

### Disability definition

*"persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others."*

- ⇒ This definition is adopted in UNRWA's Disability Policy, which is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- ⇒ UNRWA's Disability Policy follows international standards and the best examples of others, by promoting ideas of fair treatment and respect for human rights.

### Our commitment

- ⇒ UNRWA works with all Palestine refugees to help people to achieve their full potential in human development under the difficult circumstances in which they live.
- ⇒ We will do what we can to protect the human rights of all Palestine refugees, including to make sure that no-one is treated unfairly because of disability.
- ⇒ We agree that all people have a right to basic education, health care, shelter and livelihood, to get support if they have a disability, and to have their rights protected.
- ⇒ Everything we do to provide services will take into account the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, to make sure that they have equality of opportunity.

### Our objectives

We understand the importance of addressing people's specific needs as a result of their impairment, and also the wider social issues of discrimination and exclusion, so ...

- ⇒ Our approach has two parts: strengthening targeted disability initiatives and mainstreaming disability into UNRWA's broader work.
- ⇒ We will continue to support refugees with disability by strengthening pathways to rehabilitation and specialist disability services.
- ⇒ We are changing our way of doing things to make sure that our key services, like education and health care, cater better for people with disabilities.
- ⇒ We encourage efforts to change attitudes and practices so as to eliminate discrimination, and to promote respect and understanding of the needs and capacities of people with disabilities.
- ⇒ We want to help people to help themselves. We will do what we can to ensure that people with disabilities, and those who support them, understand their rights and know how to ask for what they need.
- ⇒ We are committed to ensuring that UNRWA is an employer which values people with disability and supports those staff who have a disability.
- ⇒ We are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have a voice in the things which UNRWA does which are likely to affect them.

## Our principles

**Human Rights** Human rights are for all. People with disabilities share those human rights and should be treated with same respect as everyone else.

**Social model of disability** Society can either enable or disable a person with an impairment. For a person to participate in society on an equal basis with those who do not have a disability, attitudinal and environmental barriers in society must be broken down.

**Equality of opportunity** Discrimination based on disability, age or gender is not acceptable. People with disabilities should be treated fairly, and be given the opportunity to use all the services and facilities available to people without a disability.

**Individual autonomy** People with disabilities should be respected to make their own decisions about important things in their life.

**Contribution** People with disabilities should be recognized as individuals who have different abilities to do things and who can make a positive contribution to society.

**Participatory relationships** People with disabilities can help organisations to make better decisions about things which affect the lives of those with disabilities.

**Diversity** People with disabilities are not all the same. For many, the needs are greater because they are children or because they are female. Women, girls and boys with disabilities should be given the added protection and support they need to live full and free lives.

## Main ideas

- ⇒ No one should be discriminated against
- ⇒ Everyone should have equal opportunities
- ⇒ People are free to make their own choices
- ⇒ Everyone should have equal access
- ⇒ People with disabilities have the same rights to be included in society as everyone else
- ⇒ People with disabilities should be respected for who they are
- ⇒ People with disabilities can contribute to decisions which concern them
- ⇒ It is a social responsibility to break down barriers which prevent inclusion

## More information

This document is a summary of the key points and ideas contained within the UNRWA disability policy, which was endorsed in October 2010.

<http://www.unrwa.org> for full text of UNRWA Disability Policy

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=259> for UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in English

<http://www.un.org/arabic/commonfiles/convoptprot-a.pdf> for UNCRPD in Arabic

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/> for easy-to-read version of UN Convention



UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 4,797,723 registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.

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