

FLEEING WAR IN A WHEELCHAIR

The Struggle of Disabled Refugees

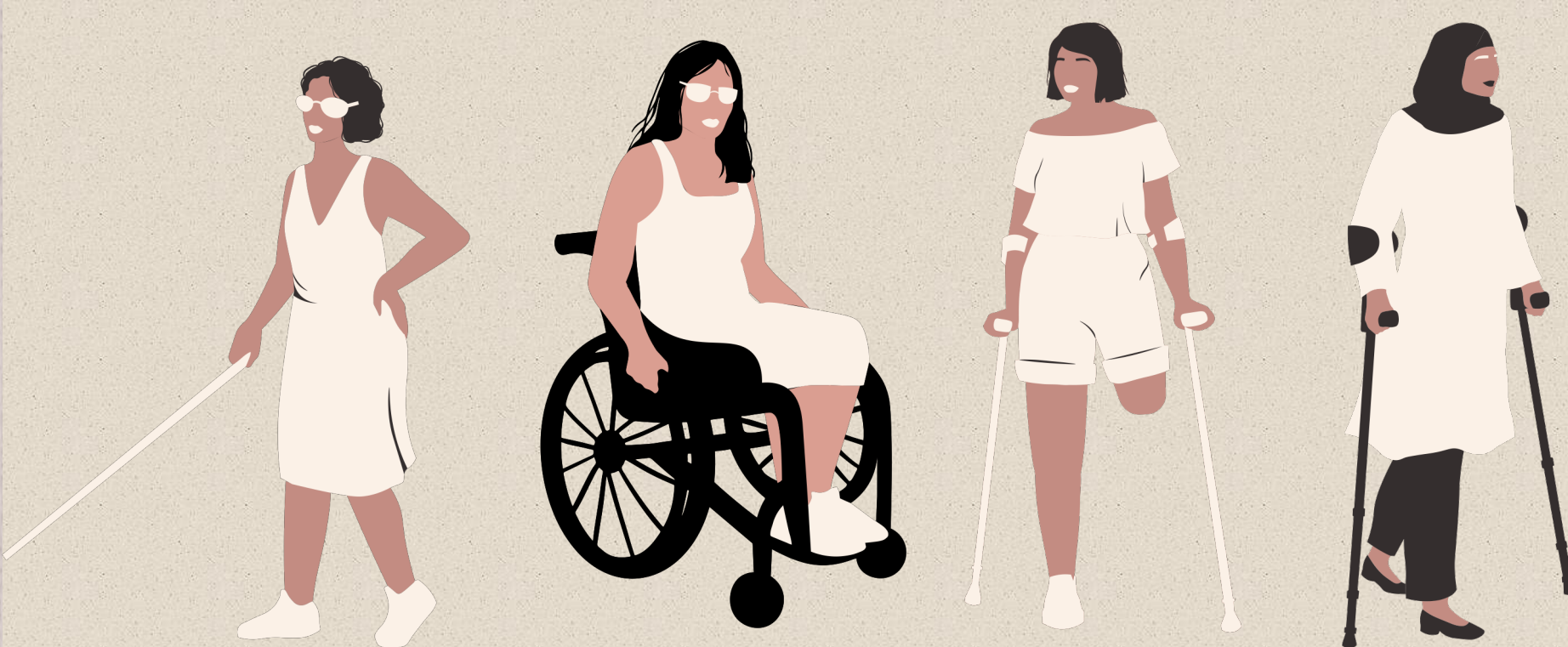
The Journey



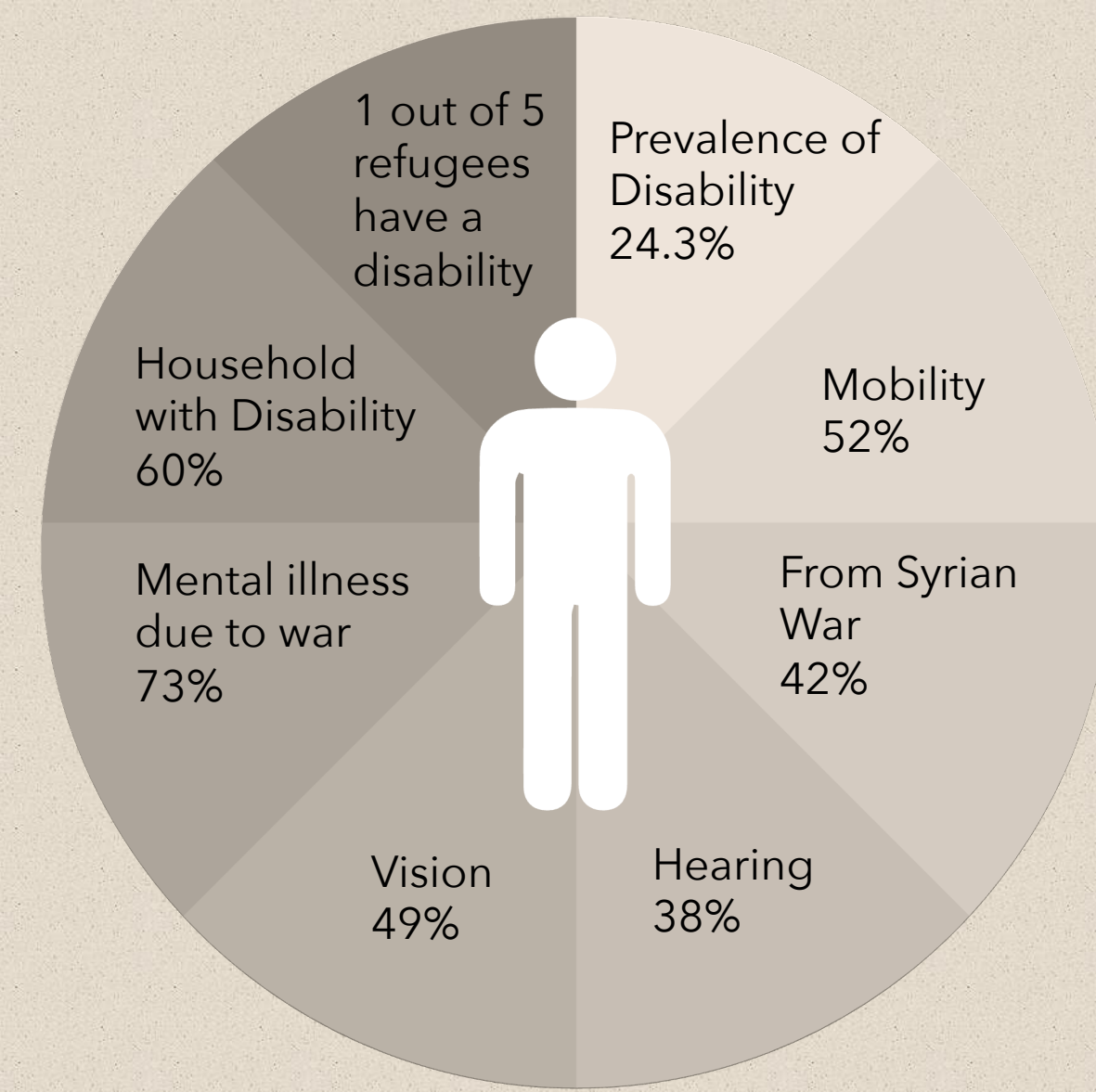
War torn Syria is the cause for the largest exodus of refugees contributing to one of the worst crises in history. Since the uprising in 2011 of anti-Bashir al-Assad / anti-government militia, the stability in Syria has been broken. Sympathizing groups of both sides of the conflict support and assert agendas to try and influence the future of the region. From allied countries to extremist organizations, the influences continue to fuel the civil war in Syria. Syrian civilians fearing for their lives amidst bombs falling, have already fled. More than 6.8 million Syrians have fled and more than 6.9 million are still internally displaced.

Not only do people with disabilities have difficulty in their journey but once they reach a refugee camp most are not accessible or fitted for any type of disability. Nisreen recalls having to pull her body across a dirty bathroom floor to get to a toilet. Those with disabilities are often left on the outside of care and left to fend for themselves instead of having any sort of consideration for their conditions. No one with a disability, after fleeing a war-torn country, should have to feel degraded and have their dignity stripped. Even in the "Nicest Refugee camp in the World", Kilis right across the border in Turkey there are not any living spaces designed for those with disabilities. The camp houses more than 14,000 refugees on 60 acres, in retrofitted shipping container spaces that include a bathroom, hot water heaters, and sink and stove combos in the 23'x 10' space that is made for 4 people. The compound is very secure and is fenced and guarded. There are schools, playgrounds, mosques, grocery stores and stone paved walkways everywhere. With all the development and consideration, a wheelchair accessible living space is still not available.

Kilis Refugee Camp Site Map



Disability Among Syrian Refugees



<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/30/nisreen-mustafa-syria>

Like Nisreen Mustafa who has cerebral palsy and is wheelchair bound. Even before the war she felt like she was held hostage in her home, a 5-story building without an elevator. She had to be carried by someone down five floors to have access to the outside world, She recalls living in constant fear and anxiety after the start of the war never knowing what the next day would bring and if she would survive. She and her sister Nisreen fled on a harrowing journey to Germany that took them 16 months to cover over 3,400 miles. A lot of which Nisreen pushed her sister in her wheelchair through rough terrain.

Qusai, like Nisreen is wheelchair bound having been born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta. He is unable to do things independently because of his condition and like Nisreen, feared for his life when the war started because of his inability to defend himself. Qusai decided to flee, and his journey is filled with hardships very few can imagine. After spending all of his savings to get a spot on a boat to travel to Greece on his way to a better life, his wheelchair was tossed into the sea because he hadn't paid for a spot for it. He was subject to sea swells that dumped water into the boat and at one point was up to his chest. Because of his small size he was tossed about and crushed by the other passengers in the overcrowded boat which resulted in a broken arm.



<http://globaldisability.org/2016/07/09/chance-story-quasi-disabled-syrian-refugee>



Concept Statement

To make accessible accommodations for those with disabilities in an existing facility. Even before the war, disabilities in Syria was something that was hidden. Most locked away from the world without consideration or accommodation. After having to flee your country for fear of your life and the unimaginable obstacles that were faced to travel and get to the safety of a refugee location, you should be relieved. But those with disabilities are finding they have no space that is made for them. We need to restore their dignity and give them a space that they can finally feel at peace in.

Disability Considerations

- Clear Floor Space- 30" x 48"
- Turning Radius 5'
- Obstructed Reach Range for Wheelchair Users- 20"- 25"
- Grab Bars in Bathroom
- Ramp to Entrance
- Bed Height Between 20"- 23"

Floor Plan



Materials

