

People with Disabilities in Ukraine

Tetiana Maidaniuk

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Ukraine has been in the news a lot lately. Share what you have heard.
2. Find Ukraine on a map. Notice what countries are nearby. Share what you know about the area.

Discrimination Makes Things Very Hard for People with Disabilities

In Ukraine, my home country, there is *discrimination* against people with disabilities. My country does not have accessible buildings or proper medicine or support. Due to the war, there are now even more people with disabilities.

If you live in Ukraine, and you are in a wheelchair, it may be very hard for you to leave your home. You may be put in an institution where you will not get adequate care.

Children with physical disabilities in Ukraine do not have *equal opportunities* to study at school with other children. There are only a few schools in Ukraine that are equipped with special wheelchair access. Also, in most schools there is no special transport or staff.

Due to the inaccessibility of schools, parents of such children often have no personal life and do not go to work because they are the only people available to take care of their children. There is no other support for their families. I worked in a hospital in Ukraine, and I saw many families struggle with this lack of support for people with disabilities.

This Is What We Need

Ukrainian society must take steps towards positive changes. Disabled people should be able to live full and comfortable lives. Ukraine should have:

- barrier-free infrastructure
- adaptive vehicles



- specialized services, specifically schools for people with disabilities
- technological solutions, like the ability to get medical devices such as wheelchairs
- social support

War Makes It Worse

Of course, the war makes it hard for the society to focus on anything else. But the war also makes it essential for Ukraine to address these issues because many more people now have physical and mental disabilities.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. Discuss *discrimination* and *equal opportunities* in the context of this article. In what ways is *discrimination* against people with disabilities evident in Ukraine? According to the author, what should be done about it?
2. How does war affect disabled people?

Tetiana Maidaniuk is a student at Plainville Adult and Continuing Education in Plainville, Connecticut. She is married and has two sons, one in high school and one in middle school. She works as a caregiver to the elderly who speak Ukrainian and Polish. Her dream is to learn the English language.