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**The Inclusion of  
People with Disabilities  
in Humanitarian Projects**

Field Study

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## Introduction:

According to United Nations statistics, 15% of the world's population has disabilities, and they are suffering from several types of discrimination in their communities, or difficulties resulting in denying them from having equality with other people in having some of their basic rights, such as the right to education, the right to work and the right to freedom of movement. Knowing that all international conventions related to people with disabilities guarantee them these rights and promote equalizing them with other groups of society and states the necessity of removing obstacles that are hindering them from accessing the main services provided.

Regarding the effort to integrate people with disabilities into society and to preserve their basic rights, most countries enact laws that protect them from all forms of discrimination. However, in countries suffering from internal conflicts, where the role of state institutions is absent and their services in the areas that are out of their control are ceased, as in the case of Syria, where these state institutions are replaced by bodies, institutions, non-governmental organizations or humanitarian organizations that carry out the tasks of providing essential services to people affected by crises, without being abided by specific laws, but whose work is governed by the principle of working to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people and people with most urgent needs.

In this context, we wonder about the ability of humanitarian organizations to abide by the principles of humanitarian action, which is based on the need for equality between the groups affected by crises, especially in the Syrian situation, where we have a large number of affected people, including people with disabilities, whose number has significantly increased due to the current war to reach 2.8 million people who are physically disabled according to the United Nations estimates.

Therefore, we will discuss through this study the extent of the humanitarian organizations targeting for people with disabilities through the projects that they are implementing, and the extent to which they consider their most important requirements and needs, and to analyze their ability to identify the people with disabilities and deal with the challenges these organizations face when trying to reach them, with highlighting obstacles that confront people with disabilities in accessing the services provided by those organizations.

## Executive Summary

The Middle East and the Arab world in particular since the beginning of the Arab Spring in the summer of 2011 have witnessed many changes. The most prominent of these is the Syrian revolution, which was transformed by the regime's systematic bombing of areas outside its control into the worst humanitarian disaster according to the statements of many international officials. And the cease of official institutions of providing public services such as health, education, transportation and other basic services has increased the suffering of the population of those areas.

As the war continued over the past eight years, many Syrians were forced to take refuge to neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan, fearing for themselves and their children of death or disability, which increased dramatically. A report issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) states that there are 2.8 million Syrians suffering from permanent physical

disabilities, knowing that Syrians, especially those living in the camps, suffer from difficult living conditions and lack of basic services.

As a result of the deteriorating living conditions of the Syrians and the cessation of governmental services, humanitarian organizations have targeted them through projects that seek to meet their needs and provide their basic requirements in various sectors such as health, education, services, livelihoods, food security, non-food items, WASH.

Since humanitarian action is based on the principle of providing humanitarian assistance as needed, taking into account the needs of all groups affected by humanitarian crises, and considering that people with disabilities are among the groups with most urgent needs, we conducted this study to the extent of humanitarian organizations consideration for the needs and requirements of people with disabilities through projects they implement and the ratios of including people with disabilities in those projects, as well as to identify the most prominent difficulties they face to access these projects, and to reveal the extent of ability of these organizations' staff to distinguish between various types of disabilities and deal with it.

The study was mainly targeted humanitarian organizations operating in Syria and Turkey, in addition to some of the organizations working to implement some of its activities in neighboring countries such as Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, by targeting a random sample of 60 staff who are working with humanitarian organizations and collecting data of them through a special questionnaire for them, which contains closed and open - ended questions, also, in- depth interviews was conducted with a number of experts in the field of humanitarian action, using a manual containing open-ended questions to understand the situation of the humanitarian organizations' work, and the extent to which the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the projects being implemented.

The study showed that there is a low percentage of targeting of humanitarian organizations for people with disabilities and including them in the projects that they implement, and a decrease in the number of projects that are designed to include people with disabilities and suit these projects' activities with their needs.

The results also indicate that there are no authorities nor institutions specialized in managing the affairs of people with disabilities, also, there are no statistics that help to know the numbers of people with disabilities and the types of disabilities they have, in addition to having many difficulties that hinder the access of people with disabilities to the services provided, and the lack of sufficient awareness and ability of humanitarian organizations staff to identify and deal with various types of disabilities.

The study also concluded that humanitarian organizations adopt physical - medical perspective to define disability and people with disabilities, and describe them as just cases of (deficiencies or limited ability), without paying attention to the main role of environmental and behavioral obstacles in the genesis of the disability, and preventing the application of an effective participation and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. it was also observed that most of the plans, strategies and programs of the various executive organizations, do not consider the rights and issues of the people with disabilities as a priority of their work, whereas the minority of them only include the people with disabilities in medical precautionary measures or in care service activities only, in which the inclusion and effective participation cannot be achieved. In addition to some discrimination and negligence cases against them.

Adding to that the clear absence of all special measures aiming to ensure the minimum amount of the people with disabilities access to employment opportunities.

Based on the above, this report recommends the necessity of supporting and funding projects designed to meet the needs of the people with disabilities, and to set a minimum percentage for targeting them in the projects implemented and raising the awareness of the community about the necessity of encouraging them and working to integrate them in all fields.

## Findings

1. The percentage of targeting people with disabilities in projects implemented by humanitarian organizations is low and almost non-existent in some sectors.
2. The number of projects that are designed to include and accommodate people with disabilities is low.
3. The number of authorities, institutions and organizations specialized in the affairs of people with disabilities is severely low.
4. Most of the activities related to the people with disabilities focus only on physical disabilities and neglect other types of disabilities.
5. Lack of official statistics showing the number of people with disabilities and types of these disabilities.
6. There are no certain and specific criteria for humanitarian organizations to identify people with disabilities and classify the types of their disabilities.
7. People with disabilities face difficulty in accessing services provided by humanitarian organizations, mainly due to lack of environmental preparation of roads, means of transportation and the buildings of the humanitarian organizations.
8. The difficulty of accessing humanitarian services by the people with disabilities is raised due to the low financial abilities and difficulty in moving.
9. Schools are not prepared to facilitate access of students with disabilities.
10. Educational staff in schools are not trained on special handling and education of people with disabilities.
11. There are no educational programs in media and curricula for raising awareness about disability and the rights of the disabled.
12. There is a shortage of staff specialized in dealing with people with disabilities within the cadres of humanitarian organizations.
13. There is a low awareness and knowledge about dealing with people with disabilities of all types in humanitarian organizations' staff.
14. Humanitarian organizations cadres' ability to distinguish between types of disabilities is low.
15. The low financial capacity of humanitarian organizations is considered as one of the main factors that hinder targeting people with disabilities.
16. Exposure to violence and cruel treatment, where these practices appear in the form of detention and restriction for people with mental or psychological disability within houses which is more noticed in remote and rural areas.
17. There is no preparing for health institutions in the form necessary to facilitate the access of people with disabilities, and their access to basic health services.

## Recommendations

1. To the donors and INGOs:
  - a) Working to fund humanitarian institutions and organizations specialized in the affairs of people with disabilities.
  - b) To allocate a percentage of the funding provided to humanitarian organizations to target people with disabilities with the projects that are implementing.
  - c) To fund seminars and awareness sessions which aims to raise community awareness about the rights of people with disabilities.
  - d) fund projects that work on collecting data about people with disabilities in order to reach statistics showing their numbers according to types of disabilities.
  - e) Allocating a part of the funding provided to humanitarian organizations to prepare public buildings and facilities to suit the needs of people with disabilities.
  - f) Fund projects which aims to develop the skills of humanitarian organizations' staff in dealing with people with different disabilities.
  
2. To the implementing partners:
  - a) To increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian projects implemented, through setting a minimum limit of beneficiaries with disabilities.
  - b) In the design phase of the project, the activities should be selected or modified in order to suit people with disabilities of various types of disabilities.
  - c) Conducting field studies on people with disabilities to identify their most important needs and work on designing their projects to meet their needs.
  - d) It is necessary to hire a staff specialized in the field of disability to work within the staff of humanitarian organizations.
  - e) Building capacities of the staff working within the cadres of humanitarian organizations in fields that contribute to raise their awareness of different types of disabilities and how to distinguish them, and ways of communicating with people with disabilities according to the various types of disabilities.
  - f) To focus on targeting local communities in general and people with disabilities in particular through awareness raising sessions on the necessity of integrating them into society.
  - g) The need to work on overcoming the obstacles that hinder the access of people with disabilities to the services provided by humanitarian organizations through rehabilitating the centers and buildings used.
  - h) Making plans to empower women with disabilities in fields of health, education, work and rehabilitation.
  - i) Implementing special educational projects for people with disabilities who have aural and visual problems and who suffer from slow learning, and paying attention and care the gifted ones of them.

3. To people concerned in affairs of people with disabilities:
  - a) Working to find an appropriate mechanism to provide statistics on the numbers of people with disabilities of all types and share them with the concerned authorities.
  - b) Communicating with the donors and humanitarian organizations working on the ground to highlight the suffering and needs of people with disabilities.
  - c) Establishing centers for people with disabilities to provide psychosocial support services and make them participate in activities aimed at breaking the barriers of living and adaptation.
  - d) Supporting civil defense teams with equipment and training to deal with and rescue people with disabilities in emergencies.
  - e) Starting training programs specialized for ambulance and rescue crews on signal language, and various forms of techniques which help to effective communication with people with disabilities in cases of emergency, rescue and evacuation.
  - f) educating people and cadres specialized in dealing with people with disabilities.
  - g) To promote the culture of acceptance of people with disabilities within society.
  - h) Forming a specialized medical committee to determine the percentage of disability according to international standards and determine categories of people with disabilities according to its reports.
  - i) Forming committees to collect information and monitor violations against people with disabilities.
  - j) Inserting subjects and demonstration within media and curricula aiming to reinforce rights of people with disabilities and consolidate the culture of diversity and acceptance.
  - k) Working with judicial bodies on legislating laws that criminalize people who practice torture and other inhuman practices on people with disabilities.

## Methodology

### Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Study ratios of including people with disabilities in humanitarian projects.
2. Mention humanitarian sectors in which people with disabilities are included and the sectors in which they are neglected.
3. Know the standards adopted by humanitarian organizations to identify people with disabilities.
4. Reveal difficulties experienced by people with disabilities when benefiting from the services of projects implemented by humanitarian organizations.
5. Know the degree of awareness of workers in humanitarian organizations regarding the concept of different disabilities and to distinguish them.
6. Identify the most important needs of humanitarian sector staff to increase their awareness and ability to deal with people with disabilities.



## Data sources

### 1- Humanitarian sector staff:

Data was collected from them to identify the fields of work and activities through which humanitarian organizations seek to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and the extent to which organizations target them, and to identify the most prominent difficulties facing these organizations in providing services to people with disabilities, and they were asked about their ability to distinguish types of disabilities and how to deal with it.

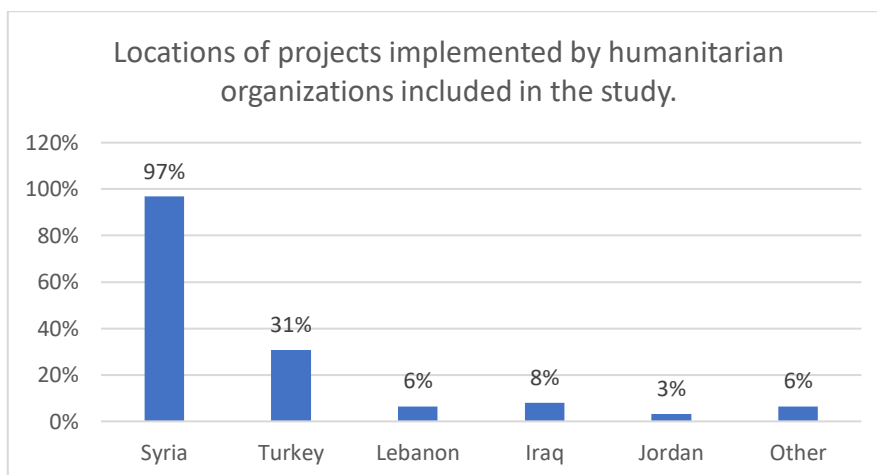
### 2- Experts in the field of humanitarian organizations:

in order to learn about general policies and strategic plans for the work of humanitarian organizations, and to identify the adopted ratios for including people with disabilities in the projects implemented, and to get details about the criteria which is used to identify people with disabilities and the ability of humanitarian sector staff to implement them.

### 3- Secondary data: To review any researches or studies conducted about the inclusion of the people with disabilities within the projects implemented in all humanitarian sectors, and the internationally adopted standards to identify types of disabilities.

## Scope

The study was conducted in November 2018. It has mainly included humanitarian organizations' staff in Turkey and Syria, in addition to some organizations that carry out some of their activities in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, and the percentages were as follows:



## Sampling method

A random sample of humanitarian sector staff was selected, including 60 males and females in all fields of work, and they were given a questionnaire that included closed and open-ended questions. The focus was on people in administrative positions and team leaders. Also, six humanitarian sector consultants who have long experience in working with humanitarian organizations were interviewed using an in-depth interview questionnaire.

## Limitations

The study faced difficulties in:

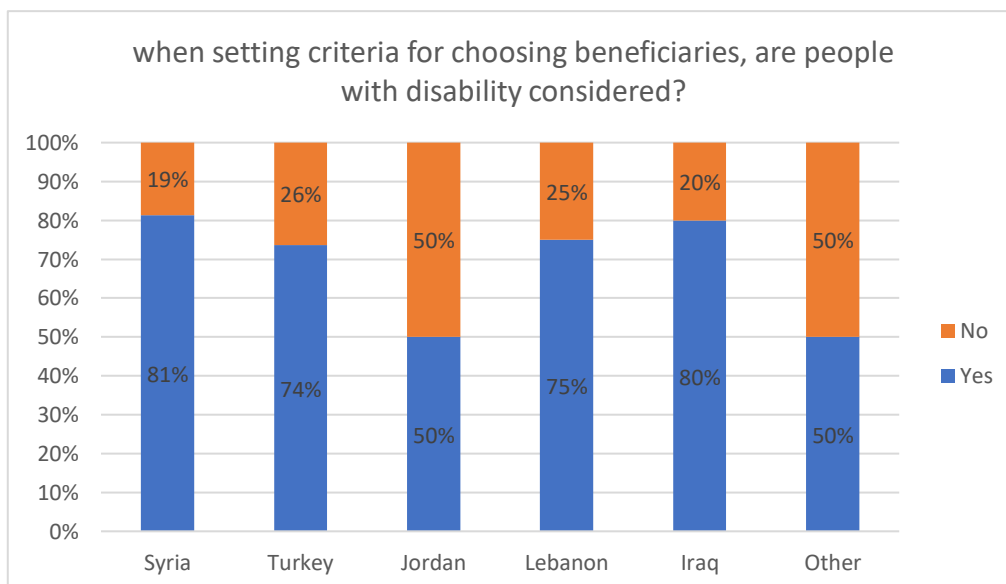
1. Lack of experience and awareness of many workers in the humanitarian sector about the concept of disability and types of disabilities.
2. Sever lack of documented information about affairs and issues of the people with disabilities.
3. Lack of accurate official statistics about people with disabilities, not only about their numbers, but also about the extent to which they get their rights and access basic services, the quality of these services and its geographical distribution, and whether these services actually meet the needs of the people with disabilities or not.
4. There are no authorities specialized in documenting cases of violence and discrimination committed against people with disabilities.

## The inclusion of people with disabilities

### Inclusion percentage

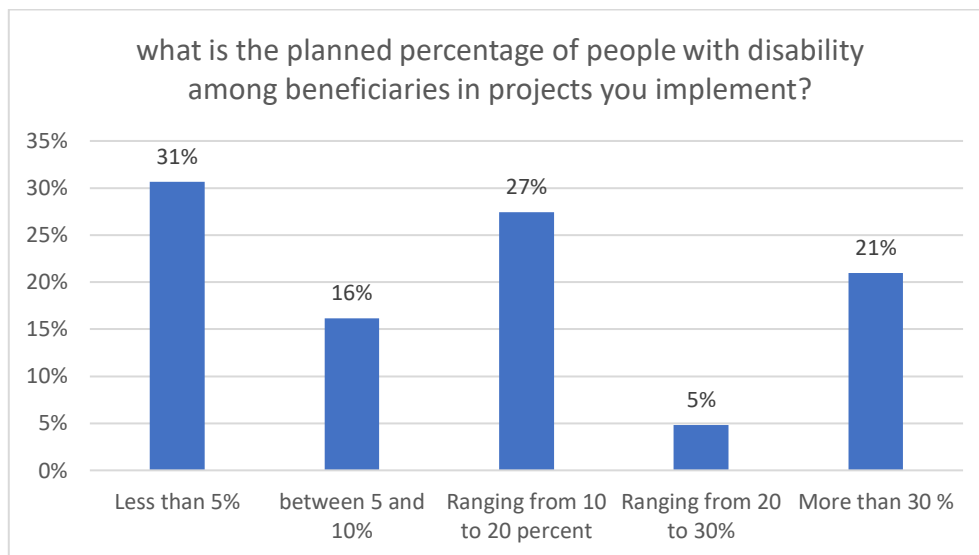
First, it should be noted that targeting people with disabilities through projects implemented by humanitarian organizations is, according to the experts, either directly through projects that are designed for them, or by allocating a percentage of the project for them as part of the beneficiaries of those projects, the other method is indirectly, by adding a condition for beneficiaries eligibility criteria which states that one of the beneficiary family should has disability, which is noted in the food security and livelihood projects.

It was noted that a high percentage of organizations adopts criteria considering including people with disabilities, especially in the projects implemented in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. While in Jordan the degree of considering designing eligibility criteria that achieve including them is less. However, although this is considered, the allocated percentage for people with disabilities remains low and is often not achieved.



It has been noted that the allocated percentages for including people with disabilities in the projects implemented by humanitarian organization is considered low. According to the percentages shown in the chart below, we find that about one third of the participants pointed out that allocated percentage for including people with disabilities as beneficiaries of humanitarian projects implemented by their organizations does not exceed 5 %, while 16 % of them said that the percentage ranged between 5% and 10%, while 27 % of participants gave a range from 10% to 20% .

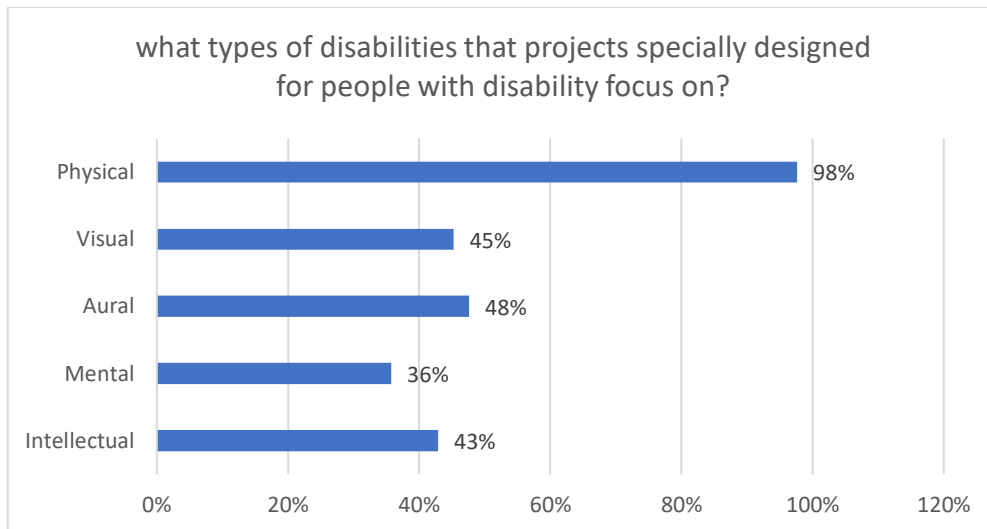
In all cases, this percentage is very low and cannot meet the needs of people with disabilities, and it is not compatible with the percentage of people with disabilities in Syrian, in addition to that, most of the participants said that these percentages are often not achieved.



On the other hand, the Key Informants think that attention to the affairs of people with disabilities is very low, were the majority of them stated that the percentage of including the PWD in humanitarian projects implemented by organizations does not exceed 5%, and vary according to the fields of work, whereas in the protection sector it is raised to 10%, where people with disabilities are targeted through psychological support activities, and in the field of WASH, the needs of people with disabilities is not considered when working on the rehabilitation of camps except working on toilets, which are equipped with specifications suitable for people with disabilities, knowing that this did not cover all camps yet.

In the food security and livelihoods sector, people with disabilities are being targeted with some projects, in which there are allocated percentages for including them in vocational training programs that suits their disabilities, but in very low percentages, while in other work sectors, often there are no specific percentages allocated.

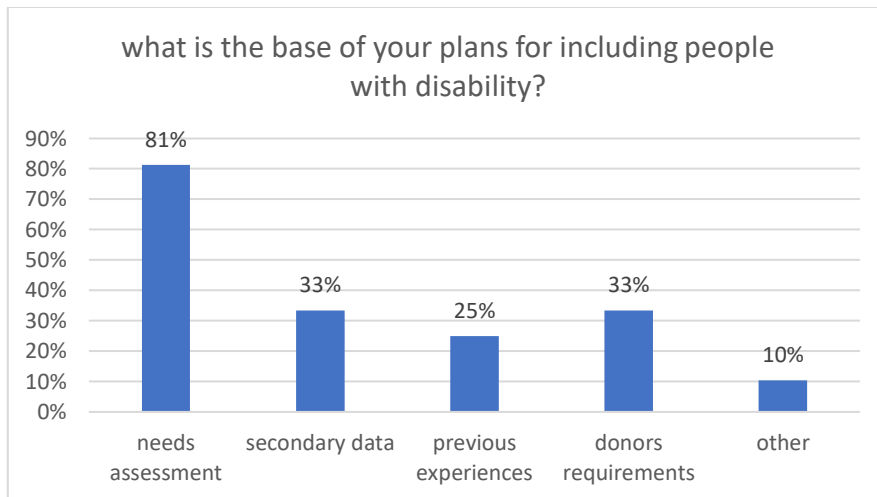
Regarding the projects which are designed for people with disabilities only, we find that 21% of the participants said that there are already projects of this kind, and it targets primarily physical disabilities, followed by aural and visual disabilities, then the intellectual disabilities, and finally mental disabilities.



However, the KIs think that the percentage of projects allocated for people with disabilities does not exceed 10% of the total humanitarian projects targeting Syrians, and these projects are mainly in the fields of health such as projects for providing artificial limbs, wheelchairs and equipment for the deaf and the dumb, and the protection projects through providing services of psychological support and guidance, as well as projects of food security and livelihoods, where coupons are given for families which have a member with disability, along with providing vocational training courses targeting people with disabilities in particular, by training them on some professions that do not require a great muscular effort, knowing that the greater concentration is on providing health services and artificial limbs and medical equipment for physical disabilities, while other aspects has a significant scarcity if compared with the size of the needs.

Finally, three quarters of participants stressed that their organizations have a systematic work plan to include people with disabilities in the projects they are implementing. That methodology is mainly based on humanitarian needs assessment, but the main weakness is that the needs assessments being conducted is of the general model, which does not include questions about the needs of people with disabilities in particular, but only questions about the existence of a people with disabilities in the family, in addition to the weakness of the mechanisms and tools used and the lack of experience of data collection teams in the aspects of identifying disabilities and their types, this shows that there is a lack of information provided by needs assessment studies regarding the people with disabilities's needs, resulting in projects that cannot provide what meets their needs properly.

In addition to that, the KIs confirmed that needs assessment which organizations usually conduct are not specialized for people with disabilities, and is only confined to gathering information about the number of people with disabilities in the region in which the project is planned to be implemented, these studies might contain information about disabilities classification, but without having experts to describe the disability type.



## Criteria for identifying people with disabilities

The criteria and methods adopted to identify people with disabilities and the type of disability and ways of dealing with them vary between organizations operating outside Syria and organizations operating in Syria. These differences can be summarized as follows:

### 1- Organizations working outside Syria:

are relying mainly on medical reports to determine people with disabilities and types of their disabilities, where everyone who has health problems or physical or mental injury that causes a percentage of deficit above 20% is considered disabled, noting that the humanitarian organizations' services are increased according to the percentage of disability until that percentage reaches 80%, and then they refer that person to the competent government agencies, which in turn transfer him to specialized centers according to the type of disability.

In addition, some organizations adopt, according to the KIs, Washington Short Questions Form to identify disabilities, and this form is a simplified tool developed to identify people with disabilities through direct questions, which are:

- Do you have a seeing difficulty, even if you wear glasses?
- Do you have a hearing difficulty, even if you use an audio tool?
- Do you have a walking or steps difficulty?
- Do you have a remembering or concentrating difficulty?
- Do you have a self-care difficulty?
- When using your usual language, do you have a communication problem?

### 2- Organizations operating inside Syria:

KIs said that there is a lack of standards or standard methods adopted by organizations to identify people with disabilities and classify disabilities, where the adopted methods vary according to the work of each organization, and these methods include:

- Personal observation: the person is determined to be disabled according to visual observation of the organizations' staff, or through field tours and visits. This method can only identify the apparent disabilities such as amputation, paralysis, deformities and Down Syndrome, while inapparent disabilities among which mental and psychological disabilities are often a majority, cannot be detected using this way.

- Depending on the statistics and data provided by the local councils on the population residing within its geographical area, where these councils have lists of the names of people with disabilities, but these lists may not include details about the types of disabilities because this requires having specialists, which those councils don't have, in addition to the lack of information about psychological and mental disabilities.
- Medical reports: in this case, work is done as in the organizations which are operating outside Syria, where everyone who has injuries caused him to deficit percentage of more than 20% is considered disabled, and this way is without a doubt the most effective one, but the obstacle which faces this way is lack of specialized medical cadres in many areas in Syria.

It should be mentioned that KIs stated that the services provided by organizations for people with disabilities in Syria does not vary depending on the type or degree of disability except in the medical field, where they are working to provide each case's supplies separately, knowing that there is a severe lack of materials, equipment and necessary supplies to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

While in other sectors such as food security, livelihoods, protection, WASH, services provided to people with disabilities do not vary according to the degree and type of disability.

## Accessibility

International treaties and conventions related to people with disabilities states the necessity of their access to all services provided equally with others, and to take the necessary procedures to that end, as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of People with disabilities and the Optional Protocol in its ninth article, which obliges the treaty parties to take actions that seek to enable people with disabilities to live independently and fully participate in all aspects of life by providing appropriate material environment and means of transport, information and communication, including technologies, information and communication systems, facilities and other services available or provided to the general public in both urban and rural areas, and these actions should include the identification and removal of accessibility obstacles, which is particularly applied on:

- 1- Setting minimum standards and guidelines to provide accessibility to facilities and services available to society, and to spread these standards and guidelines and monitor its implementation.
- 2- Ensure that private entities which offer facilities and services to the society to consider all aspects of accessibility of people with disabilities to these facilities and services.
- 3- Provide training for concerned parties on issues related to access facilities and challenges facing people with disabilities.
- 4- Providing Braille signage in formats easy to read and understand in public buildings and other facilities available to the society.
- 5- Providing forms of human assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and specialist in sign language, to facilitate access to buildings and facilities available to the society.

Based on the above, we notice that the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, which prevent them from benefiting from humanitarian projects, fall into three main categories: personal difficulties, environmental difficulties and societal difficulties.

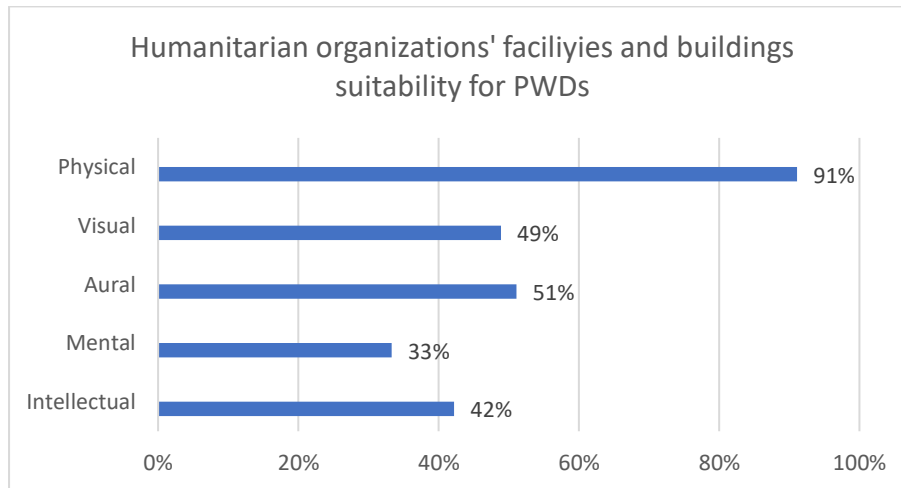
**I. Personal difficulties:** which are the difficulties and obstacles caused by personal circumstances and reasons related only to the person with disability, without any influence of his society. There are a lot of personal difficulties facing Syrian people with disabilities, which are:

- Weak financial resources of people with disabilities, especially with the significant increase in the costs of public transport and transport means, which leads to the inability to access the areas where humanitarian services are provided, and thus deprive them from benefiting from the implemented projects.
- Psychological problems suffered by some people with disabilities, and lack of self-confidence and the feeling that they are not effective members in the society, and the fear of not being accepted by others, these factors make the person introvert and make him refuse to engage in activities, and thus depriving him of the benefitting of humanitarian projects.
- The absence of a person in the family of the person with disability who can assist him in accessing the places where services are provided, as in the case where the person with disability is the head of the family and his wife is unable to leave her children to accompany him in transportation.
- Some projects require muscular effort and using tools that are not commensurate with the abilities of people with disabilities such as agricultural projects.
- There are many projects that require many capabilities, such as vocational training projects that require the ability to see, realize and follow-up, and these capabilities may not be existent for many people with disabilities.

These difficulties are considered as general challenges faced by people with disabilities regardless of the type of disability they have. The participants estimated the level of difficulty according to types of disabilities as shown below:

- Visual Disabilities: 56% of the participants indicated that there are difficulties experienced by people with visual disabilities that prevent them from benefiting from the humanitarian projects. This percentage varies according to the country in which projects are implemented, they increase significantly in Lebanon to reach 75%, and in Turkey it reached 67 %, while in Syria, the percentage is 55%.
- intellectual disabilities: 53% of the participants think that people with intellectual disabilities have difficulties that prevent them from benefiting from the projects implemented by humanitarian organizations, Iraq has the first rank with 60%, followed by Turkey with 56%, while in Syria, the ratio was 52%.
- Mental disabilities: regarding people with mental disabilities, 49% of participants indicated that people of this category are facing difficulties that prevent them from benefiting from the activities carried out by humanitarian organizations, where each of Turkey and Jordan comes first with 50% each, followed by Syria with 48%.
- Aural and movement disabilities: Finally, 41% of the participants believe that people who have aural or movement disabilities have difficulties in benefiting from humanitarian projects.

**II. Environmental difficulties:** It means the absence of an appropriate environment for people with disabilities that facilitate accessibility to humanitarian aid and public facilities such as roads, public transport and buildings which not prepared to suit their needs and their ability to transport or communicate. During the study, we asked questions about the suitability of public buildings and facilities, in which humanitarian organizations work, for the needs and requirements of people with disabilities according to the type of each disability, as shown in the following chart:



We note from the previous chart that the vast majority of humanitarian sector workers indicated that the buildings are equipped to suit people with physical disabilities, while half of them indicated that the buildings are equipped to suit the hearing and visual disabilities, while in case of intellectual and mental disabilities, percentage dropped to 42% and 33% respectively, but when KIs were asked, they stressed that these ratios cannot reflect reality because the organizations do not adopt clear criteria regarding rehabilitation of buildings and facilities to facilitate people with disabilities accessibility, the majority of public facilities and buildings used by humanitarian organizations are not prepared to suit people with disabilities, even buildings and facilities dedicated for projects targeting people with disabilities only achieve a low level of minimum standards for accessibility and transport, it focus only on the design of the main entrances size, removing obstacles from the corridors and designing stairs to be suitable for people with physical disabilities, and do not consider preparing buildings to be suitable for people with other types of disabilities such as intellectual, mental and visual disabilities, which creates environmental accessibility difficulties for people with disabilities that prevent them from benefiting from projects implemented by organizations. Adding to that the difficulties in accessing service centers because of lack of public transport and roads that are suitable for the needs of people with disabilities.

It is notable that disabled children have the greatest suffering regarding to the environmental accessibility difficulties, as their need for daily travel to and from schools and the lack of rehabilitation of public roads and means of transportation in addition to the lack of rehabilitation of schools in terms of entrances, stairs and guiding signs for people with intellectual and visual disabilities, in addition to the lack of toilets which are specifically designed for people with disabilities, causes the deprivation of a large number of children with disabilities from their right to education.



KIs have attributed the reason for lack of rehabilitation of schools to having no systematic plan to integrate children with disabilities in schools, in addition to the fact that donors and organizations which are specialized in education sector neglect the conditions of schools rehabilitation to facilitate the accessibility of these children, whereas the standards and specifications of schools rehabilitation projects do not have any provisions about that.

**III. Community difficulties :** These difficulties are the lack of sufficient awareness among the members of the community on how to deal with people with disabilities, and looking at them with pity, in addition to the superiority perspective of some people who consider them ineffective members and a burden on society and their families, and therefore not to accept them as equal individuals with equal rights with others, and not to consider them as people with ambitions and abilities that can be exploited, in addition to the low cultural level of some families which has a person with disability, considering that this cause shame on them and thus seek to hide that individual or to prevent him as much as possible from mingling with people and prevent his integration within the community.

Women with disabilities face more difficulties hindering them from benefitting from humanitarian projects, health care, education, rehabilitation services and psychological support programs, which is caused by many social factors related to gender discrimination along with disability, especially in tribal communities, where a woman with disability is considered as a shame on the family, so, she is not allowed to exit the house or to mingle with others or even to receive health care, and sometimes, she might be confined in a separate room, not because they care about her, but because the family is scared from her.

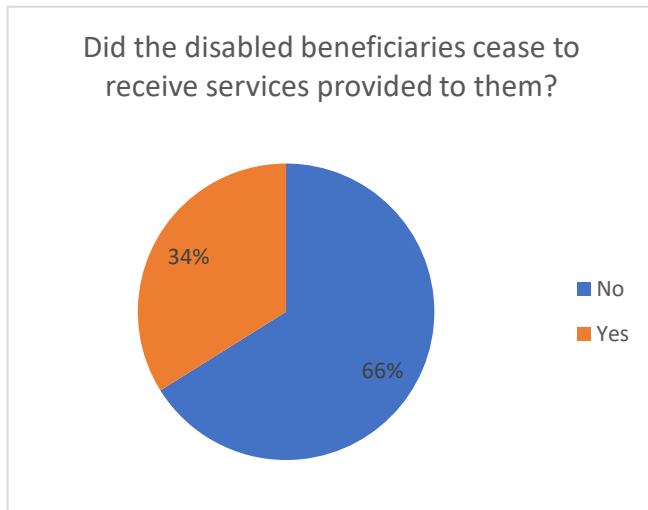
In addition, humanitarian organizations do not adopt the issues of women with disabilities as a priority that should be highlighted and dealt with, and the severe shortage of educational, health and livelihood projects targeting this category of society, this results in a high illiteracy rate among women with disabilities, as well as in terms of school and university education, and the severe lack of employment opportunities that fit their requirements, thus weakening the chances of integrating them into society and reinforcing the concept of being a burden on the family and society.

The society's negative perspective of people with disabilities in general and females in particular leads to a certain decline in their psychological state and generates feelings of despair and frustration for them, and impede their integration within the community in various fields of work, including the humanitarian sector, and this has been mentioned by experts with emphasis on the need for hard work to spread awareness to accept people with disabilities and considering them as people with capabilities enough to be active members within the community, and this can be done by conducting awareness sessions and seminars aimed at the entire community and the families of people with disabilities in particular, in addition to focusing on projects to activate people with disabilities, such as livelihoods, vocational training and educational projects, and presenting some people with disabilities success stories to prove to the community that people with disabilities are important and effective category in community, and restore self - confidence.

The above - mentioned difficulties (personal, environmental and community) deprives people with disabilities from benefitting from projects implemented by humanitarian organizations, it may also lead to the cession of disabled

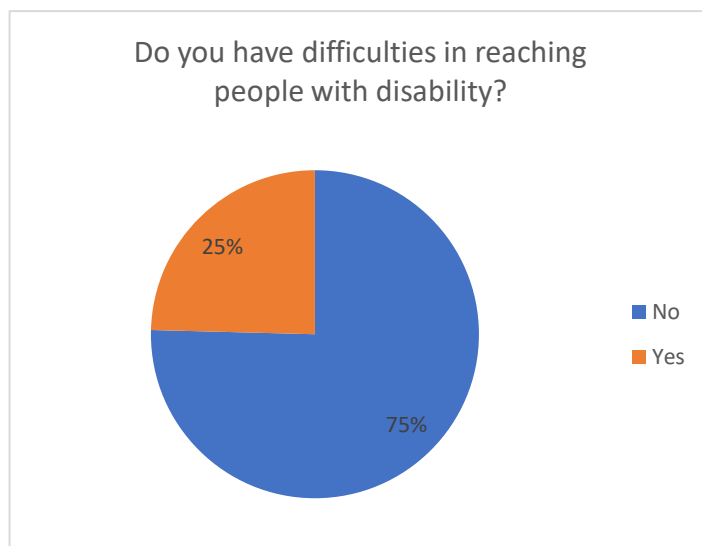
beneficiaries of humanitarian projects to receive provided services, whereas more than one third of the beneficiaries with disabilities have ceased receiving humanitarian services.

Knowing that Humanitarian organizations, as indicated by 69% of participants, are seeking to target people with disabilities and require a certain percentage of them or the families with members with disabilities to benefit from the projects, to increase their accessibility to provided services. There have been attempts to facilitate access of people with disabilities to humanitarian aid, some of these attempts are to provide great facilities for people with disabilities by allowing a member of their family to register their names in humanitarian projects on behalf of them, without having to attend personally, and the work on preparing buildings and facilities they use as much as possible to suit the needs of people with disabilities.



#### Humanitarian organizations abilities to reach people with disabilities:

Difficulties that hinder people with disabilities from benefitting from humanitarian projects are not confined to their difficulties only, as there are also some of the difficulties faced by humanitarian organizations, which prevent targeting them, including those related to the ability to reach people with disabilities and the knowing about them and their geographical location, especially in liberated areas in Syria (Syrian opposition areas), as a result of the lack of official authorities and institutions concerned with the affairs of people with disabilities and having data and accurate statistics about them, and their inability to attend themselves and register their names, in addition to having many of those who are already registered who were forced to change their residence as a result of displacement, which is mentioned by the participants.



The general difficulties faced by humanitarian organizations that prevent them from targeting people with disabilities are:

- A. The severe lack of specialists in various fields of disabilities.
- B. The weakness of the financial resources of humanitarian organizations and the lack of enough funding to target people with disabilities, especially with low number of donors interested in caring for the disabled and their needs.
- C. Higher costs of services dedicated for people with disabilities if compared to the same services provided to others, for example, when rehabilitating public facilities in one of the camps, KIs referred to the high costs of erecting special public toilets for people with disabilities.
- D. High prices of medical devices needed by people with disabilities.
- E. The severe lack of organizations specialized in providing their services to people with disabilities.

### Experience of humanitarian organizations staff in the affairs of people with disabilities:

Targeting people with disabilities through the projects that humanitarian organizations are implementing leads to a logical consequence to having the employees of these organizations to deal with the people with disabilities who benefit from these projects. There is no doubt that the means and methods of dealing with people with disabilities naturally differ from the means and methods that can be followed when communicating with others, moreover, it is necessary to distinguish different types of disabilities and the way to deal with each person in a special way that suits his needs and requirements. So, the method of communication with someone with visual disability, for example, requires touching his hand to make him know that there is someone talking to him, and it is better to describe the place with mentioning names of people who are in the place, while when speaking with one who has physical disability on wheelchair, speaker should be sitting at the same level of the person in wheelchair. Adding to that the need to choose different methods when dealing with disabled children and elder people.

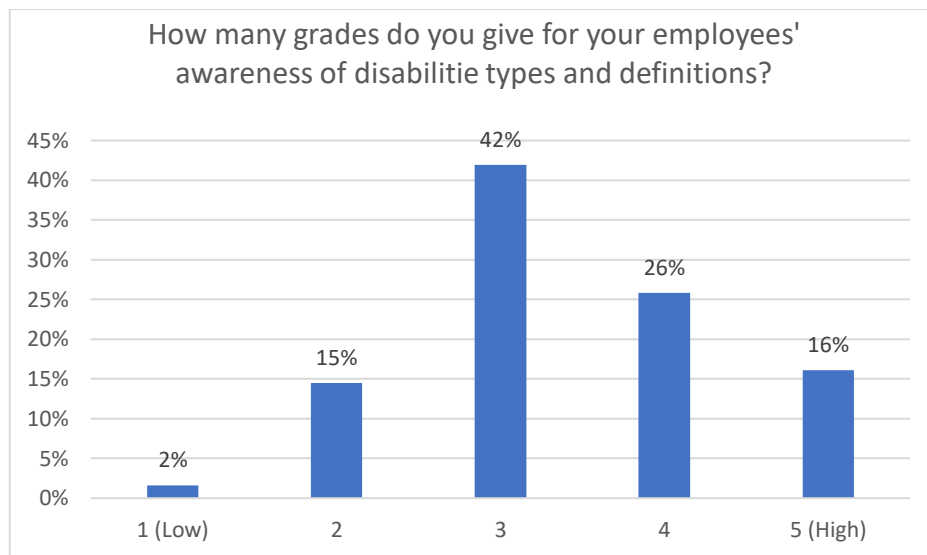


Some disabilities require specialized people to deal with, but the results that has been noticed during the study indicate that there is a lack of specialized people in dealing with people with disabilities among the cadres of humanitarian organizations as mentioned by about two - thirds of the participants.

It also noticed that cadres of humanitarian organizations which include emergency evacuation teams or ambulance staff for bombardment cases, do not include qualified people in dealing with people with disabilities, which impedes their rescue process and makes them more vulnerable than others. Many people with disabilities were killed

because of the inability to evacuate them from areas of danger, especially in areas of military operations.

The study also shows that there is an average level of awareness among the employees of humanitarian organizations of the different types of disabilities and their definition, which was indicated by 42% of the participants, while the percentage of those who indicated a high level of awareness among the staff of humanitarian organizations of types of disabilities and the definition of each of them was 16%, most of them work in the field of freedom and human rights.



Knowing that 42% of the participants confirmed that humanitarian organizations staff received training on appropriate methods to communicate with people with disabilities of all kinds, and 52% of them mentioned that humanitarian organizations staff received training on methods of distinguishing different types of disabilities, especially intellectual and mental disabilities, experts also said that the training received by these cadres is not integrated and is often limited to basic definitions only.

It should be noted that most of the participants who indicated the exclusion of people with disabilities from projects implemented by their organizations, confirmed that the reason for this exclusion is the lack of qualified staff who have appropriate abilities to deal with people with disabilities.

Returning to the KIs opinions, we find that they clearly confirmed a significant ignorance at the humanitarian sector employees in distinguishing different types of disabilities and how to deal with them, the potentials for those employees and their ability is limited to the identification of physical disabilities such as: (intellectual, mental, visual or aural disabilities) that can be distinguished through visual observation such as amputation or Down syndrome.

Based on what experts previously reported, they were asked about the most prominent humanitarian organizations staff's training needs to build their capacity in distinguishing the different types of disabilities and methods of communication with each type of them, and they proposed:

- A. Setting a clear definition of each disability and standard criteria to identify each one, and training humanitarian sector workers on them.

- B. The necessity of working on capacity building of specialized staff in different types of disabilities and how to deal with each type.
- C. Providing training courses on communication skills with people with disabilities for humanitarian sector cadres, especially those working in psychological counseling and support field.
- D. Providing training courses on negotiation skills with families of people with disabilities to persuade them to send their children to receive services.

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