**Q 1: Please provide information on the following services that are available for persons with disabilities (PWD) in your country, including data on their coverage, geographic distribution and delivery arrangements, funding and sustainability, challenges and shortcoming in their implementation:**

1. **Personal assistance;**
2. **In-home, residential and community support;**
3. **Support in decision-making, including peer support; and**
4. **Communication support, including support for augmentative and alternative communication**

* According to the last national survey, done by the Palestinian Central Bureau of statistics (PCBS), published in 2011, about 300.000 Palestinians or 7% of the total population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are living with disability. Some of which are a direct consequence of violence inflicted by Israeli settlers, police or the army.
* The State of Palestine has taken a number of legislative and policy steps that indicate commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and reducing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities (PWDs) by:
  + - 1. Article 9 of the 2003 Palestinian amended basic law, recognizes the right of all Palestinians to equality before the law and judiciary without distinction based on disability. Article 22 commits the National Authority to providing education services, health and social assurance to the families of disabled persons.
      2. The Palestinian Disability law No 4 for the year 1999, provides the persons with disabilities, the right to equality before the law and to non-discrimination, it provides them also the right to housing, to health care, and to travel, to work, the right to participate in cultural life and sport. Concerning Disabled persons, the ministries of social affairs, health, education, labor, youth and sports and other relevant agencies are required to ensure that their services equally made available for all disabled persons.
      3. A Presidential Decree was issued in 2004 calling for the establishment of a higher council for the affairs of persons with disabilities, to oversee the implementation of the 1999 law as well as other legal provisions relating to disability.
      4. A National Strategic Framework for Disability was adopted in 2012; it considers disability as a prime development issue, based on the principle that persons with disabilities are entitled to their rights equally with all other citizens. It requires various government ministries to mainstream disability issues in their planning and programs.
      5. The Palestinian National Development Plan for 2014 to 2016 includes priorities references to improving the social protection, security, access to justice opportunities of persons with disabilities. It commits itself to providing “sustainable, high quality, rights-based, social services, and specifically lists persons with disabilities amongst the intended beneficiaries.
      6. The Palestinian Ministry of Education and higher Education Development Strategy Plan for 2014 -2019, Includes specific goals relating to students with special education needs, identifies the need for a more detailed and comprehensive policy pertaining to inclusive education for children with disabilities.
* The Ministry of Social Development has a general directorate for persons with disability affairs; it has divisions for disabled persons within each of its district offices. There are currently 2-3 full time staff members/ social workers assigned to support disabled persons in accessing services and rights through government programs and schemes. They are responsible for overseeing the delivery of rehabilitative services for persons with disability. Which includes a number of services, activities and social, psychological, medical, educational, and professional support that enable disabled persons to live their life independently and with dignity.
* The Ministry of Social Development is also responsible for the coordination with all stakeholders and other ministries to work on the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities by:

1. Determining the nature, degree and the extent of the disability;
2. Determining the extent of the impact the disability has the family of the disabled person, and provide appropriate assistance;
3. Providing special services to persons with disabilities in the area of care and relief, training and education and giving prioritizing to family development programs;
4. The provision of inpatient care and social services, for the severely disabled and those who have no dependents.
5. Supporting concerns protected programs.
6. Issuing a disability card.

* Several line ministries provide services to people with disabilities, including the MOSA, MOH, MOE, MOL, MOT, and the ministry of Local Government (MOLG).
* Through line ministries and government bodies, the Palestinian government has scored progress towards implementing priority policies associated with the strategic goals of the NDP 2014-2016.
* Social Protection sector continue to develop integrated rights based social protection systems with a view to deliver high-quality services. These will ensure a decent life and allow opportunities for all citizens, particularly the poor, disabled, children, youth, women and the elderly.
* Many civil society organizations provide a range of services to people with disabilities, including rehabilitation. These are the PRCS; Bethlehem Arab Society for rehabilitation (BASR), patient’s friends Society, Abu.Raya Rehabilitation center and community based Rehabilitation Program.
* These institutions deliver a variety of services and programs to people with disabilities, particularly children, the elderly, the injured patients, children with growth disorders, and other need of rehabilitation services.
* The rights to personal assistance, in-home residential and community support, support in decision making and peer support, communication support, are all rights for disabled persons recognized in the national law for the rights of PWD, no 4 for the year 1999.
* In the Gaza Strip, the MoSA Directorate General of people with Disabilities registered many achievements in 2015. In line with its annual Plan, the MoSA embraced a variety of approaches designed to develop educational guidance and deliver services to students with disabilities.
* Partnership agreements in Gaza Strip were also concluded, to enhance the education sector. The MoE signed an agreement with the Islamic Relief Palestine to provide psychosocial support and furnish counselling offices. In addition to an agreement with UNICEF to provide guidance and special education, a memorandum of understanding on comprehensive education was signed with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS).
* The MoE concluded an agreement with the center for mind-body medicine to implement the hope and healing programs, which targeted 400 students at the Hittin Secondary school in Eastern Gaza District Directorate of education.
* Another agreement was made with the Gaza community Mental Health program (GCMHP) to provide training to school counsellors and furnish advice units.
* Personal assistance is being offered through families support for PwD, and allocated for PwD that are employed by NGOs or INGOs. There are no services related to in-home or residential care for PwD neither from the formal social nor from the health service providers. Services in this manner come from NGOs who are providing seasonal services through community based rehabilitation projects that have been offering community services for the last 24 years. These services offered by NGOs at the community level has no capacity in terms of budgets and assistive devices for communication and movement to cover all geographical areas and ages of PwD[[1]](#footnote-1).

**\*\*Geographical distribution of PwD in Palestine –2011[[2]](#footnote-2)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of disability | Disability Prevalence rates according to the narrow definition of disability | | |
| Palestinian Territories | West Bank | Gaza |
| Total of people with disabilities / difficulties | 2.7 | 2.9 | 2.4 |
| Total of disabilities / difficulties | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.1 |
| Vision | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Hearing | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Mobility | 1.3 | 0.4 | 1.1 |
| Remembering and concentrating | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Communication | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Learning Difficulty | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Psychological | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |

**Q2: Please explain how persons with disabilities can access information about the existing services referred to in question one, including referral procedures, eligibility criteria and application requirements.**

* All persons with disabilities in the State of Palestine have access to information in relation to the services delivered by the ministry of social development. In the meantime, all the information is available in the ministry’s official offices in all the regions and on the official website.

**Q3: Please elaborate on how these services respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities throughout their life cycle (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and older age) and how is service delivery ensured in the transition periods between life cycle stages.**

* The MOSA issued disability ID card, which qualify all people with disabilities to access health insurance and rehabilitation free of charge or with nominal fees, in light. In light of extended needs of people with disabilities, the Ministry’s contributes to service delivery is limited compared to services provided by private and Civil society organizations.
* In relation to disability ID card, the MOSA has finalized the case management system, including budget diagnosis and service map. The ministry concluded 23 agreements on service purchase with nationwide centers and societies to provide care to 755 beneficiaries. Three agreements were signed to purchase domestic services for the benefit of persons with disabilities. The MOSA also delivered cash and in-kind assistance to people with disabilities and beneficiaries of various programs, including the cash assistance program and deprived families Economic Empowerment Program (DEEP).

**Q 4*:*****Please provide information on the number of certified sign language interpreters and deafblind interpreters available in your country.**

* The number of certified sign language interpreters in Palestine is five; the Palestinian Deaf Union is the certified reference for granting certificates of practice. There are no deafblind interpreters in Palestine. Persons with deafblind disability are communicating through touch with their families, as they are underserved within the services available in Palestine. *(Info source: Palestinian Deaf Union)*
* In addition to that, for communication in media, the national Palestine TV offers sign language only once a day for one news bulletin. However, other Palestinian television network like Ma’an news network does not offer any sign services to PwD.
* Persons with deaf disabilities communicate through smartphone cameras and SMS messages. Israeli telecommunication companies are not allowing Palestinian telecommunication companies to benefit from this service through dominating internet services.

**Q 5: Please provide information on the existence of any partnership between State institutions and private service providers (e.g, non-governmental organizations, for profit service providers) for the provision of support to PwD.**

* Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions, Civil Society Organizations have attempted to build partnerships with it, aiming to participate in the nation building process at all levels. In the disability sector, before and after the PNA, CSOs, NGOs and INGOs have continued to be the main supporters to the rights and providers to the needs of PwD through foreign aid. During the past 22 years, the Palestinian government has played the role of a service provider to some services for PwD, instead of creating the social security system and disability card that entitles all PwD to obtain their rights and needs in dignity. Until this day the rights of PwD are pending. Until these rights are acknowledged by a decision maker.
* E.g., The MoSD has partnerships with 28 CSOs that provides PwD services in different specializations in Palestine, by offering the services for sale.
* E.g., QADER since its establishment as a CSO working in the disability sector, it has partnered with three main ministries (MOSD, MOH, MOLG and MOED) to build systems, strategies, and models in social development and created together success stories. Unfortunately, success stories require the will and capacity to build on them and carry on with the achievements, which is not the case in many of the partnerships due to the lack of institutionalization of new models.

**Q 6: Please describe to what extent and how are PwD and their representative organizations involved in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of support services.**

* The State of Palestine also re-established the higher council for the affairs of people with disabilities (HCAPD) which includes in its membership, representatives of the government, service providers, and organization of people with disabilities, private sector, and ICHR.
* According to its bylaws, the HCAPD is mainly tasked to activate policies that contributes to promoting the status of and empowering people with disabilities, propose and follow up on approval of draft law and regulations on the rights of people with disabilities, and provide capacity building to relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.
* Generally, PwD are represented through DPOs Disabled Persons Organizations in Palestine. The General Union of Disabled Persons (GUDP) is the lead Union for the disability movement since 1992, and the union has district branches in the West Bank and Gaza. During the 24 years of its function, the union has faced tremendous organizational challenges because of its membership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization PLO. Other DPOs are organized to advocate for the rights of PwD and WwD. There are about 15 to 20 DPOs existing and functioning in hard organizational and financial constraints due to limited capacities and the lack of financial support. Despite the difficult situation of DPOs, and with the support of CSOs, NGOs and INGOs, the disability movement and rights situation has developed comprehensively in the last 24 years. Nowadays, PwD who are leading DPOs along with activists who are representing, advocating and putting pressure on the formal institutions to acknowledge the rights of PwD towards enforcing the rights enshrined in the international conventions.

**Q7: Please provide any other relevant information and statistics (including surveys, censuses, administrative data, reports, and studies) related to the provision of support to PwD in your country.**

1. Al-Sahel company for Institutional Development & Communication, Needs Assessment and services provided to people with disabilities  in Bethlehem and Hebron, QADER for Community Development, 2012” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Diagrams and tables are all done from, The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and ministry of social affairs, Disability Survey 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)