



Introduction

The year 2017 is seen as a milestone in the Palestinian history; it marks 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, 70 years since the United Nations General Assembly "Partition" Resolution 181, 50 years of the Israeli occupation, and 10 years of the illegal siege and blockade on Gaza Strip. Throughout the years of the conflict, Palestinians suffered substantial losses and violations to their human rights. The occupation has for long exercised systematic evacuation of Palestinians from Jerusalem, and extending the Israeli annexation to larger areas of the occupied West Bank for the sake of building new colonies and extending the existing ones. In addition, the occupation has exercised unlawful killings; forced displacement; abusive detention; the closure of the Gaza Strip and other unjustified restrictions on movement; and the development of settlements, along with the accompanying discriminatory policies that disadvantage Palestinians. In other words, the Israeli occupation managed to create illegal dangerous facts on the grounds which could reach the level of crimes against humanity, and at the same time they pay more and more successful efforts to hide their crimes.

The UN secretary general, António Guterres, earlier in June 2017 condemned the occupation's "heavy humanitarian and development burden on the Palestinian people", which he said had "fuelled recurring cycles of violence and retribution". Guterres said the continued occupation was "an unmistakable message to generations of Palestinians that their dream of statehood is destined to remain just that: a dream". "Generation after generation of Palestinians who have been compelled to grow up and live in ever more crowded refugee camps, many in abject poverty, and with little or no prospect of a better life for their children," he said. ¹

The long rooted conflict and human rights' violations have had their profound impact on deteriorating the country's economy. Oxfam country director Chris Eijkemans said that the inaction of international governments sent the wrong signal: that international law can be violated with impunity. This lack of accountability keeps Palestinians poor and prevents them from accessing their rights. "There are few examples of poverty or injustice in the OPT that do not stem from the occupation," Eijkemans said. "If it weren't for the occupation, most aid agencies would not need to be here. The issues facing Palestinians are enormous and complex, but on each count, despite the billions of dollars invested, the lives of Palestinians cannot meaningfully improve as long as the occupation persists." ²

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/06/un-human-rights-council-israel-occupation-palestine> (June 2017)

2 Ibid.

In this report, the YMCA sheds the light on its mission in supporting the marginalized groups of persons with disability and survivors of political violence in Palestine, to whom it will remain faithful in their struggle to restore hope for a better life.

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

During the first six months of 2017, 4459 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 375 direct participants that joined us during the reporting period, 37% were persons with disabilities, 58% were survivors of the political violence, and 5% having both situations. The dramatic increase in the YMCA's efforts dedicated to supporting survivors of political violence over persons with disabilities is always expected given the abnormal acceleration



in human rights violations committed in political settings in Palestine. The demographic analysis as well highlights the fact that 78.1% of our participants were youth (12-25 years old), and thus 175 participants not only received psychosocial counseling sessions, but also received academic and career counseling through 447 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 59.2% 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.

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	79	7	0	2	73	7	3	1	10	59	17	86
Ramallah	30	6	1	1	30	3	1	0	12	14	10	36
Tulkarem & Qalqilya	23	14	0	1	19	8	6	3	11	23	3	37
Jenin & Tubas	18	14	0	2	15	8	3	4	4	24	4	32
Nablus & Salfeet	50	19	6	9	32	4	13	5	10	54	5	69
Hebron	83	31	1	8	68	25	9	3	52	48	14	114
Jericho	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	283	92	8	23	237	56	35	16	100	222	53	375
Percentage	75.50%	24.50%	2.10%	6.10%	63.20%	14.90%	9.30%	4.40%	26.60%	59.20%	14.20%	100%

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

Vocational Rehabilitation

During the reporting period, the YMCA provided 159 vocational services to support its participants. Through the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, 107 participants from all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem received vocational assessment. Of those, 55 were reached through the mobile unit. 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 30 participants from the West Bank and East Jerusalem districts in the subjects of secretarial work, accounting, computer technology, graphic design, electricity, maintenance of mobile devices, hairdressing, autotronics, etc. 11 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 toys, home ware, accessories, livestock, cosmetics, etc. in addition to a sound system for parties. 45% of those projects were established by empowered females. In addition, the YMCA facilitated the employment of 11 PWDs (2 females, 9 males) in the private sector to enhance their economic independence.



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

Vocational rehabilitation	Number of Services
Vocational assessment	107
Self-employment projects	11
Facilitation of employment of PWD's	11
Vocational training	30
Total	159

Academic Rehabilitation

In parallel to enhancing children's psychological health, the YMCA has dedicated efforts to resolve any obstacles that might discourage marginalized children, traumatized or having physical disabilities, from resuming their educational path. During the reporting period, 42 academic rehabilitation services were rendered to support participants as follows:

Academic rehabilitation	Number of Services
Remedial Education	33
Transportation (back & forth)	9
Total	42



Accessibility

In general, PWDs are often isolated and excluded, cut off from health, education and social services, and with limited opportunities to participate in family and community life. This frequently impacts their future employment opportunities and participation in public life. Following the holistic approach adopted by the YMCA towards rehabilitation, in parallel to receiving psychological support to enable PWDs accept their disability and cope with it, the YMCA addresses accessibility and mobility issues based on its belief in the right of PWDs to enjoy mobility and reach out to available services. When PWDs are given opportunities to flourish as any other person, they have the potential to lead fulfilling lives and to contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of their communities.

During the reporting period, the following was achieved:

Adaptations	Number of services
Houses	14
Schools	3
Total	17

Medical urgent assistive aids

In order to enhance the physical conditions of PWDs and pave the way for a smooth rehabilitation and reintegration into the community, 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.) or medicine. Some participants needed more than one aid. During the reporting period, the following was achieved:

Medical urgent assistive aids	Number of services
Technical aids	19
Physiotherapy	15
Medicine	1
Transportation to receive medical aid	1
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
Rights of PWDs	Young leader groups of PWDs in Bethlehem	20	3 days, 13th – 15th February
Rights of PWDs, advocacy, negotiation skills, and leadership	Women with disabilities in Nablus	17	4 days, 3rd - 4th & 10th – 11th April
Rights of PWDs, advocacy, negotiation skills, and leadership	Women with disabilities in Bethlehem	9	4 days, 17th – 20th April
Rights of PWDs, advocacy, negotiation skills, and leadership	Women with disabilities in Tulkarem	11	4 days, 13th – 16th April
Leadership, Advocacy, and Gender	Women with disabilities in Hebron	15	4 days, 20th – 21st & 25th – 26th April
Children and Youth Resilience	MoEHE school counselors in the southern districts (Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah) of the West Bank	18	4 days, 15th – 18th May
Children and Youth Resilience	MoEHE school counselors in the northern districts (Nablus, Tulkarem, Jenin) of the West Bank	19	4 days, 15th – 18th May
Leadership, Advocacy, and Gender	Women with disabilities in Jenin	16	4 days, 15th – 18th May
Leadership, Advocacy, and Gender	Women with disabilities in Ramallah	8	4 days, 15th – 18th May
Total		133	

At the internal level

The following trainings were provided to the staff:

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
Youth and children resilience	Counselors and coordinators of the Psycho-social Emergency teams	22	8 days, 9th – 17th January
Using questionnaires for data collection for the MHPSS website	Counselors of the Psychosocial Emergency teams	18	1 day, 3rd April
Results Based Management Approach, organized by the Representative Office of Finland	Administrative staff of the Program	2	1 day, 23rd February
EMDR – Level I	Counselors of the Program	22	3 days, 8th – 10th May
Total		64	

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	17	4 months

Research

The Research and Training Department is working on updating the mapping of the mental health and psychosocial service providers in the West Bank, through revisiting partner organizations operating in those fields to update the information listed on the website. An orientation session was conducted for field workers on data collection which will be fed into the website (www.mhpss.org) developed in 2013-2014 and containing information relevant to organizations operating in the field with data on location, scope of work, etc, to make all data available in one resource. Furthermore, the team reviewed, modified and uploaded the new information on the website. All the updated information is expected to be available for users by August 2017 in both Arabic and English languages along with a summary data report. Developing and enhancing the presentation of service providers will help improve the referral system and provide the MHPSS service to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities.

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, 204 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. Following are some of the highlights of the reporting period:

In Jenin, a youth leaders group of 8 was organized to build their capacities in rights of PWDs and launching advocacy campaigns so that they demand for running elections for the Union of PWDs in their area in addition to demanding the municipality and other relevant organizations to do necessary adaptations in the mall, public toilets, and cafeteria.

- A series of meetings were held with the Directorates of Education and school principals in different districts to set cooperation channels among them and the YMCA to make sure that any incident of political violence affecting the children and their families would be immediately followed up by the psychosocial emergency teams.
- A series of meetings were held with the Child Protection Network to coordinate roles and responsibilities and prepare for the celebrations of the Palestinian Child Day.
- A coordination meeting with relevant organizations working in disability was held to announce the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Bank of Palestine through the Ministry of Labor. The memorandum entailed the employment of PWDs.
- Meetings were held with district committees in different areas to follow-up on the referral system, and review achievements and discuss new action plans. Plans for interventions with females with disabilities in specific were set.
- Coordination meetings were done to assess the interventions implemented in the most conflicted areas including: Khirbet Tana, Mgharat el Daba'a, Rass Tireh, A'zzoun A'tmeh, Rfata, Burin, el Khan el Ahmar, etc.
- Several meetings were held with OCHA, UNICEF and PCC to discuss the geographical distribution of conflicted areas among stakeholders in terms of provision of services.

Awareness raising activities

During the reporting period, 12 workshops, lectures and meetings were held to affect societal understanding and attitude towards persons with disability and survivors of political violence. Following are some of the highlights of the reporting period:

- A special workshop was conducted with the representatives of different media agencies about their role in spreading awareness and calling for the rights of PWDs.
- Meetings with families of traumatized children were held to raise their awareness on PTSD syndromes that appear on their children and how they can deal with them and provide suitable support to their children.
- Meetings with families of PWDs were also held to enlighten them on the best terminology to use when approaching PWDs and they were taught techniques to manage their stress resulting from having PWDs in the family.
- A series of workshops were held with several local organizations including municipalities and municipal councils and other stakeholders relevant to the cause of PWDs to discuss the law in light of attaining the rights of PWDs.
- 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.

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 5 Friendship Committees were established inside schools. In addition, a career counseling day was conducted with school children to help students identify professions that would suite their capacities and potentials and how to collect data on the local labor market and available possibilities and linking all of this knowledge to set plans for their future.

Recreational / ventilation activities

The reporting period witnessed the organization of 46 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 nearly 36 schools, in community clusters that suffer from Israeli military and settlers' attacks, at Bedouin clusters, etc. in coordination with and participation of different stakeholders including NGOs, GOs, CSOs. Activities included group exercises, stress release exercises, artistic, cultural, and fun workouts.

Celebratory and public events

During the reporting period, 8 celebratory events were implemented in the different areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Following are some of the highlights of the reporting period:

- In Hebron, the YMCA participated in the celebrations organized for the Palestinian Counselors' Day.
- In a number of districts, the YMCA participated in the Palestinian Child's Day holding the slogan of "This is my right" where activities held included a marathon for school children. In addition, in several locations, activities were held to commemorate the Palestinian Prisoner's Day especially during the Dignity Hunger Strike.
- During the celebrations organized for the Disability Day, a campaign was launched entitled "the Right of PWDs to movement" mainly in Bedia and Salfit villages targeting 64 taxi-drivers. Arrangements were done to facilitate the movement of PWDs to access health services in the areas of Sarta, Qarawa, and Mas-ha.
- In Tulkarem, a celebration to honor the participant Yazan Hannoun winner of the first prize in the PWDs Olympics was done by Tulkarem District Office.

Meetings with decision-makers

Several meetings with key governmental agencies were held during the reporting period, of which the following were the most important:

- Meeting with the Director of the Governmental Hospital of Tulkarem to pass a petition to the Minister of Health to add specialized clinics (neurology, eyes) to facilitate access to health services especially for PWDs.
- Meetings with several governmental agencies in partnership with a number of decision-makers from the public and private sectors to hold them accountable to implement child protection policies.
- Meetings with decision-makers resulted in signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Palestine Khaddouri Polytechnic University in Tulkarem in order to acknowledge the university's role in integrating PWDs. Another Memorandum of Understanding was signed by 42 electoral candidates in the same district to enforce the implementation of disability law.
- Meetings with the Ministry of Social development were held to make the YMCA a member in the national committee of seven Civil Society Organizations supporting both the Ministry and UNICEF in revising the Law of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Meetings with Civil Society Organizations resulted in signing a memorandum by participating organizations from the different West Bank districts to put pressure on making the Labor Law more responsive to the right of PWDs to decent work.
- Meetings with the Union of Persons with Disabilities resulted in adjusting the advocacy plan of the Union to be in harmony with the YMCA's advocacy plan especially regarding the right to health insurance for PWDs.

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	196	219	415
Ex-detainees	0	20	20
Children and families	2433	2215	4648
Staff of educational institutions	250	231	481
Staff of local institutions	262	232	494
Staff of international institutions	10	18	28
Students of schools and universities	961	1431	2392
Total	4112	4366	8478

Fact Sheet: Our Work in Numbers



Direct participants receiving rehabilitation support	375
Counseling sessions	4,459
Participants receiving vocational assessment	107
Participants receiving educational and career counseling	175
Participants receiving vocational training	30
Self-employment projects	11
Facilitation of employment of PWDs	11
Academic rehabilitation support	42
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	133
University students trainees	17
Staff who received training	64
Coordination meetings and field visits held on the local level	204
Awareness raising workshops / lectures / meetings, etc.	12
Activities organized with schools and universities within the different districts of the West Bank	7
Celebratory and public events	8
Recreational / ventilation activities	46
Targeted groups by the advocacy and awareness activities	8,478

<i>Through our projects</i>	
Emergency interventions	461
Children and adults reached through emergency interventions	5,478
Signed MoU's	2
Ex-detainee children evaluated	219
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for ex-detainee children	1,576
Families of detainee and ex-detainee children evaluated	123
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for families of detainee and ex-detainee children	358