



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Sub-regional Consultations with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) on Independent Living within the Community in the Arab region

Concept Note & Agenda

December 2022

1- Background

The “Arab-EU Research Network on Disability” was founded in 2022 by ESCWA, the Government of Malta and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It acts as an inter-regional platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building. It will bring together academics, researchers and institutions from both Europe and the Arab region for the shared objective of pursuing research as a driver for change to ensure greater social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The Network’s first academic conference, planned for early 2023, will focus on the challenges and opportunities to achieving Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which is the right to “living independently and being included in the community.”

2- Article 19 of the CRPD: Transition towards Independent Living within the Community

Article 19 of the CRPD states that “States Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community”¹

However, this right is far from realized. A study by ESCWA on “Barriers to implementing Article 19: A study on the institutionalization of persons with disabilities in select Arab countries”² found that there is large knowledge gap on the status of residential institutions currently set up in the region. The study also found that “few of the institutions studied are providing the kind of care and services required to facilitate the integration and independent living of persons with disabilities in their communities”. It also found that “in many Arab states, families often turn to institutionalization due to a lack of alternative care options, [financial difficulties] and the inaccessibility of many public spaces, services and facilities.”³ In the Arab region, there are major gaps in knowledge on the status of persons of disabilities who live in institutions, which require further attention and research.

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html>

² https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/barriers-implementing-article-19-institutionalization-persons-disabilities-en_0.pdf

³ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-19-living-independently-and-being-included-in-the-community.html>

3- Objective

As part of the preparations for the conference, the Network aims to conduct sub-regional consultations with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in the Arab region.

These consultations aim to consult persons with disabilities and their representative organizations (OPDs) on the main challenges to achieve deinstitutionalization, independent living and inclusion within the community.

The key messages emanating from the consultations will be collected into an outcome and recommendations document that would be presented in the planned conference on independent living.

In order to capture the context specific challenges for the diverse countries of the region, there will be a total of four sub-regional consultations divided as follows:

1. **Group (1):** Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine
2. **Group (2):** Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia
3. **Group (3):** Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen
4. **Group (4):** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

4- Dates

A total of four sub-regional consultations are planned to be held virtually using Zoom, and they are scheduled to be held on 12, 14, 15, and 19 December 2022.

Date	Countries
12 December 2022	Group (1): Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine
14 December 2022	Group (2): Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia
15 December 2022	Group (3) Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen
19 December 2022	Group (4) Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

5-Agenda for each consultation

Virtual Consultation (via Zoom) <i>Beirut time</i>	
9:30 -10:00	<i>Log-in the platform</i>
10:00 – 10:10	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening remarks- Introduction of participants
10:10 – 11:00	Session (1): A situation analysis What is the status of independent living and inclusion by the community in the Arab region today?
11:00 – 11:50	Session (2): Defining success What would an ideal scenario to achieve independent living and community inclusion look like in the Arab region?
11:50 – 12:00	Conclusion and recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Main recommendations/ways forward