

**The East Jerusalem YMCA
Rehabilitation Program
Beit-Sahour**

Annual Report

2013

A word to be said...

They simply fight to live in a dignified society where they have the opportunities which everyone else have...These are our target groups; persons with disability, traumatized and survivors of political violence. Our target groups for the rights of whom we advocate...

Their right to living, their right to playing, their right to freedom of expression, their right to education, their right to accessing services, and most importantly, their right to be treated with dignity not sympathy.

Unfortunately, people we serve are still facing and experiencing several types of obstacles, impediments and disadvantages...

That's why we are there for them...

We lend them a listening ear and a caring hand. We offer factors of empowerment, and we highlight their needs, recognize their priorities and assist them to realize their abilities that are always far beyond their traumas and disabilities. We lead them to live a productive and decent life; a life that is far from discrimination, isolation, fear, rejection, exclusion and neglect.

People we serve are disadvantaged people who face a "double disadvantage"...

For almost a quarter of a century, we have been giving considerable attention and exerting strenuous efforts to make sure that these people live a "better life".

Believing in the issues and rights of our targeted groups, we work in a holistic approach to rehabilitate them and reintegrate them into community.

We give priority to increasing their social, economic and cultural participation into society as well as to addressing discrimination and human rights violations.

Those people who struggle to access the basic necessities of life. Those people whose normal sequence of life has been disturbed by prison, by settlers' violence, by misconception or preconceived ideas, those people whose lives are a continuous struggle for resources and support... those are our target for the sake of whom our human mission is dedicated.

At the end of this 24th year of success, we cannot but make a pause to express our sincere thanks and deep gratitude to our dear partners and friends; it is through their continuous support that we have reached where we are now. And of course, we do not forget to extend our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff who never hesitate to exert every effort possible to serve the people for the sake of whom we exist.

Many thanks...



Accomplishments

Objective 1: Increase the beneficiaries' access to psychosocial support and counseling services.

There's no doubt that our work in the psychosocial sphere- which has been accumulating since more than 24 years- has left a significant impact not only in Palestine, but also in the Arab World. This is true due to the fact that our work is distinguished of being adhered to a comprehensive scientific curriculum through which qualified social workers and counselors have been intervening upon being prepared, trained and supervised on a continuous basis to develop their capacities and simultaneously lessen their stresses and support them.

In fact, our holistic approach has left a notable impact on making an alteration in the life of the persons we have worked with, the thing that continued giving us a strong incentive to go on despite all the challenges and difficulties we face.

What makes our intervention a success is the fact that its impact extended to positively affect not only the beneficiary, but also his/her family and the society as a whole. In fact, the change in the life of the individuals positively affects the dynamic of the family, thereby strengthening its role in protecting its members and supporting them. This definitely reflects on the society, strengthens its resiliency and enforces its development.

An example is a 20-year-old young boy who has muscular dystrophy. Providing him with psychological counseling has constituted a turning point in his life. Not only he reached to a point where he accepted himself, faced his challenges, and realized his points of strengths, but also, adapting his house helped him feel self-dependent, and intervening with his family led them to accept his existence. At the vocational level, and upon being subject to vocational assessment, he has become able to realize his inclinations and capabilities and choose the best vocation that suits him.

Working with him in a holistic approach has dramatically changed his life from a person who feels inferiority, who cannot accept himself, and who has fears regarding his future, to a person who has self-confidence and self-acceptance. Furthermore, he has become a sociable person who has friends to support him and who feels that he is equal to the others.

The impact of our intervention was also obvious on his family which has become a source of support for him. Moreover, they accept him and his disability.

His father said: *"Without your presence besides my son, he wouldn't have been able to become what he is now. He is self-dependent and capable to build a future for himself that has hope."*

Another example is a 21-year-old boy with hemiplegia. Upon holistically intervening with him at the psychosocial, vocational, and family levels, besides adapting his house, the beneficiary has changed from a person who has negative feelings towards himself and his surroundings to a different person who accepts himself and his disability, who has a positive perspective towards life and future, and who has hope and objectives in his life. Whereas he used to highly depend on his mother and to be almost always isolated, he came out of this isolation and developed social

relationships with his relatives and neighbours besides becoming a stronger person who can depend on himself.

He said: *“The counseling I received helped me look at the future in a positive aspect. Now I have a goal in life, I accept my disability, and my relationship with people is strong. I go out freely.”*

In the aftermath of working with his family, they have become capable of understanding his needs, interact with him and support him to realize his future dreams.

As a matter of fact, the psychosocial support we have provided to our beneficiaries has constituted the turning point that helped them begin anew in living a life that is full of optimism and hope long after they lived traumatic incidents. What was noticeable as well is that the post traumatic stress disorders have dramatically decreased, and the vast majority of the people we worked with have developed hope towards their future and currently perceive life in a positive way.

What we focused on when working with our beneficiaries - being traumatized or persons with disability- is stabilization to become ready to reach deep inside themselves the accumulated problems and concerns, deal with them, and try to get rid of them and achieve a state of inner peace, thereby becoming ready and willing to change their life to the better and design a plan for their future.

The expressions and feedback we got from our beneficiaries and their families significantly reflect the impact which our intervention has left in their lives.

A 28-year-old beneficiary said: *“You helped me how to be optimistic in life, and I have a big incentive for work. My life has become more organized. I can understand myself more than before and now I am so happy because I can work.”*

Another beneficiary whose leg is amputated said: *“I now know how to think, I feel much more comfortable than before. I am also capable of dealing with people. I know how to talk to my wife and children while controlling myself. I can see the future clearly.”*

A young girl with disability who is 23-year-old used to refuse her disability, used to be nervous, afraid and isolated, and didn't love life expressed that the counseling she received raised her self-confidence leading her to accept her disability, lessen her fears and anxiety, and helped her to reintegrate into society and form friendships.

Another 17-year-old beneficiary who suffers of hemiplegia said that upon intervening with him at the individual level, his life turned upside down. He changed to a person who can look at life in a positive way, thereby developing more positive relationships and willingness to learn and be part of courses that enable him to work in the future.

13303 individual counseling sessions were provided for our beneficiaries all over the districts of the West Bank, and a total of 1031 beneficiaries both females and males from the entire West Bank were served according to the following distribution:

It is worth mentioning that 81.5% of our beneficiaries were between 12 and 25 years of age and 72.2% were villagers.

Area	Gender		Age Group				Location		
	Male	Female	0-11	12-18	19-25	< 26	Town	Village	Camp
Hebron	234	56	35	139	90	26	58	194	38
Ramallah	143	13	10	90	49	7	22	113	21
Jenin and Tubas	74	31	9	53	25	18	10	90	5
Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho	163	18	10	129	25	17	26	142	13
Tulkarem and Qualquilia	94	16	8	47	40	15	18	83	9
Nablus and Salfet	150	39	17	87	66	19	32	128	29
Total	858	173	89	545	295	102	166	750	115
Percentage	83.2%	16.8%	8.6%	52.9%	28.6%	9.9%	16.1%	72.7%	11.2%

Furthermore, 548 group sessions were provided for 572 persons with disability, ex-detainees children, mothers of persons with disability and mothers of ex-detainees.

In fact, the scales we have developed have significantly facilitated the process of analyzing the results of our work with the beneficiaries. Using these scales at the beginning as well as at the end of the relationship with the beneficiaries has enabled us to effectively check up, follow up and evaluate the extent of how professional, scientific, and successful our intervention was.



Using The (IES-R) scale (Impact of Event Scale- Revised) which helps in being acquainted with the level of PTSDs symptoms and measures three important dimensions for the traumatic incidents to which the beneficiary is exposed namely: avoidance, intrusion, and the physical reactions showed that upon intervening with the beneficiaries, the severity of these symptoms have dramatically decreased.

In the same context, using the scale of (quality of life), it has become obvious that as a result of the intervention with the beneficiaries, they have developed positive approaches towards life.

In fact, through the (quality of life) scale, the beneficiary is not only introduced to his/her perspective towards life in relation to the traumatic experiences to which he/she was exposed, but also it measures two dimensions; the positive perspective towards life and the future (optimism), and the negative perspective towards life and the future (pessimism).

Using the (self-esteem) scale -which measures the self-esteem of the beneficiary and the influence of the incidents to which he/she was exposed on his/her level of self-esteem- showed that the self-esteem of the beneficiaries we worked with has increased in the aftermath of the intervention with them. It ought to be mentioned here that in this scale, the high self-esteem means that the individual considers him/herself of value and importance, whereas the low self-esteem indicates a self-rejection and feeling of inferiority.

An apparent decrease in the psychological symptoms from which the beneficiaries suffer was showed through the (general health questionnaire) scale which indicates the psychological symptoms from which the beneficiary suffers as a result of being exposed to the traumatic incidents. This scale includes psychometric symptoms, depression, aggressive behaviors and withdrawal.

A significant difference was registered between the beneficiaries' ability to cope with life before and after the intervention, wherein they have become capable of coping with their life despite the difficulties they face.

This positive change was clearly measured by means of the (coping in life) which measures the level of the ability and energy of the individual to cope with and confront the difficulties in his/her life. This is besides measuring the aspects of coping and how the individual can deal with the difficulties at the individual, family and/or community levels, and how he/she can be assisted to cope with the stressing circumstances to which he/she is exposed.

Of significance during the year 2013 was the change in the attitude of our beneficiaries, particularly those with whom we have used the EMDR (Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) methodology. In fact, these beneficiaries have ended up the intervention with a clear vision towards their future.

Furthermore, we can see the change which our work is creating in the lives of people. We can see hope replacing the extreme hopeless attitudes they came with, we can see the confusion converted into clear vision and solid plans for life. In short, we can see hope and dreams for a better future as a fruit of our work.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

Over the year 2013, the service of vocational rehabilitation was provided to the needy beneficiaries of the Program including persons with disability as well as ex-detainees children and youth who upon being released from Israeli prisons- came out different, unstable, frustrated and hopeless persons who are in need of help to allocate new plans for their future.

In order to receive the vital service of vocational assessment, 345 beneficiaries were referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Program during the year 2013.

As a result of receiving career counseling, 345 beneficiaries were assisted to set a vocational goal through bridging any possible gap amongst their abilities, interests and the job market in the local community. This was followed by cooperation and coordination with different local vocational training centers, organizations, workshops and factories in the purpose of helping these beneficiaries find suitable vocational training opportunities, thereby enabling them to obtain the needed skills and be prepared to join the job market.



This reporting period has witnessed the facilitation of vocational training for 69 beneficiaries and the employment of 19 beneficiaries, thereby constituting a turning point in their lives and leading them to live a decent life.

In the same context, 16 self-employment projects were carried out for the beneficiaries, thereby contributing to enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem and enabling them to become self-dependent, productive individuals who can earn their living and live a stable life after being exposed to different types of suffering as a result of disability, detention or/and being exposed to political violence.



The following table illustrates the self-employment projects carried out for the beneficiaries over the reporting period:

Type of self-employment projects	Number of projects
Grocery	4
House appliances	2
Maintenance of bicycles	1
Maintenance of computers	1
Maintenance of mobile phones	1
Raising a cow	1
Raising sheep	2
Dresses shop	1
Stationary shop	1
Fridge to sell frozen food	1
Barbering Saloon	1
Total	16

Academic Rehabilitation:

Being a person with disability never means that success is an unreachable dream. Receiving the service of academic rehabilitation led many persons with disability to obtain their right to learning. As a result, not only the negative perception of the community towards these marginalized people changed, but also, these young boys and girls were given the chance to improve their psychological status.

Providing this service to an 18-year-old student helped her improve the level of her educational achievement, thereby increasing her self-confidence and enabling her to compete with her colleagues and allocate plans for her future.

During the year 2013, 66 beneficiaries (35 males and 31 females) in the aftermath of receiving the vital service of academic rehabilitation were able to overcome the difficulties and impediments they face.

The following table sheds more light on this service:

Type of Service	Beneficiaries	
	Male	Female
Transportation to and from school	13	16
Transportation to and from university	-	3
Remedial education courses	11	5
Remedial education courses + Transportation	1	-
Illiteracy eradication lessons	-	1
Illiteracy eradication lessons + Transportation	3	2
School fees	5	3
Secretary course	1	1
University fees	1	-
Total	35	31
Total Grand	66	

Objective 2: Enhance the beneficiaries' physical and economic independency.

Adaptations:

As a matter of fact, the complementary services such as adaptations came as a fundamental part to make the rehabilitation process a success. Despite the fact that through counseling, the beneficiary becomes ready to approach life in a positive way. However, the environmental obstacles constitute a big challenge. In so many cases, the inaccessibility of the bathroom, the entrance of the house or/and the school impeded the rehabilitation process and delayed the beneficiary from coming out of the state of isolation and from realizing an achievement at the psychological level.

The entrance of the house was adapted to enable a 14-year-old young girl with disability to come out of her house which is in the second floor, has contributed to changing her life as she said: *"I'm very happy because I can come down of my house anytime. You comforted me so much; my self-*

confidence is very big since I can depend on myself when I want to go to school and come from it instead of waiting for my father in the street.”

Her father said: “My daughter changed a lot; I feel that she’s much happier than before.”, and her mother added: “You are the only organization that helped my daughter... Thank you.”



Another 17-year-old boy who has paraplegia expressed the positive alteration in his life upon adapting his house by saying:

“I have undergone very difficult psychosocial circumstances; I used to feel isolated and lonely and I refused to live with my disability and suffered many difficulties and stresses. I also had worries about my future. Amongst the strongest obstacles which constituted a challenge for me was the nature of the house I live in which consists of two floors and has stairs which I couldn’t use without the help of the others. I used to totally depend on my family. Now, I depend on myself and I live my life in a normal way. I go to school and can find the adequate atmosphere to study. I also have friends with whom I spend good times. I also take part in different social occasions. Now, I don’t need the help of others; I’m self-dependent. I have formed my personality and I plan to succeed and go to university to study in the sphere of computers.”

In fact, providing persons with disability with such a vital service constitutes one of the fundamental factors in the rehabilitation process which contributes to increasing their level of self-esteem besides leading them to a point where they become self-dependent persons who have the willingness to reintegrate into society.

The following table sheds light on the adaptations that took place during the year 2013:

Type of Adaptation	Number of Adaptations	
	Male	Female
Adapting a bathroom	9	8
Adapting a bedroom	1	2
Adapting bedroom + Bathroom	3	0
Handrail	3	0
Ramp + Handrail	2	0
Ramp	3	3
Iron Ramp	2	0
Iron ramp + Handrail	1	0
Bathroom + Ramp	4	2
Handrail + Bathroom bar	0	1
Ramp + Bathroom bar	0	1
Ramp + Handrail + Bathroom	1	0
Adapting the entrance of the house	0	1
Adapting the entrance of the house + Handrail	0	1
Adapting the entrance of the house + Ramp	1	0
Total	30	19
Grand Total	49	

Furthermore, and during the reporting period, eight schools were adapted, thereby giving the opportunity for students with disability to be enrolled into academic life.

Name of School	District
Kraiseh School	Hebron
Talitha Kumi School	Bethlehem
A'sireh Al-Shamalieh Secondary School for boys	Nablus
Salfeet Primary School for boys	Nablus
Hares School for boys	Nablus
Samir Abdel Hadi School	Nablus
Kofor Sour School	Tulkarem
A'llar School for boys	Tulkarem

Medical urgent assistive aids:

During the reporting period, 89 beneficiaries, both females and males received the vital service of urgent medical and assistive aids according to the following table:

Type of Service	Beneficiaries	
	Male	Female
Medical apparatus	22	7
Walker	1	1
Artificial limb	-	4
Medical girdles	-	1
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	-	2
Physiotherapy sessions	6	4
Physiotherapy sessions + Transportation	2	-
Medication	1	3
Transportation to clinic	1	2
Air mattress	2	-
Air mattress + motor	1	1
Medical mattress	3	-
Bath seat	-	1
Bathroom bars	2	1
Crutches	1	-
Wheelchair	3	1
Batteries + charger for a wheelchair	1	-
Charger for an electronic wheelchair	1	-
Wheelchair for the shower	-	1
Renting a wheelchair	2	-
Medical boot	6	3
Medical boot + insoles	1	1
Total	56	33
Grand Total	89	

As a matter of fact, rendering such a complementary service to persons with disability is of much significance. In so many cases, the goals of our intervention cannot be achieved without meeting the various and basic needs of the beneficiaries.

A 24-year-old girl with disability was in need for a medical apparatus to help her walk. For continuous years, and due to her family's difficult financial situation who could not afford buying it, her movement was so limited and difficult thereby leading her to live a life of isolation and depriving her of being integrated into society.

Making this apparatus available, the young girl could go out of home. Consequently, she was enrolled into a training centre to study administration, and later, she volunteered in a charitable society.

She said: "I'm now proud because I serve children. I feel that I'm productive. I have hope and willingness to improve my situation."

In some cases, being provided with a medical assistive aid, the beneficiaries' pain and suffering were lessened. This was the case with a young boy who suffered continuous pains due to having inflammations and bedsores in his body as a result of being stuck to bed. Upon securing a medical mattress for him, not only his pain was lessened, but also, he could live his life in a more comfortable way.

Objective 3: Promote the supportive role of the families and communities towards their affected members.

There's no doubt that working with families of our beneficiaries contributes to helping them accept the situation of their sons and daughters, besides maintaining the goals on which we are working through guaranteeing their support for them. This is in addition to helping them lessen their own stresses, difficulties and negative feelings which developed in the aftermath of the difficulties they undergo due to different reasons such as worrying about their children in the prisons, besides seeing their role diminishing in front of the Israeli soldiers who take their children from their houses, handcuffed in front of them, and being unable to stop them and protect their children.

During the reporting period, we have worked with the families of our beneficiaries as a unit and/or individually since different needs aroused particularly for mothers. We have also worked with groups of parents.

Such an intervention has left a significant impact on the success of our work. This is true due to the fact that working with children cannot be completed without working with the family, and when parents do not understand the changes that occur on their children and refuse the symptoms they suffer from and lack the knowledge of how to deal with them; bigger problems are created at the individual level of the beneficiary.

The extent of the success of our intervention with them was reflected in their words when assessing this intervention.

Long after holding negative feelings towards their son and upon believing that he is a "disabled" persons who has no future, the father of a 16-year-old boy with disability said: *“For the first time, we see our son in a situation that enables him to work, and for the first time we can see what he likes and what he dislikes, and for the first time, we see him happy. We now know how much it is important to support him and prepare for his future.”*



A mother of an ex-detainee said: *“I can deal with my son in a better way than I used to, and he also changed and is now taking care of his studies.”*

Another mother who was part of a group of parents said: *“I’m so happy in the group; I feel as if I was loosing something and finally found it. I also felt that the group is my family that gave me the support and comfort in expressing myself, the thing that was reflected on my family and children in a positive way. I have really become less nervous and can better interact with my family.”*

At the community level, a series of meetings were held with organizations working in the sphere of disability and rehabilitation as well as human rights organizations and organizations of the local community of which the outcomes are illustrated under (objective 5) of this report.

Advocacy Work:

The year 2013 has witnessed a series of changes in the sphere of advocacy work which aimed at organizing the work in this field and achieving a progress in the mechanisms of planning, execution, evaluation and documentation in the purpose of ultimately achieving better results at the legal, environmental and social levels for persons with disability. Of the changes which took place in this regard, the following are to be highlighted:

- An advocacy team was established representing all the teams of the Rehabilitation Program. Each member in this team (who is one of the Program’s employees) is the reference for the work in this sphere in his/her area. Furthermore, this member contributes to coordinating the work in the field of advocacy, collecting data, planning and evaluating the advocacy-related activities and campaigns.
- A training course in the concepts of diversity was held for the counselors and supervisors of the Rehabilitation Program. Besides contributing to enhancing the right-based approach in dealing with the issues of persons with disability, the training apparently affected the personal points of views of the trainees in a positive way.
- The first draft of the disability-equality policy was prepared constituting a fundamental step for the developmental and legal treatment of the disability issues at the philosophic and procedural levels.

Community Activities and Raising Community Awareness:

The awareness activities which were carried out with parents of persons with disability came out with the following outcomes:

- Giving parents of persons with disability the opportunity to exchange experiences, thereby contributing to raising the level of accepting their sons and daughters as well as improving the means of interacting with them without neglecting or over-protecting them.
- Increase in the number of persons with disability who benefit of the services of the Rehabilitation Program, particularly the service of vocational assessment.
- Mobilizing a big number of parents who do not have children with disability to become advocates for the rights of persons with disability and more understanding to their needs to access these rights, particularly the right to collective education.
- An increase in the number of parents of persons with disability who acquired knowledge in the Palestinian law of disability as well as in the advocacy mechanisms to activate the law and benefit from it.



In the same context, the awareness activities which were held with the organizations of the civil society led to the following outcomes:

- Forming a local committee to communicate with the decision-makers and enhance them to implement the Palestinian law of disability number 4.1999 in Dura village / Hebron.
- Positively influencing the approaches of representatives of the civil society organizations regarding the mechanisms of dealing with persons with disability and their issues in a way that serves the holistic reintegration and the effective participation instead of isolation and closed opportunities.

Awareness activities for the private sector organizations:

Within the project of “Social and economic inclusion of people with disability in the West Bank” and in coordination with the chambers of commerce in different districts of the West Bank, three workshops were organized and carried out in Bethlehem, Nablus and Tulkarem. The organizing process included collecting data regarding the institutions of the private sector and paying visits to these institutions to enhance them to participate as well as to reconsider their role in relation to the rights of persons with disability to the decent work.



The workshops aimed at:

- Putting the base for the diversity culture which is the spirit of the right-based approach in dealing with the issues of disability.
- Encouraging the institutions of the private sector to employ persons with disability within this approach.
- Providing practical suggestions regarding the techniques and requirements of the suitable work for persons with disability.
- Supporting the establishment of an institutional and professional structure that regulates the process of achieving the right to suitable work for persons with disability in the private sector.

The workshops, which targeted 49 organizations (15 in Bethlehem district, 12 in Nablus district and 22 in Tulkarem district) achieved the following outcomes:

- A significant change took place in the language used by the participants.
- Many companies and organizations expressed their willingness to develop their cadres at the approach level as well as to adapt their environment to employ persons with disability.
- Signing five MOUs between the Rehabilitation Program and the private sector companies in Tulkarem district. These MOUs will contribute to facilitating the access of persons with disability to the right to decent work-just like other citizens-within clear and specific roles and responsibilities.
- Many organizations and companies expressed their willingness to revise the draft MOUs and communicate with the Program to sign them in the near future.
- Printing and distributing 4000 posters regarding encouraging the business owners to encourage persons with disability within collective and accepting working environments that invest in the capacities and capabilities and do not discriminate on the basis of disability.

Database for the advocacy process:

There's no doubt that advocacy and lobbying campaigns which are built on a clear and accurate database are more apt to success when compared to the campaigns which are not based on data that reflect the reality of an issue in the field.

This is true due to the fact that the data assist not only in the planning and objectives-allocating process, but also in designing the letters, the indicators, and the expected results. This is besides being used as a proof of the significance and seriousness of the advocated issue.

Therefore, and based on the above, the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program seeks to enhance the data-collection culture prior to building the campaigns and designing letters and/or approaching media and so forth of the advocacy means and mechanisms.

Amongst the accomplishments in this sphere, light is to be shed on the following:

- Designing and preparing a booklet regarding the language that ought to be adapted when interacting with or talking to persons with disability. This is due to the fact that the adequate language and means of communication which are non-discriminatory and not based on false assumptions and prejudice are certainly one of the bases that enhance a positive interaction

between persons with disability and persons without disability. This is besides leading the society towards a collective culture which maintains the dignity of persons with disability and deals with them as part of the natural human diversity. This booklet is perceived as a very essential step forward to fighting prejudice, unifying concepts, and developing a national understanding of these concepts and terminologies, especially that this booklet was produced in a collective manner through community workshops and in a participatory approach.

- Within the framework of the Program's attempts in changing the reality of employing persons with disability either in the governmental organizations or in the private sector organizations, Jenin team has researched about the number of persons with disability who are employed at the directorates of the Ministries of Education and the Social Affairs.
- In the same context, Hebron team has conducted a field survey for twenty employing organizations by means of designing and distributing a special questionnaire for this purpose. It is worth to be mentioned that coordination with the chamber of commerce and industry and the factories owners was held prior to filling the questionnaire.

Furthermore, following are other community activities that were carried out in the local communities of the West Bank amongst which are the following:

- Drawing on the walls in Jenin, Quabatia, and Nablus which aimed at raising the community awareness regarding the rights of persons with disability as per the law.
- Carrying out a series of workshops for mothers of persons with disability which resulted of raising the awareness of mothers regarding the rights of their sons and daughters who have disabilities as well as opening their eyes with respect to the law, and raising their level of acceptance for the members of the families who have disabilities, besides ventilating the existence of persons with disability in the family.
- Carrying out workshops with members of the chamber of commerce amongst the outcomes of which was signing memorandums of understandings (MOUs) and agreements to employ persons with disability in some factories.
- Carrying out a series of workshops, activities and meetings of which the outcome was introducing the local community to the law of disability as well as the advocacy skills based on the legal approach. This is in addition to raising the awareness level of the youth and providing them with skills and data about disability and how to deal with it. Furthermore, the awareness of university students was raised regarding the rights of persons with disability and the best ways to deal with them with dignity, as well as changing their approaches towards the issue of disability and the rights of persons with disability. In the same context, advocacy and stressing groups were formed at schools to advocate for the issue of disability and implement the laws of disability, particularly the laws related to adapting the classroom to be accessible for person with disability.
- As a result of carrying out sit-ins in several locations in the West Bank to advocate for the issue of persons with disability and their right to employment, many representatives from the government at the national level visited the location of the sit-ins and expressed their support for the rights of persons with disability and promised to follow up the set-forth issues with the parties concerned.
- An awareness activity was held with school students in Kasra village in Nablus district. Besides raising the awareness of students regarding the concept of disability, its types, means of prevention, and how to deal with cases who have disabilities. This activity was an eye-opening for these students with respect to the rights of persons with disability, particularly the right to be integrated into school and community without discrimination.

Working with the Palestinian Governmental Organizations:

Over the year 2013, a series of meetings were held with different governmental organizations including the Directorates of the Ministries of Labor, Social Affairs, Health, Media, and Education, the Governorates and the Municipalities.

Amongst the outcomes of these meetings, the most significant ones are highlighted hereunder:

- Amending the checklist of the Ministry of Labour used in the inspecting process.
- Highlighting the most important issues which represent a priority to be tackled in order to improve the reality of accessing health services for persons with disability.
- The acceptance of the Minister of Health to follow up the situation of accessibility of the health centers and buildings to be licensed and registered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
- The Minister of Health promised to check the possibility of enlarging the circle of persons with disability who benefit of the free-of-charge governmental health insurance by means of decreasing the specified ratio which constitutes a condition for benefiting of the health insurance.
- Securing some medicines for some patients who have disabilities.
- Formulating a memorandum of understanding between the East Jerusalem YMCA, the General Palestinian Union of Persons with Disability, the Teacher's Creativity Center and the Ministry of Media to regulate the cooperation process between the partner organizations to ultimately improve the reality of tackling the issues and rights of persons with disability through media.
- Opening a discussion panel with the General Administration of the Vocational Training to contribute to creating equal vocational training opportunities which are more sensitive to the needs and benefits of persons with disability.
- Positively influencing the plans of the Ministry of Education (the collective education department) to be more sensitive to all types of disability.
- Taking a commitment from the Municipality of Hebron to monitor and follow up the issue of the accessibility of the buildings, particularly in Izna and Kharas villages.
- Making an agreement with Jenin Municipality to install signs and specify special parking lots for persons with disability in the district.
- Gaining the support of a number of governors regarding the issues and rights of persons with disability. This is besides their facilitation to the work of the coordinative committees in various occasions, particularly in the districts of Hebron, Tulkarem and Nablus.
- Succeeding in returning school students to schools in Hebron district.
- Activating the file related to the accredited reference of the type and degree of disability at the Ministry of Health.
- Making an agreement with the labor office/vocational training in Jenin district to manage the distribution process of a number of persons with disability to different vocational training options.



Working with schools, universities, vocational centres and factories:

A series of meetings were held and awareness activities were carried out targeting different institutional organizations all over the West Bank in the purpose of achieving the following goals:

- Raising awareness regarding the issues and rights of persons with disability and calling for their access to the right to higher education and advocating them to obtain educational grants.
- Giving a safe opportunity for children with disability and children without disability to interact.
- Forming friendship committees inside schools to support students with disability.
- Raising the level of awareness amongst students without disability and educational cadres regarding the mechanisms of positive and adequate interaction with persons with disability.
- Mobilizing as much as possible of the community members to advocate and support the rights and issues of persons with disability.

The activities targeted 961 participants (50 of whom are persons with disability) encompassing university students, particularly students of social service, media, law and education, educational bodies, school students and teachers, students' leaders, principals, as well as teachers and supervisors of the collective education, and came out with the following outcomes:

- Submitting recommendations to Hebron University and Al-Quds Open University to make the buildings and educational means accessible for persons with disability.
- Forming twelve friendship committees to support students with disability in twelve different schools in the West Bank.
- Enabling the educational cadres to efficiently use the mechanisms of advocating the issues of students with disability.
- Including new concepts closer to the right-based approach in dealing with the issues of disability.
- Printing 4000 awareness-raising brochures in one of the village councils in Hebron district tackling the rights of persons with disability and the relevant available services.

Amongst the outcomes of the meetings which were held with the vocational centres, the following are to be highlighted:

- Raising the awareness of the owners of the factories and vocational centers regarding the rights of persons with disability.
- Agreeing upon opening new branches to carry out vocational training courses for persons with disability wherein they can obtain vocational training that coincides with their capabilities.

Media:

At the central level, and during the second half of the year, a media network was established to advocate the sector of disability as well as to invest the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disability to lobby the most popular media institutions in Palestine. The network has already allocated a work plan. As a result, a series of T.V and radio sessions were transmitted mostly tackling the subjects of the right to collective education, the right to accessing health services, and the right to the complete participation in the labor market.

Amongst the outcomes, which were achieved during the year 2013, the following are to be highlighted:

- Establishing a base-that is considered the first of its type at the regional level- which can be invested to develop the mechanisms and philosophy of how the media deals with the rights and issues of persons with disability based on the right-based approach.
- Building partnerships with some national media organizations and opening new important horizons for cooperation and influence.
- Making a change in the interventions of the Ministry of Media with respect to its role towards the issues and rights of persons with disability.
- Opening future horizons to change the means through which persons with disability and their organizations approach media.



At the districts' level, a number of activities were held targeting the various media means. These included:

- A series of T.V. and Radio meetings were held and reportages were published in the written media as well as in the social media in the purpose of classifying the role of the youth groups in advocacy in addition to activating the role of media in tackling the issue of disability based on the right-based approach.
- A radio session was registered at Al-Nawras Radio Station to discuss the issue of the rights of persons with disability. The aim was to raise the community awareness regarding this issue by means of the local media.
- Distinguished media materials were produced tackling the issue of employment, right to health and securing health services for persons with disability. Being transmitted in the local T.V. and Radio stations as well as on the social media sites, these materials contributed to raising the community and government awareness regarding the rights of persons with disability.
- A press release in Al-Quds newspaper tackling an issue of one the Program's beneficiaries which was addressed to the President of Palestine and the Prime Minister.
- A series of radio sessions which aimed at promoting the activities of the International Day of Persons with Disability.
- A series of radio sessions highlighting the rights of persons with disability.
- Media spots that were transmitted in different radio stations in the purpose of enhancing the interaction with the activities of the International Day of Persons with Disability.
- Radio sessions regarding labor and health which targeted the Ministries of Labor and Health.

The above-mentioned activities contributed to achieving the following:

- Moving the decision-makers and influencing their stands towards some individual utmost cases as well as towards some general issues such as employment in the governmental sector and accessing the health services and higher education within collective environments in the Palestinian universities, amongst other issues.
- A noticeable increase in the media programs which tackle the issues and rights of persons with disability.

Cooperation with the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability:

Based on its belief that the movement of persons with disability is a movement of which the strength is in the existence of a strong union whose capacities are well-built, the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program is extending every effort possible to support the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability and maintain it.

During the reporting period, a series of meetings were held with all the branches of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability in the West Bank. Amongst the outcomes of these meetings, the following ought to be highlighted:



- An increase in the number of persons with disability who are members in the Union and an increase in their awareness regarding their rights.
- The participation of the administrations of the branches of the Union in attending and leading the meetings and coordinating the efforts in the purpose of increasing the level of cooperation to carry out field activities.
- Carrying out workshops with the local governance in different districts of the West Bank which targeted the local community and persons with disability and resulted of an increase in the awareness of the participants regarding adaptation and its importance when issuing the building licenses.
- Preparing for the visit of the Ministers of Health and Social Affairs to Nablus district to distribute wheelchairs and assistive aids for persons with disability in the district wherein the East Jerusalem YMCA – in participation with the Union as well as the coordinative committees-submitted a list of requests including the health insurance and securing medicines and medical needs, assigning a doctor within the medical committees and amending the governmental health centers and clinics to be accessible for persons with disability. As a result, the Minister promised to follow up these issues and find solutions for them.

It has become obvious that the existence of the advocacy coordinator contributed to raising the voice of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability by means of representing them in numerous meetings and activities amongst which are the following:

- Representing the Union in a workshop that encompassed members of the National Committee for Employing Women, which was held in the aim of discussing its strategic plan, priorities, and challenges. One of the outcomes of this workshop was pressing towards including programs which take into consideration employing women in general and women with disability in particular, besides guaranteeing their involvement in the strategic plan and the adaptation of this plan by the relevant ministries, particularly the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- Representing the Union in a meeting with the Swedish Organization for Individual Relief in the purpose of discussing the advocacy campaign which will be launched in a two-year period. As a result, the role which the Union played in this regard was significant through joining the technical committee of the campaign and efficiently participating in its meetings.

- In participation with a group of persons with disability, a number of notes were put on the amended civil service law to make it more sensible for the issues related to employing persons with disability in the governmental sector. The notes were submitted to the Minister of Social Affairs.
- Representing the Union in a meeting that was held with the Palestinian Employment Fund in participation with persons with disability from Ramallah district. The meeting, which aimed at discussing the potentials of benefiting of the programs of this fund, achieved positive results amongst which was emphasizing the importance of having 5% of the beneficiaries of the fund's program to be persons with disability. Furthermore, two projects were then prepared in partnership with the Union in the aim of finding training and job opportunities for persons with disability in Ramallah district and strengthening the partnership between the Union and the Fund by means of the contribution of representatives from the Union in formulating the strategic plan of the Fund.
- Representing the Union in the meeting of the National Committee of the Social Protection Sector which was held in the aim of discussing the strategic plan of the sector for the years 2014-2016. As a result, the membership of the Union in this committee was activated.
- Representing the Union in the meetings of the technical committee of the collective education.
- Representing the Union in a workshop that was held by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Jordan. One of the outcomes of this workshop was gaining the support of the (ILO) for the recommendations of the Union as well as the YMCA Rehabilitation Program related to including the issues of disability in the inspecting samples as well as the recommendations related to the Palestinian law of disability.
- Representing the Union in a conference which was held in Lebanon in the aim of developing the disability movement at the regional level through seeking to establish an Arabic Office for the (ILO) for persons with disability. Amongst the outcomes of this participation- in which the director of the Program took part- was the obtaining of sufficient voices to consider the Union a representative of Palestine in the Arabic office of the (ILO) represented by the advocacy coordinator of the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program.

Celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disability:

The last four months of the year 2013 have witnessed a series of meetings with the coordinative committees, the networks and the various relevant bodies in the purpose of allocating plans, distributing roles, and specifying activities to be carried out on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disability.

At the central level and as previously mentioned, the focus was on investing in a media network to advocate the sector of disability and prepare for a media campaign regarding issues and topics taken from the outputs and recommendations of the national conference "Our second step towards the effective participation and non-discrimination" which was held within the project of " Empowering Disabled Young People to Access their Rights in the West Bank". The conference, which was held in Ramallah during the month of May, was under the auspices of the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disability and was prepared and executed in cooperation with the Palestinian General Union of Person with Disability and the Teacher's Creativity Centre.

<http://ej-ymca.org/rehab/reports/2013/disability-conference.pdf>

The campaign included the following:

- Preparing the issues and requests which are intended to be activated at the media level.
- Preparing a file to be used in the field visits of the media organizations including the issues and requests as well as instructions regarding how to deal with disability from a media and right-based point of view.
- Specifying the most popular media organizations.
- Holding a press-release to promote the campaign.
- Holding an honoring and assessment meeting.

Amongst the outcomes of the campaign, light is to be shed on the following:

- Succeeding to attract new media organizations and enhancing their role in advocating the issues and rights of persons with disability.
- A significant change occurred on the language which some journalists use when talking about the issues of persons with disability.
- A prompt and tangible change was noticed in the stands of some governmental parties. An example was the employment of a person with disability in the Ministry of Education upon being refused to get this position over ten continuous years.

In Hebron district, an activity was carried out targeting the decision-makers in the aim of raising the voice of persons with disability and asking for their rights. Furthermore, a workshop tackling the concept and samples of disability as well as an introduction in the mechanisms of advocacy and lobbying was held targeting 300 attendees representing some NGOs, teachers and students of Hebron University.

In Ramallah district, a workshop was held in Al-Quds Open University in the aim of advocating the rights of persons with disability in general and particularly their rights to accessing the higher education services just like the other Palestinian citizens. 150 persons attended the workshop.

In Tulkarem district, a discussion session was held between persons with disability and the parties who represented them including NGOs and GOs. The aim was to ask for the commitment to the Palestinian law of disability. Moreover, radio spots were transmitted to attract the public opinion regarding persons with disability and their issues.

In Jenin and Tubas, two activities were held in the purpose of raising awareness and lobbying towards the commitment to the Palestinian law of disability. Furthermore, an honoring activity was carried out for 60 persons with disability who are employed in some governmental organizations in Jenin and Quabatia. The message behind the activity was that equal opportunities in employment contribute to investing in the capacities of persons with disability and transferring them from consumers to productive citizens. As a result of this activity, two persons with disability were employed.

In Nablus district, a workshop targeting governmental organizations and local bodies was held to particularly tackle the issue of accessibility, its importance, and the challenges that result of its absence.

Objective 4: Upgrade the skills of the Palestinian social workers and counselors.

During the year 2013, the Training Unit of the Program carried out a series of training courses at the internal and external levels in the purpose of building the capacities of the social workers as well as those who are working in the sphere of mental health, psychosocial support, and rehabilitation in the governmental and the non-governmental organizations as well as the organizations of the local community.

At the external level:

371 trainees received training in a variety of topics including the concept of disability and the local and international laws of disability, the comprehensive reintegration of persons with disability, communication and the concept of advocacy, protection and inclusion for persons with disability, the Palestinian laws related to persons with disability and the concept of disability, the reality of women with disability and means of supporting them, how to influence decision-makers based on experience, communication skills and advocacy,



discussion management skills and being acquainted with the framework of the strategic work of disability in Palestine, skills of communicating with the civil society organizations, working with children using the butterfly hug approach, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (ISAC), the concept of disability and how to deal with persons with disability, and intervention with groups.

The training which was held for the principals of the governmental schools in the concept of disability and the local and international laws of disability, particularly in right to learning aimed at raising their awareness regarding these laws so that they become able to be supportive for persons with disability. As a result, the participants gained a deeper knowledge about the concept of disability and the laws related to the right to learning for persons with disability and are expected to contribute to lessening the impediments that face the students with disability in learning.

In the purpose of raising their awareness as well as their cognitive and practical capacities regarding the concept of disability and the impediments of reintegration into the school environment, teachers from different governmental schools from all over the districts of the West Bank received a training course entitled “the comprehensive reintegration of persons with disability.”

It is expected that as a result, these teachers will contribute to lessening the impediments that prohibit the reintegration of persons with disability in the educational environment. This is in addition to amending the negative approaches towards this sector in the Palestinian community.

Obtaining new skills in the concept of disability for the sake of implementing the local laws of disability was amongst the outcomes of the training workshop that was held for persons with disability including the youth groups.

The training course which was held in the aim of providing the workers at the Palestinian Ministry of Labour the needed knowledge about the concept of disability and inclusion in the work place is

expected to contribute to protecting persons with disability of being manipulated as well as securing an adequate working environment for them.

In the purpose of raising awareness of the directors and employees of the local councils and the municipality in Ramallah district regarding the concept of disability and the Palestinian Law of Disability, a training course was organized. Upon receiving this training, these employees who are in direct contact with the members of the community, are expected to become more aware of the needs of persons with disability and more supportive for them.

Obtaining effective skills in advocacy- particularly in influencing the decision-makers based on experience- was one of the most apparent outcomes of a two-day training course that was held for the youth groups. Consequently, these persons with disability are expected to influence the decision-makers in order to maintain their rights and support them.

A training course in communication skills and advocacy contributed to raising the awareness of 52 young persons with disability regarding their rights and the law of disability. Furthermore, they have obtained new skills in communication and managing advocacy campaigns, thereby becoming capable of advocating their issue and asking for their rights.

In the same context, another 24 young persons with disability have obtained new knowledge regarding the strategic national framework of disability in Palestine and how to come out with work approaches from it.

Ten persons with disability from Bethlehem and Hebron districts obtained new skills that help them improve their communication with the civil society in the purpose of including the issues of disability within the policies of these organizations, thereby pressing towards achieving a progress in their role to become supportive for persons with disability and their rights.

Receiving training in butterfly hug approach provided the trainees- who are from the Psychosocial Support Teams in Tulkarem- with the knowledge needed to help children who face difficult and traumatizing experiences in life.

In the purpose of obtaining the know-how of reacting during emergencies, the volunteers and members of different local organizations in the districts of Ramallah, Jenin, Tubas and Jericho were introduced to the ISAC.

Upon receiving a training in "The concept of disability and how to deal with persons with disability", seventeen employees from the UNRWA/ Hebron along with their director and eighteen employees from the UNRWA/Ramallah as well as their director have gained a good knowledge regarding how to deal with persons with disability, besides obtaining preliminary skills in communicating and interacting with them. This will definitely contribute to lessening the impediments which persons with disability face when dealing with the UNRWA staff, thereby facilitating the receipt of the services.

The social workers who received training in "Intervention with groups" have acquired practical knowledge in the sphere of psychosocial intervention with groups, with a focus on youth and adolescents.

At the internal level:

During the first half of the year 2013, a one-day training course was held for four social workers of the Rehabilitation Program tackling the subject of “Facilitation skills and sessions management”. As a result, the trainees acquired advanced skills as facilitators in the conferences.

Moreover, eighteen social workers, counselors and supervisors of the Rehabilitation Program who are using the EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) approach in their intervention with the beneficiaries attended a two-day training course through which they were given the opportunity to develop their practical skills in this sphere by means of reviewing the cases they worked and are working with and setting forth the difficulties they face in dealing with the difficult cases and being acquainted with the skills and knowledge to deal with them. Of significance was the benefit which the trainees achieved particularly knowing how to work with the cases that suffer of severe psychological symptoms, thereby developing their theoretical as well practical knowledge in the EMDR approach to be able to intervene with the cases with a high level of efficiency.



The second half of the year witnessed a concentration on the topic of "Vocational Counseling" wherein 37 social workers, counselors and supervisors of the Program received training which contributed to raising their theoretical knowledge regarding the theories of the vocational counseling, besides unifying the understanding of this concept and creating a mutual language between them regarding this topic. At a broader level, this training has definitely contributed to developing and improving the service of vocational counseling to the beneficiaries of the Rehabilitation Program.

In the purpose of increasing their practical and applied knowledge in advocating for the rights of persons with disability, a training course in advocacy was held for the social workers and counselors of the Program. As a result, the trainees acquired a better knowledge regarding the concept of advocacy and lobbying, thereby enabling them to carry out advocacy and lobbying campaigns for the rights of persons with disability.

Training university students:

Over the year 2013, 62 university students who are studying social work and/or psychology received training and supervision at the Rehabilitation Program.

As a result, the capacities of these students in the sphere of their specialization were developed, this is besides acquiring technical and therapeutic skills and enhancing their experience with professional counseling and intervention mechanisms at the individual and group levels. Moreover, raising the level of self-awareness and developing their professional identity was amongst the outcomes of this training, thereby preparing them to become capable and ready to find adequate job opportunities in the future.

International training:

During the first half of the year 2013, twenty two psychological specialists from Lebanon- who are working in the sphere of mental health with the Lebanese community as well as with the Syrian and Palestinian refugees- received a training course in “EMDR level 1”. The training aimed at providing the trainees with the theoretical knowledge of this approach and its different applications at the global level, besides implementing it while intervening with the beneficiaries.

Another training course in “facilitation skills during EMDR sessions” was held for four professionals from EMDR Lebanon Association. As a result, the trainees obtained advanced skills regarding how to facilitate the working groups in the EMDR sessions.

At the end of the year, the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program provided training in "EMDR level 1" for 28 specialists and a psychiatric who are working in the field of mental health in different parts of the World. The training, which was held in Turkey, succeeded to provide the trainees with the theoretical knowledge in EMDR, thereby enabling them to implement it with the sectors they work with, particularly with the displaced and traumatized. Level two of the training will be conducted in the future.

Within the program of "Change Agents" which is implemented by the World Alliance of the YMCAs which held the theme "Making a Change", two employees of the Rehabilitation Program attended two training courses which were held in Norway and the Czech Republic, respectively. The training, which aimed at networking between the organizations as well as at working to develop global policies to empower youth within the local framework of the YMCAs, contributed to providing the trainees with interaction and networking skills, as well as skills to design campaigns which tackle the reality and needs of the youth all over the globe.



Objective 5: Promote the coordination and cooperation among disability and rehab organizations.

Over the reporting period, a series of meetings were held with organizations working in the sphere of disability and rehabilitation including the networks and the coordinative committees. This is in addition to the human rights organizations as well as the organizations of the local community.

These meetings which were in the form of workshops, conferences, lectures and/or individual meetings came out with the following outcomes:

- Referring cases of persons with disability to the Rehabilitation Program for the sake of receiving counseling and vocational rehabilitation services.

- Allocating specific monthly dates to carry out the meetings of the coordinative committees.
- Allocating work plans to carry out activities supporting the rights of persons with disability and distributing responsibilities between the members who represent the different organizations.
- Activating the participation of the branches of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability to undertake a role in planning, preparing for and leading the field activities, this is in addition to providing different services for persons with disability such as physiotherapy and speech therapy.
- Signing many agreements of cooperation and memorandums of understanding with local private organizations of which the majority encompassed a commitment by these organizations to implement the items of the disability law related to making the public buildings and transportation accessible for persons with disability as well as regarding employing persons with disability as per the law.
- Coordinating the efforts to carry out house adaptations for persons with disability and enhancing the community resources to contribute to part of the costs of these projects.
- Referring a number of cases of injured persons to benefit of the services of the Rehabilitation Program.
- Honoring the organizations which participated in organizing the World Day of Persons with Disability, thereby enhancing these organizations to support the issue of disability and implement the law.
- Signing a memorandum of understanding to organize the work of the “Media Network to Advocate for the Disability Sector”. The MOU -which was signed between the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program, the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability, the Palestinian Ministry of Media, and the Teacher’s Creativity Centre- aimed at organizing a professional institutional partnership to develop the reality of the interaction of the Media organizations as well as the organizations working in the sphere of disability with the issues and rights of persons with disability at the media level. So far, a draft of the bylaws is already accomplished representing a reference in organizing the roles, the membership, and the scope of work of the network.
- Building a partnership with Al-Jibrini food private company to be an ideal inclusive company.
- Activating the role of the labor office in Jenin district regarding the accessibility of persons with disability to employment and vocational training.
- Coordinating with the community service center in Nablus to carry out a number of house adaptations in Nablus.
- Reactivating the Network of the organizations working in disability in Ramallah district.

Difficulties:

As we continue our journey in serving the mostly affected and marginalized people in our community, we realize – year after year – that the road that is full of flowers never leads to success. It is in the midst of the clouds of difficulties that the sun rises to reflect the reigns of challenge, determination and belief in our human mission, our human mission, which we work hard to achieve despite all the challenges and difficulties that impede our way.

Living in a country that is regrettably facing various shapes of instability, oppression and difficulties as a result of the existence of the Israeli occupation, our staff-particularly those who are working in the field-continue to face difficulties in movement especially when they need to reach the remote areas. The siege, the checkpoints, the Apartheid wall, the segregation between areas

alongside the other measures of the occupation constitute a real challenge for them and affect their daily schedules in terms of time and effort.

Some counselors of the Program find it hard to reach out for the beneficiaries in certain remote areas due to the geographical dispersion resulting from the Apartheid Wall, the political instability, and the regular disturbances on the roads. Therefore, efforts are being made regularly to try to facilitate counselors' mobility but unfortunately the problem persists especially in areas needing a permit to access.



A story to tell...

It was a virus in the bone marrow that constituted the turning point in the life of Diya’*...

While the hope was to come out of hospital healed, the regrettable reality was that Diya’ came out a totally different person; a person with permanent physical disability.

Diya’, the 26-year-old strong cheerful young man who was a very sociable person in his community, has become a depressed hopeless person who is stuck to a wheelchair.

Dealing with his sudden disability was the hardest experience he has ever undergone. The support of his caring family and loving wife slightly helped Diya’ to make a step forward towards accepting his “new self”.

However, the real change could not be achieved until a professional intervention took place. Being referred to the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program, a plan to holistically work with Diya’ was allocated. Through the counseling sessions, not only he was given the opportunity to ventilate his negative feelings towards his disability and the situation he is undergoing, but also he reached to a point where he accepts himself as he is. Besides providing him with medical help, his house was adapted to facilitate his movement, and a self-employment project was carried out for Diya’ thereby enabling him to be a self-dependent person who is responsible of his parents and wife.

Long after he held to the belief that upon becoming a person with disability, his life has reached to a dead-end, Diya’ is now looking at life with optimism and hope.

He is now waiting for his new first baby to come to this life where he will live with him/her a life of dignity.

** Real name and details of the beneficiary are reserved at the documents of the Program.*

Separate Projects:

Psychosocial Support Emergency Teams in the West Bank Project:

Through the “Psychosocial Support Emergency Teams in the West Bank” project, which was initiated in 2003, the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program coordinates the response of psychosocial support across the West Bank and East Jerusalem through 11 psychosocial support teams covering 11 districts: Jenin, Tulkarem, Qualquilia, Nablus, Salfeet, Ramallah, East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Tubas and Jericho. Each of the 11 teams consists of around 25 professionals coming from the team organizations providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in the West Bank

Wherein the first half of the year 2013 was considered as a transitional stage between two project periods, the second half constituted a major period for the implementation of the project activities. The teams started to establish the new groups of children and caregivers to provide them with counseling and other services. They also conducted most of the planned trainings for the teams, the CBOs, and the clusters, besides responding to the ongoing emergency incidents which occurred during the same period.

Activities were conducted as follows:

- **Emergency response:**

The Psychosocial Support Teams were immediately mobilized in response to political and social emergencies, particularly when children are victimized. During the year 2013, the teams responded to a total of 453 emergency cases, affecting more than 3968 children (2154 Males, 1814 Females) and 2839 caregivers (1472 Males, 1367 Females). Interventions were also focused on reaching the most vulnerable, distant and neglected areas. Despite difficulties in reaching those areas, the teams worked hard to ensure the rapid and efficient response.



Counselors held needs assessments at the affected areas based on which they set intervention plans. Affected girls, boys, mothers, fathers and family members were helped to ventilate, express their feelings and talk about the incident. In addition, initial psychosocial support was provided.

Intervention plans were developed based on the needs assessed. Group counseling sessions for girls and boys, recreational activities and caregivers’ sensitization sessions were offered accordingly. Additionally, 290 cases in need for in-depth counseling or other services were referred based on their needs, and this included disability, financial and legal aid, academic and vocational reintegration, medical aid and rehabilitation.

- **Children group counseling sessions:**

More than 2647 (1469 girls and 1178 boys) in the West Bank who are survivals of political and social violence were offered group counseling sessions. The sessions helped children decrease

stress level, reduce anxiety, build self-confidence and ventilate and express their feelings. The sessions are also designed to reinforce their resilience and coping mechanisms which empower and enable them to cope with their difficulties. A total of 1321 sessions were offered; each group of 15 children received around 7 counseling sessions.

- **Recreational (fun days) activities and trips:**

119 recreational activities covering a total of 7955 children were held at areas of intervention. Those included activities that enhance self-expression and self-confidence, as well as help children reduce tension and anxiety following exposure to traumatizing incidents. Additionally, recreational activities provided a space for children to interact with other children through structured psychosocial activities, drawing, games and play.

Furthermore, 14 field trips were organized for children who participated in group counseling, 1000 children (479 males, 521 females) besides 160 caregivers (22 males, 138 females) participated in these trips. These trips helped the affected and traumatized children spend time away from the troubled areas where acts of violence occur besides providing them space where they can ventilate their feelings and take part in new activities such as sports, theatre, drama and dancing. Additionally, children were assisted to return to normality and resume lives with happiness and positive emotions.

- **CRC day:**

The teams- in coordination with relevant Ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Education) as well as UNWRA- celebrated the Children Right Convention day on December 2013. A total of four CRC days were conducted in Jenin, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This parade provided an opportunity for more than 2236 children (1236 males, 1000 female) and 110 caregivers (33 males, 77 females) to call for their rights of dignity, respect and living in peace. Theatre bands, clowns, and scout performances were part of the programs during these days besides several performances organized by children themselves.



- **Caregivers' sensitization sessions:**

A total of 1714 mothers and fathers attending the sensitization sessions were better equipped with skills on how to protect and support their children and develop more positive skills when dealing with them. The sessions also offered caregivers the opportunity to ventilate and express their feelings, in addition to increasing their awareness and encouraging them to approach institutions that offer psychosocial services when needed.

- **Coordination and supervision:**

67 Coordination meetings were conducted on a monthly basis in the 11 districts and attended by team members who represented the local CBOs and NGOs working in psychosocial emergency sector. Areas and emergencies in need for intervention were identified. Joint plans for intervention and implementation of activities were set, with the active participation and involvement of team organizations.

- **Manual of intervention:**

During the reporting period, a manual was developed to document the accumulated experience of the psychosocial teams' interventions. This manual included the methodologies used and reflected the needed services and type of intervention during times of crises. It will be used to train the psychosocial emergency teams all over the West Bank, printed and distributed during the next reporting period to the CBOs, schools, clusters, relevant Ministries and governmental organizations, and other local and international organization.

- **Training team members, CBOs' members, and clusters**

Six training courses were conducted for the members of the teams and CBOs based on the actual need of the participants. The trainings covered different topics related to psychosocial intervention during emergency, ISAC Manual, play therapy and psychodrama amongst other relevant topics. In assessing the training, the participants indicated that they have received new techniques which empowered them to deal with the daily incidents that occur in their surroundings.

Social and Economic Inclusion of People with Disability in the Middle East Project:

The project of “Social and Economic Inclusion of People with Disability in the Middle East” was launched in April 2012 and is currently carried out in partnership with Christian Aid/ UK and The Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union- LPHU and funded by the European Commission. The project aims at contributing to improving the living conditions of persons with disability in the Middle East, enabling them to become confident, active members in society and with the opportunity to participate in all aspects of social, economic and political life. Furthermore, it specifically aims at enhancing the skills of persons with disability to engage in sustainable income-generating activities or employment, and to break down the structural barriers that prevent full inclusion.

Besides the achievements which were mentioned under the "Advocacy Work" in this report, the project - of which the targeted groups include the public sector, the private sector, the regional civil society, and persons with disability- achieved the following:

- 193 beneficiaries have been subject to psycho - social intervention.
- 161 beneficiaries have been subject to vocational assessment.
- 122 beneficiaries have been subject to vocational counseling.
- 177 beneficiaries have been subject to vocational training.
- A series of meetings with organizations (public, private, NGOs) for advocating for the rights of persons with disability to have a decent job, resulted in employing 25 persons with disability in the private sector.
- 15 MOUs were signed with the private sector stakeholders to employ persons with disability. It is noteworthy that such MOUs stipulate that social and economic rights of persons with disability shall be respected, and that all employment barriers be removed through coordination between relevant authorities.
- 24 MOUs were signed with village councils and municipalities. These MOUs stipulate the accessibility of roads, parkings, and buildings in these villages and municipalities, as well as training the public service employees on sign language in order to be able to communicate with persons with disability. All the above mentioned MOUs were signed by the Ministry of Local Governance and the Ministry of Labor.
- A methodology of private sector intervention has been produced. This methodology was a fruit of the Lebanon training that was designed to train the East Jerusalem YMCA employees on how to advocate the right to employment in the private sector.
- A database of the most influential companies in the West Bank was built. This database is the only one in Palestine, and included companies which employ 20 employees and above.
- Another database of academically and vocationally qualified persons with disabilities was built. This database is essential to influence decision- makers to employ them whenever possible.
- A project brochure was designed and printed.

- A research on coverage and application of legal rights for persons with disability and mapping existing rights provisions and advocacy for persons with disability was made.
- A report was produced as a basis for advocacy. The report represents a case study that sheds light on success stories for persons with disability who are working. This is besides addressing the obstacles and constraints which persons with disability face during their attempt to work.
- 4000 posters were printed to stimulate the owners of the private sector to employ persons with disability.
- A mutual report was prepared with LPHU to be the base for formulating a national and regional strategy for the rights of persons with disability to work.



“Post- trauma Rehabilitation of the Palestinian Ex-detainee Children in the West Bank” project:

The “Post- trauma Rehabilitation of the Palestinian Ex-detainee Children in the West Bank” project- which has been running since April 2009 in partnership with Save the Children and funded by the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection- is currently in phase V.



Statistics of beneficiaries and services provided through the Project during the reporting period:

During the first six months of the year 2013, 501 ex-detainee children were assessed while 463 of those committed to the Program and benefited from the psychosocial intervention. Reasons for withdrawal of the 38 cases were mainly re-arrest or need to work and gain money to elevate the family's income. 402 family members of detainee and ex-detainee children were assessed, committed to the Program, and benefited from the psychosocial intervention.

Psychosocial sessions conducted with ex-detainee children and families of detainee and ex-detainee children based on areas of intervention and numbers of beneficiaries are illustrated in the following table:

	Ex-detainee Children				Families of Detainee and Ex-Detainee Children			
	Individual psychosocial counseling		Group psychosocial counseling		Family intervention counseling		Group support counseling	
	beneficiaries	sessions	beneficiaries	sessions	beneficiaries	sessions	beneficiaries	sessions
Jerusalem/Bethlehem	127	1377	46	35	43	168	85	50
Ramallah	112	742	54	58	8	15	64	69
Tulkarem/Qualquilia	75	525	25	29	19	65	31	17
Jenin/Tubas	39	262	19	25	14	54	29	33
Nablus/Salfeet	104	726	30	38	61	242	34	22
Hebron	102	679	57	72	39	158	40	38
Total	559	4311	231	257	184	702	283	229

Vocational Assessment conducted with ex-detainee children based on areas of intervention is summarized in the following table:

Area	Number of Beneficiaries
Jerusalem/Bethlehem	6
Ramallah	22
Tulkarem/ Qualquilia	9
Jenin /Tubas	7
Nablus /Salfeet	19
Hebron	33
Total	96

Assessing the impact of the Project:

To assess the effectiveness of the Project, a list of indicators was set to measure the results achieved. The indicators were examined for a random sample of the targeted beneficiaries who were assessed and finalized the intervention during the period of eight months.

Results of the main indicators came as follows:

- 91.41% of the targeted child ex-detainees have a higher self-esteem. (It exceeded the target of 70%)
- 90.38% of child ex-detainee report using more positive coping mechanisms. (It exceeded the target of 70%)
- 53.89% of the child ex-detainees are referred to educational or/and vocational training. (It exceeded the target of 25%)
- 90.38% of family members are positively interacting and communicating with their children following detention. (It exceeded the target of 70%)
- 97.12% of the targeted family members are more aware and understand the psycho-social needs of their children. (It exceeded the target of 70%)
- 96.15% of the targeted families are being more supportive to their children and advocate for their rights. (It exceeded the target of 70%)

“Improving community-based psychosocial support and protection services for children and adolescents in East Jerusalem” Project

The East Jerusalem YMCA - Rehabilitation Program in partnership with UNICEF, is implementing a project “*Improving community-based psychosocial support and protection services for children and adolescents in East Jerusalem*” funded by the EU. The project is based on serving girls and boys in vulnerable neighborhoods who are victims of violence and discriminatory practices and constant harassment by the Israeli occupation. The project is implemented to support and strengthen child protection systems and provide essential services to give high priority to engaging girls and boys in their communities, as equal partners in all project activities.

Amongst the accomplishments achieved, light is to be shed on the following:

- During the project timeframe, the project has targeted 797 children (432 girls and 465 boys) who were given psychosocial support in structured counseling sessions covering topics that influenced the communication between children and counselors as well as sharing opinions and thoughts. The sessions aimed to promote positive social behavior and thereby improve ways of dealing with each other and among others; as to reduce oral and physical violence and gain skills to increase awareness and children's psychosocial behavior.
- 527 caregivers were given psychosocial support and have participated in sensitizations sessions which included awareness topics and activities in which mothers were able to build their knowledge and share their opinions and experience. Sessions included topics related to improving self-confidence, decreasing violence, enhancing communication, adolescents' difficulties and relieving stress. Mothers were committed to most of the sessions and were positively active in their participation either during the sessions or any other activities related to their children.
- A number of recreational activities and ventilation days were held in each community-based organization in which 4373 children (2428 girls and 1945 boys) have participated positively with the facilitation of the volunteers and coordination with the local organizations. All activities were organized by counselors and CBO members who encouraged caregivers and parents to contribute. Therefore, trainers, members of school committees and school teachers have attended fun days which have collaborated in the activities. The recreational days included 35 fun days that were held in coordination with the CBOs and surrounding community organizations and members. They included entertainment and educational activities which helped enhancing the relationship between children themselves and caregivers, as well as increasing the children and participants' awareness in addition to ventilating the stress faced in their daytime and schools. They also included 12 field trips throughout the period. Trips have helped children ventilate and go for excursions in various places where they had spent time bonding with others. Trips took place in a number of parks and swimming pools as well as historical places in Jericho, Tulkarem, Bethlehem and Birzeit.

- Eight summer camps were planned, designed, and organized to enhance the children's skills and knowledge, to strengthen and build on the relationships between them and their parents and among each others. Summer camps included different zones through dividing the space where each group of children would get the chance to participate in each zone throughout the ten days. The zones included activities related to the Palestinian heritage, traditional dancing, first-aid, handmade crafts from recycled materials, anti-drugs campaigns and activities to protect the surrounding natural environment. All recreational activities and counseling sessions were carried out in coordination with stakeholders who assisted in implementing and controlling the activities. They included 34 professional, 123 volunteers and CBO staff, 21 community members and teachers in addition to organizations in the neighborhoods.
- Nine training sessions were held for social workers (held by PCC, YMCA and PRCS) covering topics related to child protection, violence and abuse against children and rights, alternative and expressive therapy and narrative therapy providing social workers with key skills to assist beneficiaries to share their feelings and concerns as well as upgrading their skills to facilitate counseling sessions and group dynamics for rehabilitation and vocational services within the YMCA scope of work.. Community members, CBO Staff and volunteers have also participated in a training which took place in each CBO. Each training was given for two days; a session about drug abuse to raise awareness on drugs and give attendees tools to respond with the problem if confronted, and a session about life skills to enhance their knowledge about dealing with children as well as with their bad habits and social difficulties. Furthermore, team supervision sessions were held with the purpose of sharing achievements, accomplishment of activities, evaluating and upgrading the professional skills and competencies of counselors working with children and caregivers and those who are facilitating recreational activities as well as supervising the quality aspect of the project.

It has become obvious that meeting the main objectives of reducing stress and anxiety, acquiring self-protection skills, increasing social skills and increasing the tendency of sharing feelings and concerns is becoming gradually fruitful with all the efforts contributed from all the stakeholders within the project.

