

National Inclusive Emergency Plan

Published on 31 October 2023

Introduction

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, brought about a major shift in the global disability agenda. It introduced a rights-based model to replace the medical and charitable approaches, fundamentally shaping policies, programs, and implementation.

The international system became more inclusive with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030), which committed to the principle of leaving no one behind. This principle is further reinforced by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

At the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), global guidelines were established on how to include persons with disabilities into humanitarian action (the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action). These guidelines place the human rights of persons with disabilities at the center of humanitarian work.

It is estimated that persons with disabilities make up 15% of the world's population¹, a proportion that rises significantly during humanitarian crises. Mortality rates among persons with disabilities during emergencies and natural disasters are two to four times higher than among those without disabilities².

In Lebanon, there are no precise estimates of the percentage of persons with disabilities in the total population. The Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey (LFHLCS, 2019) indicates that persons with disabilities represent around 4% of the Lebanese population³, nearly half of whom are older persons. According to another study, the World Health Organization estimates that the number exceeds 400,000 persons⁴. The Ministry of Social Affairs' Disability Card Program reports that about 122,000 persons hold disability cards, though another study shows that only 2.4% of the population are cardholders⁵.

¹ World Health Organization and the World Bank, World Report on Disability (2011).

² Katsunori Fujii, The Great East Japan Earthquake and Persons with Disabilities, in Disability Information Resources, Japan

³ Family Planning Survey on Health and Disability, EU Trust Fund "Madad", 2019.

⁴ Kombaz – The Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Lebanon – 15 July 2018

⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs Data, 2019.

Persons with disabilities, like all Lebanese citizens, have been severely affected by the country's worsening financial and economic crisis in recent years. This comes on top of the exclusion, discrimination, and inequality they already face in social, economic, and educational life.

Following the recent Israeli aggression, which placed the entire country under emergency conditions, large numbers of people — including persons with disabilities and older persons — were forced to evacuate their homes in targeted areas and flee to safer places. Many left without assistive devices or essential medication, and faced difficulties in finding space in shelters due to lack of accessibility and appropriate facilities. Even in normal times, persons with disabilities in Lebanon encounter serious barriers in accessing services, especially during emergencies and armed conflicts.

In this context, Lebanon's ratification of the CRPD in February 2023⁶ — and the subsequent signature by the President of the Republic in April 2025 — marked a major step. The Convention obliges States Parties to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in their laws, policies, and practices, particularly in humanitarian settings. Article 11 of the CRPD requires States Parties, in line with their obligations under international law, to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and natural disasters⁷.

⁶ Pursuant to Decree No. 10966 issued by the Council of Ministers on 6 February 2023, based on Law No. 291 issued by the Parliament on 12 April 2022, which granted the government the authority to ratify the Convention.

⁷ See the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol.

Preamble

This document represents the National Emergency Plan, enriched with amendments and proposals that make it an inclusive emergency plan — one that takes into account the rights and needs of persons with disabilities during humanitarian crises and emergencies.

The Emergency Taskforce for Persons with Disabilities prepared this plan with the aim of reducing discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion against persons with disabilities during humanitarian crises. The plan also seeks to empower organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to participate meaningfully in humanitarian work — from planning through to recovery.

Our approach to this document is grounded in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, specifically:

- Non-discrimination: Persons with disabilities must enjoy equal access to services, which should be universally accessible and usable.
- Full participation: Persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations, must be enabled to take part in decisions affecting them before, during, and after crises.
- Adoption of inclusion policies: Government agencies and humanitarian actors must base their emergency policies and practices on the principles of the CRPD, ensuring the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in relief work.
- Accessibility: All humanitarian activities and displacement sites must be accessible and usable for persons with all types of disabilities.
- Respect for dignity and privacy: Relief efforts must respect the inherent dignity and privacy of persons with disabilities.
- Equity and equality: Relief procedures and distributions must be fair and just, both among persons with disabilities themselves and between them and others.

These principles form the basis for essential measures that the State and humanitarian actors must adopt to safeguard the rights and needs of persons with disabilities during humanitarian crises. They also place persons with disabilities — either as individuals or through OPDs — at the center of humanitarian action.

The procedures outlined in this document were developed in collaboration with OPDs, United Nations agencies, international organizations, and local NGOs working in humanitarian relief. They are designed for use by all actors involved in humanitarian response, especially the institutions of the Lebanese State.

To achieve the objectives of these procedures, the following enabling factors are necessary:

- Recognition of disability as part of human diversity.

- Availability of disability expertise among those working with persons with disabilities in crises.
- Provision of services and devices that guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Existence of policies and laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities in emergencies.
- Adequate financial resources to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Effective participation of OPDs with sufficient expertise and resources in planning and implementing humanitarian action.
- Availability of high-quality, reliable data on persons with disabilities, reflecting their diversity.

Ultimately, the adoption of this twin-track approach, along with the accurate implementation of these procedures, will ensure the successful inclusion of persons with disabilities in all stages of humanitarian action. This requires the engagement of all stakeholders, across all sectors, and in every humanitarian context.

Proposed Revisions to the National Emergency Plan (Published 31 October 2023)

1. Health and Health Services

Measures

- Assess and monitor the condition of the health sector in Lebanon, including medical and health stocks and needs — particularly those of persons with disabilities — to ensure continuity of services.
- Equip field hospitals and increase the readiness of blood banks and intensive care units in both public and private hospitals.
- Assess health needs in displacement centers, monitor outbreaks of diseases and epidemics, and ensure effective containment.
- Provide field-based primary health services to displaced persons, including persons with disabilities.
- Distribute medical supplies and medicines to affected populations, with priority for those with chronic illnesses, along with assistive devices for persons with disabilities in displacement centers.
- Oversee vaccination campaigns for affected groups in collaboration with international and national organizations, including child nutrition programs.
- Supervise the construction of health centers and field hospitals in compliance with Lebanese health standards and in ways that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities in affected areas.
- Lead psychosocial support programs for affected persons and relief workers, ensuring these also address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Additional Points

As part of emergency preparedness:

- Identify inclusive health centers for persons with disabilities.
- Train healthcare workers on how to assist persons with disabilities in emergencies.

2. Shelter

Measures

- Assess the condition of designated temporary shelters and identify urgent needs for their operation and management, including accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities.

- Develop a general plan to direct displaced persons to safe, adapted, and accessible locations, based on field realities. Inform field teams and local authorities about available shelters and disseminate this information through multiple accessible formats for persons with disabilities.
- Establish an adapted and detailed database of all public bodies, associations, and NGOs serving persons with disabilities across Lebanon, categorized by geography and type of services provided.
- Create an adapted database of international organizations for persons with disabilities active in Lebanon that can assist during disasters, categorized by type of services they provide in shelters.
- Prepare adapted lists of available resources across Lebanon, indicating locations and quantities held by both public and private sectors.
- Provide lists of private sector companies owning trucks and contractors with machinery that can be mobilized for aid distribution.
- Develop a national adapted platform for assessing needs in shelters and coordinating humanitarian assistance.

Additional Points

- Assign a disability focal point in every shelter.
- Train shelter staff on how to support persons with disabilities.
- Provide trained personal assistants for persons with disabilities where needed.
- Address the specific needs of persons with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, in shelters.
- Ensure reasonable accommodation measures in shelters, enabling persons with disabilities to move, access facilities, and use available services.

3. Food Security

Measures

- Identify food stock levels with main importers and prepare databases and contacts.
- Determine the number of food rations that can be secured through international organizations for displaced and affected populations.
- Develop a registration mechanism for affected persons that includes questions to identify persons with disabilities and their specific dietary needs, as well as displaced persons and families already registered under the National Poverty Targeting Program and disability support programs.
- Define the financial resources required to secure food support for a three-month period, identifying alternatives and donors, with a dedicated budget line for persons with specific nutritional needs — including those who face difficulties in eating or drinking.
- Assess Lebanon's wheat reserves and develop/implement a plan to ensure a stock sufficient for at least three months.

- Establish and implement a mechanism for needs assessments in shelters and host communities, including the food requirements of persons with disabilities, to ensure transparent, fair, and inclusive food distribution.
- Prepare and disseminate a national database of food storage facilities across Lebanon.

Additional Points

- Strengthen partnerships with OPDs and service providers to guide interventions addressing the special dietary needs of persons with disabilities.

4. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Measures

- Identify available quantities of fuel in Lebanon and those required to enable response teams to operate and supply water to shelters.
- Assess the condition of water networks and distribution systems in cooperation with water establishments.
- Develop a plan with the Lebanese Electricity Company to secure electricity supply for vital facilities and temporary shelters to ensure continuity of essential services.
- Identify alternative energy sources (private generators, solar energy, etc.) that can be used in public facilities and shelters.
- Determine available stocks of water and hygiene supplies with main importers in Lebanon.
- Prepare adapted awareness materials and distribute them to citizens in temporary shelters and host communities on hygiene standards needed to prevent the spread of disease and epidemics.
- Manage waste in shelters and host communities to prevent disease and epidemics resulting from random accumulation of waste.

Additional Points

- Ensure provision of hot water for bathing and personal hygiene.
- Regular disinfection of rooms and bathrooms.
- Provide essential sanitation and cleaning supplies.

5. Basic Assistance

Measures

- Define national criteria for groups eligible to receive financial support during emergencies under programs implemented by international organizations operating in Lebanon, with priority for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
- Develop a standardized, adapted needs-assessment form to identify beneficiaries; ensure it is inclusive and disseminated to all partners.
- Use a unified, adapted, and inclusive information management system to collect data — disaggregated by disability, sex, and age — within the national platform for coordinating and managing cash/financial assistance in host communities (outside joint shelters).
- Prepare lists of non-food items (NFIs) that include the needs of persons with disabilities and senior persons, sufficient for at least three months in temporary shelters, and develop a plan with relevant international organizations to procure them.

Additional point

- Provide financial coverage for disability-related extra costs, including personal assistance where needed.

6. Protection

Stakeholders: Add Ministry of Justice; Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

Measures

- Map and assess human, material, and financial capacities among government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations active in protection — including OPDs and service providers.
- Develop and disseminate core protection procedures to be ensured in joint displacement centers, including procedures specific to persons with disabilities and their families.
- Circulate adapted information to unions of municipalities and municipalities on entities providing protection-related services.
- Foster inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral cooperation to apply protection standards that are inclusive of persons with disabilities throughout humanitarian management of displacement.

Additional points

- Include disability and persons with disabilities as a standing item on protection-coordination meeting agendas.
- Ensure participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in protection-coordination meetings, with reasonable accommodation to enable their effective participation.
- Assess and analyze protection needs of target groups, including persons with disabilities.
- Integrate protection topics into community awareness activities conducted by governmental and non-governmental institutions.
- Conduct awareness campaigns on protection and increase knowledge among persons with disabilities about their right to submit complaints and reports.
- Deliver adapted information on protection, complaints mechanisms, and feedback channels in formats that ensure persons with disabilities can access them.
- Monitor service providers' compliance with social-protection principles and standards when collecting and sharing information about displaced individuals, including persons with disabilities.

7. Social Stability

Stakeholders: Add Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).

Measures

- Monitor tensions and conflicts that may arise and affect social stability, particularly among vulnerable groups in exposed areas and host communities.
- Support preparedness of local authorities for crises and strengthen their coordination and response capacities, ensuring inclusion of all groups. This includes supporting government efforts to establish and maintain Disaster Risk Management (DRM) operations rooms at both national and local levels, in coordination with OPDs.
- Provide support to local authorities (municipalities and unions) to retain staff and secure equipment and essential services needed for emergency response, including for immediate clean-up, repairs, and rehabilitation after crises. All such interventions must respect accessibility standards.
- Support humanitarian demining efforts and strengthen national actors' capacity to document and prioritize demining operations.
- Train governorate-level DRM operations rooms on communication during crises and disasters, including specific training on engaging with persons with disabilities.

Additional Points

- Support inclusive socio-economic empowerment projects for persons with disabilities in protracted crises.

- Ensure awareness campaigns on mines and cluster munitions are delivered in accessible and adapted formats.

Cross-Cutting Proposals:

- Allocate a budget for disability inclusion programs (such as accessibility).
- Support inclusive programming.

8. Logistics

Measures

- Prepare adapted lists of equipment, supplies, and logistical support required across all sectors, in order to develop a resource-mobilization and contingency plan.
- Develop a plan with security agencies to secure safe corridors for transporting equipment and relief materials into high-risk areas, ensuring such routes are free of barriers for persons with disabilities.
- Establish adapted communication systems and alternatives to ensure effective coordination during transportation and distribution of logistical support, taking accessibility into account.
- Adopt a clear mechanism for managing external assistance and distributing it to the most vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, based on needs assessments from various sectors and government-defined priorities.
- Prepare an adapted and detailed database of all public institutions, associations, and international and local organizations — including those providing services for persons with disabilities — across all regions of Lebanon, classified by geographic distribution and the type of logistical services they provide.
- Identify strategic warehouses across regions to serve as regional hubs for managing logistical support, including those that store assistive devices for persons with disabilities.
- Ensure the continuity of Beirut–Rafic Hariri International Airport operations.
- Ensure the continuity of seaport operations along the Lebanese coast.
- Conduct damage assessments and rebuild bridges and roads that connect different regions of Lebanon.

9. Education

Measures

- Activate community engagement to improve services in the design and implementation of inclusive education programs during emergencies and throughout recovery.
- Monitor and evaluate education delivery, particularly for children and youth with disabilities, during emergencies, recovery, and development phases.

- Build capacities to enhance knowledge and skills on implementing high-quality inclusive education programs (including specialized training to support children and youth with disabilities).
- Guide donor investments in the education sector and support specialized services.
- Issue instructions to identify school buildings near the event site that are qualified or suitable for use, including schools that are accessible
- Provide adapted school materials, textbooks, and assistive devices for children and youth with disabilities in coordination with governmental and non-governmental actors, both local and international, and distribute them to affected learners.
- Assess educational and psychosocial challenges; provide counseling services to learners, teachers, and families; and implement psychosocial support programs in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and NGOs — ensuring these services also include learners with disabilities.
- Provide specialized training to educational teams to interact effectively with persons with disabilities, and mobilize scouting groups and school clubs to support emergency response.
- Evaluate the disaster risk reduction program and its effectiveness in crises, ensuring it incorporates disability and inclusion standards.
- Activate alternative education plans to accommodate affected learners in ways that guarantee inclusive education (enrollment, teaching/learning, assessment).
- Develop a training manual for all stakeholders, tailored to their roles, and review it with OPDs, parents, and educational organizations working on inclusive education and social integration.
- Conduct practical drills in educational facilities to test the preparedness of teachers and students in emergencies, ensuring readiness also for students with disabilities.

Additional Points

- Establish and activate coordination mechanisms that connect national and local levels across sectors, ensuring that OPDs and education actors are included in disaster-management planning and response.
- Create participation mechanisms that guarantee the involvement of government and non-government stakeholders at national and community levels — including displaced and host communities — in education response plans. Emphasize the inclusion of disability organizations and their specialized human resources.
- Ensure safe and inclusive learning environments for all children, including children and youth with disabilities, by removing all barriers to access.