

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Report No: 56

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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on how to incorporate disability inclusion within climate change programming in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), Syria, Turkey and Yemen. It is intended to inform the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office’s (FCDO) climate change programming in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The document provides basic, introductory guidance on disability inclusion to FCDO advisers and managers engaging with climate change programming and sets out opportunities for the FCDO’s programmes and policy dialogue to deliver positive impacts for people with disabilities. In producing this, a rapid desk-based evidence review was carried out exploring the following two key questions:

1. What is the broad status of the rights of people with disabilities in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, OPTs, Syria, Turkey and Yemen?
2. What are some potential entry points and broad principles for incorporating disability inclusion into the programme’s thematic areas in these countries?

2. Background

Box 1: defining disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights treaty intended to protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities. The UK ratified the CRPD in 2009. The CRPD's human rights-based approach to disability defines people with disabilities as:

'...those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.' (Article 1, CRPD)

Impairments (e.g. physical, cognitive or sensory) become disabling when they interact with prevailing attitudes, behaviours and policies or physical spaces to effectively bar the individual(s) from participating fully in society. For example, inaccessible communications or buildings and discriminatory attitudes of officials may deny access to justice for individuals with different impairments. Impairments can also combine with other key factors and characteristics to compound the level of marginalisation. These include differences based on age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, rural versus urban locations and other identity markers. There are also differences in marginalisation based on whether impairments are visible or not.

The CRPD's human rights-based approach places an emphasis on removing barriers that make impairments disabling. In contrast, a 'medical model' approach focuses upon 'fixing' the individual, not upon removing barriers external to the individual, and a 'charity model' approach typically positions people with disabilities as separate to mainstream society with their needs met by others (e.g. housing people with disabilities within institutions).

People with disabilities represent a large, often overlooked group in society. Although prevalence does differ between and within countries, especially where there is armed conflict, people with disabilities represent approximately 15% of the population worldwide (WHO, 2011). Disability prevalence is higher in developing countries, (WHO, 2011), though this is likely to be a result of stronger identification mechanisms and availability of support mechanisms.

There is also likely to be a higher prevalence of disabilities in fragile and conflicts affected states (FCAS), partly as a result of the direct impacts of armed conflict (injuries, limited access to healthcare, reduced protection) as well as more indirect effects such as poverty, lack of employment or education opportunities. There can be differential access to goods and services, and inclusion of children and adults with conflict-related impairments compared to those with pre-existing disabilities. Persons with disabilities are protected under Article 11 of the CRPD (which includes situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters). There are now a range of guidelines and resources available to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in these situations, including the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019)*. However, it should be noted that much of the focus of these guidelines is on more immediate needs such as preparedness and reducing the impact of disasters (disaster risk reduction or DRR), rather than climate change per se, though these are of course linked (Kett and Cole, 2018).

In 2015, at COP21 (the United Nations Climate Change Conference), parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached a landmark agreement (the Paris Agreement) to combat climate change, which established goals to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C, to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C, and to achieve net zero emissions in the second half of this century. Countries outlined the post-2020 climate actions they intended to take to contribute to meeting

these goals in their 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' (INDCs).¹ In relation to disability inclusion, the Paris Agreement only includes reference to people with disabilities in the preamble:

*“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, **persons with disabilities** and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.” (United Nations, 2015)*

In July 2019, the forty-first session of the UN Human Rights Council passed resolution A/HRC/41/L.24 on Human Rights and Climate Change, which specifically highlighted the need to ensure the “*meaningful participation, inclusion and leadership activities of persons with disabilities and their organisations in disaster risk management and climate-related decision making at local, national, regional and global levels*” (UN General Assembly, 2019: 3)

In the same year, the UK was a co-sponsor of UN Security Council Resolution 2475 on the situation of persons with disabilities in armed conflict, which aims to highlight the need for compliance to existing human rights laws.² Climate change has been identified as a “threat multiplier” as it impacts on food and water insecurity, livelihoods and economic growth, in turn creating instability and potentially even conflicts. This potential instability is being further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and its long-term effects on health and wellbeing, including economic wellbeing (Cooper, 2020). These ‘transboundary risks’ are particularly acute in the Middle East, North Africa and East Europe (MENA-EE) region, therefore enhancing resilience is seen as key to protecting the region’s stability and prosperity.

Persons with disabilities are at particular risk of the impacts of climate change, not because of inherent vulnerabilities, but because they have less resilience to these impacts, and less coping strategies to manage them. There is also evidence of the gendered impact of climate change and links to state fragility (UNEP et al, 2020), which suggests that women with disabilities may be doubly disadvantaged and at risk of the impacts of climate change. However, there are very few examples of inclusive strategies to increase resilience, and consequently little evidence of what actually works to support resilience of persons with disabilities. This is partly due to poverty and exclusion (Kett and Cole, 2018). There is also very little focus on the potential adaptive capacities of persons with disabilities, who often have to negotiate for inclusion in all aspects of society. It could also be argued that focusing on individual or community resilience may leave local actors facing problems, such as climate change, that are in fact national and global in origin (Smith et al., 2017).

Discussions around the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate-related activities are relatively recent, building on a existing body of work around disaster risk reduction. There is a tendency for persons with disabilities to be considered as a ‘vulnerable’ group, rather than from a rights based perspective. As a result, there are as yet few specific resources or evidence of good practice around disability-inclusive climate actions (CBM, 2019). It has also led to the implementation of policies and programmes that while on the one hand may support adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change (such as banning plastic straws), on the other hand actually have a negative impact on the resilience – and inclusion – of adults and children with disabilities. In addition, there is not a specific constituency for persons with disabilities within the UNFCCC, though the International Disability Alliance (IDA) have set up a Thematic Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action (TG-DRRCA) advocating to amend this.³

Despite the growing range of global frameworks around both climate and disability, recent research has highlighted the gaps between the two fields, and a disconnect between these global frameworks, rhetoric and country-level interventions, as well as limited means to monitor their implementation.⁴ This is compounded by a wide range of measures and understandings, for example of vulnerabilities, often different

¹ For more information on INDCs see: <https://www.wri.org/indc-definition>.

² Available here: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2475>

³ For more information see: <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/climate-change>

⁴ This evidence comes from part of ongoing research on disability and climate justice being undertaken by Maria Kett for the Open Society Institutes.

from those intended in the international convention and policies. Finally, these frameworks can have a range of targets and indicators against which states must report, even if they are contradictory or have limited or no funding or resources allocated to actually deliver them.

According to a recent rapid evidence review of climate change risks and opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa, strategies and interventions to support vulnerable rural populations include livelihood diversification and community-based resilience, including access to adapted financial services such as Weather Index Insurances (WII) (Cooper, 2020). To date there is very little evidence of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in these interventions, or indeed of interventions that address climate justice in the Middle East.

3. What is the broad status of the rights of people with disabilities in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, OPTs, Syria, Turkey and Yemen?

A more detailed overview of the status of the rights of people with disabilities in the selected countries is presented in **Annex A**. Below is a summary of some of the key rights:

- Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen have ratified the UNCRPD, however Lebanon and the State of Palestine have not. Most countries have also introduced national legislation for disability rights and anti-discrimination, but according to civil society actors and researchers implementation has been lacking. Medical or charity approaches to disability remain dominant in wider society across the Middle East (Tahhan, 2018).
- Reliable data regarding the prevalence of disability is very limited in all of the selected countries. Globally, disability-disaggregated data collection using the Washington Group (WG) Questions⁵ is considered best practice. Jordan, Palestine and Turkey have reported using the WG Short Set.⁶
- In conflict-affected areas disability prevalence statistics are likely to be higher than available estimates. There are also high rates of mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities across the region.
- Across the selected countries, people with disabilities are commonly excluded from full and equal participation in the economy. Employment rates of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, are very low, even where there are mandatory employment quotas in place. Inaccessible infrastructure remains a major challenge for people with disabilities across the region, and some of the selected countries have established laws or national plans to improve the accessibility of infrastructure.
- This evidence review has found no publicly available information in English about the participation of people with disabilities in agriculture, nature-based solutions for climate change, disaster risk reduction, or food security in the selected countries. Globally, however, households with people with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience food insecurity than households without people with disabilities (UNDESA, 2019).
- There are a large number of active Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and OPD alliances in the selected countries, some of which were involved in planning and drafting national disability legislation and policies. The operations of OPDs in Yemen, Syria and OPTs have sometimes been constrained due to a lack of funding and/or constraints related to conflict.⁷

⁵ For more information see: <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/>.

⁶ The WG Secretariat conducts an annual survey among WG member countries asking the country representatives to report on activities related to disability statistics, including prior and planned use of the WG questions. The information included in this report is based on information obtained from the 2009-2020 surveys administered to WG country representatives.

⁷ See for example <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/04/statement-raja-abdullah-almasabi-un-security-council-july-28-2020>.

4. What are some potential entry points and broad principles for incorporating disability inclusion into the programme's thematic areas?

4.1 Broad principles

The UK Government has already made a clear commitment to disability inclusion, reflected in the Minimum and High Achievement disability inclusion business standards,⁸ which should serve as broad principles for incorporating disability inclusion into climate change programming. FCDO's work on climate change in the Middle East and North Africa can deliver positive impacts for people with disabilities through programmes and policy dialogue and through both mainstreamed and targeted efforts.

All efforts to incorporate disability inclusion into climate change programming in the region should include the following key principles:

- **Meaningfully involve people with disabilities and their representative organisations.**⁹ There are a number of regional organisations, including the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities, who may be able to help with initial mapping of OPDs and disability-focused organisations in the region and specific countries, as well as provide regional level policy advice. In order to ensure meaningful inclusion, both disability and climate focused organisations require considerable capacity strengthening around each other's worldview.
- **Ground programmes and policy dialogue in strong social analysis.** This should be undertaken in partnership with persons with disabilities themselves. Efforts to address climate change have the potential to address social inequalities and empower persons with disabilities as economic, social, human rights and climate actors, workers and employers, and to enhance their capabilities to live with climate change. In addition to the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities in the labour market, in education and vocational training programmes, persons with disabilities need to be included as an integral constituency in the development of the new green economy (OHCHR, 2020a).
- **Take a twin-track approach to disability inclusion:** pursue inclusive economic and governance reform that includes people with disabilities as well as activities that focus specifically on removing the barriers faced by people with disabilities. Efforts to mitigate or adapt to climate-related changes that are inclusive not only enable people with disabilities to access their rights but are also beneficial to society as a whole. International climate financing mechanisms should be encouraged to incorporate a disability-inclusive approach. There is also a need to ensure technology transfers to and capacity-building in developing countries, especially those countries that were particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (UN General Assembly, 2020).
- **Build in accessibility and/or reasonable accommodation from the outset:** Accessibility is a critical precondition for inclusive economic and governance reform. It is important to design information, training, resources and infrastructure that is accessible, usable and convenient to all the people that will use them. It is worth remembering that Universal Design may also include assistive devices for particular groups of people with disabilities. In addition to universal design, accommodations for persons with disabilities or through adaptations to existing services or resources must be made (e.g. through targeted outreach support).
- **Collect and monitor disability disaggregated information and data:** Collecting and analysing disability disaggregated data using the Washington Group Questions. Green Climate Fund (GGF) programmes should be expected to use the Washington Group Questions at the design and evaluation stage. GGF programmes should also be marked against the FCDO's Disability Marker.

⁸ Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/773358/DFID-Disability-Inclusion-Standards2.pdf.

⁹ Representative organisations include Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and disability-focused organisations.

4.2 Potential entry points

This section outlines potential entry points for incorporating disability inclusion into the programme's thematic areas. These are drawn from FCDO's programme documentation for the proposed Middle East and North Africa Climate Programme. In a few cases there is sufficient evidence to suggest some potential KPIs.

Before considering potential entry points, it is important to note that while all six countries have submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to the UNFCCC, only one (Jordan) makes any mention of disability in their post-2020 actions, and this is based on care homes, rather than direct or community support (see extract below). There is also a broader post-2020 action to integrate gender and interests of vulnerable groups into climate change policies and strategies.

“Supporting care giving houses for the orphans, people with special needs and elderly people with measures to install solar energy and production of own electricity needs” (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2015:18).

a) Water stress and security

Water scarcity is a defining challenge in the region with impacts on agriculture, health and incomes, and related insecurity and conflict. Regional and national efforts must ensure strengthened governance and efficiency, as well as food security. Persons with disabilities and their families may be at significant risk of water stress and insecurity and must be included in all efforts to address access and availability of water. There are a range of guidelines about access to water, which encompass equity and rights.¹⁰ Water use has a significantly gendered aspect, as women are often the main users and collectors of water, but have limited access to, or control over, resources. They also produce most of the food through subsistence agriculture, yet they are often excluded from decision making processes at all levels of the water sector in many countries in the region. An adaptive and inclusive approach to water management is required to ensure social transformation (Puzyreva and Roy, 2018).

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Proactively support the participation of persons with disabilities and/or representative organisations (OPDs) in any activities, training and/or solutions for resilient agricultural practices, as well as in community governance mechanisms. A potential KPI could be around the number of persons with disabilities/DPOs involved in each activity.
- Advocate for equal representation of men and women with disabilities in programme activities. A potential KPI could be around disaggregating participant records by age, sex and disability where possible and/or the number of women engaged with key water management processes.

b) Adaptive capacity

In order to ensure that national governments and key public and institutions have enhanced and inclusive adaptive capacity to manage future risks and shocks, and increased access to finance to support investment in nature-based solutions and climate resilient green infrastructure, they will need to ensure that from the outset persons with disabilities and their representatives are included in policies and programmes to address climate change, as well as national ownership processes (e.g. National Action Plans, migration and adaptation policies etc). This will require coordination across sectors to identify and support a rights-based approach to inclusion. Several of the counties looked at as part of this review are already engaging with the GCF.¹¹

Key considerations and recommendations:

- A number of countries looked at in this evidence review are already engaging with the Green Climate Fund and have either specifically mentioned people with disabilities or indicated that they will be engaging with civil society organisations (CSOs). For example, Syria and Yemen are already

¹⁰ E.g.: <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/blog/building-the-evidence-for-effective-disability-inclusive-water-sanitation-and-hygiene>.

¹¹ For more information see: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/>.

engaged in GCF institutional capacity-building and CSO consultation programmes; Iraq has recently begun a three year process with UN Environment Programme to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to build the country's resilience to climate change (UN Environment Programme, 2020). A potential KPI could be around specific targets and indicators for persons with disabilities in national climate action plans.

- Undertake vulnerability and capacity assessments¹² and identify those who may be in need of immediate, targeted support (e.g. as per the GCF Iraq).
- Ensure the proactive inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development and support of inclusive community level nature-based solutions, e.g. training agricultural extension officers on disability rights and inclusion.
- Add adaptive solutions in education curriculum (e.g. as indicated in the GCF Iraq).

c) Climate and conflict risks

Early warning systems, preparation and planning, as well as improved integration of climate risks and natural resource management into national planning can lessen the risks of both climate and conflict. There is a significant body of work around disability inclusive DRR, though little from the MENA region. The use of social protection methods to manage climate risks could be viewed as, or at least moving toward, a transformative approach, making societies more equitable and inclusive may reduce the risk of conflict. Social protections are dependent on structural interventions such as safety nets around sectoral themes, for example food security, social insurance, social services (including disability services) and even changes in the labour market. Social protection can support the mitigation of disaster risk and go some way to address underlying structural inequalities (Jones et al., 2010).

There are as yet very few examples of managed climate related migration for persons with disabilities. It has been argued that international labour migration is an 'adaptive strategy', however it is one that risks causing new forms of inequality for people with disabilities as the ability to migrate is largely based on biomedical – rather than social-relational – understandings of disability (Bell et al., 2020). There is potentially innovative and transformative work being undertaken in Fiji, which is developing a climate change relocation plan, but it too risks weakening its transformative potential by excluding people with disabilities (ibid).

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Ensure persons with disabilities are included in all disaster risk reduction mechanisms, including early warning systems and post-disaster efforts, in line with global and national commitments (e.g. UNCRPD; Dhaka Declaration 2015). There are already a range of resources to support this, including the Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network.¹³
- Promote universal social protection for persons with disabilities, including those who are refugees and internally displaced persons.

d) Innovation and accountability

There is a need for innovative and locally specific research, development and nature-based solutions which can be both implemented and scaled up. Data, tracking and accountability structures on climate and environment issues in the region (such as climate watchdogs) need to be strengthened. Any innovations developed, including those developed locally, which may have a positive impact on the environment and climate, should not have a detrimental impact on persons with disabilities.

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Support countries in the region to develop a disability inclusion action plan under the UNFCCC. This should be aimed at ensuring that climate negotiations are accessible, that data is collected on how

¹² Guidance on VCAs can be found here: <https://www.ifrc.org/vca>.

¹³ For more information see: <https://www.didrrn.net/> (though it should be noted that there are few resources from the MENA region).

persons with disabilities are affected by climate change and whether and how they are involved in its responses.

- Persons with disabilities and their representative organisations must be included in data, tracking and accountability structures. For example, the Palestinian National Climate Programme, funded by GCF (2020), highlights the impact of climate change on people with disabilities and the need to develop social programmes to ensure inclusion, however they do not mention OPDs specifically). The National Adaptation Plan does not mention disability.
- Fund and support innovative and locally specific research and development, particularly around nature-based solutions. Ensure persons with disabilities are included in these initiatives.
- Ensure states adopt a cross-sector approach in policymaking by appointing and including disability focal points at the national and local government levels, in line with UN recommendations (OHCHR, 2020b).
- Support the coordination and cooperation of councils/committees/emergency management structures on disaster risk reduction and climate action, and ensure membership is inclusive of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, in line with UN recommendations.
- Ensure data, tracking and accountability structures on climate and environment issues in the region (e.g. climate watchdogs) are strengthened and inclusive of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

e) Energy generation and uptake

Reducing emissions through increased energy efficiencies and increasing the uptake of renewable energy is a key goal of the Paris Agreement, and all the countries within the scope of this review have committed to this. For example, Jordan's INDC includes:

“Integrating gender considerations and the interest of vulnerable group in climate change policies and strategies in all relevant sectors particularly in national strategies for social development, poverty eradication, childhood and early childhood development in Jordan and develop, compile, and share practical tools, information, and methodologies to facilitate the integration of gender into policy and programming;”

“Supporting care giving houses for the orphans, people with special needs and elderly people with measures to install solar energy and production of own electricity needs.”

However, there is no specific mention of disability in Jordan's climate change and gender action plan¹⁴ or National Green Growth Plan.¹⁵

The impact of carbon emissions on health is well established (Perera et al., 2019; Tang et al., 2019), and it can be assumed there will be a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. There is a pressing need to reduce the heavily subsidised oil and gas provision in the region, which has created huge dependences on cheap fossil fuels. While countries are increasingly trying to address this, efforts are rarely inclusive of, or consider the impact on, adults and children with disabilities, or how these intersect with gender and other characteristics. For example, the need to collect or use cooking fuel again is a burden which largely falls on women, and as with water usage, women often have the least voice in decision making about access to and use of resources. There is a lot of evidence on sustainable cooking fuel, though there is much less evidence on persons with disabilities' access.¹⁶

The GCF is funding the Green Cities Facility,¹⁷ which supports the transition of cities to low-carbon, climate-resilient urban development over a 23-year period (from 2016). Jordan is one of nine funded countries, with existing projects largely focused on financing for sustainability. There is little project specific information

¹⁴ Available at <https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/jordan.pdf>.

¹⁵ Available at

<https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/A%20National%20Green%20Growth%20Plan%20for%20Jordan.pdf>.

¹⁶ For more information see <https://www.cleancookingalliance.org/feature/delivering-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-through-clean-cooking.html>.

¹⁷For more information see

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp086#:~:text=Green%20Cities%20are%20energy%20efficient,of%20life%20outcomes%20for%20residents.>

available online, but what is available does highlight the requirement for a gender assessment and gender action plans. However, neither requirements include targets or indicators for women or girls with disabilities.

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Carry out impact assessments prior to implementation to ensure efforts to address carbon emissions (e.g. alternative cooking fuels, alternative transport solutions etc) do not negatively impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure targets related to energy include specific mention of persons with disabilities.

f) Low carbon transition

In line with commitments made under the Paris Agreement, low carbon development across a range of sectors are being supported, including investment in green industries and businesses, supporting green tourism and retrofitting. Some of the countries in the region are already receiving GCF funding to support sustainable and accessible infrastructure developments, including Jordan. Technology exchange and research and development of sustainable accessible transport in the region should be a priority. Persons with disabilities already have extensive knowledge and experience in this sector and there is existing knowledge and evidence available. A recent literature review of disability and transport in low- and middle-income countries found that initiatives to promote sustainable low-carbon transport, such as cycling, were not inclusive of all types of disabilities (Kett et al., 2020). Alternative, sustainable means of transport which do not negatively impact the lives of persons with disabilities are urgently required.

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Invest in research and development of sustainable and inclusive alternative transport solutions.
- Ensure targets related to low carbon transition include specific mention of persons with disabilities.

g) Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

The aim of MEL is to gather an evidence base, identify impact to showcase, and learn and adapt from this, as well as ensure the project is demand-led and has an impact and maximises value for money. Specific policy-focused advice and guidance can be found in the recent *UN Guidelines for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction*, which focus on practical advice for policymakers, including on MEL, on how to simultaneously address climate change and accessibility/inclusion (OHCHR, 2020b).

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Work with relevant national bodies to develop disability assessments and disability action plans.
- Ensure existing action plans (e.g. gender action plans) monitor the inclusion of men, women, boys and girls with disabilities.
- Ensure persons with disabilities are included in national action plans with SMART indicators.
- Review existing climate and disability-focused policies and identify gaps/synergies.
- Set up cross sectoral task force/working group on disability inclusion with range of representatives.
- Provide training and capacity strengthening to OPDs to support inclusion in national and international climate focused fora to maximize the voice, confidence and negotiation skills of persons with disabilities in these fora (OHCHR, 2020a).
- Provide training and capacity strengthening to national and regional climate focused organisations to support inclusion and to maximize the voice, confidence and negotiation skills of persons with disabilities in national and international climate fora.
- Create links to national committees and national action plans on climate change, including the nationally determined contributions under the UNFCCC.

Recommendations for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) (Source: OHCHR, 2020a)

The following recommendations should be considered when designing MEL plans to ensure that people with disabilities are included and data on their needs and participation is adequately captured:

- a) Collect disaggregated data, paying particular attention to disability and its intersections with characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity;
- b) Develop disability-specific indicators;
- c) Map the effects of climate change on poverty and persons with disabilities;
- d) Identify priority areas to support persons with disabilities and enhance access to benefits.
- e) Include the rights of persons with disabilities in future decisions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in line with commitments under the Paris Agreement and international human rights law;
- f) Consider creating a constituency for persons with disabilities at the climate negotiations;
- g) Support diversity and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the composition of national delegations to processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- h) Support capacity-building for persons with disabilities
- i) Report on the implementation of disability-inclusive policies throughout the project cycle, based on quantitative and qualitative indicators;
- j) Develop guidance for disability-inclusive stakeholder consultations and facilitate the participation of organizations representing persons with disabilities.

h) Inclusion and sustainability

There is a need to strengthen regional and national civil society organisations (CSOs) to meaningfully engage in ongoing and sustainable dialogue with states on natural resources, environmental and climate issues. There is currently a lack of space for civil society organisations to be heard (Adenipekun, 2020). There is also a need to shift to a more rights-based agenda for persons with disabilities in the region.

Key considerations and recommendations:

- Support OPDs' efforts to refocus attention from a charity model of disability to a more rights-based agenda aligned with broader sustainable development goals in the region (Lebanon and Palestine have not ratified the UNCRPD, so this could be a specific advocacy focus). Lebanon submitted a report to UNFCCC in 2011, however there was no mention of persons with disabilities.¹⁸
- Create space for dialogue between CSOs, including OPDs and climate focused organisations.
- Governments in the respective countries need to more meaningfully engage with CSOs/OPDs in ongoing dialogue around climate and other related issues.
- Ensure persons with disabilities are not excluded from existing climate financing mechanisms. For example, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is supporting a leading Lebanese bank to 'dramatically increase lending to eco-minded businesses and homeowners.'¹⁹ However, unless persons with disabilities already own their own homes or businesses, they will not have the opportunity to apply for these loans in the first place, and will continue to miss out.
- Consider integrating disability into funding agreements. To date, none of the countries within the scope of this review have included disability in any of their reports to UNFCCC.
- Promote the active engagement and inclusion of OPDs in existing and new climate related funds and programmes. For example, Yemen and Syria have already received funding from the GCF for institutional capacity-strengthening in preparation for further GCF support, including engaging with civil society organisations to develop climate change plans.

¹⁸ Lebanon's Second National Communication (2011) is available at <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/resources/assessments-and-background-documents/lebanons-second-national-communication-official>.

¹⁹ More information is available at https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/news_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/news+and+events/news/ifc+helps+lebanese+businesses+cut+costs%2C+protect+the+environment.

Annex A: Overview of status of the rights of people with disabilities in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, OPTs, Syria, Turkey and Yemen.

Iraq (Source: Al-Ezzawi, 2019)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) status: ratified in 2013.

Policies and Legislation: Law No. 22 on Persons with Disabilities and with Special Needs was introduced in 2011. It refers to the rights and protection of people with disabilities in all aspects of life including education, health, social welfare, accessibility, however the law has reportedly not been implemented. Law No. 38 on the welfare of people with disabilities was introduced in 2013 and includes plans and programs to provide welfare to people with disabilities. This law is focused on providing welfare rather than ensuring the rights of people with disabilities as per the UNCRPD. In 2017 the Cabinet allocated 60 billion dinars to welfare for people with disabilities. Law No. 38 also commits to ensuring adequate housing for people with disabilities and making public transport accessible.

Prevalence: According to a Ministry of Planning survey in 2013, people with disabilities account for 8.4% of the Iraqi population.

Economic inclusion: Law No. 38 of 2013 on the welfare of people with disabilities mandates that 5% of public sector jobs and 3% of private sector jobs be held by people with disabilities, however this quota has reportedly not been implemented. A lack of accessible transport and infrastructure remains a significant barrier to people with disabilities. The government has tried to establish technical support from international organisations to assist people with disabilities to acquire vocational skills. It is estimated that 87% of people with disabilities in Iraq are unemployed. People with disabilities with a monthly income of less than JD 105,000 are eligible for social protection. The Community Rehabilitation Fund has established low interest loans for self-employment opportunities of people with disabilities.

Conflict and displacement: According to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan-3RP, as of 2018 there were 1000 refugees with disabilities from Syria, Turkey and Iran in Iraq. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has a 2019-2021 Disability Inclusion Strategy to support migrants with disabilities in Iraq.

Organisations and initiatives: There are at least 50 OPDs in Iraq, most of which work under the umbrella of the Iraqi Assembly of Disabilities Organizations (IADO). There is also a forum for women with disabilities under IADO. OPDs are more active and resourced in the Kurdistan region, including Rose Organization, which contributed to developing Law No. 22 on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) climate change adaptation planning project in Iraq aims to include people with disabilities, whereas the GFC project proposal for “Promoting Climate Resilient Livelihoods of Food Insecure People in Southern Iraq” does not mention people with disabilities.

Iraq has recently begun a three year process with UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to build the country’s resilience to climate change (more info [here](#)).

Jordan (Source: IDS, 2020)

UNCRPD status: ratified in 2008.

Policies and Legislation: Jordan formed a royal commission in 2006 to draft the national disability inclusion strategy, introduced the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act in 2007, and established a Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities as an independent national institution responsible for policy-making and planning for disability inclusion. A 2017 shadow report on the implementation of the UNCRPD in Jordan found that some laws were inconsistent with the UNCRPD and lacked effective measures for disability inclusion. It recommended developing a new national strategy, reviewing all national legislation, policies and strategies to be disability-inclusive, introducing financial penalties for violations and strengthening the Labour Law, which had a loophole that allowed employers to avoid recruiting people with disabilities. The updated 2017 Disabled People's Rights Act (No. 20) includes anti-discrimination principles and a commitment to making all public facilities accessible within 10 years.

Prevalence: there is limited reliable data available, however in 2018 disability prevalence was estimated to be between 11 and 15%.

Economic inclusion: As of 2014, 16% of people with disabilities in Jordan (23.8% of men with disabilities and 4.8% of women with disabilities) were employed, compared to 36% of the general population. The 2017 Disabled People's Rights Act (No. 20) prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment. Organisations with between 25 and 50 staff members are required to employ at least one person with a disability, and for organisations with over 50 members of staff, 4% of employees are required to be people with disabilities. The Development and Employment Fund provides loans and develops employment opportunities in coordination with the Higher Council for People with Disabilities. The Ministry of Social Development manages social assistance services and social protection for more than 20,000 people per year, with approximately 20% of beneficiaries being people with disabilities. People with disabilities are only required to pay 25% of the fees of courses in public universities.

Conflict and displacement: In 2014 it was estimated that 154,000 of 700,000 refugees in Jordan were people with disabilities (22%).

Organisations and initiatives: the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities is the main organisation working on disability inclusion in Jordan. The Equality Association for Persons with Disabilities and the I am a Human Society for Rights of People with Disabilities also work on disability rights. According to the Ministry of Social Development, Jordan has 260 OPDs. The proposal for the Green Climate Fund Green Cities Facility, which is partly implemented in Jordan, notes that the facility will consider the needs and priorities of people with disabilities in the design of infrastructure and services.

Lebanon (Source: Combaz, 2018)

UNCRPD status: Lebanon has not ratified the UNCRPD.

Policies and Legislation: Lebanon introduced Law 220/2000 on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2000. This law and subsequent legislation and policies do not align with the UNCRPD: they do not take a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion, rather they adopt a medical model of disability, narrowly define disability and exclude people with certain impairment types. Law 220/2000 has reportedly not been implemented, and according to several local OPDs, NGOs and UN agencies there has been no government action towards disability inclusion.

Prevalence: Disability prevalence estimates are often dated and contested in Lebanon. The government estimates that 2% of the population are people with disabilities, however this is based on a narrow medical approach to identifying people with physical impairments only, rather than collecting data using the Washington Group Questions, which is considered best practice. Multilateral organisations and NGOs estimate that 10-15% of the Lebanese population are people with disabilities.

Economic inclusion: As of 2016, it was estimated that 80% of people with disabilities in Lebanon were not or had never been employed. No state initiatives have been implemented to support inclusive employment of people with disabilities. The National Employment Office has promoted specialised centres and workshops for people with disabilities to work in segregated workplaces, a practice which is discouraged by the UNCRPD committee. Social security coverage is limited for a large proportion of the population, including people with disabilities. The budget for the development of public infrastructure is not regulated to ensure accessibility.

Conflict and displacement: It is estimated that in Lebanon, 10% of refugees from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), 8% of Palestinian refugees from Syria, and 10-22.8% of all refugees who left Syria since 2011 are people with disabilities.

Organisations and initiatives: there are a significant number of OPDs and NGOs working on disability rights and representing people with a range of different impairment types in Lebanon, which are listed in the Daleel Madani directory (available [here](#)). There is a long history of disability rights activism in Lebanon, which began during the civil war when thousands of people acquired impairments.

Syria

(Sources: UN Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme, 2019; Thompson, 2017; Humanity and Inclusion, 2019)

UNCRPD status: ratified in 2009.

Policies and Legislation: In Syria there is a national disability law No. 34 (2004).

Prevalence: a nationwide household survey using the Washington Group Questions in 2019 found that there are 3.7 million people with disabilities over the age of 12 in Syria (27% of the total population, 25% of females, 28% of males). 56% of people over the age of 40 have a disability. (For further information see: https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/Disability_Prevalence_and-Impact_FINAL-2.pdf).

Agriculture and food security: A 2017 survey in Syria found that 50% of households with a person with a disability suffered from poor food consumption, compared to 34% of households without a person with a disability.

Economic inclusion: 62% of people with disabilities are unemployed in Syria, compared to 48% of people without disabilities. Amongst households with two or more people with disabilities, 66% reported borrowing money or buying credit as a coping mechanism for financial distress.

Conflict and displacement: There is a higher prevalence of disabilities amongst internally displaced people (IDPs) than amongst long-term residents of Syria and returnees. The barriers that people with disabilities in Syria experience are exacerbated by damage to infrastructure, travel restrictions and limited operations of humanitarian organisations. Access to prosthetics and orthotics equipment is extremely limited and many people with injuries and disabilities have to depend on their families for their basic needs. There are high rates of mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities across the Middle East region and various initiatives for the provision of mental health and psychosocial services.

Organisations and Initiatives: There are a number of initiatives focused on providing rehabilitation and psychosocial support for people with disabilities in Syria. A list is available [here](#). In regard to disability rights, Humanity and Inclusion has provided support to people with disabilities in Syria to access essential services with support from the UK government, and the Saïd Foundation for Development has funded a Syria Disability Programme aimed at increasing the professional capacity of disability practitioners and organisations, supporting services for children with disabilities, and increasing advocacy on disability issues. The Green Climate Fund has awarded funds to support the establishment of a National Designated Authority and develop a country programme through comprehensive stakeholder consultations with civil society, however OPDs are not mentioned as stakeholders.

Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs)

(Sources: UNCRPD Committee Report submitted by the State of Palestine (2019); State of Palestine Ministry of Foreign Affairs (undated); Humanity and Inclusion website <https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/country/Palestine>)

UNCRPD status: the Palestinian Authority has not ratified the UNCRPD.

Policies and Legislation: The Palestinian Disability Law No. 4 affirms the rights of people with disabilities to equality before the law, non-discrimination, housing, health care, travel, work, participation in cultural life and sport. The Palestinian Authority has produced national plans for rehabilitation of people with disabilities, which have been financed by the World Bank, but implementation has been limited.

Prevalence: According to data collected using the Washington Group Questions, as of 2011, 7% of people in OPTs are people with disabilities, whereas using a narrow definition of disability, the World Bank in 2016 and Palestinian Bureau of Statistics in 2011 estimated that 2.7% of the Palestinian population were people with disabilities.

Social and economic inclusion: people with disabilities living in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged by having limited access to transport and difficulty moving between areas due to checkpoints and road closures.

Organisations and initiatives: the State of Palestine has a higher council for the affairs of people with disabilities (HCAPD), responsible for policy development and capacity-building, which includes representatives from government, service providers, OPDs and the private sector. The Palestinian Medical Relief Society and the Palestinian General Union of People with Disability (GUDP) have worked to promote a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion in OPTs. GUDP is the lead union for the disability movement, under which there are approximately 15 to 20 OPDs operating but with significant financial constraints. Humanity and Inclusion has ongoing initiatives in OPTs to promote employment of people with disabilities, inclusive education, access to rehabilitation, and psychosocial support for children. The State of Palestine Country Programme under the Green Climate Fund notes that people with disabilities are impacted by climate change, and that the programme will collaborate with civil society organisations, private sector partners, local communities and governments to ensure that specific needs, experiences and capacities are considered in climate change adaptation.

Turkey

(Sources: Turkey's Sustainable Development Goals (Government of Turkey, 2019); Universal Periodic Review – Turkey (OHCHR, 2020c))

UNCRPD status: ratified in 2009.

Policies and Legislation: the Turkish Disability Act (2014) reaffirms the rights of people with disabilities in line with the UNCRPD. In 2020 Turkey was drafting the “National Strategy Document and Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” to plan practical measures to implement the UNCRPD. Accessibility Monitoring and Auditing Commissions were formed in 2013 in all provinces to monitor accessibility practices.

Prevalence: the 2011 Turkey Population and Housing Survey, which used the Washington Group Questions, found that 6.9% of the Turkish population has a disability (5.9% males, 7.9% females).

Economic inclusion: Turkey has an “Accessible Workplaces for All” strategy with measures such as quotas, assisted employment, subsidised employment and sheltered employment (discouraged by the UNCRPD committee) for people with disabilities. For private sector employers with more than 50 staff, 3% of their staff are required to be people with disabilities, and 4% of public sector employees are required to be people with disabilities. As of 2011, 64.6% of men with disabilities and 87.5% of women with disabilities in Turkey were unemployed. Planning for accessibility in construction plans, urban, social and technical infrastructure plans and buildings is a legal requirement in Turkey.

Conflict and displacement: there is no reliable data available on the prevalence of disabilities amongst refugees living in Turkey.

Organisations and initiatives: OPDs in Turkey include Bedensel Engelliler Dayanışma Derneği (Solidarity Association for People with a Disability), Fiziksel Engelliler Vakfı (Foundation for People with a Disability), Türkiye Görme Engelliler Vakfı (Turkish Foundation for People with a Vision Impairment), İstanbul Zihinsel Engelliler Eğitim Vakfı – IZEV (Istanbul Foundation for Children with an Intellectual Disability), and İşitme Engelliler Vakfı- IED (Foundation for People with Hearing Impairments).

Yemen (Source: Amnesty International, 2019)

UNCRPD status: ratified in 2009.

Policies and legislation: The Yemeni government has a national disability strategy affirming its commitment to the rights of people with disabilities and a Social Welfare Fund and Handicapped Welfare and Rehabilitation Fund, however ongoing armed conflict has affected implementation. Yemeni law mandates that the Ministry for Social Affairs and Labour develop a national awareness raising plan in order to enable their participation in society on an equal basis with others, but current legislation (Law No. 5, 1991) still regards persons with disabilities as a “problem” to be addressed, which contravenes the UNCRPD.

Prevalence: There is no reliable data available on the number of people with disabilities in Yemen due to a lack of capacity to collect data, especially during conflict. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) estimates 3 million Yemenis are people with disabilities (9.8% of the population) but due to the conflict the number is likely to be higher.

Economic inclusion: Yemeni Labour Law (Law No. 61, 1999) guarantees the right of people with disabilities to free vocational training, promotes entrepreneurship by providing small loans to people with disabilities, and stipulates that 5% of jobs be reserved for people with disabilities.

Conflict and displacement: Amnesty International has documented difficulties of people with disabilities in fleeing conflict in Yemen, cases of people with psychosocial disabilities being unable to flee because they were chained, people with disabilities being left behind as their families fled, difficulties in accessing essential services and aid, and increased economic hardship of displaced people with disabilities in Yemen.

Organisations and initiatives: There is some limited work on the rights of people with disabilities in the Yemen conflict from Humanity and Inclusion, Human Rights Watch and the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. Before the war there were more than 300 organisations providing services for people with disabilities but there are now only 26, all of which have limited capacity and programmes due to lack of funding and operational viability. The GCF awarded funds to strengthen Yemeni institutional capacities to engage with GCF and for the government to engage with a range of civil society organisations to inform their approach to climate risks and opportunities.

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