

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

**IN THE TOWN OF TEQOA
2025**



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**IN THE TOWN OF TUQU'
2025**



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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 Tuqu', 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, Tuqu' 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 Tuqu' 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, questionnaires, 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 Tuqu' included the following:

- **Questionnaires:** Surveys were completed with 56 households that have family members with disabilities, and 56 persons with disabilities themselves, to identify their current situation and needs. Additionally, surveys were filled out with 46 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 22 participants, including persons with disabilities (children, adults, and women), their families, and representatives of local and educational institutions in Tuqu'.
- **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

The town of Tuqu' is situated southeast of Bethlehem city, approximately 12 km away. It is situated on the top of a hill extending toward the west and north, surrounded by a plain covered with olive trees. The Dead Sea is visible to the east, the Hebron mountains to the south, and towns such as Beit Fajjar and the villages of Um Salamuna and Juret AlSham'a to the northwest. To the north, the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem can be seen. Tuqu' extends eastward over an area of about 11 km². The population of Tuqu' is approximately 13,000 people, with females making up about 50% of the total population.

Water Services: Residents of the town rely on a water network established in 1976 and expanded in 2005. Around 97% of buildings are connected to the water network. The town depends on two main sources for water supply: the Palestinian Water Authority and domestic rainwater harvesting wells. Residents face water shortages during the summer, with water supplied only once a month, compared to four times a month during winter.

Electricity Services: The electricity network covers about 98% of residential units and provides continuous service (24/7), with only minor interruptions during the winter.

Sanitation: There is no sewage network in the town. Residents rely on cesspits for wastewater disposal, which cause environmental and health problems.

Waste Management: Around 10 tons of solid waste are collected daily, and the service covers approximately 98% of the town's geographical area.

Roads and Transportation: Tuqu' has an internal road network with a total length of around 40 km, including approximately 27 km of main roads in good condition and 18 km of secondary roads in fair to good condition. About 5 km of internal roads remain unpaved. The connecting roads between Tuqu' and neighboring towns extend for about 5 km and are in fair to good condition. The town also has about 5 km of agricultural roads that require rehabilitation. Public transportation is available, with around 45 public transport vehicles operating in the town.

2.2 Socioeconomic Characteristics of families of Persons with Disabilities

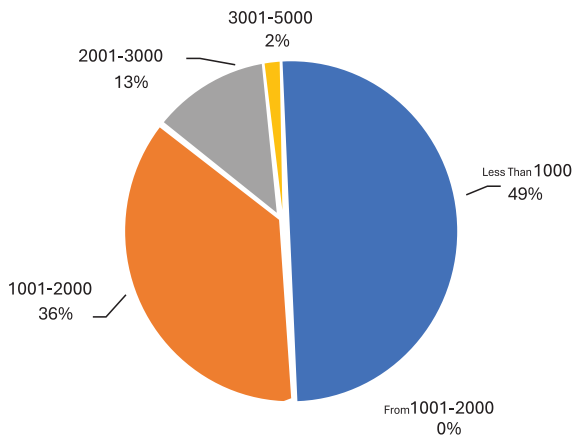
Household Size and Family Members with Disabilities: The average household size for families with persons with disabilities in Tuqu' is approximately 5.8 members, compared to the general average of 4.7 members in the West Bank as of 2022 (according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics).

It was also found that around 14.5% of heads of households are persons with disabilities. Additionally, 79.6% of families include one member with a disability, 14% include two members with disabilities, and 5.6% include three or more.

Disability types varied, as approximately 12.5% of persons with disabilities reported difficulties in mobility and hand use, 16.1% had hearing disabilities, and about 3.6% had visual disabilities. Additionally, 68.1% of persons with disabilities had multiple disabilities, involving more than one type of disability such as physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities combined.

About %13.5 of households with persons with disabilities reported having at least one family member with a disability who is unemployed, while %2 of households have two or more members with disabilities who are unemployed.

Economic Status and Income Level: Field findings show that about 49.1% of surveyed households with persons with disabilities in Tuqu’ have a monthly income of no more than 1,000 shekels. Around 36% have a monthly income that does not exceed 2,000 shekels, which places these households below the poverty line of 2,470 shekels per month.



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

Monthly Household Expenditure: The average monthly expenses for households with persons with disabilities in the town of Tuqu’ is approximately 1,588 shekels, compared to the average monthly expenditure in the West Bank, which stands at 5,800 shekels for a household of an average size of 5.2 members (according to 2017 data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics).

This gap is largely attributed to the low average income of households with persons with disabilities relative to their spending needs. The average monthly spending on healthcare and treatment is around 500 shekels, of which 330 shekels are allocated specifically to the needs of persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, the average monthly expenditure on food for these households is approximately 962 shekels.

2.3 Organizations in the town of Tuqu’

In addition to the municipality, the town of Tuqu’ includes 6 main institutions operating in various fields, including social and economic empowerment, educational and health services, and community development.

Tuqu’ Municipality: The municipality provides a range of services aimed at improving residents’ quality of life and enhancing their well-being, including infrastructure and social development services. The municipal council consists of 13 members, none of whom are persons with disabilities. The municipality employs 21 staff members, including 8 females and one person with a disability.

The municipality implements several initiatives to support persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion in the community through a dedicated staff member the “Guidance and Rehabilitation Officer.” This officer conducts home visits to persons with disabilities and their families to assess their needs and refer them to relevant institutions such as educational centers (kindergartens, schools, vocational training institutes, etc.) or assist them in finding employment opportunities. The officer also raises family awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities, coordinates with relevant authorities, and strengthens networking with governmental and non-governmental institutions to meet their needs.

The municipality also oversees the Tuqu’ Special Education Center, which provides educational services for children with disabilities in the town. Additionally, the municipality offers financial support by covering electricity and water fees for some families of persons with disabilities and provides free licensing for persons with disabilities whose level of disability exceeds 25%. It also works to make public facilities accessible.

Persons with disabilities and their families participated in developing the town’s strategic development plan, representing no less than 5% of the total participants, and their needs were integrated into the plan’s priorities and programs.

Tuqu’ Special Education Center: Established in 2022 and administratively affiliated with the municipality, the center aims to provide specialized educational and developmental services for children with disabilities up to the age of 13, focusing on addressing their academic and developmental needs within a supportive environment. The center employs two staff members—a special education teacher and a speech and hearing specialist and provides an accessible learning environment for children with disabilities through well-equipped classrooms and a 50-square-meter sensory playground that includes accessible play equipment.

The center also organizes inclusive community and recreational activities, such as fun and joy events and exchange visits with other educational institutions. It provides psychological and social support to children with disabilities and their families through individual and group sessions designed to improve children’s behavior and enhance communication skills.

Tuqu' Charitable Medical Association: Established in 2005 and registered with the Ministry of Interior under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development, the association aims to improve access to healthcare and provide comprehensive medical services to the local community. It has a general assembly of 50 members, including 15 women and one person with a disability, and an administrative board of 11 members, including two women. The association employs around 15 staff members (including doctors, nurses, secretaries, and lab technicians) and provides various medical services such as laboratory tests, emergency care, general medicine, and maternal care. However, it does not have programs specifically targeting persons with disabilities.

Tuqu' Women's Center: Established in 2006 and registered with the Ministry of Interior, the center aims to empower women economically, socially, and politically. It has a general assembly of more than 50 members, including 3 women with disabilities, and an administrative board of 11 members, none of whom are women with disabilities. The center relies on around 50 volunteers to implement its various programs, which include economic empowerment, awareness, and educational activities. Although it does not run programs specifically for persons with disabilities, they participate in the center's general activities.

Tuqu' Agricultural Charitable Association: Established in 2008, the association aims to develop and support the town's agricultural sector, both plant and animal production. It has an administrative board of 11 male members and a general assembly of about 100 members, including 10 women, with no persons with disabilities represented in either body. The association implements activities to support farmers, such as distributing fodder, establishing barns and home gardens, and planting seedlings, based on available projects and funding. However, it does not have specific programs or activities targeting persons with disabilities.

Tuqu' Charitable Association: Established in 1983 and registered with the Ministry of Interior, the association seeks to improve access to medical and health services for children and the wider community. It also runs the "Beit Al-Maqdis Kindergarten," which provides educational services for children in the town.

Tuqu' Youth Sports Club: Established in 1997 and registered with the Ministry of Interior, the club aims to develop the youth sector and enhance young people's athletic and social skills. However, its activities have been suspended in recent years due to limited resources and lack of financial support.

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

- **Lack of comprehensive strategic plans for disability inclusion:** The majority of local organizations in Tuqu' lack comprehensive strategic plans that address the inclusion of persons with disabilities. There is an evident absence of planning and institutional mechanisms to ensure that disability inclusion is mainstreamed across their programs and services.
- **Limited representation of persons with disabilities in governance structures:** Persons with disabilities are not represented in the administrative boards of any local organizations, and their representation in general assemblies is extremely limited. This lack of participation prevents them from contributing to decision-making processes and weakens the inclusion of their perspectives in institutional priorities.
- **Lack of qualified staff to address disability-related needs:** Staff, volunteers, and board members in most local organizations have not received training on how to interact with persons with disabilities, understand their needs, or be familiar with their rights. This gap in capacity leads to weak responsiveness and the absence of inclusive approaches within organizational programs and interventions.
- **Limited financial resources and weak networking:** Local organizations in Tuqu' face significant financial constraints and rely heavily on external funding to implement their activities. This dependency limits their ability to respond effectively to the needs of persons with disabilities, as external funding is often tied to specific donor priorities. Additionally, the lack of strong partnerships and coordination with local and international entities restricts opportunities for institutional development and sustainability.
- **Lack of accessible infrastructure:** The facilities of most local organizations in Tuqu' are not accessible and do not meet universal design standards. Barriers include the absence of accessible entrances, elevators, wide hallways, and adapted restrooms, which hinder the ability of persons with disabilities to access and participate in the services and activities provided by these organizations.
- **Absence of universal design and reasonable accommodations in programs:** Institutional programs and activities in Tuqu' do not adequately consider the requirements of universal design or reasonable accommodations needed to ensure accessibility. This is evident in the lack of accessible transportation, adapted communication materials (such as announcements), and other measures that facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in community programs.

- **Negative social attitudes and low community awareness:** Prevailing negative perceptions and social stigma toward persons with disabilities, coupled with limited awareness among families and community members about the importance of inclusion, continue to hinder their active participation in social, economic, and public life.

3.The Reality of Persons with Disabilities in the town

3.1 The Right to Access Education

The right to education is a fundamental human right guaranteed by national legislation and international conventions, without discrimination.

The Amended Palestinian Basic Law (the constitution) explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, including in the field of education, as stipulated in Article (9) under Chapter Two on constitutional rights and freedoms.

This right is further affirmed by Law No. (4) of 1999 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly Article (10), which guarantees equal opportunities for students with disabilities to access educational facilities, including schools and universities. The law obliges the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with relevant

authorities, to provide the necessary educational assessments to determine the type and degree of disability, and to develop appropriate curricula and educational materials, along with the necessary accommodations to ensure an inclusive learning environment. The law also emphasizes the importance of training qualified professionals to work with students with disabilities, to ensure their access to education across various types and levels, in line with their needs and in a way that 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 obligations must now be built upon the provisions of the Convention itself—particularly Article (24) on the right to education, and on the principle of inclusion. This includes, among other things, establishing an inclusive and disability-friendly education system, ensuring that no person with a disability is excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, recognizing individual differences, facilitating the learning of Braille and sign language, and ensuring the availability of teachers—including persons with disabilities—who are proficient in these means of communication, among other obligations.

Data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2017) indicate that the illiteracy rate among persons with disabilities aged 10 years and above in the town of Teqoa is approximately %43.3, compared to %3.6 in Bethlehem Governorate. The data also show that around %75 of persons with disabilities in Teqoa have either never attended school or enrolled and later dropped out.

3.1.1 Early Education

The town of Tuqu' includes five kindergartens distributed geographically, differing in size and services, and serving children aged 4–6 years. The total number of children enrolled in kindergartens is around 210, of whom 52% are boys and 48% are girls. The children are taught by 14 teachers, with an average of about 15 children per teacher. As for classrooms, the average number of children in each class is about 18. Interviews with kindergarten administrations in Tuqu' indicated that the percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in kindergartens is about 2% of the total number of children.

About 7.3% of families of surveyed persons with disabilities reported that they have children of kindergarten age with disabilities who are not currently enrolled in any kindergarten.

The tuition fees in Tuqu's kindergartens are about 180 shekels per month, with financial exemptions provided to some low-income families of persons with disabilities.

Facilities and infrastructure: In Tuqu's kindergartens, there is one toilet for every 15 children. Outdoor yards are also available, with an average area of 50 m², most of which are covered with artificial grass and shaded with canopies that cover about 30% of the area.

Field visits and interviews with kindergarten administrations in Tuqu' revealed a lack of accessibility and universal design requirements in kindergarten buildings. Most kindergartens lack the necessary adaptations for access and use by children with disabilities. This includes non-accessible entrances, corridors, and toilets, as well as the absence of elevators, outdoor spaces, and accessible playgrounds.

In addition, most kindergartens lack modern electronic educational equipment that supports early learning. There are also no curricula or teaching aids that address the specific needs of children with disabilities, which negatively affects their inclusion in the educational process. The transportation used by kindergartens is also not adapted for children with disabilities, making it more difficult for them to reach kindergartens and participate in learning activities. Although most of the teachers in Tuqu's kindergartens hold university degrees and have participated in training courses in early childhood education, they lack specialized training in working with children with disabilities, including knowledge of their rights and relevant legislation. The activities provided in kindergartens also fail to consider the needs of children with disabilities, as they are often 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 Tuqu' receive their education through 7 public schools employing 165 male and female teachers. These include 2 secondary schools and five basic schools for boys and girls. The total number of students enrolled in these schools is about 3,000 (1,375 males and 1,625 females), including 30 students with disabilities (16 males and 14 females).

Indicators of Basic and Secondary Education in the Town Compared to National-Level Indicators

General Indicator	Tuqu'	National-level figures
Number of students per teacher	18	19.4
Number of students per counselor	600	200-300
Number of students per class section	28.3	26.4
Classroom space per student (m ²)	1.6	1.5
Number of students per toilet	37	30.1
Number of students per drinking fountain	39	32.5
Number of students per sink	45	49.7

The comparison of educational indicators in the town of Tuqu' with national averages reveals relatively balanced conditions. The number of students per teacher in Tuqu' (18) is slightly lower than the national average (19.4), while the number of students per class section (28.3) is slightly higher than the national average (26.4). This indicates moderately sized classrooms and an acceptable academic workload for teachers, as also confirmed by school staff during interviews and field visits.

3.1.2.2 School Accessibility in Tuqu' 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 accessible for students with disabilities. They noted the limited accessibility to both basic and secondary education, whether due to financial costs or physical barriers.

One of the most prominent shortcomings highlighted was the poor overall design of educational facilities in relation to the needs of students with disabilities. Findings showed that five schools lack ramps to facilitate the mobility of students with disabilities. In addition, considerations of universal design and reasonable accommodations are absent in many school facilities, including libraries, computer and science laboratories, classrooms, and sanitary units, among others.

Students with disabilities and their families in the focus groups also described the educational tools, computers, and curricula as non-adapted and not meeting their needs. Regarding resource rooms, there is only one available in the town.

Participants in the focus groups further emphasized the shortage of qualified staff to work with persons with disabilities, with around 30% of surveyed household of persons with disabilities believing that there are no qualified teachers to support students with

disabilities in schools. Teachers themselves confirmed during the discussions that they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively address the needs of students with disabilities.

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

Students with disabilities in Tuqu' face a range of challenges that hinder their access to inclusive education. These challenges begin even before entering school due to the absence of early detection services.

Participants in the focus group discussions indicated that many schools refuse to enroll students with disabilities. School administrative bodies justify this refusal for several reasons, including maintaining the continuity of the educational process, the lack of inclusive academic plans, overcrowded classrooms, and the inability to provide individualized attention to students with disabilities. In addition, parents' limited awareness of their children's right to education and their lack of knowledge about the necessary arrangements for inclusion result in the absence of follow-up or intervention after schools refuse to admit their children.

Within the school environment, students with disabilities encounter multiple challenges, most notably the lack of acceptance by their peers. About 37% of surveyed students with disabilities reported feeling unaccepted by their classmates, while 69% stated that they had been subjected to bullying or violence by their peers and, in some cases, by teachers. Furthermore, families of persons with disabilities indicated that their children's presence in public schools is often only symbolic, due to continued marginalization and exclusion.

3.1.3 Enrollment in Higher Education

Persons with disabilities in Tuqu' face significant challenges in accessing higher and intermediate education. According to findings from the field study, only about 2% of the total number of persons with disabilities in the town are currently enrolled in higher or intermediate education. The most prominent barriers include the lack of accessible infrastructure in higher education facilities, as well as the absence of transportation services adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the town.

Within university campuses, lecture halls are often not adequately equipped to support the engagement of students with disabilities with the educational content, which limits their ability to participate effectively. The field study also revealed a complete absence of qualified instructors capable of addressing the needs of students with disabilities a concern echoed by all participating individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the curricula pose an additional challenge, as they fail to accommodate the diverse and individualized learning needs of students with disabilities.

3.1.4 Enrollment in Vocational Education and Training

The field study revealed that the enrollment rate of persons with disabilities in vocational training programs in Tuqu' is notably low, mainly due to several challenges. The most prominent of these challenges is the lack of information about enrollment procedures and mechanisms. The vast majority of persons with disabilities reported not receiving adequate awareness or guidance programs about joining public or private vocational education.

Additionally, persons with disabilities and their families identified the absence of nearby vocational training and education institutions as a major barrier. The nearest public vocational training center is located in the city of Bethlehem, which limits access for persons with disabilities, especially given the lack of accessible transportation options.

Furthermore, most persons with disabilities participating in field interviews and focus group discussions pointed to deficiencies in the overall design and infrastructure of educational facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, and workshops. They also emphasized that educational materials and curricula are not accessible or adapted to their needs, and that teaching staff are not adequately trained or qualified, noting that many vocational education personnel lack the necessary experience and skills to effectively support learners with disabilities.

3.2 The Right to Economic Empowerment and Employment

The right to work and employment is considered one of the fundamental rights enshrined in Palestinian legislation. The Amended Palestinian Basic Law (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 healthcare and social protection.

Additionally, Article (9) strictly prohibits discrimination based on disability, which includes the right to work.

Furthermore, Article (10) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (4) of 1999 assigns the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with all relevant parties, the responsibility of ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in the fields of vocational rehabilitation, training, and employment based on the principle of equal opportunities. It also obligates governmental and non-governmental organizations to employ at least 5% of persons with disabilities among their staff and to make workplaces accessible to their needs, while encouraging private organizations to employ them by offering tax incentives.

According to the Council of Ministers' Decision No. (40) of 2004 on the executive regulations of Law No. (4) of 1999, Article (12) emphasizes that any company or institution that does not employ persons with disabilities in accordance with the law (minimum 5%) must pay the equivalent of a minimum wage salary for each unfilled quota into a "Special Fund for Persons with Disabilities." This fund, to be established by a decision from the Minister of Social Development, is intended to provide financial support to unemployed persons with disabilities.

However, despite the significance of this provision for the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities and the many years that have passed since the enactment of the executive regulations, this fund has yet to be established contrary to what is mandated by law.

3.2.1 Economic Participation and Employment

The vast majority (64%) of families of persons with disabilities surveyed in Tuqu' believe that access to the labor market is difficult, while 31% consider it moderately difficult. This is largely due to several challenges that limit the economic participation of persons with disabilities—both men and women.

Based on interviews with persons with disabilities, focus group discussions involving both employed and unemployed individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as employers, the study revealed several key barriers contributing to the low economic participation of persons with disabilities:

- **Lack of workplace accessibility and adaptation:** According to the field study, 96.5% of persons with disabilities in Tuqu' reported that public and private organizations in the area are not accessible or adapted to accommodate and employ persons with disabilities. This is in direct violation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 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 remain among the most significant barriers for persons with disabilities in the labor market. According to the data, 98% of respondents confirmed the presence of discrimination in work environments. This manifests in various forms, including outright refusal to employ individuals with disabilities, lack of equal opportunities for promotion and training, or imposing unjustified restrictions that limit their access to employment. These biases often stem from societal and cultural factors such as a lack of awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and persistent negative stereotypes about their ability to perform tasks efficiently.
- **Lack of training and educational opportunities for persons with disabilities:** The findings of the field study showed that 78.9% of persons with disabilities in Tuqu' have not participated in any training or workshops aimed at building their capacity to access the labor market. This is attributed to several factors, including the lack of training programs specifically designed for them, the absence of accessible training environments in terms of infrastructure and means of access, and limited awareness among organizations of the importance of involving them in such programs. Financial and social challenges also play a role, such as limited family support or a lack of accessible opportunities.

- **Support for self-employment projects for persons with disabilities:** About 4% of persons with disabilities and their families surveyed in Tuqu’ reported having received support to start income-generating projects. However, most of these projects have since stopped. This is due to several factors, including the absence of prior studies on market needs in the town, which leads to supporting projects that do not align with actual demand. In addition, the reliance on generic or repetitive types of projects limits their success due to market saturation. A lack of experience in project management and insufficient skills—such as managing livestock or poultry farming often leads to failure. Moreover, project capital is often depleted without covering operational costs, coupled with limited financial capacity to expand or reinvest profits to ensure sustainability.

3.3 The Right to Health

The Right to Health and Social Insurance for Persons with Disabilities

Article (22) of the Amended Palestinian Basic Law (Constitution), under the section on Public Rights and Freedoms, states:

1. The law shall regulate social and health insurance services, as well as disability and old-age pensions.
2. The care of the families of martyrs and prisoners, and of the wounded, the affected, and persons with disabilities, is a duty whose provisions shall be regulated by law. The Palestinian National Authority shall guarantee them access to education and social and health insurance services.

This constitutional Article (22) establishes two distinct levels of obligation. In the first paragraph, the organization of social and health insurance and disability and old-age pensions is left to regular legislation meaning that the Authority is not necessarily required to provide these services free of charge, but rather to regulate them according to the relevant laws and competent authorities.

However, the second paragraph is explicit and decisive, stating that caring for the families of martyrs and prisoners, the wounded, the affected, and persons with disabilities is a duty of the Palestinian National Authority, to be regulated by law. More importantly, the Article obligates the Authority to guarantee them access to education, health, and social insurance services. In constitutional terms, the word “guarantee” signifies full responsibility implying that the Authority is directly obligated to provide these services free of charge, without imposing any financial burden on the beneficiaries. Any law that fails to fulfill this constitutional guarantee would therefore be deemed unconstitutional.

Law No. (4) of 1999 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 10) further requires the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with all relevant entities, to ensure the provision of free health services under the governmental health insurance system for persons with disabilities and their families.

Despite the fact that free access to health, social insurance, and education services for persons with disabilities is a constitutional right guaranteed by the Basic Law—and despite the explicit provisions in the Disabilities Law affirming free health insurance for persons with disabilities and their families, as well as the issuance and official publication of the 2021 Governmental Health Insurance Regulation for Persons with Disabilities in the Palestinian Official Gazette the practical implementation continues to contravene the Basic Law, the Disabilities Law, and the 2021 regulation concerning free health insurance for persons with disabilities.

3.3.1 Available Health Services

Persons with disabilities in the town of Tuqu’ receive healthcare services through both public and private health centers in the town. These include a second-level government clinic that provides primary care, general medicine, pediatrics, and laboratory services.

In addition, the town hosts the Charitable Medical Association, which offers a range of medical services including emergency care, general medicine, maternal care, dentistry, and laboratory testing. The association also provides medications free of charge to low-income families and offers home visits for individuals unable to reach the clinic, alongside several other private medical centers and clinics operating in the town.

Despite the availability of health services in Tuqu’, several challenges limit access for persons with disabilities, as reported by them and their families. These include the absence of specialized health services, the lack of accessibility in health facilities, and the shortage of qualified medical staff trained to deal with persons with disabilities. Families of persons with disabilities also pointed to the lack of early disability screening, which can delay diagnosis and appropriate care. Others are forced to seek specialized services outside the town an additional financial burden that many families are unable to afford.

3.3.2 Health Services Covered under Health Insurance

Although 40% of families of persons with disabilities in Tuqu’ have free health insurance, the level of coverage does not meet the healthcare needs of most families. About 54.5% of families of persons with disabilities pay out of pocket for medical expenses such as treatment, medications, nutritional supplements, and physical or occupational therapy. They also bear transportation costs, which places a significant financial burden on low-income families of persons with disabilities.

3.3.3 Needs of Persons with Disabilities (Coverage and Access to Services)

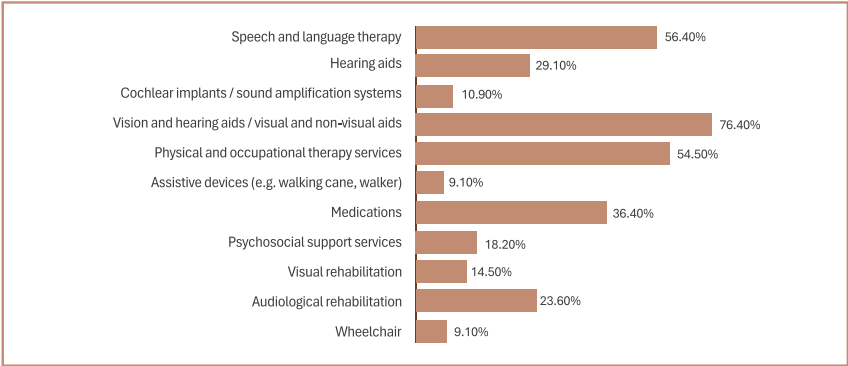
Persons with disabilities in Tuqu’ face significant gaps in meeting their basic health needs, making them heavily reliant on personal resources or irregular institutional support. Around 36.4% of their families reported a need for rehabilitation services (such as physical

and occupational therapy), which are usually not covered under the Ministry of Health’s insurance and are instead paid for by the patients themselves.

More than three-quarters (76.4%) of persons with disabilities in Tuqu’ reported a need for psychological and social support services, but the lack of specialized centers and trained staff makes such services difficult to access.

In terms of assistive devices, 9% said they needed wheelchairs, 23.6% hearing aids, and 18% required visual or auditory aids. Still, 18.2% of families bear the cost of these devices themselves.

Moreover, nearly half of persons with disabilities have ongoing medication needs, which are often not regularly provided by the Ministry of Health or are excluded from health insurance coverage, forcing families to shoulder these expenses themselves.



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

3.4 The Right to Participate in Cultural and Recreational Activities

The participation of persons with disabilities, especially children, in cultural and recreational activities in the town of Tuqu’ is extremely limited and largely depends on modest efforts by local organizations.

The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (4) of 1999 affirms the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with all relevant bodies, 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. Furthermore, it requires a 50% reduction in entrance fees for persons with disabilities to government cultural and recreational venues.

On the other hand, persons with disabilities and their families emphasized the lack of inclusive and well-designed cultural and recreational programs that take their needs into account. The study results showed that the participation rate of persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational activities in Tuqu' is around 5%. About 25% of respondents with disabilities and their families indicated that local organizations do not consider the requirements of universal design and the necessary accessibility arrangements to ensure the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities. This includes the lack of accessible transportation, adapted communication materials (such as announcements), and other forms of necessary accessibility arrangements. Families of persons with disabilities also stated that local organizations only take the necessary measures when required by the funding body. In addition, they affirmed that poor economic conditions represent a major barrier to the access and participation of persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational activities.

More than %20 of persons with disabilities reported feeling marginalized by both the local community and local organizations. This marginalization is reflected in the lack of attention given to their participation in various community activities implemented in the town, as well as the failure to take necessary measures to ensure their inclusion.

Meanwhile, most local organizations considered the lack of accessibility in public facilities in the town and their reliance on external funding to implement programs and activities as major challenges to including persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational initiatives. They also pointed to a lack of community awareness as one of the factors affecting the participation of persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational activities. They highlighted the limited awareness among families of persons with disabilities about the importance of such activities in promoting their mental and social well-being. This issue is further exacerbated by the weakness and scarcity of awareness programs about the cultural and recreational rights of persons with disabilities and their significance.

3.5 The Right to Participation in Political Life

Article (2) of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 1999 affirms the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy a free life, dignity, and access to various services, just like other citizens. It states that they have the same rights and are subject to the same duties within the limits of their abilities and capacities, and that disability should not be a reason to prevent them from obtaining those rights. Article (3) of the law places a comprehensive obligation on the state to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and to facilitate their access to those rights.

Although the law does not explicitly mention political rights, they are nonetheless guaranteed by the abovementioned articles, as they clearly refer to the full range of rights for persons with disabilities political rights naturally included. Moreover, Article (4) of the law addresses the right of persons with disabilities to form their own organizations and associations, which falls under political rights. This ultimately means that political rights for persons with disabilities are legally protected.

Additionally, the issuance of Law by Decree No. (36) of 2023, which published the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the Official Gazette (Palestinian Gazette), is expected to further strengthen the entire framework of rights for persons with disabilities, particularly political rights.

Interviews, focus groups, and field research conducted with persons with disabilities, their families, and local organizations revealed a variety of challenges to their political participation, including:

Lack of universal design: Persons with disabilities cited the inaccessibility of public facilities, registration centers, and polling stations as one of the main barriers they face in Tuqu'. In fact, 79% reported having difficulties accessing these locations or participating in public meetings and political activities due to the absence of necessary accommodations such as accessible buildings, transportation, and other facilitative arrangements.

The participation rate of persons with disabilities in political life whether through running for office, voting, or attending public meetings did not exceed %21 in the town of Teqoa.

Social perceptions: Negative societal perceptions pose a significant obstacle. Field study results showed that half of the persons with disabilities feel that the local community perceives them as incapable of making political decisions.

Tribal and political influences: Many persons with disabilities and their families view tribal and political influences as major barriers to political participation. These factors heavily shape political attitudes and decisions in the community, making it particularly difficult for persons with disabilities—especially those without strong tribal backing—to attain political positions or influence decision-making processes.

Lack of awareness programs and accessible media: The vast majority of persons with disabilities and their families pointed to the absence of accessible media materials—such as sign language broadcasts or publications in Braille—as a major limitation to understanding and exercising their political rights. Although the Central Elections Commission has made efforts, including issuing Braille materials and using sign language in instructional videos, these efforts remain limited. There is a need for coordinated efforts between official and non-official entities, including the media and civil society organizations, to produce accessible, inclusive, and sustainable awareness and media content that meets the needs of persons with various disabilities and raises awareness about their political rights.

3.6 The right to Social Protection and their Access to Services

The right to social protection is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by both international and local laws, including the Palestinian Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (4) of 1999. This law emphasizes the importance 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

About 18% of families of persons with disabilities in Tuqu’ reported receiving financial or in kind assistance from various sources, including the Ministry of Social Development, UNRWA, and local organizations. On average, they received assistance around six times throughout the year, with the average value of each assistance estimated at approximately 626 shekels per family.

About %43.6 of families of persons with disabilities in Teqoa reported facing great difficulty in accessing the services provided by the Ministry of Social Development and other institutions.

Persons with disabilities face significant 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, and more.

A total of 92% of families of persons with disabilities indicated that bureaucratic procedures and administrative complexities—which often require multiple transactions and repeated visits to service-providing organizations—represent a major barrier. These challenges are further exacerbated by the lack of accessible buildings and facilities, as well as the absence of accessible transportation options, a concern echoed by 69% of persons with disabilities and their families. Additionally, they noted that the complex and rigid eligibility criteria prevent the majority of persons with disabilities from accessing these services.

Furthermore, 91% of persons with disabilities considered long waiting periods and the irregularity of service provision to be serious challenges, especially in the absence of a stable source of income. As a result, they often rely on the assistance provided to meet their basic needs.

3.6.2 Community Protection and Support for Persons with Disabilities

The field study revealed a general lack of awareness among families of persons with disabilities regarding their right to protection, access to services, available measures, and mechanisms for reporting cases of violence and abuse against persons with disabilities. Participants in the focus group discussions emphasized the absence of effective protection mechanisms in the town.

It is estimated that around %10 of families of persons with disabilities hide their children with disabilities due to fear of social stigma.

Persons with disabilities and their families reported that individuals with disabilities are subjected to various forms of violence, including verbal and physical abuse, neglect, marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination. These incidents are more frequent among children and women with disabilities. Participants also highlighted that gender-based discrimination is particularly prevalent among women with disabilities, as families tend to impose stricter restrictions and limitations on their participation in community activities compared to men.

Violence in schools: More than 20% of surveyed persons with disabilities confirmed having experienced violence in schools, whether from classmates or, in some cases, from teachers.

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

Participants in the focus group discussions noted that boys are more likely to face physical violence in schools than girls. On the other hand, the teachers and counselors participating in the focus groups confirmed that they intervene directly when incidents of violence occur among students, especially those involving students with disabilities. When an incident has a psychological impact on the student, they are referred to individual counseling sessions.

Teachers also participate in awareness and prevention efforts through classroom activities, school radio programs, and educational sessions on the risks of violence. It is worth noting that the vast majority of families of persons with disabilities believe that teachers lack sufficient training to handle cases of violence involving students with disabilities within schools.

3.7 Community Attitudes toward Persons with Disabilities

Field results showed that 90% of the local community members in Tuqu' hold positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities, believing that they do not constitute a burden on their families or society. Most community members agreed that persons with disabilities can make a positive contribution to their community. However, 35% of respondents believed that persons with disabilities can rely on themselves to meet their basic needs.

About %22 of community members reported feeling anxious or fearful about having a person with a disability within their family.

Additionally, 96% of the community members stated that access to education and free healthcare services is a fundamental right for persons with disabilities, and that granting them full rights including amending laws and regulations can facilitate their access to all services.

Furthermore, 98% of community members believed that providing the necessary support for persons with disabilities to participate in elections (such as facilitating access to polling stations and providing appropriate explanatory materials) would give them a

better opportunity to take part in voting and elections. Similarly, 88% of the community members agreed that persons with disabilities can influence political decision-making if they participate in elections.

Lastly, 85.7% of community members believed that persons with disabilities are capable of working effectively across various sectors, while 96% agreed that providing job opportunities that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities would enhance their inclusion in the labor market.

4. Findings

1. Most Disadvantaged Groups

All persons with disabilities in the town of Tuqu' face a range of barriers that prevent their active participation in all sectors and limit their well-being and dignity. These barriers impose psychological, social, and economic burdens on them and their families. These challenges intensify for families with more than one person with a disability, large families with more than six members, poor families, families headed by women, or those where the head of the household is unemployed or elderly. These barriers are particularly severe for children of school age, individuals with intellectual disabilities (especially severe or multiple ones), those with chronic illnesses, persons with disabilities seeking employment, and boys and girls outside the public education system.

2. Weak Infrastructure Services

A number of essential services are either unavailable or weak. The town suffers from a problem with water supply through the network during the summer, forcing many families to rely on purchasing water tanks. There is also no sewage network, with residents depending on cesspits. Additionally, the infrastructure of roads and sidewalks is weak and not accessible for persons with disabilities, and the absence of accessible public transportation hinders their ability to reach various services or forces them to bear additional financial burdens by using private taxis.

3. High Poverty Levels and Their Impact on Persons with Disabilities in Tuqu'

There is a high rate of poverty among families of persons with disabilities due to high unemployment rates, particularly after the war on the Gaza Strip and the suspension of work in the occupied territories. The increased dependency ratio due to the large family size of households with persons with disabilities worsens the situation. This is compounded by the low percentage of families receiving financial or in-kind assistance from the Ministry of Social Development, UNRWA, or other organizations. Poverty is especially severe for families in need of medications that are not covered by health insurance, whether for persons with

disabilities or those with chronic illnesses.

Poverty contributes to the exclusion and deprivation of persons with disabilities, particularly children, from accessing various services such as education, health, and rehabilitation, and it significantly limits their participation in recreational, cultural, and political activities.

4. Access to Quality Education for Persons with Disabilities in Tuqu’

Despite the presence of seven schools, five kindergartens, and a special education center in the town, this has not positively impacted the access of children with disabilities to preschool or basic education. Most children and youth with disabilities remain excluded from the educational system, resulting in high illiteracy rates and limited employment opportunities.

The main reasons for the disparity in enrollment rates between persons with disabilities and their peers in educational institutions are the absence of early disability detection services and early intervention programs that prepare children for schooling.

Educational institutions and staff are also largely unprepared to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, with a shortage of qualified and specialized teaching personnel in public schools and most kindergartens, as well as a lack of support and assistance services. Moreover, many families are unable to enroll their children—particularly those above 12 years old—in schools outside the town due to the high cost and difficulty of transportation.

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

Persons with disabilities face major challenges in accessing higher education and vocational training. The most notable challenges include the lack of accessible infrastructure in educational institutions, absence of accessible transportation, and the failure to equip classrooms, workshops, and laboratories to enable effective interaction with the learning content. Additionally, the curricula and teaching staff are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

6. Access to Comprehensive Healthcare Services

Although Tuqu’ has a second-level government health clinic, several health centers, and private clinics, persons with disabilities still face limited access to essential healthcare services. Challenges include the absence of early disability diagnosis, lack or shortage of some medications, and the exclusion of physical and occupational therapy services from health insurance. There is also a lack of psychosocial counseling, psychiatric services, vision and hearing rehabilitation, and shortages of assistive devices—especially for hearing disabilities—as well as weak referral systems. Moreover, many persons with disabilities are still not covered by health insurance, whether governmental or private, due to lack of awareness or other barriers that hinder their access to inclusive health coverage.

7. Employment and Economic Empowerment

The majority of persons with disabilities—both youth and adults, men and women—remain outside the labor force due to two main reasons: first, negative societal perceptions about their capabilities and potential, particularly regarding women and persons with intellectual disabilities; and second, limited opportunities to access vocational, technical, or higher education, combined with the lack of adaptation in many economic establishments to employ persons with disabilities. These factors have increased poverty levels and the dependency ratio among these families.

8. Protection from Violence and Access to Psychosocial Counseling Services

The living conditions of persons with disabilities and their families impose various psychological and social challenges, particularly for women, and include exposure to violence from both inside and outside the family. Families of persons with disabilities also have limited awareness of their right to protection, available services, and mechanisms for reporting violence and abuse. There is an absence of effective protection mechanisms in the town, along with weak psychological, social, and legal counseling services, which exacerbates marginalization and suffering, and prevents the detection of cases of violence against persons with disabilities—often resulting in impunity, especially in a context of societal tolerance toward violence and bullying of children, women, and persons with disabilities.

9. Participation in Cultural, Sports, and Recreational Activities

Despite the presence of several active local organizations working in women's, charitable, sports, and cultural fields, this has not clearly translated into opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in cultural, sports, and social activities. Most persons with disabilities and their families expressed interest in involving their children and youth in these activities. However, their participation in shaping the policies and interventions of local organizations particularly the municipality and in contributing to the formulation of the local development strategy remains limited.

10. Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political Life

The participation of persons with disabilities in political life remains low due to several challenges that hinder their active engagement. The lack of accessibility in public facilities and registration and polling centers is among the main obstacles preventing their participation in elections and political activities. Negative social perceptions and tribal and partisan influences further weaken their participation in political life and decisionmaking.

Low awareness among persons with disabilities about their political rights and how to exercise them effectively, combined with a lack of awareness programs and accessible media materials, further deepens their exclusion.

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

There is a lack of awareness within the community and among families regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. Disability is still approached largely from a charitable perspective, accompanied by sympathy rather than a rights-based understanding. The local culture remains relatively tolerant of the exclusion and marginalization of persons with disabilities across most sectors, and there are limited support, volunteering, and community engagement programs.

12. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Programs and Services of Local Organizations

Many local organizations continue to adopt a charitable or welfare-based approach toward disability, rooted in sympathy rather than rights. This approach has hindered the adoption of a human rights-based perspective on disability and has resulted in weak institutional visions and interventions. Consequently, there is a lack of long-term policies aimed at empowering persons with disabilities to access various services based on their rights. Although Tuqu' Municipality and several local organizations are active in providing essential social and developmental services, this has not been effectively reflected in promoting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities within a rights-based framework.

13. Community Accountability and Influence on Policies

Persons with disabilities and their families are directly affected by the degree to which national legislation aligns with the rights of persons with disabilities and by the effectiveness of its enforcement. However, weak political will, the absence of strong community monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and limited advocacy and mobilization efforts hinder progress in influencing decision-makers to adopt and implement disability-inclusive laws and policies at both the national and local levels. This continues to undermine the inclusion of persons with disabilities in key sectors such as education, health, employment, and social protection programs.

5.Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the profiling document and the final community meeting held in the town of Tuqu' to review and discuss the results and issues, and to come up with recommendations and agree on priorities for action to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, a set of priority interventions has been identified to improve the situation of persons with disabilities and ensure their inclusion in various aspects of life:

1. Enhancing the Role of the Municipality in Including Persons with Disabilities:

- Institutionalizing the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the policies and services of Tuqu' Municipality and enhancing their participation in planning processes, policymaking, local development strategies, and decision-making.
- Enhancing access for persons with disabilities and their families to water and energy services at fair and equitable prices, especially for poor households with persons with disabilities. This requires decisions from the municipal council to provide discounted water and electricity for families of persons with disabilities.
- Supporting persons with disabilities and their families, particularly those living in poverty or below the poverty line, by exempting them from a reasonable percentage of municipal taxes (e.g., property tax, education tax, waste collection fees, etc.).
- Adapting and preparing roads, sidewalks, buildings, and public spaces—especially healthcare centers and schools—to facilitate access for persons with different disabilities.
- Strengthening partnerships between the municipality, civil society organizations, international organizations, and private sector entities to improve the quality of existing services and develop new ones, particularly in areas of psychological, social, and legal counseling, vocational training programs, and productive activities to employ persons with disabilities, especially those with intellectual disabilities.

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

- education, and the provision of assistive tools and medical supplies.
- Raising community awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities, including educating families and community members about their rights and promoting a developmental, rights-based approach among various community groups.
- Strengthening the role of local organizations in protection and community support for persons with disabilities and their families, and activating their role in the referral system between governmental and community institutions to facilitate the transfer of persons with disabilities to relevant organizations outside the town.
- Developing a comprehensive database of persons with disabilities that includes all data related to them and their families, to be regularly updated and serve as a reference for

planning and interventions. This database should be managed, developed, and updated jointly by the municipality and local organizations, serving as a reference for all entities within and beyond the town.

- Adapting local institutional facilities to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring the representation of persons with disabilities in the administrative and public bodies of local organizations.
- Building the capacity of local organizations on the rights of persons with disabilities, proper conduct when interacting with them, planning inclusive programs and services, advocacy for disability inclusion, and community accountability.

3.Inclusion in Health Services:

- Providing health and rehabilitation services at local health centers, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other specialized services for persons with disabilities.
- Simplifying procedures for obtaining health insurance cards and necessary medical referrals.
- Strengthening mental health programs targeted at persons with disabilities and their families.
- Adapting health facilities in the town to ensure access for persons 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 ones.
- Building the capacity of educational and administrative staff in schools and kindergartens to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in education based on the inclusive education approach.
- Adapting curricula, teaching methods, and educational materials, and providing accessible and inclusive learning resources to ensure equal opportunities for students with disabilities, including in kindergartens.
- Implementing awareness programs in schools and kindergartens to promote positive attitudes among students and staff towards persons with disabilities.

5.Inclusion in Employment and Work:

- Encouraging the municipality and various organizations in Tuqu' to employ persons with disabilities and provide them with decent work that matches their abilities and skills, while ensuring the necessary accommodations for them to perform their jobs effectively.
- Advocating with official authorities to enforce the Palestinian Labor Law, particularly the provision mandating that at least 5% of employees in any institution should be persons with disabilities.
- Facilitating access for persons with disabilities to equal opportunities for self-employment to achieve economic independence and enable them to live with dignity.
- Enhancing opportunities for persons with disabilities to access vocational training services and workshops to build their capacities and ensure their inclusion in the labor market.
- Promoting sustainable entrepreneurial projects that support self-employment for persons with disabilities, preceded by market and needs assessments to ensure alignment between their abilities and local economic demands.

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 advocacy campaigns based on rights, urging official authorities to develop and implement legislation and policies related to persons with disabilities and ensure their participation in planning and decision-making processes.
- Advocating for the implementation of the comprehensive government health insurance system for persons with disabilities (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.
- Advocating for the implementation of inclusive education policies at the Ministry of Education, including universal design in schools, adaptation of curricula and teaching methods, capacity building for teachers, and providing inclusive educational environments for persons with disabilities.
- Organizing campaigns to enhance access to higher education and vocational training for persons with disabilities, including adapting the infrastructure of institutions, revising educational policies, and providing accessible educational materials.
- Strengthening the role of persons with disabilities and their families as key drivers in advocacy and community accountability campaigns, by building their capacity to use advocacy tools, document violations, submit complaints, and participate in community initiatives that monitor the performance of institutions and the services provided to persons with disabilities at the local level.



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