

الأمل للرعاية والتنمية الاجتماعية
Al Amal For Development & Social Care

Zahrat Al-Amal

Educational magazine issued about persons with disabilities in the Middle East

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Eyes Project

Through this project we plant prosthetic eyes for a number of people who lost their eyes.

Hearing Project

In this project we provide medical earphones to 100 PWDs & speech therapy to 150 child

Opening Speech

Commenting on a suicide attempt committed by a person with disability

One of Allah's greatest blessings next to faith is our belief and giving up to Allah's will. This belief will be a certain cure for all life woes and hardships. Believing in Allah's will is also portrayed as a cool and cheerful paradise that shuns us the ordeals of this blazing Life .

My dear readers, as a surrounding community of persons with disabilities, We are obliged to be as therapists And not Facilitators for them To commit suicide, or to be one of its causes. For instance, we should be to them a warm embracement, a Merciful heart, And that We grant them Their full rights; most importantly, Their right of education And work On an equal footing With Everyone else. However, if we keep repeating these calls to deaf ears, our dear disabled brothers and sisters will suffer further despair. So Let's be Positive, and think positively towards persons with disabilities and their rights... Let's say "No" to despair.

The Editorial Board

Words of Charity People



Atty. Mr. Bassem Al-Hout
Al-Amal Board of Directors Member

Index

- Opening Speech
- 1- Voting is a right..
- 2- Loay Al-Najjar challenges his disability
- 3- Employment implications on PWD's
- 4- Fadi Sayigh.. creativity at alternatives
- 5- The disability act in Lebanon
- 6-7- Is your house or institution accessible to receive persons with disabilities?
- 8- Our achievements
- 9- Introduction to sign language
- 9- No comment

Voting is a Right..



Mr. Bassem Al-Hout

Al-Amal Board of Directors Member

“ Why are we depriving persons with disabilities from exercising their constitutional right? ”

Suffrage is one of the most important political rights that all citizens must enjoy. It's the right that enables voting citizens to participate in the decision-making process in the democratic systems. Given that suffrage is intimately linked to the human personality of each and every citizen, no authority has the right to deprive any citizen from participating in this democratic process except in some cases exclusively defined by law. So, Lebanon as a country should be no exception, so are persons with disabilities who hold the Lebanese citizenship. Even though the Lebanese constitution has highlighted the equality principles among citizens, the actual practice has unfortunately indirectly deprived some categories from exercising the right of voting. While persons with disabilities enjoy this right at the legal and legislative levels, they are practically denied of exercising it on the ground. This certainly tarnishes the whole democratic nature of the voting process. Furthermore, the procrastination is impeding the implementation of the Disability Act No. 220/2000 which provides the rights of persons with disabilities in Lebanon. Thus, they are denied their simplest rights, most important of which is suffrage which was tackled in Article 98 of the Act. To add insult to injury, some authorities in Lebanon are perpetrating a systematic marginalization policy against this category through ignoring their right of voting and by denying them the independent access to means of exercising their rights. Consequently, persons with disabilities became absented and excluded from the development and human rights agenda, and taken out of the national development roadmap. In addition, the majority of the polling stations in Lebanon are not accessible and well-equipped with the suitable means for certain categories of voters. Ballot boxes are mostly located on upper floors of the polling stations, and elevators, if any, are not allowed to be used by voters with special needs. In order to help persons with disabilities exercise their natural right of voting, their access to polling stations should be first facilitated. Then, they should be helped to reach to the ballot boxes, and lastly to behind the curtains in order to cast their ballots easily. For those who are unable to reach to the stations, there should be a mechanism to enable them exercise one of their simplest political rights of voting. For instance, they could vote by Email or even via the regular mail. Moreover, all voters should be informed of their rights and the methods to exercise these rights. Authorities should also make sure that all the basic information related to the voting process is available visually and in audio. Despite the fact that the disability act that regulates the voting process for persons with disabilities is still only dead letters, persons with disabilities should organize their ranks and demand that their rights to be realized. They would never obtain any of their rights if they sat idly and took no action because in a country that pretends democracy like Lebanon, rights won't be obtained but with incessant demands and insistence. In conclusion, persons with disabilities in Lebanon don't enjoy their right of voting except in theory. These rights aren't essentially entrenched in the essence of the legal and social priorities of the Lebanese government as opposed to what is stipulated in the international charters and conventions. So, legislating an act that enables persons with disabilities to exercise their right of voting is never enough. Instead, the actual and practical enforcement of this right is paramount because when an act is not implemented, it's considered dead letters.



Lu'ai Al-Najjar challenges his disability

With a confident stare to the top of the olive tree that stood earthbound in his father's orchard, Lu'ai managed with his unwavering will to climb the tree relying on his arms muscles after his both legs were amputated as his father also placed a wooden ladder at the tree's trunk so that Lu'ai helps him to handpick the olives.

Lu'ai, 28, has showed an enviable sample of a typical Palestinian who is living the very daily life details of his issue. He sustained a permanent disability after being injured by a missile shelling during the Battle of Al-Furqan. Lu'ai was in his sophomore studying Geography when he was injured. After he fully recovered and concluded his treatment journey, he resolutely and determinedly continued his academic studies until he graduated with a degree. After that, he got married, and got bestowed with 5 children bringing tremendous joy and happiness to his life. Lu'ai admits with a reassured smile that his life started after he had been injured. Back then, he felt that his body was revitalized with liveliness and energy as ever before. He then earned his bachelor's degree, and didn't stop learning new crafts, and whatever it takes him to foster his personal capabilities, and deepen his experience. He could've relied solely on his monthly financial assistance following his injury, but he opted to dodge dependency, and sail far exploring new routes in his life. During his job interview to get training at a formwork carpentry atelier, Lu'ai surprised the instructor who questioned Lu'ai's health situation. He then began to explain to Lu'ai how demanding and challenging this work could be. Without any embarrassment or discourage, Lu'ai didn't give up. The instructor bashfully asked him: "How would you be able to carry a woodwork and cut it"? Lu'ai confidently replied carrying a wooden board: "No difficulty, don't worry". The instructor said: "Indeed, you're more than eligible and worthy to work as a carpenter." Not only did Lu'ai help his father in picking the olives and learned carpentry, but he also farmed lands, raised trees, plowed the soil, and took part in construction activities as well. He also takes care of all his house's maintenance and electricity issues, as well as helping his wife to do the chores. Lu'ai called on persons with disabilities not to wait the implementation of laws related to their employment in public and private institutions. Instead, persons with disabilities, according to Lu'ai, should take the initiative to create opportunities themselves, and he delivered a clear message to those injured and disabled saying: "We all should always spend strenuous efforts so that we don't become burdens on the society, and prove that determination is the bedrock of our life."





Employment implications on persons with disabilities

The main goal of the efforts spent by concerned disability stakeholders lies in securing a complete integration of persons with disabilities in the society. However, this integration process is based on a number of pillars represented in the following aspects:

- The economic aspect: As a matter of fact, the majority of persons with disabilities live below the poverty line. This is primarily due to the lack of a stable financial income that they need. The high living costs coupled with the additional expenses that persons with disabilities bear contribute to the deterioration of their economic situation, and finding a work hence becomes indispensable. From a broader economic perspective, creating jobs for this category will certainly reduce burdens and pressures on their shoulders, and will generate many positive impacts on the country's national economy.
- The social aspect: Persons with disabilities can experience a huge positive change in their lives once they get decent work. Like their able-bodied counterparts, they aspire to build families, but due to the soaring unemployment rates among their ranks, most of them don't have families. The social aspect is not limited to families issues only, yet it extends to how persons with disabilities can effectively

participate in the social, political and cultural life as well as various activities in the society. Therefore, denying persons with disabilities their opportunities to work will certainly intensify their social isolation and vice versa. In other words, the better economic situation persons with disabilities enjoy, the broader participation in public life they will show.

- The moral aspect: Persons with disabilities always need to be supported by a huge morale in order to prove themselves as an effective productive force and that they possess capabilities and potential that can be invested in and benefitted from. This won't be possible except when they engage in the labor market and through creating jobs for this category. Work will boost their self-confidence and offer them a massive moral support. That's why we find that luckier persons with disabilities who got decent jobs are more active in social field, and enjoy a better social life. Therefore, hiring persons with disabilities should be prioritized in the coming time given its positive impact on their lives and on the society in general.



Fadi Al-Sayigh.. Creativity at alternatives

It was once said: "Necessity is the mother of invention". In fact, Fadi Al-Sayigh was the father and mother of invention. He managed to subdue iron so that it serves him as a hand that persons with disabilities would use in almost all daily needs. Fadi succeeded to invent, design and create despite his physical disability which he demolished under his chair's wheels, telling it: "O Disability, yes you disabled my body, you didn't and will never disable my mind, and stop me from continuing my life." He was interviewed by "Al-Balad Newspaper" at his house located in Al-Hadath in Baabda region. His house is different, unique, rare of its kind, and most of its furniture pieces are wheeled and movable. They were designed and executed by Fadi using simple means and strenuous efforts relying on recycling, and using car parts, and sometimes old stoves parts, and other rudimental tools. Following years and years of hard work, Fadi now has a house well-equipped with innovative means that enable persons with special needs to enjoy independency, and help them overcome their disabilities and live a natural life easily with all its details without being dependent on others. Telling some of his stories, Fadi said: "I was 20 years old studying at the university, an active member of youth and scout movements, volunteering in the Civil Defense, rescuing people, extinguishing fires, and helping those in need. I had an accident through which I broke my neck

resulting in a quadriplegia that obstructed all movements of my four limbs. Suddenly, everything started to collapse, and after being a helper, I became a disabled person sitting on a wheelchair and needs help in all my life requirements. I wasn't able to fulfill my private needs except with the assistance of one or two people who had to stay with me all the time." After he began to seek a sort of independency, Fadi came across a solution. "I know that I'm unable to move, but I made everything movable for me" he said. He then sarcastically smiled and said: "When I was in the rehabilitation center, they told me: "Your case is very difficult, you're practically finished. Your situation is terrible, and you will need a somebody to stay with you and help you forever". However, they didn't realize that the wheelchair below me will never stop me from achieving whatever I want, or from undertaking my role as any other person in this life." In fact, the designs that Fadi later executed are worth observing and developing by concerned stakeholders and mechanical and interior engineer students, too. This will help persons with disabilities to secure independency upon fulfilling their special needs, given its positive impact on their health, psychological and social life. In addition, achieving independency will reduce heavy burdens on their families.

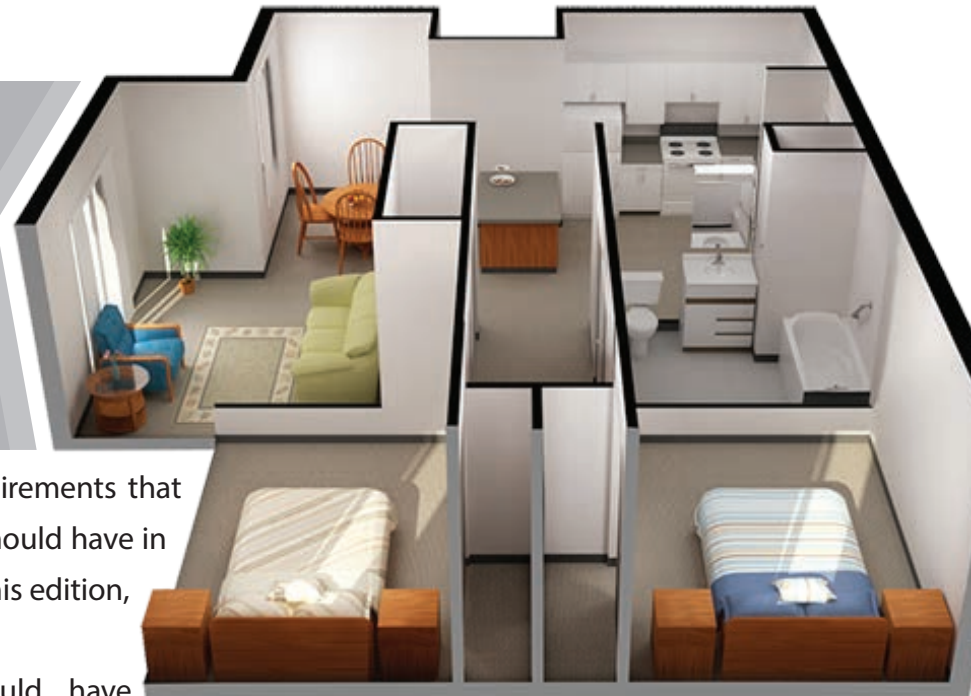


The Lebanese Disability Act Explained

In 2000, Lebanon adopted the act No. 220, related to the rights of persons with disabilities that help them to achieve integration within the social and economic life. This is achieved through allotting quotas for them in the fields of employment, transportation, housing, health services and education. Even though Act 220/2000 provides strong commitments to the rights of persons with disabilities, many of these commitments were not put into place due to a number of reasons and factors. This act is advanced compared to other adopted acts throughout many countries and based on the United Nation's Consolidated Standards of Equalization of Opportunities. The act deals

with the issue of disability in a clear rights-based manner, and it urges the government to adopt policies and programs that are based on the integration and containment philosophy. The Act 220/2000 is one of Lebanon's greatest achievements with regard to improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities. Through its 10 sections, it focuses on the right of participation, and warns against going back to isolation and exclusion. Being rights-based, this act is considered unique regarding its enforcement mechanisms and corresponding implementing authorities.

Is your house or institution accessible to receive a person with disability?



In the former edition, we covered the requirements that some of parts of your house or institution should have in order to receive a person with disability. In this edition, we will cover the rest.

Sitting/living rooms: Living rooms should have additional space for persons on wheelchairs to move freely. The latest global research and studies proved that a additional space of 15% should be added to the overall area of the room which shouldn't be less than 20 square meters. The additional area needed for a wheelchair to move freely is often calculated as a minimum of 140 X 200 CM. The distance between furniture pieces should be 90 CM, the height of the desk shouldn't be less than 70 CM in order to allow the wheelchair to move below it, and cupboards or shelves,, if any, should rise no higher than 130 CM so that a disabled person can reach its top with his hands easily.


Bedrooms: Additional space should be also allotted in bedrooms to allow a smoother movement of wheelchairs, and the way furniture is distributed inside bedrooms has a huge impact.

Doors: 1. Doors inside residential buildings should open 90 CMs to allow an easier movement for wheelchairs and for persons with disabilities who can walk. 2. No barriers should be placed at doors, and an area for movement that isn't less than 120-150 CM should be created in front and behind doors. 3. Doors should be equipped with handles accessible for

persons with disabilities. The handle should be arm-like and not the round style, and its height should range between 900 to 100 CM, and another handle can be added to make closing the door even easier. 4. In order to avoid collisions, view glass can be put in hallways, but its height shouldn't exceed 100 CM. 5. Light and easy doors should be used so that to be opened easily. Still, electrical doors are the best to use. 6. Doors of bathrooms and narrow rooms should open to the outside. 7. Sliding or foldable doors shouldn't be used unless it's necessary in narrow places where the movement is slow. 8. Hydraulic or push handles are better not to use. 9. It's not advisable to use whole glassy doors. If necessary, its lower parts should be protected, and clear signs or stickers should be placed at the height of 140-160 CM.

Windows: Windows opening handles should rise no more than 130 CM and easy to use. Windows should be easily reached and its height should range between 60 and 75 CM for a better view for persons on wheelchairs.

Balconies: For a freer movement for a wheelchair to turn, the width of the balcony shouldn't be less than 150 CM. The width of the balcony's door should be 90 CM, and the overall area of the balcony shouldn't be less than 4.5 square



Is your house or institution accessible to receive a person with disability?

meters so that to allow a space for another person with disability.

Washrooms: Washrooms are one of the most important spaces in the daily life of persons with disabilities. So, washrooms should have enough spaces, and suitable healthy parts and assistive tools so that to facilitate movement of persons with disabilities. 1. The dimensions of the washroom should allow a person with disability to enter with his wheelchair, closes the door, and goes towards the toilet easily. 2. Washrooms doors should open to the outside unless there is enough space for them to open to the inside. A lock on the external part of the door is highly recommended so that to be opened in emergency situations. 3. The private washroom of a person with disability should contain a toilet, sink, shower and cushions. 4. In public places, at least one private washroom should be allotted for persons with disabilities. It should be equipped with a toilet, sink and cushions and a disability sign on the door. 5. The toilet's height should range between 45 and 50 CM, and the supporting cushions between 85 and 95 cm behind and beside the toilet. These cushions should be placed either on the floor or on the wall, where the cushion farther

from the wall should be movable. the distance between the middle of the toilet and the wall cushion should range between 45 and 50 cm where a one-arm water tap can be placed. 6. The sink should rise no more than 80 cm, and lies at a distance of not less than 15 cm from the adjacent wall. It shouldn't contain a column or a shelf. It should be equipped with a mirror which its lower part's height from the floor shouldn't exceed 90 cm. It's preferable that bending mirrors are used, and the tap has a long arm. 7. Bathtubs are not recommended and a shower with a mobile seat is enough. The seat should rise from 45 to 50 cm. Using a movable shower is highly recommended so that to move between 120 and 180 cm with a hose of 150 cm long, and a one-arm tap. Supporting cushions should be placed facing the seat, and around the back wall. These cushions have circular edges that range between 30 and 40 MM, and keep a distance from the wall between 35 and 45 MM, and should be strong enough, and non-slippery.



-Planting Medical Hearing Devices-

With a generous funding from the International Islamic Charity Organization, Al-Amal managed to provide medical head phones for a number of beneficiaries who were in urgent need. School students and children were the main target in this project.

-Installing artificial limbs-

Because serving persons with disabilities has always been the ultimate goal of Al-Amal since its it was found, Al-Amal installed a number of artificial limbs thanks to a generous funding from My Care association in in Malaysia.

-Al-Amal's Second Charitable Iftar-

Al-Amal Held its second charitable Iftar within its Ramadan campaign "There is Hope" with the presence of several official political, ministerial, security, military, municipal religious and mayoral personalities. The event took place at the Coral Beach Hotel on 20/6/2017.



-Al-Amal's Iftar Banquets in Ramadan-

True to its habits, Al-Amal organizes a number of Iftar banquets every year in different Lebanese regions. This year is no exception. Al-Amal held several Iftar banquets during Ramadan for persons with disabilities and emigrants which brought joy and happiness to them and their families.

-Food Packages-

In order to alleviate the harsh economic situation on persons with disabilities and emigrants, Al-Amal distributed food packages during the holy Month of Ramadan.

-Speech Therapy For Students-

Given the importance of treating school students, Al-Amal covered speech therapy sessions for school students through a specialized center and speech therapy experts. This project reduced the burdens on their families, and helped to improve speech abilities for students.

Entrance to Sign language



No Comment



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info@alamal-dsc.org

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www.alamal-dsc.org