

**Amman Center
for Human Rights Studies**

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مركز عمان
لدراسات حقوق الإنسان
حاصل على وضع استشاري خاص لدى
المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي للأمم
المتحدة
وجائزة الأمم المتحدة لحقوق الإنسان لعام
2023

**14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing Guiding questions for the focus area on
“accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)”**

In terms of infrastructures and accessibility in Jordan, the country remains to have severe issues in providing vulnerable groups access to facilities and spatial features including public spaces, homes and public institutions. This is partly attributed to the car-oriented nature of urban environments in Jordan, and the lack of integrating accessibility features to public buildings and facilities. Similarly, the elderly are facing challenges due to infrastructural neglect harming the elderly. This section will discuss the challenges to participation facing the elderly in Jordan, addressing legal provisions and policies aimed at addressing these challenges.

Question 1

Chapter 2 of the Jordanian constitution, article 6 states that the law should protect the old-aged from forms of discrimination, exploitations, and abuse, however it does not specify any regulations regarding infrastructural discrimination¹. More specifically, the 2014 law for licensing elderly homes dictates that care facilities need to eliminate physical barriers that prevent the elderly from accessing their facilities.² Moreover, the National Council for Family Affairs has established a national strategy for 2018-2022 where they have devised policies to integrate the elderly in public life by ensuring that they have access to public services.³ However, the law, or the policies, do not specify how infrastructures need to be modified to include the elderly.

Question 2

Generally speaking, the built environment in Jordan does not cater for the needs of groups that have a limited physical ability to move, such as the disabled, the elderly or children. This could be attributed to the car-oriented transit infrastructure, and the lack of pedestrian-friendly forms of movement.⁴ This makes access to infrastructures in Jordan unsafe for the elderly. Moreover, many public institutions are not accessible for wheelchair users, including some health centers, housing units and parks. Infrastructures are

¹ Constitute, “Jordan 1952 (Rev. 2011) Constitution - Constitute,” www.constituteproject.org, 1952, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Jordan_2011.

² HelpAge International, “Importance of Care and Protection for Older People in Jordan,” 2018.

³ National Council for Family Affairs, “National Strategy for Senior Citizens 2018-2022,” 2017.

⁴ Hazem Zureiqat, “Jordan Needs More Innovative Solutions for Its Transport Woes,” Urbanet, May 25, 2021, <https://www.urbanet.info/jordan-transport-innovative-solutions/>.

also unmaintained, where streets, pavements and entrances to public buildings are obstructed by damage. This would make it more difficult for the elderly to access such infrastructures.⁵

Question 3

In terms of statistics and data available, several international organizations have released information on the availability of services to the elderly and their accessibility and integration within society, but such reports remained limited groups in the country. For instance, HelpAge released information on the stark disparity in the level of accessibility of the elderly to public facilities in refugee community relative to host Jordanian communities.⁶ However, their analysis did not involve an evaluation of how exclusionary infrastructures are to the access of the elderly. In that sense, there is a lack of quantifiable measurements of the level of infrastructural exclusion.

Question 4

In Jordan there is a lack of clear planning policies and regulations on building infrastructures that are inclusive of elderly's needs. This forms a challenge as there are no clear guidelines on how to provide accessible infrastructural provisions and services. However, there are measures set by the Amman Municipality to allow for greater accessibility to the elderly to transit services; in 2020, the municipality announced that their buses would have accessibility ramps for wheelchair users and the elderly, it will also distribute free passes for the elderly to enhance their ability to travel within Amman.⁷ More effective measures more regional or national mobility is lacking.

Question 5

In every municipality in Jordan there are platforms through which individuals could file complaints regarding removing obstacles, making walkways more accessible, and enhancing the provisions of a public space. The extent to which this service is age-friendly is unclarified by the municipalities. As such, there is a need for clear measures and guidelines for planners and policymakers to enhance accessibility for the elderly and help integrate them into public life. This echoes the calls from local NGOs who have advocated for having clear guidelines to protect the elderly and enhance accessibility.⁸

⁵ Asia A. M. Yaghi, "Equal Access for All in Amman, Jordan," Urbanet, April 22, 2021, <https://www.urbanet.info/equal-access-for-all-amman-jordan/>.

⁶ HelpAge International, "Importance of Care and Protection for Older People in Jordan," 2018.

⁷ Deyala Tarawneh et al., "Urban Mobility and Spatial Justice in Amman" (Fridrich Ebert Stiftung, December 2020).

⁸ Ammoun, "صحيفة عمون : الوطني لحقوق الإنسان يدعو إلى قانون خاص بحمي كبار السن," Translation: Ammoun: National Center for Human Rights Calls for Setting Guidelines to Protect the Elderly," وكالة عمون الاخبارية, June 18, 2022, <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/688599>.

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