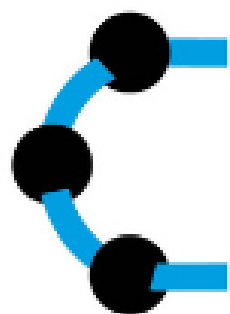




MARCH 2023

PROJECT REPORT



CITIZEN NETWORK

FOR A WORLD WHERE
EVERYONE MATTERS

PREPARED BY

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CONTENTS

1. Inclusive Development and Improved Accessibility Report.....	01
2. Executive Summary.....	02
3. Our Goals and Objectives.....	02
4. Section I - Social Welfare Policies.....	03
5. Disability Support Policies.....	04
6. Analysis of Policy among Disabled.....	05
7. Section II - Existing Policies.....	06
8. Gaps in the System.....	06
9. Section III - Education & Employment.....	07
10. Section IV - Housing.....	09
11. Section V - Policy Recommendations.....	10
12. Education and Employment Policy Recommendations.....	11
13. Housing - Inclusive Policy Recommendations.....	12
14. Case in Finland.....	13
15. Policies in Finland.....	14
16. Conclusion and Analysis.....	15
17. Bibliography.....	17
18. Contact Us.....	18

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY REPORT SPAIN



A comparative policy analysis on the Educational attainment, Employment opportunities and Housing for refugees with disabilities in Spain and the EU.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the **inclusivity policy** for **disabled refugees** in **Spain** in comparison to other European Union (EU) countries, focusing on the housing, education, and employment sectors. The study uses a **mixed-methods** approach, including a review of relevant literature and statistical data analysis. The findings suggest that Spain has made significant progress in the inclusion of disabled refugees in the country. The Spanish government has implemented various policies and programs to provide housing, education, and employment opportunities to refugees with disabilities.

However, the effectiveness of these policies remains limited due to the lack of implementation at the local level. **Spain** has shown greater efforts in promoting inclusive **education**, providing **affordable housing**, and creating **employment opportunities** for **disabled refugees**. However, there are still areas for improvement, particularly in providing **access** to **specialized healthcare services** and improving the implementation of existing policies at the **local level**. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for policymakers, NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in refugee resettlement and integration in Spain and other EU countries.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The first step to creating an effective project plan is to set a baseline. The baseline is the foundation on which the other project elements will be built on. This must include a scope statement. This Report aims to describe the **inclusion policy**, the **gaps** and the **implementation** of the different policies in place in Spain's constitution. Next, we provide **policy recommendations** for the **government** and different **co-operations** that would allow for the increased inclusion of disabled refugees in society. This is followed by a **comparative analysis** of the policies in place with countries in the EU, including Finland.





SECTION I

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE WELFARE POLICIES PRESENT IN SPAIN

Social Welfare Policies

- Refugees will have access to social welfare under the **same** conditions as nationals.
- While in the reception system, basic financial aid and specific support might be available depending on the reception phase the person is in. The aid will cover basic needs, accommodation, food and transportation, including **public health medical care / medical prescription**.
- Pew Research Center found that 86% of Spaniards support welcoming refugees, which is the highest percentage of 18 nations surveyed, including 10 EU countries. This indicates that there is significant public support for refugees in Spain, which may translate into stronger social welfare policies for refugees in the future.



Disability Support Policy

- **The Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)** urges that the equalisation of opportunities of refugees with disabilities should be integrated into general development programmes .
- **The Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Article 18**, calls upon State parties to recognise the rights of persons with disabilities to liberty of movement, to freedom to choose their residence and to nationality, on an equal basis with others; **Article 11** specifically addresses the protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.
- **The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their families (ICRMW)** recognizes the equal right of migrant workers to health and urges the States to ensure their access to both health and social services required for the prevention of irreparable harm to their health on the equal basis with others.



ANALYSIS OF POLICY AMONG DISABLED REFUGEES

Education

The Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Inclusion released by the Government of Spain shows there are **7 objectives** each to be fulfilled under education and employment domains

Employment

The reform of the Regulation on foreigners (**Reglamento de extranjería**) to streamline procedures and incorporate workers into the labour market came into force on 15 August 2022.

Housing

Spain ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, which requires governments to ensure that the physical environment and public services, including housing, are equally accessible to people with disabilities as to those without

SECTION II

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE EXISTING EDUCATION POLICY AND GAPS IN THE SYSTEM

Existing Policies

- To ensure immigrant pupils' student access to **obligatory education** in equal conditions
- To guarantee quality obligatory education for pupils regardless of their social condition or origin
- To suit the educational system to pupils' **diversity** by properly managing diversity and fostering **intercultural knowledge and skills**
- To transform schools into **areas of communication, community and integration**
- To improve immigrants' access to **adult training**
- To improve procedures for the recognition of **academic degrees**

Gaps in the system

- The scheme followed for integrating asylum seeking children in the school varies depending on the **Autonomous Community** they are placed in, as each regional Administration manages and organises school systems as they rule. Some Communities count on preparatory classrooms, while others have tutors within the normal class and some others do not offer extra or specialised services in order to ease the integration within the school.
- For refugee children to be recognised for education, it becomes important for them to be recognised and validated. Note that the procedure is slow and may take up to **2 years**, and that certain studies cannot be recognized. This is a long wait and often leads to disproportionate distribution of access of education

SECTION III

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE EXISTING EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND GAPS IN THE SYSTEM

Existing Policies

- Companies that have had an average of 50 or more employees in the last 12 months are required to hire at least **2% of workers with disabilities** (with an equal to or higher than 33% degree disability)
- Spain offers employers a variety of financial **benefits** based on the employment contract they offer to disabled individuals, consisting of either permanent or temporary contract
- **ONCE** is the main Spanish organisation that aim to increase the inclusion of disabled & blind individuals and they offer advice in areas including
- accounting & management. They further provide training and grants to increase the employability of disabled individuals.



Despite Spanish laws aiming to increase accessibility of the disabled individuals into the employment sector (public & private), only 33% of disabled individuals in Spain are employed, and part of this is due to the ineffectiveness of employment regulations.

- A lack of **education & awareness**: the true depths of the issue are not widely recognised, as it is not a common subject of communication and teaching. Secondly, **disability advocacy** organisations often face difficulties raising awareness and educating the public on the depths of the issue, making it harder for them to achieve widespread support to improve the **inclusion** of the disabled individuals.
- Disability issues are often not at the best interests of policy makers and those in the positions of power. Consequently, disability advocacy organisations find it **harder to convince** policy makers to consider the interests of the disabled individuals who are often oppressed and disadvantaged in many ways, including their access to work opportunities.
- **COCEMFE** is a non-profit non-governmental organization, that was constituted in 1980'- the fact that this is a non-governmental organisation means there may be a lack of awareness of this organisation as it may not be advertised on mainstream media and the issue not being in the best interests of the policy makers could further cause a lack of awareness and emphasis being placed on it.



SECTION IV

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE EXISTING HOUSING POLICY AND GAPS IN THE SYSTEM

- In 2007, Spain ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, which requires governments to ensure that the physical environment and public services, including housing, are equally accessible to people with disabilities as to those without.
- Spain passed a new law in 2013 based on the promise that **universal accessibility** helps guarantee **equal opportunities** and treatment for people with disabilities. This legislation made homeowner associations responsible for ensuring their buildings are accessible to all people and set December 2017 as the deadline to eliminate architectural barriers.
- March 2018 report by the **UNESCO Chair** on Housing and the **Fundación Mutua de Propietarios** found that only **0.6 percent** of Spain's 9.8 million residential buildings meet accessibility standards for those with physical disabilities.



SECTION V

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS SECTION INCLUDES POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIFFERENT SPHERES OF THE ECONOMY WHICH WILL EVALUATE THE PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE PROJECT RESULT.

- **Collaborate with NGOs:** The government should collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that specialize in disability rights and refugee services.
- **Accessibility of Citizenship Process:** The government should ensure that the process for becoming a citizen is accessible to disabled refugees.
- **Consider alternative forms of citizenship:** Some countries offer alternative forms of citizenship, such as **permanent residency** or **long-term visas**. Exploring these options can provide refugees with more flexibility and security in their legal status, even if they are not able to become citizens.
- Providing **training** to staff and officials on how to work with refugees with disabilities can help ensure that they are able to provide the necessary accommodations and support.
- Collaborating with **disability organisations** can provide valuable expertise and support in ensuring accessibility
- The government should **monitor** and **evaluate** the effectiveness of accessibility measures to ensure that they are meeting the needs of refugees with disabilities. This can include gathering feedback from refugees, disability organizations, and staff to identify areas for improvement.
- It is important to ensure that refugees with disabilities have equal access to all **services**, including **healthcare**, **education**, and **employment**. This can include providing accommodations such as **accessible transportation** and **communication services**, and ensuring that facilities and programs are physically accessible.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Basic **guidelines** for Autonomous Communities (ACs): Since there are differences in the functioning of ACs, a set of basic guidelines have to be set that ensures induction of **children to primary, high school and higher secondary levels**. Even though ACs are financially autonomous, a **legislation** is required to ensure **funding** for education is ensured with the help of **UNHCR and other non profits**. The national government shall ensure the establishment of this partnership
- **Inclusion** of disabled students: Students with disability from refugee backgrounds mostly have a hard time. **Technology** can help in this instance to a large extent. **Apps** that support visually impaired students can be built, and **braille** and other learning apps like **Tap Tap See** might help blind students. **Sanitation** is another area of focus where disabled students often struggle. This can be achieved by partnering with **World Bank and UNICEF**. UNICEF is committed to upholding the rights of children with disabilities and addressing the barriers that prevent them from participating in community life and accessing education.
- General Administration to establish partnerships with **UNHCR** and **Global Partnership for Education**: This provides access to **education, resources** and **funding**. Partnering with these organisations help in maintaining good quality education as well.
- Innovation education with the incorporation of technology: Online open source platforms under **ERASMUS+** to equip students with the 21st century skills
- **Child Safe Space**: It is important to set up a space where children feel comfortable rather than vulnerable. They might be mentally affected with the whole asylum seeking process. To make things easier, recruiting **refugee teachers** may help children to relate better. Rather than the entire workforce being localities, refugees may be recruited as teachers to build this safe space for children

HOUSING - INCLUSIVE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Orphaned disabled** people and widowed disabled people should be given primary care
- **Mandatory laws** for (hotels) to house disabled refugees and provide food temporarily and the government to **subsidise** this.
- Contact **Local Housing Authorities**: Disabled refugees should reach out to their local housing authorities to inquire about available housing benefits.
- Housing authorities are responsible for administering various housing programs, such as rental assistance, public housing, and **homeownership** programs.
- Seek Assistance from Non-Governmental Organisations: There are various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that provide housing assistance to refugees, including disabled refugees. These NGOs can help disabled refugees navigate the housing benefits application process and provide guidance on available housing options.
- Apply for **Disability Benefits**: Disabled refugees who are unable to work due to their disability may be eligible for disability benefits from the government. These benefits can help cover housing expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments.
- Explore **Community Programs**: Many communities offer programs that assist disabled individuals with housing expenses.
- Disabled refugees should reach out to their **local community** organisations to inquire about available housing benefits and support programs.
- Utilise **Online Resources**: Disabled refugees can access information about available housing benefits through government websites and online resources. These resources provide information on available housing programs, eligibility requirements, and application procedures.

THE CASE OF FINLAND



- Finland is a staunch supporter of **UNHCR** and a key ally, providing multifaceted assistance ranging from resettlement to political and financial support.
- Finland has been a member of **UNHCR's Executive Committee since 1979**, and the country's support for UNHCR has been crucial in advocating for displaced and stateless people in humanitarian crises.
- Finland is a leader in promoting the **inclusion** of persons with **disabilities** in humanitarian responses around the world and a strong advocate for the rights of women and girls, including gender equality, comprehensive **SRHR** services and protection from **SGBV** for displaced women and girls.

POLICIES IN FINLAND

- The **Non-discrimination Act** ensures that all citizens, irrespective of their personal characteristics, such as a disability doesn't impact their access to facilities such as education and employment.
- Finland, and specifically in the city of **Helsinki**, the supported **employment** programme provides support and ongoing assistance to **disabled** individuals to ensure they are able to have a successful careers. This includes support finding **accommodations, job coaching and job search** to tailor individual needs and provide them with a good standard of living, increasing the inclusion of disabled individuals in employment.
- The **Finnish education system** ensures that asylum seekers who are entitled to basic and pre-primary education can access it. Moreover, persons enjoying temporary protection can also benefit from this provision. **The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)** provides support to schools, educational institutions, and early childhood education providers. Additionally, EDUFI offers information and support materials for organizations and individuals engaged in international projects and exchange programs. Thus, refugees and asylum seekers can benefit from the support provided by EDUFI.

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

Overall, the report assessed the policies and regulations in **Spain regarding disabled individuals**, focusing on **disabled refugees** and their **inclusion** into three aspects of **social life**, including the **housing, education and employment** sectors. Initially, the report concluded that currently Spain has several policies for overall welfare, including social and physiological welfare along with policies to improve the inclusion of disabled individuals, through policies like the **World Programme of Action (1982)** and the **Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)**.

Secondly, the report addressed that Spain's strategic plan for citizenship and inclusion, consisted of **seven objectives** each to be fulfilled under **education and employment** domains but the procedure for refugees to be recognised was slower and therefore, they faced a drawback due to their 'refugee' status, proving its ineffectiveness. Moreover, the report addressed the inclusivity of the **housing sector** for those with disabilities and compared both the **Spanish and Finnish** policies revolving around housing for such individuals. It emphasises that Finnish laws to support the disabled individuals are better than Spanish ones

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

The report then focused on the issue of **disability** with regards to employment opportunities. This part of the report focused on Spanish policies that aimed to increase the inclusion of disabled individuals into the employment sector, with a key focus on the main Spanish organisation, '**ONCE**' that aimed to increase their employability chances by providing grants and training. However, the report highlighted the ineffectiveness of Spain's policies to achieve their aims as, despite these regulations, only 33% of disabled individuals in Spain are currently employed.

This was then compared to the Finnish policies, such as the '**Supported Employment Programme**' that provided ongoing support and assistance to disabled individuals to ensure their increased employability. Hence there are multiple policies recommended to improve the inclusion of disabled refugees in society in Spain. The report also analyses the work done by the **Finnish government** through **EDUFI** to provide education for refugees and asylum seekers even before being given the status. These best practices can be inculcated in Spain to reduce the time taken to enroll refugee students in school.

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