

COMMUNITY-BASED INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT
A PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSTIC STUDY ON THE RIGHTS
AND NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

IN THE TOWN OF TARQUMIYA
2025



COMMUNITY-BASED INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT
A PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSTIC STUDY ON THE RIGHTS
AND NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

IN THE TOWN OF TARQUMIYA
2025



Prepared by:

QADER for Community Development – Tarqumiya Municipality –Tarqumiya Inclusive Youth Accountability Team

QADER's Research Team:

Andaleeb Al-Atawneh
Mohammad Al-Lahham
Ammar Abu Hussein
Walid Al-Shobaki

Overall Review and Supervision:

Rawan Shawar – Carol Mukarker – George Mansour

This study was prepared and printed within the framework of the project ***“Enhancing the Inclusion and Resilience of Local Communities in the West Bank”*** implemented by QADER for Community Development in partnership with CBM Global Disability Inclusion, and with support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

QADER for Community Development bears sole responsibility for the content of this study, which does not necessarily reflect the views of CBM Global Disability Inclusion or BMZ.



Acknowledgment

QADER for Community Development extends its sincere gratitude and appreciation to CBM Global Disability Inclusion and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for their support in the successful implementation of this project. QADER also thanks its partners at the Ministry of Local Government and Tarqumiya Municipality for their assistance and backing they provided to the working team, as well as the Tarqumiya Inclusive Youth Accountability Team (IYAT) whose significant role in collecting data from organizations, persons with disabilities, their families, and community members in Tarqumiya was indispensable.

QADER further expresses its deep appreciation to all who contributed to the preparation of this study, with special thanks to the local organizations in Tarqumiya, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the advisory team and the project team at QADER for their dedicated efforts in developing this study.

Members of Tarqumiya Inclusive Youth Accountability Team:

1. Dalal Mohammed Nimir Dababseh
2. Rawan Aziz Mohammed Al-Masri
3. Rula Ayesh Ahmad Fataftha
4. Riham Fawzi Mohammed Qabaha
5. Sabrine Yousef Awwad Ja'afreh
6. Mohammed Bassam Abed-Alhadi Thababneh
7. Mohammed Hani Yoused Al-Bostanji
8. Maysa' Yaseen Mohammed Ayaydeh
9. Wissam Wasfi Mahmoud Qabaha

Table of Contents

- 1. Overview of the Study and the Methodology 4
- 2 Context 6
 - 2.1 Overview of the Town 6
 - 2.2 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Families of Persons with Disabilities 7
 - 2.3 Organizations in the town of Tarqumiya..... 8
- 3.The Reality of Persons with Disabilities in the Town of Tarqumiya 10
 - 3.1 The Right to Access Education 10
 - 3.1.1 Early Education 11
 - 3.1.2 Basic and Secondary Education 12
 - 3.1.2.1 Key Indicators for Basic and Secondary Education at the Community Level 12
 - 3.1.2.2School Accessibility in Tarqumiya from the Perspective of Persons withDisabilities .12
 - 3.1.2.3 Enrollment Rates in Basic and Secondary Education among Students with Disabilities .13
 - 3.1.3 Enrollment in Higher Educations 13
 - 3.1.4 Enrollment in Vocational Education and Training..... 14
 - 3.2 The Right to Economic Empowerment and Employment..... 14
 - 3.2.1 Economic Participation and Employment..... 15
 - 3.3 The Right to Health..... 16
 - 3.3.1 Available Health Services..... 16
 - 3.3.2 Health Services covered under Health Insurance..... 17
 - 3.3.3 Needs of Persons with Disabilities (Coverage and Accessibility) 17
 - 3.4 The Right to Participation in Cultural and Recreational Activities 17
 - 3.5 The Right to Participation in Political Life 18
 - 3.6 The Right to Social Protection and Access to Services 19
 - 3.6.1 Access to Social Services 20
 - 3.6.2 The Reality of Protection and Community Support for Persons with Disabilities..... 20
 - 3.7 Community Attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities..... 21
- 4. Findings 24
- 5. Recommendations..... 28

1. Overview of the Study and the Methodology

Objectives and Significance of the Study

This study aims to provide a participatory diagnosis of the reality and needs of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya, through engaging the local community in analyzing challenges and identifying relevant opportunities. This approach stems from a firm belief in the pivotal role that local communities can play in driving development efforts, ensuring that persons with disabilities are engaged as active contributors across all aspects of life, and preventing their marginalization or exclusion.

The study also seeks to enhance coordination and strengthen linkages among governmental organizations, the municipality, development organizations, community-based organizations, volunteer and civic initiatives, and the private sector. This is to develop more inclusive and effective responses to the needs of persons with disabilities. The study supports the inclusion of persons with disabilities into community services and activities, based on the human rights principles set forth in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), particularly in the areas of education, health, employment, social protection, and community participation.

Furthermore, the study aspires to reinforce community partnerships in shaping local policies and programs, building a knowledge base grounded in local realities to inform decision-making and guide development interventions that align with the rights and needs of marginalized groups in general, and persons with disabilities in particular. The findings of this study are expected to form a strategic framework for partnership between QADER for Community Development, Tarqumiya Municipality, local organizations, and the community accountability team in the town. This partnership will contribute to implementing direct interventions and activities that aim to bridge existing gaps in the enjoyment of rights and to strengthen the active participation of persons with disabilities.

QADER will also facilitate networking and coordination between Tarqumiya Municipality, local initiatives and organizations, as well as governmental, civil society, and international development actors. This will promote joint action on agreed priorities and mainstream inclusion across all areas of life.

Methodology:

The study follows a participatory approach that combines field research with secondary data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation of persons with disabilities in the targeted communities. This approach is guided by rights-based and developmental standards that ensure the inclusion of disability issues while taking into account social, economic, and political factors affecting access to basic services and rights.

To ensure data quality and accuracy, a series of methodological steps were implemented starting with capacity building and training. QADER formed inclusive youth accountability teams in the targeted areas and trained them on various topics including field research tools, the rights of persons with disabilities, inclusion requirements, advocacy, and community accountability.

The methodology of the study relied on diverse data sources, including:

Primary data: collected through direct interviews, focus group discussions, and community meetings.

Secondary data: obtained from official reports, national statistics, the local strategic plan, and data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics—particularly disability-related data for the targeted towns—along with updated information from the Ministry of Education regarding schools in the targeted areas.

The process of collecting primary data in the town of Tarqumiya included the following:

- **Questionnaires:** Surveys were completed with 68 households that have family members with disabilities, and 68 persons with disabilities themselves, to identify their current situation and needs. Additionally, surveys were filled out with 93 community members to explore their attitudes and perceptions toward persons with disabilities and their rights.
- **Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with representatives of local institutions, including municipalities, community-based organizations, kindergartens, and public and private health institutions, to assess the inclusiveness of the services provided.
- **Focus groups:** Three focus group discussions were organized, involving 32 participants, including persons with disabilities (children, adults, and women), their families, and representatives of local and educational institutions in Tarqumiya.
- **Community meetings:** A community meeting was held to review preliminary data. It brought together representatives from various sectors to discuss the findings, verify their accuracy, and identify local priorities based on field data. The meeting also aimed to agree on possible interventions to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensure their access to rights across different sectors. Participants included representatives of local authorities, persons with disabilities and their families, and representatives of local institutions.

2 Context

2.1 Overview of the Town

Tarqumiya is a Palestinian town situated northwest of Hebron, approximately 12 kilometers from the city center, at an elevation of approximately 400 and 490 meters above sea level. It spans an area of about 27,000 dunums and is surrounded by villages and towns such as Beit Kahil, Beit Ula, and Idhna. The town is known for its agricultural lands, although part of its land has been confiscated by the Israeli occupation for the establishment of settlements like “Telem” and “Adora”.

As of 2024, the population of Tarqumiya is estimated at 23,000 people. Children under the age of 15 account for approximately 38% of the total population, while individuals aged 65 and over represent about 3.5%.

Water Services: Around 80% of buildings are connected to the water network. The town relies on two main sources for water supply: the Palestinian Water Authority and domestic rainwater harvesting wells.

Electricity Services: About 80% of residential units are connected to the electricity network. Electricity is provided by the municipality and is available 24/7.

Sanitation: There is no sewage network in Tarqumiya. Residents rely on cesspits for wastewater disposal.

Waste Management: The municipality provides waste collection services using a dedicated vehicle that collects waste daily.

Roads and Transportation: The town has an internal road network totaling 18 kilometers in good condition, in addition to 6 kilometers of paved roads in poor condition and 6 kilometers of unpaved roads. Roads connecting the town to neighboring communities’ amount to 6 kilometers and are paved. In terms of transportation, the town is served by public transport linking it to the city center and surrounding villages, including 10 official public taxis and 60 unofficial vehicles.

2.2 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Families of Persons with Disabilities

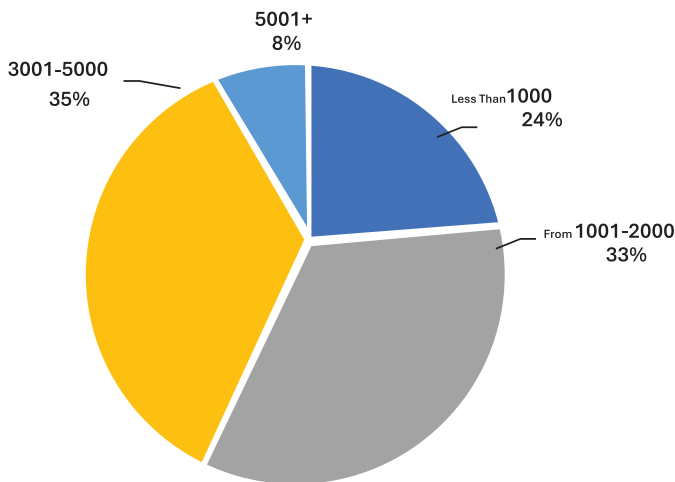
Household Size and Members with Disabilities: the average household size of families with persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya is approximately 5.6 members, compared to the average household size in the West Bank, which was about 4.7 members in 2022 (according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics).

It was also found that more than half of the heads of households interviewed were persons with disabilities themselves. The results further indicated that 75% of households include one person with a disability, while 18% of the households have two members with disabilities, and 7% include three or more individuals with disabilities.

The types of disabilities varied among individuals, with approximately 26% of persons with disabilities having trouble with mobility and using their hands. Around 11% had hearing disabilities, while about 19% had visual disabilities. Additionally, 44% of the individuals had multiple disabilities.

Economic Status and Income Level: the findings revealed that the monthly income of around 23.6% of households with persons with disabilities in the town does not exceed 1,000 shekels. About 33% of these households have an income between 2,000–3,000 shekels per month, placing them below the poverty line of 2,470 shekels per month. Meanwhile, about 8.3% of households with persons with disabilities have a monthly income exceeding 5,000 shekels.

About 14% of the surveyed households with persons with disabilities reported having at least one unemployed member with a disability, while 25% of these households have two or more persons with disabilities who are unemployed.



“Relative distribution of the income of households of persons with disabilities by different income categories – Shekel.”

Monthly Household Expenditure: households with persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya spend approximately 2,500 shekels per month, compared to the average monthly expenditure of 5,800 shekels for households in the West Bank, which had an average size of 5.2 members in 2017 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics). This gap is attributed to the low average income of households with persons with disabilities compared to their spending needs. The average monthly expenditure on healthcare and treatment was about 525 shekels, of which 300 shekels were specifically allocated to the needs of persons with disabilities. The average spending on food for these households was around 1,800 shekels per month.

2.3 Organizations in the town of Tarqumiya

In addition to the municipality, the town of Tarqumiya includes six main organizations that work in various fields, including social and economic empowerment, educational and health services, and community development.

Tarqumiya Municipality: The municipality provides a range of services aimed at improving the lives of residents and enhancing their well-being, including infrastructure services and social development. The municipal council consists of 13 members, including 2 females, and none of them are persons with disabilities. The municipality employs 73 staff members, including 6 females and 2 persons with disabilities. The municipality provides several interventions for persons with disabilities in the town, including exempting them from 25% of electricity, water, licensing, and official transaction fees. It also works on adapting public facilities and schools to ensure ease of access. In cooperation with related organizations, it carries out various activities, such as providing financial and in-kind assistance, supplying assistive tools, networking to facilitate access to basic services, and awareness programs.

However, the strategic plan of the Tarqumiya Municipality lacks a clear focus on persons with disabilities, as their needs are mentioned in a limited way without specific programs or projects. The municipality relies on other organizations to provide services to them, and the budget allocated to them does not exceed 2%.

Palestinian Red Crescent Society for Mental Development and Rehabilitation:

The Tarqumiya branch was established in 2003, aiming to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities and integrate them into society. The general assembly of the society includes 70 members, including 20 females and one person with a disability, and the administrative board consists of 12 members, including one female. The society employs 5 staff members, 4 of whom are females. The society provides a range of training activities for persons with disabilities, such as workshops on wax, bamboo, and simple tool manufacturing. It also has a speech therapist and organizes recreational, cultural, and awareness activities for persons with disabilities and their families.

Tarqumiya Women's Club for Rural Women's Development: Established in 1996, the club is affiliated with the Rural Women's Development Association and is registered with the Ministry of Interior. The club aims to empower women through developmental, economic, and cultural activities. It includes 50 members in its general assembly, 15 of whom are women with disabilities. The administrative board consists of 5 women, and the club offers various activities in the field of women's empowerment, but there are no activities specifically targeting persons with disabilities.

Zakat Committee in Tarqumiya: Established in 1989 and now supervised by the Ministry of Awqaf, the committee is a volunteer organization that aims to support marginalized groups: "orphans, the sick, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and poor schoolchildren." The committee consists of 6 male members appointed by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious

Affairs, and none of them are persons with disabilities. The committee provides in-kind, food, financial assistance, medical supplies, and assistive tools. It solely relies on donations from local organizations, the local community, and the private sector.

Tarqumiya Charitable Women's Association: Established in 2011, the association is registered with the Ministry of Interior and aims to serve women, the poor, and persons with disabilities. It includes 40 members, 39 females and one male, and 4 persons with disabilities. The administrative board consists of 7 members, including 6 females, and there are no members with disabilities. The association provides in-kind and financial assistance to poor families in the town, including persons with disabilities and their families, and offers simple assistive tools, such as special shoes. It also organizes cultural and recreational activities through networking with other organizations.

Tarqumiya Charitable Association: Established in 1964, the association is registered with the Ministry of Interior and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development. It aims to improve the living conditions of citizens in Tarqumiya (culturally, health-wise, educationally, and economically). The association has 110 members, including 35 females, 75 males, of whom one is a person with a disability. The administrative board consists of 7 members, including one female. The association, in cooperation with supporting organizations, carries out cultural, awareness, and economic activities, as well as educational and health services through its kindergarten and health center. These services are provided for free to persons with disabilities and poor families, in addition to offering in-kind and financial assistance.

Tarqumiya Youth Sports Club: Established in 1994 and registered with the Ministry of Interior under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, the club aims to develop the cultural and sports sector for youth in the town. It has evolved to include a cultural and recreational non-academic forum. The general assembly consists of 1500 members, with women comprising about 2% of the total membership. There are no persons with disabilities in the general assembly, and the administrative board consists of 13 members, 2 of whom are females. The club relies on 22 volunteers, and there are no activities specifically directed at persons with disabilities.

Key Challenges and Obstacles Faced by Local Organizations in Including Persons with Disabilities:

- **Lack of Comprehensive Strategic Plans for Persons with Disabilities:** Most local organizations in Tarqumiya lack comprehensive strategic plans, and there is no planning or institutionalization of including persons with disabilities in their programs and services.
- **Lack of Representation of Persons with Disabilities in Administrative and General Boards:** Persons with disabilities are not represented in the administrative boards of local organizations, with extremely limited representation in the general assemblies, which marginalizes their participation in decision-making processes.

- **Lack of Qualified Personnel to Address the Needs of Persons with Disabilities:** Most local organizations have not trained their staff (employees, volunteers, general assembly members, or administrative members) on how to deal with persons with disabilities, understand their needs, or be familiar with their rights, leading to failure to respond to their needs or apply an inclusive approach in their interventions and programs.
- **Weak Financing and Networking:** The lack of financial resources for local organizations and their dependence on external funding for implementing their programs and activities presents a significant challenge, limiting their ability to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities and include them in their programs and activities, as external funding is often restrictive and linked to the goals of supporting agencies. Furthermore, the limited partnerships with local and international entities reduce opportunities for obtaining additional support to enhance organizational capacities.
- **Lack of Accessible Buildings:** The facilities of local organizations lack accessibility and design requirements, including the absence of accessible entrances, elevators, wide corridors, and accessible bathrooms. This presents a significant barrier for persons with disabilities in accessing local organizations, using their facilities, and participating in their programs and activities.
- **Lack of Universal Design and Reasonable Arrangements in Programs and Activities:** The programs and activities implemented by local organizations do not consider the requirements of universal design or reasonable adjustments to ensure the accessibility and participation of persons with disabilities. This is evident in the lack of accessible transportation, suitable communication materials (such as announcements), and other reasonable arrangements to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities.
- **Community Awareness and Negative Attitudes:** The negative societal perception of persons with disabilities, accompanied by social stigma, is a major obstacle to their inclusion in society. Moreover, the low awareness among the families of persons with disabilities and the local community about the importance of including persons with disabilities in various activities limits their active participation in them.

3.The Reality of Persons with Disabilities in the Town

3.1 The Right to Access Education

The right to education is a fundamental right guaranteed by both national legislation and international conventions for all individuals without discrimination. The amended Palestinian Basic Law (Constitution) prohibits discrimination based on disability, including the right to education, as explicitly stated in Article 9 under the second chapter on constitutional rights and freedoms. Law No. (4) of 1999 on the Rights of the Disabled further reinforces this right in Article 10 by ensuring equal opportunities for students with disabilities to access educational organizations, including schools and universities.

The law mandates the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with all relevant bodies, to provide the necessary educational assessment to determine the nature and degree of the disability. It also requires the development of suitable curricula and educational materials, along with the provision of facilities that guarantee an inclusive educational environment. Furthermore, the law emphasizes the need to train qualified professionals to work with students with disabilities, ensuring their access to all types and levels of education in a manner that meets their needs and promotes their active participation in society.

With the publication of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the official gazette under Decree Law No. (36) of 2023, these commitments must now be aligned with the text of the convention itself—particularly Article 24 on the right to education—and based on the principle of inclusion. This includes, among other things, the establishment of an inclusive and disability-friendly education system, strict avoidance of excluding any person with a disability from the education system on the basis of their disability, consideration of individual differences, support for learning Braille and sign language, and the provision of teachers with disabilities who are proficient in these methods, along with other related obligations.

3.1.1 Early Education

The Tarqumiya area includes six kindergartens that are geographically distributed and vary in size and services. These kindergartens welcome children aged 4 to 6 years. The total number of children enrolled in these kindergartens is approximately 600, with 55% being boys and 45% girls. Education is provided by 29 female teachers, with an average of about 20 children per teacher. The average number of children per classroom is around 24. According to interviews conducted with kindergarten administrators, children with disabilities make up about 7% of the total kindergarten population in Tarqumiya. The monthly tuition fee is approximately 100 shekels, with financial exemptions provided for some low-income families of children with disabilities.

In terms of **facilities and infrastructure**, there is one toilet for every 30 children. Outdoor play areas have an average size of 130 m², most of which are covered with artificial grass and shaded by sunshades that cover about 65% of the space.

Field visits and interviews revealed significant shortcomings in accessibility and general design within kindergarten buildings. Most kindergartens lack necessary accommodations for children with disabilities, including inaccessible entrances, hallways, and restrooms, as well as the absence of elevators, accessible playgrounds, and adapted outdoor games.

Moreover, most kindergartens do not have modern electronic learning tools to support early education. There are also no curricula or educational materials designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities, which negatively affects their inclusion in the learning process.

The transportation services used by kindergartens are also not accessible for children with disabilities, making it difficult for them to commute and participate in educational activities. While many of the teachers in Tarqumiya kindergartens hold university degrees and have attended training courses in early childhood education, they lack specialized training in working with children with disabilities, including knowledge of their rights and relevant legislation. As a result, the activities provided often do not consider the needs of children with disabilities, and these children are frequently excluded from physical activities without being offered suitable alternatives.

3.1.2 Basic and Secondary Education

3.1.2.1 Key Indicators for Basic and Secondary Education at the Community Level

Students in the town of Tarqumiya receive their education through 10 public schools, which employ 234 teachers. The schools are distributed as follows: two secondary schools and eight primary schools for both boys and girls. The total number of students in these schools is 5,279 (2,705 boys and 2,574 girls), including 39 students with disabilities (14 boys and 25 girls).

Indicators of Primary and Secondary Education in the Town Compared to National Indicators:

General Indicator	Tarqumiya	National-level figures
Number of students per teacher	22.5	19.4
Number of students per counselor	750	300-200
Number of students per class section	34.5	26.4
Classroom space per student (m ²)	1.23	1.5
Number of students per toilet	52.3	30.1
Number of students per drinking fountain	54	32.5
Number of students per sink	66	49.7

A comparison of the educational indicators in the town of Tarqumiya with national indicators shows positive results in several areas. The student-to-teacher ratio in Tarqumiya is 22.5, compared to the national average of 19.4. Additionally, the average number of students per class in Tarqumiya is 34.5, compared to the national average of 26.4. These figures reflect overcrowded classrooms and a high academic burden on teachers.

3.1.2.2 School Accessibility in Tarqumiya from the Perspective of Persons with Disabilities.

Most persons with disabilities and their families who participated in the field study and focus group discussions reported that schools in the town are not adequately equipped to accommodate students with disabilities. They highlighted significant barriers to accessing basic and secondary education, including financial costs and physical obstacles.

One of the key shortcomings they pointed out was the inadequate design of educational facilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The findings revealed that 6 schools—equivalent to 60% of the town’s schools—lack ramps that facilitate mobility for students with disabilities. In addition, school facilities such as libraries, computer and science labs, classrooms, and restrooms lack inclusive design considerations and reasonable accommodations.

Data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) for the year 2017 showed that the illiteracy rate among persons with disabilities aged 10 years and above in the town of Tarqumiya was approximately 36%, compared to about 4.4% in the Hebron Governorate as a whole. Furthermore, PCBS data indicated that around 74% of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya have either never enrolled in education or enrolled and then dropped out.

Participants also described the teaching materials, computer equipment, and curricula as inappropriate and unresponsive to their needs. There is only one available resource room in a boys’ elementary school.

Focus group participants further noted a shortage of qualified staff to support students with disabilities. About 25% of the households of persons with disabilities believed there are no trained teachers capable of addressing the needs of students with disabilities in the schools. The teachers themselves confirmed in the focus groups that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively support students with disabilities.

3.1.2.3 Enrollment Rates in Basic and Secondary Education among Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities in Tarqumiya face a range of challenges that hinder their access to inclusive education. These challenges begin even before school enrollment due to the lack of early detection services and early intervention programs that are crucial for preparing them to join the education system.

Within the school environment, students with disabilities encounter multiple difficulties, the most significant being a lack of peer acceptance. About 23% of students with disabilities reported feeling unaccepted by their classmates. This lack of acceptance contributes to increased incidents of bullying and violence, with 54% of surveyed students with disabilities stating they had experienced bullying or violence, sometimes even from teachers.

Moreover, families of persons with disabilities indicated that their children's presence in schools is often merely symbolic, as they frequently face marginalization and exclusion. In some cases, teachers are compelled to isolate students with disabilities within classrooms or remove them entirely, preventing their meaningful participation in the learning process.

3.1.3 Enrollment in Higher Educations

Persons with disabilities face challenges in accessing higher and secondary education organizations. The findings of the field study indicated that only about 3.5% of the total number of persons with disabilities in the town are currently enrolled in higher or secondary education. The most prominent challenges include the lack of accessibility in the buildings and facilities of higher education organizations, as well as the absence of accessible transportation in the town to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Within university campuses, lecture halls are not adequately equipped to support the interaction of students with disabilities with educational content, which hinders their ability to participate. The field study also revealed a complete absence of qualified teachers capable of working with students with disabilities—a point that was raised by all persons with disabilities who participated in the study. In addition, the curriculum presents an added challenge, as it does not consider the individual needs of students with disabilities.

3.1.4 Enrollment in Vocational Education and Training

The results of the field study showed that the percentage of persons with disabilities enrolled in vocational training is approximately 3.5%. This low rate is due to several challenges, most notably the lack of information about the procedures and mechanisms for enrollment. Most persons with disabilities have not received adequate awareness or guidance from programs regarding enrollment in public or private vocational education.

In addition, persons with disabilities and their families considered the lack of vocational training and education organizations in nearby areas to be a major barrier. The nearest public vocational center is in the town of Halhoul and in the city of Hebron, which affects the accessibility for persons with disabilities—especially in the absence of accessible transportation.

Also, most persons with disabilities who participated in field interviews and focus groups pointed out the poor overall design of educational facilities, including infrastructure issues in classrooms, laboratories, and workshops. They also highlighted the lack of accessible teaching tools and curricula, as well as the limited qualifications of educational staff. Many vocational education workers emphasized lack the training and experience needed to meet their needs.

3.2 The Right to Economic Empowerment and Employment

The right to work and employment is considered one of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Palestinian legislation. The amended Palestinian Basic Law (the Constitution) explicitly affirms in Article (25) the right of every citizen to work and the regulation of labor relations in a way that ensures justice for all and provides workers with health and social care. Article (9) prohibits discrimination based on disability, including the right to work.

Furthermore, Article (10) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. (4) of 1999 assigns the Ministry of Social Development the responsibility—coordinated with all relevant bodies—to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in the areas of rehabilitation, vocational training, and employment, based on the principle of equal opportunity. The law also mandates that governmental and non-governmental organizations employ no less than 5% of their workforce from among persons with disabilities and make workplaces accessible to their needs. Additionally, it encourages private organizations to employ persons with disabilities by offering tax incentives.

Referring to Cabinet Decision No. (40) of 2004, which issued the executive regulations of Law No. (4) of 1999 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article (12) emphasizes that any company or organization that does not employ persons with disabilities in accordance with the law (i.e., at least 5%) must pay the equivalent of a disabled person's minimum wage salary into a "Special Fund for Persons with Disabilities." This fund is to be established by a decision of the Minister of Social Development within the Ministry and is designated to provide financial assistance to unemployed persons with disabilities.

Despite the importance of this provision in promoting the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities, and despite the many years that have passed since the issuance and enforcement of the executive regulations, this fund has yet to be established—contrary to what the law stipulates.

3.2.1 Economic Participation and Employment

The majority (61%) of families of persons with disabilities surveyed in Tarqumiya believe that access to the labor market is difficult, while 34% view it as moderately difficult. This is due to a range of challenges that hinder the economic participation of persons with disabilities both men and women.

Based on interviews with persons with disabilities, focus groups including both employed and unemployed individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as employers, several key challenges contributing to the low economic participation of persons with disabilities were identified:

Lack of accessible work environments: The field study showed that 96.5% of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya indicated that organizations (both public and private) in the area are not adapted to accommodate or employ persons with disabilities. This stands in contradiction to the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law, its executive regulations, and the obligations arising from the publication of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the official gazette under Decree Law No. (36) of 2023.

Discrimination and bias in the workplace: Discrimination and negative bias against persons with disabilities in the labor market remain major barriers. According to the data, 96% of respondents confirmed that persons with disabilities face discrimination in work environments. This discrimination appears in several forms, including refusal to hire, denial of equal opportunities for promotion and training, and the imposition of unjustified restrictions that limit access to jobs. These biases stem from social and cultural factors such as low awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and negative stereotypes about their ability to perform tasks efficiently.

Lack of training and educational opportunities: The data showed that 90% of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya have not participated in training programs or workshops to build their capacities for entering the labor market. This is due to several factors, including a lack of training programs tailored to their needs, the absence of accessible training environments in terms of infrastructure and means of access, and limited awareness among organizations about the importance of involving them in training. Financial and social challenges—such as weak family support or lack of suitable opportunities—also play a role.

Support for self-employment projects for persons with disabilities: Only 3% of persons with disabilities and their families surveyed in Tarqumiya reported receiving support to establish income-generating projects. However, most of the previously implemented projects have since been discontinued. This is due to several reasons, including the lack of prior market needs assessments in the area, which leads to support for projects that do not align with actual demand. There is also a tendency to fund repetitive or generic projects, reducing their success potential due to market saturation. In addition, weak project management experience and a lack of necessary skills—such as managing livestock or poultry farming—often result in project failure. The reduction of capital without the ability

to cover operational costs later, along with limited financial capacity to expand or reinvest in the projects, also undermines their sustainability.

3.3 The Right to Health

Article (22) of the Amended Basic Law (the Constitution), under the section on rights and public freedoms, states: “1. The law shall regulate social and health insurance services and pensions for disability and old age. 2. The care of the families of martyrs and prisoners, and of the wounded, the affected, and persons with disabilities is a duty, the provisions of which shall be regulated by law. The Palestinian National Authority shall guarantee them access to education, social, and health insurance services.” This constitutional provision affirms two levels of obligation. The first paragraph leaves the organization of social and health insurance and pensions to ordinary legislation, meaning the Authority is not obliged to provide them for free. However, the second paragraph is unequivocal in stating that care for these groups is a “duty” of the Palestinian Authority and must be guaranteed particularly education, social, and health insurance services. In constitutional language, the word “guarantee” implies full responsibility, meaning the state must provide these services free of charge without requiring payment from beneficiaries. Any law that fails to fulfill this obligation is unconstitutional.

Furthermore, Article (10) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. (4) of 1999 obligates the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with relevant bodies, to ensure the provision of government health insurance services free of charge to persons with disabilities and their families.

Despite these strong legal guarantees—enshrined in the Constitution, the Disabilities Law, and the 2021 Government Health Insurance Regulation for Persons with Disabilities—practical implementation continues to fall short, violating the Basic Law, the Disabilities Law, and the regulation concerning free health insurance for persons with disabilities.

3.3.1 Available Health Services

Persons with disabilities in the town of Tarqumiya receive healthcare services through both public and private health centers within the town. These include the public health clinic, a second-level government facility that offers primary care, general medicine, pediatric services, and laboratory services, in addition to private health centers and clinics.

Moreover, the rehabilitation center affiliated with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Tarqumiya provides specialized healthcare and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, including speech therapy sessions and support programs for children with autism. The center also organizes health awareness activities.

Despite the availability of healthcare services in the town, several challenges affect the accessibility of these services for persons with disabilities, as noted by them and their families. These challenges include the lack of specialized healthcare services tailored to persons with disabilities, insufficient accessibility of health facilities, and the absence of qualified staff trained to work with this population. Families of persons with disabilities also pointed out the lack of early detection services, which can lead to delayed diagnosis or inadequate care. As a result, some individuals are forced to seek services in private centers outside the town, incurring additional costs that many families may not be able to afford.

3.3.2 Health Services covered under Health Insurance

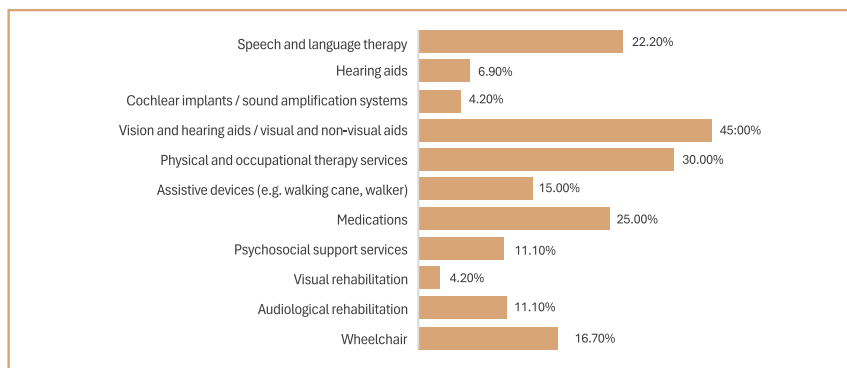
Although 57% of families of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya have free health insurance, the level of coverage does not meet the healthcare needs of most families. As a result, 51.4% of these families bear medical expenses out of pocket, including treatment, medications, nutritional supplements, physical therapy, and transportation costs. This places a significant financial burden on families of persons with disabilities, particularly those with limited income.

3.3.3 Needs of Persons with Disabilities (Coverage and Accessibility)

Persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya face a clear shortage in meeting their basic health needs, which forces them to rely heavily on their own resources or on irregular organizational support. About 25% of families of persons with disabilities reported needing rehabilitation services (such as physical and occupational therapy), but these services are often paid for out-of-pocket, as they are not covered by the Ministry of Health's insurance.

Additionally, 45% of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya expressed a need for psychological and social support services, but the limited number of specialized centers and the lack of qualified personnel hinder access to these services. In terms of assistive devices, 16.7% of persons with disabilities reported needing wheelchairs, 11% needed hearing aids, and 11% needed visual or auditory aids. Despite these needs, 19% of families cover the cost of these devices out of their own pockets.

Moreover, nearly one-third of persons with disabilities require medication on a regular basis, which is often either unavailable through the Ministry of Health or not included in the insurance coverage, forcing them to bear the cost of these medications themselves.



“Distribution of health and rehabilitation needs for people with disabilities in Tarqumiya

3.4 The Right to Participation in Cultural and Recreational Activities

The participation of persons with disabilities especially children—in cultural and recreational activities in the town of Tarqumiya is extremely limited and depends on modest efforts made by local organizations.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. (4) of 1999 affirms the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with all relevant parties, to provide opportunities for sports and recreation for persons with disabilities. It also mandates the adaptation of playgrounds, halls, camps, clubs, and their facilities, and supports the participation of persons with disabilities in national and international sports programs. The law further stipulates a 50% discount on entry fees for persons with disabilities to public cultural and recreational venues.

About one-third (30%) of persons with disabilities reported feeling marginalized by the local community and local institutions. This marginalization is reflected in the lack of attention given to their participation in various community activities organized in the town, as well as the failure to take the necessary measures to include them in these activities.

However, persons with disabilities and their families reported a significant lack of cultural and recreational programs designed to be inclusive of persons with disabilities in the town. Study findings show that the participation rate of persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational activities is only about 2%. Over half of the respondents noted that local organizations fail to consider universal design principles and the necessary accessibility arrangements to ensure the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. This includes the lack of accessible transportation, inclusive communication materials (such as advertisements), and other necessary accommodations.

Families of persons with disabilities also pointed out that local organizations tend to implement such measures only when required by donors. In addition, families emphasized that poor economic conditions are a barrier to persons with disabilities' participation in cultural and recreational activities.

Local organizations, for the

ir part, cited the lack of accessible public facilities in the town and their reliance on external funding as major challenges to including persons with disabilities in local cultural and recreational events. They also pointed to a lack of community awareness as a contributing factor to the low participation rates, including limited awareness among families about the importance of cultural and recreational activities for enhancing the psychological and social well-being of persons with disabilities. This issue is further exacerbated by the scarcity and limited reach of awareness programs that promote the cultural and recreational rights of persons with disabilities.

3.5 The Right to Participation in Political Life

Article (2) of the Disability Rights Law of 1999 stipulates that persons with disabilities have the right to live freely and with dignity, enjoying numerous services just like other citizens, with the same rights and obligations within the limits of their abilities and possibilities. Disability should not be an obstacle to accessing these rights. Article (3) imposes a comprehensive obligation on the state to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and facilitate their access to them.

The participation rate of persons with disabilities in political life (running for office, voting, or attending public meetings) in the town of Tarqumiya did not exceed 20.8%.

Although the Disability Rights Law does not explicitly mention political rights, these rights are legally guaranteed by the above provisions, as they clearly refer to the rights of persons with disabilities, including political rights. Additionally, Article (4) addresses the rights of persons with disabilities to form their own organizations and associations, which falls under political rights. This means that political rights for persons with disabilities are guaranteed by law.

Furthermore, the decision by law No. (36) of 2023, which publishes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the Official Gazette (Palestinian Journal of Official Events), is expected to enhance the entire rights system for persons with disabilities, including political rights.

Interviews, focus groups, and field research with persons with disabilities, their families, and local organizations revealed various challenges to their participation in political life, including:

Accessibility Issues due to Lack of Universal Design: Persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya identified the lack of accessibility in public facilities, registration centers, and polling stations as one of the main challenges they face. 80% of persons with disabilities confirmed they experience difficulties accessing registration centers and polling stations and participating in public meetings and political activities due to the lack of necessary measures, such as accessible buildings, transportation, and other facilitating arrangements.

Social Perceptions: Negative social perceptions form a significant barrier to political participation for persons with disabilities. The field study showed that half of the persons with disabilities feel that the local community views them as incapable of making political decisions.

Tribal and Party Influences: Persons with disabilities and their families believe that tribal and party influences pose a challenge to political participation, as they play a significant role in shaping political orientations and influencing individuals' stances. This makes it difficult for persons with disabilities who lack strong tribal support to access political positions or influence decision-making.

Lack of Awareness Programs and Media Materials: The vast majority (83%) of persons with disabilities and their families indicated that the absence of accessible media materials, such as brochures in sign language or Braille, limits their understanding of their political rights and how to exercise them. Despite efforts by the Central Elections Commission, such as issuing brochures in Braille and using sign language in explanatory videos, these efforts remain limited. More comprehensive efforts are needed, with collaboration between official and non-official entities, including media and civil society organizations, to produce accessible, inclusive, and sustainable awareness and media materials to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and raise awareness of their political rights.

3.6 The Right to Social Protection and Access to Services

The right to social protection is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by both international and local laws, including the Palestinian Disability Rights Law No. 4 of 1999. This law emphasizes the necessity of providing a safe and supportive environment that ensures persons with disabilities have access to care services and protection from all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

3.6.1 Access to Social Services

22% of the surveyed families of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya indicated that they received financial or in-kind assistance from various sources, such as the Ministry of Social Development, UNRWA, and local organizations. The average number of times they received assistance during the year was no more than four times, while the average monthly value of the assistance was around 350 shekels per family.

39% of the families of persons with disabilities in Tarqumiya face significant difficulty in accessing services provided by the Ministry of Social Development and other institutions.

Persons with disabilities face challenges in accessing social services provided by the Ministry of Social Development, UNRWA, and other organizations. These services include “financial and in-kind assistance, health insurance, assistive devices, customs exemptions, etc.” Most families of persons with disabilities indicated that bureaucratic procedures and administrative complications, which require repeated visits and transactions with the organizations providing social services, pose a challenge for persons with disabilities, especially given the lack of accessibility in the buildings and facilities of these organizations and the absence of accessible transportation. This was confirmed by 36% of persons with disabilities and their families. They also pointed out that the complex and difficult eligibility criteria prevent most persons with disabilities from obtaining these services.

Moreover, two-thirds of persons with disabilities considered the long waiting times to receive social services and the irregularity of these services to be a challenge, especially in the absence of a steady source of income. They depend on the assistance provided to meet their basic needs.

3.6.2 The Reality of Protection and Community Support for Persons with Disabilities.

The study results revealed a lack of knowledge among the families of persons with disabilities about the rights of persons with disabilities to protection, access to services, available measures, and reporting mechanisms for cases of violence and abuse against persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities and their families in the focus groups pointed out the absence of effective protection mechanisms in the town.

It is estimated that about 22% of families of persons with disabilities hide their disabled children out of fear of social stigma.

The focus group participants also noted that persons with disabilities face various forms of violence, including verbal and physical abuse, neglect, marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination, with a higher incidence among children and women. They confirmed that gender-based discrimination is most common among females with disabilities, where families impose many restrictions and controls on the participation of females in community activities compared to males.

Violence in schools: 23% of persons with disabilities reported experiencing violence within schools, either from their peers or, in some cases, from teachers. The focus group participants mentioned that males experience physical violence in schools at a higher rate than females.

26% of persons with disabilities reported experiencing violence within their homes.

However, the teachers and counselors participating in the focus groups confirmed that they intervene directly when violence occurs among students, especially those with disabilities. If the incident has a psychological impact on the student, they are referred to individual counseling sessions by the counselor. Teachers also participate in awareness and violence prevention efforts through classroom activities, school radio, and awareness meetings on the risks of violence. It is important to note that most families of persons with disabilities believe teachers lack adequate training to handle violence faced by students with disabilities within schools.

3.7 Community Attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities

Field results showed that 19% of the local community members in Tulkarm have negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, believing that they are a burden on their families and society. 34% of them agreed that people with disabilities cannot rely on themselves to meet their basic needs.

42% of community members feel anxious and fearful about having a person with a disability in their family.

Meanwhile, 97% of the community members believe that access to education and receiving free healthcare services is a fundamental right for people with disabilities, and that granting them full rights, including amending laws and regulations, can facilitate their access to all services.

95% of community members believe that providing the necessary support for people with disabilities to participate in elections (by facilitating access to polling stations and providing appropriate explanatory materials) gives them a better chance to participate in voting and elections. 73% of the community members agreed that people with disabilities can influence decision-making if they participate in elections.

On the other hand, 6% of the community members believe that people with disabilities are unable to work effectively in various sectors, while 95% think that providing job opportunities that accommodate the needs of people with disabilities enhances their inclusion in the labor market.

4. Findings

1. The Most Deprived Groups:

All people with disabilities in the town of Tarqumya face a range of obstacles that hinder their active participation in all sectors and limit their well-being and dignity, imposing psychological, social, and economic burdens on them and their families. These obstacles are more severe for families with more than one person with a disability, families with more than six members, poor families, and families headed by women, or those where the head of the household is unemployed or elderly. The obstacles are also intensified for children of school age, people with intellectual disabilities, especially those with severe and complex conditions, individuals with chronic diseases, people with disabilities seeking employment, and boys and girls out of formal education.

2. Weak Infrastructure Services:

There is a range of essential services that are either unavailable or weak. The town suffers from a water supply issue through the network during the summer, leading many families to rely on purchasing water tanks. There is also a lack of sewage services for residents, and reliance is placed on cesspits. Additionally, the infrastructure for roads and sidewalks is weak and not accessible for people with disabilities. The absence of accessible public transportation further hinders their ability to reach different services, imposing additional financial burdens on them for private taxis.

3. High Poverty Levels and Their Impact on People with Disabilities in Tarqumya:

There is an extreme poverty rate among families of people with disabilities due to the high unemployment rates, especially after the war on Gaza and the cessation of work in the occupied territories. The poverty situation is worsened by the high dependency ratio due to the large average number of family members in households with people with disabilities. Furthermore, the proportion of these families receiving financial or in-kind assistance from the Ministry of Social Development, UNRWA, or other organizations is low. Poverty is also exacerbated for families requiring medications not covered by health insurance, whether for people with disabilities or those with chronic illnesses. Poverty contributes to the exclusion and deprivation of people with disabilities, especially children, from accessing numerous services such as education, health, and rehabilitation, and severely affects their participation in recreational, cultural, and political activities.

4. Access to Quality Education for People with Disabilities in Tarqumya:

Despite the presence of 10 schools and 6 kindergartens in the town, this has not positively impacted on the access of children with disabilities to preschool or basic education. Most children and adolescents with disabilities are still outside the educational system, reflected

in high illiteracy rates and limited work rehabilitation opportunities. The reasons for the inequality in enrollment rates between people with disabilities and their peers in educational organizations are primarily due to the lack of early disability detection services and early intervention programs, the severe lack of readiness in educational organizations and their staff to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, the absence of qualified and specialized teaching staff, and the lack of support services in schools or kindergartens. Additionally, families cannot afford to send their children to schools outside the town due to high transportation costs.

5. Access to Higher Education and Vocational and Technical Training for People with Disabilities:

People with disabilities face significant challenges in enrolling in higher education and vocational training. The main challenges include the lack of infrastructure accessibility in educational organizations, the absence of accessible transportation, and the unpreparedness of lecture halls, workshops, and laboratories to support their interaction with content as required. Furthermore, the curriculum and teaching staff fail to meet their needs.

6. Access to Comprehensive Health Services for People with Disabilities:

Despite the availability of a government-run secondary health clinic, and several health centers and private clinics, this has not translated into better access for people with disabilities to necessary health services of excellent quality. This is due to the lack of some services such as early disability diagnosis, shortages or unavailability of certain medications, and the exclusion of physical and occupational therapy services from health insurance coverage. Additionally, mental health and counseling services, vision and hearing rehabilitation services, and some assistive devices, especially for hearing disabilities, are not available. Many people with disabilities are still not covered by health insurance, whether governmental or private, due to lack of awareness or the various obstacles they face in obtaining disability-specific insurance.

7. Employment and Economic Empowerment:

The majority of people with disabilities, including both young people and adults, are outside the workforce due to: firstly, the negative societal perception of the abilities and capabilities of people with disabilities, especially women and those with intellectual disabilities; and secondly, the lack of available opportunities for young people to join vocational training, technical education, and higher education. Additionally, the lack of accessibility in many economic establishments and organizations to employ people with disabilities has contributed to an increase in poverty levels within these households and a higher dependency ratio.

8. Protection from Violence and Access to Psychological and Social Counseling Services:

The living conditions of people with disabilities and their families impose many psychological and social problems on people with disabilities and some family members, especially women, accompanied by violence both inside and outside the family. There is also a lack of awareness among families of people with disabilities regarding their rights to protection and access to services, available measures, and mechanisms for reporting violence and abuse against people with disabilities. Effective protection mechanisms are absent in the town, and psychological, social, and legal counseling services are weak. This contributes to further marginalization, suffering, and the failure to detect cases of violence against people with disabilities, with impunity, especially in the presence of a culture of tolerance toward violence and bullying against children, women, and people with disabilities.

9. Participation in Cultural, Sports, and Recreational Activities:

Despite the existence of a range of active local organizations in women's, charitable, sports, and cultural fields, this has not been reflected in clear opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in cultural, sports, and social activities. Most people with disabilities and their families are interested in engaging children and young people with disabilities in these activities. Additionally, the participation of people with disabilities in policymaking and interventions related to the work of organizations, especially the municipality, and in developing local development strategies, remains limited.

10. Participation of People with Disabilities in Political Life:

The participation of people with disabilities in political life is low due to challenges that hinder their ability to actively participate. The main obstacles include the lack of accessibility of public facilities and registration and polling centers, which limits their ability to access the electoral process and engage in political activities. Negative social perceptions toward people with disabilities, as well as partisan and tribal influences, also weaken their participation in political life and decision-making. The lack of awareness among people with disabilities of their political rights and how to actively participate, along with the lack of awareness programs and accessible media materials, further deepens this issue.

11. Community Awareness and Interest in the Rights of People with Disabilities:

There is a lack of awareness in the community and among families about the rights of people with disabilities, which is clearly reflected in the community's treatment of disability issues from a charitable perspective, often linked to pity toward people with disabilities. The local culture is still relatively tolerant of the exclusion or marginalization of people with disabilities in most sectors, with limited programs for support, volunteering, and community assistance.

12. Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Local Organizational Programs and Services:

Many local organizations continue to approach disability from a charitable/relief perspective, often associated with pity for people with disabilities. This approach has excluded the issue of disability from being seen as a rights-based issue, leading to weak visions and interventions by these organizations. Consequently, there are no policies focused on long-term changes to enable people with disabilities to access numerous services based on rights. Although there are active local organizations in social development, including the municipality of Tarqumiya, which provides basic services to residents, this has not led to tangible progress in the inclusion and enhancement of the participation of people with disabilities through a rights-based approach.

13. Community Accountability and Influence on Policies:

People with disabilities and their families are impacted by the extent to which national legislation aligns with the rights of people with disabilities or the enforcement of disability-related laws and policies. This is due to weak political will, insufficient community oversight and accountability mechanisms, and limited efforts to mobilize and influence decision-makers to adopt and enforce policies and legislation responsive to the rights of people with disabilities at both the national and local levels. There is a need to compel duty-bearers to include people with disabilities in all sectors, especially education, health, employment, and social protection programs.

5. Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the introductory file and the final community meeting organized in the town of Tulkarm to review and discuss the results and issues in order to come up with recommendations and agree on the work priorities to enhance the inclusion of people with disabilities, a set of priority interventions has been identified to improve the situation of people with disabilities and their inclusion in various aspects of life:

1. Enhancing the Municipality's Role in Including People with Disabilities:

- Institutionalizing the inclusion of people with disabilities in the policies and services of the Tulkarm Municipality and enhancing their participation in planning processes, policymaking, local development strategies, and decision-making.
- Enhancing access for people with disabilities and their families to water and energy services at fair and equitable prices, especially for poor families that include people with disabilities. This requires decisions from the municipal council to provide water and electricity to families of people with disabilities at reduced rates.
- Supporting people with disabilities and their families, especially poor or low-income families, by exempting them from a reasonable percentage of the taxes due to the municipality (property tax, waste tax, etc.).
- Adapting and preparing roads, sidewalks, buildings, and public spaces, especially healthcare centers and schools, to facilitate the access of people with different disabilities.
- Strengthening partnerships between the municipality, civil society organizations, active international organizations, and private sector organizations to improve the quality of existing services and develop new ones, especially psychological, social, and legal counseling services, as well as organizing vocational training programs and productive activities to employ people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities.

2. Enhancing the Role of Local Organizations in Providing Specialized and Inclusive Services for People with Disabilities:

- Enhancing the role of local organizations in Tulkarm to provide specialized services for people with disabilities, including physical and occupational therapy, services for intellectual and severe disabilities, special education, and providing assistive devices and medical supplies.
- Strengthening the role of local organizations in raising community awareness about the rights of people with disabilities. This includes educating the families of people with disabilities and the local community about their rights and promoting a rights-based

development approach among different segments of society.

- Enhancing the role of local organizations in providing protection and community support for people with disabilities and their families in the town, and activating the role of organizations in the referral system between various governmental and community frameworks to facilitate the referral of people with disabilities to relevant organizations outside the town.
- Establishing a comprehensive database for people with disabilities in Tulkarm: working on creating a complete database of people with disabilities, including all data related to them and their families, which can be updated and serves as a reference for planning, interventions, and working with people with disabilities. The database should be managed, developed, and updated by the municipality and local organizations in the town, forming a reference for all organizations within and outside the town.
- Adapting the facilities of local organizations in the town to ensure access for people with disabilities.
- Ensuring the representation of people with disabilities in the administrative and public bodies of local organizations.
- Building the capacity of local organizations in the field of disability rights, etiquette for interacting with people with disabilities, planning programs and services based on inclusivity, advocacy for people with disabilities, and community accountability.

3.Inclusion in Health Services:

- Providing health and rehabilitation services in local health centers, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other specialized services for people with disabilities.
- Facilitating the procedures related to obtaining health insurance cards and necessary medical referrals.
- Strengthening mental health programs for people with disabilities and their families.
- Adapting health facilities in the town to ensure access for people with disabilities.

4.Inclusion in Education Services:

- Adapting educational facilities in the town to ensure that children with disabilities can access them.

- Establishing additional resource rooms in schools and rehabilitating and developing existing resource rooms.
- Building the capacity of educational and administrative staff in schools and kindergartens to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in education according to an inclusive education approach.
- Working on adapting curricula, teaching methods, and educational materials, and providing accessible and appropriate study materials to ensure equal opportunities for students with disabilities in education, including in kindergartens.
- Implementing awareness programs in schools and kindergartens to enhance awareness and positive attitudes toward people with disabilities among students and staff.

5. Inclusion in Employment and Job Opportunities:

- Influencing the municipality and various organizations in Tulkarm to employ people with disabilities and provide them with decent work that matches their abilities and skills, and providing the necessary accommodations to enable them to perform their jobs efficiently.
- Pressuring official entities to implement the Palestinian Labor Law, especially regarding the employment of people with disabilities, ensuring that at least 5% of workers in any organization are people with disabilities.
- Facilitating equal opportunities for self-employment for people with disabilities to achieve economic independence and live with dignity.
- Strengthening opportunities for people with disabilities to access vocational training services or workshops to build their capacities and help them integrate into the labor market.
- Working on providing sustainable entrepreneurial projects that promote self-employment for people with disabilities, preceded by a needs study to provide projects that match the abilities of people with disabilities and meet the needs of the local market.

6. Advocacy and Community Accountability:

- Activating community accountability tools to hold the municipality and local organizations accountable for their commitment to including disability in their services, programs, and development plans, including reviewing budgets and assessing their responsiveness to actual needs.
- Organizing community-based advocacy campaigns based on rights, demanding that official entities develop and implement policies and legislation related to people with disabilities, and ensuring their participation in planning and decision-making processes.

- Advocating for the activation of the comprehensive government health insurance system for people with disabilities for 2021, and ensuring the availability of rehabilitation services, medications, supplies, and assistive devices, through pressure campaigns directed at the Ministry of Health and relevant authorities.
- Supporting the implementation of the inclusive education policy in the Ministry of Education, which includes general design in schools, adapting curricula and teaching methods, building teachers' capacities, and providing an inclusive learning environment for people with disabilities.
- Strengthening access to higher education and vocational training for people with disabilities through campaigns targeting the adaptation of the infrastructure of educational organizations, modifying educational policies, and providing accessible curricula and teaching tools.
- Enhancing the role of people with disabilities and their families as key drivers in advocacy campaigns, by building their capacity to use advocacy tools, document violations, file complaints, and participate in community initiatives that monitor the performance of organizations and services provided to people with disabilities at the local level.



QADER for Community Development
Beit Jala Public Library Building, Al Salam Park
Street, P.O. Box: 246, Beit Jala, Palestine
Fax: +970 (2) 2749767
www.qader.org | info@qader.org