

# Improving **inclusion** of children living with disabilities from Ukraine


Highlights from research on the experiences of children living with disabilities and their caregivers



See a  
summary of  
our research  
at the QR  
code here:



## **Why is it important to research the experience of children living with disabilities from Ukraine?**



**There are many disabilities which can affect children from Ukraine and their families. Disabilities include physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments.**

For many of these children and families, the experience of conflict and displacement has interacted with existing disabilities, and resulted in additional challenges.

Many children have also developed a disability or a special need since the conflict, sometimes as a result of trauma from the war.



# 5%

An estimated 5% of refugees from Ukraine in Poland are people living with a disability, according to the UNHCR



In our study, caregivers spoke mainly of children with difficulties in cognition and communication, including **some children who cannot speak or have stopped speaking** since arriving in Poland.

Some families are not able to find therapists providing services in the child's language, or appropriate education centres.

In Poland, we partner with **Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci** (Child Development Foundation) and **Patchwork**, who support with these needs.



**fundacja  
rozwoju dzieci**



**patchwork**

## What did we research?

The aim of our study was to learn about the needs of girls and boys up to the age of 6 living with disabilities or special needs from Ukraine.

The study's findings are based on interviews with caregivers, educators and practitioners providing support to children and their families in Wrocław, Łódź, Lublin and Kraków.

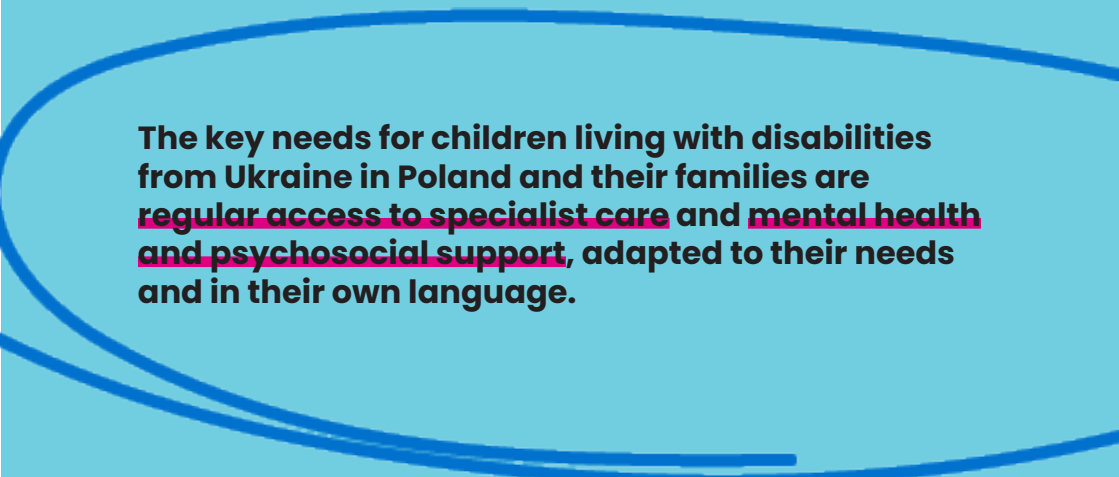


## What did we find?



Our research suggests that the most important challenges facing children living with disabilities in Poland are:

- **Language barriers:** Specialist care is most effective when delivered in the child's and caregiver's language
- **Information:** Lack of clear and complete information on the eligibility for public aid and services
- **Lengthy administrative procedures:** Families face long waiting times to obtain or translate disability certifications



**The key needs for children living with disabilities from Ukraine in Poland and their families are regular access to specialist care and mental health and psychosocial support, adapted to their needs and in their own language.**

# Recommendations



Our research identified the following recommendations for donors, Polish organisations, the Government of Poland and international organisations:

- Continue **support and funding** to organisations offering childcare services to families with children living with disabilities
- **Centralise and share knowledge** about organisations providing dedicated support to children living with disabilities and their families
  - Set up and maintain a **working group** with key stakeholders working to support children living with a disability and their families, including a state organisation such as PFRON
- Increase financial and human resources dedicated to **accessible and inclusive education** for all children living with disabilities in Poland
- Reinforce social services' capacity to reduce waiting time to convert **disability certifications from Ukraine**

## Our project with Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci

Our project with Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci includes pre-schools for Ukrainian and Polish children up to 6, which combine childcare and specialist care (such as speech therapy and psychological care) in Ukrainian language, filling a gap in public services. Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci operates these pre-schools, known as "Szynkas" across Poland.



**fundacja  
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“ **Attending the Spynka [pre-school] has a very good effect on him: it is vital for his further development** ”

**Caregiver, Lublin**



**patchwork**

## Our project with Patchwork

Our project with Patchwork includes support for children living with disabilities from Ukraine in Lesser Poland Voivodeship to find appropriate education centres, as well as providing special education support sessions for children. Patchwork also hosts social activities and trips for children's families to better support them and their integration.

## About Plan International Poland

Since March 2022, Plan International has been working in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova and Romania to deliver immediate humanitarian aid to children and their families affected by the war in Ukraine.

We collaborate with Polish civil society organisations like Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci and Patchwork that support refugees and people in need, in particular targeting children, youth and minority groups.

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