilities to safer regions of Ukraine, the removal of children to other countries, and the forced removal of children to the Russian Federation.

²⁸ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 526-r of August 9, 2017, “On the National Strategy for Reforming the System of Institutional Care and Education of Children for 2017-2026 and the Action Plan for the Implementation of its First Stage”



Yulia, Zaporizhzhia

I am a mother raising a child with a severe disability. My child has several disabilities – cerebral palsy, does not move independently, is blind and does not speak. Needless to say, I went to a social rehabilitation centre with my child when he was still a baby and submitted documents. They accepted my documents. We went to the meeting and the manager said to me: “You know, honestly, I’ve been working here for 10 years, and I’ve never had a child this difficult. I don’t know what to do with you.” That’s how they provided social services to my child. Well, we went there, worked together, I carried methodological instructions from the kindergarten teachers and shared something with their specialists. But, to be honest, I had enough for one course for six months. I thanked them. We’ll probably continue on our own...



Svitlana, Vinnytsia

Ukraine has a legislative framework in place, so a programme can work in every region. Let’s dream... When a child is born, a specialist, a doctor, a medical psychologist, comes to the mother in the maternity hospital and says, “Yes, your child has a disability, but you should not be afraid, because our state of Ukraine will help you. We have a support programme in place – your child will first be in early intervention from birth to three and a half years. Then we will help you, and you will go to an inclusive kindergarten, where your child will have an assistant, if necessary. And then at school, your child will also have an assistant. After that, perhaps, if your child has severe disabilities, there will be a day centre in parallel. And after the age of 18, you will have a programme of social and labour adaptation, social workshops, which are now quite active in Ukraine on the basis of both NGOs and municipal rehabilitation centres... After that, support in the workplace... we also have standards. Then we have transitional accommodation and preparation for independent living. Today, deinstitutionalisation programmes, in which considerable funds are invested, are ineffective, as people need supported living in families. And there are many models of supported living. And every community that has its own resources can open this or that model. ... Today we must talk about the need to support our families from the birth of a child and beyond at all stages of their lives. Let’s dream and believe.

The adopted National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education until 2029²⁹ provides some optimistic forecasts for the realisation of the right of children with disabilities to education. The practical activities of OPDs and surveys of parents raising children with disabilities show that due to the inaccessibility of bomb shelters in schools, kindergartens, information and resource centres, and the lack of accessible school buses, children with disabilities cannot attend educational institutions with their peers, receive relevant services, etc. They are forced to stay at home, but due to the lack of technical equipment, the Internet, and power outages, they cannot learn through distance education.



Natalia, Zaporizhzhia

In 2016, parents of children with autism were active, got together and held an event dedicated to Autism Awareness Day (2 April). We made friends with the deputy corps and joined a working group. Parents outlined their problem, and the deputy corps decided to allocate financial assistance to families raising children with autism every year, by 2 April. And then our trend was picked up by parents of children with other disabilities and they also appealed to the city council. Thus, as far as I know, people with most types of disabilities in Zaporizhzhia now receive UAH 2,000 annually (previously it was UAH 1,000).

International humanitarian organisations provide significant assistance to children with disabilities and their families.

²⁹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 527-r of June 7, 2024, “On Approval of the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education till 2029 and Approval of the Operational Action Plan for its Implementation for 2024-2026.”

The State does not ensure awareness-raising activities among children with disabilities in the context of their human rights in general and, in particular, rights derived from their disability status.

The accessibility of children with disabilities to goods and services provided at the community level is unsatisfactory, as in the case of persons with disabilities, due to the barriers of the environment and information, low level of public awareness of communication and support for such children, taking into account the specifics of their health condition, underdeveloped system of service provision in the community, etc. The more complex the impairment of a child with a disability, the more limited his or her access to all rights is, including medical care, rehabilitation, and education.³⁰

OPDs dealing with children with disabilities are not active participants in decision-making processes affecting such children, often due to the deliberate disregard of their potential by state institutions.



Zhanna, Zhytomyr

Thanks to the activity of parents, a day care unit for children with disabilities under the age of 18 was opened in our city in 2020 at the Zhytomyr City Council's Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centre. And in 2024, together with Caritas, the Zhytomyr City Council will provide day care service for young people, i.e. aged 18+. But I want to say that there is one difficulty. This service, especially when it comes to people over 18, is not available to every young person. That is, people with severe complex disabilities are not accepted for this service. And this specifically affected my family, my son, who has autism and severe mental disabilities, was not accepted, refused... And in Zhytomyr, there is a general tendency that both adults and children with severe disabilities are not accepted anywhere.



Natalia, Zaporizhzhia

Regarding the situation in our region... I can say that grants are also being used for social services, for this favourite social service – resilience. This is how they try to stabilise communities. But we understand that everyone is also present at the city level, at the level of the region, and usually when I come to meetings with UNICEF, with various international organisations, clusters, Zaporizhzhia is not present, other communities are present. And I understand that we are slipping in this regard. I want to say that the specificity of a frontline city is that there is no statistics and sometimes people are “doubled up” in humanitarian aid. They are registered both in Zaporizhzhia and in their community. And some of them receive payments very actively, as far as children with disabilities are concerned. I am registered in the chats of organisations that provide services for children, and one mother complained: “I don’t have time because I’m signed up for another event. I’m sorry, I can’t make it today, I won’t come.” And I understand that out of a thousand families with children with disabilities, about a hundred families are active. The rest are just sitting around waiting for humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, I think this is an incorrect division. ... If parents were worried about their child’s health before the war, before Covid-19, they will continue to be worried.

And there are also parents who need psychological support, with whom we need to work in depth. Unfortunately, most of the psychologists who work in municipal institutions and charitable institutions work with beneficiaries very superficially. I’m talking about our region, so I have a lot of questions about the quality...

From our practice, we see that we can help each other better than a psychologist who will give you a simple exercise to breathe and “score” this stress.

³⁰ Although children with disabilities have the right to free and preferential provision of medicines and medical devices, the relevant legislative provisions are not always implemented with impunity. The families of such children are mostly below the poverty line, although they receive payments from the state, the amount of which is meagre compared to the needs of the child.



Natalia, Zaporizhzhia

If you come up with a certain initiative to implement something at the state or city level to make it work for the citizens, for parents and children of the community, you see that this idea is often taken and defamed, sorry, and desecrated. That's why we unite with other parents, with various NGOs, and only then can we advocate for our rights and implement our ideas. Sometimes we advocate on our own, sometimes with the help of grants.

We hear about deinstitutionalisation. I can only quote one of the "opinion leaders" who say that this is not the right time. But if our issues are not relevant now, then we need to look at where and when they are relevant. That's why we understand that tomorrow I won't have a child who will be 13 years old, next year I won't have a child who will be 13. He will be 14, he will need other support, other social services, he will need other services, other networks. That is why we, as parents' organisations, are working today, fighting for the right to vote for our children today and for the future plus 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure access to educational, social, and medical services for children with disabilities, including those with orphan diseases, and families raising them, at the place of residence.
- ✓ Ensure access to rehabilitation services for children with disabilities and children affected by war on a free of charge basis at the place of residence.
- ✓ Ensure the right of children with disabilities to participate in decision-making related to their lives by creating a safe and inclusive environment, developing appropriate age-appropriate methods of involvement and providing necessary support by adults.
- ✓ Provide funding for support programmes for parents raising children with disabilities.
- ✓ To introduce ongoing monitoring of state programmes relating to children with disabilities, including their financial support.
- ✓ Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the observance of the rights of children with disabilities in institutional settings.

ARTICLE 9. Accessibility



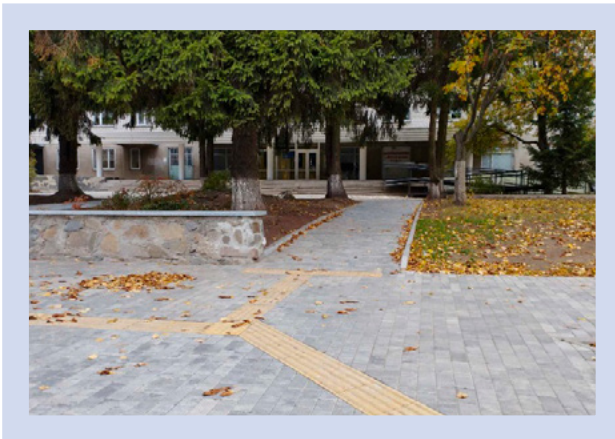
Valentyna, Mykolaiv region

I believe that the main thing is the development of our Ukraine, our cities, our villages, and when everything is physically accessible and the labour law is proper, and people will live better...



Valentyna, Chernivtsi

Compared to previous years – 10 to 20 years ago – it is clear that the situation with accessibility and legislation on this issue has improved. I cannot say that everything is 100% complied with and everything is very good. We need to change laws, introduce changes such as fines. It is necessary to create separate departments or sectors for accessibility at each city administration and other authorities. This is my opinion.



Recent numerous government initiatives on barrier-free accessibility^{31,32,33} have not led to a significant solution to accessibility issues, among other things, due to the lack of or insufficient funding for relevant government solutions.



Nelia, Zhytomyr

In recent years, all public spaces, squares, and the embankment in Zhytomyr have been reconstructed to meet the needs of people with limited mobility. Currently, no funds are allocated from the city budget for such needs because of restrictions due to the war. Design and estimate documentation has been developed, and the work is already starting on four houses for IDPs. These are five-storey buildings, so the accessibility of the first floors of these houses for people with limited mobility is taken into account. Shelters are also provided. So it's not all bad, because the situation is changing.

Recently, the Zhytomyr Regional Military Administration launched a "Barrier-Free Hour." The first training was conducted by a sign language interpreter who taught civil servants how to communicate with people with hearing impairments.



Valentyna, Chernivtsi

I would also like to share some positive moments. In our country, the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration has created the Barrier-Free Bukovyna cluster. This cluster involves representatives of international organisations, government officials, and representatives of local organisations of people with disabilities. This is, first of all. Secondly, in the Chernivtsi region, our NGO started creating inclusive hospital wards. This initiative was picked up by the regional authorities, so there are already 22 inclusive hospital wards, and more are being created. And one more thing. In fact, lifts and elevators have begun to appear that provide accessibility to floors in medical institutions and communities, and this is a very positive impact.

In our region, various structural units initiated by the Chernivtsi State Regional Administration conduct trainings. They involve public organisations of people with disabilities and explain what accessibility, inclusiveness and ethics of communication with people with disabilities are. But this is not enough... there must be more, and more than once. We already have this experience: once we gave a lecture, told how to communicate properly, how to use terms correctly, and the next time we hear the same mistakes from the people we have already taught.

³¹ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 443 dated 14 April 2021](#) "On the Establishment of the Barrier-Free Council."

³² [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 366-p dated 14 April 2021](#) "On Approval of the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine for the Period till 2030."

³³ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 883-p dated 04 August 2021](#) "On Approval of the Action Plan for 2021 and 2022 for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine for the Period till 2030."



Inaction on accessibility issues, lack of monitoring, chaotic initiatives, and a formal approach to understanding disability led to negative consequences with the outbreak of hostilities: people with disabilities were “locked” in their inaccessible homes; it was impossible to go down to shelters because they were inaccessible to people with disabilities; temporary collective shelters are practically inaccessible to people with disabilities; not all medical facilities can provide services to people with disabilities due to inaccessibility of premises, equipment, etc.; inability to find accessible housing for IDPs with disabilities who have lost their own homes; inability to organise services for adults and children with disabilities due to the lack of indoor shelters, as during the air raid people have to go outside to get to the nearest shelter, which is impossible due to limited mobility and lack of shelters, etc.



POSITIVE PRACTICE

NGO “Centre for Social Adaptation of People with Disabilities “Ocean of Goodness”, Dnipro, headed by Olga Volkova

On 24 March 2022, with the support of the Dnipro City Council, the organisation established a temporary accommodation centre for low-mobility elderly people and people with disabilities evacuated from hot spots who need outside help. The centre accepts people with disabilities with musculoskeletal problems, single people aged 80+, bedridden after a stroke, heart attack, wounds, undocumented, with dementia, psychosis, and stateless. As of today, the Centre has 150 beds and has provided support to a total of 2,691 people, including 567 people with disabilities. The Centre helped 76 people to obtain disability status, 169 people to obtain passports and over 1,463 people to obtain IDP status. Under a contract with Vostok, the Centre delivers ready-to-eat meals for 100 people. Another 50 beds, deployed on two floors of one of the two buildings, are conserved (covered with linen and ready to receive people), but there are no funds for their maintenance (neither for food nor for staff).

We solve not only the issues of temporary accommodation, food, hygienic treatment of the elderly, further movement for permanent residence, but also medical, social, educational and other domestic problems.

There are no legal mechanisms to encourage owners, tenants, and asset holders to create accessibility.

According to the law, there is a permit for the construction and reconstruction of facilities using old design documentation, but this does not ensure accessibility. Complaints to ministries and state inspectorates have not yielded any results. The central government has begun to shift the responsibility for not creating accessibility to local authorities, without providing the latter with any legal mechanisms of influence.



Valentyna, Chernivtsi

I see tactile tiles, but I also see that they are often not installed as they should be. And this means money, accessibility, human safety...



Nelia, Zhytomyr

While we still have new state building standards for people with limited mobility and for medical facilities, for some reason it seems that these standards are only advisory. There is no responsibility. The standards seem to exist, but there is no responsibility for non-compliance. This is the biggest problem. This applies to both transport and architecture.

The state has not ensured proper control over compliance with the requirements of the legislation in the field of urban planning, building codes, state standards and regulations in terms of accessibility, as the government has suspended scheduled and unscheduled state supervision (control) measures for the period of martial law since 13 March 2022.^{34,35,36}

The fact that modular towns are being built that are not adapted for people with disabilities is a cause for concern. These are mostly projects funded by international organisations.

The accessibility of transport and transport infrastructure for people with disabilities remains low, especially in rural areas.^{37,38}

³⁴ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 303 dated 13 March 2022](#) "On Termination of State Supervision (Control) and State Market Supervision Measures under Martial Law."

³⁵ It is important that in the presence of a threat that has a negative impact on the rights, legitimate interests, human life and health, environmental protection, and security of the state, as well as to fulfil Ukraine's international obligations during martial law, unscheduled state supervision (control) measures are allowed based on decisions of central executive authorities responsible for formulating state policy in the relevant areas. However, reports by the OPDs on violations of building codes regarding accessibility requirements during design and construction by the relevant state authorities (including controlling authorities) remain unanswered.

³⁶ [On 22 March 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Resolution No. 347](#), which stipulates that during the period of martial law, the state architectural and construction control authorities are allowed to carry out unscheduled inspections of compliance by customers, designers, contractors and expert organisations with construction standards in terms of inclusiveness of buildings and structures, compliance with the requirements of legislation in the field of civil protection, fire and industrial safety, requirements of the However, over the past three months, this resolution has not been published and therefore has not entered into force.

³⁷ The share of passenger railcars designed to carry passengers with disabilities, which were ordered by the Ukrainian Railway over the past two years, in the total structure of passenger railcars purchased does not exceed 7%, while the [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 152 of 14 February 2023](#) "Some Issues of Ensuring Barrier-free Conditions, Energy Efficiency, and Civil Protection Requirements" refers to all goods. The situation with school buses is similar. In particular, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine did not include in the [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 418 of 28 April 2023](#) "Some Issues of Providing a Subvention from the State Budget to Local Budgets for the Procurement of School Buses" the requirement that local authorities can purchase exclusively inclusive buses at the expense of public funds. As a result, accessible school buses are hardly ever purchased.

³⁸ Ukraine's implementation of standardisation norms regarding the sounds of traffic lights remains unresolved. No standards for the sound of traffic lights in Ukraine exist, although this issue was once discussed, in particular, a [general standard for road traffic lights](#) was developed with public participation, which provided for the regulation of traffic lights sound.



Persons with various types of disabilities face difficulties in obtaining public information, using electronic services, services, and mobile applications. There is no software for blind people to help them read Ukrainian-language text on a computer monitor or mobile phone display. The level of adaptation of television daily broadcasting for the perception of persons with hearing impairments through sign language interpretation and/or subtitling remains low. Government websites remain inaccessible.³⁹



POSITIVE PRACTICE

NGO “Initiatives of Slobozhanshchyna”, Sumy, led by Daria Sassa

The organisation cares for visually impaired people, including IDPs, living in Sumy region.

Through persistent efforts and convincing negotiations with the local authorities, Slobozhanshchyna Initiatives managed to ensure that in October 2017, traffic lights with sound signals started operating for the first time in Sumy. We continue working to resolve this issue completely.

At the initiative of the organisation’s chairman, Anatolii Sassa, in 2019, programmer Serhii Svitailo developed a mobile transport application Sumy GPS Inclusive for visually impaired people who use screen access apps on their smartphones. Using this app with GPS navigation enabled, visually impaired Sumy residents can find the desired public transport stop, plan a walking route to it using Google Maps, find out the time of arrival of the transport, and find the target stop on the desired route and track it in the mobile app. The app will notify the user when they approach this stop and when they arrive. The app’s interface is free of small elements and uses voiceover and language access, which is very convenient for people with visual impairments. The developer later adapted this application for other regional centres of Ukraine: Dnipro, Lviv, Poltava, Kharkiv, etc.⁴⁰

Instead, official information in this regard differs significantly and shows that 67.69% of central executive authorities and 84% of regional state administrations have fully complied with the requirements of legal acts to ensure accessibility of information for users with visual and hearing impairments. The websites of local authorities and local self-government bodies are not monitored for compliance with accessibility standards.



Maryna, Poltava

The issue of information accessibility looks like this: information, including digital information, accessibility of information on websites has not improved, unfortunately. Even during the war, visually impaired people in Poltava region (I think not only in Poltava region) experience discomfort and some discrimination.

People with visual impairments receive less humanitarian aid because they are unable to fill out questionnaires without assistance. Many people simply do not have modern means of communication, especially those with visual impairments living in rural areas.



Gennadiy, Kyiv

Especially Diia. Signature. This function in Activities for the Blind and Visually Impaired is impossible to use because you need to turn your face left and right and get into the square, which is impossible without sight.

³⁹ Report on the results of the study “The Inclusiveness and Human Rights in the Focus: Accessibility of Services and E-Governance Services for Citizens in Ukraine.”

⁴⁰ Higher mobility – lower barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Reinstate state architectural and construction control, in particular to ensure that all new and reconstructed facilities meet accessibility standards and are user-friendly for people with different needs.
- ✓ Create an effective system for monitoring the accessibility of licensed facilities.
- ✓ Involve representatives of the CSOI as experts at all stages of design and construction of public facilities.
- ✓ Create a system for monitoring compliance with digital accessibility requirements and provide for liability for their violation.
- ✓ Implement state programmes to develop accessibility of information and communication technologies for persons with disabilities, including the provision of special equipment, training and consultations.
- ✓ Ensure accessibility of shelters, places of temporary stay, and shelters in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine.
- ✓ Ensure compliance with the principles of accessibility and universal design in physical infrastructure rehabilitation programmes, including medical and educational facilities.

ARTICLE 11. Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

Communication between civil protection actors and public organisations of persons with disabilities and consultants with disabilities is not established at the appropriate level and is fragmented. Mostly in cases when state authorities and local self-government bodies need assistance in the practical implementation of emergency response measures.

For example, when it comes to evacuation, accommodation of victims in shelters, provision of humanitarian aid, etc.

Most collective temporary accommodation facilities, transport and transport infrastructure used during evacuation are not adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Public policy requires a systematic approach – improving the legislative framework, strategies, programmes, and ensuring their practical implementation.



Mykola, Lviv

Perhaps we need temporary houses so that people with disabilities can have some adequate, normal living conditions. For example, in western Ukraine, several such houses could be built so that there would be a normal infrastructure, a pharmacy and a shop, so that they would not have to look far...



Since the beginning of the war, OPDs have been providing significant support to people with disabilities and the elderly in terms of evacuation, humanitarian aid, legal and psychological support; opening shelters on the basis of organisations; and helping people in institutional care. Activities are funded by international donors and UN agencies.



POSITIVE PRACTICE

The National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine

The National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD) is an association of public organizations of people with disabilities, and before the war it included 126 organisations from different regions of Ukraine.

With the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022, NAPD member organisations had to partially reorient their activities to provide humanitarian assistance to people with disabilities, families raising children with disabilities, and elderly people: targeted cash assistance, accommodation and meals, food packages, hygiene products, technical rehabilitation equipment, medicines, payment for medical services, vehicles, etc.

Thanks to the support of organisations of people with disabilities from different countries, individuals, UN agencies, foundations and NGOs, and businesses, the NAPD Secretariat was able to provide assistance to more than 40,000 people with disabilities. The organisational capacity of 220 organisations of persons with disabilities was supported through mini-grants, training, and participation in NAPD projects.



Mykola, Lviv

Together with Valentyna Butenko, Liubov Dmytrivna, and Olesia Perepechenko, we have been involved in evacuation since the beginning of the war. And in the first months of 2022, about a thousand people passed through us, whom we evacuated to safe countries in Europe.

**POSITIVE PRACTICE****Poltava Regional Organisation of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind. Maryna Babets, Head of the Board**

During the martial law period, the Poltava regional organisation of the UTOS, with the financial support of the Poltava City Council and the Poltava District Branch of the Poltava Regional Employment Centre, provided 78,234 physical support services to persons with visual impairments, including IDPs. The heads of the organisation's structural units provided 10,689 consultations on social and legal protection of persons with disabilities during martial law alone.

During the war, as part of the humanitarian response, members of the organisation received 6,971 food packages, 621 hygiene kits, 174 packages of vitamin complexes, 58 sets of bed linen, etc. During the war, as a result of the organisation's cooperation with the Poltava City Council and the "PoltavaElectroAutoTrans" utility company, 100% of new trolleybuses have external route number announcements, and 100% of all trolleybuses have updated internal bus stop announcements.

**POSITIVE PRACTICE****NGO "Association for the Protection of Rights and Assistance to People with Disabilities "Open Hearts", Vinnytsia. Head – Svitlana Demko**

The Open Hearts Association runs an office with classrooms, an independent living training centre, social creative workshops, inclusive greenhouses, a support centre for people with disabilities and their families, and an eco-estate for recreation and rehabilitation. All premises and grounds are accessible and programmes are tailored to the needs of the target group. In the social sphere, we provide day care, occupational therapy, counselling, support and mediation services to children and young people with disabilities, parents, and other family members. We work with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to develop and test state standards for social services.

In the legal sphere, we protect the rights of people with disabilities, represent their interests, and provide proposals for draft laws.

Since 24 February 2022, we have sheltered, heated and fed 421 people in the first two months, including people with disabilities, small children and the elderly.

Wartime forced the opening of new programmes:

- ✓ online format of psychological support, art therapy, and counselling;
- ✓ group evacuation (135 people with severe disabilities and their families to four EU countries);
- ✓ collecting and delivering humanitarian goods (67 tonnes delivered and distributed);



- ✓ providing people with disabilities, including IDPs, with essential medicines, food, and hygiene products (1,300 sets with the support of Japan; 7.5 tonnes of food sets with the support of the UN World Food Programme);
- ✓ Clothing bank – providing clothes to IDPs with disabilities and the elderly;
- ✓ Temporary accommodation shelters for IDPs, in particular for people with severe disabilities and their families – comfortable and affordable living conditions, provision of food, personal hygiene products, clothing (151 displaced persons with disabilities and their families, the elderly, and families with children found protection and support with us);
- ✓ in 2022-2024, with the support of international donors, renovation work was carried out and the following programmes were launched: Palliative Care for Persons with Disabilities Programme for 10 places, the Inclusive Non-formal Learning Space with rooms for living, a lift, a transformer hall for 25 places, and the Day Care Centre with an Employment Workshop for 20 places for persons with disabilities.

Ukrainian legislation on evacuation and shelter does not fully take into account the rights and needs of persons with disabilities.

From the very first days of Russian hostilities, significant barriers were identified in the areas of shelters, transportation, evacuation, communication, and dissemination of information in accessible formats for people with disabilities.

For example, the legislation on the maintenance and creation of a fund for civil defence shelters and warning the population about a military emergency makes it impossible to create the necessary conditions for persons with disabilities to stay in such shelters and to inform them, and therefore its implementation poses a threat to human life and health.^{41,42}



Nelia, Zhytomyr city

We have accessible shelters, two of them. Two accessible shelters for people with disabilities, including people with physical disabilities. These shelters are equipped with lifting devices and tactile tiles inside. They are accessible, but... No, we don't go to these shelters, because it's unrealistic, even if the shelters were nearby, near me. How many times a day can a person who uses a wheelchair go down to a shelter? Most people with limited mobility stay in their apartments.



Natalia, Brody, Lviv region

We have a bomb shelter, but it is not one that is equipped for people with disabilities. It is not equipped for people without disabilities either. This is a former basement. After it became a bomb shelter, nothing much changed there.

Sign language, audio description, and plain language are not used in much of the public announcements by officials about emergencies, including military emergencies.

The types and scope of support provided by the emergency response do not take into account the additional needs caused by a person's disability. For example, the housing offered to affected persons is not provided with accessibility conditions, and humanitarian assistance does not always take into account the needs of people with different disabilities. For example, food is provided without taking into

⁴¹ In the night of August 17th, the Russian occupiers fired a missile at a dormitory where people with hearing impairments were living, and therefore some of the victims could not hear the air raid alarm.

⁴² According to a survey of 1,316 persons with disabilities and their legal representatives conducted by the NAPD, only 21.5% of respondents answered affirmatively to the question about the availability of an architecturally accessible shelter/bomb shelter near their homes. [Analytical report based on the results of the survey](#) on the access of persons with disabilities to various types of assistance and services at their permanent place of residence during martial law. P. 13.

account possible food intolerance, and hygiene products do not take into account the specific health conditions of a particular person.

**Andrii, Lviv city**

Attention should be paid to information and technical support for people with visual impairments. It's good that there is humanitarian aid, food and cash packages, but there are things that are not available in Ukraine for people who have visual impairments. This includes electronic Braille, some digital tools, some better computer equipment, and smartphones. For some reason, no one pays attention to this.

The principle of “build back better” is globally violated in recovery efforts. For example, the humanitarian response to the negative consequences of the war still ignores the legal requirements for creating accessibility conditions and the real needs of persons with disabilities caused by the relevant violations – housing is built, reconstructed, and overhauled with violations of the state building codes on accessibility.

The civil protection system provides unsatisfactory information and training for personnel to assist people with various disabilities, which was confirmed by the military realities in Ukraine during humanitarian response activities, including evacuation, accommodation, and provision of services defined by law.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Adapt the early warning system to ensure that all categories of the population, including persons with visual, hearing and speech impairments, and psychosocial disabilities, can understand emergency information.
- ✓ Ensure that all emergency information is duplicated in sign language and audio format.
- ✓ Ensure access to humanitarian assistance for persons with disabilities with different types of impairments in small towns and cities by mainstreaming disability in humanitarian response plans.
- ✓ Create a feedback mechanism that allows persons with disabilities to communicate their needs and assess the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided by government agencies and international institutions.
- ✓ Ensure participation of representatives of OPDs in working groups dealing with humanitarian response.
- ✓ Strengthen control and monitor the provision of services in places of temporary residence of persons with disabilities, including IDPs.
- ✓ Ensure evacuation routes for persons with disabilities, including those in institutional settings, during emergencies, armed conflicts and natural disasters; implement a systemic approach to these issues.
- ✓ Implement programmes to provide one's own housing/return to one's own homes for IDPs with disabilities who lost their homes during the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
- ✓ Ensure that IDPs with disabilities, civilian victims, and veterans with disabilities have access to stable livelihoods and employment, healthcare, housing, social protection, and other services.
- ✓ Identify and remove environmental, behavioural, and communication barriers and, if necessary, provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that all services, programmes, and activities are accessible to IDPs with disabilities.



ARTICLE 12. Equal recognition before the Law

Ukrainian legislation does not comply with the provisions of Article 12 of the CRPD and allows for the deprivation and restriction of civil capacity of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities based on a combination of status and functional approaches, as a result of which persons with disabilities deprived or restricted in capacity cannot exercise their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.⁴³ No alternative forms of ensuring the rights of people with relevant disabilities to guardianship and custody have been introduced or even initiated.

Since 2014, a law on guardianship and custody of adults has not been adopted⁴⁴, while this document was supposed to increase the level of legal and social protection of persons with disabilities in Ukraine.

The two-year validity period of court decisions on incapacity led to a wave of protests, especially by family members of incapacitated persons who were appointed guardians of adults with extremely serious health conditions that are not improving or even worsening. There is currently no prospect of a differentiated approach, and the relevant bill⁴⁵ has been withdrawn.

According to the law, when a person acquires the status of incapacitated, he or she retains all the rights of a citizen, except for the right to enter into transactions independently. However, practice shows that it is impossible for incapacitated individuals to exercise their legal capacity independently.⁴⁶

The only legal mechanism that provides legal and social protection to persons with severe intellectual and psychosocial disabilities is the institution of guardianship and trusteeship, which provides for deprivation and restriction of legal capacity of such persons.⁴⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure that alternative forms of support for adults with intellectual and mental disabilities, such as supported decision-making, are implemented at the legislative and practical levels.
- ✓ Implement a differentiated approach to the duration of the status of incapacity for adults depending on their mental state, including the provision of the relevant status for people with duly confirmed complex irreversible mental health disorders indefinitely.
- ✓ Ensure that the timeframe of the judicial process and forensic psychiatric examination is optimised when deciding on the scope of legal capacity of an adult with a disability, and that such examination is unconditionally free of charge.

⁴³ [Briefing Note](#) "Situation of Human Rights of Persons with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities in Ukraine" / UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2022.

⁴⁴ [Draft Law on Guardianship and Trusteeship of Adults](#) with Incapacity and Persons with Limited Civil Capacity, 20 January 2016, No. 3786.

⁴⁵ [Draft Law of Ukraine on Amendments to Article 300 of the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine](#) (regarding the abolition of the need for repeated appeals to the court to establish guardianship over an individual with a chronic severe mental health disorder caused by an incurable and (or) progressive disease), dated 05 April 2019, No. 10203.

⁴⁶ For example, it is common practice to register pension files and personal accounts of incapacitated persons who are fully supported by the state and who have not been appointed a guardian in the name of the head of the residential care home, which makes it impossible for the guardianship and custody authorities to take full measures to protect the property rights of incapacitated wards of such homes and may lead to violations of their rights. [Sotska A. M. Dissertation for the degree of a Doctor of Law](#) "Public Administration in the Field of Guardianship and Care of Adults in Ukraine."

⁴⁷ [Briefing Note](#) "The State of Human Rights of Persons with Intellectual and Psychosocial Disabilities in Ukraine" / UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, 2022.

ARTICLE 13. Access to justice

Legislation establishes a number of privileges and guarantees for persons with disabilities in the field of justice.⁴⁸ However, in practice, the relevant guarantees often remain mere declarations. Among other reasons, this is due to the lack of sufficient legal knowledge or trust in the courts, physical inaccessibility of at least half of the courts, the inability to fully meet the needs of persons with hearing, speech, and visual impairments for access to information in court proceedings, as well as at the initial stage of applying to the court for protection of rights, etc. The government's task to ensure the use of easy-to-read and other amplifying formats of communication in the areas of justice and access to free legal aid, which was due in December 2023, remains unfulfilled.⁴⁹ The National Action Plan on Access to Justice has not been approved at the legislative level.

The level of awareness of persons with disabilities regarding access to justice remains extremely low. The state does not take measures to explain to such persons, especially those in state institutions, those living in rural areas, and parents raising children with disabilities, the guarantees of access to free legal aid and justice, as well as their rights in general and how to exercise them. They receive the relevant knowledge mainly from OPDs and from open sources (e.g., Internet resources and mass media).

Measures to raise awareness of disability issues among employees of the judiciary, penitentiary system, the bar, and the prosecutor's office do not ensure that the relevant professionals are adequately trained to interact, support and provide inclusive services to persons with disabilities in the areas of justice and access to free legal services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure practical accessibility of justice for persons with disabilities by creating conditions for architectural and information accessibility.
- ✓ Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to free legal aid regardless of their income.
- ✓ To create a transparent system for collecting and publishing statistical information on appeals by persons with disabilities to the courts.
- ✓ Guarantee access to free legal aid at the pre-trial stage for persons deprived of their legal capacity and those with limited legal capacity at the legislative level.
- ✓ Raise awareness of disability issues among employees of the judicial and penitentiary systems, the bar, and the prosecutor's office.

⁴⁸ Kuvila O. I. *Privileges and Guarantees for Persons with Disabilities in the Field of Justice*. International scientific conference "Topical issues of modern jurisprudence": conference proceedings (April 5 – 6, 2023. Częstochowa, the Republic of Poland). Riga, Latvia: "Baltija Publishing," 2023. P. 137 – 140.

⁴⁹ [The Fulfilment of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy](#) in the 2nd half of 2023.



ARTICLE 19. Living independently and being included in the community

As subjects of the right to choose their place of residence, lifestyle, etc., people with disabilities are often deprived of the opportunity to exercise this right, especially in the military context. The ability to control their lives and have the right to choose is absent for persons in residential care facilities within the state social protection system. In the case of incapacitated persons, the relevant issues are resolved by guardianship entities (guardians, special institutions or guardianship, and trusteeship bodies).

Communities do not provide services to persons with disabilities that would facilitate their independent lifestyle. Among other things, these include social services such as supported accommodation; day care; physical support for persons with disabilities who have musculoskeletal disorders and use wheelchairs, visual impairment; sign language interpretation.⁵⁰ In addition, access to services at the family or community level is significantly hampered by barriers to the environment, transport and information, especially in rural areas.



Olha, Poltava city

Today in our city there is a centre with a group for young people aged 18+, but it does not address all the possibilities and needs of parents. If we talk about the programme, we write to them every year, we send them our application, a letter, and we have been receiving a response for probably the third year in a row, which, unfortunately, I'm sorry, is that there are no funds for this year. If we talk about our public organisation, our young people are involved in development, and almost every day they have their own schedule of classes. ... Our young people who are not involved in the centre's classes – some of them are already 35, and some are, maybe, 40, so they are simply not taken to these classes anymore. But thanks to our friends from the organisation, these young people are included and have the opportunity to develop. That's how it is, in our city, everything is on the shoulders of parents.



Iryna, Odesa

...we really miss ... the service of supported accommodation. And we are now working very closely with the authorities to make the whole service work. However, the authorities do not want to spend any time or money, or provide premises, because they are not interested. We have, as I said, a municipal institution where there is this supported accommodation, but no more than 10 people attend it, only 10! They don't want to do anything to make sure that an NGO takes over and works in this direction.

⁵⁰ The Research "Social Services for Veterans in Communities: Challenges and Needs."

The state does not take measures to raise awareness of persons with disabilities about their rights and ways to exercise them. Activities in this area are carried out mainly by OPDs.



Valentyna, Mykolaiv region

...As for the information that should be available to community residents, it is occasionally published on the pages of the city council. In general, in the NGO, it is us who tell people more about their rights because we are studying ourselves, so that we can convey this information to people.

OPDs are not properly involved in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of community-based service delivery strategies. Mostly, such communication is fictitious or involves loyal civil society institutions.

The task of reforming the psychoneurological residential institutions of the social protection system,⁵¹ scheduled for 2022, has not even begun due to the failure of both the Ministry of Social Policy and regional state administrations to take any measures. There is currently no unified strategic approach to planning the process of deinstitutionalisation and development of the social service delivery system at the state level. The development of a network of social services in communities is carried out separately in relation to the development of some support services, but not systematically.^{52,53,54}



Svitlana, Vinnytsia city

Clause 9 of the Final Provisions of the Law of Ukraine "On the State Budget of Ukraine" states that all territorial communities must pay for social services at the regional level. This applies to both residential care services and various other services provided at the regional level.

Therefore, it is advisable for territorial communities to create their own day care centres to provide social services and open the programs needed to support our families and children. I don't know about the entire Ukraine, but the number of day care centres in Vinnytsia region is currently decreasing. We are still holding on, but, unfortunately, centres in the districts, even with the support of international funds in local communities, are not opening as much. And, unfortunately, the war has left children and young people with disabilities behind for the state, and it seems that they will be funded on a residual basis.



Zhanna, Zhytomyr city

Thanks to the efforts of parents raising children and young people with disabilities, a day care unit for children with disabilities under 18 years old was opened in Zhytomyr in 2020 at the Zhytomyr City Council's Centre for Comprehensive Rehabilitation. Since 2024, in cooperation with the Caritas Foundation, Zhytomyr City Council has been providing day care for young people aged 18 and over. However, a problem should be mentioned here. Not everyone can use this service, especially when it comes to people over the age of 18. People with severe complex disabilities are not eligible for this service. And this specifically affected my family, as my son, who has autism and severe intellectual disabilities, was not accepted and was refused service.

⁵¹ President of Ukraine's Decree No.553 of 13 December 2016, "On Measures Aimed at Ensuring the Observance of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities."

⁵² Task 84 of the [Action Plan for 2023-2024 to implement the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine till 2030](#), approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in Resolution No. 372-p of 25 April 2023.

⁵³ Action Plan for 2021-2023 to implement the Concept for the Development of Mental Health Care in Ukraine till 2030, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in Resolution No. 1215-p of 06 October 2021.

⁵⁴ [The Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine for 2023-2026](#): "Resilience, Recovery, and Reconstruction."



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Create a support system that enables persons with disabilities to choose the services and level of support they need to live independently.
- ✓ Develop a system for monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of social services to ensure their continuous adaptation to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure the transition of persons with disabilities from institutional settings to the community by developing individual support plans and providing the necessary services.
- ✓ Provide greater autonomy to local communities in overcoming social problems and procuring social services.

ARTICLE 21. Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

The situation with information accessibility is somewhat improving due to the provision of a basic social service of sign language interpretation^{55,56}, the use of online video communication technologies⁵⁷, the establishment of requirements for the provision of certain types of services with the involvement of a sign language interpreter if necessary^{58,59}, and other measures.

The development of plain language and easy-to-read formats to create conditions for communication for people with intellectual and mental disabilities is not sufficiently paced. The adopted regulatory documents on this issue⁶⁰ are insufficient to ensure accessibility of information for people with these disabilities, as they are of a recommendatory nature.

The situation with information accessibility in the private sector is much worse than in the public sector, as the state does not encourage private enterprises providing services to the public to ensure their inclusiveness, taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure the introduction, development and use of accessible formats of information and communication, including audio description, subtitles, sign language, easy reading format, simplified language, web accessibility software, and other opportunities.

⁵⁵ Subparagraph 14 of Paragraph 6 in Article 16 of the Law of Ukraine "On Social Services."

⁵⁶ Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine No. 220 of 06 May 2021 "On Approval of the State Standard of Social Service of Sign Language Interpreting."

⁵⁷ UTOG (Ukrainian Society of the Deaf) service – sign language interpreting service.

⁵⁸ In accordance with Part 7 of Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine "On Free Legal Aid," if the subject of the right to free secondary legal aid does not speak the state language and/or has a hearing impairment, the free legal aid centre shall engage an interpreter from a language in which the applicant can communicate, including a sign language interpreter, at the expense of the state budget.

⁵⁹ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 63 of 19 January 2024 "Some Issues of Payment for the Services of Interpreters and Mediators Engaged by Free Legal Aid Centres."

⁶⁰ On 17 November 2023, to ensure the accessibility of information provided by public authorities, the government approved the Recommendations for the presentation of information by public authorities in formats that ensure the accessibility of its perception / Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1046-p of 17 November 2023.

ARTICLE 23. Respect for home and the family

The law stipulates that registration of a marriage with a person who is recognised as incapacitated results in the recognition of such a marriage as invalid. Such a marriage shall be dissolved by an authorised body at the request of one of the spouses if the other spouse is recognised as incapacitated.⁶¹ However, despite these restrictions, in practice, there are isolated cases of marriages with incapacitated persons.⁶²

Persons who have been declared incapacitated or have limited legal capacity are prohibited by law from becoming adoptive parents.⁶³

There are virtually no support programmes for families raising children with disabilities at either the national or local level. Assistance to single mothers raising children with disabilities is meagre (from \$1 to \$75 per month) and is provided exclusively to the poor. In the absence of developed community-based services and meagre benefits, women are forced to care for their children 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, unable to find work to support their families.

The social service of temporary respite care for parents or persons in loco parentis caring for children with disabilities⁶⁴ is not developed at the state level. It is known to be provided by a small number of OPDs and in some communities only.⁶⁵



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Provide funding for programmes at the national and local levels to support families raising children with disabilities.
- ✓ Establish a state support system for women and men with disabilities who wish to take up foster care, including psychological, social and legal assistance.
- ✓ Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities as potential parents by overcoming stereotypes and discrimination in society.

⁶¹ [The Family Code of Ukraine](#): Articles 15, 24, 39, and 107.

⁶² In Vinnytsia region, two cases of marriage of disabled people were recorded: the first couple came from Zhmerynka Psychoneurological Institution, where they were provided with a separate room and everything they needed for married life. The second couple consisted of the brother of the head of an OPD, who found his beloved in the same Zhmerynka institution. [The “Taboo” Topic. About Intimate Life in Psychoneurological Institutions.](#)

⁶³ [The Family Code of Ukraine](#): Article 212.

⁶⁴ [The State Standard for Social Services of a Temporary Retreat for Parents or Persons in Loco Parentis Caring for Children with Disabilities](#), approved by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine in Order No. 13 of 19 January 2021.

⁶⁵ [The “Obrii” Centre has resumed providing temporary retreat services](#) for parents raising children with disabilities.



ARTICLE 24. Education

Children and adults with special educational needs, including persons with disabilities, have the right to receive education in all educational institutions, including free of charge education in state and municipal ones.^{66,67}



Each year, a subvention is allocated from the state budget to provide state support to people with special educational needs. Thus, in 2022 and 2023, the general fund expenditures under the budget programme 2211220 “Subvention from the State Budget to Local Budgets for the Provision of State Support to Persons with Special Educational Needs” amounted to UAH 454,012,500 and 304,595,300, respectively. Despite significant progress in recent years in ensuring inclusive education for children with special educational needs, there are still obstacles to their access to education. According to UNICEF, children with special educational needs remain one of the most excluded and isolated groups and face daily obstacles, including access to education. Stigma and discrimination, lack of individualised and child-centred teaching methods, lack of learning aids, inaccessibility of learning materials, physical inaccessibility of schools, etc. are the problems faced by children with special educational needs.⁶⁸

Many children, including those with disabilities, will not be able to return to their schools and kindergartens due to their destruction by the war. Among the most pressing problems are the lack of shelters in educational institutions and rehabilitation centres, the lack of transport to get to institutions, the reduction in the number of pre-school and general secondary education institutions and, accordingly, their remoteness from the child’s place of residence.

⁶⁶ Law of Ukraine “On Education.”

⁶⁷ Statistical data.

⁶⁸ Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 527-r of June 7, 2024, “On Approval of the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education till 2029 and Approval of the Operational Action Plan for its Implementation for 2024-2026.”

**Uliana, Stryi, Lviv region**

Our city has 12 schools, including two primary schools. One of them has had an inclusive class for a very long time, probably for 15 years. And children with different types of disabilities really study there. Parents are happy because their children are in society, and they lead an active lifestyle. I see my friends among them. There are even classes in schools which have a teacher and an assistant. And parents of children without disabilities do not object to coeducation, as attitudes towards people with disabilities change since childhood. Children become friends.

I would like to add one more thing... I have a musculoskeletal disorder, and it was difficult for me to climb the stairs at school. My classmates helped me, carried me, and gave me a hand where needed.

When I first got sick, I was offered home schooling, which was difficult for me. Difficult physically, difficult mentally, how does it feel? My classmates will be going to school, and I will be looking out the window and waiting for the teacher to come to my house?

I would like to see schools adapted with lifting platforms and ramps so that children with disabilities can feel equal to others...

The difficult situation in autumn and winter in educational institutions with lighting and heating, and the inability to fully guarantee the safety of children, leads to the spread of distance learning. Some children with disabilities are forced to be “out of education” due to the lack of internet, technical equipment, and a shortage of teachers and specialists who can provide individualised services.

To support children with special educational needs, a network of inclusive resource centres has been set up to assess a child’s special educational needs^{69,70}, and training for teachers on the specifics of working with children with special educational needs has been continued.⁷¹ At the same time, the needs of children with special educational needs are only one-third covered by budget funding. More than 90% of educational institutions have access only to the first floor, experience the lack modern textbooks and teaching aids, etc.

Problems remain unresolved because children with special educational needs (including kids with disabilities) study in special institutions separately from other children or receive education in the family (home) form and under pedagogical patronage⁷²; kindergartens are not fully prepared to work with children with special educational needs; there are not enough services for converting documents, educational materials, translating them into sign language, audio description, recording in easy-to-play formats, etc.⁷³

There are no measures in place at the national and local levels to ensure early identification of persons with disabilities and their educational and linguistic/communication needs.

The civil society’s proposal to the draft Law of Ukraine “On Education,” which is currently in force, regarding sign language instruction in general education institutions was not supported.

⁶⁹ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 545 of 12 July 2017 “On Approval of the Regulation for the Inclusive Resource Centre.”](#)

⁷⁰ [71 Inclusive resource centres. Today, some IRCs are closed because of destruction for the safety of children.](#)

⁷¹ [Statistical data.](#)

⁷² As of the 2022/2023 academic year, there are 290 special general secondary education institutions with 34,029 children enrolled. [Statistical data.](#)

⁷³ [The National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine for the Period till 2030.](#)



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure that educational materials are available in a variety of formats to meet the needs of children with disabilities (e.g. audio format, large print, and alternative texts).
- ✓ Create a bank of accessible educational resources for children with disabilities and ensure its constant replenishment and updating.
- ✓ Create a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of measures aimed at ensuring accessibility of education for children and youth with disabilities.
- ✓ Introduce a set of measures aimed at creating an accessible educational environment for children and youth with disabilities, including the adaptation of curricula, the use of modern technologies, and ensuring accessibility of information and communication.
- ✓ Implement the accessibility of education at all levels for students with disabilities, including war veterans.

ARTICLE 25. Health

Architectural and transport barriers, inaccessibility of the services themselves (information, financial, communication, etc.) significantly reduce the ability of persons with disabilities to receive medical services and their provision with medical devices and medicines.⁷⁴ Every day, medical services are becoming less accessible to persons with disabilities due to the hostilities on the territory of Ukraine.⁷⁵ The situation with access to medical services for such people in the temporarily occupied territories is of particular concern.



Valentyna, Mykolaiv region

In territorial communities and villages, when we talk about a sanitary room, there may be a toilet somewhere, but it is not suitable for people with disabilities at all. In general, medical facilities, services, pharmacies are inaccessible...



Valentyna, Chernivtsi

There have been positive developments in the provision of medical services. However, gynaecological chairs, mammography machines, X-ray machines, couches, toilets... ambulances are still inaccessible for people with disabilities, especially individuals using wheelchairs...



Uliana, Stryi, Lviv Oblast

Our main referral hospital is fully accessible – wide and operating elevators, and the hospital wards are all like that. Even if there is a small threshold somewhere, it is rounded, so it is easy to move... Many family hospitals are now opening in our city and switching to sole proprietorship. They try so hard to make it accessible. Our family doctor asked us if we were sure Ok, because we had made a comment about the steep ramp, so they redid it.

⁷⁴ The list of medicines that used to be provided free of charge and on preferential terms (up to 800 items) has been significantly reduced over the past seven years. It is actually available only under the "Affordable Medicines" programme (almost 300 items).

⁷⁵ [Analytical Report on the Results of a Survey of Legal Representatives](#) of Children with Disabilities (under 18 years of age) concerning their access to the guarantees, benefits, and services established by law for children with disabilities and their families in Ukraine after 24 February 2022. Kyiv, NAPD, 2023.

**POSITIVE PRACTICE****NGO “Chernivtsi Regional Organisation of People with Disabilities ‘Leader’”, headed by Valentyna Dobrydina**

Thanks to the activities of our organization, four inclusive hospital wards were created in medical facilities in Chernivtsi region. They are equipped with a separate bathroom with an installed shower and all the elements of accessibility. All conditions have been created for patients with disabilities. The arrangement of the multifunctional hospital bed and other furniture makes it possible to manoeuvre when using a wheelchair and other auxiliary devices. In addition, the ward is equipped with air conditioning, a microwave, refrigerator, kettle, and TV set. These wards are accessible, convenient, and comfortable. As a result, people with disabilities and other groups with limited mobility can receive quality treatment on an equal basis with others.

The regional administration and management of healthcare facilities continued this important initiative. New inclusive hospital wards are appearing in the region.

These wards were created as part of the Projects supported by the Japanese organisation AAR Japan and the Numotion Foundation (USA) in cooperation with the NAPD and the Chernivtsi Regional Medical Association.



Although persons with disabilities have the right to free and preferential provision with medicines and medical devices, these legal provisions are not implemented without any punishment for this.

**Halyna, Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk region**

My adult daughter with Disability group 1-A and I moved from the war zone to Zhydachiv, Lviv region. At home, we had received monthly diapers from our family doctor. Now we had to register with a family doctor at Zhydachiv City Hospital. I wrote an application to the director of the polyclinic asking him to provide my daughter with diapers and attached all the necessary documents. I also wrote a statement to the mayor of Zhydachiv asking him to allocate the appropriate funds from the city budget to provide my daughter with diapers. I was refused everywhere because Zhydachiv City Council does not work under this programme, so they do not have funds to purchase diapers. And in general, they don't have such a thing as giving diapers for free, advising me to contact the Red Cross.

At home, we received a prescription for the medicine we had been taking for many years. And here they offered another drug that causes seizures. How is this possible?

**Yurii, Kharkiv**

The state must provide us with free medicines. Since the beginning of the war, I have been denied free medicines. I called the Ministry of Health. They told me there is a war and no money. The law does not work. And I have a small pension, and if I have to buy medicines, how can I live?



The healthcare reform does not take into account the needs of men and women with disabilities, in particular, regarding their access to community-based services, reproductive health services, and early diagnosis of illnesses. The accessibility and inclusiveness of the premises and medical equipment of most healthcare facilities exists only on paper. Due to austerity measures and the closure of healthcare facilities in communities and the lack of adequate transportation, people with disabilities, especially in rural areas, are unable to visit doctors or receive treatment.



Olena, Kirovohrad region

I would like to draw your attention to the outrageous situation with accessibility in medical institutions for people with musculoskeletal disorders. At least in our city. There is no specialised transport service. If a person with a disability needs to attend a necessary procedure, you have to book transport at your own expense. Often, it is necessary to travel to another city (prepare 3 – 5 thousand hryvnias for that), as services are being cut due to the reforms. You have to look for someone to carry the patient yourself (as a rule, these are untrained people and they do carrying however they can). A house-call for a specialist is usually also paid for...

Due to the large number of people who obtained injuries and other health damage as a result of the armed conflict, the burden on healthcare facilities has increased.



Ruslan, Odesa region

After being wounded, I lost my eyesight... We have more or less normal medical services, as it happened so that we live near a hospital. I have to walk a block and a half to see my family doctor, and I'm in the hospital. The family doctor helps me with almost all issues, and he writes prescriptions for medicines that are free of charge from the state, and some painkillers. And there is a pharmacy right next to the hospital where these medicines are given. Perhaps the fact that we live in a district centre helps us. I just had an ear operation in a clinic in Odesa, and before the operation I was prescribed a bunch of tests – such as blood group analysis, HIV tests, syphilis tests, hepatitis tests, a long list. However, I went to my family doctor, and he wrote a referral – everything was free... Professional care. Everything works here, everything has started. My wife has completed her studies and received a certificate. Then the commission came, and since the first of May she has had a job.



Oleksandr, Dnipro region

We have not had even public transport for 12 years. So what kind of privileged transport can we talk about? It wasn't too difficult to get a disability group after being wounded... But to get to the hospital, the residents apply to the head of the OTG [amalgamated territorial community]. The only answer they get is that there are no funds, although even if they do have money, they don't have transport right now. I came to Dnipro. They heard that I was a war veteran and immediately invited me as the first one ... I already had all the documents in my hands. I went to the hospital for a medical examination, and then I went to the MSEC [Medical and Sanitary Commission], and it took me maybe an hour. I was surprised myself. The family has its own transport, as otherwise it would take a very long time not only to get there by public transport, but also to find those hospitals.



Olesia, Kyiv

We have veterans who did not receive a Form 5 from their military units as proof that they had been wounded during a combat mission. And now they are applying and suing. And there are veterans who really receive very small social payments, about 2,200 hryvnias, if I'm not mistaken.

**Oleksandr, Dnipro region**

My mother asked the doctor if I needed any rehabilitation or something. That was Romodanov Institute of Neurosurgery, where I was on treatment. And he said: what rehabilitation does he need? He doesn't need any rehabilitation. They discharged me and that was it... How did we know what kind of walking cane we needed and how to walk with it... Then I went to rehabilitation at a public organisation, to Lesia Mykolaivna, and we were taught by blind instructors how to live... Now I can tell other guys a lot of things myself.

The Ministry of Health, together with national and international experts, is implementing the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as a national classifier⁷⁶. There is no instructional document on how to use the ICF. The translation of this document into Ukrainian is unreliable. From time to time, the Ministry of Health, in violation of the CRPD, publishes statements on the rejection of the term "disability" and the revision of all legislation on persons with disabilities.⁷⁷

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Improve the accessibility and transparency of the disability registration procedure.
- ✓ Ensure a comprehensive approach to medical care for persons with disabilities and equal access to quality medical care for all persons in this category (including rural residents).
- ✓ Ensure the provision of medical care to veterans, civilian victims, and IDPs with disabilities.
- ✓ Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information for women and girls with disabilities.
- ✓ Procure universal medical equipment (e.g. gynaecological chairs, mammography machines, examination couches) accessible to women and girls with disabilities.
- ✓ Provide training for healthcare professionals and improve their skills to provide healthcare services to persons with disabilities.

ARTICLE 26. Habilitation and rehabilitation**Natalia, Zaporizhzhia**

"Nothing for us without us," i.e. taking into consideration the wishes of people with disabilities, is how the system should be built. I think that any rehabilitation should be motivated. That is, not just rehabilitation for the sake of rehabilitation, but when you enter rehabilitation, you need to achieve a certain goal, either improvement, renewal, or mastery, acquisition of new skills, and sustainability...

The capacity of the existing network of rehabilitation facilities, most of which are involved in providing temporary accommodation for IDPs, including those with severe disabilities, does not allow for the coverage of a significant number of people (children) in need of rehabilitation services. Due to the temporary occupation of certain districts of some regions, as well as areas near ongoing intense hostilities, 36 comprehensive rehabilitation centres have suspended their work (in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, and Kharkiv regions). In addition, the current development of the state

⁷⁶ [Following the initiative of Ukraine's First Lady, Olena Zelenska, a new approach to rehabilitation is being introduced in Ukraine.](#)

⁷⁷ [The Ministry of Health wants to abandon disability](#), because it does not return a person to their "economic status," said Minister Liashko.



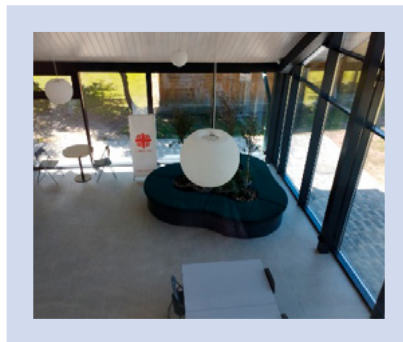
policy to launch rehabilitation in the healthcare sector (medical and physical rehabilitation) leads to the destruction of the system of comprehensive rehabilitation of persons (children) with disabilities in general. In the context of war, it further complicates the access to rehabilitation services for this group of population. In some cases, the situation becomes critical, despite the vital need for these services among persons with disabilities.⁷⁸



POSITIVE PRACTICE

Zhytomyr regional public organisation of people with disabilities “Youth. Woman. Family,” headed by Nelia Kovaliuk

A new rehabilitation centre for children with disabilities was built and put into operation in the Nadiia camp near Zhytomyr. For more than a year, the experts of our organisation had been advising on eliminating deficiencies in the construction and equipment of the premises, so it turned out to be almost flawless. The work of the centre provides an opportunity for children with disabilities to learn what to do and how to do it to restore their lost functions. It is an opportunity for a child with a disability to be socialised, independent, and lead an active lifestyle.



At present, there is no clear structure and unified standards for the rehabilitation system, which leads to uneven, inefficient and inadequate provision of rehabilitation services that do not meet the needs of persons with disabilities.^{79,80} There is terminological chaos in the legislation, as rehabilitation is both a social and a medical service.⁸¹

The system of rehabilitation services does not have a single coordination centre and a single algorithm for providing services to persons with disabilities. This makes it difficult for people of this group to receive information about available rehabilitation services and relevant services in a timely manner.

⁷⁸ The reorganisation of state rehabilitation institutions for people with disabilities and children with disabilities, which are managed by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and have a medical licence, has begun with transforming them into state non-profit enterprises. This will allow rehabilitation centres to enter into contracts for the provision of rehabilitation services under the medical guarantee programme signed with the National Health Service. In other words, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine will no longer fund these institutions. Thus, the Ministry has begun the process of transferring state centres for comprehensive rehabilitation of persons/children with disabilities to a self-financing model, effectively destroying them and turning them into healthcare institutions, as they will not be able to provide rehabilitation services other than healthcare rehabilitation services, due to the lack of funding sources. As a result of this reform, persons/children with disabilities will be deprived of relevant services by the decision of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine during the war. [By its Resolution No. 910-r of 14 October 2022](#), “Some Issues of State-Owned Property Management,” [the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine](#) transferred state and state-owned prosthetic and orthopaedic plants, as well as the only scientific institution on prosthetics, into privatisation status during the war.

⁷⁹ The Ministry of Health of Ukraine, as it should, has been playing a leading role in the development of this type of rehabilitation since the early 2020s. However, if it had started this activity in 2005, the rehabilitation system would be in a much better state today. Instead, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine has ceased to address social, vocational, labour, and sports rehabilitation. Therefore, we propose to cancel their funding and exclude the article on labour rehabilitation from the draft law 5344-d. [Appeal of the NAPD to the Members of Parliament of Ukraine!](#) Once again, we ask you to prevent the adoption of draft law 5344-D in the second reading and in general!

⁸⁰ The Law of Ukraine “On Rehabilitation in the Healthcare Sector,” while launching a powerful development of rehabilitation in the healthcare sector, has led to the decline of social, vocational, labour, physical education, and sports rehabilitation.

⁸¹ [Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine No. 429 of 23 June 2020](#) “On Approval of the Classifier of Social Services.”

The government has been slow to respond to the rehabilitation needs of people affected by the armed conflict. This is also evidenced by the insufficient number and sub-optimal competence of rehabilitation specialists and medical professionals.

There is a lack of adequate community-based rehabilitation services and programmes, particularly for children with disabilities.

The absence of community-based programmes for young children and children with rare diseases is a concern. Rehabilitation aids are provided without taking into account the individual needs of children and in a timely manner. The mechanism for reimbursement of the cost of technical rehabilitation equipment purchased by patients is not properly regulated. There are virtually no positions of physical rehabilitation specialists/therapists and occupational therapists in public healthcare facilities. As a result, comprehensive, interdisciplinary and individual support is not provided, particularly for children with disabilities and their families. Parents are forced to look for auxiliary means of rehabilitation by themselves, and seek help from specialists in private medical facilities and abroad.



Olesia, Kyiv

During the war, many people are wounded with mine-blast injuries. Biomaterials such as corneas, all transplantation treatment, and surgical procedures are currently purchased by charitable organisations only. This is not included in the medical aid package, so medical facilities cannot procure them.

And the most important thing now is to save the eyesight of the injured boys and girls. That is why it is very important that such things are mandatory. I would like to say that the NHS treatment and rehabilitation packages do not include the ophthalmological issue, i.e. a package for patients or persons with disabilities who have a disability related to loss or impairment of vision. There are many other things, but the ophthalmic issue is not included, and the direction of ophthalmic rehabilitation and rehabilitation is also not included...



Zoia, Kharkiv

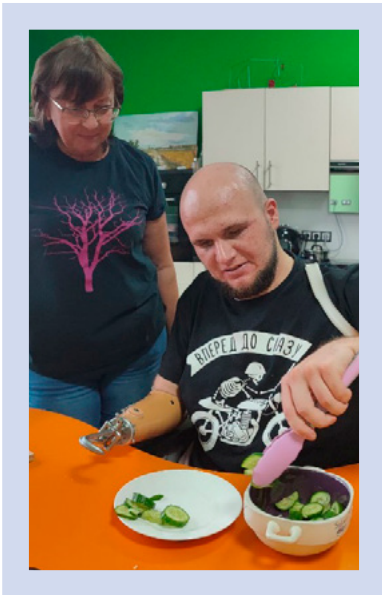
In my opinion, for a person with a disability to be able to get a wheelchair or something else, everything is too bureaucratic. We have Borova, which is 20 kilometres from the border. And they have their centre in Iziy. A person who needs a wheelchair has to go to Izyum. There is an alarm there, the hospital is closed, you have to wait. They demand one certificate or another... And the man came back from the war without an arm or a leg. My organisation helped with a wheelchair, not the state... It is just bureaucracy.

Since 2022, a significant part of the assistance to provide persons with disabilities with assistive technologies, as well as physical and social rehabilitation services, has been provided by international and national humanitarian organisations and NGOs.



Oleksandr, Volyn region

A support centre for veterans has now been opened in the district centre, but everything is by appointment. Even to see a psychologist for your family, you have to make an appointment six months in advance. We have one paramedic for three villages at our health post. She drives her own car and fuels it herself. She works part-time. I've been fighting for eight months to get 200 metres of road built, because there are no roads in the village...



POSITIVE PRACTICE

Public Association “The All-Ukrainian League of Organisations of Persons with Visual Impairments” “Modern Look.” Executive Director: Olesia Perepechenko.

From 2019 to the present day, our organisation has been actively conducting social adaptation and rehabilitation activities for veterans who lost their sight as a result of the war. Since February 2022, this group has grown significantly and, of course, we have increased the number of our support and rehabilitation activities for blind veterans. As part of our organisation’s activities, we have developed a systematic approach, starting with support for people who have lost their sight and family members during their stay in hospital and continuing with support at home. Further work takes place in social adaptation and rehabilitation camps, which have several stages of stay and further support at home in online and offline formats.

This course includes psychological support and counselling, physical therapy, therapeutic massage, ergotherapy classes, spatial orientation, development and compensation of sensory systems, work with specialised screen access programmes for smartphones and computers, home management, and legal and information training sessions and seminars.

Our organisation is taking care of 120 veterans with complete vision loss. Fifty people, not counting family members, have gone through rehabilitation in rehabilitation camps. We managed to return them to independent living. Four veterans run interesting social blogs and are involved in business and volunteer projects. Ten veterans are actively studying a basic course on the basics of computer literacy, and 5 people are improving their skills in practice after completing training courses on the basics of massage and continue their studies. Some of them are already employed in a hospital or have their own office. The rest are currently at the stage of recovery and searching for their own places in their future lives.

For more than 10 years of war in Ukraine, this is the only systemic programme that includes a comprehensive approach to supporting and rehabilitating veterans with vision loss and their families, which has been developed and is being implemented by a non-governmental organisation.



Ruslan, Kyiv

There are moments when, you know, sometimes you want to give up on such help and rehabilitation. Once, when I was in a hospital, a man came up to me, and he was a trained psychologist, a psychologist... He said, ‘Get up, let’s go dancing, this is your rehabilitation.’ And I was still a lying patient. The person didn’t even ask me if I could get up or not. Such “help” is, you know, repulsive.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Identify a single coordination centre or structure that would be responsible for the rehabilitation system in Ukraine and ensure a clear distribution of responsibilities and coordination among different agencies and sectors.
- ✓ Implement unified standards and protocols for the provision of rehabilitation services in healthcare facilities for persons with disabilities with different types of impairments.
- ✓ Introduce training of specialists and payment for rehabilitation services (mobility, orientation, adaptation, etc.) for war veterans and civilian victims with visual impairments.
- ✓ Review the amount of payment for rehabilitation services for adults and children in inpatient and outpatient settings.
- ✓ Prevent the closure, re-profiling, and privatisation of state and municipal rehabilitation centres, the Ukrainian Research Institute of Prosthetics, and prosthetic and orthopaedic factories.
- ✓ Increase the state support for educating, training, and advanced training of specialists in physical and rehabilitation medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and other specialists needed to provide comprehensive rehabilitation care.
- ✓ Improve the quality of services for the selection, adaptation, and training in how to use assistive technologies for persons with disabilities with various types of impairments.

ARTICLE 27. Work and employment

According to Ukrainian legislation, all persons with disabilities, regardless of disability group and type of impairment, have the right to work. There is a mandatory standard that enterprises, institutions, organisations, and individuals using hired labour must meet⁸² for workplaces intended for the employment of persons with disabilities, as well as incentives for employers.

There is no direct prohibition on working in certain professions or jobs for persons in this category. Restrictions on the ability to work for a particular person with a disability may be recorded in disability documents.⁸³ However, despite a sufficient number of measures to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, they do not ensure an adequate level of employment of people in this category, in particular due to the outdated nature of such measures and low level of efficiency, especially in wartime.



Halyna, Zhytomyr

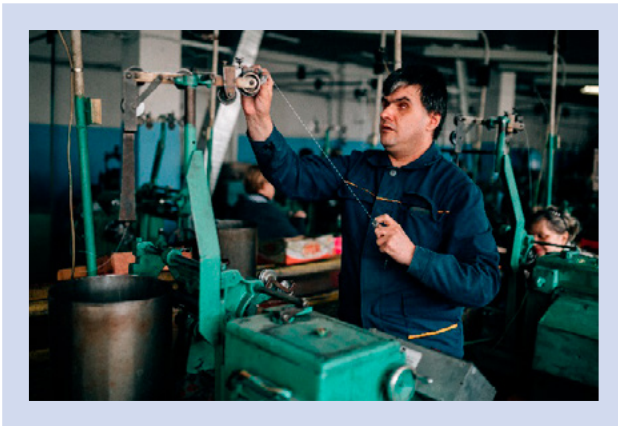
Talking about raising the pension or, for example, about some kind of humanitarian aid... Great. But my vision, my personal opinion, is that if a person with a disability were given an opportunity to self-realise through a profession, to create, for example, jobs or access to this job, it would be ideal and could benefit other people and, accordingly, the state...

⁸² [Information on the implementation by employers of the standard quota of workplaces](#) designated for the employment of persons with disabilities in accordance with Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine" (as amended) (as of March 15, 2024).

⁸³ [Practical Guidebook](#) "Employment of Persons with Disabilities."



The state system, to some extent, provides work and employment in the open labour market, but mainly for persons with disabilities who do not need special conditions for their work, additional support during employment and in further work, and it does not extend to individuals with complex disabilities. The salary received by people with disabilities for performing their work duties is often lower than that of employees without disabilities. The Ministry of Social Policy, together with the Social Protection Fund for Persons with Disabilities, does not provide funding for the creation and adaptation of jobs for persons with disabilities at the expense of funds received for the unemployment of this category of people.



POSITIVE PRACTICE

Central Board of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind. Serhiy Kit, First Deputy Chairman.

The Dnipro Training and Production Enterprise of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind, a public association of citizens, began its history on 1 February 1945 from just a plot of land. Today the enterprise has a hostel and a recreation centre. It manufactures products in three main areas: railway, lifting and transport, and construction. The company participates in public procurement tenders.

Due to the military aggression by the Russian Federation, the employees were forced to go abroad. Currently, the company employs 63 people, including 35 people with disabilities. Despite the war, the company has not stopped its operations. Our Centre is listed among places of temporary residence for internally displaced persons. Through the years, the Centre has provided shelter to more than 1,300 refugees, and 100 people have been living there permanently.

Currently, no effective measures are aimed at increasing opportunities for persons with disabilities to find employment and advance in the open labour market.⁸⁴

Out of about 2,721,700 Ukrainians with disabilities⁸⁵ (as of 1 January 2023), only slightly more than 830,000 people are employed. About 575,000 of them are under the retirement age.⁸⁶ However, different departments of the Ministry of Social Policy (the Pension Fund of Ukraine and the Information and Computing Centre) give significantly different data on the number of employed persons with disabilities.

⁸⁴ It is impossible to improve the level of employment and employability of individuals without proper education, and even more so where there is no architectural, transport, or information accessibility. Unfortunately, the government's initiatives and decisions in this regard lack a comprehensive approach and are filled with manipulative regulations. The most complaints from the public and persons with disabilities in this regard have been received regarding the clumsy draft law 5344-d, which benefits certain business circles, but does not support persons with disabilities. [Appeal of the NAPD to the Members of Parliament of Ukraine!](#)

⁸⁵ [Social Protection of the Population of Ukraine](#). 2022. Statistical Digest.

⁸⁶ [Practical guidebook](#) "Employment of Persons with Disabilities."

There are no effective mechanisms: 1) to encourage businesses and the public to employ persons with disabilities; 2) for the supported employment of persons with intellectual and mental disabilities; and 3) to promote and develop entrepreneurship and self-employment among persons with disabilities. Measures to support the activities of enterprises established by NGOs (i.e. those employing more than 50% of persons with disabilities) are not properly implemented. In addition, there are numerous cases of “fictitious” employment of persons with disabilities, when an employee is registered with a company and is paid the statutory minimum wage, but does not actually participate in the work process.

The destruction of transport infrastructure, civilian infrastructure, including employers’ premises, internal displacement and migration have resulted in a significant number of persons with disabilities losing their jobs, and those who have changed their place of residence are unable to find employment again. The supply of vacancies for such people does not meet their employment needs, as the vacancies offered often do not match their level of education, experience, mobility, etc. Working from home or remotely does not always satisfy the employer, creating barriers to employment for persons with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Take measures to increase the level of employment and participation of persons with disabilities, in particular, individuals with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities and severe disabilities, in the open labour market.
- ✓ Strengthen efforts aimed at stimulating the creation and development of entrepreneurship and self-employment among persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Develop effective mechanisms of “reserving contracts” and ensuring government orders for products (goods) and services produced by social enterprises, including enterprises run by OPDs.
- ✓ Maintain state support in the form of tax exemptions for enterprises with disabilities.
- ✓ Annually provide for and allocate financial assistance to support the competitiveness of enterprises with disabilities and create/save jobs for people with disabilities.

ARTICLE 28. Adequate standard of living and social protection

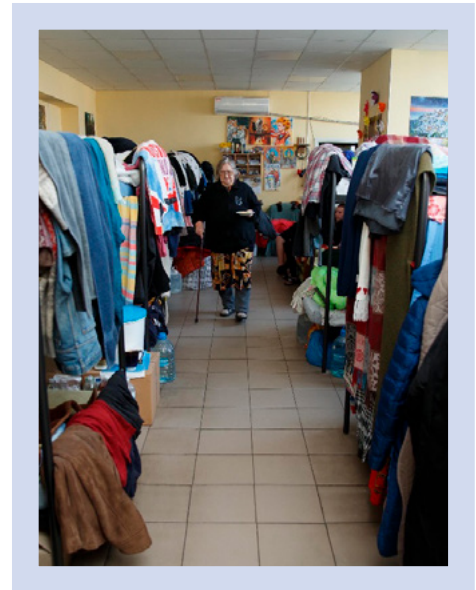
The provision of social services is significantly hampered by imperfect legislation; an insufficiently developed, and sometimes non-existent, network of institutions and facilities providing various services; the prevailing inaccessibility of existing institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities and groups with low mobility; insufficient funding for service delivery, and in some communities, no funds for these purposes at all; the destruction of infrastructure; the displacement/evacuation of staff/specialists; the lack of information about all types of services in the accessible formats; and other issues.

The state of persons with disabilities living in areas adjacent to the combat line is critical, with limited and often no access to basic necessities (water, food, medicines, technical equipment, etc.).



The Ministry of Social Policy, together with the Fund for Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, having failed to ensure effective legislation for social services and its implementation, began experimenting⁸⁷ with central procurement of social services that, by their nature and laws, should be organised and provided at the local level.

Most persons with disabilities receive a pension and social assistance of \$58 per month^{88,89} in the context of continuously rising prices for all goods, works, and services by at least 50-100%, if not more. It is extremely difficult not only for IDPs with disabilities, but also for persons with disabilities who remain living in their permanent place of residence. In turn, the low incomes of persons with disabilities and families with persons with disabilities force them to save money on food, proper medical treatment, recreation, cultural leisure, etc. This is especially true for those living in rural areas.



Zoya, Kharkiv city

I used to receive humanitarian aid – food. But now people with disabilities are in greater need of material assistance. Financial assistance. After all, the prices of everything have risen dramatically. People with disabilities have very small pensions.



Oleksandr, Kharkiv city

Today, it is financial aid that is relevant, as food aid is no longer so important in Kharkiv. It is better for a person to be able to determine their own needs and manage their funds.

Barriers in the environment contribute to the low level of access to various services and the low level of awareness about the rights and opportunities for their fulfilment. The state does not have a unified strategy aimed at continuous raising public awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and among persons with disabilities. The legal requirement to inform local authorities about changes and amendments to the legislation on social protection of persons with disabilities⁹⁰ is declarative.

The subsistence minimum, which is taken into account when determining payments and other types of assistance for persons with disabilities, is 20 per cent lower than that for persons without disabilities⁹¹, despite the often higher needs due to health conditions.

⁸⁷ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 70 of 27 January 2023](#) “Some Issues of Providing Financial Support to Public Associations of Persons with Disabilities.”

⁸⁸ What the disability pension will be in 2024: Ukraine has increased the amount of social benefits.

⁸⁹ [Amounts of state social benefits in 2024.](#)

⁹⁰ [Article 7 of the Law of Ukraine](#) “On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine.”

⁹¹ Starting from 1 January 2024, the subsistence minimum per person per month will be UAH 2,920, and for persons who have lost their ability to work, it will be UAH 2,361. [Law of Ukraine](#) “On the State Budget of Ukraine for 2024.”

**Iryna, Odesa city**

We have a very cool "equality" programme whereby 10,000 hryvnias are given out once a year for rehabilitation. They are given to children who do not attend rehabilitation activities in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 309. And in general, they cannot undergo rehabilitation there with their own medical conditions, such as epilepsy. So this is the kind of money they receive. Also, not only children, but also young people and adults with disabilities receive computer equipment under this programme... In addition, there is a separate item for children on early intervention. Here, too, funds are allocated for the purchase of tablets for communication. As for services: we have a rehabilitation centre, you may have heard of it, Janusz Korczak's, it is a municipal institution in our city. There are many social services in this centre... But no matter how long I have been fighting with our authorities to involve public organisations and allocate some funds for social services to public organisations, they keep saying that we have a municipal institution that we will fund. That's why we, the parents, are already getting together, writing projects, winning some and not others, and that's how we survive.

The situation with the provision of housing for persons with disabilities is critical, although certain categories are entitled to extraordinary and priority improvement of housing conditions.⁹²

The social housing stock is almost non-existent, and the housing on offer does not meet accessibility requirements. Accessibility requirements are often violated even during new construction, reconstruction, and major repairs. There is no state order in the housing sector.

The mechanism for replacing the housing in which a person with a disability lives, if such housing (premises) does not meet the requirements for unimpeded access and cannot be adapted to the needs of such persons, has not been defined and is not working. As a result, some people have been registered to improve their housing conditions for over 50 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Streamline the mechanism of inclusion of civilian victims with disabilities as a result of war in the social protection system and provide assistance in the process of paperwork and status.
- ✓ Prevent the reduction of pensions and social benefits for people with disabilities and those who care for them and take into account the inflation index annually.

ARTICLE 29. Participation in political and public life

At the level of the Constitution of Ukraine, incapacitated citizens are deprived of the right to vote as a right to freely elect.⁹³ At the same time, legal acts of lower legal force detail the prohibition for incapacitated persons to vote and to be elected.⁹⁴

⁹² Articles 45 and 46 of the Housing Code of Ukraine.

⁹³ Constitution of Ukraine: Article 70.

⁹⁴ Electoral Code of Ukraine: Articles 7, 10, 104, 105, 159, 160, 230, and 231.



There have been improvements in legislation to ensure accessibility of the electoral process for persons with disabilities, but in practice, polling stations often remain inaccessible, and election campaigning and related information materials are not accessible. The political participation of persons with disabilities is extremely low.^{95,96}

The bureaucratisation of the procedure for establishing public associations, the lack of support for statutory activities by state and local authorities, the difficult situation of persons with disabilities, the priority of addressing pressing issues, including those caused by the war, and a number of other negative factors hinder the creation of new civic institutions that would deal with the problems of such people.

All of the above hinder the establishment of interaction between communities and persons with disabilities through their representative organisations, which negatively affects the consideration of the needs of this category of population in decisions that directly or indirectly affect them.



Pavlo, Kharkiv city

Very short and simple. As long as people with disabilities go around begging for what they need, it's bad, and it's simply unacceptable. Until the state turns its face to them and offers effective help, concrete support, nothing will happen...



Kostiantyn, Vinnytsia city

I think we have never been asked what exactly we need. Maybe they should ask and listen to what we have to say...

⁹⁵ A person with visual impairments who was unable to vote independently in the 2020 elections because the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC) had not approved a list of reasonable devices for independent voting filed a lawsuit over the issue. The claim was partially upheld in the first instance and on appeal. In particular, the court of first instance noted that the CEC failed to ensure "the right to vote by secret ballot." [Verdict of the Kyiv District Administrative Court](#) of 18 August 2021 in case No. 640/11812/21.

⁹⁶ [Participation of internally displaced persons in elections.](#)

In addition, the OPDs have been designated as social service providers, and as a result, they have lost financial support for their statutory activities. This situation will have a negative impact on the organisational capacity of OPDs, leading to staff burnout and, in the future, to a reduction in the amount of assistance that these organisations will be able to provide to persons with disabilities, and to the inability to participate in decision-making processes at the local and national levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Implement a mechanism for deciding on the scope of voting rights of an incapacitated person, considering their individual characteristics and taking into account international experience.
- ✓ Improve the accessibility of the electoral process for persons with disabilities by enacting the list of necessary auxiliary aids as soon as possible and defining the procedure for their provision.

ARTICLE 30. Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport

Contrary to the legislative requirements, the number of news and featured television programmes, films, and videos with subtitling and sign language interpretation available on television remains small. This issue has been unresolved for more than 10 years.





Information on the percentage of adapted products is not summarised or analysed.

The government's 2022 goal of developing guidelines for the media on presenting information for people with disabilities in accessible formats (sign language translation, subtitling, audio commentary and other formats for presenting information for reading and communication)⁹⁷ has not yet been fully implemented.

In 2023, the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled entered into force for Ukraine.⁹⁸ However, the mechanism for implementing this treaty has not yet been defined by law.

At the legislative level, the status of the Ukrainian sign language and the language rights of sign language speakers are defined, as well as requirements^{99,100,101,102,103} are set to ensure accessibility of communication and create conditions for information accessibility. However, the effectiveness of implementing the relevant legislative norms is extremely low. Therefore, the adequate accessibility for persons with disabilities with sensory impairments (there are more than 40,000 sign language speakers¹⁰³) is not properly ensured. The community of persons with hearing impairments remains largely excluded from society.



Natalia, Kyiv city

Once we have identified that a child is deaf, what does the state give to parents? What? For example, there is no training for parents in sign language. This is the first language communication begins with. ... Parents do not know sign language, so there is no contact. What do we see, what services should be provided? Firstly, courses for parents in various fields. Sign language should be the first course. The second is the class itself, that is, the formation of a parent-child duo. Teaching parents how to work with deaf children. Then there is psychological support. How many times we have already said that there are no psychologists fluent in sign language. There are none to work with children. And children need psychological support, and so much! It is compulsory for parents to know sign language. Why? Because this is the key to adequate schooling. It is the key to a full-fledged family upbringing. This will be the development of a personality...

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Develop a detailed mechanism for the implementation and control of the use of accessibility tools (audio description, subtitles, etc.) in the field of television, culture, and public events. Identify a responsible body that will monitor compliance with the law and bring violators to justice.

⁹⁷ [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 285-r of 07 April 2021](#) "On Approval of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the Period up to 2025."

⁹⁸ [Law of Ukraine No.2854-IX of 12 January 2023](#) "On Ukraine's Accession to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Printed Information in Published Works for the Blind, Persons with Visual Impairments, or Other Persons with Disabilities."

⁹⁹ Clause 9 of Article 7 of the Electoral Code of Ukraine. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/396-20#Text>

¹⁰⁰ Articles 3 and 6 of the Law of Ukraine "On Education." <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2145-19#Text>

¹⁰¹ Paragraph 202 of Part 1 of Article 18, Paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Article 19, and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Article 20 of the Civil Protection Code of Ukraine. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5403-17#Text>

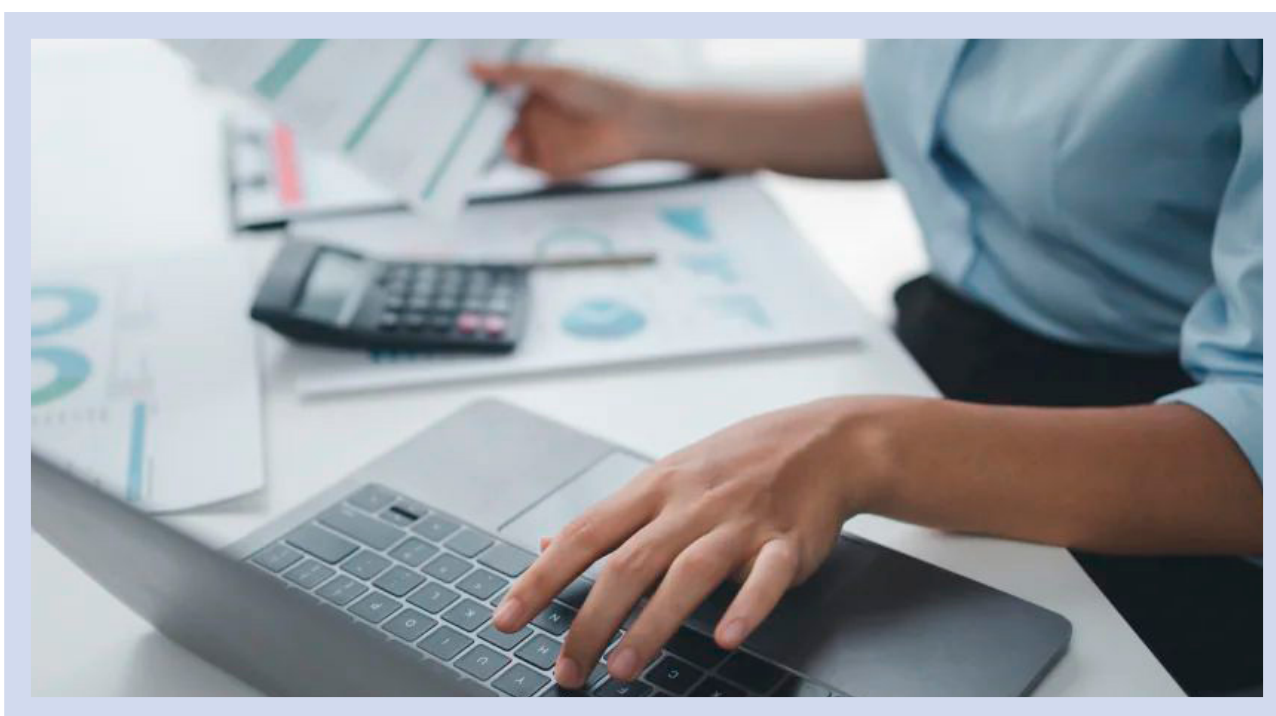
¹⁰² Article 75 of the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1618-15#Text>

¹⁰³ UTOG (Ukrainian Society of the Deaf) service – sign language interpreting service. <https://utog.org/vazhliva-informacziya/servis-utog-vpevveno-poruch>

ARTICLE 31. Statistics and data collection

Ukraine has no institution that would be responsible for collecting, compiling, and analysing data on the number of people (children) with disabilities.

The above data is compiled by combining information from the Ministry of Social Policy and the Pension Fund (in terms of recipients of state benefits) and the Ministry of Health (in terms of new cases of disability). Data on the number of persons with disabilities are disaggregated (sorted out) only by disability group, age (children/adults), place of residence (rural or urban), and disease category according to the International Classification of Diseases.¹⁰⁴



In terms of age, gender, and types of impairment, statistical data is collected only for persons who are newly diagnosed with a disability and for children with disabilities.

There is a risk that some persons with disabilities who were diagnosed with a disability long ago and do not receive these state benefits are not included in the statistics.

In addition, the registration of a disability is a human right, and due to the complexity of the procedure, low state guarantees, and public stereotypes, a significant number of people with health problems that give them the right to register a disability do not use this opportunity.

There is also no official data on the number of killed and injured persons with disabilities, as well as those who remained in the occupied territories, including in institutional facilities, or persons deported to Russia.

¹⁰⁴ Social Protection of the Population of Ukraine. 2022.

**Oleksandr, Kharkiv city**

There is no proper registration of persons with disabilities, no consideration of their disability types, and whether they are single or not, and what their needs are. If it comes to evacuation in Kharkiv, the authorities do not know what persons with disabilities need help, and what their needs are... There is no record of needs and no active action by the state or local government. That is, local governments and the state should identify such people and ensure that their needs are met.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ Ensure systematic collection and publication of statistical data on persons with disabilities that reflect the real picture.



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE
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