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The challenges of disabled people in Lebanon in the early-2020s

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Abstract

Since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the approach to disability has not only focused on medical care, prevention, and rehabilitation guided by medical staff, but there has been a growing international consensus that full participation of disabled people must be guaranteed (Sugino, 2007). In this research, the author explored the application of the “social model of disability”. Some have questioned the validity of and relevance to the social model of disability in the generally conservative Arab region. Through the analysis of this research, it was made clear that in Lebanon, where the basic foundation of the civil society movement and democracy has been established, the “social model of disability” is being established with powerful disability movements and self-help groups. This research is an emancipatory research. It is based on existing publications and the author’s experiential knowledge through her residency at the United Nations Office in Beirut from 1997 to 2002¹, as well as a participatory focus group and individual interviews conducted in Beirut in March 2020. The set of recommendations was written based on the results of interviews and focus groups. In short, this research was planned, shared and co-produced with the participating disabled individuals in Lebanon.

Keywords: Lebanon, Social Model of disability, CRPD, self-help groups

21世紀前半におけるレバノンの障害者のチャレンジ

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1 The author worked for 14 years from 1988 to 2002 at the United Nations Arab Regional Office, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). During that time, due to Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and the reconstruction of Lebanon, the UN ESCWA headquarters itself became a refugee and moved to Baghdad in Iraq, Amman in Jordan, and Beirut in Lebanon. This English paper is based on the field survey conducted by the author (in Japanese), as a research team member of IDE-JETRO.

発行日 2023年3月31日

1. Socio-economic situation of Lebanon in the 2020s

Lebanon was once upon a time, a center of the Middle East for service-economy such as finance and tourism, boasting its highly-educated and globally-minded human resources. Educated Lebanese are fluent in English and French. Similar to a Mediterranean country such as Cyprus, the land of Lebanon is beautiful, surrounded by mountains and the sea. Beirut was called “Paris of the Middle East” and it looked like a little European nation artificially installed in the middle of Arab land. Lebanon has a population of approximately 4.5 million, of which one in four is a refugee from Syria or Palestine. A number of Lebanese have emigrated to Europe and the United States, and in France alone, there are about 50,000 French citizens of Lebanese descent. It can be said that Lebanon is an exporter of talented human resources, sending many emigrants to the Gulf countries, the United States, Europe and Australia. Lebanon and Syria used to be the same land (country). However, after World War I, it was mandated by France, and its mountainous region where many Christians, mainly Maronite Christians, lived was cut off from Syria-Lebanon as an independent Lebanon. This is the foundation of present-day Lebanon. Officially, 40% of the Lebanese population is Christian, but in reality, 30% are Shia Muslims, 30% are Sunni Muslims, and 30–40% are Christians of various denominations. The percentage of Shia Muslims will increase in the near future.

There have been compound socioeconomic problems such as civil war, Israeli invasion, Syrian political and military influence and influx of refugees, governance problems (partial government paralysis), economic collapse and rapid depreciation of the Lebanese currency (Lebanese pound). When the author visited its capital, Beirut for the purpose of field survey in March 2020, Beirut, formerly called “Paris of the Middle East”, had faded considerably in her eyes. The famous Hamra Street, which is called Lebanon’s 5th Avenue (parallel to 5th Avenue in New York), has an image of an ordinary low-income Arab city, and is unattractive compared to the growing Arab cities, such as Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Amman, and Cairo. The image of Paris is far from the eyes of visitors nowadays. Poverty and disability are a bad cycle in Lebanon. That said, the strength of Lebanon’s democratic civil society still persists. Unlike the Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia where democracy is restricted, it is a small, free and quite Western country. Active civil society and democracy is also visible in the Lebanese disability community. Disabled people’s groups were also active/vocal, and wheelchair demonstrations and political campaigns were frequently held, demonstrating the strength of civil society in opposition to the non-functioning Lebanese government, which is often corrupt.

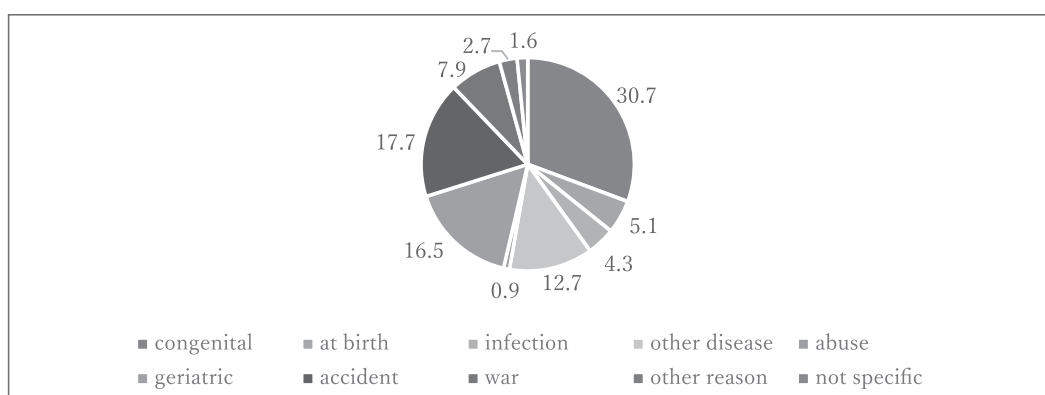
Here, disability in Lebanon is the focus, however before that, the critical issues faced by men and women with disabilities that are common throughout the Arab region, including Lebanon, will be listed below. These causes and consequences of disability are seen to some extent not only in Lebanon, but throughout the Araba Region and the Middle East.

- Civil war, terrorism, armed conflicts and the challenges of disabled war victims- especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq. War victims include not only physical disabilities but also trauma and mental disorders. The latter is often unnoticed and ignored.
- A vicious cycle of refugee, poverty and disability-poverty challenges, including the gap between the rich and the poor. Disability and poverty are a cause and result of each other. In a low-income country such as Lebanon, disability issues enjoy an extremely low priority. Outside the affluent oil-rich countries (e.g. UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc.), development challenges such as poverty and malnutrition, are a primary cause of disability
- Disability and gender issues-especially issues of mother-child and of prejudice/discrimination against women in general, particularly women with disabilities, which includes sexual harassment, verbal harassment and violence. Disabled young men who became physically disabled during the war or tortured to permanent illness are often treated as “patriots and heroes”, while women with disabilities and those with congenital disabilities are kept low key.
- Problems with the concept of disability and statistics –The concept of disability is still a “medical model of disability”, not a “social model”. There are also problems with the management of disability statistics. Disability incidence tends to be reported too low in those nations utilizing the disability definition and classification system based on the medical model. In addition, there are many institutional care facilities, and so it is quite difficult for ordinary people with disabilities to live independently in the community. Arab society is not yet fully inclusive nor accommodating disability.
- Barrier-free issues –Comprehensive access issues for various barriers, such as barrier-free or universal design, inadequate infrastructure, social barriers such as discrimination, legal barriers, and information barriers such as insufficient sign language and Braille.
- Legal and policy issues –The disability related law and acts need to be comprehensively reviewed. Ratification and post-ratification implementation/monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a priority obligation for signatory states. Lebanon is one of the few countries that has not yet become a signatory.
- Cultural issues as a cause of disability – all countries in the Region tend to favor consanguineous or kinship marriage, which is a cause of a variety of congenital disabilities.
- Lack of inclusive education facilities, especially the problem of accepting persons with disabilities in higher education such as universities and technical colleges. This problem is acute in the field of natural science.

2. Disability statistics in Lebanon

As in other Arab countries, Lebanon’s official disability statistics do not fully capture the reality. According to national survey statistics in 2004, the proportion of people with disabilities is only 2% of the total population, and the proportion of men is considerably higher. The World Health Organization (WHO)

reports a disability rate of 15%, but corresponding figure of 2% in Lebanon is extremely low, demonstrating the unreliability of the statistics. More than half of the disabled are physically impaired, about 18–19% are deaf and intellectually disabled, and 13–14% are visually impaired. Why is the disability rate so low? The first factor is the problem of definition and classification of disability. Lebanese disability statistics have adopted an out-of-date medical model definition, namely the WHO-ICIDH² international definition of the 1980s, and do not use the WHO-ICF³ definition revised in 2001. This means that the definition is the old medical model of disability, not the social model of disability. In addition, out of concern that the issuance of disability cards will increase the financial burden on the national welfare system, the registration standards are too strict from a medical point of view. A certain number of disabled Lebanese people otherwise eligible in developed nations are not properly counted. There are also many people with psychological disorders and other compound disabilities that are excluded from the Lebanese definition of disability. There are also missing statistics for people living in institutions as well as women with disabilities. The male-female gender ratio of persons with disabilities in Lebanon is 64.0%–36.0%. The percentage of women with disabilities is low compared to the Lebanese total population, where men and women are almost evenly divided between 49.8% and 50.2%. According to government data by cause of disability, congenital impairment is the most common, nearly 30% of the total. In addition, aging, accidents, and diseases are common, and 7.9% of them are disabled due to war (see graph1).



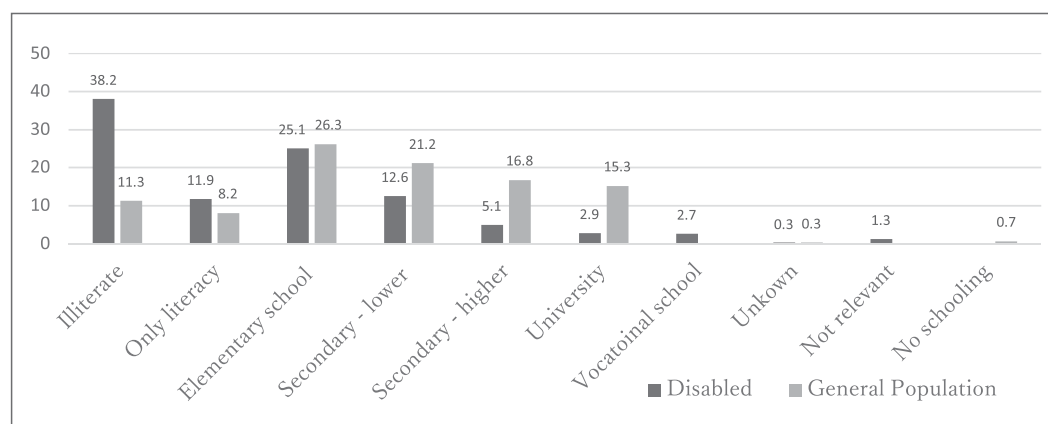
Graph1: Lebanon disability statistics in 2004: Cause of disability (%)

Source: Lebanon, *Demographic and Social Statistics, General Administration of Statistics in 2004*

- 2 International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) was the classification system defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), until the new system was created. The ICIDH was intended to offer a conceptual framework relevant to the long-term consequences of disease, injuries, or disorders. It emphasized the medical aspect of disability, namely impairments.
- 3 The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, known more commonly as ICF, is a classification by WHO of health and health-related domains. As the functioning and disability of an individual occur in a context, ICF also includes a list of environmental factors.

Besides poverty, there are two other outstanding causes of disability. One is civil strife and war, and the other is kinship marriage related to social customs and norms. In Arab countries, including Lebanon, marriage within relatives is permissible, and sometimes even preferred. Moreover, Lebanon faces a civil war in Syria and Palestinian refugees as a front line, and fighting is a hindrance. Since the civil war in Syria, about one million Syrians have moved into the small country of Lebanon. War is responsible for 7.9% of the causes of disability in Lebanon, a rather significant figure (see graph 1). The rate of intra-kin marriage is high not only in Lebanon but also in other Arab countries. In rural areas, marriage between people of the same family is sometimes even desired. Lebanon is a small, socially divided country with limited choice of marriage partners. In addition to sectarian attributes such as Sunni Islam, Shia Islam (Hezbollah supporters, moderates), Druze Islam, Maronite Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodox, and Protestantism, ethnic divisions, such as Syrians, Palestinians, and Armenians, are also intermingled. Thus, a sense of belonging to each attribute may be stronger than loyalty to a nation. There is a survey on consanguinity in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. A 1983 study by Kahlat and Khudr⁴ (quoted by UN ESCWA) found that even in the capital city of Beirut, a quarter of all marriages were consanguineous.⁵

Let's look at the consequences of disability. What kind of problems do people with disabilities face in the target area? In what areas is the full participation of disabled persons in development hindered? The



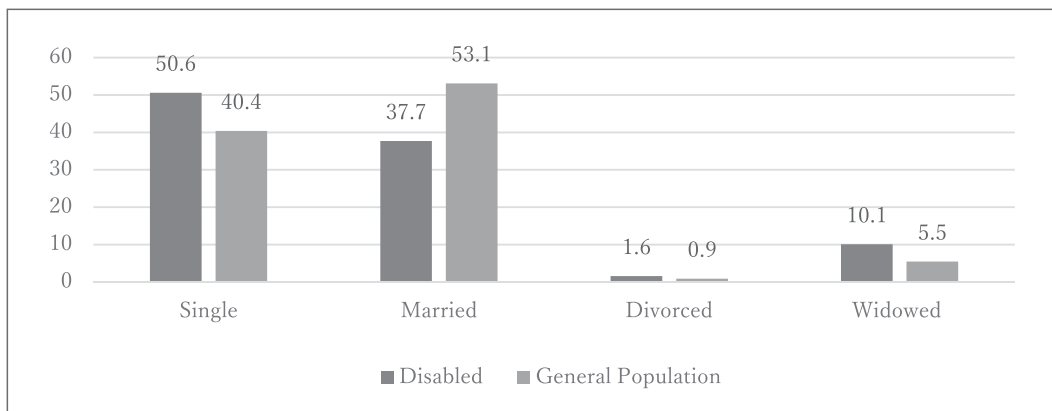
Graph2: Educational attainment (%) in Lebanon in 2002

Source: Lebanon, *Demographic and Social Statistics*, General Administration of Statistics in 2004

- 4 Quoted by UN ESCWA (1992). Proceedings of ESCWA Regional Seminar on the Role of the Family in Integrating Disabled Women into Society, Amman, 16-18 October 1994.
- 5 In Beirut, in 1983, consanguinity defined as "marriage between first cousins or more distant relatives" was reported 28.96 per cent in the same survey. There has been a public campaign against this negative practice; however, the cultural practice and economic benefit among kinship is still a serious barrier.

most common ones are related to education, work and livelihood. It is clear that the percentage of people who cannot read and write, or who did not go to school is overwhelmingly high among the disabled population. About 40% (38.2%) of people with disabilities are illiterate, more than three times as many as in the general population. With regard to higher education, less than 3% of the population with disabilities has a university degree, compared to 15.3% of Lebanon's total population. Persons with disabilities who have completed high school account for less than one-third of the total population.

Employment and livelihood are indeed a major social issue of disabled people. Lebanon has a legal employment quota of 3%, but its implementation has been delayed and it is very difficult for persons with disabilities to find a permanent employment and secure their income. According to the 2007 United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) survey in Lebanon, only 26% of the 27,086 job-seeking disabled persons of working age surveyed were employed.⁶ Professor Kabbara, a prominent disability leader in Lebanon, estimates that the employment rate of disability card holders aged 18 to 64 is 22%, a similar figure. This indicates that most disabled people are not formally employed (N.Kabbara, 2013). Most people with disabilities in Lebanon who are in regular employment are recruited in the public sector (civil servants of some), and few are active in private companies. Most ordinary disabled people are self-employed or employed in some form of informal sector. They are trying to secure some kind of money and livelihoods available to them. Social life including marriage and formation of family is another serious challenge for disabled women and men (see graph 3).



Graph3: Marriage status of Lebanese over 15 years old (%) in 2004

6 Refer to the study by the International Labour Organization (2003), "Emerging Good Practice Related to Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Beirut".

3. Legal and institutional framework for disabled people in Lebanon

Lebanon has a democratic domestic law created mainly by persons with disabilities, but it has been pointed out that “The Persons with Disabilities Law 2000” enacted in the year 2000 lacked monitoring and “enforcement power”. No penalties have been imposed for non-compliance. Also, implementation of the Law 2000 has been delayed in most areas even though 20 years have passed. Also, most people who took part in this field survey thought the 2000 law needed to be revised or rewritten (see the section below).

Finally, Lebanon’s biggest problem at the moment is non-ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The government ratification is a necessary step forward to express, to the international community, the commitment of Lebanese persons with disabilities and the government, and to enforce the implementation of the State Party obligations. It is unfortunate that the politically paralyzed government has not yet been able to ratify CRPD even though it has been already submitted on multiple occasions to the National Assembly of Lebanon. While more than 185 countries around the world have ratified this international treaty, it is one of the few countries that has yet to ratify, along with the United States of America, which has left with a legacy of the Trump-era America. Lebanese disabled people are looking forward to ratification and subsequent legislative changes. It is also ironic that the democratic United States and Lebanon, the most democratic in the Middle East, are both on the list of countries that cannot ratify.

4. Women and disability in Lebanon

Many women with disabilities in Lebanon face the triple predicament of disability, gender and poverty. At the same time, the low educational level of mothers hinders early detection of childhood disabilities, and women also play a significant role in caring for families with persons with disabilities. Some women with disabilities living in mountainous areas, rural areas and conservative communities are often unaware of their universal human rights and legal rights in Lebanon, trapped in their over-protective families and hiding their existence. In extreme cases, some are forced to stay home because having a daughter with a disability in the family would have a negative impact on her sister’s prospects for marriage. In areas such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, which have experienced civil wars/armed conflicts, men with disabilities such as Hezbollah fighters are treated as heroes (at least on the surface). Not having the image of a brave soldier fighting the enemy, disabled women, who have no political value, were given lowest priority in campaigns of conflict; so the war began to form a new hierarchy among disabled people, between men and women. In 2007, when the author visited the Shia Hezbollah-administered district in southern Lebanon, photographs of young male soldiers (heroes) were proudly displayed throughout the town. At the same time, young disabled men who

are now amputates and confined to wheelchairs—those who continued to fight against Israel until the very end—were treated as war heroes and could receive generous social rehabilitation services and social security, while women with disabilities were kept hidden in a corner.

5. Field survey in Beirut (March 2020)

The following is to summarize the results of the field research conducted by the author in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, for four days from March 1 to 5, 2020. This section is a brief description of the results of a focus group and subsequent personal interviews with disability leaders involved in disability activism.

First, a focus group was held with international and national networks of disability activists, grassroots disability leaders, parents' association members, and disability associates in Lebanon. A participatory survey was intensively conducted with a total of 15 respondents. Participants were physically disabled (including those in wheel-chair), deaf, blind, parents of persons with intellectual disabilities, and persons with multiple disabilities. The religious sector breakdown was dominated by Sunni Muslims, however, also included Shiites, Druze and Christians. The male to female ratio was equal, 8: 7.

5.1. Focus Group

- Employment, income and social security issues are of the highest priority and means of livelihood are needed.
- The issue of inadequate access to medical care and rehabilitation is also a high priority.
- Consensus about weak enforcement of laws and employment quotas.
- Lebanon is a society where there are physical barriers, information barriers such as sign language, subtitles, Braille, and attitude barriers. It was pointed out that people with disabilities find it difficult to live.
- The challenges of access to education, especially higher education and inclusive education, are problematic from a human development perspective. The serious problem is that university education for persons with disabilities is limited only to humanities and social sciences.
- Lack of awareness and understanding about persons with disabilities is a serious problem. All participants also pointed out the need for increased public awareness, especially the lack of understanding of independent living for persons with disabilities.
- Disability and gender – DV (domestic violence) and sexual and other aggression against persons with disabilities was reported by women with disabilities and mothers, as well as male counterparts with disabilities. The issue of sexuality and marriage of women with disabilities was highlighted. At least in Lebanon, now it is an issue that is no longer a taboo, and we were able to have an open

exchange of views.

- All participants also agreed on the need to amend the Persons with Disabilities Act 2000 and to make efforts to ratify CRPD. Political corruption and the powerlessness of the Lebanese government were repeatedly pointed out by most participants.
- There was dissatisfaction with the sharing of the government subsidy budget. It was pointed out that the benefits of institutional services that force people with disabilities to live in isolation are greatly benefiting, and that there is a conflict of interest with groups of people with disabilities who want to live independently. In Lebanon, some thought that the very existence of institutions was a barrier to independence and self-determination for persons with disabilities.
- Disability activism is essential to policy-making regarding the lives of persons with disabilities. “For us, the principles “we decide” should be thoroughly enforced. It has the advantage of functioning as political lobbying”, they said.
- Foundation for activities aimed at small-scale group homes – The Association for Parents of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities is searching for a new type of Lebanese-style group home that is close to the community from the non-institutional perspective. In fact, there are also concrete plans.

The results of the above-mentioned exchange of views are summarized herewith. Regarding the Disabled Persons Act of 2000, its implementation and lack of enforcement were pointed out. There is no regular monitoring of Lebanon’s implementation of the statutory employment quote. No penalties have been imposed. Moreover, although 20 years have already passed since the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act, implementation has been delayed in most areas. Most people who took part in the survey believe the 2000 law needs to be amended. In particular, the definition of disability and classifications are like a medical model. All of the participants in this field survey optimistically expect the government to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is necessary to demonstrate to the world the collective commitment of the Lebanese government and people.

5.2. Interview with disabled leaders in Lebanon

Following the above focus group, an individual interview was also conducted with two internationally recognized disability activists in Beirut, namely, Prof. Nawaf Kabbara and Ms. Sylvana Lakkis.⁷

7 Prior to the field study, both leaders gave full consent for their names to be used in this research. They do take pride in their own achievements. This study is conducted based on an acceptable research ethic.

Sylvana Lakkis

On the second day of the field survey, the author also interviewed Ms. Lakkis, who is currently the chairman of LUPD. The Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities (LUPD), founded in the capital Beirut in the early 1980s, is a pioneering organization for people with physical disabilities. Currently, her activities are wide-ranging, but this time she was interviewed from the standpoint of women with disabilities.

“When I was a child, I suffered from polio and became disabled. I currently use a wheelchair, but recently I have obtained a driver’s license and am able to move around on my own. In Beirut, where it is difficult to drive due to traffic jams, female drivers with disabilities are still rare and pioneers. In my childhood, I lived in what was then Czechoslovakia. Originally for the treatment of polio, I grew up there and was influenced by Eastern European culture. I learned while working under the supervision of a teacher, eventually worked as an interpreter, and then returned to Lebanon. The Lebanese people’s movement has a long history. The first group of people with disabilities was the Association of the Blind, which dates back to the mid-1960s. However, as a political pressure group, it did not engage in social movements seeking to improve the lives of people with disabilities. At the time of its foundation, the LUPD (originally LSHA) was an organization centered on people with physical disabilities, with people from all regions of the country. It is now a cross-disability organization. The foundation of LSHA⁸ was also influenced by the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983–1992). The global exposure also led to my own empowerment, and I participated in the first DPI international conference in Vancouver, Canada in 1992. There, I met fellow women with disabilities from around the world and learned about the position of women with disabilities in every country. After that, I participated in the formation of an international network of women with disabilities. I also participated in the 4th UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 as a member of Lebanese civil society. Even today, women’s rights groups in general in Lebanon seem less serious about including women with disabilities. After returning from Beijing, I started by thoroughly promoting gender equality within LSHA (now LUPD). In Lebanon, it is difficult for women with disabilities to participate politically. At the national level, the number of women parliamentarians is still very low.”

8 Lebanese Sitting Handicapped Association (LSHA) was renamed now, Lebanese Union for People with Disabilities (LUPD), fully reflecting the organization’s cross-disability membership.

Nawaf Kabbara

Prof. Nawaf Kabbara became disabled in a car accident in his early twenties. After that, he started a civic activism in the student union at the American University of Beirut. In 1981 he went to England to complete his postgraduate studies, and during his four years there he had the opportunity to rethink disability as a social and political issue. He returned to Beirut in 1984, where he began working together with the aforementioned LSHA. After that, in the 1990s, the country's reconstruction began, and Lebanon's disability organizations reached a major turning point.

“Mr. Kabbara says that since the 1990s, the aims of disability activities have basically been narrowed down to two goals. By 2000, the aim was to create a democratic and representative national disability law in Lebanon. He devoted himself to this goal and was successful. He points out that it was fortunate that the political party was left-wing (Salim al-Hus’ government) at the time. However, after the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2000, the direction changed slightly. In addition to simply monitoring the implementation of the law, we began another activity, namely, as a unique and avant-garde civil society movement, and devoted our energies to tenaciously continuing anti-war, anti-violence, and progressive social movements. The anti-Israel movement and the anti-war movement took center stage. In a complicated political situation, disabled people gradually achieved results while repeating many failures. Since 2010, he has continued to expand his campaign as an activist and lobbyist in Lebanon. During this period, NARD/AODP⁹ was also the core of the organizations for persons with disabilities regarding the efforts for proclamation of the Arab Decade of Disabled Persons (2004–2013), and has grown into a conspicuous and respected organization in the Arab region. Lebanon, which allows for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, has favorable conditions for research and dissemination in the Arab region, he said. Lebanon is the center of Arab intelligence, creativity and freedom. However, it is complicated because it is also the front line where different ideologies and interests in the Middle East and the world as a whole collide. Persons with disabilities are also human beings living there, and political activities are indispensable. The financial continuity of the organization is also always considered. In 1990, his organization started the only wireless taxi in Tripoli, which attracted attention as a pioneer of social business to secure transportation for disabled people. Although it was successful at first, it was not continued after being defeated by major general taxi companies who entered the market and began to compete. Even now, he is challenging various sustainable social businesses. Funding issues are always a challenge for disability organizations. However, it is also clear that the current focus of activity is to get the Lebanese government

9 The National Association for the Rights of Disabled People (NARD) is the Lebanese national union of various disabled people's organizations, and the Arab Organization of Disabled People (AODP) is the Pan-Arab federation of disabled people's organization. Both headquarters are located in the capital city, Beirut.

*to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Lebanese disabled persons' organizations are hoping and anticipating ratification and we are gradually preparing a so-called parallel (shadow) report.*¹⁰ *The Lebanese disability movement is truly a movement for social reform.*"

6. Conclusion

The disability movement empowers persons with disabilities and makes them realize the importance of standing up for themselves. Politics is an integral part of everyday Lebanese life. It is fortunate that Lebanon is one of the leading democracies in the Arab world, has a firmly rooted civil society, and has a solid foundation for the movement of people with disabilities. At the same time, the central government has long been paralyzed and non-functional due to civil war and complicated politics. Even the provision of basic social services is outsourced to private organizations such as NGOs. The Lebanese disability movement has a long history. It began in the early 1980s, taking an action during the civil war with its famous "wheelchair peace marches" and taking the lead in the anti-war movement.

There are outstanding disabled leaders in Lebanon. This includes Mr. Nawaf Kabbara, who was inspired and empowered by DPI's activist movement and Ms. Sylvana Lakkis, who has continued to work on the issues of women with disabilities.

At the same time, it is also clear that through international movements, namely the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983–1992) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities process, international cooperation with disabled peers in countries around the world has been very useful for their activism and success. Multi-linguistic Lebanese people have an advantage in the international community. It may be inevitable that the base of the Arab regional network of persons with disabilities is centered in Beirut. At present, the social model of disability and the concept of self-determination are spreading in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. But the case of Lebanon may not be simply applied as it is, to other more conservative Arab countries. Having said so, many of the fundamental problems faced by disabled people are common to all Arab countries, such as physical and information accessibility, discrimination and prejudice, and developmental challenges. It is hoped that the Beirut-based Arab regional network will make use of the transmission of information and knowledge in common Arabic language to spread the concept of "Nothing about us without us"¹¹ throughout the Arab region. The various experiences of the

10 Once Lebanon becomes a CRPD signatory, the government is obliged to submit a periodical "progress report" to the United Nations Monitoring Committee. However, the counterpart civil society national network is also eligible for submitting a "shadow report" (or "parallel report") reflecting their own views.

11 "Nothing about us without us", is a global slogan proclaimed by the Disabled People's International (DPI), with their firm conviction about self-determination and independence. They promote the principle of full participation of disabled people in decision-making process.

disability movement and self-help groups in Lebanon will awaken and encourage their counterparts in more conservative Arab countries such as GCC countries, and encourage them to seek and implement their solutions for their own destiny.

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