

MIDDLE EAST PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

LEBANON/OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Supporting people living with disabilities in the Middle East

Across the world, people with disabilities face more obstacles to working and being fully involved in society than the rest of the population, and even more so in developing countries. This new project in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory aims to improve the lives of thousands of people with disabilities, directly benefiting over 30,000 people. However, its wider impact will boost the prospects of many times this number.

The money given by groups like yours will:

- Provide training and careers guidance for people living with disabilities.
- Improve prospects for jobs.
- Improve working conditions, including workplace adaptation.
- Increase awareness of issues facing disabled people – particularly among employers.
- Improve laws protecting the rights of people living with disabilities.

What's more, your donations will be matched by the European Commission at 3:1, so the £5,000 your group pledges will be worth an incredible £20,000 to the project. (Please note that your gifts need to be with Christian Aid by 31 December 2014.)

Thank you for your support!

This new project, which begins work on 1 April 2012, will improve the lives of people with disabilities in the Middle East, enabling them to become more confident and active members of society. It will help them improve the skills needed to set up their own businesses or enter employment, and will also break down the obstacles currently standing in their way.

The work will be carried out by two long-standing Christian Aid partners in the region, both of whom have a great deal of experience in working with people with disabilities: the Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU) and the East Jerusalem YMCA.

There are approximately 500,000 people living with disabilities in Lebanon and the West Bank (part of the occupied Palestinian territory). They should all indirectly benefit from the project's wider goals, with 30,000 receiving direct benefits in the form of new employment or business opportunities, and 1,000 people receiving personal support from the project.



Christian Aid/Tabitha Ross

Naghem Hasha is the first wheelchair user to attend her university. The groundwork was done by LPHU, which highlighted the importance of disability inclusion and accessibility at the university, and took Naghem to see the premises. LPHU helped the campus install wheelchair ramps and assisted with Naghem's application by sending her on a computer course. Now, she says: 'I can prove that I am more than my chair. It doesn't matter what others say and think.'

The challenge in Lebanon

Years of civil war and invasions by Israel have left Lebanon with a relatively high proportion of people living with disabilities. Although official figures are in short supply, household surveys by LPHU, conducted in line with World Health Organisation definitions, suggest that those living with disabilities make up about seven per cent of the population.

LPHU works to support people living with disabilities across Lebanon – both those disabled as a result of accidents or conflict, and those disabled from birth. Part of LPHU's work is dedicated to local projects that serve the needs of its membership, such as skills and vocational training, micro-credit or counselling. Additionally, a large part of its focus is challenging the

structures that keep people living with disabilities in Lebanon poor and marginalised.

The challenge in the West Bank

The YMCA works with disadvantaged young people in the West Bank. Its centre in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, offers people with physical disabilities a comprehensive rehabilitation programme involving social care, counselling and home modification.

The shortage of adequately functioning public services in parts of the West Bank poses a particular challenge, but one that the YMCA has experience in working to overcome.

Impact at every level

The project will tackle the obstacles facing people with disabilities in a wide variety of ways:

National

- Strengthening and fully implementing laws protecting the rights of people living with disabilities.
- Improving the effectiveness of government departments responsible for implementing these rights.
- Lobbying for government action to make further improvements to the position of people with disabilities.

Businesses

- Increasing awareness of disability rights within the business sector.
- Technical and financial support to enable companies to become accessible for all people.
- Training for employees in a range of businesses, on issues such as disability, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and workplace adaptation.

Civil society

- Increasing the capacity of YMCA and LPHU to support people with disabilities more effectively, and strengthening the links and exchange of expertise between them.
- Strengthening regional networks to improve their lobbying and advocacy for people living with disabilities.

Individuals

- Jobseekers' training and careers guidance.
- Direct support in applying for jobs.
- Vocational training for specific jobs.



When he was 14, Noor picked up what looked like a metal pipe in a street near his home. It turned out to be an abandoned Israeli explosive device. He lost his right hand in the explosion and then became depressed after the accident, dropping out of school. Counselling from the YMCA helped Noor return to school, build his confidence, and imagine a positive future. He's still very shy, but dreams of working with computers when he's older and being able to help his family, who are very poor.

If there is any way we can help your group, please contact us.

Email partnershipscheme@christian-aid.org or call Max Khanna on 020 8123 7523.

Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives.

Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty – and we believe that vision can become a reality. We urge you to join us.

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