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## The Needs Assessment of Ukrainian Refugees in the Work of Volunteer`S Organisations

**Kateryna Ihnatenko**, Ph.D., associate professor, MSCA4Ukraine Fellow at Ilia State University  
[kateryna.ihnatenko@iliauni.edu.ge](mailto:kateryna.ihnatenko@iliauni.edu.ge)

**Introduction:** The war in Ukraine changed hundreds of millions of lives. Families have been displaced, communities have been disrupted, and the region's social fabric has been significantly altered. More than 180,000 citizens of Ukraine have entered the territory of Georgia since 24 February 2022. As of November 2022, around 25,000 remain in Georgia. Around 25% of Ukrainians staying in Georgia are minors (UNHCR data). The present study aims to investigate and describe the needs assessment process among refugees with disabilities from Ukraine and gaps in response. According to the Social Work Theory, we understand the definition of the “process of needs assessment” as a method of social work used in community-based protection.

**Method:** We gathered secondary data through websites, Telegram chats, and Facebook groups of national and international agencies involved in refugee assistance to Ukrainians. We conducted a conversation analysis (n=5) with members of nonprofit organizations in Tbilisi who assist disabled refugees from Ukraine. Also, we conducted a detailed and intensive analysis of the activities of the volunteering organization “Volunteers Tbilisi.”

**Findings and their interpretation:** The nongovernment organizations that were the target group of the study don't incorporate needs assessment in their practice or link it to Community-Based Protection (CBP). Except for UN agencies, the local grassroots organizations mostly don't conduct the needs assessment of Ukrainian refugees. General trends of the needs of refugees guide them. The respondents define needs set from livelihood, hygiene, shelter, and accommodation, which were a key priority for many new arrivals. Another significant need is access to medical care and the risk of infectious diseases. Protection risks included family separation, loss of support networks, mental health trauma, potential discrimination, limited services and access to resources, as well as gender-based violence risks. Refugees experience significant psychological distress due to family separation, loss, fear, and future worries.

With reference to the interviews, we can suggest that nonprofit organizations lack a comprehensive approach to needs assessment for people with disabilities and have limited organization capacity building and fundraising. Insufficient government support and coordination with main humanitarian actors also pose challenges to providing social assistance to reach and understand the needs of beneficiaries. To ensure inclusivity for vulnerable groups, such as individuals with disabilities, organizations should address and/or refer to these issues more effectively. The unique aspect of this study is that it has captured opposite points of

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view of providers of social services and, eventually, those who receive them. It provides a vivid picture of the size of gaps between theory and practice.



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