



# The National Jordanian Strategy For Senior Citizens

National Council for Family Affairs

2008







## Table of Contents

Subject	Page Number
<b>Preface</b>	4
<b>Vision and Mission</b>	6
<b>Methodology</b>	8
<b>Strategy Basis</b>	10
<b>The Status of Senior Citizens in Jordan</b>	12
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	23
<b>Strategy Directives</b>	23
First Directive: Senior Citizens and Development	24
Second Directive: Healthcare for Senior Citizens	27
Third Directive: Physical Environment to Support Senior Citizens	29
Fourth Directive: Social Care for Senior Citizens	31
Fifth Directive: Scientific Research, Studies and Databases	34
Sixth Directive: Legislations	35
<b>Definitions</b>	37

## Preface

*"And your lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young" Al-Isra chapter, verses 23 and 24.*

Aging is a period in a person's life that is very special, and has special characteristics. Senior citizens require special care by the family and society equally. All religions, and social traditions and customs require us to respect senior citizens and revere them since they are a vital part of the society, and have the right to live within an environment that enhances their abilities, and enables them to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.

In light of the changes in the population structure in Jordan, and according to the Department of Statistics figures which indicated a decrease in mortality rate and an increase in the life expectancy at birth to 71.5 years (70.6 for males, and 72.4 for females), the number of senior citizens in the country is increasing, currently making up about 5.2% of the population, and is expected to rise to 7.6% by the year 2020.

Despite the fact that the society in Jordan is close-knit, according to general observations it was found that there are some elderly individuals who are neglected and uncared for by family members, compelling them to resort to special homes and shelters for care. According to the statistics issued by the Ministry of Social Development, which is the legal umbrella and the supervisor of the shelters and daytime clubs for senior citizens in the Kingdom, there are eleven such establishments nationwide for both sexes, six of which are run by the voluntary sector, and five by the private sector.

Due to the importance that must be given to the issues concerning senior citizens, the fact that they must be included in national priorities, as directed by His Majesty King Abdullah II and Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, and based on their





majesties' desire to improve the quality of life for senior citizens, and enable them to live a dignified life in society, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), in cooperation with the Ministries of Health and Social Development, the Jordanian Nursing Council, the World Health Organization (WHO), and experts in the field from the various Jordanian universities and non-governmental organizations, has developed a comprehensive national strategy for senior citizens considered the first document concerned with the drafting of policies for senior citizens to be presented to decision-makers, and those involved in devising the policies and programs aimed at identifying the shortcomings in the programs provided for this stratum of society. The strategy addresses six directives, each of which comprises one aspect of an elderly individual's life. Each directive also puts forward issues that are considered priorities and require interventions in order to improve the quality of life and facilitate it for senior citizens; enable them to live independently; and provide them with the best medical, social and health care possible. It also aims at responding to opportunities, facing the challenges related to senior citizens in Jordan, and supporting an overall structure that caters to people in all various age groups. These issues are the basis of the Jordanian National Strategy for Senior Citizens.

Finally, we can only say that aging is an inevitable part of life, and the ability of a person to build a safe and stable society is unrelenting and not limited by time. We would like to express our sincerest thanks and gratitude to everyone who participated in preparing this document, and stress the importance of joint work and relentless effort to enhance the standard of living of all the members of our Jordanian family.

Godspeed.....

Dr.haifa abu ghazaleh  
National Council for Family Affairs

## VISION

A society that improves the quality of life for senior citizens, and ensures their ongoing and efficient participation.

## MISSION

Enhance the status of senior citizens at the health, social, developmental, environmental and spiritual levels, based on the demographic changes particular to Jordan by utilizing international standards.

## The National Jordanian Strategy For Senior Citizens



## Methodology

This strategy is the first document to give the issues related to senior citizens in Jordan the importance they deserve. It has set the priorities on how to handle this group as an active social group that requires care and support in order to realize sustainable human development, by making use of all the available opportunities and facing all ongoing challenges, in order to advance the Jordanian family as a social unit that cares for its members.



The drafting of this strategy underwent the following phases:

- (1) Conducting a comprehensive desk review of literature, including research and studies conducted on senior citizens in Jordan - this included available statistical surveys and research.
- (2) Conducting a comprehensive desk review of international, regional and Arab strategies on senior citizens.
- (3) Conducting an in-depth analysis and evaluation of Jordanian studies, researches, statistics, and examining their input in order to identify the status of senior citizens in Jordan.
- (4) Preparing the first concept paper for the strategy based on the Arab work plan for senior citizens (2002-2012), which stipulates the main direction of the work.
- (5) Establishing a Higher Steering Committee which comprises the Secretary Generals of the partners: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Jordanian Nursing Council, along with experts from the various Jordanian universities, and those actively involved in the work related to senior citizens.





- (6) Presenting the first referential paper to the Higher Steering Committee, identifying the strategy's directives, and proposing the members of the Technical Committee - to include experts, academics, and specialists from 35 governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- (7) Presenting the strategy's proposed main directives to the Technical Committee, and amending them based on the Committee's recommendations.
- (8) Preparing a detailed statistical analysis of the status of senior citizens in Jordan, by a smaller Committee branching off the Technical Committee.
- (9) Establishing focus groups within the Technical Committee according to the directives of the strategy, whereby each work group addressed and identified the priorities and issues related to the respective directives, and the necessary executive procedures and programs, and finally proposed the entities that could implement them and the timeframe required to do so.
- (10) Conducting a meeting with the Technical Committee to approve the directives and issues that are considered a priority, the sub-objectives, and the procedures proposed by the Steering Committee
- (11) Conducting two focus group discussions with senior citizens at the Friends of Senior Citizens Club and the Samir Shamma Home - The groups comprised 13 male and female senior citizens, whose opinions were sought regarding the directives of the strategy. The aim of these sessions was to identify their problems and needs.
- (12) Establishing a small work group from the Technical Committee, which conducted extensive meetings to draft the Strategy, bearing in mind the outputs of the discussion sessions, general observations, working papers, and the recommendations by the Technical Committee and incorporating them in the Strategy.
- (13) Revising of the draft document by WHO experts in the field.

This Strategy benefited from the international, regional and Arab efforts in this field, especially what was provided by agencies such as ESCWA and WHO, which included scientific references, activities, and programs directed at senior citizens worldwide.

## Strategy Basis

The Jordanian National Strategy for Senior Citizens is based on the following main points:

First: Arab and Islamic values, and the instructions of the various monotheistic religions, which urge us to respect and revere senior citizens, and provide them with a dignified life.

Second: Human Rights Agreements ratified by Jordan, and adherence to the principles of the UN 1991 regarding senior citizens, which stipulate that "independence", "participation", "care", "self achievement" and "dignity" are among the basic rights of senior citizens.

Third: The regional and international action plans and strategies related to senior citizens: the Vienna Work Plan for Senior citizens 1982, the Regional Work Plan for Senior Citizens 1993, Senior Citizens Declaration 1993 (general comment 6), "The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Senior Citizens" issued in 1995, the International Work Plan for Senior Citizens 2007, the Arab Work Plan for Senior Citizens 2002-2012, the document of Active Ageing: A Policy Framework 2002, and the Arab Families Strategy 2004.

Fourth: The Jordanian referential documents which contain texts directly related to senior citizens, such as: the National Agenda 2006; the National Strategy for the Jordanian Family 2005; the 2006 National Strategy for Jordanian Women 2006; the National Strategy for the Handicapped 2007 ; and the work programs for the "We are All Jordan" Forum 2006.





## Introduction

Jordanian families, like all other Arab families, play a major role in caring for senior citizens, impelled by a series of religious principles and social values that urge us to respect and revere senior citizens, and ensure that we greatly value the approval of our parents and are aware of the importance of keeping in touch with relatives. Both the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad's oral tradition, contain many such humane and noble sentiments, like the following verse from the Holy Quran:

*"And your lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was young" Al-Isra chapter, verses 23 and 24.1*

Prophet Mohammad, PBUH, said, "Should a young man respect an elderly person because of his age, God will surely send him someone to respect him in his old age".<sup>2</sup>

Integration between generations in all aspects - family, and local communities, among others - is a major principle on which a society fit for people of all ages may be established. The customs and traditions prevalent in the Jordanian society are the moral incentive that compels us to respect senior citizens and help them. Additionally, the social restraints in this regard often serve as a pressure point on family members bearing responsibility for senior citizens, whom we should encourage, in addition to stressing their importance to guarantee the stability of the family. Violating the rights of senior citizens is a problem that could intensify as the number of senior citizens increases in the future. Violating their rights includes any intentional or unintentional abuse by a person they know or trust. Abuse of senior citizens takes on different forms, including: causing pain or physical injury; illegal use of their funds and properties; mental and emotional abuse such as threatening, degrading or exploiting them; neglect and failure to fulfil their basic needs like: food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, among others; and sexual harassment or abuse.<sup>3</sup>

Studies show that about 4 to 7% of senior citizens are exposed to some form of violation within their homes. As for the abuse of senior citizens living in care centres (shelters/ homes), this could be more common than imagine, and includes physical detention, deprivation of care and degradation<sup>4</sup>

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1) Al Isra, verses 23 and 24.

2) Sonan Tarmathi

3) The National Council for Family Affairs, WHO The Health and Violence Report, 2005

4) The National Council for Family Affairs, Procedures and Protocols for Protection and Prevention of Family Violence in the Health Facilities in Jordan, 2007

## The Status of Senior Citizens in Jordan

Senior citizens, according to the definitions of the UN agencies, and the World Health Organization (WHO), are those individuals who are sixty years old and above. According to some studies, old age in developing countries begins at 65.<sup>5</sup> As for Jordan, the UN definition is considered appropriate.

The number of senior citizens (aged 60 years and above) is currently about 668 million worldwide. This number is expected to increase to about 2 billion by 2020, whereby, for the first time in history, the number of senior citizens will surpass the number of children (aged 0-14).<sup>6</sup> In Jordan, the case is similar, senior citizens are a group that should be studied, since their number is expected to increase from 5.2% of the total population in 2004 to 7.6% by 2020.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, they require strategic planning to fulfil their needs, whether they are medical, mental, social, or economic, and ensure they enjoy a dignified life and a high standard of living.<sup>8</sup>

With the decrease in mortality rate and increase in life expectancy at birth, the average age of the people has risen to 71.5 year (70.6 for men, and 72.4 for women)<sup>9</sup>. This is considered one of the most important health indicators reflecting the achievements in Jordan as a result of implementing national strategies that serve to realize sustainable development.

## Demographic, Social and Economic Characteristics

### Distribution According to Age and Gender

Table (1) indicates that the majority of senior citizens are distributed in the (60-64) and (65-74) age groups, and that the number of senior citizens decreases gradually with the increase of age. However, it is expected to rise in the higher age bracket in forthcoming years.

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5) Hogtel, M. *Gerontology: Nursing Care of the Older Adult*. atlanta: delmar, 2001

6) United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2006

7) AlMasarweh, I. (2006). Projection of Jordan elderly 2006-202. Jordan DemoProj Model 2004 - 2005. Department of Statistics

8) Akroush, L. (2000). Problems of senior citizens in the Jordanian Society: unpublished PhD. Dissertation, Institute of Social Sciences, Lebanese University.

9) Department of Statistics, 2005





The results of the *General Population and Housing Census 2004*<sup>10</sup> indicate that the percentage of senior citizens (60 years and above) is distributed as follows: 51.3% male, and 48.7% female, distributed as per the age groups shown in Table (1) below:

**Table (1)**  
**Frequency distribution of senior citizens by age and gender**

Age Group	% Male	% Female	% Total
60 - 64	38.5	36.4	37.4
65 - 74	44.7	45.3	45
75 - 84	9.3	9.0	9.2
85 and above	7.5	9.3	8.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The Department of Statistics, (2004) *General Population and Housing Census*.

## Marital Status

As for the marital status of senior citizens, 71.5% are married, whereby the percentage of married males reaches 92.6% compared to that for females, which is only 49.4%. The increase in the rate of married males is equal to the rate of married and widowed elderly females, which is 47%, compared to the percentage of widowed males which made up only 6.1% of the total. Additionally, the number of unmarried elderly females was found to be 2.2% compared to males 0.7%. Here we can conclude that elderly women require extra care and support since the majority are either widowed or unmarried, and the percentage of those who are married is far lower than the percentage of the married elderly men. These differences can be the result of early marriage among females, and the difference in the marriage age between men and women, in addition to the social discriminatory approach regarding the marriage of divorced women, and the fact that women prefer not to remarry in order to protect and take care of their children.

10) Department Statistics, the Major Results of the 2004 Population and Housing Census.

**Table (2)**

Frequency distribution of senior citizens (60 years and above) by marital status

Marital Status	Male (%)	Female (%)
Married	92.6	49.4
Single	0.7	2.2
Widowed	6.1	47
Divorced	0.5	1.4
Separated	0.1	0.02
Total	100	100

Source: The Department of Statistics, 2004

## Geographical Distribution and Educational Level

As for the distribution of senior citizens according to place of residence, 79.7% reside in urban areas. As for their educational level, it is interesting to note that 50.7% of them are illiterate. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to prepare programs and policies for the eradication of illiteracy and the education of senior citizens (Table 3).

**Table (3)**

Relative distribution of senior citizens according to educational level and gender

Educational Level	Percentage
Illiterate	50.7
Literate	10.5
High School or more	30.2
Diploma or above	8.6
Total	100

Source: The Department of Statistics, (2004) Population and Housing Census.

## Senior citizens and Work

Work plays a major social and psychological role in the life of a person, in addition to its economic dimension. Very often, retirement or a decrease in the occupational role cause senior citizens to lose self-esteem, and feel that they have lost the social status they used to enjoy when they worked. The percentage of senior citizens who are still working was found to be 2.8% of the total work force in the Kingdom, which accounts for 10% of the total number of senior citizens: 95% of them are married, 90.3% work in the private sector, 9.2% work in the public sector, 41.8% work for a salary.



## Health Status

The role of comprehensive health policies that focus on preventive services and the provision of effective health service is obvious given the advancement of the overall health status of people. However, in Jordan, available data indicates that national health policies focused on secondary healthcare (curative and rehabilitation services). It is worth noting here that in 2007, senior citizens were included in the civil health insurance program.

Table (4) indicates that hypertension (53%) ranks as the most common chronic diseases affecting the elderly. These diseases are costly, and they utilize a large portion of the national income<sup>11,12</sup>. As for the number of elderly individuals affected with all forms of cancer, they make up about 40% of the total individuals affected with this disease.<sup>13</sup>

This is also indicated in the National Health Account Study, which found that the rate of annual expenditure on health was 9% of the gross domestic product, the equivalent of JD 454 million. The larger part of this amount is spent on curative services JD 263 million.<sup>14</sup>

In another study conducted by the Social Security Corporation, the cost of health care for individuals aged 60 and above was found to be about JD 599 million, or 74% of the total expenditure on curative services, while only a small part of expenditures (26%) was allocated for preventive services. Despite the importance of preventive healthcare services in preventing the occurrence of chronic diseases and their complications, especially that 7.2% of the disabilities are a result of preventable diseases, only 26% of total expenditures are directed towards preventive services<sup>15</sup>.

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11) Shishani, K. & Mrayyan, M.T. (2007). Risk Factors for Medication Errors among Chronically Ill Adults. University of Sharjah of Pure and Applied Science Journal (PAS) , 40, 2.

12) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Centers for Disease Control, (2004). Assessing Risk Factors for Chronic Disease Jordan.

13) Ministry of Health, The Annual Statistical Report 2005.

14) Al-Halawani, F., Barnes, D. & Ferdous, T. (2006). Jordan National Health Accounts, 2000 and 2001.

15) Zoubi, M. (2003). The Health Insurance Through Social Security Project.

**Table (4)**

**Prevalence of chronic diseases among senior citizens (aged 60 and above)**

Nature of the Disease	Prevalence
Hypertension	53
Cholesterol	30
Diabetes	25
Heart Diseases	13
Asthma	10

Source: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2004

Chronic diseases have a major psychological and social impact on the affected individual, and his/her family, since being affected by these diseases and suffering from the resulting complications can lead to the loss of independence, and thus cause the affected person to suffer from depression, and in some cases, even become suicidal. Additionally, being affected with these diseases increases the economic burden on the person and his/her family. 18 cases of suicide among senior citizens in Jordan were recorded between the years 2000 and 2006<sup>16</sup>.

Data issued by the Department of Statistics indicates that the occurrence of disabilities increases with the rise in chronic diseases that occur with age. 11.8% of disabilities in Jordan are among senior citizens, with 0.92% of senior citizens suffering from disabilities: 57.5% of which are male, and 42.5% are female. Physical disabilities were found to be the most common disabilities between both sexes, as is shown in Table (5).

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16 The Criminal Information Department (2006), Cases of Suicide among senior citizens during the years 2000-2006, Directorate of Public Security.



**Table (5)**

**Pattern of disabilities among senior citizens (60 years and above)**

Type of Disability	Percentage (%)
Physical / Motor	43.2
Multiple	16.1
Visual	15.8
Speech / Hearing	10.5
Paralysis as a result of cerebral strokes	3.7
Mental retardation	3.4
Other disabilities resulting from chronic diseases	7.2
Other	0.2
Total	100

Source: The Department of Statistics, Annual Statistical report, 2004

Elderly people's illnesses cause a great burden on his/her family, especially since s/he requires specialized and long-term care, bearing in mind the unavailability of financial capability and time in some families. Additionally, most families lack the knowledge required to care for a sick elderly person, which is the cause of the low standard of the care provided for this group, and the problems that occur within their families. Thus, it is important to work on providing long-term medical, mental health and social services for senior citizens who suffer from chronic diseases, in addition to the importance of supporting their families, thus enabling them to provide the elderly with their needs.

A study conducted by the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Department of Statistics in 2000, to evaluate the ability of 400 individuals aged 60 and above (as indicated in Table (6)) to undertake day-to-day activities, showed that 17.1% of them were totally incapable of preparing food, which is considered a basic need, bearing in mind that this could also be a result of the traditional role that they are used to, whereby it is the duty of women to prepare the food and present it to the members of the family. Additionally, the study found that 9.3% of the study group were unable to move outside their homes, which reflects negatively on their social life, mental well-being, and health. Another study highlighted the problems that senior citizens suffer from in the Jordanian society, indicating that they suffer from loneliness, think they are too old, and spend their time either watching TV or sleeping.<sup>17</sup>

17) Akroush, L. (2000). The Problems of senior citizens in the Jordanian Society, unpublished PhD. Dissertation. Institute of Social Sciences. Lebanese University.

**Table (6)**

**Proportion of the ability of senior citizens to undertake day-to-day activities**

Activity	Cannot at all (%)	Can with assistance (%)
Eat	1.9	3.1
Walk	2.6	7.4
Dress	1.4	10.4
Bathe	1.7	14.0
Prepare food	17.1	9.0
Go to the bathroom	1.7	7.4
Move outside the house	9.3	6.2

Source: Ministry of Health, 2000

Total of percentages does not add up to 100.

Jordan still needs many more vital services in the field of caring for senior citizens, such as: providing medical and nursing services at home, increasing the number of clinics and healthcare centers qualified to care for senior citizens, and establishing specialized divisions to provide comprehensive services to senior citizens in hospitals and health centers. Additionally, there is a dire need to expand the educational opportunities in the field of geriatric medical sciences for those working with senior citizens, and introduce geriatric medicine as a specialization approved by the Jordanian Medical Council. It is necessary to expand educational programs, especially those specialized in geriatric health, to include the mental (psychological) aspects, especially since the changes that occur to a person later in life could affect his/her mental health. Such cases, if left undiagnosed, are misdiagnosed or left untreated, could lead to the patient being given the wrong medication or the exacerbation of the illness.

## Legislative Policies

Based on the above-mentioned, legislations related to senior citizens, the drafting and implementation of these legislations is an absolute right for this group. It is the responsibility of each country to ensure they are implemented based on the needs of senior citizens, and pertinent national objectives. Additionally, enhancing the activities related to senior citizens, their safety and leisure should be a vital part of the comprehensive developmental efforts being exerted nationwide. The various legislations governing the rights of senior citizens in Jordan, such as the civil and military retirement laws, and the social security laws organize the retirement of individuals and all pertinent financial rights, thus ensuring the economic empowerment





of senior citizens and providing them with the protection they need after leaving their jobs. The Retirement Law 34/ 1959 and its amendments stipulates in article 12 that, "Once the employee has reached the age of 60, he should retire". The Social Security Law 19/ 2001 stipulates in article 41 that, "The insured males are entitled to receive a retirement pension once they have reached the age of 60 while insured females are entitled to this salary once they reach the age of 55, whereby the age is proven by an official birth certificate, or any other official document issued by the competent authority, once the employee subscribes to the insurance system; and any changes to the date of birth after this date shall be disregarded".

As for other legislations concerning senior citizens, the Charitable Endowment Program 83/2005 stipulates in article 9 that, "Bearing in mind the condition of the endowed, the revenues of the Program to help the needy shall be expended in cooperation with the Alms (Zakat) Fund according to the following: The homes caring for poor senior citizens." The Aid and Rehabilitation Law 120/ 1971 defines in article 3 an elderly person as "anyone who has reached the age of 60, and is therefore within the category to whom this law applies".

Some of the regulations governing the rights of senior citizens include: the regulations governing the licensing of Daytime Clubs for senior citizens 1/ 1999, which defines senior citizens in article 1 as: A male who is over 60 years old, or a female who is 55 years old, or above". The regulations governing the licensing of centers for senior citizens 2/ 2001 do not contain any definition of senior citizens. On the other hand, the Assistance and Rehabilitation Regulations 1/ 2004 do contain a definition of senior citizens as "any individual who is over the age of 60". Both the regulations governing the licensing of centers and daytime clubs for senior citizens were subjected to a revision in 2006, although they have not been endorsed to date.

## Social Care

Despite the fact that the Jordanian society is close-knit, due to the changes in living patterns and the impact of the economic and social factors, which have lead to an increase in the number of nuclear families and a decrease in the number of extended families, who were provided with care by their family, it was found that many senior citizens lack the care they need, thus causing them to resort to the various centers and homes that provide the care for this group. Data provided by the Ministry of Social Development, which is the legal umbrella and supervisor of the care centers and daytime clubs for senior citizens, indicates that there are 11 such centers for

senior citizens, of both sexes, in the Kingdom. Six of them are run by the voluntary sectors, and five by the private sector; and overall they serve a total of 282 elderly individuals of both sexes<sup>18</sup>. The Ministry of Social Development purchases the services provided by the centers run by the voluntary sector to care for 104 poor elderly individuals and reside at the Dar-Al Diyafah and the Princess Muna Center, and which costs about 170 JD per month. This data indicates that senior citizens normally receive the care they need from their families in their homes; therefore, it is very important to focus on providing services to senior citizens in their homes, as part of the social, medical, economic, and psychological services available to senior citizens, targeting the largest number possible. In Jordan, there are five clubs that provide recreation to senior citizens by allowing them to socialize with their peers. However, the services provided by these clubs and centers are inadequate in terms of quality and quantity, and are not accessible to all senior citizens, especially those residing in rural areas (Table 7).

**Table (7)**  
**Care centers and daytime clubs for senior citizens in the Kingdom**

Name of Center/Club	Men	Women	Total Capacity
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>			
Dar-Al Diyafah for Senior Citizens	72	36	120
Prince Muna Center for Old Ladies		29	60
Dar-Assaalam for the Disabled	21	20	70
Beit Al Ziyarah for Elderly Women	-	-	120
Human Care Home	9	10	75
Samir Shamma Home	-	-	120
<b>Private Sector</b>			
Dar Amman for Senior Citizens	10	9	22
Dar Al Amal for Old Women	11	23	30
Al Dar Al Hadeetha for Old Women	-	5	10
Dar Az-Zahrah Home for Senior Citizens	16	7	60
Dar Wadi Ashittah for Senior Citizens	4	-	30

Source: the Ministry of Social Development, 2007

18) The Ministry of Social Development, September 2007.





## Physical Environment

One of the main objectives of human rights is to create an environment that is comprehensive and empowering. Each elderly person has the right to live in an environment that enhances their capabilities, enables them to participate in the development of their communities, and includes accessibility to basic services such as: appropriate housing consistent with their capabilities and ability and adapting all the buildings that provide public services to enable senior citizens to go on with their day-to-day life. As a result of the focus group discussions conducted with a number of elderly individuals, it was found that there is a pressing need to improve the physical environment surrounding these people in their homes and in public services facilities. They expressed their need for public services facilities that include areas where they can rest. Additionally, many complained that they have to wait a very long period of time before being served by the workers in these facilities. They also expressed their need for aid equipment to be made available within these facilities to facilitate their movement, and the need to rehabilitate recreation facilities to be consistent with their abilities, and thus enhance their role in society<sup>19</sup>.



Some establishments and entities concerned with issues related to senior citizens have launched interventions to create a physical environment to

19) The National Council for family Affair, Focus Group Sessions held at the Friends of senior citizens Society, and the Samir Shamma Home, September 2007.

20) Jordanian nursing council (2007). Final Community Assessment Report for Cities Project. Jordan

support senior citizens by establishing public services facilities that they are able to enjoy, especially in the capital Amman, such as:

- Issuing building codes for the disabled by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in 1993
- The Greater Amman Municipality's intervention to create the Building Codes Department for people with special needs in 1999 - Since the majority of senior citizens are people with special needs, this department is the first step towards establishing an environment that is free of architectural obstacles and barriers.
- Establishing the National Council for the Disabled in 2007.
- The intervention by the Jordanian Nursing Council, which declared Amman as a city "friendly to Senior Citizens" in 2007<sup>20</sup>.

### Studies and Research

On the academic side, it was found that Jordanian researchers and academics, and social research centers did not pay much attention to the issues concerning senior citizens. Only one Ph.D. and 20 Master's thesis discuss these issues. As for published researches, there are only 5 such documents, all of which focus on the problems that senior citizens face in their homes and in care centers, in addition to highlighting the medical and social problems, and the problems that elderly women face. There is also a severe shortage in the studies that discuss the training requirements of the healthcare providers that deal with senior citizens; the causes of death among this group; their health and medical needs; society's view of them; and the evaluation of the physical environment surrounding them.

In Jordan, it is noticed that elderly issues were not addressed in the social and economic policies and were not given priority from decision-makers as is the case with children, youth and women issues. This National Strategy is the first document to focus on drafting policies for senior citizens, based on the National Agenda, which stresses the importance of preparing a national strategy for senior citizens. Some of the barriers and challenges facing policy and decision makers include the shortage in the scientific studies and research in this field and the unavailability of updated and detailed databases that could help them analyze the situation of senior citizens, and their medical, social, economic, and legislative needs. Additionally, there are no unified definitions and concepts related to senior citizens at a national level.



## Strategic Objectives

The National Council for Family Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the Jordanian Nursing Council, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the 35 experts from the various Jordanian universities and non-governmental organizations, worked to draft a comprehensive national strategy for senior citizens, to include a work plan comprising a number of activities to be implemented by government organizations, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The aim of this strategy is to:

- (1) Give the issues pertaining to senior citizens the attention they merit within the Jordanian government's plans and policies, and ensure they are addressed as a priority.
- (2) Improve the quality of life for senior citizens, and ensure they enjoy a dignified life within their communities.
- (3) Enhance the self-esteem of senior citizens, and their ability to continue giving, contributing and participating.
- (4) Raise the awareness of the people regarding the issues concerning senior citizens, and promote a positive outlook towards them.
- (5) Support family relations, and enhance inter-generational communication and dialogue.

## Strategy Directives

This strategy consists of six directives, each of which addresses one aspect of the life of senior citizens. Each directive comprises the priority issues that require interventions to improve the quality of life and facilitate it for senior citizens, in addition to enabling them to live independently, providing them with the best social and medical care possible, taking advantage of opportunities, facing challenges, and supporting the establishment of a society for all ages. These issues form the basis of the Jordanian National Strategy for Senior Citizens. The directives of this strategy are as follows:

<b>Directive 1:</b>	Senior Citizens and Development
<b>Directive 2:</b>	Healthcare for Senior Citizens
<b>Directive 3:</b>	A Physical Environment that supports Senior Citizens
<b>Directive 4:</b>	Social Welfare for Senior Citizens
<b>Directive 5:</b>	Scientific Studies and Research, and Databases
<b>Directive 6:</b>	Legislations

## Directive 1:

### Senior Citizens and Development

Senior citizens are considered partners in the national development process; many are specialized in the various sciences and possess extensive experience in many fields. Many of them also play major roles within their families and local communities and contribute immensely in ways that cannot be measured in terms of economic criteria, such as caring for family members, participating in community work, and other work they conduct from their homes in order to support their families, in addition to their immeasurable contributions which are unpaid for. Thus, they enrich society and are not a burden on it.



### Issue 1: Participation of senior citizens in the formulation of national plans

#### *Sub-objective:*

- Encourage the participation of senior citizens in the decision-making process at all levels.

#### *Procedures:*

- Establish a board or council for senior citizens.
- Encourage senior citizens to participate in public, social and cultural affairs.
- Activate the role of the civil society in empowering senior citizens to undertake various activities and benefit from their extensive experience.

### Issue 2: Work – Income – Poverty

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Improve the living conditions of senior citizens.
- Decrease the rate of poverty among senior citizens.

#### *Procedures:*

- Provide loans and credit facilities for senior citizens.
- Support the productive projects run by senior citizens, and market their products.



- Take the necessary measures to alleviate the burdens of poverty among senior citizens.
- Take the necessary measures to alleviate the inflation in salaries and aid and link them instead to the cost of living.
- Enhance awareness regarding the importance of including all workers, nationwide, in the social security system.
- Establish a social security network.

### Issue 3: Senior citizens in rural and (Badia) areas

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Improve the quality of life for senior citizens living in rural and (Badia) areas.

#### *Procedures:*

- Provide support to senior citizens workers and farmers to enable them to continue working.
- Encourage the establishment of rural cooperative communities especially for senior citizens in rural areas.
- Ensure protection and provide basic needs to the elderly, who are economically inactive.

### Issue 4: Senior citizens and immigration

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Integrate senior citizens in the society.
- Ensure a dignified life for senior citizens, whose children immigrate.

#### *Procedures:*

- Increasing numbers of elderly expatriates engaged in supporting the national economy in the Motherland.
- Follow-up the living conditions of senior citizens once their children have immigrated.

### Issue 5: Ongoing education and training

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Eradicate illiteracy among senior citizens, especially women.
- Improve the capabilities of senior citizens who wish to work, or train them prior to joining the workforce.
- Benefit from the technical and educational experience of senior citizens as workers or volunteers.



### *Procedures:*

- Provide senior citizens with the opportunity to enroll in literacy programs.
- Provide senior citizens with the opportunity to acquire professional skills.
- Provide senior citizens with the opportunity to use information technology.
- Conduct extensive training programs for senior citizens to ensure they are able to continue working.
- Raise the awareness of senior citizens with information regarding their rights.
- Increase the opportunities available to senior citizens to work as consultants and trainers.





## Directive 2: Healthcare for Senior Citizens

Investing in the preventive, curative and rehabilitation healthcare services available to senior citizens contributes to increasing their years of a healthy and active life. The main objective is to provide comprehensive healthcare services, including preventive, curative and rehabilitative programs. In order to fulfill the ever-increasing needs of senior citizens in Jordan, the Ministry of Health has included senior citizens (aged 60 and above) in the Civil Health Insurance System.

### Issue 1: Preventive healthcare for senior citizens

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Encourage all members of society to practice healthy lifestyles and thus enhance the health of senior citizens.
- Develop comprehensive, preventive services in the field of physical, mental and social health.
- Build the capacity of healthcare providers in the field of preventive health concerning the needs of senior citizens.

#### *Procedures:*

- Educate senior citizens and their families and increase their awareness regarding the importance of practicing healthy lifestyles in order to prevent chronic diseases and their complications.
- Provide knowledge to senior citizens and their families regarding methods of preventive care.
- Provide a series of preventive healthcare services to senior citizens at all healthcare centers.
- Train the medical staff and rehabilitate them, thus allowing them to provide preventive healthcare services to senior citizens.

### Issue 2: Curative health services for senior citizens

#### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop the overall curative healthcare services provided to senior citizens, in terms of physical, mental and social aspects.
- Build the capacity of medical staff in the field of curative health for senior citizens.

## *Procedures:*

- Provide home healthcare services to senior citizens.
- Provide medical treatment services to senior citizens in the various medical institutions in the Kingdom.
- Encourage the qualified elderly to participate in the designing of long-term curative healthcare programs.
- Train senior citizens and enhance the awareness of their families regarding the means of providing medical care for them.
- Train the medical staff and rehabilitate them, thus allowing them to provide curative healthcare services to senior citizens.

## **Issue 3: Rehabilitative healthcare for senior citizens**

### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop comprehensive rehabilitative healthcare services for senior citizens in terms of physical, mental and social health.
- Build the capacity of medical staff in the fields of rehabilitative health services provided to senior citizens.

### *Procedures:*

- Provide a series of rehabilitative healthcare services to senior citizens in the various health institutions in the Kingdom.
- Encourage the qualified elderly to participate in the formulation of long-term rehabilitative healthcare programs.
- Educate senior citizens and their families about rehabilitative healthcare.
- Sustain the occupational capabilities of senior citizens for as long as possible.
- Train the medical staff and rehabilitate them, thus allowing them to provide rehabilitative healthcare services to senior citizens.







### Directive 3:

#### A Physical Environment that Supports Senior Citizens

Housing and the environment surrounding senior citizens, provides the security and stability they need and enable them to move freely, easily and safely in their own homes, in addition to the financial burden of caring for a home, are all major issues that must be given special attention when identifying the needs of senior citizens. In Jordan, most senior citizens reside with their families and in their homes, and maintain their financial status. This is obvious from the very low number of individuals who reside in centers or homes for senior citizens, which is only 282. The low percentage of senior citizens visiting the day clubs is either due to small number of these clubs (5) or the lack of information about their availability.

#### Issue 1: Special housing and care centers

##### *Sub-objectives:*

- Provide special housing meet the needs of senior citizens
- Provide care centers for senior citizens that fulfill their needs

##### *Procedures:*

- Provide credit facilities and tax deductions for the families that care for an elderly person to enable them to purchase homes adapted to the needs of senior citizens, with loans.
- Fulfill the needs of senior citizens and allow them to design their own homes.
- Encourage the private and public sectors to build housing projects designed for senior citizens.
- Design care centers in a way that ensures their appropriateness for senior citizens.
- Establish a database of the locations that are appropriate for the establishment of care centers for senior citizens.

## Issue 2: Public buildings and facilities

### *Sub-objectives:*

- Adapt the public services buildings and facilities that are compatible for senior citizens to use.
- Adapt elderly friendly traffic environment to ensure their safe use by senior citizens.
- Provide means of transportation that are suited for senior citizens.

### *Procedures:*

- Adapt the public services buildings and facilities for senior citizens' use.
- Provide support equipment for senior citizens using these buildings and facilities.
- Design crossroads, passageways and pedestrian bridges that are consistent with the capabilities of senior citizens.
- Provide means of transportation that are consistent with the needs of senior citizens.



## **Directive 4:**

### **Social Care for Senior Citizens**

The Jordanian society, like all other societies, has witnessed an increase in the number of individuals who live to a ripe old age. This is probably due to the changes that have occurred in societies, and the developments in the fields of industry and technology. This in itself has caused a dramatic change in the living patterns of societies, whereby an elderly person, in most cases, finds him/herself lonely, after his/her own children have gone and established families of their own. In turn, this has had major social and psychological impacts on senior citizens because they do not have their children around them at a time when they need them the most, not only financially, but also psychologically. They have no one to provide them with the stability and feeling of security they need; and therefore, they lack the feeling of being part of a group that respects and appreciates them.

#### **Issue 1: The Social services available to senior citizens and supporting service providers**

##### ***Sub-objectives:***

- Provide social services to senior citizens.
- Provide support to service providers for senior citizens.

##### ***Procedures:***

- Improve the social and psychological skills of those who care for senior citizens.
- Provide counseling for the families caring for senior citizens.
- Establish social, cultural and recreation clubs for senior citizens.
- Fulfill the special needs of senior citizens who are living alone, and ensure that their living needs are met.
- Encourage the concept of alternative families for senior citizens who live without a provider.

#### **Issue 2: The participation of senior citizens in society**

##### ***Sub-objectives***

- Enhance the participation of senior citizens in society.
- Formulate special programs for old ladies to ensure that they live dignified lives.

## ***Procedures:***

- Encourage senior citizens to participate in voluntary work.
- Enable senior citizens to participate in social, cultural and recreation activities.
- Formulate programs to prepare those who are on the verge of retirement.
- Identify the needs of old women who live on their own.
- Establish and support productive projects in which the old women who provide for their families participate.
- Enhance the participation of old women in the decision-making process concerning their own issues.

## **Issue 3: Violence that senior citizens are subjected to**

### ***Sub-objectives:***

- Protect senior citizens from violence.
- Develop the human resources to enhance the institutional capacity of the entities involved in protecting senior citizens from violence.

### ***Procedures:***

- Provide information about the services and means available to protect senior citizens from violence.
- Integrate the concepts of violence against senior citizens and ways to protect them in the educational programs at all levels.
- Improve the capabilities and skills of the social workers, psychologists and educational counselors to help them provide guidance and awareness raising to ensure the protection of senior citizens from violence.
- Enhance the capabilities and skills of religious clerics and preachers regarding issues related to senior citizens.
- Improve the skills and capabilities of those working in the media to promote a culture that protects senior citizens from violence.

## **Issue 4: Society's view of senior citizens**

### ***Sub-objectives:***

- Enhance the positive social views regarding senior citizens.
- Enhance inter-generational integration.

### ***Procedures:***

- Portray the positive image of senior citizens.
- Encourage the youth to provide services to senior citizens.



## Issue 5: Partnerships and cooperation with the organizations concerned with senior citizens

### *Sub-objectives:*

- Enhance partnerships and cooperation between the organizations concerned with senior citizens, whether they are in the private, public, or civil society sector.
- Enhance the social responsibility of the private sector.

### *Procedures:*

- Formulate protocols and standards to organize the work of the organizations working with senior citizens.
- Encourage the private sector to support and fund the programs concerning senior citizens, and participate in their formulation and organization.

## Directive 5:

### Scientific Research and Studies, and Databases

Those attempting to formulate policies and educational programs for senior citizens in Jordan face many challenges and difficulties. In addition to the shortage in scientific research and studies, there is also a lack of updated and detailed databases, which could help them identify the status of senior citizens in the Kingdom, their needs, including their social, medical and economic needs, which all serve to direct the national programs and interventions for this group.

Therefore, the way to address the issues related to aging and senior citizens requires conducting research, preparing databases, and unifying definitions, in order to face this challenge in a practical and scientific manner.

#### Issue 1: Studies and research regarding senior citizens

##### *Sub-objectives:*

- Establish a national center for research and studies related to senior citizens.
- Encourage partnerships and cooperation with scientific research centers concerned with senior citizens, locally, regionally, and internationally.

##### *Procedures:*

- Build a comprehensive database on senior citizens.
- Solicit financial support for research.
- Prepare a guide of all researches concerning senior citizens that have been conducted in Jordan.
- Steer scientific research in the direction of empirical studies on senior citizens, regarding their social, medical and mental status.
- Encourage cooperation between research and academic institutions regarding issues concerning senior citizens.



## Directive 6:

### Legislations

Formulating legislations regarding senior citizens and implementing them is an absolute right of each individual, and the responsibility of each and every country, provided their implementation bears in mind the needs of this group and pertinent national objectives. Additionally, enhancing activities for senior citizens, their safety and their recreation should be a vital part of the developmental efforts being exerted nationwide.

#### Issue 1: legislations and Laws related to the elderly and development

##### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop laws and legislations that contribute to the participation of senior citizens in the development process.

##### *Procedures:*

- Raise the age of early retirement.
- Raise the age of mandatory retirement.
- Activate and amend supporting laws to guarantee a minimum income that ensures a dignified life for senior citizens.
- Expand the umbrella of subscribers to social security.
- Allocate pension salaries for senior citizens not included in the retirement laws in the Kingdom.

#### Issue 2: Legislations and laws regarding the provision of preventive healthcare, curative and rehabilitative services to senior citizens

##### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop legislations and laws related to the provision of preventive healthcare, curative and rehabilitative services.

##### *Procedures:*

- Review the legislations related to the care of senior citizens.
- Activate, amend and formulate laws to ensure that preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services are provided to senior citizens.



## Issue 3: Legislations and laws related to the provision of a supporting physical environment to senior citizens

### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop the necessary legislations to create a physical environment that supports senior citizens.

### *Procedures:*

- Activate the building codes for the disabled.

## Issue 4: Legislations and laws related to social care for senior citizens

### *Sub-objectives:*

- Develop the laws and legislations necessary to protect senior citizens from violence.
- Develop the laws and legislations that will guarantee that senior citizens are cared for within their families.

### *Procedures:*

- Revise, activate, amend and codify the legislations and laws related to protecting senior citizens from violence.
- Revise, activate and formulate legislations and laws that guarantee senior citizens are cared for within their families.







## Definitions

**Aging:** Senior citizens, in Jordan and worldwide, are defined according to the definition of the United Nations and that of the World Health Organization (WHO), as any person above the age of 60.

**Vision -** is the desired aim to empower senior citizens as seen by the concerned organizations, and identify the characteristics and contents of this aim through a medical, cultural, social and economic perspective, based on society's customs, values, and traditions, and on the philosophy of comprehensive and sustainable development. The vision is a short and concentrated version of the aspirations of the society in which senior citizens reside, and it is the final outcome of the mission once it has been completed.

**Mission -** is the mission of the National Council for Family Affairs reflected in the realization of the desired vision for the Jordanian family through the formulation of policies and strategies; the implementation of programs and activities; and the development of methods, tools, and methodologies that are both practical and realistic to achieve. The formulation of the mission requires describing it as the clear, appropriate and practical choice to bring closer the general objectives and the sub-objectives of the various programs and activities, bearing in mind the traditional values; the status quo; and the future direction of all social, economic, and cultural aspects.

**Strategy:** "Strategy" is a term derived from the military science, and means the broad lines and the main components of a plan that is drawn to achieve victory, and which is based on absolute knowledge and real awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses, and those of the enemy, in addition to the inputs, conditions, and characteristics of the field and scope of conflict. Strategy is the process of using a series of positive and negative elements of the weapons and arms used by the conflicting parties to undertake a series of movements, interventions, and steps to realize superiority and victory.

Formulating a strategy to empower senior citizens and promote their status requires identifying the broad lines for specific steps, interventions and activities and the objectives of special themes that will realize empowerment and advancement if they are implemented with the appropriate and realistic tools and methodologies,

based on unchangeable factors that portray their national and cultural identity and a practical analysis of the health, social, economic and political status of the family and society taking into consideration strengths and positive aspects, and weaknesses and negative aspects. It is vital that we stress that the strategy must be objective and specific, and must be implementable by translating it into executive work programs that make up the action plan that comprises activities, with respective objectives or sub-objectives that, united, make up the overall effort being exerted to realize the general objectives of the strategy.

**Physical Environment** - is everything that surrounds a human being, affects him/her, negatively or positively, and has an impact on his/her day-to-day activities. Senior citizens have the right to live within an environment that enhances their capabilities and allows them to contribute to the development of their communities. This includes facilitating their access to basic services such as: adequate housing, and appropriate means of transportation and roads.



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# The National Jordanian Strategy For Senior Citizens

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## Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to implement the objectives of the strategy, a scientific methodology was devised and a methodology was proposed to identify responsibilities, coordinate the efforts, and follow-up the implementation in cooperation with all the concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations, in order to monitor all the activities and programs undertaken by the various entities in an effort to realize all the objectives of the Jordanian National Strategy for senior citizens.

Additionally, a team will be formed to liaise the operation to include members from NCFA, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the Jordanian Nursing Council, Amman Municipality, and the governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in following up on, entering and evaluating all data as part of NCFA's monitoring and evaluation system. This will ensure that the standard of work is closely monitored and achievements are observed and supervised by the concerned authorities.

Liaison Officers will undertake the task of submitting detailed quarterly and annual progress reports according to the planned activities stipulated in NCFA's national work plan. These reports will in turn be discussed, and recommendations made to activate the strategy by the concerned organizations in order to realize its desired aims and objectives.