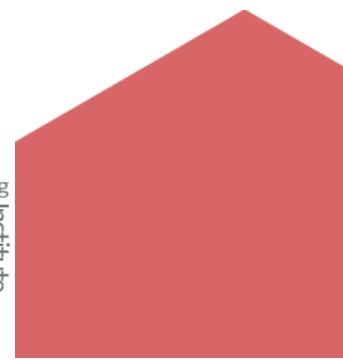
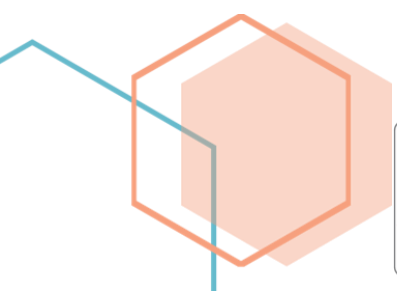


Disabled Refugees Welcome (DRW)
a project of Independent Living Institute

Short Impact Report
June 2020



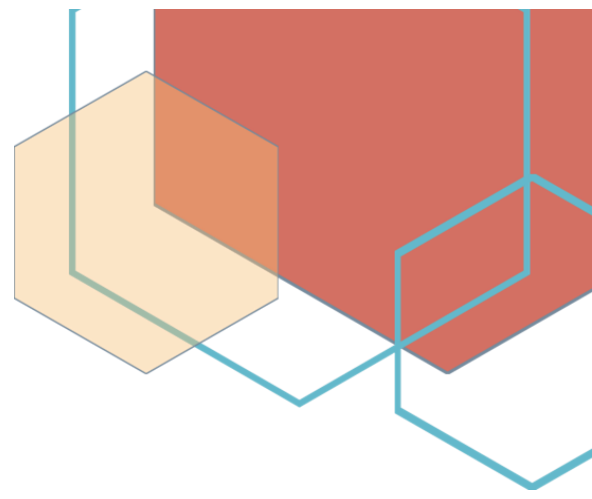
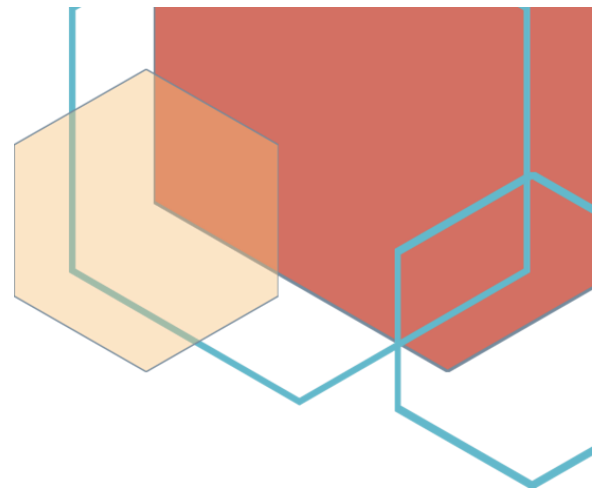


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Preamble

This short impact report offers a glimpse of the work carried out by DRW from September 2017 until June 2020. A goal has been to keep the report short so detail is limited but still given so that the reader can gain a good understanding of the project at hand. The purpose of this document is to be able to spread information on DRW with a hope to find funding for a future national knowledge and support center for disabled migrants.

Background of DRW

Disabled Refugees Welcome (DRW) is a three-year project that started in 2017 and will end in December 2020. It is run by the Independent Living Institute¹ (ILI) and financed by Allmänna Arvsfonden² – The Swedish Inheritance Fund. The purpose of the project is to bridge the gap between disabled refugees and the Swedish authorities as well as the civil society which has lacking preparedness to meet and support the integration process of disabled migrants.

The work of DRW is guided by the UN CRPD³ and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030⁴. It is based on Independent Living, which is a philosophy and movement of disabled people. Independent Living works for self-determination, equal opportunities and self-respect. Independent Living wants to guarantee that the same choices and control in every-day lives that non-disabled people take for granted can be ensured for disabled people and disabled migrants.

A network has been built between authorities, civil society and individuals acting within the field. Support has been given to disabled refugees but also other disabled migrants needing support in the integration process. Needs of the target group have been documented. Support has been given on an individual basis. New methods have been tested to facilitate a better reception process and more accessible integration policy for disabled migrants.

Guided by its original vision, DRW works for an inclusive society with equal opportunities and Independent Living for everyone regardless functional ability or number of years spent in Sweden. The vision is now updated to being – DRW envisions a national knowledge and support center for disabled migrants and is working towards this vision.

DRW target group

The target group for the project has been two-fold. Firstly, it has been disabled migrants themselves and secondly all actors operating in the fields of migration, integration and disability. Individuals are refugees, paperless persons, those who have acquired a permit as a refugee, as a student, through marriage or employment. Actors are among others authorities such as the Migration Board, the

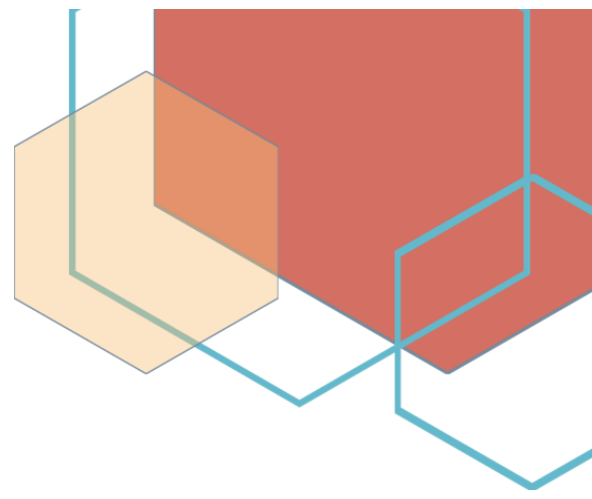
¹ <https://www.independentliving.org> Independent Living is an ideology and movement of disabled people started in the early 70s in the USA.

² <https://www.arvsfonden.se> Allmänna Arvsfonden finances projects for youth and disabled people.

³ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

authority for disabled people – Myndighet för Delaktighet⁵, the Swedish Employment Agency, local authorities, disabled people's organizations, refugee organizations, the Swedish Red Cross, Caritas, SIOS⁶ – a cooperation organization for Swedish ethnic organizations, Islamic Relief or Svenskkyrkan – the Swedish Church. DRW has expanded its network to the European and global level with contacts now including among others: UNHCR, Disabled People International, European Disability Forum and ENIL⁷ – the European Network on Independent Living.



The project required that the DRW team consist of people with experience from migration and of disability. The core team was four persons all having come from another country and having different disability. This fact allowed for the development of trust with the project participants. People understood that their experience was shared and that the information was coming from persons who had themselves found solutions to problems faced by disabled migrants.

DRW has raised awareness on the fact that refugees and migrants can have a disability and need to be considered in the integration process from the start. As it is today legislation, policy and practice often do not take disability into consideration. Disabled refugees are not reached with official information as it is the case now in this Covid 19 pandemic.

DRW promotes the issues of disabled migrants as human rights and not charity. In this work DRW has produced an information handbook with recommendations that can be found at this link - <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/wp-content/uploads/Road.pdf>. The recommendations cover several areas for reciprocal integration and the implementation of human rights in the field.

DRW believes that there is a need for more research in the area of migration and disability. DRW has contributed in several ways, i.e. supporting university students in applications for research, participated in interviews conducted as part of thesis projects, and engaged as a partner in international grants. Recently a collaborative effort with Associate Professor Eric Asaba at Karolinska Institutet culminated in a multi-country grant submission to the EU commission. The submission concerned psychosocial interventions for people who have survived forced migration, as well as further project planning with regard to strengthening community-based projects and methods with a focus on disability and migration locally.

DRW impact reality

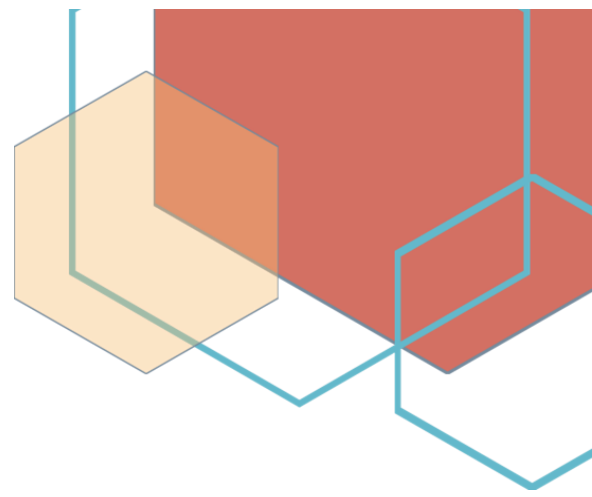
DRW is known among many actors. Journalists continue to take contact, come to the DRW office in Farsta, Stockholm or now through zoom and write articles contributing to the awareness raising of the existence of DRW and on the issues at hand.

⁵ <https://www.mfd.se/other-languages/>

⁶ <http://sios.se>

⁷ <https://enil.eu>

DRW's message that the gap needs to be filled has spread. Today actors either work with migration issues or disability issues but few with the cross-between which is necessary to make progress for integration of disabled migrants. DRW's network is wide. From the beginning the DRW team has striven for diversity and mainstreaming of the issues at hand. DRW's events are attended by a vast number of authorities, civil society representatives and individuals. Dialogue happens across the area.



Individuals have gotten much needed support. From just being listened to, to gaining knowledge of rights and obligations, building of social networks, legal aid, having a number to call in the case of an emergency, learning what has to be done to apply for various support measures, the list is long. Empowerment is a key concept. People strive better if empowered. In the case of disability, it means to believe in one's self and not to identify with disability, to identify as an individual who can do what one dreams. Punishment and guilt carried by religious beliefs and societal norms are to be overcome. Hiding away is not a life, nor is it a life to be dependent on social benefits. Education and employment if possible are ways to live lives that give self-fulfillment.

DRW has been invited to present the project on many occasions, to present results and to participate in the debate.

DRW activities

In the drive for integration of disabled migrants DRW runs various activities for both individuals and the actors in the fields of migration, integration and disability.

Activity for disabled migrants

Disabled migrants are in need of different kinds of support. DRW offers activity to map the needs and solutions that can be found. DRW has as a goal to promote empowerment and providing opportunities to strengthen individuals who can grow and learn and take the lead in their own lives and know where to turn when necessary. Some activities are done on a one to one base with interpreters allowing the use of the person's mother tongue. Other activities are done in a group, allowing for the meeting of others in the same situation and from there the building of social networks.

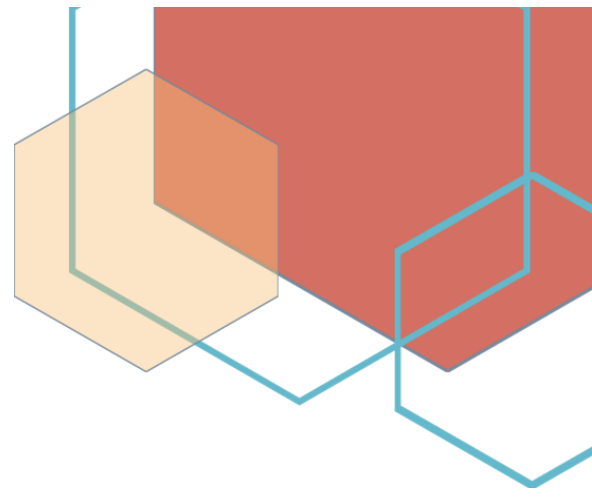
Contact with the migrant individual:

DRW can be reached most hours of the day through telephone numbers to the team as well as through emails that are answered daily. Sessions are booked to listen to the needs of the individuals. A plan is formulated on how the needs can be met. If agreed a more in-depth interview is carried out to add to the DRW database on needs of disabled migrants.

Target group as volunteers:

Some of the project participants have offered their services to DRW. Interpretation is the most common activity. Assisting in DRW events and being interviewed are other tasks. See the most recent film of Sisay: with the translation - Talk, Talk, Talk only Swedish -

<https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2020/06/prata-prata-bara-svenska/>



Other participant activities

DRW has many events among which are: open house, mingles, information meetings, peer support and training. Here below are two commented.

Peer support is part of the foundation of the Independent Living movement. Disabled people meet in groups and exchange experience. Through this method people gain empowerment and learn that as disabled people they are the experts of their lives, it is not the professionals. Together disabled people can develop and manage their own services.

Photovoice – through photovoice participants have found a channel for expression of the lived experiences during the integration process. The group planned and DRW carried out a zoom exhibition on June 10th. Another event is planned for the fall to improve the sound quality of the recording. Material such as flyers and brochures are soon to be on the web.

DRW reachout

DRW has held high the goal of reaching out and building the DRW network. Integration of disabled migrants regards all areas of society. With this in mind many events have been carried out. Below a few are mentioned.

Roundtable

Roundtable is a method where a group of actors interested in the same question can be gathered to share experience on how all are tackling the problems, or to spread new contacts and innovative ideas. The first roundtable was organized with the City of Stockholm. Together we discussed the issues at hand and shared contacts in order for the reach out to be successful.

Theme day

When interviewing the target group problems are identified. To find answers, professionals covering the area of the field are invited to come and speak to the DRW team but also to others in the field. DRW goes out with direct invitations as well as with a notice in the DRW newsletter so that the information sessions can be shared by a large group. Theme days have assisted in the building of the DRW network and added to the debate in the field.

The Solution Forum

DRW has gathered relevant actors to view actual anonymous cases and find solutions in what has been called the Solution Forum. Having actors from various fields allows for a wider view and different perspectives and solutions to cases being considered. This solution has permitted a widening of the DRW network and contacts as all actors have built up networks based on their individual experience and the variety of employment they have had.

Webinars

DRW has held and participated in various webinars. The most successful webinar was the May 5th webinar. Around 51 persons from many countries attended to hear experts talk about disabled

refugees and liberty – the theme of the ENIL international day for Independent Living⁸. Here is the link for the PowerPoint covering all speakers: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/wp-content/uploads/DRW-general-webinar-presentation.pdf>.

An article on the speakers was published in the April newsletter of DRW <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2020/04/presentation-av-medverkande-i-panelen-pa-webinaret-disabled-refugees-and-liberty/>.

DRW on Social Media

DRW uses Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to reach both individuals and actors from the general society. Mentioned earlier is Facebook with the video with Sisay. Facebook has been used for pods and information on Corona with one in Arabic and one in Amharic. The DRW team is small so resources are limited otherwise pods are a good way to reach out with important information and in the languages of the migrants. Here is the link for the Corona pod in Amharic <https://www.facebook.com/disabledrefugeeswelcome/videos/2851790448270252/>.

DRW Website

The DRW website offers information in Swedish, English and Arabic. There is a goal to have more information in more languages. The website is not viewed as much as the Facebook page. The page in 2019 had 2600 visitors and 4000 visits as per the ILI 2019 annual report <https://www.independentliving.org/docs1/ilanrp2019.html>.

DRW Events

Events have been many. DRW had a stand at the Jarva Veckan⁹ 2019, an important event for the spreading of issues to politicians as well as many other actors. A stand and seminar were planned at Jarva Vecka 2020 but had to be cancelled due to Corona. The list of DRW events is long, more information can be found in the ILI annual report. Almedalen was used to be able to attract people at a higher structural level. In 2019 one of the speakers at the DRW event was the Director of the Myndighet for Delaktighet, see announcement <https://www.facebook.com/disabledrefugeeswelcome/photos/fpp.174289139815434/452644311979914/?type=3&theater>.

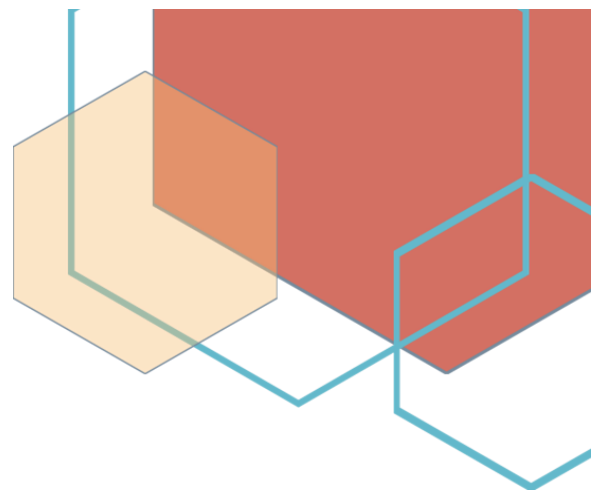
Besides the organization of DRW events, DRW actively participates in events organized by other actors which can be held by municipalities, other disabled people organizations, migration organizations, etc.

DRW Lobby

DRW follows the national and international development of migration policy and the migration situation. Through the organized events and newsletter DRW contributes to the actual debates. It has been important to highlight the life situations of the disabled migrants to push for change.

⁸ <https://enil.eu/campaigns/5th-may/>

⁹ <https://jarvaveckan.se>



Newspaper articles put current and important areas in focus with two samples that can be found in the last DRW newsletter of 2019:

A reference to the new High-school legislation and the lack of a disability perspective:

<https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2019/10/nya-gymnasielagen-om-rattslig-osakerhet-for-unga-migranter-med-normbrytande-funktionalitet/> The right to living accommodation:

<https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2019/10/lansstyrelsen-stockholm-och-drws-samarbete-om-bostadssituationen-for-migranter-med-normbrytande-funktionalitet/> .

In 2018 DRW rose awareness on the situation of disabled migrants and the right to family reunification. A reference has been made to the DRW article in the recent Shadow Directive written by the Swedish Asylum Commission at the link - <https://liu.se/forskning/asylkommissionen>.

DRW's article can be read here: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2018/12/funktionshinderperspektiv-pa-ratten-till-familjeaterforening-och-familjeliv-i-sverige-for-nyanlanda/>

DRW results and indicators

DRW results are widespread. DRW has interviewed around 60 persons and has contact with over 100 persons from the target group. Individuals have received support varying from: support to keep a newborn baby in spite the threat from the municipality to take the baby, for accessing the special transport for disabled people, from being kicked out of actual living arrangements, to having someone moved from an inaccessible living arrangement, for the reunification with family members, finding someone to talk to and the list continues.

The target group comes mainly from Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia and then other middle eastern and African countries. People are of all ages. Men dominate the case which reflects the overall pattern of migration to Sweden. More men than women have come to Sweden.

Needs noted are among others: access to living arrangements, access to healthcare, access to accessible language training, access to education and employment, access to cultural life and others.

DRW materials and reports

Here are examples of some of the DRW materials. The links can be found on the DRW webpage under resources: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/material/>

Some are mentioned here for direct access:

The information handbook gives support to people working with disabled migrants and is called - *The road to reciprocal integration*. It can be found in Swedish and English. An easy-to-read version has also been produced.

English version: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/wp-content/uploads/Road.pdf>

Swedish version: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/wp-content/uploads/Vagar-mot-omsesidig-integration-1.pdf>

Easy-to-read version in Swedish: <https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/wp-content/uploads/Lattlast-informationshandbook.pdf>

The DRW Method Handbook, which is written to counter the lack of the disability perspective in policy and projects in the field, is found at this link:

<https://disabledrefugeeswelcome.se/2020/06/drws-metodhandbok-valkommen-vem-du-an-ar/>

The Method handbook is now being translated into English.

DRW and the future

DRW with its three-year experience has chiseled a top of an iceberg. There is much to be done if integration of disabled migrants is to be successful. DRW will no longer be a project from December 31, 2020 but incorporated within Independent Living Institute's core activities. There is the hope of building a national knowledge and support center for disabled migrants to help to achieve DRW's goal of an inclusive society with equal opportunities and Independent Living for everyone regardless functional ability or number of years spent in Sweden. A national center could continue the work that DRW does, meeting and supporting disabled migrants. Information and training could continue be given to actors in the field. Lobby should be carried out to ensure that the issues of disabled migrants stay on the agenda and for better integration of disabled migrants. DRW sees the need of continuing to have persons who share the experience of migration and disability as staff members to ensure that the reach out is successful as it has been in the project. The national support center should be developed in coproduction with the actors to be involved. Organizations that have showed interest thus far with ILI are: The Swedish Church, UNHCR, Karolinska Institute, DHR and SRF. Through a national center the work of DRW could continue and ensure that disabled migrants are not left behind.

June 25, 2020

Jamie Bolling

Director - Independent Living Institute

Project leader – Disabled Refugees Welcome

jamie.bolling@independentliving.org

