

# **Report on some needs of persons with disability living in Lebanon, and needs of deprived persons in the areas of health, education, and shelter**

**5 November 2013**

## Introduction:

The present report is prepared in response to a request made by Decency Limited (hereafter 'Decency') to the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs (hereafter 'MoSA') to assess needs of Syrian displaced in Lebanon in areas such as disabilities, health and shelter and to identify areas of intervention where Decency can potentially provide support and assistance.

The report sheds light on the following areas:

1. The situation of persons living with disabilities in Lebanon, with a focus on Syrian refugees
2. Intervening among deprived persons, including persons with disability, in the areas of health, education and shelter

## **1. PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN LEBANON**

### Legal and operational framework:

In 2000, the Government of Lebanon (hereafter 'GoL') adopted Law 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The law deals with disability as a rights-based issue and calls upon government to adopt policies and programs based on the philosophy of integration.

As part of this effort, a National Council on Disability (NCOD) was established and represents the highest Council in charge of disabled persons in the country. It is hosted under the auspices of the MoSA. The role of the Council is to gather statistics and documentation on the disabled in the country, formulate a national policy for the disabled and adopt an identity card or record for each disabled person.

In 2007, Lebanon signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) but has not yet ratified it.

In 2012, a National Youth Policy was endorsed and it urges all stakeholders to take actions in reforming laws and policies to make Lebanese society more inclusive towards young men and women in all aspects of society, overcoming different forms of social, economic and political exclusions, including disabilities.

The MoSA is responsible for implementing disability-related policies. The Ministry has thus far established partnerships with 94 service providers specialized in the provision of care for people with disability. These service providers are located in all regions of the country. The MoSA is currently catering to the needs of approximately 7800 beneficiaries.

#### Situation analysis:

Data on disability in Lebanon is collected through administrative records and registers, specifically the disability card adopted by the GoL in 1995, whereby persons with disability can voluntarily register themselves with the MoSA to obtain this card.<sup>1</sup> The registration form provides comprehensive information on the person with disability, and therefore, the number of persons with a disability card reveals the following:

- Until the end of January 2013, the number of registered persons with a disability card is 80703, whereby 62% are male and 38% are female.
- 16% of persons with disability are under 18 years of age.
- The distribution in terms of the form of disability is 54% motor, 27% mental, 9% hearing, 8% visual, and 2% learning.
- Furthermore, there are 7638 persons with multiple disabilities and 353 autistic persons.
- The largest number of persons with disability is living in Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon, followed by North Lebanon, Bekaa, and finally Beirut.

In addition, the Syrian crisis that started in March 2011 and that resulted in the displacement of over a million Syrian refugees into Lebanon contributed to the worsening of the situation of persons with disability living in the country, whereby existing services and resources are overburdened or exhausted, and incapable of catering for the entire population of persons with disability.

Statistics on disabled Syrian refugees hosted in Lebanon is gathered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereafter 'UNHCR') as part of the agency's registration process of Syrian refugees.<sup>2</sup> Information gathered from these administrative records reveals the following:<sup>3</sup>

- Until the end of October 2013, the number of registered Syrians with a disability is 9929, whereby 64% are male and 36% are female.

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<sup>1</sup>Based on this system of registration, statistics are compiled only for those who choose to register; leaves out significant numbers of persons with less severe disabilities or persons in upper socio-economic status.

<sup>2</sup> Syrian refugees who do not register with the UNHCR are excluded from this statistical exercise.

<sup>3</sup> The breakdown of the number of persons with a disability, in terms of 'gender' and 'the form of disability', is almost similar for both Lebanese and Syrian persons with disability.

- 43% of persons with disability are under 18 years of age.
- The distribution in terms of the form of disability is 52% motor, 21% mental, 2% hearing, 2% visual, 1% speech, and 23% not specified.
- The largest number of Syrian persons with disability is living in North Lebanon and the Bekaa, followed by Mount Lebanon, South Lebanon, and finally Beirut.

#### Assessment of Needs:

The needs of persons with disability living in Lebanon are most pressing in the health and education sectors.

In the health sector:

- There are concerns about the provision of equipment, technical aid, prosthetic devices, and artificial limbs to the growing number of persons with disability requiring such services.
- Poor families with members with disability are suffering to meet the cost of handling the medical and rehabilitative needs of their children.
- Availability of spaces for the placement of persons with disability has become scarce or is exhausted within some existing specialized centers/institutions.
- Lack of capacity of some specialized centers/institutions to cater to persons with disability according to minimum standards.

In the educational sector:

- A large number of persons with disability are deprived of being integrated in normal schools. They are either staying at home without an education, or entering one of the specialized schools or institutions.
- There is a generalized lack of physical accessibility in Lebanese society, and this lack extends into the realm of public educational institutions where limited schools have been turned accessible for use by persons with a physical handicap.
- Some schools that have been turned accessible through the intervention of civil society organizations still lack some resources or training for school staff to deal with disability and to monitor integration.
- There is a lack of a united sign language in Lebanon for deaf persons.
- There is a need to provide accessible books for the blind.

## **2. INTERVENING AMONG DEPRIVED PERSONS, INCLUDING PERSONS WITH DISABILITY, IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SHELTER**

Suggestions for possible interventions by Decency:

In the health sector:<sup>4</sup>

- Cover the costs associated with:
  - o Provision of technical aids and equipment such as mobile and stationary **prosthetic devices** (limb prostheses, artificial eyes, etc.), orthopedic formations, and **mobility aids** (wheelchairs, crutches and canes); aids for double incontinence and for ulcer prevention, plus all transplants used in surgical operations. Such services may include maintenance.
  - o Provision of access to medical services especially dialysis (support up to 500 cases for one year ( $500 \times 100\$ \times 2 \times 52 = 5.2$  Million\$))
  - o Provision of support to individuals who need operations that are not covered by UNHCR (2000\$ per case for a total of 1000 cases= 2 million \$)
  - o Provision of equipment to the SDCs worth 1.1 million\$ approximately (See Annex B – Cost of some types of medical equipment)
- Provision of specialized external and internal rehabilitative treatment such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, audio-psychotherapy (See Annex C – Costs for different types of services and different forms of disability). Total expected budget (2 million divisible by the percentages indicated above)
- Provide physiotherapy sessions ( $50\$ \times 10000$  sessions = 500,000\$)

In the education sector:

- Enhance access to schooling with specialized schools for handicapped children (2000\$ per student per year - total budget for 500 individuals is 1 million \$)
- Enhance access to private schools ( $650\$ \times 1000 = 650,000\$$ )

In the shelter provisions:

The quickest intervention can be achieved through paying rent support to families. We propose an equation of 150\$ per family per month, for one year, meaning for 500 families (total cost is 900,000\$).

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<sup>4</sup> The MoSA has identified a number of centers-institutions that can provide quality services to persons with different forms of disability (See Annex A – List of centers-organizations that can provide services to persons with disability).