



UNPRPD MPTF

Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



UNITED NATIONS
MOLDOVA



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MOLDOVA



COUNTRY BRIEF



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COUNTRY BRIEF

Disclaimer

This brief was prepared by the Technical Secretariat. It summarizes the key findings from the situational analysis report and does not necessarily reflect the position of the UNPRPD MPTF.

CONTENTS

Acronyms and abbreviations	4
1 Background	6
2 Why a country analysis?	7
3 Introduction to disability context in Moldova	8
4 Findings	9
4.1 Stakeholder coordination mechanisms	9
4.2 Preconditions for disability inclusion	12
– Equality and non-discrimination	12
– Inclusive service delivery	13
– Accessibility	15
– CRPD compliant budgeting and financial management	16
– Accountability and governance	17
4.3 Cross-cutting approaches: Participation, gender, inequalities	19
4.4 Disability inclusion in broader development, humanitarian and emergency contexts	20
5 Conclusions	22
Annex 1	24

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOPD	Alliance of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPA	Central Public Authorities
CPEDEE	Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality
CPR	Centre for Policies and Reforms
CREPOR	Republican Experimental Centre for Prosthesis, Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LPA	Local Public Administrations
MoEI	Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure
MoER	Ministry of Education and Research
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCDWAA	National Council for Disability and Work Ability Assessment
NCRPD	National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
NEA	National Employment Agency
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-governmental Organization

NHIC	National Health Insurance Company
NRAECIT	National Regulatory Agency in Electronic Communications and Information Technology
NSAA	National Social Assistance Agency
NSSO	National Social Security Office
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPDs	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
PA CRPD	Public Association “Centre for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”
PFSD	Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization

1 BACKGROUND

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) is a unique partnership that brings together United Nations (UN) entities, governments, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and broader civil society to advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the country level around the world.

The UN entities participating in UNPRPD are ILO, OHCHR, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WHO. Other UNPRPD members include the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). The main contributors to the UNPRPD MPTF are Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In 2020, with the Strategic and Operational Framework 2020-2025, UNPRPD adopted a new programme design approach. The Framework moves towards proactive, results-oriented joint programming to drive implementation of the CRPD and disability-inclusive SDGs.

In the same year, the UNPRPD launched its fourth funding call and invited UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to submit proposals for joint country-level programmes with the objectives of advancing CRPD implementation and improving the implementation of disability-inclusive SDGs. The 26 selected teams (see Annex 1) were then allocated an initial budget to deliver an induction training, conduct a country situational analysis and complete a full joint programme proposal based on the findings of the situational analysis.

The 26 countries each conducted a comprehensive multistakeholder situational analysis to identify gaps and opportunities around preconditions to CRPD implementation and agree on a set of recommendations to address them.

From March to October 2021, the UNCT in Moldova conducted the comprehensive situational analysis. The methodology included a desk review of relevant literature, key informant interviews and focus groups, stakeholder mapping exercises, and consultative workshops with key stakeholders.

The full situational analysis report can be found [here](#).

2



WHY A COUNTRY ANALYSIS?

Many countries still struggle to transform the CRPD into concrete policies, systems, programmes and services that uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. It is urgent that governments and their implementation partners deliver on their SDG commitments through CRPD-compliant interventions. To support countries in the most catalytic way requires understanding the main bottlenecks and priorities in each country in relation to the fulfilment of the CRPD. We needed to know who the key stakeholders are, how implementation/monitoring mechanisms are functioning (or not), which capacities stakeholders may need to improve, and which ongoing development processes could be leveraged to become more disability inclusive.

The situational analyses were designed to:

- Inform the design of future PRPD funded programmes in the country and serve as a baseline for them;
- Inform UNCTs of gaps in achieving disability inclusion in ongoing national processes and programmes and recommend further, in-depth analysis where needed;
- Build a base of mutual understanding and working relationships among UN entities; government, OPDs and other civil society organizations, as well as the private sector and academia, as the basis for future co-design of joint programmes;
- Strengthen the capacity of those stakeholders to more effectively include and address the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the CRPD; and,
- Serve as an advocacy tool for ODPs and other civil society partners, both national and international.

3 INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY CONTEXT IN MOLDOVA

 Population	2.6 million
 Disability Prevalance	6.7% [2019]¹
	Female 48% Male 52%
	Rural 62% Urban 38%

According to available statistics, as of 2020, the total number of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova totalled 176,100, including 10,700 children. This reflects a decrease of 3,500 persons compared to 2017. Of this number, approximately 48 percent are women and 52 percent are men, 62 percent reside in rural areas and 38 percent in urban settlements.

The Republic of Moldova ratified the UNCRPD in 2010, which led to important changes in the areas of disability and social inclusion. Those include approval of the Law on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in 2012, which resulted in the development of the 2017-2022 National Programme on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the National Deinstitutionalization Programme, and the Residential Institutions Transformation Plans for 2018-2026. Ratification also prompted reforms to the disability determination system, as well as the development of various types of social services for persons with disabilities.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Stakeholder coordination mechanisms

The key stakeholders responsible for implementing and monitoring the CRPD are highlighted below. A full list of stakeholders and additional details is included in the full report.

The key stakeholders in the implementation of the CRPD in Moldova are:

- public authorities (including key government ministries and subordinated entities);
- organizations of persons with disabilities and other human rights civil society organizations; and,
- development partners, including United Nations agencies.

Government

Implementation of programmes related to the rights of persons with disabilities are mainly the responsibility of the **Ministry of Labour and Social Protection**, the **Ministry of Health (MoH)**, and the **Ministry of Research and Education**. Other national authorities that do not deal directly with the rights of persons with disabilities rarely address the issue of CRPD implementation because a cross-sectoral approach to the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities is rarely taken. National and local public authorities lack sufficient capacities to integrate issues of inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities in development plans, programmes and strategies. Disability is not mainstreamed in local and regional development policies or in sectoral policies.

The **Disability Council (NCRPD)** is responsible for “monitoring the implementation and advocacy of the national policy on social inclusion of the persons with disabilities.” It was established as part of the new disability legislation to monitor CRPD implementation, but according to reports, it is not functional.

The **National Council for Disability and Work Ability Assessment (NCDWAA)** is the entity responsible for disability determination and assessment.

The government designated the State Chancellery as the focal point for implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Shortly after the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was adopted in 2015, the government established the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development to create an appropriate institutional framework and ensure a participatory and transparent process for the national adaptation and implementation of the SDGs. Despite the existence of the Coordination Council, persons with disabilities remain unaware of the role played by the SDGs, how they could be monitored and implemented in Moldova, and how OPDs could contribute to SDG implementation and monitoring.

The weak capacity of central and local government authorities and institutions responsible for integrating the disability dimension into plans, programmes and strategies and for monitoring, reporting and assessing the impact of policies implemented helps to explain the obstacles to making progress in implementing sustainable reforms, particularly in the area of disability.

Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)

OPDs are the main actors in ensuring direct engagement with persons with disabilities and with parents of children with disabilities in contributing to CRPD implementation. The report found that the number of OPDs in Moldova is low. However, several OPDs were described as well-known in the disability field, such as: Association MOTIVAȚIE; Alliance of (AO) Mental Disability Advocacy Centre; Association of Young Persons with Diabetes; Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities; AO SOS Autism; AO Sunshine; and AO Children of the Rain. Additional associations date to the Soviet period and still receive support from the State budget: Association of the Blind of Moldova; Association of the Deaf the Republic of Moldova; and Association of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Moldova. Not all of these organizations meet the definition of an OPD; that is, a membership-based organization led by persons with disabilities themselves or their caregivers (in case of children). OPDs do not represent, or only partially represent, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with disabilities who reside in rural areas, older persons with disabilities, women and girls with disabilities, persons with dwarfism, and LGBTIQ persons with disabilities.

The Alliance of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD) coordinates civil society organizations active in the area of the rights of persons with disabilities and has become rather influential. It is not an umbrella organization, but an activist-driven research and advocacy group.

Based on the views shared by persons with disabilities and experts, this small number may be explained by low levels of knowledge and awareness among persons with disabilities of the importance of developing OPDs, together with the difficulties of registering and maintaining an NGO. Although the legal framework for NGO registration seems to treat all organizations equally, the procedure is more cumbersome for persons with disabilities, given poor accessibility of procedures at all levels. Other factors that prevent persons with disabilities from organizing into formal NGOs are limited funding opportunities and weak capacity to meet financial management requirements.

International cooperation

The following development partners support the programmes that contribute to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities: IM Swedish Development Partner; UN agencies (UNAIDS, UNICEF, WHO, OHCHR, UNDP Moldova and UN Women); European Union; East European Foundation; Swiss Confederation; Sweden; GIZ Moldova; SOROS Foundation Moldova; and the Austrian Development Agency. Most of the OPDs collaborate with these development partners.

The development partners provide support in these areas: inclusive education; physical accessibility of public and information facilities; right to reproductive health; independent living in the community; employment and labour market; equal opportunities; efforts to combat discrimination and prejudice; economic empowerment and development of social entrepreneurship; and participation in public life and politics.

Coordination platforms

The **National Platform for Monitoring the Implementation of the International Recommendations on Human Rights** includes three core sets of actors: the government, the national human rights institutions and OPDs/CSOs. Approximately 70 organizations participate in monitoring the implementation of the international recommendations.

The **Equality Council** (Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality) is mandated to identify acts of discrimination that violate the law, while sanctions are determined by the courts. The Council has cooperated with OPDs and has brought many cases to court, some 50 percent of which it has won.

Civil society launched an initiative to establish an independent monitoring mechanism based on the State's obligations under Article 33(2) of the CRPD, with OHCHR support. The Ombudsman's Office established an expert council to act as an advisory body responsible for evaluating and monitoring CRPD. The council carried out several activities jointly with the Ombudsman, but those events were sporadic.

Summary of stakeholder coordination analysis

- Moldova's OPDs – particularly NGOs working in rural areas and small towns – are underdeveloped. They have limited capacities to promote social inclusion or contribute directly to the process.
- OPDs have limited capacities and seldom participate in decision-making processes.
- UN agencies have started to include protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in their overall plans and strategies. They also support reforms and programmes focused on advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and implementing the CRPD.
- The partnership among OPDs, the Ombudsman's Office and the Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality strengthens mutual support in combating discrimination against persons with disabilities and has achieved positive results in securing inclusive participation.

4.2 Preconditions for disability inclusion

In its Strategic Framework, UNPRPD has identified five preconditions as foundational aspects that must be in place to address the rights of persons with disabilities across sectors. The following findings focus on these preconditions in the Moldavian context.

- 1 Equality and non-discrimination
- 2 Accessibility
- 3 Inclusive service delivery
- 4 CRPD-compliant budgeting and financial management
- 5 Accountability and governance

Equality and non-discrimination

In 2012, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted Law No. 60 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities, which incorporates the CRPD into the national legal framework and ensures the rights of persons with disabilities.

Moldovan law in general establishes an obligation to ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities only in buildings, public transportation and employment. Other areas, such as education, health, social protection and access to justice, are not covered by specific regulations that require reasonable accommodation. Social protection legislation, particularly regarding disability allowances, still includes discriminatory elements. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened pre-existing inequalities, especially regarding persons with all types of disabilities.

Moldovan legislation needs to be strengthened if it is to secure full equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. For example, the 2012 law does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in accordance with the Constitution, which provides for equality under the law. In addition, equality and non-discrimination indicators are not included in the set of indicators used to monitor implementation of the CRPD, which the government approved in 2016.

The Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality (CPEDEE) is a key independent public institution that is mandated to examine discrimination complaints and assess equality legislation. However, it has limited tools to combat stigma and discrimination.

Key findings

- **Gap:** Law No. 121/2012 is not widely implemented because of the CPEDEE's limited authority. It may identify discrimination, but cannot apply sanctions, which are the prerogative of the judiciary.
Opportunity: Empower OPDs to advocate for more efficient remedies, which the CPEDEE would identify, in cases of discrimination.
- **Gap:** Persons with disabilities face discrimination in terms of determination or reconsideration of a disability pension, while some of their carers experience problems ensuring that their caregiving employment is included in their pension contribution periods.
Opportunity: Analyse the pension system, propose amendments to eliminate discriminatory provisions from Law No. 156/1998 on the Public Pension System, and align the system with the CRPD requirements.
- **Gap:** Persons with disabilities face further stigma and discrimination in society at large.
Opportunity: Develop campaigns that would address stigma and discrimination against persons with various types of disabilities, taking an intersectional approach.
- **Gap:** The Republic of Moldova has not yet integrated disabilities into the SDGs.
Opportunity: Strengthen the capacities of central public authorities (CPA) in mainstreaming disability in the SDG planning and monitoring processes, based on public policies relevant to the rights of persons with disabilities.

Inclusive service delivery

Disability assessment and referral services

Two major reforms of Moldova's disability assessment system were carried out in 2013 and 2018, particularly the institutional reform of the NCDWAA. Although essential reforms at the institutional level have helped to mitigate and combat corruption in disability assessment, the system still reflects a medical outlook and approach. Given the additional documentation required to apply for an assessment, access to the system is even more difficult. Further, the degree of disability is determined based on documents only and persons with disabilities do not have an opportunity to meet with the assessment team in person. A formal complaint mechanism does exist for those who are not satisfied with the disability assessment process, but it is cumbersome.

Disability support services

Although the social services legal framework has been in place for more than a decade, no national programme exists to develop integrated social services based on the needs assessments of vulnerable groups (including persons with disabilities) and there are no financial resources for such services. As a result, neither regional nor local social service programmes have been developed to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Given the lack of such programmes, most social services depend on individual initiatives and local capacity to attract external funds and the programmes and projects offered by external donors.

Mainstream services

The situational analysis report provides an overview of disability inclusion in mainstream services, including social protection, education, health, employment and access to justice. The brief highlights key gaps and further details may be found in the full report.

Social protection

Persons with disabilities still face unequal access to basic services. The data on inequalities related to poverty and income of people with disabilities are still limited. The mechanisms created to establish benefits, compensation and allowances do not consider the individual needs of persons with different types of disabilities and their specific contexts. Guaranteed minimum income and subsistence minimums are not estimated separately for people with disabilities, who have extra costs related to their disability.

Health

Persons with disabilities still face problems accessing basic health care services due to inaccessible infrastructure, failure to meet individuals' health care needs, limited information on health services and health insurance, expensive medicines, and limited knowledge among doctors on how to communicate with people with disabilities. Families with children aged 0-5 years with disabilities, persons with mental health problems, and women with disabilities are among the groups that lack access to specialized health services, such as early intervention, mental health and reproductive services.

Education

Children with disabilities have limited access to inclusive preschool and vocational education due to the lack of a methodological, normative and financial framework to implement inclusive education at these levels. There is no data on children with disabilities who are not enrolled in the school system, nor is disaggregated data available on school attendance, absenteeism, the share of children with disabilities who have finished school, and those who achieve the minimum competencies at the end of high school in reading, math and other subjects. Budgets allocated for inclusive education are very small and do not meet the educational needs of children with different types of disabilities. Children with locomotor and sensory disabilities face problems with lack of assistive equipment and inaccessible school infrastructure. Institutionalization in special schools is still the main option for children with disabilities.

Employment

The NCDWAA has contributed to some improvements in the employment sector, however, several obstacles remain that impede the employment of persons with disabilities. These challenges include a lack of mechanisms to implement the legal provisions in place, limited awareness among persons with disabilities regarding their right to work and facilities that must be provided by law, limited access of persons with disabilities to rehabilitation, career counselling and vocational training services, inaccessible road and building infrastructure, low level of confidence among persons with disabilities regarding their own strengths and their personal potential, lack of information, and employers' fears about employing persons with disabilities. The research also shows that the lack of employment support services constitutes another major barrier to the employment of persons with disabilities.

Key findings

- **Gap:** Despite the Republic of Moldova taking steps to reform the disability assessment system over the last decade, it still relies on a medical approach.
Opportunity: Support capacity building and institutional strengthening within the disability determination system to adopt a social approach to disability.
- **Gap:** Persons with severe disabilities, intellectual and sensory impairments, older persons, and persons from impoverished families and rural areas lack adequate access to disability assessment services.
Opportunity: Support the accessibility of the NCDWAA's services by making them available online.
- **Gap:** Individual rehabilitation programmes do not function efficiently and are not available at the community level. In addition, implementation of recommendations developed under the programme is not monitored.
Opportunity: Support the development of a system to monitor implementation of recommendations that were developed under the individual rehabilitation programmes.
- **Gap:** There is no national programme that focus on integrated social services based on the evaluation of the needs of persons with disabilities with clearly defined objectives and financial resources.
Opportunity: Support the development of a national programme to develop integrated social services for persons with disabilities.
- **Gap:** The number of newly developed social support services in most districts is relatively small relative to the overall needs for such services.
Opportunity: Analyse the legal framework and propose ways to incorporate, within the general obligations of local public administrations (LPAs), the obligation to develop social services based on the needs of their community members with disabilities.
- **Gap:** A methodological framework for initial and ongoing training of social service providers, including those in the area of disabilities, has not been developed.
Opportunity: Institutionalize pre-service and in-service training for social services providers.

Accessibility

Although the social inclusion law incorporates notions of universal design and reasonable accommodation, regulations have not been developed to elaborate on their practical implementation and minimum requirements. Persons with different types of disabilities continue to be excluded due to a lack of accessibility standards for the information environment, information services and communications, including electronic and emergency services. Persons with visual and hearing impairments and those with intellectual disabilities are among the most marginalized groups with limited access to public information. Accessibility for persons with disabilities is not included in legislation and normative acts on the procurement of public goods, works and services. Contracting

authorities are not required to consider accessibility standards and criteria in awarding contracts. This issue became even more pressing during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the government's recovery plans and programs do not mention persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group.

Key findings

- **Gap:** Moldova's general legal and policy framework lacks sufficient and efficient regulatory mechanisms to implement it in practice.
Opportunity: Support the strengthening of the regulatory framework on accessibility and build the capacities of stakeholders in the field of accessibility for persons with all types of disabilities.
- **Gap:** Although the 2017-2022 National Programme on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities covers the institutions responsible for ensuring control and monitoring in the area of construction, transportation, information and communications with regard to compliance with accessibility technical regulations and standards for persons with disabilities, the mechanism is not efficient or transparent.
Opportunity: Support the development of transparent and participatory mechanisms for monitoring the accessibility criteria for public services.

CRPD compliant budgeting and financial management

Financial planning and monitoring

The Republic of Moldova provides funding for CRPD and SDG implementation in the area of social inclusion as follows:

- expenditures under the social protection programme, which includes a separate sub-programme for the social protection of persons with disabilities (disability is its core focus); and,
- public budget expenditures, allocated as part of other sub-programmes that also integrate disabilities, with an inclusive focus. These include the sub-programmes providing social protection of the elderly and families with children and budget programmes in the areas of education, health, law enforcement, media and employment.

The public authorities have limited capacity and knowledge of participatory budgeting processes based on a rights approach and the principle of disability inclusion. Although community-based social care services are increasingly included in local budgets, the State budget still supports the existing segregated services that do not comply with CRPD provisions or meet the current needs of persons with disabilities. Over the last four years, the Republic of Moldova has not benefited from special external assistance programmes aimed at implementing policies that focus on the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Key findings

- **Gap:** National, sectoral and local budgets do not comply with the CRPD and SDGs and do not yet meet the core preconditions for inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Opportunity: Develop tools and build the capacities for SDG-integrated budgeting, with a focus on disability-sensitive budgeting and programming.

- **Gap:** Despite the trend to increase local funding for inclusive social services that are created and developed by the community, the national budget still supports traditional services that do not comply with the CRPD and the current needs of persons with disabilities.

Opportunity: Develop legal and policy amendments to require disability mainstreaming at all levels of budgeting and planning.

Accountability and governance

Inclusive evidence and data gathering systems

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) collects data on disability directly, based on national household and labour force surveys. In the last national census (2014), the bureau used the Washington Group Questions on Disability. The NBS publishes an annual statistical report on the number of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova, which integrates multiple indicators from a series of data sources. This report is the most comprehensive source of data in disability, but according to OPDs, it is difficult to access the report on the NBS website.

The available statistics on the socio-demographic profile of persons with disabilities do not provide sufficient information for planning and monitoring of progress of CRPD implementation. There are no disaggregated data on persons with disabilities by indicators such as basic functional deficiency (including neuromotor, mental and sensory), economic status, marital status, ethnicity, religion, and educational background. Comprehensive and disaggregated data is lacking on the level of poverty among persons with various types of disabilities, the level of access to health care, education, and social services of persons with disabilities, and their employment rate.

National accountability mechanisms

The Republic lacks a functional mechanism to coordinate CRPD and SDG implementation across government sectors as the NCRPD has not yet fulfilled its mandate. Such a mechanism would necessarily include consultations with persons with disabilities and OPDs. Current accountability mechanisms are outlined below.

The National Human Rights Council was created during the period January-July 2019 as a government advisory body. It was established to monitor implementation of the national human rights policy and international human rights treaties to which the Republic of Moldova is a party and to monitor compliance with the country's commitments in this area. The Council is composed of five members representing civil society, including one

member representing persons with disabilities and their rights. (Prior to 2019, the National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was mandated to promote State disability policy and to monitor CRPD implementation. That Council had greater representation of OPDs and a greater impact on coordinating the actors involved in CRPD implementation.)

The National Platform for Monitoring the Implementation of the International Recommendations on Human Rights was created at the initiative and with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Moldova's Alliance of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD) coordinates another platform of civil society organizations active in the rights of persons with disabilities. It has 105 members, including 53 AOPD member organizations. The Alliance facilitates dialogue among persons with disabilities and organizations active in policymaking and ensures their participation in the consultation process.

Key findings

- **Gap:** Evidence-based decision-making in the disability field is limited.
Opportunity: Create capacity among LPAs and CPAs to develop evidence-based policies that address the rights of persons with disabilities.
- **Gap:** The Republic of Moldova has no efficient mechanisms for consultation, participation and involvement of persons with disabilities in monitoring SDG implementation. The disability dimension is integrated only superficially into the voluntary progress assessment report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
Opportunity: Assess the efficiency of existing participatory mechanisms for persons with various types of disabilities and propose and promote mechanisms to strengthen them.
- **Gap:** The Republic of Moldova lacks a system to regularly collect, review and report statistical data on persons with disabilities disaggregated by gender, age, education background, residential area and types of disability.
Opportunity: Develop and adopt a roadmap to strengthen the data collection system on disability and related intersectional criteria.

4.3 Cross-cutting approaches: Participation, gender, inequalities

The UNPRPD has adopted three cross-cutting approaches to be intrinsically applied across all of UNPRPD MPTF's work, including its structures, programmes, and processes to ensure full and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities.



Participation:

Enabling full and effective participation of persons with disabilities



Inequalities:

Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities



Gender:

Addressing gender inequality and advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities

Participation

Although the legal framework supports the participation of rights holders in the decision-making process, the genuine participation of persons with disabilities at all levels is limited by restrictive practices. The authorities are expected to encourage OPDs' involvement in decision- and policy-making processes by publicizing the initiatives through all available communication channels, which is especially important at the local level. This is not happening. Regardless of the challenges, the OPDs succeed in monitoring the agenda of public authorities and usually do present proposals on drafts that are put forward for consultation. Still, given that the authorities seek OPDs' views on a limited basis, those organizations remain outside of the decision-making process in practical terms.

It can be quite challenging for OPDs to participate in decision-making at the local and national levels, given that they have limited skills in analysing policies and plans and drafting amendments to legislative and policy documents. The physical spaces where discussions are held and decisions are made – in addition to public transport to reach them – may not be accessible. In addition, OPDs may have limited access to electronic platforms. These also constitute barriers to participation in the decision-making process.

Gender

The reproductive health of women with disabilities is an ongoing issue in the Republic of Moldova due to the stigmatization of women with disabilities and their limited access to health services. There is clearly more violence against women with disabilities, forced treatments and less access to justice. UN agencies in Moldova support a range of programmes focused on the sexual and reproductive health of women with disabilities, gender equality and prevention of domestic violence.

Inequalities

Families with children with disabilities aged 0-5 years, persons with mental health issues and women with disabilities are among the groups with less access to specialized health services, such as early intervention, mental health and reproductive services.

The situational analysis highlights that persons with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities, older persons with disabilities, and women and girls with disabilities, persons with dwarfism and LGBTQ+ are the most underrepresented groups in Moldova's OPDs. Although there has been progress in the field of deinstitutionalisation (i.e., approval of the 2018-2026 National Programme on Deinstitutionalisation of Persons of Disabilities), around 2400 persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities were reported to still live in institutions as of 2021.

4.4 Disability inclusion in broader development, humanitarian and emergency contexts

National Development Plans

The Moldovan Parliament has not yet approved Moldova 2030, the country's national development strategy. The available version refers to disability as a type of vulnerability. Other areas that the strategy does not yet address include the need to strengthen the accessibility of infrastructure and provide gender equality for women and girls with disabilities.

The government assigned the State Chancellery to serve as the focal point for SDG implementation and monitoring. Shortly after adopting the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015, the government established the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development to create an appropriate institutional framework and ensure a participatory and transparent process for the national adaptation and implementation of the SDGs. The coordination committee in charge of drafting the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was also assigned to monitor implementation of the development agenda. The Government of the Republic of Moldova submitted a national evaluation review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite the existence of the Coordination Council, persons with disabilities and OPDs remain unaware of the role of the SDGs and how they could be monitored and implemented in Moldova.²

On a positive note, the UN common country analysis (CCA), conducted in 2020, highlighted key data on the impacts on persons with disabilities³. The Government of Moldova and the UNCT recently published its UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027)⁴ based on the CCA findings. The framework emphasizes the empowerment of vulnerable populations, particularly persons with disabilities.

Climate change, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action

No studies have addressed the impacts of climate change on persons with disabilities. Despite concerns from the disability community, this remains an area of improvement for all humanitarian actors.

Law No. 174 of 25 July 2014 on the organization and functioning of the Unique National Emergency Calls Service sets out the approach to providing support to persons with disabilities in case of disasters or emergencies. Article 14 describes Call Service 112, which ensures that calls from persons with hearing and/or speech impairments are received through telematics terminals used in the public electronic communications networks. This system is not yet operating, so persons with hearing impairments can call the emergency services only with the support of other persons.

COVID-19

The restrictive measures imposed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had a negative impact on persons with disabilities. Their vulnerabilities increased, particularly regarding access to health and education services as well as the availability and quality of social services and psychological support. In addition, their precarious financial situation worsened, leaving them unable to meet their basic needs.

Contributions from CSOs were instrumental in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on persons with disabilities. OPDs brought their needs to the authorities' attention, including, for example, by issuing a public call for accountability to ensure that the authorities provided necessary protective measures for persons with disabilities. They also raised the issue of the NCDWAA's ability to ensure the continuity of its activities. This led the government to extend the validity of disability certificates, allowing the payment of disability allowances to continue. Throughout the state of emergency, CSOs provided legal, psychological and material support to persons with disabilities via existing online platforms.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The Republic of Moldova reiterated its commitment to recognizing and implementing disability rights and inclusive development through the ratification of UNCRPD (2010) and Optional Protocol (2021); revision of the legal framework in accordance with CRPD requirements; development and implementation of inclusive policies in social protection, health, education; deinstitutionalisation reforms; and development of new community based social care services for persons with disabilities. Although significant progress has been made, the situational analysis highlighted several challenges.

To address these challenges, three key recommendations are outlined below:

- 1 Increase the knowledge and practical tools of national stakeholders so that they can effectively contribute to the development and implementation of disability-inclusive policies and systems.
 - Strengthen the organizational and advocacy capacity of OPDs and informal OPD groups to support the inclusion, recognition and representation of persons with disabilities;
 - Strengthen training and institutional capacity of the disability assessment and determination system with a focus on a human rights approach; and,
 - Develop guidelines and draft regulations to inform cross-sectoral referral, policy planning and resource allocation.
- 2 Address gaps in achieving essential building blocks or preconditions to CPRD implementation in development and humanitarian programmes.
 - Revise legislation, regulations and methodologies to ensure access to all persons with disabilities in areas including disability determination, referral processes, implementation and monitoring of individual rehabilitation programs, transparency and dispute settlement, data collection and disaggregation; And,
 - Develop a methodology and plan of action to mainstream disability and gender equality in national and local budgets.

- 3** Mainstream disability in national development and humanitarian plans, budgets, programs and monitoring processes.
- Mainstream disability in the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2023-2027 design (including results framework, inclusive budgeting and consultations with OPDs);
 - Establish a cross-sectoral, multistakeholder coordination mechanism with government on mainstreaming disability into national policies and legislation and coordination with CRPD implementation, with meaningful representation and active involvement and participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations; and,
 - Establish an independent, formalized monitoring body in line with the CRPD.

ANNEX 1: 26 SELECTED COUNTRIES

Argentina
Colombia
Guatemala
Panama
Trinidad & Tobago

AMERICAS

Cameroon
DRC
Eswatini
Ghana
Rwanda
Sierra Leone
Tanzania
The Gambia
Tunisia
Zimbabwe

AFRICA

Montenegro
North Macedonia
Republic of Moldova

EUROPE

Armenia
Bangladesh
Cambodia
Georgia
Nepal
Uzbekistan
Vietnam

ASIA

Cook Islands

OCEANIA



ENDNOTES

- 1 National Bureau of Statistics
- 2 <https://moldova.un.org/en/53280-republic-moldova-voluntary-national-review-vnr-2020>
- 3 <https://moldova.un.org/en/122198-un-common-country-analysis-republic-moldova-2020>
- 4 <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-moldova-2023-2027>



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