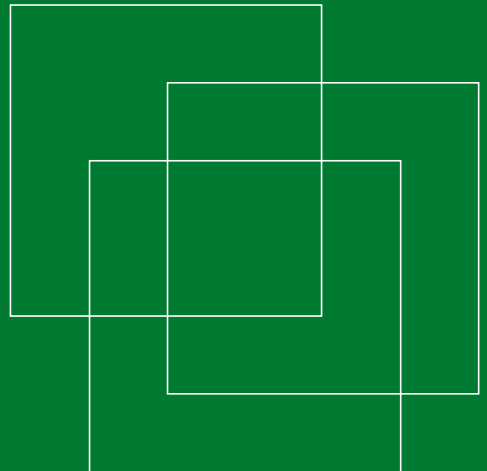




International  
Labour  
Organization

# Emerging **good practices** related to the training and job placement of **persons with disabilities** in Lebanon

International Labour Organization  
Regional Office for Arab States



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## Collaborating partners for this report

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The logo for Arcenciel.aec, featuring the text "arcenciel.aec" in white lowercase letters on a red rectangular background.

Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union

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Forum of the Handicapped Association

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UNRWA

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# Abbreviations

ESIP	Economic and Social Inclusion Project for People with Disabilities
FOH	Forum of the Handicapped Association
LEAP	Lebanese Employment Assistance to People with Disabilities Project
LPHU	Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union
NGO	non-governmental organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WHO	World Health Organization

# Foreword

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities confirms that people with disabilities should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms – fully and equally. That includes the right to decent work – which provides an effective means of escaping the vicious cycle of marginalization, poverty and social exclusion. Access to decent jobs provides income to families, but also strengthens the person’s sense of self-worth and ability to contribute to the community.

However, this meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in societies can only come about with changes in the way they are perceived by their communities, in Lebanon as elsewhere. Lebanese society must tear down the barriers which persons with disabilities face to enable their effective participation in the world of work.

This process starts with a change of attitude at home. Many Lebanese families with children with disabilities are not aware of their children’s rights and their potential. Too often, this leads to an overprotective attitude that limits the capacity of the child to access education, skills and decent employment. Teachers, instructors and employers also need to demonstrate a more inclusive attitude, in order for persons with disabilities to feel welcomed in schools, training centres and companies, gain personal and professional skills, and access decent jobs.

This report is the product of a collaborative effort bringing together Arcenciel, the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union, and the Forum of the Handicapped Association, UNRWA and the ILO. It provides practical knowledge on the training and job placement of persons with disabilities through six emerging good practices. When combined, these good practices provide a comprehensive programme for inclusive employment, with interrelated components ranging from advocacy, on-the-job training, to business development services, coaching and counselling.

The Lebanese law 220/2000 defines the rights of people with disabilities in the fields of education, rehabilitation, employment, and access to services. As part of the common efforts for the full implementation of this law, we hope that the integrated services documented here will contribute to make the marginalization of persons with disabilities in Lebanon a thing of the past.

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*Assistant Director-General  
and Regional Director for the Arab States*  
International Labour Organization

# Introduction

## Access of Lebanese with disabilities to decent work

There are various estimates of the number of persons with disabilities in Lebanon. Of the total Lebanese population of 3.8 million<sup>1</sup>, between 4 per cent and 9.5 per cent are persons with disabilities, according to estimates from different sources (*table 1*).

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<sup>1</sup> Central Administration of Statistics estimate, 2008.

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**Table 1.** Estimates of number of persons with disabilities in Lebanon

Source	Persons with disabilities	Prevalence
Lakkis and Thomas, <i>Disability and livelihoods in Lebanon</i> , 2003	140,000	4%
Ministry of Social Affairs, <i>National Survey of Family Health</i> , 2004	150,364	4%
World Bank report, 2005, based on country-level data available at the United Nations Statistics Office	Between 133,200 and 356,400	3.5% to 9.5%

Global evidence indicates that persons with disabilities and their families are more likely to be economically and socially disadvantaged. They are more likely to be unemployed and generally earn less when employed. The global prevalence of disability is estimated by the World Health Organization (WHO) at 15 per cent of the world's population. The World report on disability (WHO and World Bank 2011) also clearly shows that disability increases the risk of poverty, and poverty increases the likelihood of disability.

Lebanese with disabilities are less employed than those without disability. A joint study on the situation of vulnerable social groups revealed that 81.2 per cent of persons with disabilities were not employed nor did they have any previous employment (Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA 2000). The Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU) has estimated that only 26 per cent of persons with disabilities capable of working are employed (LPHU 2010).

When they are employed, most Lebanese with disabilities hold low-skilled jobs with little income and low career prospects. The majority of persons with disabilities who are employed work in fields that do not require a high level of skills. For the most part, the occupations of persons with disabilities in Lebanon do not provide sufficient income for them to live decently (Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA 2000).

Most of the employment opportunities that are made available to persons with disabilities do not fit their personal potentials and aspirations. In his intervention at the National Conference on Disability in May 1999, Jeryes Khoury, of the Lebanese Federation of Associations for the Disabled, pointed to the fact that certain jobs are "imposed" on certain disabilities, such as Koran reciting and bamboo work for the blind, and glass painting and other handicrafts for the physically disabled and the deaf. Lakkis and Thomas (2003, p.5) report that Lebanese with disabilities are employed "for extremely low wages and without the protection of health or retirement insurance".

## Barriers to decent work

Obstacles that exclude persons with disabilities from decent work are social, economic, cultural and political. Heron and Murray (2003, p. 2) summarize them as follows: (a) negative attitudes, often linked to discrimination; (b) unequal access to education and training; (c) inaccessible buildings; (d) lack of accessible information; (e) inaccessible transport; (f) lack of assistive devices and support services; (g) low self-esteem and overprotective families; (h) lack of a supportive legal environment; and (i) lack of policy support.

The low employment rates of Lebanese with disabilities, and their confinement to a limited number of low-end jobs, is due in part to their limited access to education and skills training. Of the estimated 33,923 Lebanese persons with disabilities of working age, 27,086 are considered capable of working. Of these, only 7,052 are actually working (United Nations 2007, p. 31). Quality education and vocational training are key factors for improving the employment situation of persons with disabilities. In Lebanon, inadequate education and vocational training contribute to their marginalization.

The labour situation of Lebanese with disabilities is also due to the reductive perception employers and society at large have of their productive capacity, as reflected in Lebanese Law 220/2000, which enshrines a “charity” approach to disability. Article 2 of Law 220/2000 defines disability as *“a diminished or impaired capacity to perform one or more important daily life skills, or to independently secure one’s personal requirements, or participate in social activities on equal terms as other people, or enjoy a normal personal and social life in harmony with the standards of one’s community, because of a chronic or temporary, total or partial, physical, sensory or intellectual loss or dysfunction due to an innate or acquired impairment, or resulting from a health condition that has lasted more than what would medically be expected”*.<sup>1</sup> This definition focuses on the inabilities of persons with disabilities rather than on their abilities, as opposed to the definition of disability in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where disability is defined as an evolving concept resulting *“from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”*.<sup>3</sup>

This situation of Persons with Disabilities on the Lebanese labour market may be due also to a stage of discouragement they may reach when they identify themselves with the biased perception that society has of their capacities. The inability to work produces a state of “learned helplessness” among persons with disabilities, which is “a

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<sup>1</sup> Complete text of Law 220/2000 available from [www.lphu.com](http://www.lphu.com) (translation to English by author).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, preamble (e). <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>.



self-fulfilling prophecy of incompetence” (Wehman et al. 2007, p. 5). This negative self-perception has an impact on the low labour participation of persons with disabilities. In contrast, working and a feeling of productivity and competence are generally associated with positive mental health (Wehman et al. 2007).

This situation is also compounded by the non-availability of accessible transportation means, making it very difficult for persons with disabilities to commute independently from home to the workplace. The question of accessibility is crucial for inclusive employment. Persons with disabilities have limited access to transport in Lebanon. This situation results in a great deal of daily stress, and limits their participation in the labour market.

## Overview of the Government’s support for persons with disability

Law 220/2000 encompasses most aspects of disability rights. The law includes an outdated definition of disability (see above) but it details the rights of persons with disabilities in the fields of education, rehabilitation, employment,<sup>3</sup> medical services, sports, recreation and access to public transport and other facilities.

Article 4 of Law 220/2000 is the legal basis for the disability identification card, which enables a person with disabilities to benefit from targeted support and benefits. Articles 73 and 74 also introduce quotas for public and private recruitment.<sup>4</sup> However, the penalties for non-respect of this article were later suspended by the Ministry of Labour, and no alternative enforcement mechanism was put in place.

In the context of war and political instability, the partnership between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Government institutions in planning, delivery and assessment of services to persons with disabilities has proved to be a key success for their sustainability. Lebanese are free to create associations and the Government contributes to the funding of these NGOs by alleviating taxes and fees, as well as granting direct financial contribution when needed. NGOs and Disabled Persons Organizations (DPO’s) deliver services in a flexible and efficient manner; they also contribute to policy-making. The mutual recognition of these roles and the implementation of various mechanisms of dialogue have contributed to fostering a climate of positive collaboration (Ministry of Social Affairs and UNDP 2004).

Within the Government, disability issues are dealt with mainly through the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which includes elected representatives of Disabled Persons’ Organizations (DPO’s) and persons with disabilities themselves. It oversees the Ministry of Health’s plan for free

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<sup>3</sup> Articles 68 to 75 of Law 220/2000 related to the right for work and employment are summarized in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> 3 per cent for public sector, 1 person for companies between 30 and 60 employees, 3 per cent for companies with more than 60 employees..

hospitalization of persons with disabilities, the implementation of the decree related to accessibility (the Building Code), the unemployment compensation plan, the implementation of the employment quota in Law 220/2000, the plan of the Minister of Public Works and Transport to provide accessible transport buses for persons with disabilities, and the creation of a Sports Union for persons with disabilities.

Through the Department of Disability Affairs at the Directorate of Social Services of the Ministry of Social Affairs, a range of services is delivered for persons with disabilities, as summarized in table 2.

However, access of Lebanese with disabilities to specific services is constrained by the fact that only few are registered, and because of corrupt practices. Although a decree was issued by the Ministry of Public Health on 7 January 2010 to grant “complete health coverage” and the “reimbursement of the rehabilitation costs for the person with disability”, the fact that only 20 per cent of persons with disabilities in Lebanon are holders of the disability identification card that provides them with free admission to hospitals limits the application of the law.<sup>1</sup> Even when they have this identification card, persons with disabilities are often requested to provide additional legal documents and even pay bribes in order to get benefits from the health services ensured by the disability card.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the implementation of Law 220/2000 has been limited because of the removal of penalties,<sup>3</sup> the lack of an action plan and the general lack of coordination between ministries. Ten years after the issuance of Law 220/2000, the Arab NGO Network for Development<sup>4</sup> points to the lack of coordination between the concerned ministries and the lack of a national strategy to enforce the implementation of the law. It also highlights the absence of inclusion standards at the workplace (ANND 2010, p. 8). The former Minister of Social Affairs, Dr Selim El-Sayegh, also stated in the National Social Development Strategy of Lebanon that: “The respect of the rights of the disabled, for example, specified by the Law 220/2000, is tributary to the commitment of different line ministries. Only a minor part of this law is so far respected, since the Government through its services and ministries has failed to engage the necessary related reforms and finances” (Ministry of Social Affairs 2011, p. iii).

To conclude, persons with disabilities in Lebanon today are affected by their lack of inclusion in the labour market, the lack of implementation of laws and policies, and decreased social spending. Within this context, their care often becomes the burden of their families and communities, in a welfare approach to disability. The former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability, Hissa Al Thani, called the integration process of persons with disabilities in Arab society a “forced integration” – whereby close-knit family structures assume the role of care givers and providers, in the absence of structured governmental initiatives and insufficient resources. This integration is not based on rights and does not recognize the potentials and abilities of persons with disabilities, but it is unfortunately the only current alternative to segregation and marginalization (Al Thani 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the occasion of the 9th Session of the Universal Periodic Review 2010 – Lebanon, p. 6 (report prepared by LPHU, Youth Association for the Blind, Lebanese Self-Advocacy Association, Palestinian Disability Forum, Parents Association for Deaf Children in Lebanon, and Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network). [www.lphu.org](http://www.lphu.org).

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<sup>2</sup> “Unavailing Disability Card ... and not applicable law.” *Waw* magazine, p. 3–12, August 2007.

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<sup>3</sup> Under the pressure of private companies, the Ministry of Labour agreed not to impose fines if quotas were not complied with.

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<sup>4</sup> The Arab NGO Network for Development is a regional network including 7 national networks and 27 NGOs from 11 Arab countries.

**Table 2. Summary of Ministry of Social Affairs services to persons with disabilities**

Service / benefit	Description
<b>Issuance of disability identification card</b>	The card is delivered under the supervision of a specialized medical team, through different centres distributed across all Lebanese mohafazats (districts). The new version of the disability identification card will include information about the holder's medical record.
<b>Partnership with NGOs</b>	Annual contracts are signed with 82 NGOs of or for persons with all types of disabilities (for an estimated outreach to 7,600 persons with disabilities). <sup>1</sup> The NGO Resource and Support Unit at the Ministry of Social Affairs ensures networking between Government and NGO representatives, among NGOs and between NGO donors and the Government. It also provides capacity building for NGOs (workshops on NGO governance, fundraising, financial management, human resources management, recruitment, etc.)
<b>Professional services</b>	Services include assessment of learning and intellectual disabilities and school difficulties to ensure proper intervention in regular schools, preventive assessment of audition impairment for young children in families at risk, especially those enrolled in the public schools, and provision of speech therapy sessions for children with speech and communication disabilities.
<b>Provision of assistive devices</b>	Centres of social development at the Ministry of Social Affairs deliver free-of-charge consultations, medicaments and assistive and prosthetic devices (wheelchairs, walkers, medical crutches, medical shoes, hearing aids, etc.) for accredited centres.
<b>Exemptions for individuals with disabilities and organizations of or for persons with disabilities</b>	Pursuant to the provisions of Law 220/2000, and as per Ministerial Decree No. 257/1 (30 November 2000), persons with disabilities holding disability identification cards, and organizations of or for persons with disabilities, are exempted from municipality taxes, land property taxes, customs tax on cars and car registration fees.
<b>Ministry of Social Affairs hotline</b>	The hotline is a joint venture between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health to receive and handle comments and complaints by persons with disabilities or their families about medical problems or hospitalization issues with public or private hospitals in Lebanon.
<b>Employment Centre in the Department of Disability Affairs</b>	The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs implemented a mechanism for the announcement of job postings and the employment of persons with disabilities through the reactivation of the Employment Centre in the Department of Disability Affairs to cooperate and coordinate with all NGOs providing employment services for persons with disabilities and to cooperate with the Ministry of Labour towards the implementation of Law 220/2000.
<b>Accessibility</b>	The Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and the Supreme Council of Urban Planning issued a joint decree related to accessibility standards and specifications of buildings and constructions. A Building Code (issued in 2004) includes accessibility standards in the licensing of all public buildings. Municipalities are responsible for supervising the adherence to the Building Code (Abdel Samad 2010). This initiative is in line with Law 9091/2002 on space specifications for public school buildings, facilities and classrooms with disability access.

# Part I. Presentation of the NGOs and agencies

Four non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and agencies were surveyed for the present report; all four have had experience with employment of persons with disabilities. The following sections present their history, mission and achievements.

## ArcenCiel: LEAP, in partnership with Catholic Relief Services

ArcenCiel (“rainbow” in English) is a Lebanese non-profit organization, founded in 1985, with more than 15 centres across Lebanon. It delivers services related to rehabilitation, employment and social support, health and youth development, environment and agriculture. The focus of the organization is on innovation for social change, and community ownership.

In 2009, ArcenCiel launched the Lebanon Employment Assistance to People with Disabilities Project (LEAP), with the technical support of Catholic Relief Services and the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development. LEAP relies on an advisory committee of Lebanese businesses. It works with an adaptation centre to monitor the physical accessibility of companies that have job openings. It provides personalized assistance for each person with disability through a personal career plan, and tailored training courses that fit individual profiles and career plans. It also provides specific support for companies and undertakes regular monitoring during the integration and follow-up at the post-placement level.<sup>1</sup>

ArcenCiel also offers alternative employment opportunities for persons with disabilities who cannot access technical training due to the severity of their impairment. These persons are integrated into the continuous training programmes available in ArcenCiel’s manufacturing workshops for production of wheelchairs and other assistive and prosthetic devices, and in the carpentry, ceramics and wheelchair metallic painting workshops. Around 90 per cent of employees in each ArcenCiel workshop have disabilities. ArcenCiel produces 10,000 wheelchairs per year, for national and regional markets.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: ArcenCiel brochure for LEAP.

## Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union: Economic and Social Inclusion Project

The Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU) is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-sectarian grass-roots organization founded by and for persons with disabilities in 1981. It currently has around 1,200 members with physical disabilities and thousands of supporters and friends. It has community branches in six areas of Lebanon. LPHU undertakes advocacy activities to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities to inclusion and equality of opportunities. It also implements community-based development projects providing physical rehabilitation services, inclusive education, vocational rehabilitation and job placement and employment.

In 2005, LPHU started a pilot initiative in the Bekaa region, with the financial help of the NGO Christian Aid and the European Union, on the economic and social integration of persons with disabilities. The project was initially entitled the Open Horizons Project and is known today as the Economic and Social Inclusion Project for People with Disabilities (ESIP). Its vision is to create a network between NGOs, employers, Government agencies and the local community.

It aims at (a) ensuring the participation of the civil NGOs in the committee of the National Indicative Programme for Lebanon; (b) spreading a culture of diversity and equal opportunity among the business community in order to increase job opportunities for persons with disabilities; (c) facilitating the implementation of the 3 per cent quota for the employment of persons with disabilities in both the private and public sectors; and (d) providing job search skills to persons with disabilities. The underlying goal of the initiative, according to Doha Yahfoufi, LPHU project coordinator, is to enable “companies to implement diversity and inclusion policies on their own without having to be pushed to do so”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Marc Abizeid, “Disabled have little to celebrate on Labor Day: Workers with disabilities still face marginalization, despite project to boost inclusion.” The Daily Star, Friday, 1 May 2009.

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## **Forum of the Handicapped Association in north Lebanon**

The Forum of the Handicapped Association (FOH) in north Lebanon is a disabled persons' organization founded in 1986. It has been promoting a shift from the charity welfare model of disability to a rights-based approach. FOH provides a wide range of services to more than 2,800 individuals with physical, visual, auditory and intellectual disabilities in north Lebanon. Services include a Health Services Programme that has been mediating since 1988 between persons with disabilities and medical institutions. It also provides socio-medical services (including physiotherapy) and mobility equipment to persons with disabilities. FOH activities also include the design and implementation of individualized rehabilitation plans in cooperation with civil society organizations and public sector institutions.

Since 1987, the Educational Mainstreaming Programme has facilitated the access of persons with disabilities to schools and universities through mediation, and the provision of individualized support. FOH was also one of the first associations in Lebanon to promote through national sport events the right of persons with disabilities to sports and leisure activities on equal basis with their fellow citizens. Since 1993, FOH has been taking a range of initiatives to facilitate the accessibility of public places in cooperation with the Municipality of Tripoli. FOH also provides training programmes (vocational and life skills) and job search and entrepreneurship support.

## **UNRWA: Employment Services Centres**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. In 2009, UNRWA launched the Employment Services Centres, in partnership with the International Labour Organization and with the financial contribution of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, to improve the access of Palestine refugees to decent, sustainable and high-quality jobs (UNRWA 2011a). The Employment Services Centres provide intermediary services between Palestinian job seekers (with and without disabilities) and Lebanese companies. UNRWA has integrated the issue of disability into its programmes so as to improve access to employment for persons with disabilities (UNRWA 2011b). The number of beneficiaries with disabilities is still low, compared to non-disabled job seekers.

## Part II. Emerging good practices

The following examples of good practice (GP) are based on principles upheld in the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Recommendation, 1983 (No. 168), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



# GP1.

## Choosing the right job: Empowering persons with disabilities to make decisions for their professional lives

### Background of the practice

Because employment opportunities are limited, many persons with disabilities end up performing jobs that do not fit their potentials and aspirations, negatively affecting their performance because of lack of motivation and a sense of dissatisfaction. In many cases, persons with disabilities do not fully participate in choices that affect their professional lives. The use of an individualized approach to job placement that emphasizes competencies and occupational interest over disabilities is a requirement of a successful job matching.

This strategy is based on ILO Recommendation No. 168 concerning vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, Paragraph 7, which states: “Disabled persons should enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of access to, retention of and advancement in employment which, wherever possible, corresponds to their own choice and takes account of their individual suitability for such employment.”<sup>1</sup>

Empowering persons with disabilities to make decisions for their professional lives is also clearly included in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27 (Work and employment), emphasizing “the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities”.<sup>2</sup>

### Description of the practice

For the four organizations reviewed, the self-motivation of the person with disabilities is considered central to the job matching process. The person with a disability is the ultimate decision-maker, as part of a guidance, training and placement process that provides the required support if and when needed. Consequently, much emphasis is devoted to “listening” to the applicant’s expectations, with a careful consideration of their ability, the potential impact of their choice, and the ways they can develop their potentials and reduce the impact of their impairment.<sup>3</sup>

All four programmes also showed streamlined processes to ensure prompt and timely services, with various registration and evaluation steps to facilitate job placement and self-employment. At the same time, flexibility and adaptation has been another common feature for all the programmes reviewed, through the constant revision of their activities to fit the choices of the persons with disabilities, and market demand.

The placement and career guidance unit in each Employment Services Centre of UNRWA provides a three-month apprenticeship programme, in the field of specialization chosen by the applicant, after appropriate counselling has been provided. This apprenticeship allows the person with disabilities to gain more skills and demonstrate their competencies to potential long-term employers.

In addition to employment services provided at the job placement centres, LPHU designed and published a Guide for job description to raise the awareness of employers and persons with disabilities themselves about the potentials of persons with disabilities. The guide details tasks and responsibilities for generic jobs, the related competencies that are required, and the reasonable accommodation that will need to be made for employees with disabilities.

The vocational training workshops at FOH are designed based on the needs and potentials of the persons with disabilities. Consequently, FOH has been continuously revising and updating its vocational training programmes in order to match market demands and the choices of the persons with disabilities. Recently, the handcrafted wax and candle training workshop had to be terminated due to lack of interest from the job seekers, and increased competition from cheaper imported manufactured products. On the other hand, a music instruction workshop has been recently introduced, because of a demand expressed by blind persons aspiring to become singers and musicians.

*Rola graduated from FOH's computer and language training programmes and is presently a private tutor for children in elementary classes. She says that disability is not a handicap to the person as long as there is a strong will to work and succeed in the job of their choice. Today she contributes to her family's income and is very proud of her achievements.*

## Impact of the practice

Much work is being done in the field by the organizations surveyed in this report towards respecting the individual's personal preferences and work choices. Empirical evidence in the four programmes showed that this individualized approach to vocational counselling and job placement had several positive effects, including increased motivation to work and reduced absenteeism, increased employer satisfaction, improved team spirit and an empowering atmosphere at work.

An indirect impact is the fact that a successful placement contributes to challenging wrongful perceptions employers and persons with disabilities themselves have of their potentials. LPHU statistics from 2005 (beginning of ESIP) until the time this report was drafted show the increasing number of CVs received, and the increased number of job offers channelled through LPHU. There is also a positive change of attitude within the family of the person with disabilities, who is no longer perceived as dependent and unable to work, but instead encouraged to seek further training and to integrate more into society.

# GP2.

## Continuous support to both employers and persons with disabilities

### Background of the practice

In most cases, when the person with disabilities is employed, there is a great sense of relief from their family and support organization. Further problems the person with disabilities may have, or wishes for career progress, are not fully taken into consideration because they are “lucky enough to have a job”.

However, inclusive employment is not just about persons with disabilities accessing any job, but ensuring they access decent work that will allow them to lead a meaningful and satisfying life. This cannot be attained if the person with disability is condemned to perform non-rewarding, routine and frustrating tasks, because of assumptions about their disabling condition that prevent them from accessing further professional development.

In order to ensure the person with disabilities will keep the new position they have secured, and progress in the company, there is a need for continuous liaising with employers before and after the placement, and for providing support to the person with disabilities in terms of (a) motivational coaching; (b) continuous professional development; and (c) prevention and sometime remedial action for technical and interpersonal problems.

### This good practice is based on:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27: “To enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes,

placement services and vocational and continuing training; and to promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market.”

- ILO Convention No. 159, Article 7: “Competent authorities shall take measures with a view to providing and evaluating vocational guidance, vocational training, placement, employment and other related services to enable disabled persons to secure, retain and advance in employment.”
- ILO Recommendation No. 168, Para 28: “Staff engaged in vocational guidance, vocational training, placement and employment support of disabled persons should have appropriate training and experience to recognize the motivational problems and difficulties that disabled persons may experience and, within their competence, deal with the resulting needs.”

### Description of the practice

ArcenCiel has established a direct relationship with the employers (and potential employers) by providing them with on-going advice on (a) logistic and technical adaptations to ensure proper integration of persons with disabilities at the workplace; (b) the interpersonal aspects of the process (how to deal with persons with disabilities in different situations); and (c) awareness sessions for the entire team in the workplace so they can be better prepared to integrate their future colleague with disability. This direct

relationship with the employers ensures that they have adequate information about the type of disability of the recruit, that the workplace is properly equipped with the necessary adjustments for improved accessibility, and that there is a shared sense of job satisfaction for the employer and the employee.

The personal development of each person with disability at their worksite is reinforced by an individualized follow-up, which consists of regular monitoring during the integration phase (the first three months of employment) and continues at the post-placement level through regular contact with the human resources officer at ArcenCiel.

The placement and career guidance officer in the UNRWA Employment Services Centre ensures that the job placement is sustainable and meets the criteria of quality and decent work. Bi-weekly contact is kept with the person with disability, and specific interventions occur when further services are required (for example training or counselling).

FOH's Continuous Vocational Training Programme provides training for persons with disabilities in order to further develop their vocational and social skills and help them acquire new ones so they can progress in their jobs. Trainers are all technical experts in their own fields, and the curricula are the same as those of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Several incentives are provided to the trainees in order to further motivate them to persevere in the training and in their jobs (daily transport to and from the centre, daily breakfast meals and "trainee of the month" competitions).

## Impact of the practice

The documented impact of this good practice includes increased job retention and employer satisfaction. Employers feel more confident to hire persons with disabilities when they can be certain they will be supported by services on a continuous basis. Persons with disabilities also access higher responsibilities, when provided with training in a lifelong approach.

# GP3.

## Making the “business case”: Demonstrating the productivity potential of persons with disabilities

### Background of the practice

It is important for each organization to demonstrate the productivity (quality and quantity) of persons with disabilities in the work context, whether in vocational training workshops, apprenticeships, inclusive employment or self-employment. Such demonstration will serve as a good model and motivation for potential employers and persons with disabilities themselves.

### This practice is based on the following provisions of ILO Recommendation No. 168:

- Paragraph 14: “Vocational rehabilitation measures for disabled persons should be followed up in order to assess the results of these measures.” Careful and systematic assessment records should be compiled into research, which will be very important in furthering the participation of disabled persons in the regular labour market.
- Paragraph 11(I): “[Measures should include] research and the possible application of its results to various types of disability in order to further the participation of disabled persons in ordinary working life.” Information on inclusive employment should be documented in research but also disseminated in order to encourage other organizations to implement such models.
- Paragraph 11(i): “[Measures should include] encouragement of the dissemination of information on examples of actual and successful instances of the integration of disabled persons in employment.”

### Description of the practice

The pioneering research and fact-based advocacy that LPHU has been leading has significantly contributed to mobilizing the private sector for inclusive employment. Indeed, LPHU’s research provides a unique perspective in Lebanon on the issues of employability and productivity of persons with disabilities. For example, regular inserts in An Nahar newspaper present success stories of employees with disabilities, and information concerning the activities of the Employers’ Network for Supporting Diversity at Work.

Ensuring client satisfaction is another way of demonstrating productivity of persons with disabilities: At ArcenCiel, much attention has been given to improving and increasing productivity of the workshops so as to satisfy and reach out to more clients through the production control mechanism “Zero Defect”, for analysing and eliminating production defects and errors.

### Impact of the practice

The best way to fight stigma is through appropriate education and information. This is why dissemination of information about the productivity of persons with disabilities is very important. Documented impact of this good practice can be seen at different levels. Publication of information about employer–employee satisfaction in inclusive employment has led to an increase in the number of enterprises that have joined the Employers’ Network for Supporting Diversity at Work, and an increased number of job offers at LPHU. Public dissemination of

feedback from employers related to the “business case” of employing persons with disability has also contributed to attitudinal change within society.

**Continuous improvement of product quality**

**Satisfaction of clientele**

**Increased number of clients and demand for products**

**Increased work opportunities for persons with disabilities**

**Companies working with these organizations could join the ILO Global Business and Disability Network.**

**See**

[http://www.businessanddisability.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=146&lang=en](http://www.businessanddisability.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=67&Itemid=146&lang=en).

This network comprises representatives from multinational enterprises, employers’ organizations and business networks, and selected non-governmental and disabled people’s organizations, to assist companies to include people with disabilities in the workforce from the perspective of business and human rights cases.

The ILO believes that by participating in such a network, companies will benefit from more diverse workforces, improved productivity, reduced turnover of staff, safer workplaces and increased customer service and community brand loyalty. Employers’ organizations will also increase their capacity to address their members’ needs related to disability diversity, corporate social responsibility, legal adherence and human resources.

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network wishes to foster the development of a workforce culture that is respectful and inclusive, promoting the hiring, retention and professional development of people with disabilities.

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network is an employer-led, member-based initiative that drives strategic business awareness about the positive relationship between the inclusion of people with disabilities and business success. It serves companies of all sizes and markets by encouraging knowledge sharing and joint activities, thus building disability expertise, facilitating the development of national networks and promoting the business and human rights cases for disability inclusion in the workplace.

# GP4.

## Ensuring accessibility and increasing outreach of services

### Background of the practice

This good practice relates to efforts made to improve access of the person with disabilities to the training venues and workplaces. The question of accessibility is crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive employment, not just because it reduces a great deal of daily stress for persons with disabilities and positively affects their performance, but also because it indicates the openness and readiness of the companies and training providers to accommodate their needs.

This practice is based on ILO Recommendation No. 168, Paragraph 11(h): “[Measures should include,] wherever possible and appropriate, facilitation of adequate means of transport to and from the places of rehabilitation and work according to the needs of disabled persons.”

The practice is also in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9 (Accessibility), which states that appropriate measures must be taken to “ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.”<sup>1</sup>

### Description of the practice

All four organizations have spread their services throughout Lebanon, as shown in the map (figure 1), in order to provide services that can be accessed easily.

For ArcenCiel, increasing accessibility is a holistic concept: changes need to happen at home, in the means of transportation, and at the workplace. In order to achieve this, ArcenCiel first secures the collaboration of the family and community of the person with disabilities. Ramps and other adjustments are then added to the home of the beneficiary. More than 100 cars per year are also adjusted to the needs of persons with disabilities. Coordination with the companies recruiting persons with disabilities allows for the identification of the necessary adjustments, and implementation of changes.

Moreover, ArcenCiel has also published two accessibility-related documents: (a) the Inclusion at work manual (September 2012), a resource guide for recruiting and integrating persons with disabilities; and (b) the Accessibility checklist, a document designed to identify architectural and communication changes that need to be done to increase the accessibility of private and public places.

ArcenCiel reached an agreement with the Lebanese Government to pay for all manufactured products to be delivered for clients with disabilities. The demand for wheelchairs in Lebanon being estimated at 3,000 per year, ArcenCiel aims at producing up to 10,000 wheelchairs per year and exporting the surplus. The success of the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>.

ArcenCiel experience has led to its franchising to governmental and other non-governmental organizations working with persons with disabilities in Jordan, Syria and Egypt.

The LPHU manual Your guide for job description provides specific information on workplace adjustments, including parking spaces, ramps for building entrances, enlargement of hallways with horizontal grab-bars, widening of doors, and adjustments of elevators (depth, width, grab-bars, sound systems) and washrooms. In addition, LPHU carried out accessibility-related training workshops and awareness-raising seminars in different companies and private sector organizations, including for more than 50 tourism and travel companies with the Beirut Academy for Tourism Sciences.

Since 1993 FOH, in cooperation with the Municipality of Tripoli, has contributed to an increase in the accessibility of public and private schools, homes, worksites, places of worship, roads and pavements in the region. In cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, FOH has also organized a training workshop for municipalities on physical accessibility. In 1990, FOH launched the White Taxi Project, a special transport service for persons with disabilities. FOH was also able to create an accessible cafeteria and playground to encourage social integration of children with disabilities and their families. FOH also run several specially equipped buses to facilitate the transport of persons with disabilities.

## Impact of the practice

An accessible home, accessible means of transportation and accessible work environments are minimum requirements for persons with disabilities to access decent work. Empirical evidence shows that tackling the accessibility issue in a holistic way leads to greater independence of the person with disabilities, reduced isolation and an improved sense of self-control and self-worth. Accessible transport facilities are also used by persons without disabilities and therefore contribute to the increased visibility of persons with disabilities. Enterprises that adopt an accessibility policy also become accessible for clients with disabilities (which allows them to expand their customer base).



Mediterranean Sea

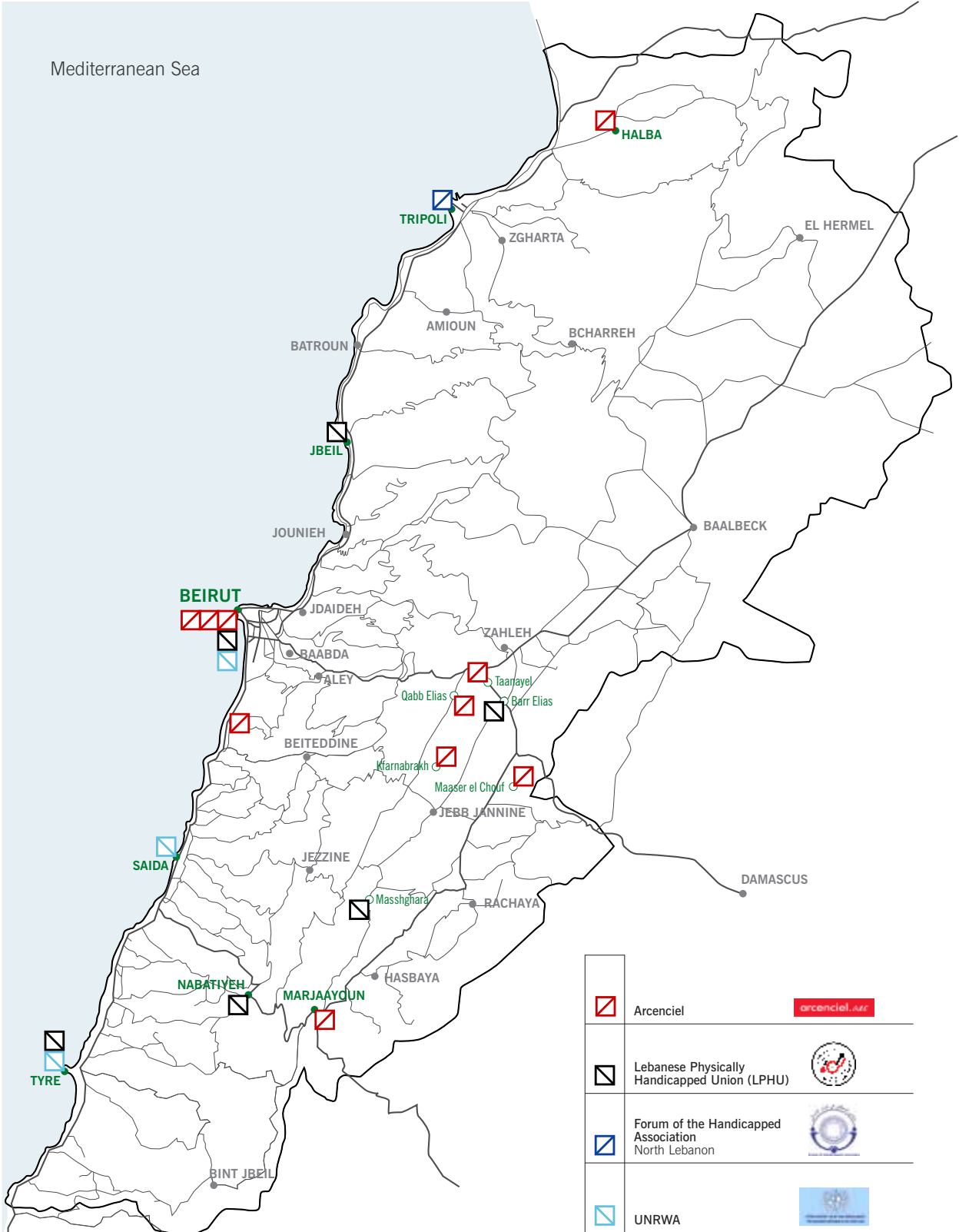


Figure 1 Map of Organisations providing services to persons with disabilities in Lebanon

## Nothing about us without us”: Support by and for persons with disabilities

### Background of the practice

The implementation of successful inclusive employment should involve persons with disabilities themselves at all stages of the operation: programme design, mobilization and awareness promotion, training, service provision, implementation, evaluation, and others. This is based on general obligation (3) in Article 4 (General obligations) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: “In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.”

The practice of empowering persons with disabilities is also embedded in ILO Convention No. 159, Article 5: “The representative organizations of and for disabled persons shall be consulted on the implementation of policy, including the measures to promote co-operation and co-ordination between the public and private bodies engaged in vocational rehabilitation activities.”

### Description of the practice

LPHU describes itself as an “organization built by and for people with disabilities” with a mission to defend their rights and interests, and to secure equal opportunities. LPHU has mobilized persons with physical disabilities to speak for themselves through public awareness campaigns, in order to spread a culture of inclusion and diversity (through the magazine *Waw*, for instance).

The LPHU advocacy training programme has a double objective: to raise the self-confidence of trainees with disabilities, and to improve the perception of disability issues in Lebanese society. A woman with disability’s post-training feedback was: “I have found here what makes me capable to change my life. I am becoming stronger and I want to overcome all the obstacles.”

LPHU, with the support of the Office of Transition Initiatives and in partnership with the Youth Association for the Blind, ensured maximum participation of the disabled community in the Parliamentary elections that took place in Lebanon in the summer of 2009, after a survey showed that only two of the 73 stations met accessibility standards in Beirut.

For ArcenCiel, the involvement of persons with disabilities at all levels of the organization provides the strongest guarantee of the relevance of its activities. It also highlights the unique expertise persons with disabilities have developed in terms of the optimal way to promote their own social inclusion.

## Impact of the practice

The active participation of persons with disabilities in programmes that affect their lives contributes to their enhanced sense of self-worth. This improved self-perception allows for a more proactive challenging of both discriminatory attitudes in society and overprotective behaviour within the family. This is in turn reflected in the increased number of applicants to the programmes of the four organizations.

Effective self-advocacy practices have also led to a more than fourfold increase in the number of disabled persons' organizations in Lebanon over the last 10 years, organized in a powerful lobby for the full implementation of Law 220/2000. They also allow building meaningful partnerships with both public and private sector stakeholders.

Fact-based lobbying led to a new electoral law in September 2008 that stipulated provisions to improve accessibility to polling stations, thus allowing persons with disabilities to exercise their right to vote on equal grounds with all Lebanese citizens (USAID 2008). Advocacy and lobbying from disabled persons' organizations and NGOs have contributed to the inclusion of the disability dimension in the National Education Five-Year Plan 2010–2015 (Ministry of Education and Higher Education 2010).



LPHU - Waw magazine

## Gender mainstreaming

### Background of the practice

In Lebanon, as well as in much of the rest of the Arab world, women with disabilities face double discrimination. A study on women and disability in Lebanon by Wehbi and Lakkis (2010) revealed that discrimination against women with disabilities begins at home, where boys are preferred over girls. A girl's primary role is often restricted to marriage and childbearing, which a woman with disability is perceived as incapable of fulfilling. Women with disabilities are then perceived as a burden to their families or the State, and forced into dependence for their entire lives. Such discrimination is a great barrier for their personal growth. The sixth good practice is based on the following legal instruments:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 6: "States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms."
- ILO Convention No. 159, Article 4: "The said policy shall be based on the principle of equal opportunity between disabled workers and workers generally. Equality of opportunity and treatment for disabled men and women workers shall be respected."
- ILO Recommendation No. 168, Paragraph 8: "In providing vocational rehabilitation and employment assistance to disabled persons, the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers should be respected."

### Description of the practice

LPHU has supported gender mainstreaming with numerous activities ranging from its participation in the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, to the organization of awareness-raising workshops and advocacy campaigns about women with disabilities with successful motherhood experiences (for instance). Half of its beneficiaries who benefitted from placement are women.<sup>1</sup>

Five out of nine board members of FOH are women. Both men and women with disabilities are involved at all levels in the design and execution of FOH's programmes and projects. The Women's Committee in FOH is active in promoting the rights of women with disabilities, and in organizing fund-raising events to support FOH's programmes. Some of FOH's vocational programmes and many training workshops have been designed for women in non-traditional occupations.

### Impact of the practice

Constant gender mainstreaming efforts have led to a higher visibility of women with disabilities in Lebanon (in public places and in the media). At programme level, more women with disabilities are joining vocational training and seeking job placement in the four organizations.

<sup>1</sup> LPHU ESIP employment statistics, communicated to the author by D. Yahfoufi, October 2012.

# Conclusion

A shift in the perception of disability has taken place in Lebanon: today, persons with physical and sensory disabilities have become more visible and are able to assert themselves. Still, their access to decent work is limited, and the small share of children with disabilities in school is not an encouraging sign for the future of inclusive employment in the country.

Much remains to be done. Implementation mechanisms must be identified for Law 220/2000 as a matter of priority. Work is also needed for persons with intellectual disabilities to be better included in education programmes and in the world of work. Another area for potential improvement includes a shift in the type of interventions, away from sheltered employment, towards meaningful inclusion in the workforce.

The work of all four organizations clearly shows the way forward. They have demonstrated that supporting the employment of persons with disabilities should include systematic individually tailored service provision, a strong empowerment component, and continuous advocacy towards employers and society at large.

It is hoped that this documentation of good practices will serve as an opportunity for peer learning and promotion of inclusive employment. It is also hoped that this report will inspire other organizations to document the impact of their activities, and improve the common understanding of what actually works for the promotion of inclusive employment.

# Summary of Articles 68 to 75 from Law 220/2000 related to the right to work and employment<sup>1</sup>

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**Article 68.** Every person with a disability has the same right as all other members of society to work and employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by author from:  
[http://www.lphu.com/AR/index.asp?Id\\_Page=40](http://www.lphu.com/AR/index.asp?Id_Page=40).

**Article 69.** A person's disability should not be an obstacle for that person's candidacy for work, and selection tests should be adapted to the needs of the person with disability, and will be used to determine the candidate's suitability for the job.

**Article 70.** It is the responsibility of the National Employment Office, in cooperation with the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Education, to provide rehabilitation for disabled persons above 18 years of age and channel them to the regular labour market or sheltered workshops or vocational associations, and monitor their work and ensure continuous follow-up in order to refer them to the regular labour market.

**Article 71.** Every person with a disability who is above 18 years of age and is a holder of the personal disability identification card is considered unemployed and will benefit from unemployment indemnity, which amount to 75 per cent of the minimum wages, paid by the Ministry of Labour. Unemployment indemnity will stop as soon as the person finds employment.

**Article 72.** A joint committee grouping all labour and employment directorates and associations and headed by the Director-General of the Ministry of Labour is formed to activate the right of disabled persons for work and employment, through guidance and coordination.

**Article 73.** A minimum quota of 3 per cent in the public sector is allocated to the employment of persons with disabilities.

**Article 74.** For private enterprises of 30 to 60 employees, one person with disability is employed. For private enterprises of more than 60 employees, the minimum 3 per cent quota is applied. Employers who do not abide by this law must pay to the Ministry of Labour, within one year, an amount equivalent to twice the minimum wages for each non-employed disabled person.

**Article 75.** Any employer who employs more disabled persons than prescribed by the law receives an income tax exemption equivalent to the minimum wages for each employed disabled person.

# List of people interviewed

## 1. ArcenCiel and Catholic Relief Services:

Ms. Marie Melki, *Job Placement Supervisor* (ArcenCiel)

Ms. Rania Temraoui, *Project Manager* (CRS)

## 2. Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU):

Ms. Sylvana Lakkis, *President*

Ms. Doha Yahfouf, *National Programme Coordinator*

## 3. Forum of the Handicapped Association (FOH):

Mr. Jameel Sbeiti, *Executive Director*

Mr. Hassan Mustapha, *Job Placement Supervisor*

## 4. UNRWA / Employment Services Centre:

### Beirut Office:

Ms. Taghreed Awad

Mr. Rabih Fakhri

Ms. Leila Kaissi

Mr. Ziad Kawash

Mr. Samir Shaaban Radwan

Ms. Johanne Van Dijk

### Saida Office:

Ms. Iman Al Khatib, *ESC Counsellor*

Mr. Majd Farhat, *Job Creation Manager*

### Tyre Office:

Mr. Salem Amin Yassin, *ESC Supervisor*

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