



**National Assembly of People
with Disabilities of Ukraine**

All-Ukrainian
Public
Association



TOOLKIT

ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES IN HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN ACCORDANCE
WITH ARTICLE 11 OF THE UN CONVENTION ON
THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



НВЕНЦІЯ
ОСІБ З ІНВАЛІДЬ

Prepared by **Larysa Bayda, Viktoriia Nazarenko, Pavlo Zhdan, Yurii Vasylchenko, Alla Sotska, Svitlana Petrusha**

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INTRODUCTION

In August-September 2024, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) in Geneva presented Ukraine's report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).¹

The reporting was conducted under the simplified procedure for periodic reports,² which was adopted by Ukraine. Under this procedure, the Committee prepares and approves a set of questions, which are then transmitted to the state. The state's responses to these questions constitute its official report.

The Coalition of public organisations of persons with disabilities presented its joint Alternative Report.³ In preparation for the report, the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD) held discussion panels and community meetings with women and men with various types of disabilities, elderly people, parents raising children and young people with disabilities, veterans, and civilian victims of military operations by the Russian Federation.⁴ The NAPD's consultants analysed legislation across various sectors to assess its compliance with the CRPD.

The Committee reviewed Ukraine's report, heard the Alternative Report from public organisations of persons with disabilities, examined reports from international organisations, and adopted the Concluding Observations on Ukraine's combined second and third periodic reports regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the Concluding Observations).⁵ Among other issues, the Committee highlighted shortcomings in the implementation of Article 11 of the CRPD, which significantly hinders persons with disabilities from accessing support in humanitarian response efforts.

What's next? We must act!

It is crucial to ensure the implementation of the Concluding Observations in general, and the comments on CRPD Article 11 in particular, as well as the broader implementation of the CRPD itself. The rights of persons with disabilities in Ukraine must be protected, and they must be provided with access to humanitarian response efforts.

The NAPD emphasises the need for dialogue and cooperation among all relevant institutions in conducting advocacy activities to ensure that the Concluding Observations "do not remain on paper only and do not become merely declarative."

This Toolkit has been developed to communicate the Concluding Observations – both in general and specifically regarding the Committee's observations on Ukraine's implementation of Article 11 of the CRPD – to the general public, state institutions, and to facilitate joint advocacy efforts.

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_g71#Text

² Guidelines on periodic reporting to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including under the simplified reporting procedure. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/3&Lang=en

³ Joint NGO report "Situation on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine." https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FCSS%2FUKR%2F58975&Lang=en

⁴ Information materials "People with Disabilities on Their Rights: Every Voice Matters." https://naiu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NAIU_AlternateReport_v03.pdf

⁵ Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Ukraine. <https://docs.un.org/en/CRPD/C/UKR/CO/2-3>; <https://naiu.org.ua/archives/news/komitet-oon-z-prav-osib-z-invalidnistyu-nadav-ukrayini-rekomendatsiyi-stosovno-zabezpechennya-prav-lyudej-z-invalidnistyu-z-urahuвання-mizhnarodnyh-standartiv> (translated by the NAPD)



SITUATIONS OF RISK AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES (ARTICLE 11)

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS (SHORTENED)

The Committee notes with concern that the State party did not take preventive measures to address risks, including during humanitarian emergencies, which could have allowed better protection of persons with disabilities during the conflict. It observes that several factors have impeded the safety and security of persons with disabilities in the context of the conflict and the increase in the number of persons who have acquired an impairment. It is concerned that:

- ✓ In civil protection and evacuation plans, as well as in the coordination of decisions on the distribution of humanitarian aid, no specific actions have been contemplated for persons with disabilities and amendments to such plans have not involved persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, causing serious difficulties for their protection and evacuation. In addition, evacuation points are not accessible;
- ✓ There is a lack of accessibility in relation to emergency and evacuation plans, as well as in shelters and emergency infrastructure;
- ✓ The procedure to obtain a conflict-related disability status is difficult and discriminates in access to social entitlements and long-term rehabilitation services depending on the region in which hostilities led to the disability;
- ✓ There are insufficient comprehensive measures, particularly in relation to insufficient access to adequate housing and social programmes,
- ✓ Some women and girls with disabilities are forced to cross the border and are subjected to violence, including sexual violence;
- ✓ There has been a deterioration in the situation of older persons with disabilities, and that they are facing increasing institutionalization and difficulties being evacuated from the conflict areas and protecting themselves from the hostilities;
- ✓ Humanitarian, recovery, post-conflict and development projects, including those with international and regional partners, do not mainstream disability and have not been developed in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

The Committee recommends that the State party, in close consultation with and with the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations:

- ✓ Reform civil protection, emergency and evacuation plans to provide adequate support and protection for persons with disabilities, and accessible warning systems, shelters and evacuation routes at home, in institutions and at the border. The State party should also:
 - ⊙ Provide persons with disabilities with information on disaster risk reduction and emergencies in accessible formats, including Braille, Easy Read and sign language, and using alternative modes and formats of communication;



- ✓ Ensure accessible facilities for respite care and for keeping and maintaining personal devices;
- ✓ Ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the planning and distribution of humanitarian aid;
- ✓ Ensure that the national preparedness plans provide for inclusive and accessible warning systems and shelters for persons with disabilities and secure sufficient funding in its regular budget and that from development and recovery projects to ensure that the “Ukraine without Barriers” campaign and other accessibility projects are implemented;
- ✓ Adopt legal safeguards to protect women and girls with disabilities from being harassed into a forced marriage and ensure that such cases are investigated, the perpetrators sanctioned and comprehensive reparations provided to the victims;
- ✓ Establish agile and expeditious mechanisms so that persons with disabilities can obtain a conflict-related disability status and access social benefits and long-term rehabilitation services in all regions;
- ✓ Guarantee a human rights-based response for internally displaced persons with disabilities, particularly those who have been displaced for prolonged periods, including in relation to violence and armed conflict, ensuring that they are provided with assistance and accessible and safe shelters;
- ✓ Prevent persons with disabilities, especially women and children with disabilities, from crossing the border without their consent and prevent and punish violence, including sexual violence, against them;
- ✓ Develop comprehensive and inclusive policies specifically tailored to the needs of older persons with disabilities to ensure that their rights are respected and to eliminate any protection gaps that they face in emergencies;
- ✓ Make sure that children with disabilities affected by the armed conflict remain with their families in community-based environments and that, in cooperation with the international community, take all measures necessary to facilitate the return of children with disabilities who have reportedly been forcibly transferred to the territory of the Russian Federation;
- ✓ Mainstream disability into all its future humanitarian, reconstruction, development and post-conflict projects with international and local partners, and develop them in close consultation with persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations. The Committee also recommends that national legislation ensure that all businesses participating in reconstruction comply with accessibility standards and establish enforcement mechanisms to that end.

WHAT THE STATE CAN DO IN THE SHORT TERM:

- ✓ Review legislation on wartime and humanitarian emergencies, ensuring that the needs of people with various disabilities are taken into account.
- ✓ Review legislation on evacuation to address the needs of persons with disabilities with different types of impairments.⁶

⁶ The outbreak of the full-scale war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, along with the enemy’s aggressive actions and the rapid shifts in the military situation, prevented local executive authorities from carrying out population evacuations in accordance with pre-developed plans. The majority of the population fled dangerous areas independently, using their own transport, vehicles provided by friends and volunteers, as well as evacuation trains, according to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (Rapid Assessment of the Experience of Evacuating People with Disabilities in Ukraine as a Result of Hostilities in 2022: Research Report. UNDP in Ukraine, 2022). <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/publications/zvit-z-doslidzhennya-shvydka-otsinka-dosvidu-evakuatsiyi-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-v-ukrayini-vnaslidok-voyennykh-diy-2022-roku>



Mykola, Lviv city

Together with Valentyna Butenko, Liubov Dmytrivna, and Olesia Perepechenko, we have been involved in evacuations 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.⁷

- ✓ Improve the procedure for interaction between various authorities and actors during the evacuation of the population, including persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Include in the plans of basic civil protection measures for the civil protection of persons with hearing and speech impairments, in particular those who are completely deaf, persons with visual impairments and persons who are completely blind, persons with mobility impairments and self-care difficulties, persons with cognitive impairments.
- ✓ To define at the legislative level the requirements for barrier-free accessibility, mechanisms and sources of funding for the survey, algorithms for determining barrier-free accessibility and adaptation of:
 - ⊙ assembly, reception, intermediate evacuation points, boarding/disembarkation points, railway/bus infrastructure facilities (railway/bus stations, stations, platforms, etc.), buildings and accommodation facilities, surrounding area, and vehicles;
- ✓ Improve the procedure for coordination between various authorities and stakeholders during the evacuation of the population, including persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Incorporate measures for the civil protection of persons with hearing and speech impairments – including those who are completely deaf – persons with visual impairments, persons who are completely blind, persons with mobility impairments and self-care difficulties, and persons with cognitive impairments into the core civil protection plans.
- ✓ Establish legislative requirements for barrier-free accessibility, including mechanisms and funding sources for accessibility assessments, as well as procedures for determining and adapting barrier-free accessibility at:
 - ⊙ assembly points, reception areas, intermediate evacuation points, and boarding/disembarkation sites; railway and bus infrastructure facilities (e.g., railway/bus stations, platforms, etc.); buildings, accommodation facilities, and surrounding areas; and vehicles.



Iryna, Sumy city

There are places of compact living in our Okhtyrka district, but they are hardly adapted for people with disabilities. Even in the most basic way, there is no care, the person relies on themselves. And accordingly, even basic ramps are a very big problem in places of compact stay, because these places were planned in advance and are not adapted for people with disabilities.

- ⊙ Vehicles, particularly wagons and buses (including school buses), intended for transporting persons with disabilities during emergencies, especially those who use wheelchairs or have to lie down;

⁷ Information materials “People with Disabilities on Their Rights: Every Voice Matters.” https://naiu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NAIU_AlternateReport_v03.pdf



Representative of a non-governmental organization:

In the carriages, people could simply lie on the seats if the train was not adapted for transporting people with disabilities. The issue of accessing the toilet in inaccessible trains was a serious one. Sometimes, people had to wait for 10–12 hours.⁸

There was a lack of accessible vehicles, including wagons and buses, particularly for persons with disabilities, especially those using wheelchairs.⁹

- ☑ Measures to support the livelihoods of the evacuated population, including the provision of water, essential supplies, housing, medical services and facilities, utilities, transportation, and necessary information.

Mykola, Lviv city

Perhaps temporary homes are needed 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 is a normal infrastructure, a pharmacy and a shop, so that they don't have to look far away...

Uliana, Stryi city, Lviv region

The biggest problem our people are facing is the lack of access to all medicines. Those people who have been abroad are now undergoing re-registration, and their medicines have run out... Not everywhere they are available, not everywhere they are permitted, and so it is overall difficult in Ukraine.

- ☑ Implement programs to provide permanent housing or facilitate the return to their homes for internally displaced persons with disabilities who lost their homes due to the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.
- ☑ Develop and approve methodological guidelines for involving persons with disabilities, organizations representing their interests, and entities providing employment or services to persons with disabilities (with their consent) in:
 - ☑ The development of evacuation plans, as well as the reception and accommodation of the population, taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities;
 - ☑ The evacuation and transportation of persons with disabilities, along with the logistics of relevant processes;
 - ☑ The inspection, assessment of barrier-free accessibility, and adaptation of evacuation assembly points, evacuation reception points, intermediate evacuation points, boarding/disembarkation points, railway/bus infrastructure facilities (railway/bus stations, platforms, etc.), buildings and accommodation facilities, and their surrounding areas.
 - ☑ Inspection and assessment of barrier-free accessibility and adaptation of vehicles, including wagons and buses (such as school buses), for the transportation and accommodation of evacuees with disabilities – especially those who use wheelchairs or are bedridden – during an emergency.

⁸ February 24 Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities. An analytic report. NGO "Fight for Right," 2022. <https://ffr.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/zvit-z-pravkamy.pdf>

⁹ Rapid Assessment of the Experience of Evacuating People with Disabilities in Ukraine as a Result of Hostilities in 2022: Research Report. UNDP in Ukraine, (2022). <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/publications/zvit-z-doslidzhennya-shvydka-otsinka-dosvidu-evakuatsiyi-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-v-ukrayini-vnaslidok-voyennykh-diy-2022-roku>



- ✓ Improve training programs for employees of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, emergency rescue services, and railway transport on providing assistance to the population during emergencies, considering the full range of impairments and chronic diseases that people with disabilities may have. Ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in relevant training sessions and briefings.
- ✓ Involve persons with disabilities and/or organizations representing their interests, as well as entities providing employment or services to persons with disabilities (with their consent), in:
 - ⊙ evacuation commissions;
 - ⊙ activities of humanitarian and coordination headquarters;
 - ⊙ development of evacuation plans for the population and plans for receiving and accommodating evacuees, as well as evacuation plans for employees
 - ⊙ compilation of lists and inspection of collection, reception, and intermediate evacuation points; boarding and disembarkation points; railway and bus infrastructure facilities (such as railway stations, bus stations, platforms, etc.); vehicles; accommodation buildings and structures; and evacuation routes;
 - ⊙ direct involvement in the evacuation and transportation of people with disabilities, including the logistics of the related processes

Ensure that the necessary legislative changes are made in this regard.

- ✓ Provide disaster risk reduction information to persons with disabilities in accessible formats.



Maryna, Poltava city

People with visual impairments face barriers to accessing information and miss opportunities to receive humanitarian aid. Elderly individuals, in particular, are at a disadvantage because they often do not own digital devices and, as a result, lack access to essential resources. Even those who are proficient in information technology at the level of users with visual impairments may struggle to receive assistance, as its forms are often not fully accessible.

- ✓ Ensure sufficient funding for the implementation of projects aimed at enhancing the accessibility of shelters.



Nelia, Zhytomyr city

We have accessible shelters – two of such kind. These shelters are designed for people with disabilities, including those with physical disabilities. They 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 they were nearby, how many times a day can a person who uses a wheelchair go down to a shelter? Most people with limited mobility remain in their apartments.¹⁰



Nataliia, Brody city, Lviv region

We have a bomb shelter, but it is not equipped for people with disabilities. It is not equipped for people without disabilities either. It is a former basement. After it became a bomb shelter, nothing much has changed there.¹¹

¹⁰ Information materials "People with Disabilities on Their Rights: Every Voice Matters." P21. https://naiu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NAIU_AlternateReport_v03.pdf

¹¹ Information materials "People with Disabilities on Their Rights: Every Voice Matters." P24. https://naiu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NAIU_AlternateReport_v03.pdf



- ✓ Ensure access to humanitarian assistance for persons with disabilities with various types of impairments, including residents in rural areas.

Andrii, Lviv city

Attention should be paid to information and technical support for persons with visual impairments. It's good that there is humanitarian aid, food, and cash packages, but there are things that are not accessible in Ukraine for such people. This includes electronic Braille, some digital tools, better computer equipment, and smartphones. For some reason, no one pays attention to this.¹²

Mykola, Ivano-Frankivsk city

The problem is, in fact, in personal care products. I see that everyone is raising this issue. And it is very big and very acute in our country. Do you understand? That is, the state cannot provide such products. The law is not observed. And, in fact, international missions cannot cover this issue either.

Yurii, Kyiv city

The problem is that most donors do not take an individualized approach to humanitarian aid. One major concern is that many donors are now focusing on frontline areas while neglecting the rest of Ukraine when it comes to support for people with disabilities. The locations where humanitarian aid is provided or distributed remain largely inaccessible. In my opinion, humanitarian aid should be delivered on a targeted basis – directly to the beneficiaries.

- ✓ Ensure that internally displaced persons with disabilities, civilian victims, and veterans with disabilities have access to stable livelihoods and employment, healthcare, housing, and social protection.

Maryna, Poltava city

It is difficult to make appointments with doctors because HELSI is not fully accessible for visually impaired people, and even going to the registry or calling is often anxiety-inducing, it is difficult to get medical services because of digital inaccessibility. Information is an important factor, but now digital inaccessibility is making itself felt, because HELSI works both in alarm and non-alarm conditions, but we cannot use it, so this is also negative for our health. It is difficult to make appointments with doctors because HELSI is not fully accessible for people with visual impairments. Even visiting the registry department in a hospital or making a phone call can provoke anxiety. Accessing medical services is challenging due to digital inaccessibility. Information is a crucial factor, but digital barriers are increasingly evident. HELSI operates in both emergency and non-emergency conditions, yet we cannot use it, which negatively impacts our health.

Olha, Cherkasy city

You know, I have a dream that there would be wards for people with disabilities in hospitals. So that a person who is completely bedridden would know that he or she will arrive, have a place, and get proper treatment.

¹² Information materials "People with Disabilities on Their Rights: Every Voice Matters." P.25. https://naiu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NAIU_AlternateReport_v03.pdf



- ✓ Involve public associations of persons with disabilities in the implementation of these measures.
- ✓ Establish 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.
- ✓ Monitor and analyse the inclusion of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in civil protection measures.
- ✓ Establish accountability for entities involved in evacuation planning, execution, and the placement of evacuees in shelters for failing to consider the needs and for violating the rights of persons with disabilities during evacuation. Additionally, designate an entity with the legal authority to prosecute such offenses.¹³
- ✓ Ensure the development of community-based social and medical services to support women with disabilities, women affected by the war, women who have returned from captivity, and women who have experienced violence and abuse.
- ✓ Ensure the integration of disability considerations into state policy on humanitarian response.
- ✓ Monitor and analyse state programs for humanitarian response and recovery at the national and regional levels, as well as their funding for disability inclusion, to improve resource allocation, enhance transparency, and strengthen the accountability of state institutions.

WHAT PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (OPDS) CAN DO:



Svitlana, Vinnytsia city

Through public organizations, we manage to ensure that all our children and youth receive the necessary support and care.

- ✓ Conduct monitoring of compliance with Article 11 of the CRPD.
- ✓ Analyse the situation of persons with disabilities during the war, taking into account gender, age, and access to humanitarian aid.
- ✓ Conduct monitoring of the accessibility of shelters, temporary accommodation for persons with disabilities, informational materials on evacuation, access to humanitarian aid, etc.
- ✓ Conduct training for representatives of clusters, international institutions, and humanitarian organizations on the needs of persons with disabilities with various types of impairments during war and humanitarian emergencies.¹⁴
- ✓ Provide information and training for civil protection system personnel on assisting people with different types of disabilities.

¹³ Rapid Assessment of the Experience of Evacuating People with Disabilities in Ukraine as a Result of Hostilities in 2022: Research Report. UNDP in Ukraine, 2022). <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/publications/zvit-z-doslidzhennya-shvydka-otsinka-dosvidu-evakuatsiyi-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-v-ukrayini-vnaslidok-voyennykh-diy-2022-roku>

¹⁴ I would like to note that the emergency rescue teams that arrived at Arena Lviv from abroad to assist in evacuating people with disabilities operated with remarkable efficiency – it seemed as though they had undergone specialized training. They transported bedridden patients abroad for treatment using specially adapted vehicles. Even after a stroke, they stabilized the patient's condition and secured them with special belts for safe and comfortable transportation to hospitals abroad. Such team training is extremely important and necessary at the multidisciplinary team level – not only for medical workers and the State Emergency Service (SES), but also with the involvement of social workers and volunteers. *Rapid Assessment of the Experience of Evacuating People with Disabilities in Ukraine as a Result of Hostilities in 2022: Research Report. UNDP in Ukraine, 2022* <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/publications/zvit-z-doslidzhennya-shvydka-otsinka-dosvidu-evakuatsiyi-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-v-ukrayini-vnaslidok-voyennykh-diy-2022-roku>



- ✓ Conduct awareness-raising activities to explain the Concluding Observations in general and the recommendations under Article 11 of the CRPD in particular.
- ✓ Carry out advocacy campaigns for the implementation of Article 11 of the CRPD and the Concluding Observations.
- ✓ Actively participate in discussions on amendments to disability-related legislation, provide recommendations, and advocate for their implementation.
- ✓ Provide psychological and legal support to women and men with disabilities, as well as families raising children and youth with disabilities.

Oliha Volkova, Head of NGO “The Centre for Social Adaptation of People with Disabilities ‘The Ocean of Kindness’” in Dnipro city

I regularly conduct such training sessions myself: how to properly handle a wheelchair to avoid damaging it and ensure comfort for a person with a disability, and other topics. However, this is not enough. Such training needs to be conducted on a regular basis or standardized within the system of training for rescue team members.¹⁵

- ✓ Continue providing government authorities and local self-government bodies with assistance regarding practical implementation of emergency response measures, particularly during evacuation, the placement of affected individuals in shelters, the provision of humanitarian aid, legal and psychological support; establishing shelters based on organizations; assisting people in institutional facilities, etc.
- ✓ Provide people with disabilities and families raising children and youth with disabilities with humanitarian aid, psychological and legal support (for example, through the establishment of hotlines), and carry out case management, among other services.

Tetiana

You have provided support, faith, and understanding, showing me that I am not alone in this difficult time. Your care and assistance are a great contribution to our family. These are true professionals in their field and heroes of our time. I admire and thank you for being part of our lives.

¹⁵ Rapid Assessment of the Experience of Evacuating People with Disabilities in Ukraine as a Result of Hostilities in 2022: Research Report. UNDP in Ukraine, (2022). <https://www.undp.org/uk/ukraine/publications/zvit-z-doslidzhennya-shvydka-otsinka-dosvidu-evakuatsiyi-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-v-ukrayini-vnaslidok-voyennykh-diy-2022-roku>



BEST PRACTICES OF PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1. PUBLIC ORGANIZATION “CHERNIVTSI REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ‘LEADER’”, Chernivtsi city

Improving access to medical services for people with disabilities, individuals with various impairments, and community residents.

During 2022-2024, the organization managed to create four inclusive hospital wards in medical facilities in Chernivtsi region.

These wards are equipped with a separate sanitary and hygiene room featuring a shower and necessary accessibility elements, wide threshold-free doors, accessible furniture, an anti-bedsore mattress, a functional bed, a refrigerator, a television, a microwave, an air conditioner, and other amenities. The furniture is arranged to ensure manoeuvrability for both individuals in wheelchairs and for rearrangement of hospital beds. Additionally, the wards are designed to accommodate a person who assists a patient with a disability. **To have equal access to medical services is a fundamental right for everyone.**





Another important initiative of the organization in the field of humanitarian response is the installation of a standard-compliant ramp at Chernivtsi Geriatric Boarding Institution. This facility hosts 180 people, including 70 internally displaced persons. People with disabilities, elderly individuals, and persons with various impairments who use assistive devices now have access to the ramp and are pleased to use it independently – in a safe, easy, and comfortable way. The installed ramp helps them to be independent and self-reliant.

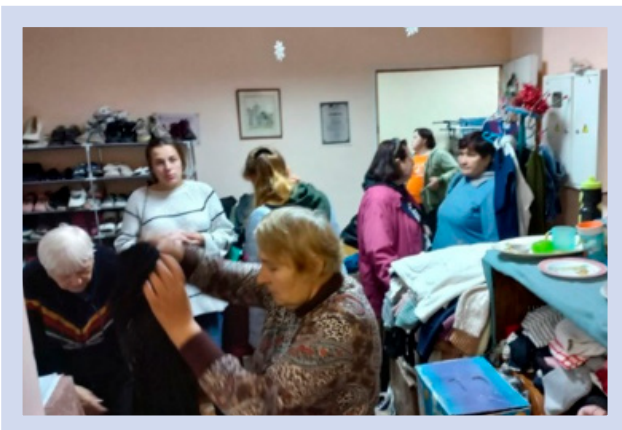


2. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “THE ASSOCIATION OF PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND SUPPORT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ‘OPEN HEARTS, ” Vinnysia city

Providing humanitarian assistance.

Since the first days of the war, we have been working to support people with disabilities and their families, including internally displaced persons.

At the beginning of the full-scale invasion, in November 2022, our organization resumed the operation of the Clothing Bank, where people with disabilities and their families, internally displaced persons, the elderly, and families with children can receive humanitarian assistance with clothes, shoes, hygiene products, and other household items.

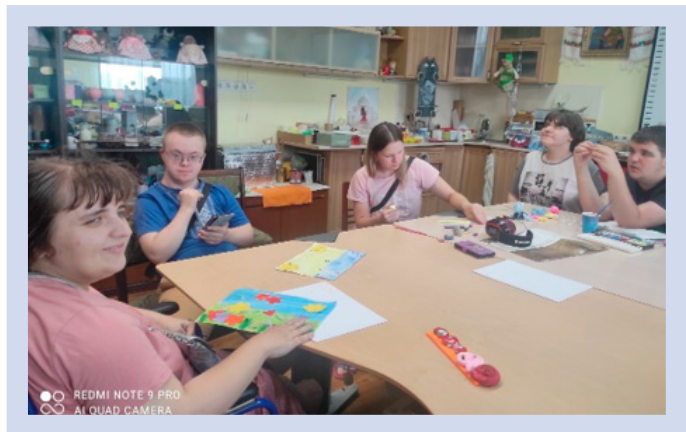




After receiving humanitarian assistance from abroad, the Open Hearts Association established a bank of clothes in its office, where citizens can also exchange clothes or give away the ones they do not use. Caring members of our organisation volunteer in the programme, donating their clothes in good condition so that those who need it most can get the help they need free of charge. So far, almost six thousand people have used the services of the Clothes Bank. **Let's stick together! Only by helping each other can we cope with everything!**

Providing psychological support.

Resilient and unbreakable, infinitely loving parents/legal representatives with children/youth with disabilities from different territorial communities of Ukraine visited Vinnytsia region, participating in family psychological and rehabilitation camps. Most of them are frontline communities or de-occupied ones. Therefore, the organisers of the event – the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine and the Open Hearts Association – made everything possible to help improve mental health, restore internal resources, prevent burnout, and stabilise the psycho-emotional state of the participants.





The exchange of experiences on best practices for advocating the rights and interests of children and young people with disabilities in territorial communities during the war, which took place during the camps, inspired participants, fostered friendships, and united them for the sake of their children's future. The coziness, convenience, accessibility, and safety of the Inclusive Non-Formal Learning Space in Dorozhnie village, where the camps were held, allowed parents and children to momentarily escape the fear of explosions and danger, recall the feeling of peacetime, and relax. The program included unforgettable excursions around the city on a convertible sightseeing bus and visits to the zoo, psychological training sessions, art therapy techniques, dancing and singing for the soul, as well as sessions on advocacy, barrier-free environments, and much more. Most importantly, there was a sincere and friendly atmosphere.

3. POLTAVA CITY PUBLIC ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES "VIRA," Poltava city

Improving access to healthcare for all women, including women with disabilities.

A multifunctional gynaecological chair was purchased for the gynaecological department of Karlivka Primary Health Care Centre, a non-profit municipal enterprise in Poltava region. It is accessible for use by all women regardless of their age and mobility.

Iryna, the head of the organisation

Our organisation has been working to ensure access to high-quality services for women with disabilities for many years. During the war, our work continued thanks to the support of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities, the European Disability Forum, and the Christian Blind Mission.

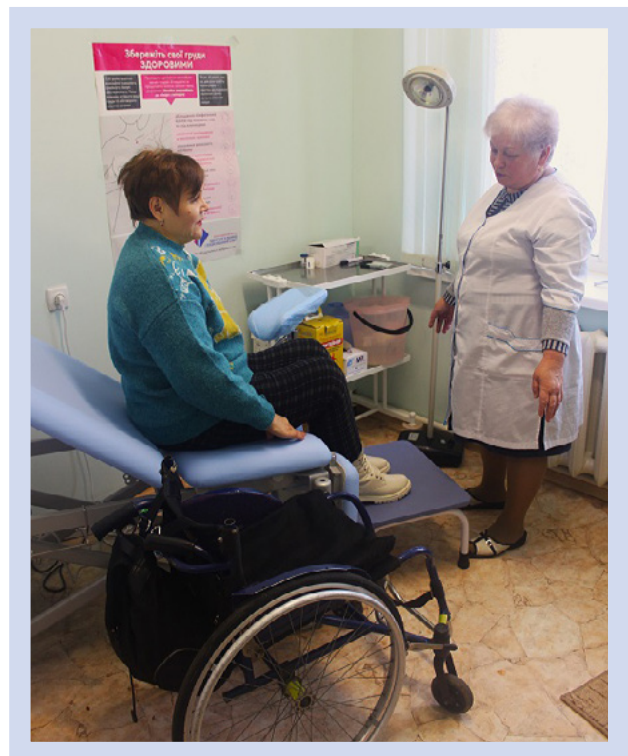
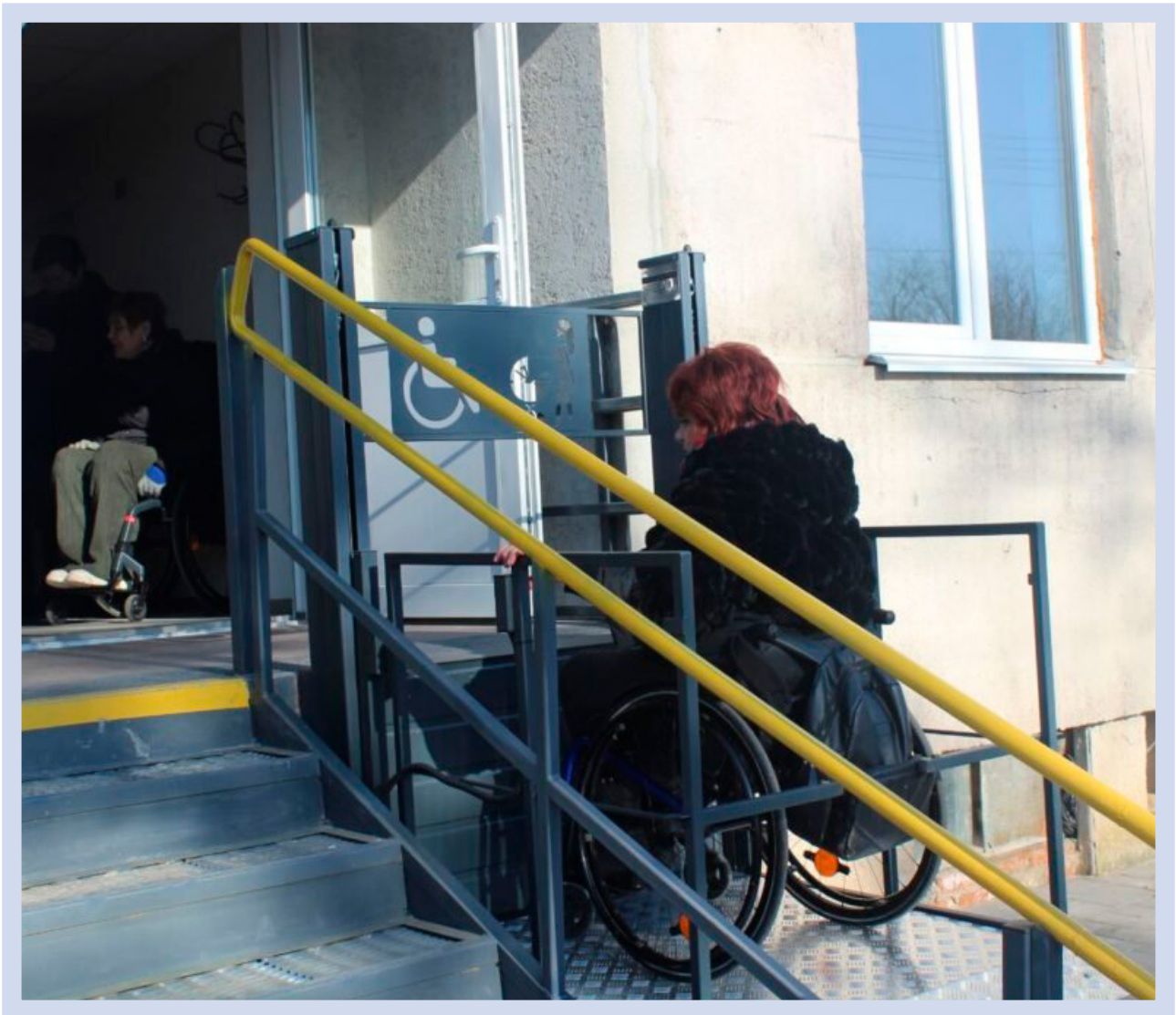


Photo: Karlivka community, Holoborodkivske's Starostat [Eldership]



Improving access to medical services for community residents, including people with disabilities.

The new premises of the paramedic and obstetric unit have been renovated to meet inclusive standards: the surrounding area is equipped with seamless paving stones, the entrance stairs are duplicated with a lift, the width and height of all doors in the building comply with the standards, the sanitary and hygienic room is equipped with additional equipment for people in wheelchairs (in particular, handrails near the toilet, a staff call button, and an additional horizontal handle fitting the full width of the door). **Now all the community residents can benefit from the facility's services.**





4. ALL-UKRAINIAN PUBLIC ORGANISATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES "MOVEMENT FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES," Cherkasy city

Legal and psychological support for people with disabilities and the elderly.

During the period of full-scale invasion, as part of the humanitarian response, social support trainings are systematically conducted for members of the organisation.



In addition, 217 legal consultations were provided in 2024 alone. 320 people with disabilities were provided with food as humanitarian assistance from the UN World Food Programme. **We try to support people by providing them with psychological and legal support.**

5. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “ZAPORIZHZHIA REGIONAL ORGANISATION ‘AUTISM. CONSCIOUS PARENTING,’” Zaporizhzhia city

Since the first days of the war, the organisation’s specialists have intensified their work with parents of children with autism, adding psychological support in emergency situations and strengthening close cooperation with other NGOs providing humanitarian aid. Thanks to the organisation’s consistent and systematic efforts, parents did not panic and were able to help their children.

Since February 2022, more than 140 Socialisation Studios for young people with autism have been conducted, along with 120 parental meetings and 16 social visits to public places and events. Additionally, parents receive psychological and legal support.



Systematic work with parents and children helps them survive in such difficult conditions. You feel that you are not alone. This is very important, especially when there is shelling every day, and children and adults are being killed. We continue our work, supporting parents and children.





6. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “KHARKIV’S ASSOCIATION OF BLIND LAWYERS,” Kharkiv city

Legal support during wartime.

Since the outbreak of the war, the organisation has been providing legal assistance to socially vulnerable groups. Our specialists focus on supporting civilians who have suffered mine-related injuries and require legal aid in obtaining the war veteran status.

In partnership with the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, the organisation’s lawyers provide legal support (both by phone and in writing) through a dedicated hotline. The service delivers legal aid to persons with disabilities and elderly individuals residing in Ukraine who have fled abroad seeking protection from the war.

Much attention is paid to advocating for the rights of military personnel and veterans who have lost their sight. In partnership with the NGO “Modern Look,” legal education events are organised for defenders and their families.

Within the “Echoes of War” public space, social services and humanitarian aid are provided to people with disabilities, the elderly, war veterans, and children with special educational needs. For example, in 2024 alone, more than 1,000 people facing high-risk situations and humanitarian emergencies received support from the organisation.





7. NATIONAL FOUNDATION “THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS,” Kyiv city

Creating and supporting inclusive spaces for children and families.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the organisation has been conducting ongoing awareness-raising activities on inclusive access to humanitarian aid, as well as social, medical and legal services. These efforts target local authorities, MHPSS specialists, lawyers, advocates, and representatives of humanitarian organisations.

The organisation has created 15 inclusive child-friendly spaces and 11 youth hubs across 19 regions of Ukraine. Ten of these spaces were created on the basis of inclusive resource centres. Trained professionals provide first aid, case management, referral services, and various types of psychosocial assistance to children and parents with disabilities. They also promote a deeper understanding of disability issues, ensuring inclusivity and non-discrimination. Within these Spaces, children with special educational needs receive support in catching up on lost or missed learning with the assistance of social educators and young volunteer activists.





Special assistance and support are provided to parents raising children with disabilities.



The organisation also advocates for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes during humanitarian crises and community-level reconstruction efforts in the country.



8. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “THE ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ‘MOTHER’S HEART,’” Kropyvnytskyi city

Support for families raising children with disabilities.

During the wartime, the organisation’s primary focus has been on activities that provide emotional and practical support while promoting psychosocial well-being.

In partnership with various humanitarian organisations, individual, family and group meetings with psychologists, as well as practical sessions with art therapists and social educators, are held weekly for people with disabilities.



In 2024, five projects aimed at providing social services to persons with disabilities were implemented. These included more than 150 consultations addressing issues faced by families of persons with disabilities. Additionally, 9 meetings were organised and held with specialists from government agencies and partner organisations, where approximately 250 participants received information on legal, social, and educational issues. Furthermore, over 100 classes were conducted for children and their parents. Advocacy activities were also undertaken to promote a barrier-free environment within the community and to monitor its implementation.



Thanks to cooperation with other NGOs and benefactors, about 600 people with disabilities have received charitable assistance, including food, hygiene products, and other essentials.





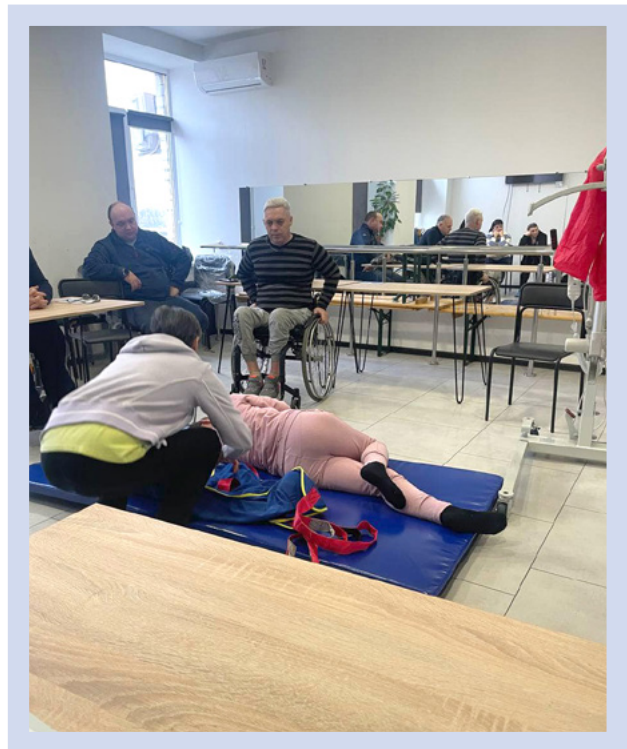
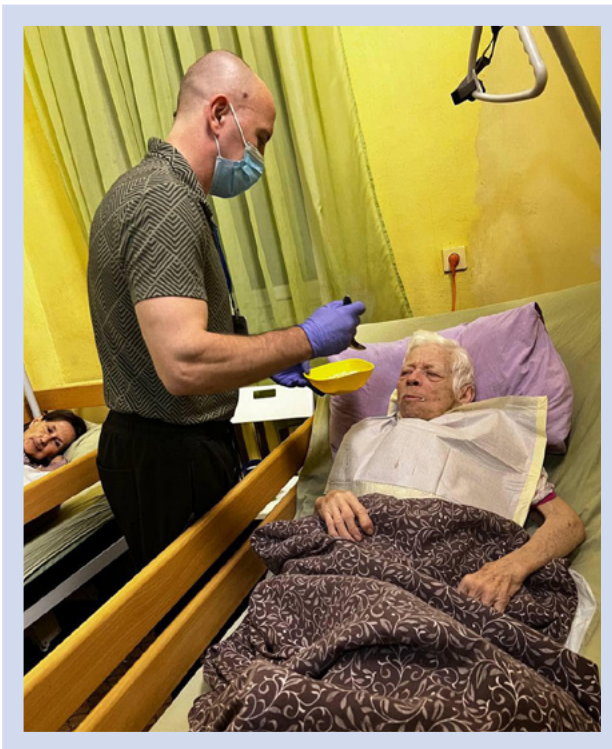
9. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ‘OCEAN OF KINDNESS’”, Dnipro city

Creation and support of a shelter for people with disabilities and the elderly.

The organisation provides 24/7 assistance to people with disabilities and the elderly affected by the war. For example, in 2024, as part of its humanitarian response, the organisation provided shelter, care services, long-term resettlement until the end of hostilities, rehabilitation, and assistance with restoring and obtaining documentation to 1,032 people with disabilities and elderly individuals evacuated from frontline cities and villages.



In particular, more than 350 evacuated beneficiaries received physical therapy, rehabilitation, and social adaptation services. In addition, 308 documents (including passports, tax IDs and pension certificates) were restored from scratch. Support was provided for accompaniment to multidisciplinary healthcare facilities, and 75 certificates from medical and social expert commissions were obtained. Disability groups were established, and measures were taken to ensure that individuals received social benefits, among other forms of assistance.



Members of the organisation conducted training for volunteers of the “Angels of Salvation” charity organisation and new employees, teaching them how to properly assist people with disabilities who use wheelchairs. The training also covered caregiving techniques for the elderly using assistive devices such as lifts, transfer sleeves, and other aids.

Within the cooperation with the Department of Social Pedagogy at the State Institution “Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University,” a short-term seminar was held for employees of social service providers, and certificates in the professional practice of social work were awarded.



10. PUBLIC ORGANIZATION “MAGIC LITTLE ANGEL,” Torchyn village, Volyn region

Creating an accessible and inclusive space for community residents.

The organisation implemented the “Kryla” [Wings] Accessible Space project with the support of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine. As a result, an inclusive space was created for the first time in Torchyn community, providing people with disabilities, children with disabilities, and the elderly with equal access to communication and leisure. Located on the first floor of the Torchyn Public Library, this space now allows people with disabilities to access library resources on equal terms, receive training in electronic services, and participate in cultural and educational events.



The space has given everyone an opportunity to meet – children, women, and men. The most important thing is that we created it together. We realised just how many people needed a place for communication.

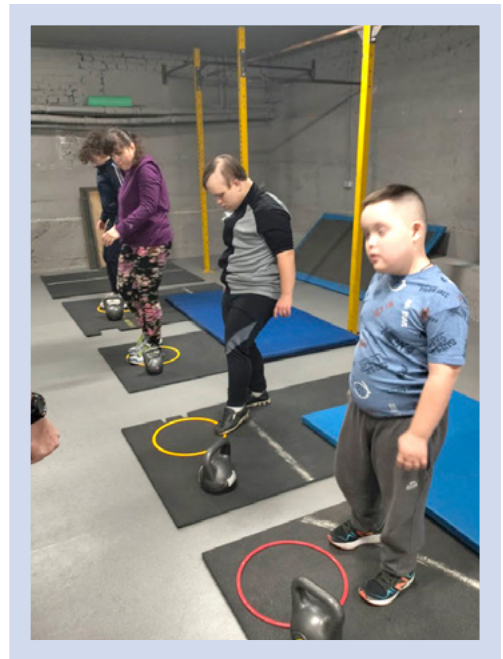




11. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “BALANCE – PLUS,” Poltava city

Support for families raising children and young people with disabilities.

A sustainable mutual support group for families of adolescents and young people with disabilities aged 18+, including internally displaced persons, has been established and is actively operating within the organisation. In particular, 30 families with adolescents and young people with disabilities from the Poltava community, as well as internally displaced persons, have been given the opportunity to join mutual support groups, participate in thematic meetings and workshops, engage in art therapy, and receive oral consultations on social and legal issues when needed.



In 2024 alone, 50 workshops were organised and held for teenagers and young people with disabilities on crafting with clay and self-hardening materials, as well as decorating.

Young people with disabilities and their parents/guardians receive psychological support, which significantly improves their well-being, overall emotional state, and helps reduce internal anxiety.

In the autumn, a group of young people with disabilities and their parents/guardians (10 families) took part in a rehabilitation programme at the Nadezhda rehabilitation camp in the village of Zarichany, Zhytomyr region.



12. NATIONAL ORGANIZATION “DONETSK REGIONAL BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF UKRAINE”

Services for men and women with disabilities, families raising children, and young people with disabilities.

In 2022-2024, five humanitarian response projects were implemented in partnership with international and national humanitarian organisations.

With the support of the organisation, the Donbas-Prykarpattia Centre for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities was established in Ivano-Frankivsk.

More than 3,500 people from four regions of western Ukraine and Donetsk region received emergency cash assistance for basic needs.

More than 4,000 internally displaced persons and local residents of western Ukraine received hygiene kits, food, and drinking water as part of humanitarian aid.

In Ivano-Frankivsk community, two Child, Youth, and Family Friendly Spaces were created in the cities of Ivano-Frankivsk and Kosiv. Both facilities feature play areas with inclusive educational toys and rooms for sessions with parents, children with special educational needs or disabilities, and adolescents.



Social support services for children with disabilities and internally displaced persons were introduced, engaging children from 28 communities in Ivano-Frankivsk region.

More than 3,000 children and over 10,000 adults from vulnerable groups in local communities, as well as internally displaced persons, have received psychosocial support services.

Six camps for children with disabilities were organised in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions.



13. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PROTECTION OF THEIR RIGHTS ‘STEP INTO THE FUTURE,’” Odesa city

Support for parents raising children and young people with disabilities.

In 2022-2024, the organisation conducted advocacy training sessions for parents raising children with disabilities and for people with disabilities in Odesa city and the region. Psychological support groups are also held. During this period, 85 women – including mothers of children with disabilities and women with disabilities – attended the events, including art therapy and fairy tale therapy.



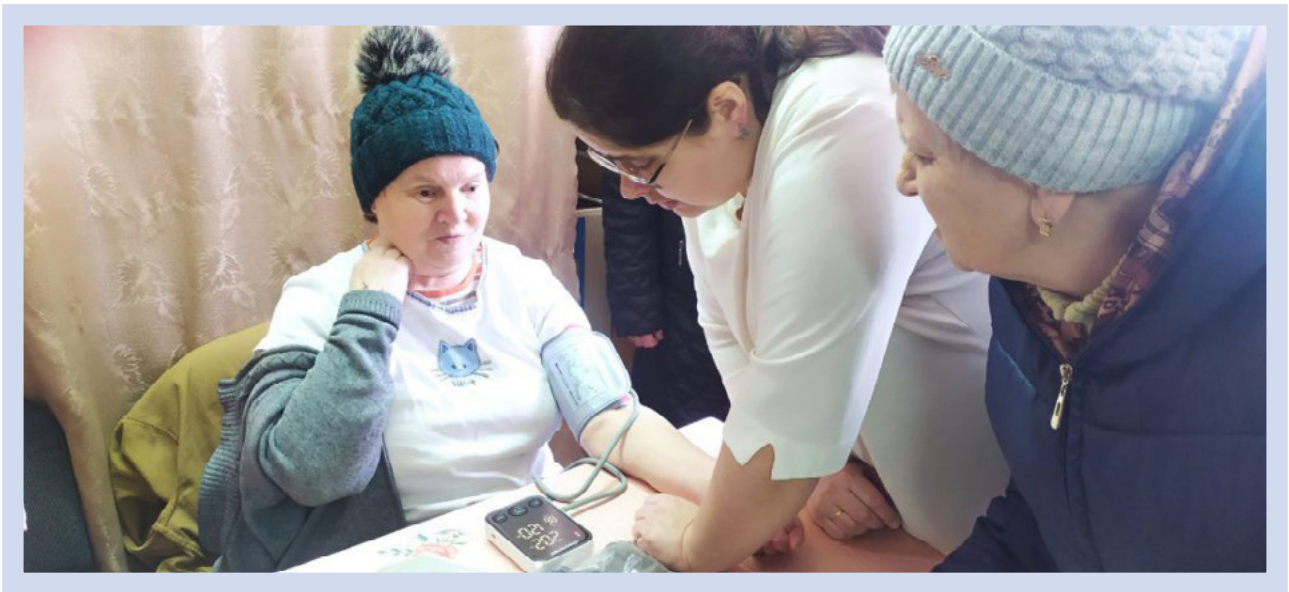
We provided humanitarian aid to 300 members of our organisation and residents of Balta and Kodyma districts of Odesa region. In 2022-2023, the organisation members received humanitarian aid twice a week, while in 2024, aid was provided once per quarter.





14. POLTAVA REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE UKRAINIAN SOCIETY OF THE BLIND, Poltava city

During the martial law, the organisation has been advocating for the interests of persons with visual impairments and implementing humanitarian response activities, as well as spiritual, psycho-emotional, and informational support for more than 1,200 members of the organisation and their families, including children.



In 2024 alone, 133 events were held, and 634 members of the organisation received financial assistance from various sources. The organisation's members also received 6,720 food parcels and 1,405 non-food parcels from various benefactors.

Thanks to cooperation with the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, 40 people with visual impairments from the first and second disability groups were provided with talking tonometers, 10 people with visual impairments from the first group received tactile canes, and 30 people received reflective bracelets and stickers.





15. PUBLIC ORGANISATION “I KNOW YOU CAN,” Dnipro city

Psychological assistance to people with disabilities.

Since the beginning of the war, the organisation has been providing psychological assistance to people with disabilities, primarily young individuals with disabilities and their mothers. Women with disabilities who are raising children with disabilities need special attention and support. They spend 24/7 caring for their children, assisting them, managing household tasks, and constantly worrying about their own and their children’s safety. Most of them are unemployed and depend on humanitarian aid.

The organisation provides individual legal and psychological support to people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers in Dnipro city.



Over 2 years, 765 food parcels and 423 hygiene kits were distributed to people with disabilities. In addition, the organisation helped more than 40 people with disabilities with rehabilitation equipment (wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, pressure ulcer cushions, and toilet chairs).

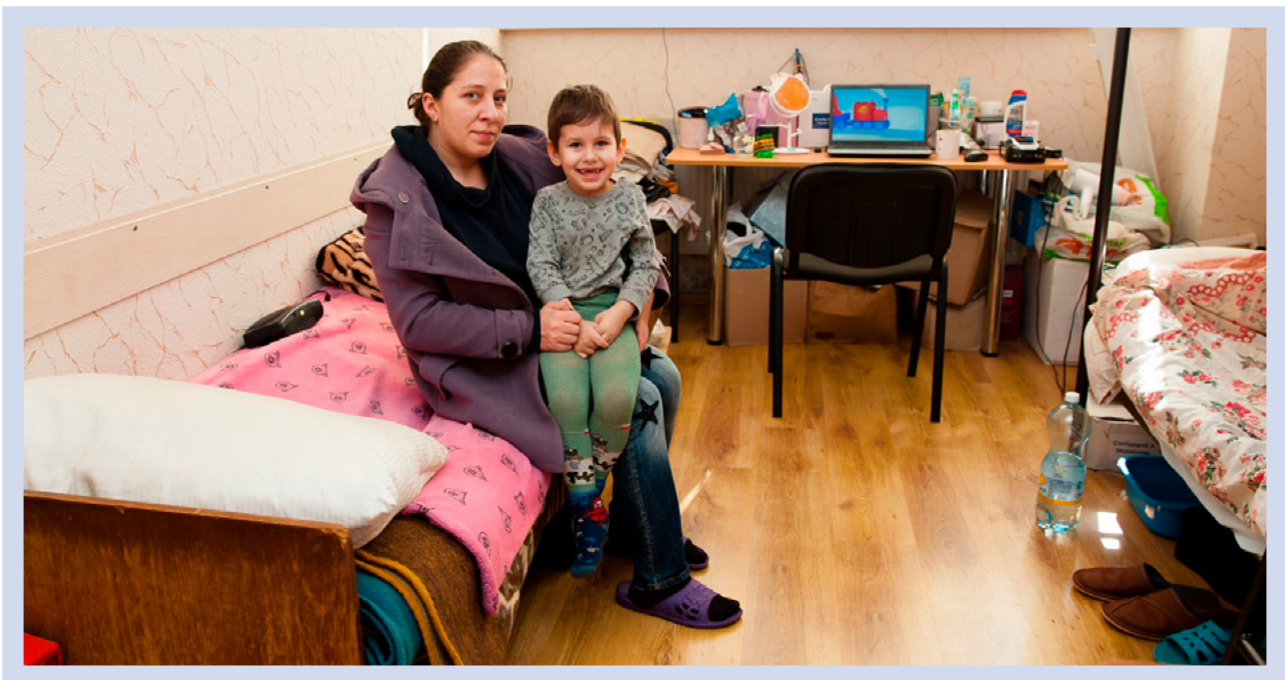




16. DNIPRO TRAINING AND PRODUCTION ENTERPRISE OF THE UKRAINIAN SOCIETY OF THE BLIND, Dnipro city

Establishing and maintaining a temporary stay centre.

From the first day of the full-scale invasion, we established a free accommodation centre for internally displaced persons in our administrative and production building and began accepting refugees from areas of active hostilities (particularly, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia regions). Our priority has been to assist people with disabilities, families with children, and the elderly. The number of beds at the centre has steadily increased, reaching a total of 130. Since its opening, the centre has provided shelter to more than 2,000 refugees. As of February 21, 2025, the centre had hosted 64 people.





The Centre's premises provide sanitary and hygienic conditions, permanent electric heating and air conditioning, as well as separate toilets and showers for women, men, and people with disabilities. The toilets and showers are equipped with electric heaters, detergents, and sanitary products.



Our Centre is registered with local authorities and on the website “Shelter – Protect Your People.”¹⁶ The work of our Centre has been repeatedly covered in the media.¹⁷

¹⁶ Website “Shelter – Protect Your People.” <https://prykhystok.gov.ua>

¹⁷ 11th Channel: <https://youtu.be/Hj5nqleY178>; Open: <https://youtu.be/-3YBKbLFBEk>; Sky News (з 1:21). <https://youtu.be/vhhw3TIK-EI>; The Ukrainska Pravda (starting 21:32). https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=x35sogPzVGQ&feature=emb_title; 9th Channel: <https://youtu.be/vRgPeb8thcY>; Dnipro TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaK8CNoUZLk>; TCH (1+1). <https://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/pereselenciz-vadami-zoru-oblashtovuyutsya-v-dnipri.html>; Article in The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/22/ukraine-network-visually-impaired-provides-shelter-displaced-people?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other



17. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OF UKRAINE

Humanitarian activities in various fields.

The NAPD, which unites more than one hundred organisations founded and led by people with disabilities with various types of impairments, has been providing support to people with disabilities since early 2022. It has refocused 60% of its activities toward humanitarian response, including the creation and support of shelters, provision of food and multi-purpose cash assistance, distribution of medicines, hygiene products, and assistive technologies. Additionally, it supports medical facilities by funding minor repairs, equipment, and improved access to sanitation and hygiene, as well as offering legal advice and support, psychological assistance, information support, social rehabilitation, and other types of support.

The NAPD actively advocates for the rights of people with disabilities to access humanitarian aid and recovery efforts, working in partnership with international and humanitarian organisations, clusters, and UN agencies.

In 2024 alone, the NAPD provided financial assistance to 6,019 people with disabilities and elderly individuals. Over the three years of the war, the NAPD has provided institutional and organisational support to 52 organisations of people with disabilities in different regions of Ukraine.



Photo: A social taxi in the communities of Volyn, Poltava, and Chernivtsi regions.



Photo: Cooperation with medical facilities. Arrangement of a ramp, Mykolaiv city.

The NAPD purchased equipment for 8 medical facilities, including 22 units of rehabilitation equipment for rehabilitation departments and centres, 276 units of assistive technology for assistive technology rooms, 12 all-in-one PCs and 12 printers for communities, and 48 Braille information stands to improve the accessibility of medical facilities. As a result, more than 300,000 people, including 25,200 individuals with disabilities living in eight communities, will be able to receive rehabilitation services in the communities using modern equipment, accelerating their recovery. Additionally, they will be able to receive online administrative services within their communities.



Photo: Improving the rehabilitation process of patients at Balta Multidisciplinary Hospital in Odesa region. The NAPD purchased equipment for the hospital.



Photo: Cooperation with communities to create an accessible environment.



Photo: Targeted support for people with different types of disabilities.



Photo: Social rehabilitation camps for veterans who have lost their sight.



Photo: Support for parents raising children with disabilities



КОНВЕНЦІЯ
ПРО ПРАВА ОСІБ З ІНВАЛІДНІСТЮ



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES OF UKRAINE**

Office 110, 8/5A Reitarska Str., Kyiv, 01054

Tel.: +380 44 279 6182

E-mail: office-naiu@ukr.net

Web-site: www.naiu.org.ua