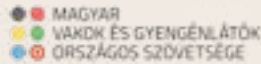


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DISASTER AND RISK REDUCTION THROUGH THE EYES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Project description and objectives

The “Ukraine war: OPD led disability inclusive response and recovery” is a one-year project jointly funded by the Christian Blind Mission (CBM) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) that provides support to persons with disabilities affected by Russia’s full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.¹ The overall goal is to make sure that persons with disabilities and DPOs (Disabled Persons’ Organizations) are meaningfully involved in the humanitarian response mechanisms.

The EDF-CBM project has three main objectives:

1. Identifying and responding to the immediate needs of persons with disabilities (food and non-food items; information and assistive technologies; transportation)
2. Influencing the humanitarian sector by advocating for disability-inclusive response and service delivery (advocacy efforts with governments, EU institutions and UN Agencies; socio-legal research related to the disability aspect in the disaster risk reduction and asylum legislation and policies)
3. Strengthening the disability movement (capacity building; data collection; enhancing members’ expertise to advance disability inclusion in the humanitarian sector).²

The following 12 DPOs from eight countries were part of the project led by the European Disability Forum:

- Ukraine: *National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities (NAPD), The League of the Strong*
- Hungary: *National Federation of Organisations of People with a Physical Disability (MEOSZ)*
- Latvia: *Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations (SUSTENTO)*
- Lithuania: *Lithuanian Disability Forum (LDF)*
- Moldova: *Motivatie, Centre for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CDPD), Society for Deaf Republic of Moldova (ASRM), Alliance of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (AOPD)*
- Poland: *Polish Disability Forum (PFON)*
- Romania: *Romanian National Disability Council (CNDR)*
- Slovakia: *Slovak Disability Council (NROZP)*

The research project of the National Federation of Associations of Persons with Physical Disabilities (MEOSZ)

As part of the EDF-CBM project, the National Federation of Associations of Persons with Physical Disabilities (MEOSZ), a Hungarian umbrella organization of persons with physical disabilities with 83 member organizations and more than a thousand local groups representing 160 000 individuals across the country, conducted a research project investigating **how the disability aspect appears in the Hungarian disaster management, disaster risk reduction and asylum legislation, policies and practices**. The report titled “Disaster and risk re-

¹ Ukraine war: OPD led disability inclusive response and recovery. European Disability Forum. <https://www.edf-feph.org/projects/ukraine-war-opd-led-disability-inclusive-response-and-recovery/>

² 2.7 million - How EDF and partners are supporting persons with disabilities impacted by the war in Ukraine. European Disability Forum, October 2022. <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2022/11/Ukraine-Report-FINAL.pdf>



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duction through the eyes of persons with disabilities” aims to support future disaster management, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian and asylum legislation and policy-making by reviewing existing literature, identifying policy gaps, presenting promising practices and providing policy recommendations to the Hungarian Government, national disaster management authorities, DPOs, UNHCR and the academic world. It intends to raise awareness of the disability and accessibility aspects and broaden the knowledge base of state and non-state actors in order to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities in disaster and humanitarian emergency situations as well as to call for high-quality disability-inclusive disaster management services for them.³

Methodology

Research was carried out between 1 November 2022 and 31 March 2023. During this period, semi-structured online and in-person interviews were conducted with representatives of five organizations (NGO, research institution, national asylum authority, EU-based advocacy organization and UN Agency). In-person consultation was held with legal experts of three DPOs who were also involved in the proofreading and editing process of the first draft of the research report in which they shared their invaluable insights. The questionnaire of the “2023 Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disaster” designed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) was translated into Hungarian and its preliminary results were incorporated in the research report.⁴ A written input related to the Day of General Discussion and call for written submissions on Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) issued by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was collated and uploaded to the website of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR).⁵

The report is centered around the guiding principles and priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and Article 2 (Universal design), Article 9 (Accessibility) and Article 11 (Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Key findings of the “Review of Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice across Europe and Central Asia” published by EDF were also incorporated in the report.⁶

³Tiszabecsi Blue Dot-ról MEOSZ jelentés 20221019. című szervezeti dokumentum. Hozzáférés: a MEOSZ szakértőjének jóvoltából, 2022. november 14. [Report on the monitoring visit conducted by MEOSZ at the Blue Dot Hub in Tiszabecs (internal document). Access provided by MEOSZ, 14 November 2022.]

⁴UNDRR’s “2023 Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Disaster” is available here: <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/2023-survey-persons-disabilities-and-disasters>

⁵Call for Input: Day of General Discussion and call for written submissions on article 11 of the Convention, OHCHR. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2023/day-general-discussion-and-call-written-submissions-article-11-convention>

⁶Review of Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice across Europe and Central Asia. European Disability Forum, 2021. <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2021/12/DiDRR-Review-Europe-and-Central-Asia.pdf>



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Promising practices in Hungary⁷

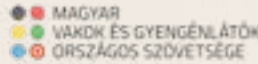
- 1. Consultations with DPOs:** a series of consultations was held between the National Directorate General for Disaster Management (Ministry of Interior), DPOs representing persons with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities and a research institution with expertise in universal design in 2014. The aim of the meetings was to engage DPOs in policymaking, to develop good practices in disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DiDRR) and to plan an evacuation exercise. Although the latter had eventually not been carried out and consultations were halted due to financial restraints, these past events still serve as a good illustration on how meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations should look like in relation to DiDRR.
- 2. Metro Line 4 evacuation exercise:** a research institution with expertise in universal design organized an evacuation test in Metro Line 4 involving DPOs and the disaster management authority of Budapest in 2015. They investigated how persons with disabilities could be evacuated from the metro tunnel in an emergency situation. Lessons learnt were planned to be incorporated into disaster risk reduction policies and institutional protocols which did not take place at the end.
- 3. Blue Dot monitoring visit:** MEOSZ staff conducted a monitoring visit to the Tiszabecs Blue Dot Hub under the EDF-CBM project and in cooperation with UNHCR in 2022. The Blue Dot Hub, jointly established by UNHCR and UNICEF, aims to provide free protection services and reliable information in multiple languages to people fleeing Ukraine as well as referrals to the health care, education, psychosocial and other specialized services. It aims to focus on unaccompanied minors, adolescents, persons with disabilities, survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence as well as members of the LGBTQIA community. It would be crucial to incorporate the findings of the monitoring visit in the design of other Blue Dot Hubs in order to achieve full accessibility.

Recommendations for the Hungarian Government⁸

- Examine if the national legislation is in compliance with the principles and priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and Article 2 (Universal design), Article 9 (Accessibility) and Article 11 (Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Amend national legislation related to disaster management, disaster risk reduction and disaster prevention following meaningful engagement of DPOs in the decision-making procedure.

⁷Significant part of the recommendations was developed by Ms. Erzsébet Földesi (MBE-ETIKK).

⁸The description of the first and the second practice is based on internal documents provided by Ms. Erzsébet Földesi (MBE-ETIKK).



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- Involve the widest range of people with disabilities, including girls, women and children with disabilities to co-develop solutions related to DiDRR.
- The Ministry of Interior should initiate and coordinate negotiations between the disaster management and disaster risk reduction authorities and DPOs with the involvement of charity organizations and UN Agencies, if necessary.
- The Ministry of Interior should promote the rights of persons with disabilities by strengthening inclusive public discourse, especially related to DiDRR.
- The Hungarian Government should allocate sufficient financial resources to create and to promote DiDRR legislation, policies and practices.

Recommendations for the national disaster management authorities:

- The National Directorate General for Disaster Management, Ministry of the Interior (NDGM) and its relevant local branches should resume meaningful engagement with DPOs in testing and developing DiDRR solutions that could be channeled into policymaking.⁹
- NDGM should regularly invite DPOs to meetings organized for disaster management and disaster risk reduction authorities and charity organizations where persons with disabilities and their representatives could share their lived experiences that could be included in national and local disaster management and disaster risk reduction plans and risk assessments.
- Disaster management, disaster risk reduction and disaster prevention authorities should systematically carry out tests similar to the 2015 Metro Line 4 in relation to all public investment with meaningful involvement of DPOs during all phases of decision-making processes (including planning, implementation and evaluation).¹⁰ This would increase the ability of national disaster management authorities to provide quality DiDRR services for persons with disabilities that would result in better compliance with Article 11 of the CRPD and the Sendai Framework.

Recommendations for Hungarian disabled people's organizations (DPOs):

- Develop DiDRR guides based on good international practices and adapt them to local conditions in order to serve as a model for disaster preparedness at the national and local level as well as a tool for examining the

⁹Szakmai megbeszélés a katasztrófavédelemről a fogyatékosokkal élő személyek bevonásával. MBE-ETIKK, 2014. december 8. [Discussion about disaster situations involving people with disabilities. MBE-ETIKK, 8 December 2014.] <https://www.etikk.hu/hir/szakmai-megbeszelesre-a-katasztrofavedelemrol-a-fogyatekosokkal-elo-szemelyek-bevonasaval/>; Katasztrófavédelmi tanácskozás a Máltai Szeretetszolgálatnál. MBE-ETIKK, 2015. február 26. [Disaster management consultation at the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. MBE-ETIKK, 26 February 2015.] <https://www.etikk.hu/hir/katasztrofavedelmi-tanacskozas-a-maltai-szeretetszolgalatnal/>

¹⁰Metró kiürítési gyakorlat. MBE-ETIKK, 2015. június 25. [Metro evacuation exercise. MBE-ETIKK, 25 June 2015.] <https://www.etikk.hu/hir/metro-kiuritesi-gyakorlat/>



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process of inclusive disaster planning.¹¹ The guide should include accessibility criteria in accordance with the requirements of universal design, if possible. This would also help the reception of refugees arriving in Hungary.

- Create gender-responsive national and local DiDRR guides that refer to the needs of displaced women with disabilities as well.
- Translate existing international DiDRR literature into Hungarian and make these resources accessible for everyone by creating Easy-to-Read versions as well. If necessary, involve volunteer translators and provide quality assurance for them.
- Strengthen professional and public discourses on DiDRR by engaging other NGOs, advocacy organizations, universities, research institutions and the media as well.
- Proactively search for available funds in order to intensify strategic cooperation with relevant stakeholders in the field of DiDRR.
- Make conscious capacity-building efforts to expand the knowledge base on DiDRR of their staff and members. Contact the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta which launched disaster prevention training in 2020 and seek cooperation with them in order to develop a new training plan related to DiDRR.¹²

Recommendations for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency:

- Dedicate at least one meeting to the needs of people with disabilities who were granted temporary protection in relation to Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine under the Inter-Agency Coordination Forum (Protection Working Group) and invite relevant state and non-state actors in order to identify potential gaps and solutions in service delivery.
- Incorporate the outcomes and recommendations of the Tiszabecs Blue Dot Hub monitoring visit conducted by MEOSZ experts in future operations and service design.
- Review of measures that should be implemented in order to include the needs of people with all types of disabilities to achieve full accessibility of the Blue Dot Hub system. Keep in mind the potential arrival of another large inflow of refugees in the near future.

Recommendations for the academic world:

- Conduct research to obtain a better understanding on the interconnectedness of disasters, climate change, humanitarian emergencies, people with disabilities, accessibility, societal exclusion, marginalization and political oppression.

¹¹Guidelines – Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. IASC Task Team on inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Endorsed by IASC Principals. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, July 2019.

¹²Vészhelyzet-kezelés. Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat. [Disaster management. Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta.] <https://www.maltai.hu/tevekenyseg/intezmeny/275>