

Disability language guide - Ukraine: Terminology and definitions

Appropriate respectful terms to be used in Ukraine



Language is important. Language used to describe people with disabilities can contribute to negative beliefs and ideas about them and increase their experience of marginalisation. Portrayal of people with disabilities should be respectful and promote their contributions as active members of communities in Ukraine. The following table lists recommended rights-based language to be used by humanitarian actors. Note: medical and legal terminology is not included in this table.

English	Ukrainian
People with disabilities	Люди з інвалідністю
People without disabilities	Люди без інвалідності
Person with a physical disability	Людина з фізичними порушеннями
Person with an intellectual disability	Людина з інтелектуальними порушеннями
Person with a psychosocial disability	Людина з психосоціальними порушеннями
Person with a vision impairment(s)	Людина з порушеннями зору
Person with hearing loss(es), Person with hearing impairment(s)	Людина з порушеннями слуху

Tips on disability terminology

- Use 'person-first' language which emphasizes the individuality, equality and dignity of persons with disabilities.
- Examples of person first language include people with disabilities (rather than disabled person) and woman with a vision impairment (rather than blind woman).
- Use appropriate respectful terms in Ukraine. Use the preferred terminology of the individual or group of persons with disabilities. If in doubt, ask them how they wish to be addressed.
- Avoid using disrespectful and negative language: Negative language promotes stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities.
- Be correct: we speak or write about a person's disability only when it is important or necessary. For example, when organizing an event or arranging a workplace, it is important not just to ask what kind of disability a person has, but also what needs to be provided to create accessibility conditions.

Note: Existing barriers and lack of support that make people with disabilities vulnerable and excluded. They are rights holders and play an important role in their communities.

See [UN Disability Inclusion Communication Guidelines](#) for more information.

The following table lists recommended rights-based language to be used by humanitarian actors. (Medical and legal terminology is not included here). It also provides examples of terms to avoid.

Use	Avoid
People/persons with disabilities	<i>Disabled, PWD, people with special needs, people with physical and mental disabilities, severe disabilities</i>
Person using a wheelchair	<i>Wheelchair, Wheelchair case</i>

Definition of disability inclusion key concepts

Accessibility
Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. ¹
Disability Inclusion
The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). ²
Mainstreaming
A consistent and systematic approach to disability inclusion in all areas of operations and programming including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Mainstreaming does not focus on what is done, but on how it is done.
Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)
Organizations or associations led, directed, and governed by persons with disabilities that are entrenched, committed to, and fully respect the principles and rights recognized in the CRPD. ³ They are established predominantly with the aim of collectively acting, expressing, promoting, pursuing and/or defending the rights of persons with disabilities and bring a unique perspective to speak on their own behalf. ⁴ The majority of their members are to be persons with disabilities.
People with disabilities
Disability is an evolving concept and disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. ⁵
Reasonable Accommodations
Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. ⁶
Universal design
The design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed. ⁷

¹ CRPD Article 9

² UN Disability Inclusion Strategy

³Note: This document was finalised by a task team from ADTWG Ukraine. Barrier free initiative also has a [vocabulary resource](#)

⁴ CRPD General Comment No. 7

⁵ CRPD Preamble

⁶ CRPD Article 2

⁷ CRPD Article 2