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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

INCLUSION POLICY

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) embraces the principle of respecting and upholding the rights of all people,¹ as enshrined in Article 1 of the International Bill of Human Rights, as well as all relevant international treaties and conventions, most notably the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD). This principle is based on an understanding of the essence of diversity and comprehensive inclusion,² which is embodied by the differences among individuals in terms of social and economic circumstances, cultural identity, nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, language, geographic location, or even disability of any kind.³ All of these characteristics should not be regarded as a reason for denying any individual the right to participate in all aspects of life, society and the production process.⁴ Everyone is equally entitled to their full rights, including education, employment, healthcare, housing, mobility, freedom of expression and participation in political life. It is therefore imperative to enshrine those rights for all through local, national, regional, and international legislation, policies, programs, and activities.

Accordingly, ANND is committed to adopting the principles and standards identified by the ICRPD. Its programs include the launch and support of initiatives aimed at bringing about a paradigm shift to ensure equal opportunities and the right of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to participate in the development process and contribute to it. This commitment stems from ANND's acute awareness of the severity of exclusion and marginalization suffered by PWDs and their representative organizations, due to stereotypes and preconceptions rooted in the collective culture and awareness of Arab societies. ANND therefore has an absolute conviction that the dissemination and consolidation of a culture of inclusion and diversity in all economic, social, cultural, and political sectors in the Arab World would ensure sustainable development opportunities, as well as provide the means to live with dignity and autonomy for all marginalized groups, particularly PWDs. Since its inception, ANND has sought to ensure that disabled people's organizations (DPOs) are involved in the initiatives and activities it undertakes at all levels and in various areas, including the promotion of dialogue and lobbying for the development of policies and the implementation of programs that would consolidate the concept of sustainable development as a human right. Indeed, a number of these organizations have played a significant role in enriching and motivating these initiatives, with a view to adopting strategies that promote the integration of the issue of disability into the various sectors at the heart of ANND's work.

1 <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/innovation-policy-inclusive-sustainable-development-arab-region>
2 <https://www.ferris.edu/administration/president/DiversityOffice/Definitions.htm>
3 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability#1>
4 <https://globaldiversitypractice.com/what-is-diversity-inclusion/>

Through its compliance with the principles and standards set out above, ANND seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- Promoting equal opportunities for all marginalized groups, particularly PWDs, by including them in the initiatives and programs implemented at the national, regional, and international levels. ANND therefore ensures that these programs (whether they serve to support demands or are research-oriented) actually reflect the status of people with disabilities and the issues they face. It also seeks to link these programs with the various micro or macro themes and policies that it is working on and closely following.
- Ensuring that PWDs and the organizations that promote their rights and support their demands are represented in the various programs, initiatives and activities launched by ANND at different levels and in the various areas of focus. Accordingly, ANND seeks to strengthen cooperation and partnerships with DPOs at the regional level, as well as at the national level through its active members.

To put these goals into effect, ANND is committed to adopting the following strategies:

- Incorporating in the Network's media and awareness-raising activities the systematic dissemination of an inclusive culture and discourse that take into account the issues of diversity and rights and that target public opinion, especially decision-makers in various developmental aspects and sectors;
- Urging organizations affiliated with the Network to promote joint action and build partnerships and encouraging local and national DPOs to launch permanent campaigns that are based on dialogue and positive interaction with decision-makers. This would serve to increase decision-makers' awareness of concepts related to the issues of development, disability and inclusion and thus to demonstrate the mechanisms required to find tangible and applicable solutions to these issues, at the level of policies and programs;
- Including in the dialogues undertaken by ANND with various donors, including UN agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, topics related to the idea of fostering the atmosphere required to pressure Arab governments to adopt policies and programs based on the principles, standards, and strategies for the systematic social and economic inclusion of disability issues;
- Working on the development of studies, research and reports that demonstrate the importance of systematic planning in a way that goes beyond the sectoral dimension, thereby illustrating the importance and inevitability of interconnectedness between the different axes and issues of development, including the issue of disability, in terms of their impact on the consolidation and dissemination of inclusive policies and programs;
- Putting pressure on donors to support projects and programs aimed at promoting intersectionality among the different marginalized groups in society, including PWDs, and the issues they face, at the development and human rights levels, thereby making intersectionality a precondition for evaluating and accepting projects submitted for funding;

- Raising the awareness of ANND members about the importance of forming permanent networks, coalitions and platforms between the different components and organizations of civil society to the degree possible. These networks, coalitions and platforms should include organizations representing PWDs of all categories, with the aim of promoting permanent joint action and cooperation in various micro and macro areas of development. They should also allow for the opportunity to share experiences and elaborate a common development discourse that promotes the integration of the issues and interests of the participating bodies and organizations;
- Empowering ANND members to urge public opinion to reject the existing care-based model adopted by various Arab governments, which is represented by exclusionary institutions that provide care to PWDs and other institutions. This would demonstrate the negative effects of this model, which prevent the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Ensuring that training and awareness programs implemented by ANND or its member organizations highlight the status of PWDs in any development axis that is the subject of those trainings, using the available sources of expertise and information at the national, regional, and international levels;
- Conducting a periodic assessment to verify the adequacy of material resources at the disposal of the Network and its member organizations, such as buildings and equipment, including computers, publications or means of transportation, and how well they meet the standards for access and an enabling physical environment;
- Ensuring that all the activities undertaken by ANND and its member organizations are in line with the minimum standards on inclusion and access for PWDs, in terms of the venues where such activities are held or the materials used in their implementation;
- Seeking the assistance of DPOs or experts in this field to conduct the assessment and planning processes outlined above and to identify ways to meet the required standards by adopting innovative strategies to overcome the issue of limited resources available for the organizations working in this field;
- Ensuring that the funding proposals submitted by ANND and its member organizations to donors include inclusion and access criteria and strategies. This should also be reflected in the various items of the proposed budgets.