



Introduction

Although the beginnings of the year 2016 look more promising than what the Palestinians have survived during the past year, incidents of human rights violations continue to dominate local communities' lives. The effect of the last year's incidents required big efforts from the YMCA teams to restore the coping mechanisms and psychosocial and physical wellbeing of the marginalized groups of persons with disability (PWDs) and the survivors of political violence.

Although the year 2015 was seen as a distinguished year in terms of unprecedented efforts dedicated to conduct 1930 emergency interventions as well as to design and implement focused interventions in highly conflicted areas, it looks like the current year will be no easier for the YMCA teams. During the first six months of the year 2016, 918 emergency interventions were conducted in highly conflicted areas especially those within area C, near settlements, near the Segregation Wall, threatened by evacuation and demolition, etc. In addition, the reporting period included conducting two focused interventions; one in Silwan within East Jerusalem, and another in Hebron H2 area, where human rights violations are on the toll. Through its achievements during the latest years of 2015 & 2016, the YMCA has positioned itself as the national premier emergency response organization in the minds of the local and international stakeholders.

Believing in the abilities and potential of local communities, and taking into consideration the increase in human rights violations and the high risk for closures of wide areas by the Israeli military thus jeopardizing the accessibility of the YMCA teams, the YMCA has been lately very keen to regularly organize capacity building programs targeting local community leaders and volunteers in subjects of crisis intervention and psychological first aid, to make sure that the communities are able to respond to the emergencies they face whenever the YMCA teams are forbidden access to a certain area.

Through the coming pages, the YMCA focuses on the efforts made to support the marginalized groups of persons with disability and survivors of political violence in Palestine, with a strong will to continue being the main supporter for their rights to live in dignity and enjoy their psychosocial wellness. At the same time, the YMCA hopes that the future holds a brighter life for the children and youth of Palestine, one that is free from violence, oppression, and violation of human rights.

Objective 1: To enhance the targeted individuals' and groups' access to psychosocial support and counseling services and promote the supportive role of the families and communities towards their affected members



One of the main highlights of the work of the YMCA during the reporting period was the high numbers of ex-detainee children that were assessed and evaluated all over the West Bank especially in East Jerusalem and Hebron. In East Jerusalem in particular, the counselling work was more focused on individual intervention as many children were sentenced to home arrest. In general, the main challenge facing the YMCA teams during this period, was mobilizing the limited human and financial resources available to meet the unexpected numbers of survivors of political violence that the Program targets, and those included people affected by military attacks, home raids, arrest, interrogation, detention, home demolition, home evacuation, etc. Another highlight of the same period, was working with young females with disabilities, ages 18-28 years old, with the aim to build their capacities through organizing a series of training workshops for them in different subjects. The workshops would result in establishing youth leader groups of women with disabilities who work in their communities to advocate for their rights. The intervention with this group also included vocational rehabilitation which aims at enhancing their economic self dependency and would contribute to increasing their social networks.

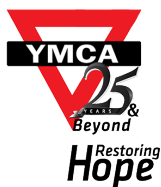
S.S., is a 15 years old ex-detainee girl, who benefited along with her family from YMCA interventions. Her mother says: "Now I am relieved that you are here to support us. You have changed our lives for better. Before your intervention, we were all experiencing negative feelings. The house has literally been a cluster of negative feelings, with no clue on how to properly communicate. This was as a result of the traumatizing detention experience of our beloved daughter. When she was released, she was totally isolated. She would not communicate with us. She became constantly nervous and anxious. When you visited us, everything changed. I feel secure and relieved knowing that you are supporting my daughter psychologically. You enabled her to quit her isolation. We can see this change and it clearly shows on her personality. She is better at school and shares her decisions with us. This was positively reflected on the entire family. We enhanced our communication skills and became more positive".

During the first six months of 2016, 4888 psychosocial counseling sessions were provided either through individual or group interventions based on the assessment done by our counselors. The following table provides a demographic analysis of the participants that joined the YMCA during the reporting period and received rehabilitative and integrative support.

It is worth mentioning that of the 479 direct participants that joined us during the reporting period, 29.8% were persons with disabilities, 67.7% were survivors of the political violence, and 2.5% having both situations. The dramatic increase in the YMCA's efforts dedicated to supporting survivors of political violence over persons with disabilities was expected given the abnormal acceleration in human rights violations committed in political settings during the end of 2015. The demographic analysis as well highlights the fact that 78% of our participants were youth, and thus 188 participants not only received counselling sessions but also received academic and career counselling through 474 sessions during the reporting period. Those sessions help younger participants to resume their academic path, and helps those over 15 years old to set a vocational goal for their lives. The demographic analysis shows as well that 70% of our participants came from villages and remote areas where several locations cannot be reached by vehicles and where services are limited or non-existent. Youth being the biggest target group of our interventions is only expected as they are on the crossroads of surviving their trauma or disability and being able to move a step forward in their lives.

District	Number		Age						Place of Residence			Total
	Male	Female	0-6	7-11	12-18	19-25	26-35	>36	City	Village	Camp	
Jerusalem & Bethlehem	91	10	2	1	88	5	2	3	14	79	8	101
Ramallah	37	8	0	2	27	9	6	1	11	29	4	45
Tulkarem & Qalqilya	31	9	0	1	14	22	2	1	4	34	2	40
Jenin & Tubas	18	21	0	1	15	14	5	4	2	36	1	39
Nablus & Salfeet	55	17	1	5	32	23	9	2	10	55	7	72
Hebron	134	42	4	21	90	30	18	13	66	103	7	176
Jericho	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	3	0	3	6
Total	372	107	7	31	272	103	42	24	110	336	32	479
Percentage	78%	22%	1.5%	6.5%	57%	21%	9%	5%	23%	70%	7%	100%

As the end of 2015 witnessed open discussions and brainstorming among the three departments of Research and training, Vocational rehabilitation, and Counseling and supervision, a full review of the indicators and scales used was conducted in order to be in line of the latest development of psychosocial scales worldwide. Many questionnaires were changed towards the early beginnings of 2016 and the teams started using those questionnaires in February for a probation period. The three departments are currently evaluating the effectiveness of the new questionnaires to be able to make a final decision, expected towards the second half of 2016, on adopting them or incurring further changes. So far it was evident that the new questionnaires are more effective in measuring the indicators, but at the same time they require longer time and more sessions to complete with the participants.



Objective 2: To enhance the targeted groups and communities' physical and economic independency

Vocational Rehabilitation

During the reporting period, the YMCA provided 102 vocational services to support its participants. Through the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, 74 participants from all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem received vocational assessment. Of those, 45 were reached through the mobile unit which proved to be an imperative asset for the Program. As soon as the participants were clear about their goals, they were assisted to locate suitable training centers to develop their capacities and be prepared to resume their professional lives.

The YMCA was able to facilitate vocational training for 19 participants from the West Bank and East Jerusalem districts in the subjects of secretarial work, computer technology, electricity, maintenance of mobile devices, hairdressing, autotronics, etc. 7 self-employment projects were supported to enhance the economic conditions and enable the participants to become self-dependent. These projects included establishing different kinds of income generating projects like groceries, shops for selling homeware, livestock, producing candles, etc. 57% of those projects were established by empowered females. In addition, the YMCA teams facilitated the employment of 2 PWDs in the private sector.

During the reporting period, vocational rehabilitation support was as follows:

Vocational rehabilitation	Number of Services
Vocational assessment	74
Self-employment projects	7
Facilitation of employment of PWD's	2
Vocational training	19
Total	102

Academic Rehabilitation

Both, children with disabilities as well as those traumatized, are facing a big challenge in going to school mainly due to restricted access and mobility, lack of security, and social stigma. In many cases the economic situation of the family affects the decision of the children to continue their school education especially for children with disabilities who live in remote areas and require expensive daily transportation.

The counselors dedicate efforts to investigate the reasons discouraging children from continuing their education and try to resolve them. During the reporting period, 95 academic rehabilitation services were rendered to support participants as follows:

Academic rehabilitation	Number of Services
Remedial Education	84
Transportation (back & forth)	11
Total	95

Accessibility

During the reporting period, the YMCA was able to implement 15 adaptations in residential units distributed in all districts of the West Bank through building ramps, installing handrails, and adapting bathrooms. The impact of adapting these units is seen in enhancing PWDs self-dependence, increasing their self-esteem and eventually enabling them to live in dignity.

Through the interventions conducted in schools, and believing in the rights of PWDs to access educational facilities, the YMCA implemented two adaptations inside an elementary school in Tulkarem district which hosts 450 students of whom three currently live with disabilities. Interventions in schools usually include: adaptations to facilitate the mobility and accessibility of PWDs resulting in enhancing their self-dependence, enabling them to build social networks with their peers, and increasing their self-esteem; and sensitizing and raising awareness of the school community on the rights of persons with disability in order to help them better support their peers who live with disability, and change the stigma and preconceived ideas about disability. Eventually all of these efforts contribute to encouraging school attendance among children with disabilities.

During the reporting period, the following was achieved:

Adaptations	Number of units
Houses	15
Schools	2
Total	17

Medical urgent assistive aids

When supporting PWDs to live a better life, it is important to care for their basic needs as well. Small aids can incur a big change in their physical conditions and open doors to further improvements. Therefore the YMCA succeeded in providing 36 medical assistive aids to its participants who live with disability by either subsidizing physiotherapy or occupational therapy or offering technical assistive aids (like wheelchairs, crutches, artificial limbs, etc.). Some participants needed more than one aid.

During the reporting period, the following was achieved:

Medical urgent assistive aids	Number of services
Technical aids	25
Physiotherapy	9
Transportation to receive medical aid	2
Total	36

Objective 3: To upgrade the skills of the Palestinian social workers and counsellors

The YMCA's Training Unit has been dedicating huge efforts to build the capacities of all professionals 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

The following trainings were provided to other NGOs and GOs:

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
Psychological First Aid - PFA	Psychosocial Emergency teams in East Jerusalem (members & volunteers)	23	3 days, 19th – 21st March
Rights of PWDs, advocacy, negotiations, and leadership	Young leader groups of PWDs in Ramallah	13	4 days, 22nd – 25th March
Disability Law	Women with disabilities in Hebron	12	1 day, 26th March
Advocacy	Women with disabilities in Hebron	15	1 day, 28th March
Psychological First Aid - PFA	Counselors in Jenin	31	2 days, 28th – 29th March
Advocacy and negotiation skills	Women with disabilities in Bethlehem	11	2 days, 30th – 31st March
Psychological First Aid – PFA	Volunteers within the Psychosocial Emergency Teams in Ramallah	22	2 days, 30th – 31st March
Palestinian Disability Law & Advocacy	Women with disabilities in Jenin	13	4 days, 30th – 31st March, 7th & 9th April
Negotiations, conflict resolution, and leadership	PWDs in Hebron	16	2 days, 4th & 11th April
Psychological First Aid – PFA	Volunteers and Social Work students in Hebron	26	2 days, 6th – 7th April
Crisis Intervention	CBO's in Tulkarem (members & volunteers)	17	2 days, 6th – 7th April
Psychological First Aid – PFA	Counselors in Bethlehem	13	2 days, 6th – 7th April
Psychological First Aid – PFA	Social Work students in Nablus	40	2 days, 18th – 19th April
Crisis Intervention	Volunteers in Tulkarem	17	1 day, 11th April
Palestinian Disability Law & Advocacy	PWDs in Nablus	10	4 days, 16th & 20th & 24th & 28th April
Rights of PWDs	Women with disabilities in Bethlehem	15	1 day, 5th May
Rights of PWDs, advocacy, negotiations, and leadership	Women with disabilities in Tulkarem	12	4 days, 5th & 9th – 11th May
Psychological First Aid – PFA	Psychosocial Emergency teams in East Jerusalem	31	2 days, 4th – 5th June
Total		337	

University students

The following internships were completed:

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
Enhancing the capacities of students in the sphere of their specialization, in addition to acquiring technical and therapeutic skills and enhancing their experience with professional counseling and intervention mechanisms at the individual and group levels.	Local universities – students of social work and/or psychology	11	4 months

At the international level

The following trainings were provided to YMCA staff:

Training subject	Organized by	Participants	Number	Duration
“Refugees with Disabilities in the Arab World”, building the capacity of organizations working with PWDs & designing and managing emergency and response programs	The Arab Regional Office of Disabled People’s International (DPI)	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	1	5 days, 23rd – 27th May, 2016

Research

The YMCA’s Research and Training Unit produced a research document entitled “Needs Assessment of Persons with disabilities, ages 18-25 years old, in the West Bank”. The research aimed at comparing the needs of young PWDs with the services already made available for them. The research revealed a huge gap between both ends and these findings will be used as an advocacy tool as well as a cornerstone for designing future interventions for PWDs that aim at attaining their human rights and accessing the services that cater for their needs.

Objective 4: To promote community responsibility towards persons with disability and traumatized through networking within the rehabilitation and disability organizations

Networking with local organizations, centres, committees, clubs, etc.

During the reporting period, 40 coordination meetings were held with the different organizations working in the spheres of psychosocial rehabilitation, mental health, emergency interventions, and vocational rehabilitation on the local level that aimed at networking and coordinating efforts to implement activities, youth initiatives, field visits, referral of participants to specialized services, and planning for joint interventions.

A series of coordination meetings were held to assess the needs of the families and children of Khirbet Tana and Beit Furik, with different stakeholders including Save the Children International and the Child Protection Network of UNICEF, resulting in designing an intervention plan.

A series of meetings were also held among stakeholders working on disability to follow-up on referral of PWDs to the relevant organizations and the different services provided for them including psychosocial support, adaptations, vocational rehabilitation, etc. The meetings included representatives of the General Union for Disability, the different organizations working on disability, child protection and psychosocial support, in addition to the public sector organizations like the chambers of commerce, municipalities, governorate offices, and coordination committees.

Two main outputs were highlighted during the reporting period; first, an agreement among governorate offices and municipalities in different districts that the Public Relations department in each of them would provide halls for implementing the activities of the team and that they would do a media coverage of these activities. And second, representatives of governmental and public sectors showed enhanced cooperation with the team and commitment to facilitate its work. Of those organizations were: the chambers of commerce and industry to lobby for the employment of PWDs and increase their salaries, the directorates of health to provide medicine and refer PWDs to suitable treatment, the Ministry of Labor to train the targeted groups in vocational streams, and the municipal councils to supervise the adaptations implemented in the homes of PWDs.

Awareness raising activities

During the reporting period, 44 workshops, lectures and meetings were held to affect societal understanding and attitude towards persons with disability. The aim was to trigger the society's responsibility towards persons with disability. It is important to note that through the conducted activities, a huge lack of general awareness was observed at the level of local families and PWDs themselves about Disability law. It is after reaching out to them, that they demanded that the General Union for Disability should take charge to teach PWDs on their rights as stipulated by the law.

A special workshop was conducted with the representatives of different media agencies about their role in calling for the rights of PWDs and the importance of their participation in the district committees that follow-up disability issues. An agreement was reached that the YMCA with its partners and the participating media agencies would elaborate on a media plan to approach disability and spread awareness.

A series of workshops were conducted with youth leader groups of females with disabilities which aimed at raising their awareness on disability and rights of PWDs, communication methods, enhancing social protection of PWDs, and policies related to PWDs rights.

A series of workshops were conducted with the local communities to raise their awareness on the rights of children especially those detained, the impact of detention, the recent dramatic increase in detention of children, modalities for documenting detention incidents, and setting up an advocacy plan for child detention in partnership with international and human rights agencies. As a result of one of the workshops conducted in Hebron, a petition was submitted to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to call for protection of children especially against detention and political violence.

In general the workshops, meetings and lectures resulted in informing local communities about existing services and service providers in the spheres of psychosocial rehabilitation and relevant fields.

Activities with educational institutions

During the reporting period, 7 activities were organized with either schools or universities within the different districts of the West Bank. Those activities aimed at raising awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities, their needs and the challenges they face in their lives. Educating the targeted groups on their supportive role to persons with disability and the appropriate communication to be used with them were the main concerns highlighted in those activities. In addition 3 Friendship Committees were established inside schools.

During those activities, the team was able to assess the level of integration of PWDs within the educational organizations and implement activities that support their integration and participation with their peers through extra-curricular activities. Ventilation exercises were part of those activities especially in schools that are located in highly conflicted areas, as many were implemented during the celebrations of the Palestinian Child Day. In many educational institutions, support groups were formed to lobby for the rights of their peers who live with disabilities.



Recreational / ventilation activities

The reporting period witnessed the organization of 62 recreational / ventilation activities in all West Bank districts including East Jerusalem, which targeted marginalized groups of survivors of political violence and PWDs, children and their caregivers. These activities were implemented in schools, in community clusters that suffer from Israeli military attacks, at Bedouin clusters, etc. in coordination with and participation of different stakeholders including the Directorate of Education, the Directorate of Social Affairs, World Vision, Defence for Children International, UNRWA, the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, the Red Crescent, and many others.



Special activities were implemented for mothers and children during the celebrations of Mothers' Day and the International Women's Day. Moreover, other activities were implemented in Bethlehem during the Palestinian Child Day in partnership with the Directorate for Social Affairs, and SOS Children's Village. Those activities targeted the children of Jemima Foundation (houses children with mental and physical disabilities), SOS Children's Village (houses children who can no longer live with their families), and Bethlehem Children's Crèche (houses orphaned and abandoned children).

The main highlight of this period was the organization of structured ventilation programs targeting the teachers and counselors of the Directorate of Education in Hebron. So far two programs have been implemented, and other eight are expected within the second half of the year. These programs aim at building the capacities of the participants in dealing with their stress and in emergency incidents that they face.

Youth initiatives

Following the trainings organized for volunteers from the local communities, a set of 9 youth initiatives were implemented in their own communities. Those initiatives also included ventilation exercises.

- Drawing murals on children rights and importance of living in a safe place at Al A'rqa Boys' School – Jenin that lays adjacent to the Segregation Wall and which has also lost two of its students during military attacks.
- Provision of a sound system and educational games to schools in Silwan – East Jerusalem that aim at developing the students' physical and mental abilities.
- Rehabilitation and cleaning of the sports playground in the village of Faro'on – Tulkarem which is threatened by demolition. Trees were also planted all around the playground and banners calling for the rights of children to play in a safe place were erected. A set of sports' tools were also bought and given to the municipal council to encourage children and youth to use the playground.
- In the village of Bil'in, Abu Lemon Park was renovated to host the local children and enable them to play safely. Renovation works included fixing existing toys, planting trees, cleaning surfaces, painting the sides, etc.
- In the village of Al-Khader, in Bethlehem, the YMCA team in partnership with students of Al-Khdeira School renovated an agricultural land that belongs to the schools of the village, where each child was allowed to plant herbs and flowers that would hold his/her name.
- In East Jerusalem, a campaign for drawing murals in threatened schools was launched entitled 'my school is the most beautiful', where children would reflect their feelings towards having their schools demolished through those murals.
- In Salfit and Nablus, an initiative entitled 'think of others, I have the right to live safely and freely' was implemented where volunteers and children cleaned and planted the garden of the old ruin there (al Khirbeh). Counselors from UNRWA participated in this initiative.
- In the schools of Kufr Lakef and Fara'ta, highly conflicted areas that lay adjacent to the Segregation Wall in Nablus, initiatives to raise the awareness of the teachers on children rights were implemented and they were taught skills to deal with children with special needs.
- In E'zbet Shufa – Tubas, an initiative entitled 'the right to live safely and freely' was implemented through drawing murals at the school to send messages on children rights. School staff and local institutions participated in this initiative as well.

Celebratory and public events

During the reporting period, 9 celebratory events were implemented in marginalized areas in the West Bank and East Jerusalem with the participation of child participants and volunteers who received training in crisis intervention and psychological first aid. The activities came to emphasize the right of the Palestinian children to protection as well as to other rights as stipulated in the international conventions.

Groups of children have participated as well in the Palestinian Child Day celebrations in April 2016 as part of the activities organized by the Child Protection Network and its members. These activities included marches headed towards the offices of the ICRC and other international organizations and submitting petitions calling for Palestinian children's rights in living safely and be protected from the Israeli continuous attacks against them, and attaining their rights to education, health, protection and living in dignity. In Jericho, a set of recreational and ventilation exercises were implemented with the assistance of volunteers from the different partner organizations who also made sure to distribute awareness raising publications. Similar publications were also distributed in Beit Sahour, in stores and schools and to passing cars on the main roads.

In Nablus, a marathon was organized in coordination with the district coordination committee that joined PWDs with persons without disabilities. The activities included special ventilation exercises with the mothers of PWDs.

Meetings with decision-makers

Several meetings with key governmental agencies were held during the reporting period, which aimed to investigate opportunities for designing joint programs, to coordinate exchange of information and referral of individuals in need of support, and to coordinate efforts in the field.

The reporting period witnessed the signing of an agreement with the Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees on March 1st 2016, as well as the arrangement for signing of an agreement with the Prisoners' Club, expected by end of July 2016.

Media activities

During the reporting period, a program was prepared with the radio station in Tubas to cover the work of the psychosocial emergency team in the same area, the emergency interventions and response mechanisms, and the provision of psychosocial support to the local communities. A counselor and children participants as well joined this program.

In addition, three radio stations in the West Bank participated in an advocacy campaign on disability that highlighted the need for conducting adaptations to homes and buildings, the right to work, and the right to reach services.

Advocacy and awareness activities in numbers

The following table provides a quick insight on groups targeted by the aforementioned advocacy and awareness activities implemented during the reporting period:

Target Groups	Females	Males	Total
Persons with disability	222	242	464
Ex-detainees	0	270	270
Children and families	3674	3421	7095
Staff of educational institutions	359	233	592
Staff of local institutions	213	323	536
Staff of international institutions	32	29	61
Students of schools and universities	943	1193	2136
Total	5443	5711	11154

Fact Sheet: Our Work in Numbers



Direct participants receiving rehabilitation support	479
Counseling sessions	4888
Participants receiving vocational assessment	74
Participants receiving educational and career counseling	188
Participants receiving vocational training	19
Self-employment projects	7
Facilitation of employment of PWDs	2
Academic rehabilitation support	95
Adaptations of residences, schools, clinics, and public buildings for the use of persons with disability	17
Medical urgent assistive aids	36
Trainees from other organizations who received training	337
University students trainees	11
International training for our staff	1
Coordination meetings and field visits held on the local level	40
Awareness raising workshops / lectures / meetings, etc.	44
Activities organized with schools and universities within the different districts of the West Bank	7
Youth initiatives	9
Celebratory and public events	9
Recreational / ventilation activities	62
Targeted groups by the advocacy and awareness activities	11,154

<i>Through our projects</i>	
Emergency interventions	918
Children and adults reached through emergency interventions	8,664
Signed MoU's	1
Ex-detainee children evaluated	246
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for ex-detainee children	1453
Families of detainee and ex-detainee children evaluated	161
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for families of detainee and ex-detainee children	360