



# Planning Together: Empowering Refugees with Disabilities

National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP)



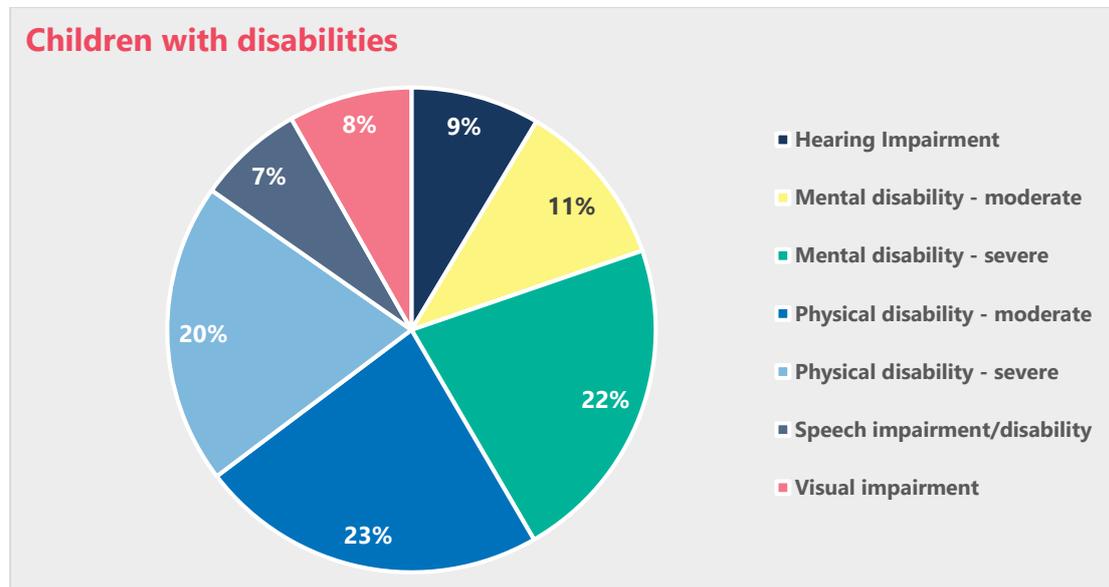
(Active-Learning Exercises during the Training Seminar on Disability Issues, Athens-June 2018)

With support by



ΑΘΗΝΑ, ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΣ 2018

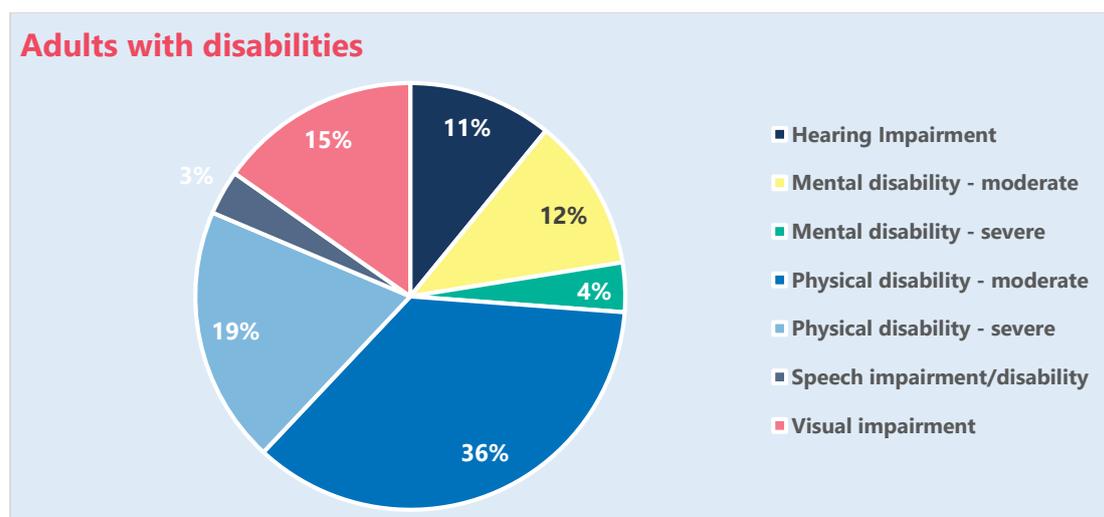
Based on enrolment data by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and partners, **1.071 refugees** with disabilities live in Greece, of which **269** are children and **802** are adults (as of 01 November 2018). In below **graph** you may see **children per category of disability**.



(graph 3) <sup>1</sup>

As already stated above, the total enrolled number of children with disabilities is **269** persons. In the **graph 3**, the percentage by the categories of disabilities is presented, i.e. **43%** of the total has physical disabilities, **33%** mental, **8%** of visual, **9%** hearing and **7%** speech impairment.

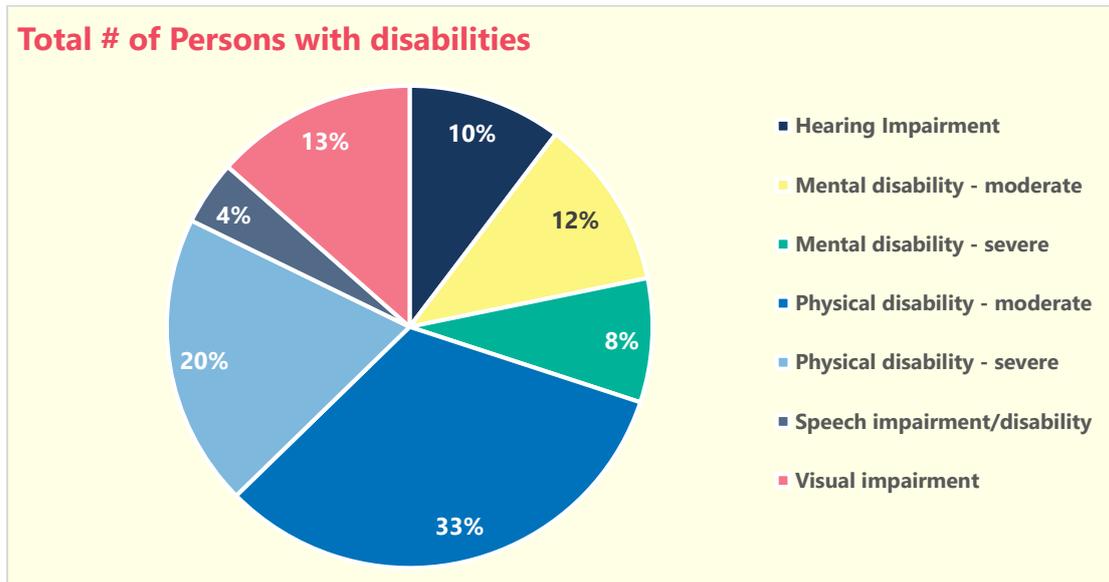
Following **graph 4** shows the percentage of **adults per category of disability**. The total enrolled number of adults with disabilities is **802** persons. **55%** of the total has physical disabilities and **16%** mental. **15%** of persons has visual impairment, **3%** speech impairment and **11%** has hearing impairment.



<sup>1</sup> Based on enrolment data by UNHCR and partners (Greece); as of 01 November 2018.

(graph 4) <sup>2</sup>

And here is the **graph 5** which includes the total of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities in the country per category of disability:



(graph 5) <sup>3</sup>

The NCDP implemented the project titled: **"Planning together: Empowering refugees with disabilities"** funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2017 until 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2018.



(Active-Learning Exercises during the Training Seminar on Disability Issues, Thessaloniki - June 2018)

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<sup>2</sup> As per above footnote 1

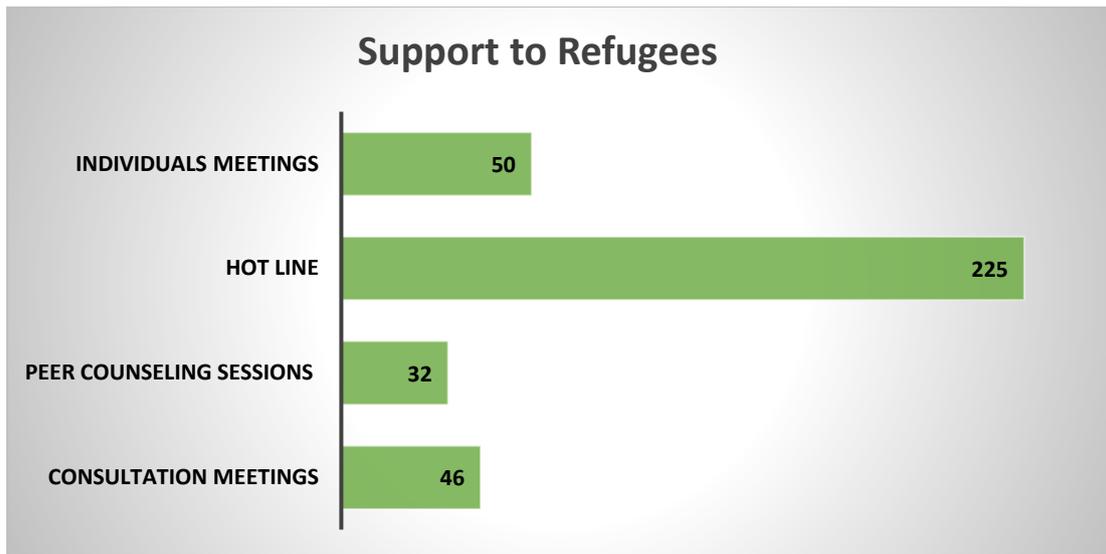
<sup>3</sup> As per above footnote 1

Since January 2018, under the reformed project, the following actions were included:

- Implementation of awareness-raising and training seminars on disability and chronic diseases issues addressed to staff active in the provision of services to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Hotline for the provision of specialized information and guidance to organizations active in the refugee field and the provision of services to refugees with disabilities.
- Hotline for the support of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and/or chronic diseases through also Arabic and Farsi languages.
- Conduct of individual meetings and provision of individualized information and guidance to refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and/or chronic diseases and to their families.
- Implementation of consultation meetings with refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities, chronic diseases and their families
- Implementation of peer counseling sessions for refugees and asylum seekers who are parents of children with disabilities.



From January to September 2018, NCDP implemented **6 Peer Counseling Sessions for refugees who are parents of children with disabilities, 3 Consultation Meetings, 50 Individual Meetings** and the hotline has been providing support on disabilities' issues to **225 persons. 353 refugees and asylum seekers** with disabilities have benefited in total of the abovementioned actions (**graph 1**).



(graph 1)

According to the **graph 2**, **289** professionals have already benefited, in total, who support directly or indirectly the refugees. **131** persons of them have attended training for disabilities and chronic diseases' issues through the NCDP's Seminar and **158** professionals received support though the Hotline.



**Relief measures for refugees with disabilities and/or chronic diseases and ensuring health care for all**

**Do you know that...?**

- According to the article 33 of the law 4368/2016, the uninsured persons and the vulnerable social groups are entitled to have free access in public health structures and they are eligible to nursing and medical care.

- Vulnerable groups are persons with disabilities, children at risk, pregnant women, persons who are accommodated in mental health structures and other therapeutic structures, etc., regardless of legal status.
- The refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities are entitled to certify their disability in Disability Certification Center (KEPA) and need assistance for relevant administrative procedure.



(Training Seminar on Disability Issues, Leros - May 2018)

### **Gaps, Challenges and Recommendations**

- ✓ Limited support for refugees or asylum seekers with disabilities and chronic diseases.
- ✓ Difficulties in accessing health care services and other due to lack of interpretation.
- ✓ Poor information about the persons with disabilities' rights by the Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- ✓ No systematic case management plan for the refugees with disabilities.
- ✓ A significant number of refugee children with disabilities do not participate in special education schools due to lack of information and support from their service providers.
- ✓ It's quite often refugees with disabilities to live in non-accessible sites, which is very harmful for their physical and mental health. The living conditions are more difficult when the persons with disabilities are accommodated in the sites faraway the urban areas and as a result, they have even more limited access to services.
- ✓ Some professionals have limited knowledge and training about work in refugees' field for disabilities and chronic diseases issues. As a result, the refugees with disabilities are invisible and do not receive information about their rights, including the disability certification processes in Disability Certification Center (KEPA).



(Active-Learning Exercises during the Training Seminar on Disability Issues, Athens - June 2018)

### **Suggestions**

- ✓ Reinforcement and continuing training of staff in social and health services in order to support efficiently the refugees with disabilities and/ or chronic diseases.
- ✓ The asylum seekers who are accommodated either in sites or apartments are not always eligible for disability allowance. Recommendations and interventions should be made so this policy is changed.
- ✓ Supported structures of living should be provided for refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and who have no supportive framework and they cannot take care of themselves.
- ✓ The State and the Providers of accommodation should always assure that the living conditions of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and their families ensure their rights for decent living, according to the international and national standards.
- ✓ Cooperation between Organizations working with refugees and persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Creation of programs which will contribute to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities including sporting and educational activities.
- ✓ Full participation of children (refugees and asylum seekers) with disabilities and/ or chronic diseases in school-education spheres.
- ✓ Mainstreaming of disability rights in all services provided.
- ✓ Inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and/or chronic diseases in the planning and implementation of national policies.

- ✓ Integration of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and/or chronic diseases and their families.
- ✓ Implementation of the national law and international conventions on the rights of persons with disabilities.



(Peer Counseling Session Athens- April 2018)

### About NCDP



The National Confederation of Disabled People (N.C.D.P.) is an umbrella organization representing the disability movement of Greece. The NCDP of Greece has officially

been recognized as the national partner of the Greek State dealing with disability issues, promoting policies so that those concerned are included socially, economically and politically in the everyday life of the country.

An **Advisory Committee** of seven (7) refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities and chronic diseases, as well as family members of persons with disabilities has been established in the framework of the project. The Committee is established under the principle: **“Nothing for persons with disabilities without persons with disabilities”**, a global motto of the disability movement, which does not accept actions about persons with disabilities to happen without persons with disabilities. The basic role of the Committee is to monitor the legislation and the development of policies for the improvement of the provided services.

The NCDP interferes at the Greek State when the rights of refugees with disabilities are breached and not fulfilled as laid down in the extent set out in national legislation and in international conventions. Through the individualized interventions, under this project, the overall refugees with disabilities have benefited.

Meanwhile, the NCDP Greece as a member of European Disability Forum (EDF) and International Disability Alliance (IDA) has a role to play abroad: writing public letters to EU authorities and articles in magazines, participating in forums, the NCDP president Yannis Vardakastanis met with EU authorities and EU leaders (Euro parliament parties’ leaders - December 2016, with Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship D. Avramopoulos- March 2016, Commissioner Chr. Stylianides for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management - November 2017).

The NCDP brought the issue of refugees with disabilities in the UN as well: On 13<sup>th</sup> of June (2017), Mr. Vardakastanis gave a speech in the side event about the refugees with disabilities’ rights: “Persons with disabilities on the move- the rights of refugees and migrants with disabilities”, during the 10<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD in New York.



(Public Hearing for the situation of refugees and migrants with disabilities, Brussels - February 2017)

### Other Services

**Kinoniko EKAV** (Social Instant Aid Greek Team) with the support by UNHCR, is implementing the "Thetis" Programme, for refugees with disabilities. The "Thetis" aims at a comprehensive and detailed enrolment of refugees with disabilities, as well as the launching of a tailor-made therapeutic-support programme. This project is implemented by two specialized mobile teams, based in Athens and Thessaloniki covering the wider area of Attica / Central Greece and Northern Greece, respectively. The programme provides to the beneficiaries special equipment, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc. In the following table the cover of needs until the end of September 2018 is described:

<b>Cases</b>	<b>313</b>
<b>Repetitive appointments</b>	<b>887</b>
<b>Hospitalization</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Provision of medical equipment</b>	<b>35</b>

**EPAPSY** has been an implementing partner of UNHCR Greece since 1/3/2018 as an expert partner in outreach mental health care. The direct beneficiaries of the project are refugees and asylum seekers in ESTIA programme who are experiencing severe mental illness that can be either chronic or acute relating to different kinds of socio-economic and health conditions. The mobility of EPAPSY team has proven to be very helpful for cases that are secluded in their accommodation, have other difficulties in accessing proper mental health care, are being hospitalized or for other reasons find it more accessible to meet in different than the usual treatment settings. Moreover, EPAPSY builds the capacity for social scientists and other mental health or health professionals, during this project. In the following table the profile of the beneficiaries until the end of September 2018 is described:

<b>Population Planning Group:</b>		<i>Attica</i>					
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Total</b>		
	<b>in numbers</b>	<b>in %</b>	<b>in numbers</b>	<b>in %</b>	<b>in numbers</b>	<b>in %</b>	
0-4	0	0	1	2,30%	1	<b>2,30%</b>	
5-11	5	11,40%	0	0	5	<b>11,40%</b>	
12-17	3	6,80%	1	2,30%	4	<b>9,20%</b>	
18-59	22	50,60%	12	27,60%	34	<b>78,20%</b>	
60+	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>68,8%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32,20%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Major Sites:</b>	Attica						

## **In Conclusion**

Since the beginning of the refugee crisis, the NCDP tried to raise awareness with official letters to the Government, the EU Commissioner for the immigration and the European governments and organizations in order to make clear that persons with disabilities face multiple discrimination in various areas of their lives and easily become victims of poverty, exclusion and refugees' circuits. We seek special care for refugees and migrants with disabilities with specialized staff at the sites, the reception and care structures as well as the rapid training of the state authorities who are the first that make contact with them. We continue to push for specialized care for persons with disabilities and chronic diseases and for their families, so that their rights are respected and protected.

In this context, this newsletter refers to the countrywide situation and is part of the project "Planning together: Empowering refugees with disabilities", through UNHCR funding.

**Yannis Vardakastanis, NCDP President**