Ageing situation in Lebanon:

The aging phenomenon’s attention is increasing worldwide. Lebanon is an Arab World country undergoing a demographic transition that includes declining fertility and high migration rates among younger segments of the population (Abyad, 2001; Sibai, Sen, Baydoun, & Saxena, 2004). Indeed, the age distribution in Lebanon is expected to change rapidly over the next 40 years, the National Report for the Living Conditions of Families in 2007 has showed that those whose ages are 65 years and over represents 10% of the population, and in comparison with neighboring countries. Lebanon has the largest proportion of elderly population who need support. “The old age dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons aged 65 years old and above per 100 persons of age 15 to 64 years. It measures the dependency burden that the economically active population handles.”

The needs of elderly population:

The elderly people’s issue is not a big part of the Lebanese Government priorities. For this reason, the Lebanese government established in the year 1999 a national Committee for placing the Lebanese Elderly issue within the National agenda’s priorities for social development. The head of this Committee is the Minister of Social Affairs. It is also composed of official, private, and civil sectors as well as a group of experts.

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1 Prem C. Saxena, Chair professor, “Demographic Profile of the Arab Countries”, Analysis of the Ageing Phenomenon”, United nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut – Lebanon 2013, p: 20
The Elderly issue is ranked among the priorities of the Human development reports, a matter that requires the set up of integrated policies, plans and programs that are capable of securing adequate and decent conditions for elderly to live decently and with dignity to integrate within their societies.

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) is responsible, within its mandate, for the status of old people in Lebanon and handles this issue through its Family Affairs Department. This department is the executive body of the Permanent National Commission for the Elderly people in Lebanon (PNCE).

This cooperation between MOSA and PNCE resulted in several activities such as researches and workshops. They all contribute to the achievement of the common expectation for the Elderly status.

Moreover the Elderly People benefit from the social and medical services provided directly through the Social Development Centers (SDCs) offer. They are the key executive bodies at grass root level aimed to achieve the Decentralized Development plans adopted by MOSA.

In addition, to direct services delivered through its SDCs, MOSA has been providing services and social care through annual contracts with approximately 50 residential and day care institutions all over the Lebanese regions, which provide the social and medical services to the Elderly.

“Partnership between government and civil sector organizations is a strong asset that holds great potential if properly regulated and managed through well defined procedures for contracting, monitoring, and evaluation.”

**Residential Elderly Care:**

In order to maintain a good health situation and to be able to take care of himself/herself, especially if he/she suffer from social constraints such as poverty, unemployment, lack of decent housing, and lack of family support or abandonment; MOSA established in 2013 three “Residential Elderly care” centers in three regions in Lebanon:

- Aramoun center
- Mansoura center
- Rachaya center

Elderly institutions provide with special emphasis or infections diseases as health care associated infections and long term services; multidrug resistant infections can be acquired in almost any setting. Both staff and patients or residents move
throughout the organization and around the community. This raises the need for an effective infection prevention and control plan in all elderly organizations, with a more developed plan for the long term services.

To help reduce the possibility of acquiring and spreading an infection, MOSA has created standards for the elderly organizations in order to establish a systematic infection prevention and control program.

The design and scope of each organization's program should be determined by the specific risks faced by its location, the population it serves and the type of services it provides.

The infection prevention and control activities that the institution adopts should also be practical and reasonable to follow. All organizations should try to establish infection control activities that protect their patients' or residents' health.

Once an effective, practical and current program is in place, the institution takes measures so that the program operates consistently and is evaluated for opportunities of improvement.

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) is trying to reduce the problems of the Elderly People in Lebanon and raise awareness on elderly issues, in this regard MOSA in cooperation with the PNCE implement wide activities as below:

- Workshops titled “Accompany the Disabled Elderly people” which has been conducted in 2007 and targeted the Social workers at the Social Development Centers (SDCs) and the NGOs contracting with the Ministry. This project aimed to strengthen the capacities of the Social workers on the “Home visits’ techniques and communication” with unaccompanied Elders and people with special needs in emergency situation.

- Workshops titled “building the Capacity of the elderly companions on Home Care” which has been conducted in 2011 and targeted 31 Social workers from the Social Development Centers (SDCs) (3male,29 female) This project aimed to prepare a group of caregivers well trained in order to get a job opportunity where they can provide “Home Care” to the Elderly at their local communities.

- Awareness campaign on “the prevention of elderly bone fractures “was conducted in 2008-2009 within the cooperation of the “Lebanese Association for osteoporosis and metabolic bone disease”. It targeted 26 doctors and 245 social workers (57 male, 239 female) from the Social Development Centers (SDCs) the NGOs contracted with the Ministry.
This project aimed to raise awareness about the importance of building a Multidisciplinary team to guide Elderly and his family on how to diagnose and prevent osteoporosis and metabolic bone disease.

- Workshops titled “Alzheimer’s disease and ways to care for patients” with the cooperation of the “Alzheimer’s Association in Lebanon” has been conducted through three years (2011-2013). It targeted around 800 Social workers from the Social Development Centers (SDCs) the NGOs contracting with the Ministry. These workshops formed a gateway to mainstream a new optimistic look towards the Alzheimer's patient, a new vision to solutions that facilitate his life and the lives of his family members, and to stimulate initiatives to establish Alzheimer's patient centers over all Lebanese territory.

Three years after the launch of this project, it achieved the “international Award for 2013 from the Alzheimer’s disease Association and from the METLIFE foundation”

In order to enrich the data related to the Lebanese Elderly issues, MOSA with the collaboration of PNCE prepared some studies as mentioned below, should be noted that some studies are still under revising:

- “The National Report on the seniors’ available services in Lebanon” has been prepared in 2010 in order to describe the current institutions reality and to identify the gaps and difficulties that face these institutions and their needs to improve the quality of Elderly life in Lebanon.

- “The Elderly Daily Activities and the factors influencing them in the Mount Lebanon’s province” has been prepared in 2013 in order to characterize the independence of the Elders in Lebanon.
- A study on the deficiency of vitamin “D” in Elderly people, this study is still in progress (2013-2014) in order to identify the importance of this health problem. This study includes the anticipated benefits of the scientific side to compensate for the lack of Vitamin “D” in the Elderly people.

- Working on the implementation of an Empirical Study in 2014 in order to verify the validity of the tests adopted in Arabic language. Moreover, this study is essential for the illiterate Elders to recognize early memory lack and their mental capacity. This study is intended to be implemented to strengthen the ability of the Ministry of Social Affairs Centers in tracking the social needs of the elderly when losing their mental abilities and their personal independence.