



## Introduction

Within our efforts to further spread the mission of the East Jerusalem YMCA – Rehabilitation Program and believing in the power of media, we are proud to issue the first bulletin of the Rehabilitation Program covering the period of January to June 2015 to keep our target groups, friends and donors informed on our achievements within this life-saving mission. The bulletin will be issued on a semi-annual schedule that maintains accurate and brief updates on our work. The bulletin is promoted through the website, the social media pages and the mailing lists of the Rehabilitation Program. The bulleting marks the second achievement in the year 2015 on the level of enhancing our communication efforts, as we officially launched the new bilingual website of the Program on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 ([www.ej-ymca.org/rehab](http://www.ej-ymca.org/rehab)), which was redesigned and built through a collaborative effort by the capable team of the Program.

Bringing the East Jerusalem YMCA - Rehabilitation Program's valuable message and resources to people throughout the world via the website and bulletin is considered an attractive asset for the Program's team. We are certain that our beneficiaries, friends or supporters, will appreciate the Program's capable and life-saving mission. Our hope is that our efforts in improving our communication channels will serve as a gateway and catalyst to attract other sponsors and resources that would further support our Program in reaching out to those who suffer most.

## Providing psychosocial support and counseling services to individuals and groups

The main service provided through the Program's eleven field teams covering the whole of the West Bank including East Jerusalem is psychosocial support and counseling that is conducted on the individual as well as the group levels based on the needs. The counseling sessions help the beneficiaries find a safe place to express their feelings and thoughts, accept the reality, and develop a brighter view of their lives. The most important achievements of counseling are seen when our beneficiaries develop increased levels of self-esteem, coping mechanisms, become able to plan for the future, among other traits that eventually lead to re-integration into their communities.



During the reporting period, 4276 psychosocial counseling sessions were provided either through individual or group interventions based on the needs assessed by our counselors. The following table provides a demographic analysis of the beneficiaries that joined the Rehabilitation Program during the first six months of 2015 and were provided with different rehabilitative and integrative services available within our Program. It is worth mentioning that of the 448 beneficiaries that joined us during the reporting period, 55.35% were persons with disabilities, 43.31% were survivors of the political violence, and 1.34% suffered from both situations. The demographic analysis highlights the fact that 68% of our beneficiaries were youth, and 71% of our beneficiaries come from villages and remote areas, which is similar to last year's trend. 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. The Rehabilitation Program's eleven teams distributed in all West Bank Districts have been highly devoted and loyal in reaching out to those marginalized groups to extend a hand of help even in scattered areas that cannot be reached by vehicles.

Hanin, an 18 year old girl from Hebron with physical disability who received psychosocial counseling sessions told us: "I used to think that life is awful. I thought about death a lot. I felt lonely and I saw everybody around me as a monster. I hated people and I hated myself....My life has changed... but the most important thing is that I can feel love. I love life and I am optimistic that the future will be better, and I am determined to finish school".

District	Number		Age				Place of Residence			Total
	Male	Female	0-11	12-18	19-25	>26	City	Village	Camp	
Hebron	109	41	31	64	33	22	35	101	14	150
Ramallah	46	8	3	34	11	6	23	27	4	54
Jenin & Tubas	21	17	3	15	10	10	4	30	4	38
Jerusalem & Bethlehem & Jericho	48	9	9	32	6	10	12	42	3	57
Tulkarem & Qalqilya	34	16	1	15	24	10	8	36	6	50
Nablus & Salfit	66	33	17	31	29	22	17	80	2	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>448</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>



# The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program

**Update Bulletin #1**  
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Since 2003, the Rehabilitation Program has been playing a crucial role in responding to the psychosocial emergency needs of children and their caregivers resulting from incidents of political and social violence all over the West Bank through providing them with Psychosocial First Aid and counseling sessions. The main aim of responding to emergencies was to ensure that children most affected by the conflict have strengthened coping mechanisms and resilience and have increased protection. The Program responds to those emergencies through its Psychosocial Emergency Support Teams which are immediately mobilized in response to the political and social emergencies. Victimized children and caregivers are visited and initial psychosocial support is provided through ventilation and expression of feelings. An initial needs' assessment is conducted based on which a comprehensive intervention plan is developed. Different services are provided to those children and caregivers including: emergency visits using the inter-cluster response framework; psychosocial group counseling sessions for children; referral; structured psychosocial activities (recreational / fun day activities, stress release days, parade); empowerment and capacity building; sensitization sessions and psychosocial support for parents and caregivers. During the first six months of 2015, the Program responded to 822 emergency interventions through which it reached out to 10133 children and caregivers.

On another level, the Program has been leading a special intervention focusing on ex-detainee children and their families who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders resulting from the inhuman experience of detention. Children and their families are provided with psycho-social rehabilitation services through the individual and group counselling sessions, in addition to remedial and vocational rehabilitation services catered for the needs of those children. The main aim behind supporting those children is to enable them to reintegrate in their communities while maintaining their psychosocial wellness. During the first six months of 2015, 145 children and 141 family members received psychosocial evaluation and assessment and were referred to suitable interventions based on their needs.

## Enhancing the communities' physical and economic independency

### Vocational Rehabilitation

The Rehabilitation Program continued to provide vocational rehabilitation services to children and youth, 15 years old and above, those who live with disability or trauma and need to set a vocational goal in their lives. Those beneficiaries are unable to resume their academic lives for different reasons and therefore need assistance and support to help them plan for their future.

Within the first six months of 2015, the Vocational Assessment Unit was able to assess 120 beneficiaries from all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Of those, 72 were reached through the mobile unit which proved to be an imperative asset for the Program.

Through the support of the counselors, 238 beneficiaries received vocational counseling that enabled them to set a vocational goal for their lives. The vocational counseling entails discussing the abilities and interests of the beneficiaries and the economic reality of their respective communities. As soon as the beneficiaries are clear about their goals, they are assisted by the counselors to locate suitable training centers to develop their capacities and be prepared to resume their professional lives.

The Rehabilitation Program was able to facilitate vocational training for 74 beneficiaries from the West Bank and East Jerusalem districts in the subjects of computer technology, maintenance of mobile devices, hairdressing, autotronics, etc. In addition, the Rehabilitation Program facilitated the employment of 12 persons with disability in the private and public sectors. Nine self-employment projects were supported to help the beneficiaries become self-dependant and economically secured as part of the process to help them reach stability and wellness. These projects included establishing different kinds of income generating projects like groceries, stationery shops, clothing shops, etc. But what was distinguished about those projects is that 66.7% were established by empowered females.

### Academic Rehabilitation

Following the Rehabilitation Program's quest in enabling its beneficiaries to live a better life, huge efforts are made to reintegrate children into their schools. In general, children with disabilities and traumatized children, are facing a big challenge in going to school mainly due to restricted access and mobility in addition to lack of security. Other factors related to psychosocial challenges only add to the dilemma. As soon as counselors resume their psychosocial support with children, they try hard to investigate the reasons discouraging children from continuing their education and dedicate efforts to resolve those issues. During the reporting period, 120 beneficiaries received academic rehabilitation services as follows:



Academic rehabilitation services	Number of beneficiaries
Remedial Education	94
Transportation	25
School fees	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>



In many cases the economic situation of the family affects the decision of the children to continue their school education. This is very true especially for children with disabilities in remote areas who would need transportation means to go back and forth to school on a daily basis. When the family can hardly provide for the basic needs of its children, it is hard to save money for the transportation of one child and therefore leaving school would become a realistic choice.

## Adaptations

Through the Rehabilitation Program's long experience in providing rehabilitation and integration services to its target groups of people with disabilities, it was evident that in order to affect change to their lives, we need not only to provide adequate psychosocial support, but also we have to respond to one of the main problems hindering their integration within their communities which is accessibility. Therefore the Program is keen to continuously find ways to enable persons with disability to enjoy their rights in reaching the different services available and therefore the Program builds access facilities and adapts buildings in need for hosting people with disabilities and according to its set criteria. During the reporting period, the Program was able to adapt 22 residential units as follows in the table. Those adaptations enabled beneficiaries with disabilities to move in and out of their homes easily and use bathrooms by themselves the fact which developed their self-dependence and contributed to building their self-esteem.

Residential adaptation services	Number of beneficiaries
Adapting bathrooms	11
Adapting bathrooms and installing handrails	2
Adapting bathrooms and building ramps	1
Adapting home entrance and installing handrails	2
Building ramps	4
Building ramps and installing handrails	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

Within our quest to support the marginalized group of people with disabilities in Palestine, we have succeeded in adapting 11 schools in the Districts of Ramallah, Jenin & Tubas, Nablus, and Tulkarem as follows in the table. Adapting schools has an added value impact on children. They develop a sense of independence as they can move freely inside the school facilities, they can socialize with their classmates while spending time in the playgrounds, and they feel that the school environment is friendly. At the same time the counselors work on sensitizing the school community on the rights of persons with disability in order to help them better support their peers who suffer from disability, and change the stigma and preconceived ideas about disability. Eventually all of these efforts contribute to encouraging school attendance among children with disabilities. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that later in March 2015 the Rehabilitation Program has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to provide adaptation services and awareness campaigns to six governmental schools under the Directorate of South Hebron-Yatta.

District	School receiving adaptation services	Average number of students	Average number of students with disabilities
Ramallah	Ein Qeinya School	200	3
	Silwad Girls' School	650	3
Jenin & Tubas	Hasshad Primary School	245	1
	Tyaseer Secondary Boys School	200	1
	Ein Bayda Secondary School	212	3
Nablus	Beit Furik Primay School	550	5
	Telfet Secondary Girls School	492	3
	Beta Primary Girls School	496	2
Tulkarem	Zannoubia Primary Girls School	352	4
	Saida Boys Secondary School	200	5
	Qaffin Primary Boys School	450	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>4047</b>	<b>33</b>

In addition, the Rehabilitation Program was able to adapt 4 public buildings to facilitate the accessibility of persons with disability in order to benefit from available services. Following is an overview of those buildings.

District	Public building receiving adaptation services	Average number of daily users	Average number of persons with disabilities
Jenin & Tubas	PRCS Hospital	170	43
Nablus	Directorate of Education	130	10
Tulkarem	West Nazli Health Center	100	15
	East Nazli Health Center	150	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>550</b>	<b>88</b>

## Medical urgent assistive aids

For persons with disability, the rehabilitation process cannot be real without providing some basic and urgent assistive aids. Therefore the Rehabilitation Program succeeded in serving 43 persons with disability by either subsidizing physiotherapy and occupational therapy or offering technical assistive aids (like wheelchairs, crutches, artificial limbs, etc.). The following table provides further details:

Medical urgent assistive aids	Number of beneficiaries
Technical aids	33
Physiotherapy	5
Medicine	1
Contribution to surgery costs	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

### Upgrading the skills of the Palestinian social workers and counsellors

The Training Unit implements a variety 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

- Trainings on crisis intervention were organized in Jerusalem;
- Trainings in using the 'Butterfly Hug' techniques were organized in Tulkarem ;
- Trainings on using the 'Manual of Psychosocial Intervention during Emergencies' –IASC Guidelines- were held for the counselors and social workers of the Ministry of Education as well as those of the community based organizations all over the West Bank districts;
- Trainings on 'Psychological First Aid' were organized in Ramallah and Jerusalem;
- Upgrading trainings were held for the social workers of the Early Childhood Programs in post-traumatic stress disorders as well as for the social workers of the Children's Village (S.O.S) on how to build supporting groups.

#### At the internal level

- The Hebron team counselors and volunteers received training on advanced techniques in group counseling;
- A number of administrative staff received trainings on partners' guidelines and procedures, children safeguarding policies, and monitoring and evaluation.



#### University students

9 students from the different universities of the West Bank, studying social work and/or psychology, received training and supervision at the Rehabilitation Program for four months.

#### At the international level

The Rehabilitation Program in partnership with HAP UK & Ireland, has recently implemented the first level of the basic training in 'Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing' (EMDR) in May 2015 in Turkey. The training was attended by 28 participants from various Arab countries - Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Palestine - who have professional backgrounds in the field of psychology and mental health and who devote high efforts to serve the refugees and the victims of political violence in their countries.

## Research

On April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, the Research and Training Unit of the Program in partnership with Save the Children succeeded in producing a research document on “The Accessibility of children with disabilities to educational, social and health services in the West Bank”. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct this research and the results showed that there is a huge lack of services available for children with disabilities on educational, health and social protection levels and that there are obstacles and barriers that limit their access to those services. The research revealed the hard reality of discrimination and poverty these children live through and the urgent need for making a change on the national level to better serve this marginalized group.

## Looking forward

The director of the Rehabilitation Program, through his trip to South Korea in April 2015, succeeded in restoring hope for one of the Program’s old dreams and ambitions in building a professional stress management center. A dream that was delayed due to funding restrictions will be made possible through the support of the Institute of Light Finders and planned for the year 2016. The center will be located in the heart of the Shepherds’ Field in Beit Sahour adjacent to the Rehabilitation Program’s premises.



## Promoting community responsibility towards persons with disability and the traumatized

Within the first six months of 2015, the Rehabilitation Program through its field teams was able to implement many activities aiming at advocating and lobbying for the rights of persons with disability and the victims of the political violence. More than half of those activities, around 154 activities were implemented in partnership with other organizations with whom the Program has established networks for cooperation.



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

58 coordination meetings and field visits were held at the local level that aimed at raising public awareness on concepts of disability and diversity in addition to sensitizing and increasing the commitment of public and private sectors on supporting the rights of persons with disability and the survivors of political violence.

Coordination meetings were held with the Child Protection Cluster and the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights in organizing the Palestinian Child Day in April 2015. A number of periodic meetings were held as well with the Advocacy Coordination Committees for Disability at the districts level aiming at coordinating efforts to jointly implement advocacy activities. In addition a coordination meeting between the Advocacy Committee and the General Director of Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Labor was held to discuss the need for adapting some articles within the law of labor concerned with the rights of persons with disability.

A series of coordination meetings were done with governmental organizations such as the Directorate of Education in the different districts in order to facilitate the work of the Rehabilitation Program teams. At the same time several meetings were held with institutions and companies that provide vocational and academic training for persons with disability in order to plan for tailor-made trainings in the near future. In order to facilitate the employment of this target group, those meetings were followed by a number of workshops that were held in cooperation with the chambers of commerce and industry in the different districts in which private sector companies, representatives of municipalities, the ministry of local government, and service councils participated together with persons with disability.

## Awareness raising activities

97 workshops / lectures / 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. The main outputs were seen in strengthening the role of persons with disabilities in their communities by enhancing their abilities and raising their awareness about their rights and responsibilities. A special attention was given to highlight the importance of activating the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disabilities as a main body providing support to this group especially in marginalized areas by enhancing their access to services provided through public and private institutions. Most importantly the role of the Union was seen as the main body to monitor the violations being done against them in governmental, civil, and private organizations.

Participants at those activities were introduced to the different types of disabilities, the rights of persons with disabilities, their crucial role in supporting them and in the process of applying the law in their

favor as well as the appropriate terminology to be used when addressing them.

The workshops held with private sector institutions resulted in signing 6 Memorandums of Understanding to facilitate the employment of persons with disability in addition to signing 10 Memorandums to facilitate the training of persons with disability.

### **Activities with educational institutions**

39 activities were organized with either schools or universities within the different districts of the West Bank. Those activities aimed at raising public awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities, their needs and the challenges they face in their lives. The public were also informed about reasons for disability, the different forms of disability and ways for prevention. Educating the public 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. The main results of those initiatives were the cooperation with the directorates of Education at the districts' level, the formation of cultural and friendship committees within schools to facilitate and support the reintegration process of students with disabilities, the formation of 'legal clinic' for following up on complaints from and provide legal counseling to persons with disability as well as organizing a set of advocacy activities within universities.

In general activities with schools and universities included theatrical performances that discussed the marginalization and exclusion of persons with disability within the work place and the community in general as well as the exploitation of children with disability in labor. Other activities included stress release activities and fun days at schools where students with disability interacted with their peers with the aim of enhancing their inclusion in their schools.

### **Celebratory and public events**

During the organization of the Palestinian Child's Day celebrations, the Rehabilitation Program successfully implemented 13 centralized activities to emphasize the right of the Palestinian children to protection as well as to other rights as stipulated in the international conventions. Hundreds of children who came from villages affected by the Segregation Wall, and children suffering from political violence as well children residing in rehabilitation centers in the cities participated in those activities during which they received small gifts. It is worth mentioning that the Rehabilitation Program participated in all activities organized by the Child Protection Network as well as the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights. These activities have contributed to raising children's awareness on the dangers of child labor as well and the importance of demanding for protection from exploitation and abuse by emphasizing the roles of the different organizations in providing safety measures in the fields of health, education and community participation. Similar activities included festivals, stress release activities and artistic activities, drawing on the walls of the schools as well as the cultivation of forest trees and perennial trees, and cleaning the streets of the villages and water resources which emphasized the importance of volunteering and social solidarity. Peaceful marches that resulted in the submission of 9 petitions demanding for child protection to decision makers were organized in different places as well as visits to the elderly, the homeless and the children with disabilities residing in specialized institutions. It is worth highlighting that many activities included the participation and involvement of children with light to severe intellectual disabilities as well as other groups of children with learning difficulties, and those with physical disabilities in implementing several activities.

### Meetings with decision-makers

2 meetings were held with a number of institutions and decision-makers who provide services to ex-detainee children. The meetings resulted in the formation of the “Child Detention Working Group” led by the Rehabilitation Program with its main members being: Save the Children- oPt Country Office, Commission for the Affairs of Detainees and Ex-detainees, Médecins Du Monde – Switzerland, Defence for Children International – Palestine Section, and UNICEF. The group aims at planning on the longer-term for approaching child detention and making sure that all stakeholders are fulfilling their obligations, and being faithful to their mandate in child protection. Other members will be invited to join the group later in 2015.

### Media activities

A press conference was held in Hebron with the presence of a number of media outlets, TV stations, radio stations, the press, etc. aiming at advocating for the issue of child detention in Palestine and emphasizing the importance of the media role in exposing those violations, demanding for documenting similar acts, and calling for referring the issue of child detention to the International Criminal Court. Participating organizations of the Rehabilitation Program, Defence for Children International – Palestine Section, the Commission for the Affairs of Detainees and Ex-detainees, and the Prisoners’ Club talked to the media about the impact of child detention on all aspects of children’s lives.

### 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	1163	583	1746
Ex-detainees	39	196	235
Children and families	4707	3778	8485
Staff of educational institutions	517	383	900
Staff of local institutions	289	271	560
Staff of international institutions	39	33	72
Students of schools and universities	811	532	1343
<b>Total</b>	<b>7565</b>	<b>5776</b>	<b>13341</b>

### Fact Sheet: Our Work in Numbers



Direct beneficiaries receiving rehabilitation services	448
Counseling sessions	4276
Beneficiaries receiving vocational assessment	120
Beneficiaries receiving career counseling	238
Beneficiaries receiving vocational training	74
Facilitation of employment of persons with disability	12
Self-employment projects	9
Beneficiaries receiving academic rehabilitation	120
Adaptations of residences and buildings for the use of persons with disability	37
Beneficiaries receiving medical urgent assistive aids	40
Trainees from other organizations who received training	504
Trainees from our staff	25
University students trainees	9
International trainees	28
Activities implemented in partnership with other organizations	154
Coordination meetings and field visits held on the local level	58
Awareness raising workshops / lectures / meetings, etc.	97
Activities organized with schools and universities within the different districts of the West Bank	39
Celebratory and public events	13
Targeted groups by the advocacy and awareness activities	13341

<i>Through our distinguished projects</i>	
Emergency interventions	822
Children and adults reached through emergency interventions	10133
children receiving group counseling	1738
Children and caregivers who attended recreational day activities	11875
Children and caregivers who attended fun open days	4454
Children and caregivers who attended stress release activities	1032
Children and caregivers who participated in parades	3985
Stimulation social, cultural and environmental initiatives	24
Community advocacy campaigns	2
Community awareness sessions	10
Caregivers who attended sensitization sessions and psychosocial group support	890
CBO's & MoEHE school counselors participating in the empowerment and training sessions	332
Signed MoU's to facilitate the access of persons with disability to the right of decent work	16
Private sector companies attending workshops to promote diversity and PWD's rights	72
Ex-detainee children evaluated	145
Families of detainee and ex-detainee children evaluated	141
Ex-detainee children and families of detainees and ex-detainees attending ventilation weekends	252