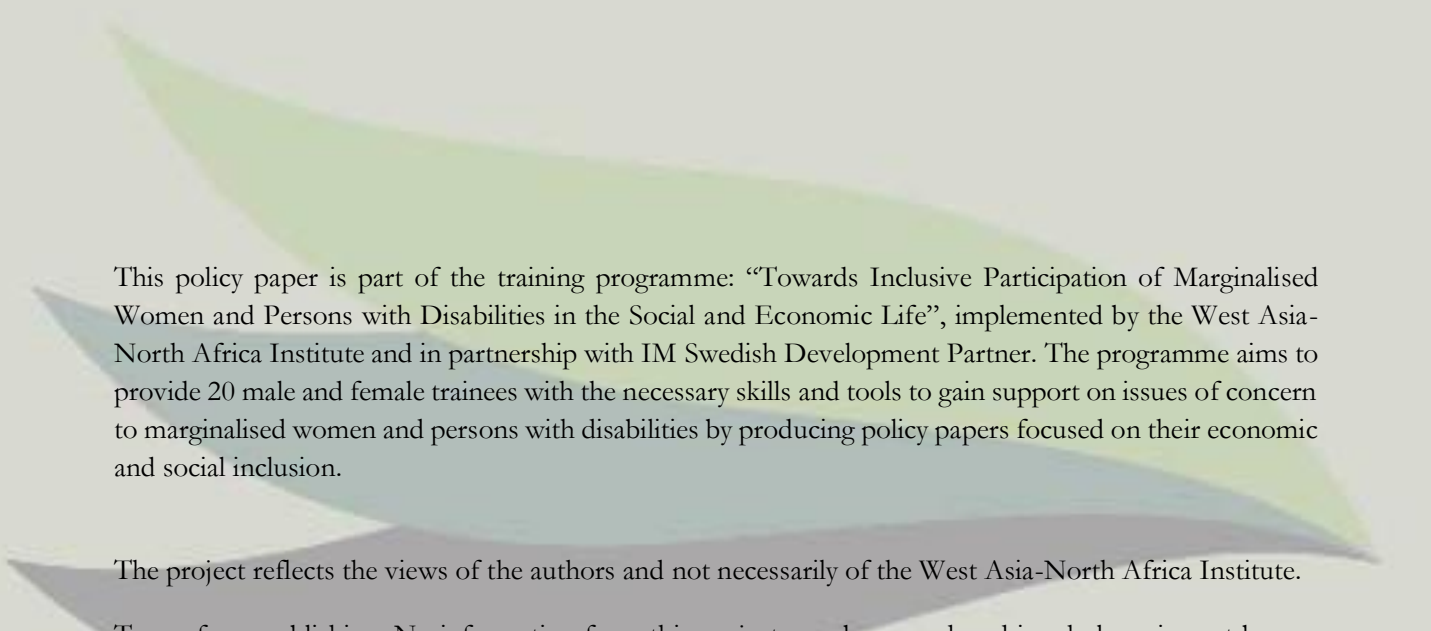


Labour Market Inclusion of Persons with Mobility Disability, in Kasbat Irbid



West Asia- North Africa Institute, October 2021



This policy paper is part of the training programme: “Towards Inclusive Participation of Marginalised Women and Persons with Disabilities in the Social and Economic Life”, implemented by the West Asia-North Africa Institute and in partnership with IM Swedish Development Partner. The programme aims to provide 20 male and female trainees with the necessary skills and tools to gain support on issues of concern to marginalised women and persons with disabilities by producing policy papers focused on their economic and social inclusion.

The project reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily of the West Asia-North Africa Institute.

Terms for republishing: No information from this project may be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without the prior approval of the West Asia and North Africa Institute. To obtain the approval of the Institute, please write to the communication department at the following e-mail: info@wana.jo

Published by West Asia-North Africa Institute, Royal Scientific Society, Amman – Jordan

Authored by: Ibrahim Touq, Afnan Ananza, Samah Mistarihi, Nour Ababneh, Wael Al-Hassan.

Reviewed by: Hayat Al-Shoubaki

Translated by: Abeer Abu Saud

Cover photo: BBC news

Printed in Amman, Jordan

All rights reserved to West Asia and North Africa Institute, Jordan © 2021

1. Table of Contents

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2	INTRODUCTION	5
3	KEY TERMINOLOGY	7
4	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	7
5	RESEARCH RESULTS.....	10
5.1	IMPACT OF LABOUR MARKET INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH MOBILITY DISABILITY	10
5.2	CHALLENGES FACING PERSONS WITH DISABILITY	12
5.2.1	PROBLEM TREE	12
5.2.2	DISCUSSION OF CHALLENGES.....	13
6	OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES.....	17
7	ANNEX	22

1 Executive Summary

Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that, “Every person has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment, and all individuals without discrimination have the right to equal remuneration.” Based on the 2015 Population and Housing Census data of the Department of Statistics, the percentage of persons with disabilities among the population aged 5 years and more in Jordan reached 11.2%, where mobility disability constituted the second highest prevalence rate of 24.3%, and Irbid Governorate recorded the highest prevalence rate in mobility disability out of the total population of those aged 5 years and over, at a rate of 5.6%.

Work is central to people’s well-being. Due to the importance of work in improving the lives of persons with disabilities and its role in obtaining their rights to economic participation, achieving their independence, equal opportunities, and improving their lives and those of their families, which leads to their active contribution to economic growth, the study aimed **to shed light on the economic participation of persons with mobility disabilities, specifically in the labour market in Kasbat Irbid District**, and to identify the challenges that prevent their effective economic participation.

The research methodology was based on:

1. Reviewing a set of secondary sources, such as: international agreements, laws, studies and national strategies.
2. Conducting a series of in-depth interviews with relevant and specialised government entities.
3. Conducting two focus group discussions with 13 persons with mobility disabilities working in the private and government sectors as well as job seekers.

The results depicted the implications for the participation of persons with mobility disabilities in the labour market, including:

1. **The economic impact**, which is manifested in meeting their needs, their financial stability, and alleviating the pressure on the state budget.
2. **The social and family impact**, which is manifested in the ability of persons with disability to establish a family, build new relationships and friendships, and get rid of the prevailing negative stereotypes against them, which is based on looking at them with compassion and considering them dependant.
3. **The psychological impact**, which is manifested in psychological stability, increasing self-confidence, and improving self-esteem.

The results also showed a set of challenges facing the promotion of decent and productive work opportunities for women and men with disabilities that impede their economic participation in the labour market, most notably:

1. Challenges due to the ineffectiveness of a **monitoring system** that would track the employment of persons with disability.
2. Challenges linked to the **accessibility** for persons with disabilities.
3. **Socio-cultural** challenges towards persons with mobility disabilities.
4. Challenges in terms of the lack of **employability skills and the high rate of illiteracy** among persons with mobility disabilities.
5. Lack of **awareness and media programmes** to shed light on the issues and rights of persons with disabilities.
6. **Legislative and legal** challenges.

These challenges impact the inclusion of persons with mobility disabilities in economic, social and political fields. Their feelings of frustration, despair and anxiety reinforce their isolation and exclusion, and limit their capabilities, and increase their exposure to the risk of poverty. On the other hand, this strains the national economy and its growth and increases the financial consequences of the state, which are manifested in financial aid.

Accordingly, the paper came up with a set of proposed policies aimed at alleviating the challenges facing persons with mobility disabilities and enhancing their access and inclusion in the labour market in the Kasbat Irbid District. The proposed policies are as follows:

1. **A policy to activate an effective well-designed disability monitoring system for employment.**
2. **A policy to improve the accessibility to the public transportation** to serve persons with mobility disabilities to facilitate their integration and use of smart transportation applications.
3. **A policy for the development of institutional measures** for the employment of persons with mobility disabilities in the private sector.
4. **A policy for developing awareness and educational programmes** on the importance of the economic participation of persons with disabilities.

2 Introduction

Persons with disability are an integral part of society and the national fabric. They have the right to effective social, political and economic participation, in a manner that ensures their independence and a decent life for them and their families. With regard to their participation in the labour market, the Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. (20) of 2017 obligated public and private sector institutions and companies in which the number of employees is not less than 50 to employ one worker from persons with disabilities, and if the number of workers is more than 50 workers, then they should employ at least 4% of persons with disabilities, provided that the nature of work in that institution allows that, and in accordance with that Article (13) of the Jordanian Labour Law in force.

Although the law provides for obligating institutions in the public and private sectors to employ persons with disability in both sectors, their actual participation in the labour market is very low. The number of persons with disabilities working in the labour market during 2019 reached (489) persons, while the number of job seekers in the same year was (228)¹.

Employed persons with disabilities, especially those working in the private sector, suffer from difficult working conditions such as low quality of jobs in which they work, lower wage rates than the general rate prevailing in the establishment, lack of a sense of security and job stability, lack of confidence by employers despite the fact that the productivity of most of persons with disability does not differ from the productivity of their colleagues. They are also exposed to psychological pressures resulting from the view of most employers and colleagues of pity and charity, not a view of rights based on equality ².

Because of the importance of the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market for enhancing the exercise of their economic rights and making them feel as active, effective and productive persons, Jordan has seen positive developments towards the highlighting the rights of persons with disabilities. Since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, Jordan has moved towards **a rights-based model, not a caring model** with regard to persons with disability. This trend was reinforced by the issuance of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 20 of 2017, according to which the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability was established, to form the institutional and legal umbrella for persons with disabilities in the Kingdom with the aim of creating a society in which persons with disability enjoy a dignified and sustainable life that achieves their active participation based on equity and equality ³. The law assigned tasks to the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability, including: proposing a general policy for the rights of persons with disabilities, following up and monitoring the implementation of the provisions of this law and relevant national strategies and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities based on Article No. (8) of the Convention.

Based on these tasks, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities issued the National Policy to ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2020-2030. This policy included a set of chapters, including the chapter of rehabilitation, training and employment, where this policy, represented by its chapters, is considered the road map to promote and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.

In cooperation with the Inspection Directorate, the Ministry of Labour inspected private sector institutions to ensure the achievement of Article (13) of the Labour Law, as well as provided legal awareness to employers and job seekers, and also received complaints from persons with

1 Annual Report 2019, Ministry of Labour.

http://www.mol.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page.2019/التقرير_السنوي.pdf

2 Al-Sarayrah, Rania. 2019, International Day of Persons with Disabilities; a report revealing their "let down" in the labor market, Al-Ghad newspaper.

<https://alghad.com/ذوو-الإعاقة-يبيومهم-العالمي-تقرير-يكشف/>

3 المجلس الأعلى لحقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة.
<http://hcd.gov.jo/ar/content/لمحة-عامة>

disabilities. Action was taken against (32) institutions, including (4) warnings and (28) advice and guidance⁴.

3 Key Terminology

For the purpose of the paper the following terms were adopted:

- **Persons with Disability:** “Those who suffer from long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in dealing with various barriers, that may prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.”⁵
- **Disability:** “A concept that is still developing due to the interaction between persons with disability and the barriers in attitudes and surrounding environments that prevent them from participating fully and effectively in their society on an equal basis with others.”⁶
- **Persons with mobility disability:** “People who have a physical handicap that prevents them from performing their mobility functions normally as a result of a disease or injury that led to muscle atrophy, loss of motor or sensory ability, or both together in the lower and upper extremities, or to an imbalance of motor balance or amputation. Such persons need medical, psychological, social, educational and professional programmes to help them achieve their life goals and live as independently as possible⁷.”
- **Reasonable accommodation:** “Adjusting the environmental conditions in terms of time and place to enable a person with a disability to exercise the rights or freedoms or achieve access to one of the services on the basis of justice with others⁸.”
- **Accessibility:** Creating and adapting buildings, roads, facilities and other public and private places available to the public in accordance with the codes of building requirements for persons with disability issued under the provisions of the Jordanian National Building Law and any special standards issued or approved by the Higher Council⁹

4 Legal Framework

International human rights covenants affirm the right to work, as one of the basic economic and social rights to achieve a decent life through earning a living. These covenants also guarantee the right to work and protection from unemployment for all human beings, including persons with disability. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Jordan

4 التقرير السنوي لعام 2020، وزارة العمل.

http://www.mol.gov.jo/ebv4.0/root_storage/ar/eb_list_page.pdf.2020

5 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Article 1..

6 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, preambular paragraph e..

7 Obaid, Magda El-Sayed. 2014, People with Mobility Challenges, Dar Al-Safa Publishing and Distribution, 2nd Edition, Amman..

8 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, Article 2.

9 Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 31 of 2017, Article 2.

ratified and committed to in 1975, guarantees in its second article that the exercise of rights is free from any discrimination based on race, colour, sex or other grounds, including disability¹⁰. In 2003, Jordan acceded to Convention No. 159 on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for Persons with Disability issued by the International Labour Organisation, which emphasised enabling persons with disability to secure, retain and be promoted in suitable work, thus promoting their integration into society.¹¹

However, the promotion of the rights of persons with disability in the Jordanian development agenda was not up to the hopes. International efforts to provide special protection for persons with disability culminated in the adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. Jordan ratified the convention on 14 August 2008. The Convention defines discrimination on the basis of disability in Article 2 as: “any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation”¹².

The Convention contained principles in Article No. 3, the most important of which are: non-discrimination, respect for the inherent dignity and autonomy of persons, including the freedom to make their own choices and independence, ensuring the full and effective participation and involvement of persons with disability in society, respecting differences and accepting persons with disability as part of human diversity, human nature, equal opportunity and access. Article (5), paragraph (2) of the Convention indicated the need for state parties to prohibit any discrimination on the basis of disability and to guarantee that persons with disability receive equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on any grounds, and paragraph (3) of it indicated that state parties should make an effort to promote equality and the elimination of discrimination, and to take all appropriate steps to ensure accessibility for persons with disability.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability sets out Article (9), paragraph (5) on accessibility to enable persons with disability to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. State parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, on an equal footing with others, to the surrounding physical environment, means of transportation, information and communication.

The Convention affirmed the right to work for persons with disability in Article (27) by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in just and appropriate working conditions on an equal footing with others, including equal opportunities and equal pay for work of equal nature, as well as safe and healthy work. It also referred to

10 The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified and published in the Official Gazette in 2006

11 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for Persons with Disabilities Convention No. 159, International Labor Organization, 1983

12 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2.

enhancing job opportunities and career advancement for persons with disability in the labour market and encouraging employment of persons with disability in the private sector through the adoption of appropriate policies and measures that may include corrective programmes, incentives and other measures, including the provision of reasonable accessibility for persons with disability in places of residence, work, in addition to promoting vocational and occupational rehabilitation programmes.

Within the framework of international development work, the efforts of the United Nations have focused on the programmes of sustainable development goals and linking them to the issues of persons with disability, including Goal No. (8) related to decent work, and one of its purposes is to protect the rights of workers and to promote a safe and secure work environment for all workers, including persons with disability.¹³ This was confirmed by the Arab Convention on the Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disability in Article (3) on employing persons with disability and benefiting from their abilities to enable them to obtain work that suits their capabilities.

The Arab Charter on Human Rights affirmed in its third article that states guarantee to every person under their jurisdiction the right to enjoy freedoms stipulated in the charter without discrimination on any basis, including disability, and also emphasised in Article (34) that work is a natural right, and the state must provide it to the largest possible number without any kind of discrimination, including disability, and every worker has the right to enjoy just and satisfactory conditions of work, an adequate wage, and the protection of persons with disability while at work¹⁴.

At the local level, the Jordanian constitution affirmed in Article 6/1: “Jordanians are equal before the law, regardless of whether they differ in race, language, or religion.” It also stipulated in Article 6/3: “The state guarantees work and education within the limits of its capabilities and guarantees reassurance and equality opportunities for all Jordanians. It also protects in Article 5/6: “motherhood, childhood and old people, takes care of young people and people with disability and protects them from abuse and exploitation,” and affirmed in Article 23 that: “Work is a right for all citizens, and the state must provide it to Jordanians by directing and advancing the national economy”.¹⁵

The Rights of Persons with Disability Law No. 20 issued in 2017 in its Article No. (2), defines discrimination on the basis of disability as: “Any limitation or restriction based on disability for any of the rights or freedoms stipulated in this law or in any other law, exclusion, nullification, or direct or indirect denial or refusal to provide reasonable accommodation.” The law affirms the right to work for persons with disability in Article (25): “A person may not be excluded from work or training on the basis of or because of disability, and the Ministry of Labour and the Vocational Training Institution shall include policies, strategies, plans and programmes for work, training and

13 Rechmawi, Mervat. 2018, The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

14 Arab Charter, Articles 3 and 34, 2004

15 الدستور الاردني، مادة 1، مادة 6، مادة 23

vocational and technical education, as well as for governmental and non-governmental employers to provide reasonable conditions that allow persons with disability to perform job or work tasks.

The Labour Law No. (8) for the year 1996 and its amendments referred to in Article No. (13) which states: “The employer must employ the percentage of workers with disabilities specified in the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in force and in accordance with the conditions contained therein and send to the Ministry a statement specifying the jobs occupied by people with disabilities and the wages for each of them. Regulation No. 22 on the flexible work system, was issued in 2017, and stated in its Article 3/d that persons with disabilities are among the categories covered by the flexible work system. Also, a regulation on the employment of persons with disabilities No. (35) was issued on 2021 in accordance with Articles (13) and (140) of Labour Law No. (8) of 1996, which included the obligations of the employer towards the employment of persons with disability and inspection standards for facilities that are subject to the system and the law, and developing procedures of the vocational training institution sensitive to the rights of persons with disability.

5 Research Results

5.1 Impact of labour market inclusion of persons with mobility disability

The results of the fieldwork demonstrated that the impact of labour market inclusion of persons with mobility disabilities, including:

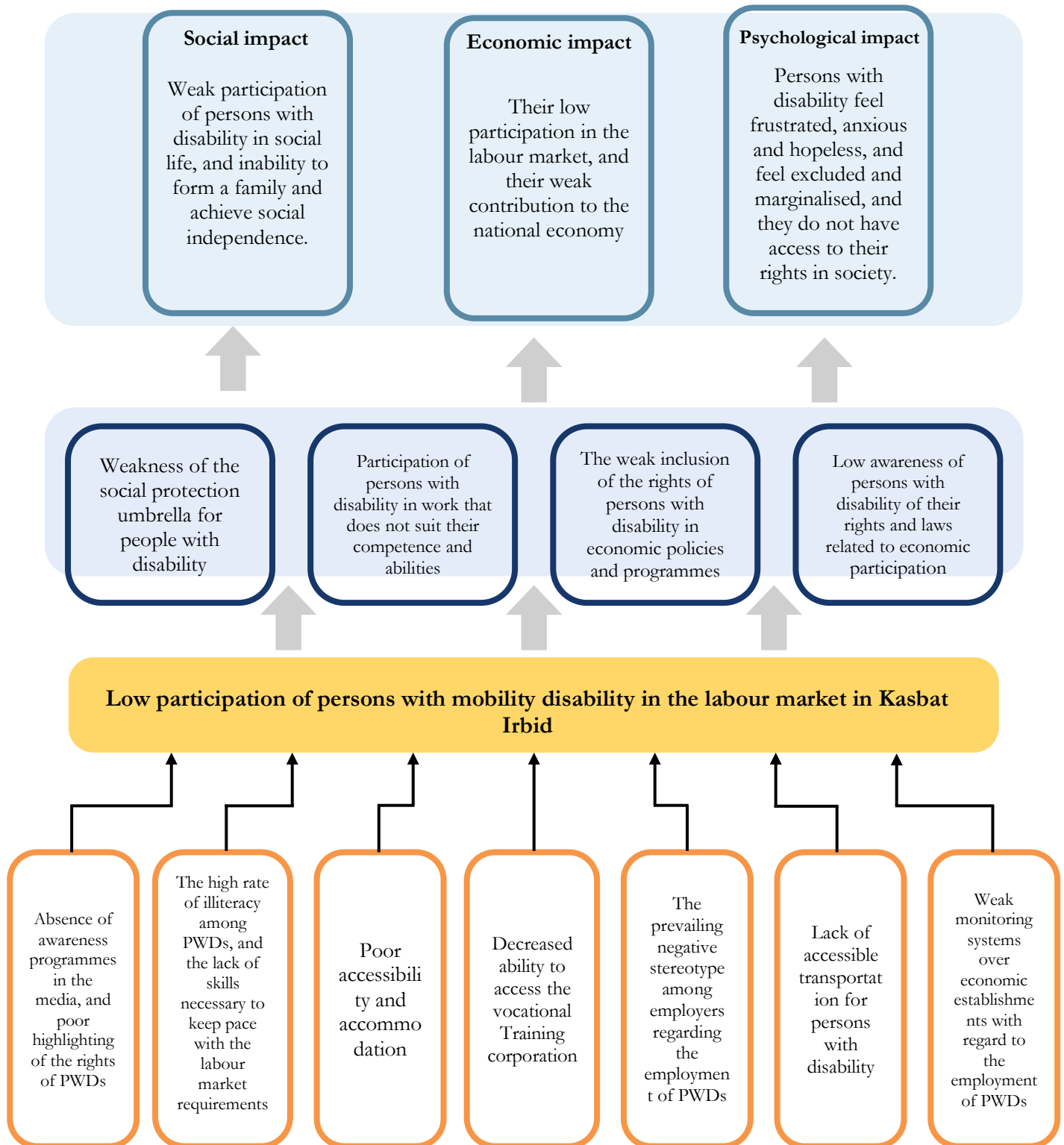
- **Economic impact:** this is manifested in the access of persons with mobility disabilities to job opportunities that makes them feel effective as productive members of society, relying on themselves to meet their needs, and their financial stability, which eases the burdens on the state budget in terms of financial aid provided to them, in addition to their positive contribution to the growth of the national economy. It also gives them the opportunity for professional growth in their fields of specialisation as well as their scientific specialisations, as one of the participants indicated, *“Before work, I was ashamed to ask for my needs from my father, but work led to my financial stability, and my ability to spend on myself and help my family.”* Another participant added in the same context, saying: *“work helped me to become financially independent and unsupported by others and I stopped receiving any financial assistance from the state. This is an excellent thing and raises a lot of burdens from the state.”*
- **Social and family impact:** Improving the economic conditions of people with disabilities is reflected in improving their social conditions through forming a family and building new relationships and friendships, as well as getting rid of the prevailing negative stereotype in society towards them, which is based on the perspective of compassion and dependence. As one of the participants clarified, *“I could not complete my studies, I could not marry, and I did not have*

financial stability, but after taking a job, I became psychologically stable, and I was able to complete my studies and get married."

- **Psychological impact:** represented in psychological stability, increasing self-confidence and improving self-esteem. One of the participants spoke, saying: *"It reflected on my psychological status and sense of job security, financial stability, improving my living situation, and demonstrating my practical capabilities as a normal human being, Thank God"*. Another participant, said: *"I am interested in finding a job for myself so that I can feel my humanity, my being and my personality, as then I will not remain a burden or a dependant, and wait for government support"*. Another participant said: *"such a person becomes independent and largely self-reliant, not dependent on others, and feels that he is an active person in society."*

5.2 Challenges facing persons with disability

5.2.1 Problem Tree



5.2.2 Discussion of Challenges

Despite the positive effects of the participation of persons with mobility disabilities in the labour market, the results showed a number of problems and challenges that led to a decrease in the labour market inclusion of persons with mobility disability, in Kasbat Irbid, including:

- **Challenges at the level of monitoring systems on economic establishments with regard to the employment of persons with mobility disability**

Regulation No. (35) of 2021, the Persons with Disabilities Operating System, defines in Article 4/A the authority and practice of the labour inspector to inspect what is stated in the Labour Law in accordance with Articles (13) and (14) of Labour Law No. (8) of 1996. Therefore, inspection is linked with control as one of its mechanisms, and labour inspection is defined as: “The process through which the Ministry of Labour, jointly with employers and workers, verifies that the work environment, terms and conditions in an organisation are in accordance with the requirements of the Jordanian Labour Law.”¹⁶

The weakness of the control and inspection mechanisms is due to a number of reasons, the most important of which are: the lack of clear standards and measures for inspecting the employment rate, the weakness of the prepared and trained cadres for inspection with regard to environmental preparation and reasonable accommodation, the absence of forms based on approved standards for inspection, and the absence of measures to encourage employers to employ people persons with disabilities as a golden list, for example, in addition to the lack of financial resources for inspection, and the weak role of the Equal Opportunities Committee to look into complaints, and it does not have any authority to inspect¹⁷.

- **Challenges related to accessibility of persons with disabilities**
 - Lack of transportation adapted for persons with mobility disabilities: Goal No. (11) of the Sustainable Development Goals refers to: “sustainable cities and communities. Despite the explicit reference in the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 31 of 2017 in its article 36 to compel public transport companies to prepare all buses for the use of persons with disability and to allocate two seats for them in public transportation buses, but the reality of the Kasbat Irbid district is devoid of transportation adapted for persons with disability, whether in public transport or taxis, which leads to the difficulty of transporting persons with mobility disabilities, and the exercise of some of their rights, such as: movement, work, their lack of active participation in society, their exclusion and isolation. On the other hand, this situation leads people with mobility disabilities to rent medium transport vehicles, which costs them a lot of money, time and effort, and some drivers deal with them illegally and

¹⁶ Labor Inspection and Occupational Safety Manual, Jordanian Ministry of Labor

¹⁷ Forty Guide, Chapter Two, Q9 + Q10, The Supreme Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

refuse to park and transport people with disabilities. This is confirmed by what one of the participants added, saying: *“I challenge you if I go outside, and signal to the first taxi, the second, the third, and the fourth, if someone stops.”* Another participant added: *“the taxi driver says he is afraid for his car”*.

- Persons with disabilities suffer from poor accessibility in the Vocational Training Corporation: Despite the objectives of the proposed strategy of the Vocational Training Corporation for the years 2020-2022, which stipulates “ensuring training opportunities to achieve greater participation of women and people with disabilities”, and also includes an initiative and project to improve the quality of vocational training institutes at all levels of the environment and equipment, but the reality of the situation is completely different. The Vocational Training Institute in the Kasbat Irbid is still not adapted for people with mobility disability, which negatively affects the accessibility of persons with disability. Also, the Vocational Training Centre - Irbid is geographically far from the population centres in villages and rural areas, which in turn increases their financial burdens and limits their chances of joining the centre¹⁸. Also, the proposed strategy did not include implementation mechanisms to achieve the desired goals, and according to the latest published report for the year 2020, the report did not include information on how to prepare and rehabilitate persons with disabilities professionally and did not mention any programmes or policies directed to persons with disability.
 - Poor accessibility and accommodations: Through the poor availability of databases for persons with mobility disabilities, and websites and geographic sites that facilitate the process of communication between persons with disabilities and facilities, taking into account the diversity of types of disabilities, as one of the participants added: *“The first dilemma for people with special needs is that there is no information, in addition to the factor of the geographical distance and the distance of villages and their distance from markets and facilities,”* as another participant added: *“The distance of villages and the distance to market places and workplaces is also a major dilemma and the facilities and institutions lack environmental preparation for people with mobility disabilities represented by “ramps” and elevators and other logistics that suits their needs,”* A third participants added: *“We in Irbid lack ramps. Wherever you go you find a sidewalk and if you want to use the sidewalk, someone must lift you up, and we suffer from this a lot, frankly”*. Thus, it reflects directly on their economic participation in the labour market.
- **Challenges related to the cultural and social issues facing persons with mobility disabilities**

This challenge is represented by the negative stereotype prevailing among employers regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, as this challenge constitutes one of the most prominent

¹⁸ A human rights perspective instead of a philanthropic perspective. 2019, Position Paper, Phenix Center for Economic and Social Studies..

challenges faced by persons with disability in general, and persons with mobility disability in particular. Employers refuse their employment for several reasons, including: the control of the medical model of disability and the caring approach, and the view of persons with disabilities as patients who are unable to work and are unproductive, and because they are sick and may resort to repeated absences, which will negatively affect the facility. One of the participants illustrated this by saying: *"I applied several places that refused to give me work, because they said I will be a burden on them."*

If they are employed, they are often treated in an inappropriate manner. In the event that this is imposed on the employer for the purposes of applying the employment rate, they restrict their employment to simple jobs without taking into account the efficiency and educational and academic achievement, according to what one of the participants said: *"she was imposed on the employer, but they made her life hell, to the extent that she was unable to bear the work and actually left the job."* Also, there is the fear of causing losses to the facility, especially with regard to the costs of environmental preparation and reasonable accommodation, and the weak employers' awareness of the importance of the participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market and their responsibility to promote human rights on the ground, respect for diversity, acceptance of persons with disability, equality and non-discrimination. This was confirmed by what Prof. Dr. Saleh Al-Sharafat *"there is clear and negative discrimination against persons with mobility disability in recruitment, interviews and employment"*¹⁹.

- **Challenges pertaining to the high rate of illiteracy among persons with mobility disabilities**

It was noted that there is a high percentage of persons with disability who have not previously joined educational institutions, with a prevalence rate of 29.1%, or one third of the total number of persons with disability. According to the educational level, the results showed that Jordanian illiterates of persons with disability constituted more than a third of Jordanian illiterates aged 13 years and over, at a rate of 36.8%. Irbid Governorate recorded the second highest rate of illiteracy among persons with disability, with a rate of 43.7%²⁰.

Because of the importance of illiteracy eradication, the Arab Decade for Literacy and Adult Education²¹ (2015-2024) was adopted by the Arab League, at the summit level, and UNESCO. Although Jordan is considered part of this contract and participated in the development of a strategic plan to eradicate illiteracy through the Ministry of Education, this strategy does not include persons with disability.

19 Dr. Saleh Al-Sharafat / Member of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, President of the Nahda Association for Mobility Challenges, and Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Al al-Bayt University.

20 Indicators of the reality of disability based on the 2015 population and housing census, page 26/27/28, Department of Statistics, 2015.

21 One of the decisions of the Council of the League of Arab States at the summit level, regular session (26, Egypt, 2015). http://www.mogatel.com/openshare/Wthaek/title/GamaKema/699.doc_cvt.htm

The follower of the national policy to guarantee the rights of persons with disability in Jordan, and according to the indicators of the success in implementing the national policy, it must target until 2030 only 15% of the illiterate persons with disability, who constitute 36.8% of the total illiterate persons in Jordan, and there is no policy or mechanism or a programme to achieve this, noting that this is the only place where literacy for persons with disability is mentioned. The ten-year strategy of inclusive education for the years (2020-2030), launched by the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, does not incorporate the inclusion of illiterate persons with disability.

Obviously, the high rate of illiteracy and weak skills of persons with disability is due to several reasons, including: the lack of policies to eradicate illiteracy among persons with disability, low rates of participation of persons with disability in education, weak presence in institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities to empower and train persons with disability, weak training and rehabilitation programmes, whether in vocational training institutions or the Ministry of Labour, and their inadequacy with the requirements of the labour market, and weak coordination between the various and relevant institutions concerned with the employment of persons with disability.

- **Challenges due to the lack of awareness and media programmes to highlight the rights of persons with disability**

The media plays a prominent and important role in promoting the rights of persons with disability, raising awareness of their rights and promoting a human rights approach to dealing with their issues. It has an influential role in raising and directing societal awareness and promoting positive practices and behaviours. So far, the media, its means and programmes do not cover issues related to the rights of persons with disability properly, and it also lacks media professionalism in dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities. Thus, it reinforces the negative stereotype towards persons with disability, supporting the caring medical approach on media programmes, by highlighting persons with disability as patients or service recipients only²².

With regard to the rights of persons with disability at work, the media discusses how persons with disabilities overcome their health and physical disabilities and not the obstacles of society, and that they have reached the status of a superhero. A press story about disability is usually treated as an element of suspense, which is in fact discrimination and a violation of their privacy, as it is better to focus on the gaps, shortcomings and negative practices in providing the necessary needs for persons with disability to exercise their rights and freedoms²³. This media absence is due to a number of reasons, the most important of which are: the negative stereotype towards persons with disabilities in the minds of media personnel, the weakness of policies, strategies, plans and

22 The National Policy to Ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan 2020-2030, The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

23 Persons with disabilities between the hammer, oh poor thing, or oh great in the balance of the media, Dr. Muhannad Al-Azzah, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

programmes aimed at raising awareness of the rights of persons with disability, in addition to the weak mechanisms for monitoring violations in the media and the absence of a culture of acceptance of human diversity²⁴.

6 Options and Alternatives

With the aim of improving the participation of persons with disability in the labour market in Kasbat Irbid, and based on the results of analysing information and data from its secondary and primary sources, the research team proposes a number of public policies, namely:

First: A policy to activate an employment monitoring system of persons with mobility disability in the public and private sectors.

Objective:

To reach a private and governmental work sectors that are committed to employing persons with mobility disability in the proportions specified by law.

Programmes:

- Creating incentive packages for work sectors obligated to employ persons with mobility disabilities in cooperation with the relevant authorities (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Finance, Income and Sales Tax Department).
- Developing the implementation of periodic inspection programmes on the establishments of the labour sectors in order to monitor the availability of accommodations for persons with mobility disability, in cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability.
- Reviewing the inspection criteria for establishments approved by the Ministry of Labour, which includes a list of inspection criteria for the employment of persons with mobility disabilities, including accessibility and employment in cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Improving the performance of private sector companies and increasing their flexibility in hiring persons with mobility disabilities.
- Alleviating the obstacles faced by persons with disabilities by following the course of the work plan for the inspection of work sectors.
- Integrating persons with mobility disabilities into working life and promoting the concept of equality in society.

²⁴ The National Policy to Ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan 2020-2030, The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The financial cost of introducing stimulus packages.
- The time period required for coordination between the Ministry of Labour and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability in developing inspection programmes.
- The time period for setting a strict mechanism for implementing inspection programmes to ensure the prevention of any violations.

Second: A policy to create public transportation that serves people with mobility disability and integrates them into the labour market with smart transportation applications

Objective:

To facilitate transportation for persons with mobility disability and ensure their enjoyment of the right to move safely and easily.

Programmes:

- Creating means of transportation in each of the villages of Kasbat Irbid, adapted for people with mobility disability, in coordination and cooperation between the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability and the Public Transport Authority.
- Requiring taxi offices and public transport companies to have at least one vehicle adapted for people with mobility disability by the Public Transport Authority.
- Encouraging the owners of application companies for transportation services to involve people with disability by working as drivers, and thus people with disability get work and at the same time can use this means of transportation in cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Public Transport Authority.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Accessibility for people with mobility disabilities.
- Providing new job opportunities for people with disabilities as taxi drivers and avoiding discrimination on the grounds of disability.
- Reducing the negative stereotype in society about persons with mobility disability and their abilities.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The high financial cost of developing transportation networks that include all villages in Kasbat Irbid.
- Persuading and committing the owners of smart applications transportation companies to employ persons with mobility disability.

Third: Developing institutional measures for the employment of persons with mobility disabilities in the public and private sectors.

Objective:

To create national institutions capable of confronting all forms of discrimination against persons with mobility disability in the labour market.

Programmes:

- Reviewing the systems of the Vocational Training Corporation in terms of infrastructure and training programmes in line with the rights of persons with mobility disabilities, in coordination and cooperation between the Vocational Training Corporation and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability.
- Developing a sectoral plan at the Irbid governorate level that brings together all institutions related to the rights of persons with disability in order to unify the official approaches and mechanisms used in employing persons with disability, in cooperation between the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Labour.
- Strengthening the role of civil society institutions in partnership with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability to monitor and document violations of the rights of persons with mobility disability in the governmental and private sectors.
- Community awareness of the roles of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability in terms of prevention, control and monitoring through awareness and educational programmes implemented by the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Contribute to increasing the economic participation of persons with mobility disabilities in the labour market, and work to unify the human rights institutional approach for persons with disability.
- Enhancing the response of official institutions to violations of the rights of persons with disability in the work sectors.
- Increasing the commitment of the various labour sectors to the national legislation related to the employment of persons with disability and the development of responsive infrastructures.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The time period required for coordination between the relevant institutions, and the development of the sectoral plan at the level of Irbid Governorate.
- Qualified cadres aware of the human rights method and approach in dealing with persons with disability and who possess the ability and knowledge of methods for monitoring violations and abuses committed against persons with disability.
- The time period required to spread societal awareness.

Fourth: A policy for developing awareness and educational programmes on the importance of the economic participation of persons with disabilities and the role of education in enhancing their economic participation.

Objective:

To raise awareness and the necessary knowledge about the importance of the economic participation of persons with disability and the importance of their education for achieving this.

Programmes:

- Developing training courses that contribute to providing persons with disabilities with the necessary skills in the labour market, in cooperation and coordination between civil society institutions and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability.
- Developing a national programme in cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability to enhance the educational attainment and reduce illiteracy among them.
- Media programmes that highlight the importance and role of persons with disability in economic participation, and reflect their abilities to achieve this in a manner that ensures alleviation of the stereotyped image against them.

Policy advantages and opportunities:

- Helping persons with disability to obtain employment opportunities commensurate with their abilities.
- Reducing illiteracy rates among persons with disability.
- Short-time frame for implementation.
- Forging partnerships with relevant institutions, civil society organisations and media entities.

Policy implementation challenges:

- The financial cost needed to implement it.
- The time period needed to change the negative cultural stereotype towards persons with disability.

This paper aims to improve the inclusion of persons with mobility disability in the labour market. Accordingly, the research team relied on the standard scale of analysing the advantages, opportunities and challenges in implementing each policy separately, and based on the analysis of the results of a group of secondary sources in addition to in-depth interviews and focus group sessions.

Thus, the paper adopts:

1. A policy to create public transportation to serve people with mobility disability to facilitate their integration into the labour market with smart transportation applications.

2. A policy for developing awareness and educational programmes on the importance of the economic participation of persons with disability and the role of education in enhancing their economic participation.

If the competent authorities put their efforts to improve the situation of the transport sector and its regulation, this will be reflected in a noticeable way on improving the conditions of persons with mobility disability economically, and their integration into the labour market, thus contributing to achieving the sustainable development goals represented in SDG 1 concerning the eradication of poverty, and the SDG 9 concerning decent work and economic growth, SDG 11 concerning sustainable cities and communities, SDG 15 concerning life on land, and finally SDG 17 concerning partnerships to achieve the goals.

7 Annex

This paper is based on desk research and on holding two interviews with official entities and specialists on work and the rights of persons with disability. Here are their names (in alphabetical order):

- Tamer Jihad Al-Awawda: Head of the Better Work Department/ Irbid Labour Directorate.
- Saleh Swailem Al-Sharafat: Member of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disability, President of the Nahda Association for Mobility Challenges, and Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Al al-Bayt University.

It must be emphasised that the information contained in this policy paper does not necessarily express their opinions, and they are not responsible for its contents, but rather represent the positions and conclusions of the research team in analysing their experiences and information regarding the rights of persons with disability, in addition to the monitoring process and the preparation of the desk research prepared by the research team.



WANA
INSTITUTE

Royal Scientific Society, 70 Ahmad Al-Tarawneh St, Amman, Jordan | Tel: +962 6 534 4701 | info@wanainstitute.org

www.wanainstitute.org