



# MAPPING OPLOYMENT SERVICES

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**Prepared by:**

**Palestinian Consultative Staff for Developing NGOs "PCS"**

**In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour**

**This Mapping study comes within a publication,  
within the efforts of Palestinian consultative staff  
for developing NGOs, which aimed to Identify  
specific recommendations to promote  
mainstreaming and accessibility of persons with  
disabilities to services provided by public  
employment service offices**

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## **PART I: Accessibility of People with Disability to Palestinian employment district offices**

### **Overview**

#### **Background of the Study**

As part of the efforts to promote mainstreaming people with disabilities in the work of Ministry of Labor, particularly its employment service offices, this mapping aims to identify gaps and recommendations for improving accessibility of services provided by these offices to people with disabilities (PWDs). The mapping will heavily draw on expertise and past experiences by the Palestinian Consultative Staff for Developing NGOs – PCS.

Despite increasing their outreach efforts, the public employment service offices and recent OSS offices have no particular strategy or policy on working with persons with disabilities. As a result, many of the services provided are neither adequate nor accessible to this marginalized group. This study aims to conduct a mapping and review of the public employment service offices, with the aim of identifying gaps and recommendations for better mainstreaming of persons with disabilities

Work is important for persons with disabilities to ensure their financial independence, professional development, self-esteem, and social inclusion. Thus, the focus of the study is geared towards identifying specific recommendations focusing on better accessibility and mainstreaming for persons with disabilities. The study addresses the specific obstacles facing persons with disabilities in accessing services of employment service offices, and whether reasonable accommodation has been made at the offices. The study highlights the perceptions of heads of employment service offices on constraints limiting PWD full access to services. It will further examine the support services available to facilitate PWD integration into active economic and social lives. While the mapping covers employment service offices across all West Bank Governorates, accessibility of services in some vocational training centers was examined.

While the assessment will be conducted with employment service office personnel, involvement of DPOs and PCS will be realized to ensure that particular gaps identified by them are reflected in the assessment. The review will focus on case studies and particular life experiences of PWD as reported by DPOs in accessing services of the employment service offices. The review will also entail a capacity building section that pinpoints specific areas suggested to improve the capacities of manager of employment service offices.

The assignment also entails customized assessment of the employment service offices based on an assessment tool that addresses various service criteria relevant to PWDs. Assessment based on this criteria will delve into aspects important to service accessibility and feedback mechanisms. These include general service accessibility, accommodating individual disabilities, freedom of decisions and choices, privacy and confidentiality, inclusion and participation, complaints and dispute resolution, and how services are managed in these employment centers.

It is worthy to note, that although the mapping study focuses on the services provided by employment offices, overall challenges and constraints of the job market have been highlighted, especially as these affect the performance of the employment offices. Thus, the high unemployment rates in the job market, the unsuitable infrastructure in the work place, and even cultural stigmas are issues that are highlighted in this study. Another limitation to the study was its geographical coverage, as it only focused on the West Bank including the main office in East Jerusalem. However, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem localities that are under the administrative boundaries of the Jerusalem municipality are not incorporated in this study.

## Objectives of the Study

This study aims to conduct a mapping of public employment services – namely the employment district offices of the Ministry of Labor (MoL) – and review the accessibility of their services to persons with disabilities.

In pursuit of this, the assignment has the following specific objectives:

- Map the existing public employment service offices describing their location, their status (OSS or within a district office), and their offered services
- Assess the accessibility of services provided by public employment service offices to persons with disabilities, particularly gaps and challenges facing their access to services
- Identify specific recommendations to promote mainstreaming and accessibility of persons with disabilities to services provided by public employment service offices

A cross-cutting objective of the mapping study was to assess the actual application of Palestinian laws and legislations, as well as international agreements that the PA is a signatory on. These entail the Palestinian Disability Law, the Labor Law, other pertinent Palestinian laws and bylaws, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## Methodology

The study relied on both desk and field-based data collection, that included

1. Literature review of relevant documents including the PCS project documents, project progress reports, national strategy for employment, and other relevant material suggested by the General Directorate for Employment at MoL
2. Meetings with the Manager of the General Directorate for Employment Services at the MoL and other key staff within the ministry suggested by PCS.
3. Presentation of methodology and data collection tools to the project steering committee and taking into consideration their comments
4. Conducting structured interviews with managers of employment service offices and heads of directorates
5. Hold 2 focus groups with PWDs to assess their familiarity with public employment service offices and their services, and what specific challenges limits their accessibility
6. Conduct field visits to further assess the accessibility of services and physical space at the employment service centers
7. Held other interviews outside the scope of the assignment to get broader feedback and insights on accessibility of PWDs to services provided by the Public Employment Service offices, including heads of vocational center, heads of district-level general union for People with Disabilities, and governorate representatives.
8. Held a brief presentation workshop to relevant stakeholders, primarily the General Directorate of Employment, heads of public employment service offices, and DPOs to present findings and receive recommendations
9. Presented draft study findings to a technical expert and received comments and recommendations

## Employment services and employment offices

### Historical context

Since its establishment in 1994, the Ministry of Labor has been working under its General Directorate for employment services to provide complimentary services to citizens promoting employability services and matching job seekers with employers in the job market. To this end, employment offices have been set up at district level offering job placement services in addition to several other value-added services. Recently, the ministry has been upgrading these employment service offices into one-stop shops (OSS), intended to narrow employment gaps by reducing the mismatch between labor demand and supply. Their services are available to jobseekers, graduates, the unemployed, dropouts and women. They provide career guidance and counseling services to employees and jobseekers, including vocational guidance, employment counseling, job placement and guidance in self-employment and small enterprise creation (start-ups). They also provide services to employers, especially the matching of qualified staff to employer needs, and they collect and provide labor market information for their target groups.

In 1999, the PA passed the Palestinian Disability law with the intention of promoting and protecting rights of persons with disabilities. The law marked an important shift in how the Palestinian government viewed its citizens with disabilities, how it intended to promote and protect their rights, and how it valued the contributions persons with disabilities can make in developing a vibrant, diverse and prosperous Palestinian state.

As a result of the Disability Law and the efforts of disability activists, Disabled Persons Organizations and their national and international partners, several ministries have begun mainstreaming disability considerations in their policies and regulations, most notable the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Labor. A higher council for people with Disabilities has been established under MoSA and has begun its work to ensure that the disability law is implemented and that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected. Progress so far has been limited in practical implementation of the law and its impact for most persons with disabilities has not met expectations.

The Palestinian Disability Law has yet to be comprehensively mainstreamed into government policies, programmes, and practices. Most activities do not fully comply with the law, and as a consequence persons with disabilities cannot benefit from them.

Living under a politically turbulent context, Persons with Disabilities in Palestine have suffered the implications of the Palestinian political split for the last 8 years. The economic and social conditions of them increasingly deteriorate due to the non-application of the Palestinian Law no. 4 of 1999 on the rights of disabled persons and absence of well to promote and protect their rights under the international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Standards of living, which these persons and their families should enjoy, have aggravated due to irregular payment of social allowances to them for long periods, which may extend to 4 consecutive months, despite their low financial value. Disabled persons still suffer poor services included in the card of persons with disabilities in the Palestinian law such as health care services, rehabilitation, education, employment, training, adequate facilities and the easy access to them in addition to their rights in the fields of entertainment, sports, and participation in the cultural life in society. The disabled have been waiting for the issuance of the disabled card, which gives them access to the main services in the fields of health, rehabilitation, training and education, for over 13 years.

### Services

As the line ministry guiding the employment sector in Palestine, it is the main stakeholder governmental body leading on the implementation of the newly approved sector strategic plan for



employment. Accordingly, its services contribute to the overall vision of the sector, especially in working with relevant stakeholders to ensure a regulated and organized employment sector, with full participation of stakeholders towards reducing employment rates and poverty, as well as promoting decent work and social welfare in Palestine. While the ministry does not generate employment opportunities itself, the services provided by its different directorates and district-offices contribute towards improved opportunities for Palestinian citizens in the job market. Besides working on towards regulating the employment sector, the ministry provides a wide range of services under its general directorate for employment. District-level offices are set-up across all Palestinian governorates to ensure the accessibility of services to the public.

The services provided under the general directorate of employment and its district-level offices and departments include:

- Job Matching services: This is one of the main services provided by the employment offices to link job seekers to the job market. Employment offices compile a database of all job seekers and employers, matching any new job opportunities with qualified job seekers. Through support by the German Technical Office (GIZ), a new comprehensive system was developed, the “Labour Market Information System – LMIS”. This new system “aspires to link all organizations related to the labour market in one computerized system to increase the efficiency of the labour market information system and labour market strategy”. The system contributes to better transparency in fields of employment, as well as gather data that could be used for capacity building and career choices for Palestinians.
- Career guidance and counseling: The employment offices offer counseling and career guidance opportunities to provide better orientation to the public on the job market, as well as improve their readiness for employment. Some of these services are provided at counseling centers located at primary Palestinian universities.
- Professional development and training: Some of the services provided by employment offices include training workshops to the public to improve their job-searching and job-readiness skills, including how to write your CV, interview skills, workplace success, among others.
- Vocational Training: District-level vocational training centers have been set-up to provide technical and hands-on training, that are partly administered by the Ministry of Labor and partly by the Ministry of Education.
- Limited though increased emphasis on entrepreneurship and income generating projects: Employment offices are increasingly involved in donor-funded income-generating and entrepreneurship projects. The employment offices are also partaking in the Local Employment Councils headed by the Governor, which is increasingly taking on entrepreneurship and income-generation projects as a strategy to drive employment.
- Employer-oriented services: Besides supplying employers with qualified job seekers, the employment offices offer guidance and technical assistance to employers primarily in complying with pertinent laws and legislations.

- Referral System: The employment service offices are also serving as a referral system to the public, linking them to professional development and training opportunities offered elsewhere.

### Status of district offices

As a separate function in the ministry of labor, employment services has distinct offices or departments at each directorate.

- Embedded within the directorate: Eizariya, Jericho, Tubas, Salfit, and Qalqilia
- OSS: Hebron, Tulkarem, Jenin & Nablus & Beit Jala & Ramallah (embedded within the office)
- Separate offices: Al-Ram, Dura, Halhul, Hebron old city

### Employment of PWDs in Palestine

The most recent Palestinian census has revealed some striking figures amongst the population of the disabled according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The disability rate as appears in 2007 is 5.3 percent of the total population based on the classification of disability that has been agreed upon by the technical committee of the census, whereas the PCBS revealed that the percentage of disability in the census conducted for families in 2006 was around 2.7 percent in the Palestinian territories. This discrepancy is probably due to the different classification system used by PCBS for disability in the two censuses. The census of 2007 shows that less than 20 percent of working-age disabled (according to ILO criteria) are employed, whereas almost 80 percent of them have no jobs; 55 percent have had no education whatsoever; and more than 70 percent of the disabled have had access to rehabilitation and other types of services. Those figures indicate without any doubt that discrepancy and discrimination between the so-called “abled” and disabled are the major colours of the picture in our society.

The proportion of disability among females in the Palestinian society is 2.5%, where the proportion of males is 2.9%.<sup>1</sup> The survey omitted disability dimensions in the demographic variables and has not been addressed to examine gender. It is therefore difficult to understand the situation of women with disabilities in Palestinian society and thus determine the national programs and policies to meet their needs in improving living conditions and promoting rights. The culture of social vulnerability of women with disabilities to double marginalization is reflected here. Palestinian families give advantage of opportunities in access to education or social participation and even marriage for males, and prefer to not get women with disabilities out from the private sphere into the public sphere, because of the stigma and the attempt to protect the, specifically against sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

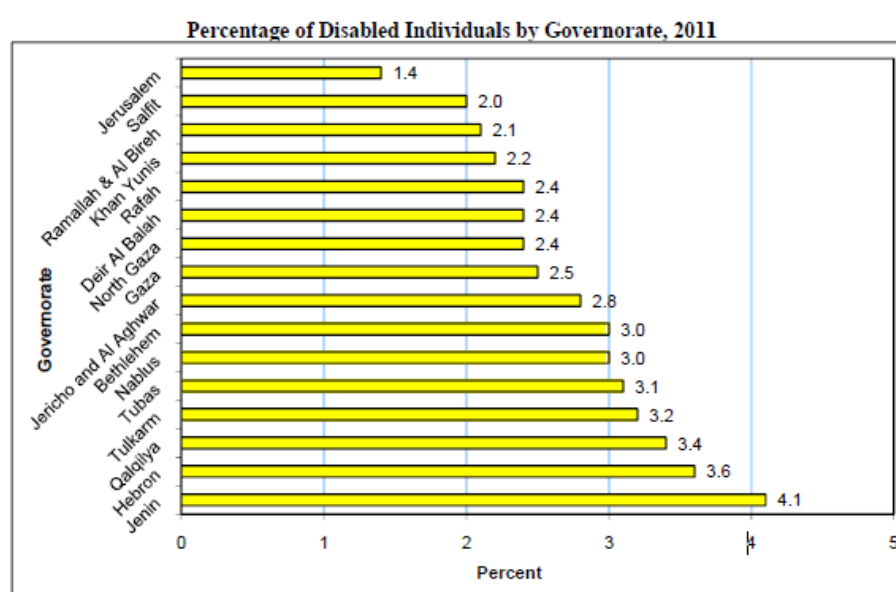
On the eve of the International Population Day in 2012, PCBS produced a report indicating that people with disabilities in the Palestinian Territory are around 113,000 people, of which 75,000 reside in the West Bank, or 2.7% of the total population in the West Bank; and 38,000 in the Gaza

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<sup>1</sup> Palestinian National Authority, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the main results Report of the disability situation in Palestine 2011

<sup>2</sup> Palestinian Women Center for Research and Documentation, Disabilities in Palestinian communities in Lebanon and refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territories, 2012

Strip; or 2.4% of the total population in the Gaza Strip are with disabilities. The culture of social vulnerability of women with disabilities to double marginalization is reflected in the oPt. Palestinian families give advantage of opportunities in access to education or social participation and even marriage for males, and prefer to not get women with disabilities out from the private sphere into the public sphere, because of the stigma and the attempt to protect them, specifically against sexual violence.<sup>3</sup>



## Accessibility of services to PWDs

Article II in the Palestinian Disability Law in 1999 provides the “The disabled have the right to .... various services in a manner equal to that of other citizens and he/she have the same rights and obligations that are within his/her capabilities. It is not permissible to prevent any disabled from enjoying these rights because of his/her disability.” Nonetheless, persons with disabilities face a multitude of constraints limiting their accessibility to services.

### Physical Accessibility

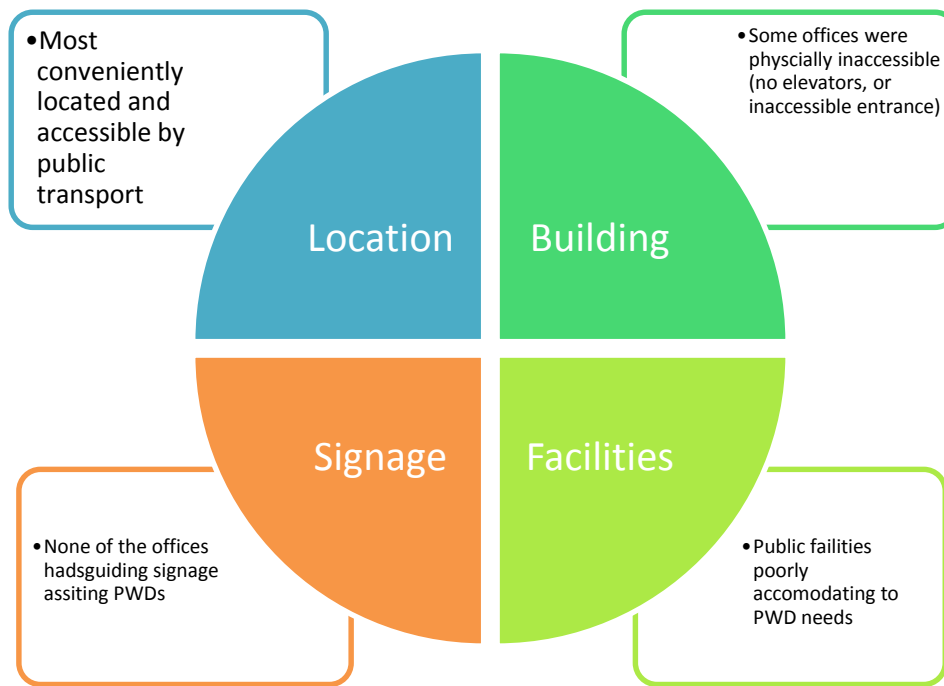
At its most basic sense, accessibility for PWDs starts with physical ability to enter employment service offices. There are a wide range of obstacles and barriers that constrain PWDs from physically accessing a building, such as public transport, building entrance, stairs, signs, or facilities.

In assessing the physical accessibility to employment service offices, it is important to note the general context in Palestine. Accessibility is hampered by a number of constraints, as most public offices and facilities, public transport, and most employers are physically unaccommodating to needs of PWDs. Nonetheless, this mapping attempts to rate the physical accessibility of employment offices, identifying gaps and constraints that could be remedied to enable improved physical accessibility. The rating focuses on “reasonable accommodation”, taking into account a number of

<sup>3</sup> Palestinian Women Center for Research and Documentation, Disabilities in Palestinian communities in Lebanon and refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territories, 2012

important factors and criteria: location, building entrance and stairs, signage or readers, and facilities.

- Location: The physical location of employment services offices is an important criteria on assessing PWD physical accessibility. Conveniently located buildings allow for easy transport and thus accessibility to the employment office. The visits to employment service offices across all 11 governorates revealed that most offices are centrally located enabling reach of public transport. However, some of these offices were far from the city and harder to reach with public transport, such as the employment service offices in Tulkarem and Tubas. Other offices had accessible transport but were located in industrial zones, such as Jenin and Ramallah, which is not a suitable location for an employment service office. It is also worthy to note that certain employment offices had more than one physical presence in a district to enable easier access for the public. For instance, there are 4 offices in Hebron and 2 offices in Jerusalem which is much easier and more practical for PWDs and public alike. One of the limitations affecting the decision on selecting a location for the employment service offices is the rental allocation fees, with a ceiling set by the ministry that offices cannot exceed.
- Building entrance and stairs: This criteria covers the physical constraints to accessibility, including parking, building entrance, stairs, and the pathway to the office. It was noted that certain offices are highly inaccessible to PWDs, being located at higher floors without having elevators, or the entrance of the building is elevated without having entrance ramps. While most offices had parking space available for the public, only a few had reserved parking marked with the international symbol for accessibility. Certain offices were deemed highly accessible to PWDs, particularly Qalqilia employment services office, where the elevators were equipped with Brill System.
- Signage or readers: Very limited efforts were invested in facilitating PWD access to signs, equipment, or speech readers that provides them direction to the office or within the office. Braille system to enable reading by the blind or visually-impaired was rarely used in physical spaces. One of the employment service offices did not even have a sign showing the location of the office itself.
- Facilities: These include the main facilities by which the service is delivered, including front desk, waiting areas, and public restrooms. Some of the service front desks that were the first encounter for public were highly elevated, which is not considerate for wheelchair users. Moreover, some offices did not have waiting areas available to public when queuing or awaiting their service. None of the public restrooms available were accessible to PWDs.



### Outreach to PWDs

In assessing the awareness of PWDs of the role and services of public employment offices, most participants in the focus groups reported having very limited or no idea of what these offices offer. On the other hand, many of the employment offices themselves acknowledged extremely low turnout rate among PWDs. It is worthy to note that PWD turnout varied from office to office, which usually points to local problems and challenges rather than cross-cutting issues facing PWDs at the national levels. Nonetheless, the outreach to PWDs is still sub-standard and needs to be drastically improved, as demonstrated by the very low percentage of PWDs registered in the Labour Market Information System (Less than 1%).

### Means of Outreach

Public employment service offices promoted their services primarily through publications and other central outreach efforts of the Ministry. At district-level, employment service offices held coordination meetings with CBOs and local employers to promote their services. In fact, several workshops were held following requests by certain organizations to have representatives from employment offices explain about their role and services they offer. However, such coordination, though highly important, was rare due to several reasons mostly related to lack of human resources or availability of vehicles. In fact, one of the main challenges facing mobility of staff is that governmental employees are not usually reimbursed for their transportation even if it is work-related.

This also primarily affected the outreach potential of employment offices to visit employers within their district. It is worthy to note that usually the inspection department conducts most of the field visits to employers as part of their efforts to monitor compliance with laws and legislations. Due to very limited outreach by public employment service offices and the employers lack of awareness of

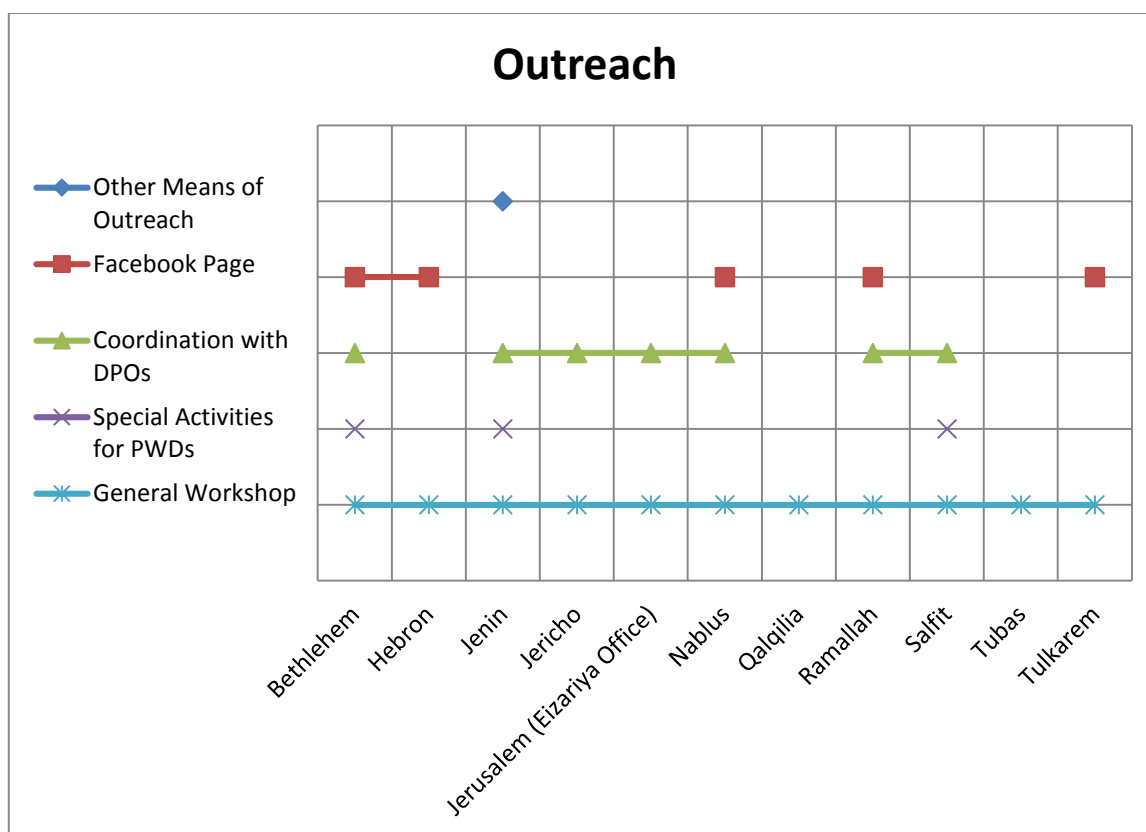
the services they provide, it is perceived by many employers that the Ministry of Labor's role is just regulatory rather than providing them with services.

While outreach to the public in itself is too limited, some of the employment offices had occasional coordination to promote their services among PWDs. Some of these offices had working relationship with local chapters of the General Union of Persons with Disabilities. However, many employment offices cited the weak and limited representation these offices had to outreach to PWDs. Some employment offices complained that the GUPWD does not have databases of PWDs who are eligible to enroll in the job market. In fact, most of employment services offices thought it would be useful if the union provided them with such databases. Some employment offices have also worked with DPOs and found such cooperation useful in better promoting their services among PWDs. As a result of such coordination, workshops were held by employment office representatives to present to PWDs some of the services and ways they can help them in job readiness and job matching.

Another important outreach mechanism employed by employment offices was through schools and universities. Staff at the employment offices held career guidance workshops and sessions to students in high school or university students. Other forms of career counseling were also held to university students through the career counseling centers at colleges and universities.

Another way of outreach to the public utilized by employment offices is social media. Many of these offices had special facebook pages for the employment office, most notably the one stop shop offices. In these pages, the employment offices promoted the activities they held as a way to promote work undertaken by their office. However, many of the pages were rarely activated missing on real opportunities to outreach. The OSS of Bethlehem is one of the offices that actively used facebook to promote their services and the activities they withheld, which included workshops dedicated to PWDs. Since facebook and social media in general presents excellent opportunities for outreach, this is a lost opportunity so far for employment offices to utilize this channel to promote its services.

Another notable and more proactive outreach effort was in the case of Jenin OSS, holding an honoring ceremony to celebrate those employers who exemplified practices that facilitated employment of PWDs in their workforce. A total of 17 employers were honored by the directorate of labor in Jenin with the presence of any other employers as a positive gesture to encourage their active efforts towards themselves welcoming PWDs to their workforce.



## Legal & Institutional Constraints

### Legal constraints

The Palestinian Disability Law and the Palestinian Labor Code have both set a number of articles that regulates and promote employability of PWDs. However, these laws are far from being applicable in the Palestinian case, especially in relation to employment. Chapter 3 of the Palestinian Disability Law stipulates that public places are to be obligatory accessible to PWDs, yet most Palestinian employers including key line ministries are not accommodating to the physical needs of PWDs. This issue has actually been cited as a main challenge facing employability of PWDs, as most of workplaces in the job market are unaccommodating to special needs of PWDs. Many cited this problem as serious one that requires the attention of all stakeholders, including the government. Some have recommended that the PA allocate enough financial resources to rehabilitate most of their public offices to accommodate needs of PWDs.

Another legal issue is the article that “compels government and non-government organizations to absorb a number of disabled individuals provided that the number is not less than 5% the number of staff in each organization”. The article further stipulates that “the absorption shall be consistent with the nature of work of these institutions, and the work place shall be suitable for the employment of these individuals”. While most heads of employment offices acknowledged their awareness of this article, most felt that it is irrelevant since it cannot be enforced. First, they cited that the overwhelming majority of the employers in the Palestinian case are considered small in nature, employing less than 20 people, and accordingly the 5% quota does not apply on them in this case. They further argued that the law does not have any executive bylaws or enforcement mechanisms

that allow its implementation and regulation. That said, some respondents felt that enforcing quotas is not the right approach to promoting employability among PWDs.

Furthermore, staff at employment offices lack informed and updated knowledge on rights of PWDs. Workshops and sessions to raise their awareness of the human and legal rights of PWDs can be key in enhancing mainstreaming and ability to relate to the needs and rights of PWDs.

### Human resource constraints

During the field visit period to the employment service offices, it was noted that staff were mostly involved with requests related to health insurance. This is a service that the MoL is temporarily providing whereby they provide public with the clearance proving they are unemployed, a document that constitutes the approval to acquire complimentary health insurance from the Ministry of Health. This service consumed considerable times and efforts of employment office staff, at the expense of other functions particularly their ability to more widely outreach to the public. Also, many of the staff saw this as a time-consuming, bureaucratic procedure that does not fall under the Ministry's priorities or even mandates.

Another human constraint issue that affected performance of employment offices was the absence of key personnel according to the office organizational structure. For instance, the key of partnerships and development position was missing at certain offices, a position that primarily leads on outreach efforts to the public.

Specifically affecting outreach and services provided to PWDs, the lack of coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) as another key line ministry working with PWDs was evident. One of the main programs implemented by MoSA was the cash assistance program to PWDs, which is allocated to those unemployed. There are plenty of opportunities for cooperation between the employment service offices and MoSA's programs targeting PWDs. Targeted training and awareness workshops could be directed towards beneficiaries of MoSA's cash assistance programs, and employability interventions may enhance opportunities of employment among PWDs.

Another constraint facing quality service to PWDs is the staff weak awareness of PWN rights and special skills on how to accommodate and deal with their disabilities. Most employment service offices expressed their need for such trainings that would enable them to more inclusively and equitably provide their services, tailoring to the specific needs of PWDs. During the focus groups, PWD themselves raised the idea of training designated staff at employment service offices to become advocates within the office for PWD needs.

### Service Constraints

One important issue that is key to assessing the feasibility of role and services of employment offices is the perceptions held by public and WD alike around the effectiveness of these services. PWDs questioned during the focus groups the services provided by the employment offices, and whether these services would effectively help them in their employment prospects. The fact that the ministry only serves as a matchmaker between employers and job seekers was noted as a service that does not resolve the overall issues facing high unemployment of PWDs in Palestine.



PWDs noted that there are no programs or projects that are fully-fledged to address unemployment, arguing that stand-alone awareness workshops would not resolve the long-standing issues of unemployment. While some job placement and support to income-generating projects were supported by the Ministry, these were very limited. Some employment offices complained that they have not received applications from PWDs to entrepreneurship contests. Again, and through focus groups with PWDs, this seemed related to the lack of awareness among PWDs of these services and opportunities. Moreover, it was noted that the employment offices roles could be more proactive in coordinating with civil society organizations that design and implement employability programs. Also, there are increasing opportunities to liaise with Chambers of Commerce and the Local Employment Council to expand the services and programs employment offices provide.

Another important service deficiency is the skills and technical assistance provided by employment offices to employers. While laws and legislations require employers to have accessible work place, this is not clearly defined and requires special technical assistance to ensure specifications meet relevant standards of PWDs. In order to embed such service within employment offices, this requires special skills and knowledge of international standards, which can then be transferred to employers.

### **Cultural Constraints**

One of the most challenging constraints was cultural, specifically the public perceptions held by the public. As conveyed by employment offices, PWDs are seen as unsuitable and unproductive in the job market. As demonstrated in a study conducted by the Independent Commission for Human Rights, “employers maintain that PWDs can hardly perform the task assigned to them due to their disability; in particular those with seeing or hearing impairments. This, they say, requires radical environmental accommodation”. In fact, this again related to the issue of physical accommodation to PWDs at the workplace, as the absence of support tools especially for seeing and hearing impairments would affect their ability to perform the tasks and duties required by their position.

Another high-level issue is the negative perceptions held by PWD families and friends. Some families were shy to encourage their PWD relatives to seek employment or visit employment offices. Some are skeptical whether PWDs have the potential to land employment opportunities, or fulfill their responsibilities if they successfully assume a job. There was also a perception among employment offices that PWDs themselves lack the confidence and motivation to actively seek employment services.

PWDs have also voiced a real concern related to gender issues in employment of PWDs. They argued that employment of PWDs even when successful is usually high among men and only rare for women. They explain that women with disability suffer from several obstacles concerning accessibility to the labor market, including gender-based attitudes, traditions and customs, low wages for women, unequal opportunities. They cite the increasing unemployment rates among women, which is demonstrated by the ICHR study as well. The findings revealed that “rates of unemployment among women with disability are higher than those among men with disability. They are also less likely than their counterparts of women without disability to join the labor market. Among the respondents in the study, the rate of unemployed women with disability was 73% while that of the employed is 14%.”

PWDs argue that due to these cultural constraints, employment of PWDs are relatively high. They cite that employment matching, even when effective in landing a job opportunity to PWDs, are usually unsuitable for their type of disability.

## **PART II: Improving employment prospects for people with disabilities**

The mapping concludes a number of recommendations to enhance employment service offices outreach and quality of services to PWDs. While the study emphasizes the role of employment offices, some of the recommendations are directed to the ministry as a whole, or the Palestinian Authority, or even cultural and national recommendations to other relevant stakeholders.

### **Recommendations to Ministry of Labour**

#### **Service Improvements at district-offices**

##### **Outreach**

- Coordinate with other line ministries providing services to PWDs in order to hold workshops and sessions that familiarize PWDs with the various services provided by public offices, including the employment service offices. Awareness workshops of type of services offered to PWD.
- Enhance coordination and outreach of employment services offices with DPOs and Union for PWDs at district level, especially in using their information and databases, or through holding joint workshops and sessions targeting PWDs.
- Employ quotas for PWDs across all employment office programs, projects, and services.
- Lead on efforts to compile a full national database for PWD that defines their employment status, and serves as an entry point for employment interventions for PWDs

##### **Representation**

- Deliver services to DPOs and Unions of PWDs to improve their ability to offer employability services to their constituents.
- Integrate PWDs in decision-making or service-delivery functions, such as the local employment council or even certain functions at the employment offices

##### **Services**

- Introduce new and special programs and projects that tailor needs of PWDs in the design of these interventions, while integrating them in all project management cycle
- Support PWD advocates at employment offices that act as focal points and agents defending the rights of PWDs and serve as their advocates for improved employability

- Follow up with PWDs even after their employment (minimum wage, accessibility, other rights, etc...) and issue reports that highlight status of employment for PWDs in Palestine
- Enhance employment offices ability to locate and promote job opportunities for PWDs, as well as supporting them in job seeking skills that may include trainings, developing manuals, etc...
- Design special programs and activities that engage private sector, public sector, and civil society together in discussions and joint-work
- Activate joint cooperation between the government, represented by the Ministry of Labor, and the private sector to give PWDs access to decent work.

## **Physical**

- Continuously advocate all employers to rehabilitate buildings to accommodate PWDs to ensure reasonable accessibility at the very least
- Enhance services provided to private sector relevant to PWDs, including technical assistance in accommodating the work place to PWDs.

## **Capacity Building of staff at district-offices**

### **Staff Capacity Building**

- Work with Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders to resolve the problems and challenges faced through MoL's involvement in the clearance requirements for the health insurance program
- Dedicate more staff to outreach and coordination functions (this requires vehicles or at least covered transportation)
- Provide training to special designated staff on rights of PWDs, their needs and special requirements, and how to advocate for these rights
- Be a model for applying the 5% quota (based on field visits and interview number of PWDs working at district offices less than 5%)

### **PWD Capacity Building**

- Provide awareness and training to PWDs on their rights and improve their confidence and motivation to seek employment opportunities
- Accommodate vocational training or professional development courses to needs of PWDs, especially ensuring physical accessibility
- Empower DPOs and Unions for PWDs to better represent and advocate for rights of PWDs

## National Interventions

### National-level policies and legislations

- Activate mechanisms necessary for implementing legislations and regulations relevant the employment of PWDs.
- Develop strategies, policies, and programs that mainstream rights of PWDs
- Invite representation of PWDs to ensure effective participation in, and ownership of legislative reforms

### Awareness

- Conduct awareness campaigns targeting employers of the potential and capabilities of PWDs (focus on case studies), highlighting mainstreaming PWDs as an important aspect of CSR
- Offer visits to PWDs in their homes as sometimes they or their families are ashamed of reaching out
- Develop a public awareness-raising campaign through electronic and print media to promote rights of employability for PWDs