

# THE STANDARD SERIES



مَعْدُ القِيَادَاتِ النِّسَائِيَّةِ العَرَبِيَّةِ  
ARAB WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## Volume Three: Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Expert Advice for the Arab World's Next Experts  
Written by Women for Women

*Because the path toward a democratic Arab World is only possible with the integral political and social participation of women.*

Published December 2013



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## INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the International Republican Institute (IRI) established the Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), a political skills building training program for women throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) based in Amman, Jordan. Led by an executive board of prominent Arab and American women leaders, AWLI recruits and trains countless numbers of emerging women leaders throughout the MENA region.

Through trainings at its headquarters in Amman, Jordan, and elsewhere throughout the region, AWLI is taking advantage of these turbulent times by focusing programs on discussing relevant policy topics and current issues facing women in the region. AWLI prides itself on teaching the skills needed to be effective leaders, creating relationships across borders and cultivating new and innovative ideas for Arab women to not only enter, but also increasingly lead in the public and political arena throughout the region.

AWLI's support of its participants extends beyond AWLI training programs. AWLI mentors its members, establishing individual short and long-term goals as they relate to their respective organizations and country's needs, and assists them in conducting programs of their own. With support from the National Endowment for Democracy, the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and the Canadian Foreign Ministry, AWLI's membership has grown to include women from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the West Bank and Yemen.

The multidimensional approach of AWLI provides women with the support, educational opportunities and resources needed to advance democratic governance as elected or appointed officials, play a meaningful and impactful part within civil society, and serve as community leaders. With practical skills-building training, a platform for dialogue and sustained mentorship, AWLI is increasing the number of Arab women leaders.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) seeks to empower women and strengthen their leadership role in the Arab region. AWLI roots its foundation in the belief that the implementation of democracy in the Arab world is only possible with the integral participation of women in all sectors, including cultural, economic, political, and social.

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## **The Standard Series: Volume Two – Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), nongovernmental activists are hard at work trying to improve the lives of citizens with disabilities in their communities and enrich their societies with the inclusion of these citizens in everyday life. Governments should reinforce these attitudes by creating a platform for social support systems for citizens with disabilities, their families and broader community.

However, resources are often stretched thin, especially in the current economic environment when it comes to promoting the rights of the persons with disabilities community. To this end, this Standard Series collects AWLI participant testimonies from across the MENA region that present past, current and proposed future programs to develop stronger inclusive communities for persons with disabilities. Also a part of this manual, expert advice helps to provide a full picture of how effective policies, strategic partnerships, and financial planning can help better advocate for persons with disabilities and establish new effective programs that address the needs of persons with disabilities within communities. The manual details components and tools for strategic planning and budgeting for advocacy initiatives related to persons with disabilities that can easily be applied to other marginalized groups.

In October 2012, AWLI brought together 30 female political and civil society leaders from several Middle East countries to Amman, Jordan for a training conference focused on the rights of persons with disabilities. The training drew on experiences from Europe, the United States and the Middle East and North Africa regions to review efforts to improve the lives of persons with disabilities, their families, and the community through public access, welfare, right to work and representation initiatives. In addition to case studies shared with the participants (and included in this manual), AWLI conducted a series of skills-building workshops focused on community financial planning in order to support programs benefiting persons with disabilities. Training topics also included budgeting and financial planning with a review of public/private partnerships and corporate social responsibility. This targeted training program reviewed best practices in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities and improved participants' leadership skills in resource management to promote effective programs that incorporate citizens with disabilities in the community. This manual details participant testimonies given during the aforementioned AWLI trainings.

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## SECTION I: GLOSSARY

**International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: According to the United Nations Organization,** the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. There were 82 signatories to the Convention, 44 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and one ratification of the Convention. This is the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and is the first human rights convention to be open for signature by regional integration organizations. The Convention entered into force on 3 May 2008. The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.<sup>1</sup>

**Disability:** The World Health Organization defines disability as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.<sup>2</sup> A disability may be physical, mental, sensory, developmental or some combination of these.

**Disabled Persons Organization (DPO):** An organization for persons with disabilities that is also managed by mostly by persons with disabilities.

**Accessibility:** A general term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible. This can involve direct access, or indirect access, with the use of assistive technologies.

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Convention adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=12&pid=150>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>

to end such discrimination. The Convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."<sup>3</sup>

#### BAHRAIN – A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Bahrain is home to 6,899 persons with disabilities, which represents one percent of the population. In 2011, Bahrain launched the National Strategy, which ensured the rights of persons with disabilities in the Kingdom. The National Strategy provided a framework for five years to integrate persons with disabilities more effectively into Bahraini society. The strategy includes legislation for rehabilitation, inclusive education, economic and social empowerment, easy access to services and facilities, and media awareness.

The Kingdom also signed the International Convention for the Rights of Person with Disabilities. Following this, the king issues a royal decree to set up a national social fund, which included several funds for children, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens. The Bahraini Council of Ministers also set up A Higher National Committee for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities.

In addition, Bahrain launched a special union for persons with disabilities, which includes a host of associations and rehabilitation centers. For example, the Center for the Services of Persons with Disabilities: You Are Not Alone opened to employ persons with disabilities. The Labor Law also includes special articles concerning employment of persons with disabilities and legal protection in the private sector. The articles stipulate that private sector institutions must employ a percentage of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Education also enforced methods to integrate persons with disabilities in schools. It launched a project to assign computers with speech capabilities to blind students to help integrate them into society, stay up to date with technology, and improve professional advancement. In addition, persons with disabilities receive a monthly salary and a special welfare card from the government.

**Endowment:** An asset donation made to a non-profit group or institution in the form of investment funds or other property that has a stated purpose at the bequest of the donor. Most endowments are designed to keep the principal amount intact while using the investment income from dividends for charitable efforts.

**Private Public Partnerships (PPP):** A government service or private business venture which is funded and operated through a partnership of government and one or more private sector companies. These are sometimes referred to as PPP, P3 or P<sup>3</sup>. PPP involves a contract between a public sector authority and a private party, in which the

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

private party provides a public service or project and assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the project.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** This is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international norms. CSR is a process with the aim to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and the public.<sup>4</sup>

#### TUNISIA – ADVOCACY THROUGH DIFFERENT AVENUES

Demonstrations for the Disabled In Arab society, we lack a culture of peaceful demonstrations. In my opinion, Persons with Disabilities should not use demonstrations to call for respect of their rights. For example, instead They could surround the entrance of the Constituent Council with wheelchairs on various occasions and on several days to symbolize a call for greater inclusion for persons with disabilities legally. Such methods will attract the attention of the media, politicians, and civil society organizations but do not harm others. This is far more effective than standing in the streets, which could be humiliating for people with disabilities and could give the impression to the public that the disabled are in need of financial assistance and that they are begging. Others might also think that nothing can be achieved through this kind of demonstration and not care about the cause.

Sports for the Disabled - Persons with disabilities in Tunisia have achieved significant milestones in various sports, including the 2008 handball championship. However, this is not enough to make persons with disabilities feel that they have achieved everything they want in society? Tunisian media exploits persons with disabilities whenever they achieve milestones in sporting activities. Media uses there small achievements to show that there is nothing that needs improvement in the persons with Disabilities communities. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities allow themselves to be exploited because they want to show their love for their homeland and prove themselves capable outside their homes.

Media - The Media holds the potential to influence political authority in Tunisia and is qualified. However, we do not have trained journalists who can moderate dialogue on issues pertaining to persons with disabilities. As a disabled person, I would like to appeal to all broadcasters. We are citizens and we should not only be viewed as disabled persons. I do not want to be invited to appear on a media outlet only when the topic of discussion is related to disabled persons. I want to appear on any issue related to my country, I want to represent it. I want to feel the freedom my country is currently enjoying. I do not want disabled persons to be used as a tool to evoke pity. I hope that the media in my country will seek to prove that persons with disabilities are citizens.

<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_social\\_responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility)

## **SECTION II: THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Full text of the Convention can be found online at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc8adart.htm>

Important components to the Convention in relation to this manual include the following:

“The International Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities endeavors to outline, in detail, the rights of persons with disabilities and set out a code of implementation.”

“The purpose of the present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

“Countries that join the Convention engage themselves to develop and carry out policies, laws, and administrative measures for securing the rights recognized in the Convention and abolish laws, regulations, customs, and practices that constitute discrimination.”

“As a change of perceptions is essential to improving the situation of persons with disabilities, ratifying countries are to combat stereotypes and prejudices and promote awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities.”

“Countries are to guarantee that persons with disabilities enjoy their inherent right to life on an equal basis with others, ensure the equal rights and advancement of women and girls with disabilities and protect children with disabilities.”

“Children with disabilities shall have equal rights, shall not be separated from their parents against their will, except when the authorities determine that this is in the child’s best interests, and in no case shall be separated from their parents on the basis of a disability of either the child or the parents.”

“Countries are to recognize that all persons are equal before the law, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee equal legal protection.”

“Countries are to ensure the equal right to own and inherit property, to control financial affairs and to have equal access to bank loans, credit and mortgages. They are to ensure access to justice on an equal basis with others, and make sure that persons with disabilities



enjoy the right to liberty and security and are not deprived of their liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily.”

“Countries must protect the physical and mental integrity of persons with disabilities, just as for everyone else, guarantee freedom from torture and from cruel, in human or degrading treatment or punishment, and prohibit medical or scientific experiments without the consent of the person concerned.”

#### **IRAQ – ADVOCATING THROUGH THE MEDIA**

The Ministry of Labor plays a role in supporting persons with disabilities its capabilities are limited. After the regime change, civil society organizations are no encouraged by the government. These organizations can work to advocate for persons with disabilities. For example, a civil society organization emerged in Baghdad that held a celebration for children on International Child Day. The celebration featured disabled children and deaf and mute children performed a play on the stage and emulated what the instructor did. The resources for this celebration were modest with minimal donations, which mainly came from other persons with disabilities because they sympathized for the children. However, the media amplified the performance and it caught the attention of the prime minister, the minister of labor and social affairs, and the minister of human rights. Person with disabilities understand that the civil society organizations have limited resources but we can relay our own voice. Believe me when I say that the media is our only means to convey our voice and to activate the role of this large segment of the society.

“Laws and administrative measures must guarantee freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse. In cases of abuses, States shall promote the recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of the victim and investigate the abuse.”

“Persons with disabilities are not to be subjected to arbitrary or illegal interference with their privacy, family, home, correspondence, or communication. The privacy of their personal, health, and rehabilitation information is to be protected like that of others.”

“On the fundamental issue of accessibility, the Convention requires countries to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers and ensure that persons with disabilities can access their environment, transportation, public facilities and services, and information and communications technologies.”

“Persons with disabilities must be able to live independently, to be included in the community, to choose where and with whom to live and to have access to in-home, residential and community support services. Personal mobility and independence are to be fostered by facilitating affordable personal mobility, training in mobility skills, and access to mobility aids, devices, assistive technologies and live assistance.”

“Countries recognize the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection; this includes public housing, services, and assistance for disability-related needs, as well as assistance with disability-related expenses in case of poverty.”

“Countries are to promote access to information by providing information intended for the general public in accessible formats and technologies, by facilitating the use of Braille, sign language, and other forms of communication and by encouraging the media and Internet providers to make on-line information available in accessible formats.”

“Discrimination relating to marriage, family, and personal relations shall be eliminated. Persons with disabilities shall have the equal opportunity to experience parenthood, to marry and found a family, to decide on the number and spacing of children, to have access to reproductive and family planning education and means, and to enjoy equal rights and responsibilities regarding guardianship, ward ship, trusteeship, and adoption of children.”

“States are to ensure equal access to primary and secondary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning. Education is to employ the appropriate materials, techniques and forms of communications. Pupils with support needs are to receive support measures, and pupils who are blind, deaf and deaf-blind, are to receive their education in the most appropriate modes of communication from teachers who are fluent in sign language and Braille. Education of persons with disabilities must foster their participation in society, their sense of dignity and self-worth and the development of their personality, abilities, and creativity.”

“Persons with disabilities have the right to the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. They are to receive the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health services as provided other persons receive those health services needed because of their disabilities, and not to be discriminated against in the provision of health insurance.”

“To enable persons with disabilities to attain maximum independence and ability, countries are to provide comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services in the areas of health, employment and education.”

“Persons with disabilities have equal rights to work and gain a living. Countries are to prohibit discrimination in job-related matters, promote self-employment, entrepreneurship and starting one’s own business, employ persons with disabilities in the public sector, promote their employment in the private sector, and ensure that they are provided with reasonable accommodation at work.”

“Countries are to ensure equal participation in political and public life, including the right to vote, to stand for elections and to hold office.”

“Countries are to promote participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport by ensuring provision of television programs, films, theatre, and cultural material in accessible formats, by making theatres, museums, cinemas, and libraries accessible, and by

guaranteeing that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative potential not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society. Countries are to ensure their participation in mainstream and disability-specific sports.”

“Countries are to provide development assistance in efforts by developing countries to put into practice the Convention.”

“To ensure implementation and monitoring of the Convention, countries are to designate a focal point in the government and create a national mechanism to promote and monitor implementation.”

“A Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, made up of independent experts, will receive periodic reports from States parties on progress made in implementing the Convention.”

“An 18-article Optional Protocol on Communications allows individuals and groups to petition that Committee once all national recourse procedures have been exhausted.”

#### **JORDAN – CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Takafu campaign started in 2012 before elections and aimed to incorporate disabled people in the 2012 elections as both voters and as candidates. Prior to the 2012 Takafu campaign, disabled people were only eligible to vote. However, problems still existed with the system. For example, if I went to cast my vote at a ballot center, there would be no wheelchair accessible ramp and I would not be able to access the center. Furthermore, if blind individuals go to vote they would not receive secrecy with their ballot because they would have to verbally announce their choice. . As a result, this discourages the blind from voting because in tribal communities voters do not wish to reveal the candidate they choose. Ballot secrecy is a right guaranteed to us by the constitution and the international accord for rights of persons with disabilities. Additionally, political participation is guaranteed by law for persons with disabilities. It is our right but we need to know how to better claim it.

The Takafu campaign enabled persons with disabilities to be escorted by someone of their choice to vote with the help of the escort f The ballot boxes were also lowered to accommodate persons with disabilities to ensure they could submit their own ballot. I So This was a great accomplishment.

These rights have now been incorporated into the new election law. This is a major win for persons with disabilities. Moreover, we managed to include people with psychological disabilities who were not initially categorized as disabled. .

### **SECTION III: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Public Private Partnerships

The purpose of this manual is to help you integrate persons with disabilities into your program. Whether you are starting a new community program, or expanding an already developed program, there are many resources available to you to help involve persons with disabilities every step of the way. This manual serves as a stepping stone to get you started. By including persons with disabilities on your staff, as volunteers, interns, or as part of the board of directors, they can offer the judgment as to whether or not a program is successful. This involvement is critical to the success of your program. Persons with disabilities are important stakeholders in communities, and by working to include them, not segregate them, your chances of success will be higher.

Programming is expensive. Your best funding sources may come from government or through private donations. In this section, we will look at strategic partnerships you can build to the mutual benefit of all participants.

#### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

There are corporations, foundations, companies, and private businesses, which are passionate about working with people with disabilities. By partnering with these entities, you will have access to more resources, and in turn, they will fulfill aspects of their CSR (see glossary). Often, corporations, companies, and private businesses, will sponsor a portion of your program. For example, if you approach a car-rental company and ask them to support your community program, they in turn may donate the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles for an event or workshop. In the end, you will be able to accommodate participants who use wheelchairs, and the car-rental company will be able to proudly say that they were a part of making the event or workshop successful. In turn, the car-rental company may see more customers and increased income.

It is important to lend credit and thank your partners and benefactors whether that means the inclusion of their logo on certain documents, on a poster or informational flier on your program or in direct remarks given at your program's various events.

Many companies and large corporations or foundations have mandates to give back to the community. If you are approaching these organizations, be aware of whether or not they have physical assets that are available for your kind of program and that their business interests fall within your advocacy goals. Do not be disheartened if they do not. By proposing a financial donation, you can still achieve your strategic partnership goals while encouraging new stakeholders and advocates. For example, a community organization for the blind is hosting a workshop on engaging youth. The community group has approached 20 young people to participate, and 7 of them are blind. The cost of translating all the workshop material into braille is quite high, but you do not want to exclude anyone. A private corporation or company may be open to donating the costs of translation. It takes

no effort on the part of the company, but again, all parties benefit. Your workshop is now accessible to all your targeted participants, and the company or corporation can now tell their investors and stakeholders about the success of the workshop, while meeting the terms of their CSR mandates.

#### **MOROCCO – ANA INSAN SOCIETY**

The first project carried out by the Ana Insan society focused on integrating disabled women into society. Since this practice was nascent, we collaborated with an international organization and together we worked to help disabled women with gardening and planting. This had a positive impact on the women that participated because they broke out of previous societal constraints. Participants spent a whole day in greenhouses. Participants loved planting saplings and trees, gardening, and preparing green landscapes. Notably, a second center in Morocco helps to train mentally disabled children, namely those with Down Syndrome. Some of the children are now employed to assist with gardening throughout Morocco. These gardens now employ only youths who suffer from Down syndrome.

Civil society organizations are now playing a leading role in integrating youth and disabled peoples in educational institutions and are attracting experts such as psychomotor doctors, speech therapists and psychiatrists to the cause. We have found successful experiences through this integration and many disabled children are obtaining higher level educations. For example, there are autistic youth that hold bachelor degrees in Morocco.

In addition, two Moroccan ministers with disabilities hold positions of importance. The first has an amputated arm and is known as the minister of women because he was the first minister to talk about the importance of women's rights. He worked to integrate women into the development plan. He belongs to the leftist development and socialism party. In addition, we have a minister who suffered from a motor disability. He was a minister and an MP for three terms. As a minister, he supervised relationships with the Arab Federation.

#### **Private-Public Partnerships (PPP)**

PPP's (see glossary) are a great way to focus on empowering and creating leadership development activities for persons with disabilities. You may have found through your networking or stakeholder relationships that companies and institutions show an interest in participating more in your program. Engaging in PPPs is a cost-effective way to broaden the base of support for your program and potentially expand your organization. For example, your organization may be working with deaf people, in order to have these individuals as full participants in your program you need to invest in adaptive computer software. If you approach universities or even technology companies that have expertise in this type of software, you can propose a PPP involving the loan of equipment, or even workspace. By setting up the PPP for an extended length of time, perhaps over the course of a year, you have ensured full participation by persons with disabilities and of a valuable partner and stakeholder.

Think about your community, region and country, and find ways to broaden your base of support and grow your fiscal strength.

Another good example of a successful PPP can be found in working with a specific industry organizations for specialized training opportunities. For example, your organization develops programs for youth with learning disabilities to transition into the workforce. By partnering with a hospitality industry foundation or professional organization, you are able to learn specific skill-sets youth with disabilities would need to enter into the hospitality industry. In turn, you have exposed the members of the foundation to a new group of potential employees.

### **Other Strategic Partnerships**

Public Awareness Campaigns including the use of the Internet, Facebook, YouTube, are all good ways to raise public awareness and to advocate for persons with disabilities. Look for opportunities to partner with radio or television stations, newspapers, magazines, or other social media companies. This way, you are able to get your information out to a larger audience.

Exchange Programs: Many international organizations that focus of the rights of persons with disabilities offer exchange programs. By using the human resources available through these organizations, your program participants, will have access to the global community.

Service Learning or Community Service: Encourage university students to participate in your organization for educational gain. By working with post-secondary institutions or even high schools to tie service learning to education, you will gain volunteers and you will be able to learn from the students as well. Additionally, you will see greater promotion of students with developmental disabilities to participate in post-secondary education.

Volunteering: Volunteering has proved a successful measure around the world in gathering people from the grassroots around a specific cause. Volunteers will often offer their services because they are impacted by in this case a disability, in some form or another. Volunteering a good way for individuals to give back to their own community and to make it stronger.

Networking Events: Partnering with companies, corporations, organizations, and private business is rewarding. Remember during networking opportunities to share the successes with your participants on your program. Hold networking events where people with disabilities, activists, volunteers, and advocates, as well as elected officials, businesses, and government agencies are able to share their stories and learn more about each other is mutually benefitting.

There are as many opportunities for strategic partnerships as your imagination can dream up. Yet remember that you are doing this to create a program that is going to provide the most successful outcome for persons with disabilities as possible. Always include people

with disabilities throughout the entire process, from the design and creation of a program, to the evaluation and report stages. Do your best to ensure your staff, volunteers, interns, and board of directors include persons with disabilities. This involvement is critical to the success of your program. View persons with disabilities as full participants and important stakeholders in our communities.

#### **LIBYA – BENEFITS OF DATABASES**

Creating a database in Libya of those with Special Needs would assist with funding and assisting those who need assistance. War and conflict has created additional need to target areas that need additional assistance to those with disabilities. There are six phases that should take place in order to collect all the information needed from all parts of Libya.

The first phase should be data collection for the database from Libya's eastern region; the second is from the southern region; and the third from the western region. Each phase should last one year. The database would collect information regarding personal and social information, as well as persons with disability need's in The Ministry of Education would know how many disabled people need to go to school or university and the type of facilities that should be in place for them. Moreover, the Ministry of Health would have a budget from the state that would include allocations that can cover the costs of equipment for disabled people. We By examining this database and distributing duties through ministries, we can guarantee that disabled people will receive the services they need.

#### *EXERCISE I – STRATEGIC PLANNING*

Participants break into country or regional teams. During this session, participants outline a basic advocacy plan to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in their communities. They should draft a mission statement, one key objective, and three indicators acknowledging that the objective has been achieved. The strategic plan should also include two to three core activities that seek to accomplish the objective, noting staff and administrative resources needed to carry out the activities.

#### **SECTION IV: BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL PLANNING**

Sometimes, when trying to integrate persons with disabilities into programs, you will encounter, "this is going to cost too much" or "we can't do that, it is too expensive." The truth is, the cost of accommodation is quite low. Most accommodation can be provided with no cost at all, because sometimes it is as simple as re-arranging the furniture. Regardless, you have to be able to account for your resources. Knowing how your resources are divided will be helpful to donors and stakeholders.

#### **Budgeting for your Initiative**

When producing an itemized budget, you should make sure that any aspects of the budget related to accommodating for disabilities is clearly defined. By being open, transparent, and accountable for all your disability accommodation costs you are better able to report back to your funding organizations, governments or partners on the financial status of your program.

It is key to ensure you have a line item for disability-related accommodations. You want to highlight that there are costs for accommodations and a separate line item for those costs will be easy to understand and communicate. When you go to a funding source, or report on how you have used your resources, someone will ask you what is included in disability-related accommodations, why those resources are necessary, and what are you doing with the funding. By keeping a separate line item for these expenses you will be able to clearly state for example, that the funding went to sign language interpreters at a training session, or the installation of a temporary wheelchair ramp in a conference room.

Disability-related accommodations can also include transportation costs. Some community programs involve travel within or outside your immediate community for advocacy, events or volunteer activities. You must make sure that all modes of transportation are accessible, allowing for all individuals to participate fully. These travel costs may include the rental of a wheelchair accessible vehicle or an aide to help people get in and out of the vehicle.

Also provide a line item for the costs of technology and equipment. This will be useful to you in approaching strategic partners as well including technology software and hardware companies. Provide a clear and precise costs for equipment, such as computer screen readers or large print documents and for any equipment that will help make your program fully available to persons with disabilities.

Office or training space needs to be accessible, which can come at an extra cost. This includes room rentals, the building of a temporary ramp, or specialized access to the bathrooms or other building areas. You may have a specific facility you are using for a program and the cost of rental includes accessibility accommodation, however, you still need to make sure this is clearly marked within your budget.

Your organization or program probably already has a line item for marketing and outreach within your current budget. To ensure your announcements, training documents, even your website are fully accessible, you may have to invest in specific software or technologies. You must ensure all of your programmatic communication is accessible to as many people as possible. Understanding who you are marketing your information to and creating the appropriate tools to do so is important. For example, you are providing a youth leadership program, but want to recruit and involve young people with disabilities. Your materials and brochures about the training need to be clear that people with disabilities are welcome to participant. Include a photo of a young person with a disability as well as information about the accessibility of the program, or that sign language interpreters are available as needed. Make a positive statements to the disabled community through your marketing plans. Your line items within your budget for marketing and outreach should reflect complete inclusivity.



Another budgeting strategy is to create a supplemental fund that is specifically identified as disability-related accommodation costs. By setting these funds aside in a separate category, they are easily identifiable and useful in approaching private donors, civil society organizations, disabled people's organizations, or corporations to ask for financial contributions. This means that if you receive financial resources they will be put directly into this separate fund, making you accountable and transparent. It is far easier for second party groups to identify a way for them to partner with you if you are specific about what your request is and how it is reflected in a budget.

Your budget will have a line item for staff, or staff salaries and benefits. By including persons with disabilities on your staff, your budget for salaries and benefits may not change. But it is important to remember that when recruiting for staff you should say you are looking for talented people to fill the position, including persons with disabilities. There is no added cost to you by reflecting inclusiveness on a recruitment add or application form, and it allows the community that know all are welcome to apply.

Lastly, you want to celebrate the success of your program, of individuals who participate in the program and your program partnerships. When putting together a budget for an event keep in mind all of the aforementioned items. You want to invite program participants, alumni, guest speakers, and other notable people to celebrate the success of the program. Your event should have disability accommodation costs reflected in the event budget as well.

#### **KUWAIT – “TOGETHER FOR A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL”**

Services for persons with disabilities in Kuwait began in the early 1950s. Several sectors supported these rights including civil society organizations, public service associations, non-profit organizations as well as government ministers such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Labor, and the Public Commission of Persons with Disabilities. The Kuwaiti National Assembly also issued Law number 8 in 2010, which addressed the rights of persons with disabilities.

In Kuwait, persons with disabilities are entitled to inclusive educational, health, and social services offered free of charge by certain ministries. Moreover, disabled persons can seek medical treatment outside the country if the local institutions cannot offer their specific treatment services. The same rule applies to educational services. The Public Commission of the Persons with Disabilities monitors the implementation of Law Number 8 and provides support to disabled persons, including covering expenses related to private education in Kuwaiti schools or outside the country. The Commission also offers financial assistance, provides necessary devices, and aids to the persons with disabilities community.

However, even with these services, there are still inconsistencies when it comes to equal and fair treatment of persons with disabilities in Kuwaiti society. Kuwaiti schools follow a segregation system. They are divided not only according to the kind of disability, but also

by gender.. For example, there are special schools for students with mental or physical disabilities, schools for students with autism, schools for the blind, and schools for the deaf. Private schools are the only avenue for people with more than one disability or with a learning disability. Work is still needs to be done to achieve greater integration in public schools, but Kuwait is not quite there yet.

In terms of employment, the Civil Service Bureau gives special attention to the employment of persons with disabilities. In 2000, it issued Law Number 5, which dealt with the employment of persons with disabilities. The law allows for the employment of disabled persons regardless of their academic background, if they are listed in a special category. Individuals are nominated to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which in turn, coordinates with others ministries to provide employment.

The 2010 Law Number 8 stipulated that "Government and civil organizations, as well as the oil sector that have at least 50 Kuwaiti employees, shall be committed to hiring a percentage of disabled persons who are professionally qualified no less than four percent of the total number of Kuwaiti employees."

The laws, especially the Civil Service Law, have a humanitarian aspect that works in the favor of persons with disabilities. Kuwait is against discrimination and merit. However, at the same time, we trust that persons with disabilities are capable of performing their jobs competently. To achieve this, Kuwait is moving in two directions: integrating persons with disabilities in professional capacities and empowering these individuals to perform as well as non-disabled persons.

Kuwait is working within international standards to enable persons with disabilities to play a leading role in their communities and their countries. One example is the Samiyah Bureau, which is a weekly cultural and social platform that allows the disabled to speak about their capabilities, achievements, and aspirations. The Bureau recently convened its 47<sup>th</sup> platform highlighting inspiring examples of persons with disabilities being empowered to be leaders. Kuwait's also coordinates an event on International Day of Persons with Disabilities and all speakers and organizers of the activities are persons with disabilities.

## **Participant Fees**

Running a successful program can be expensive. A good way to cover costs is to charge a participant fee for the program. Costs of a program or event may go up as you make it fully available to all participants, but never charge different rates for participant fees based on disability. Calculate the entire budget of an event of a program, with disability-accommodation costs included, and break up the participant fees evenly.

If you offer scholarships they could be used to help pay for participation in a program or event. Corporations and foundations are often amicable to setting up a scholarship, so remember this as part of your strategic partnership planning. By offering scholarships,

individuals with disabilities who may not be able to participate due to high costs, will now be able to participate. If you have more than one scholarship to offer, make sure at least one is specifically for persons with disabilities. This increases your visibility to the persons with disabilities community and encourages persons with disabilities to participate.

### **Budgeting Estimates**

You now know what needs to be in your budget, but how do you know what your costs will be? The best place to start is to build an action plan and within this plan identify the costs in making sure your program is accessible to people with disabilities. Items you are keeping in mind: sign language interpreters, accessible transportation, specific food requirements for events, the installation of a wheelchair ramp, etc. It is easier to estimate the costs before you finalize your budget, rather than trying to find the money to do it later on.

A standard estimate for providing disability-related accommodation is five to 10 percent of your overall budget. This is probably more than enough, but you need to have identified the costs and ensure they are clearly reflected in your budget. By keeping the five to 10 percent number in mind, you will have a decent amount to work with.

The Internet is a great place to look for resources on how to build an appropriate budget that accounts for all disability related costs. Another good resource is other organizations that work with or employ persons with disabilities. Engage the disability community, as members will have a very good idea of what program costs typically are. Use this knowledge to your advantage and benefit from the work that has already been done. By working with disability community, you can identify costs, use your resources effectively, and make the program stronger.

## IRAQ – ENACTING LAWS

It is well-known that Iraq has a large number of people with various types of disabilities. The number has increased because of recent wars and the deteriorating security situation. Law No. 16 drafted in 2012 supported the rights of people with disabilities. The law remains in the parliament to this day and has not been put to vote yet. A recent movement advocating for the rights of disabled created a slogan “Our voice will resonate until our goals are met.” A group of people with various disabilities launched the group and rallied supporters including politicians, influential leaders, and legislators.

The movement’s goal is to pressure the government to enact law No. 16. Unfortunately, there is little support from the government for the causes of disabled people. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs cover certain individuals with specific disabilities and they receive a small financial subsidy that does not provide enough assistance to those who are disabled and unemployed. This subsidy is distributed not only to disabled people but also to the poor people. Government care homes also exist for persons with special needs. The homes however are below standards.

We also hope to benefit from investors in Iraq. We will apply pressure on the government to levy taxes on investors to fund services for disabled people. For example, I noticed at the airport a ramp for disabled people. We want all our buildings to include such accessible amenities, including recreational sites, malls, and streets whereby we can install special traffic lights for disabled people. We do not have this and we hope that after enacting the law, civil society organizations and ministries will start to move in this direction, because disabled people have a voice but are still awaiting for the legislative framework to support it.

### *EXERCISE II – BUDGETING FOR YOUR PLAN*

Participants break into country or regional teams to work out a draft of a basic budget in order to carry out the activities for achieving their objectives as stated in their proposed advocacy plan designed during Exercise I. Using the internet, research real world costs for the budgets.

### **CONCLUSION**

As we have seen through different AWLI participant testimonies in this document, there is a passion and desire to advocate for persons with disabilities across the Middle East and North Africa region. Together, persons with disability advocates can work to ensure that governments, civil society, and citizens become more aware and dedicated to increasing the inclusiveness of their communities.

This Standard Series aims to outline ways in which AWLI can build on foundations already set, create new and stronger programs on increasing the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring that persons with disabilities are fully integrated into society. This includes

developing new strategies for the employment of persons with disabilities and fully integrated education systems. Women who are committed to advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities are leaders and hold the keys to influencing government, organizations and communities.