



Introduction

The year 2015, could be described as the year of vicious turbulence for Palestinians. It has witnessed an acceleration in human rights violations¹, especially after September, seen through the sharp increase in settlers' violence, unlawful killing, forced displacements, arrest and torture, movement restrictions, and many other illegal acts. The enormous effect of this unrest has taken its toll on the coping mechanisms and psychosocial and physical wellbeing of Palestinians, and a growing number of persons with disabilities. As a result the YMCA, through its dedicated staff and field teams, has invested huge efforts in supporting the marginalized groups of survivors of political conflict and those who live with disabilities to enable them to attain their rights and achieve their immediate and long-term psychosocial wellbeing.

The year 2015 witnessed big achievements on the level of provision of rehabilitative and re-integrative support to its target groups as will be seen throughout the coming sections of this bulletin. But what is worth highlighting here is the unprecedented efforts exacerbated in 1930 emergency interventions conducted by the Psychosocial Emergency Teams distributed in all the West Bank districts. Not only the number of daily interventions was higher than planned for 2015, but also focused interventions were designed and implemented in highly conflicted areas, specifically in East Jerusalem, Hebron, and the eastern slopes of the West Bank where human rights violations were the highest.

On another level, we were able to pursue some of the results and recommendations of the last strategic planning done for the YMCA in terms of improving our communication tools, specifically the launch of the new bilingual website of the YMCA (www.ej-ymca.org/rehab), and issuing the first update bulletin in July 2015 that provided a holistic description of its achievements during the first six months of the year. The bulletin will continue to be issued on a semi-annual basis. Both the new website and the bulletin bring the valuable message and resources to people throughout the world and serve as a gateway and catalyst to attract other sponsors and resources that would further support the YMCA in reaching out to those who suffer most.

As we have survived quite a pressuring year, full of dedicated hard work, we look forward to 2016 as a new year that renews hope for Palestinian children and youth to live a better life where they obtain equal rights and opportunities and enjoy living in dignity.

¹ In the year 2015, Palestinian injuries caused by the Israeli forces in the West Bank reached 12500, of which many resulted in disabilities, while fatalities reached 127. The bi-weekly average of Israeli military search and arrest operations into the West Bank was 85. Settler-related violence in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), resulted in 132 property damage incidents and 89 casualty incidents. While the number of Palestinians displaced due to demolitions in area C reached 564, and in East Jerusalem it reached 72. www.ochaopt.org, 2015

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



Through its Counseling and Supervision Department, the YMCA continues to be the main provider of psychosocial rehabilitation support targeting persons with disability and the survivors of political violence in all West Bank Districts including East Jerusalem, through the holistic approach it adopts to make sure that its services enable its target groups, their families and their surrounding communities to practice their rights on the different levels. The main support provided through the YMCA's eleven field teams is psychosocial support and counseling that is conducted on the individual as well as the group levels based on initial assessment.

In order to contribute to the overall wellness of the participant, the key partner in this process is the family who happens to be a main source of support to him/her. Family members are provided with techniques and skills to better understand their children's rights and needs and respond to them in addition to positively communicate with and encourage them. In many cases, family members receive counseling sessions and are taught techniques to manage their stress, especially those who have one of their children detained. Usually the minute of military attack on the house and brutal arrest of the child leaves parents traumatized.

O.S., a 14 year old boy from Qalqiliya, got detained twice at a very early age. Detention left him in deep fear from seeing military forces, feelings of rage and anger filled his soul, feelings of guilt controlled his mind, not to mention the continuous nightmares, heavily smoking, breaking of assets, isolation, and aggressive attitudes towards his family. His family felt helpless in front of his uncontrollable rage and fury and his withdrawal from society. The YMCA's team worked with him and his family. They gave him space to release his anger and regain self-control through the many counseling sessions conducted. The family as well was taught techniques to better communicate with and support their son. O.S. received academic rehabilitation services and was convinced to return back to school. Today he is a leading social young boy who participates regularly in local activities organized through the municipality. O.S. said, "I feel strong enough to revisit the place where I got arrested and I can talk to people about my experience... I feel relieved... my family understands my needs and treat me much better than before... today I am going to buy new clothes to wear upon my return to school".

During the reporting period, our teams were confronted with the dilemma of mobilizing the limited human and financial resources available to meet the unexpected numbers of survivors of political violence. Our support targeted all those affected; military attacks, home raids, arrest, interrogation, detention, home demolition, home evacuation, etc. In 2015, detention rates sharply increased in the West Bank, especially in two main areas; East Jerusalem and Hebron. In East Jerusalem, detention of children was done differently as many boys were sentenced to home arrest where the family became the oppressor in the eyes of the children. Working with these families was highly challenging as family relations and bonds were dramatically affected and children were losing their scholar years. Academic rehabilitation represented a major intervention in working with those children. A special focus was made during the reporting period on supporting the wives of those killed in the conflict.

During 2015, 8053 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 support through the different rehabilitative and integrative services. It is worth mentioning that of the 796 direct participants that joined us during the reporting period, 48.61% were persons with disabilities, 48.24% were survivors of the political violence, and 3.15% suffered from both situations. The demographic analysis highlights the fact that 73% of our participants were youth, and 70% of our participants came from villages and remote areas 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. An estimated value of as little as 3% were very young children of 6 years old and less, while an estimation of around 3.5% were older adults of 36 years old and more. The YMCA's eleven teams distributed in all West Bank Districts have been highly devoted and loyal in reaching out to those marginalized groups even in scattered areas that cannot be reached by vehicles.

District	Number		Age				Place of Residence			Total
	Male	Female	0-11	12-18	19-25	>26	City	Village	Camp	
Hebron	221	63	38	140	70	36	60	189	35	284
Ramallah	76	12	7	56	16	9	40	39	9	88
Jenin & Tubas	56	29	14	38	15	18	8	72	5	85
Jerusalem & Bethlehem & Jericho	90	17	15	63	16	13	19	84	4	107
Tulkarem & Qalqilya	63	27	2	28	45	15	18	61	11	90
Nablus & Salfit	95	47	25	46	44	27	24	110	8	142
Total	601	195	101	371	206	118	169	555	72	796
Percentage	76%	24%	13%	47%	26%	15%	21%	70%	9%	100%

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



Accessibility

Through the YMCA's long experience in providing support to rehabilitate and integrate people with disabilities, it was evident that in order to affect real change in 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. During the reporting period, the YMCA was able to adapt 60 residential units in all the districts of the West Bank including East Jerusalem through building ramps, installing handrails, and adapting bathrooms, kitchens, and home entrances. These adaptations enabled participants with disabilities to move in and out of their homes easily and use bathrooms by themselves the fact which developed their self-dependence, contributed to building their self-esteem and eventually enabled them to live in dignity. Within our quest to support the marginalized groups of people with disabilities in Palestine to attain their right to education, we have succeeded in adapting 17 schools in the districts of Ramallah, Jenin & Tubas, Nablus, Tulkarem, and Hebron currently hosting around 4825 students of whom around 38 students live with disabilities. Adapting schools has an added value impact on children. 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 live with disability, and change the stigma and preconceived ideas about disability. Our work in the schools was coordinated with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to provide adaptation services and awareness campaigns.

In addition, the YMCA was able to adapt 4 public buildings operating within the health and educational sectors in the districts of Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, and Tulkarem to facilitate the accessibility of persons with disability in order to benefit from available services. The buildings received a daily average number of visitors reaching 550 persons of whom 88 live with disabilities.

In the District of Hebron, 7 clinics located in the remote and marginalized areas were adapted to facilitate the provision of health services to persons with disabilities within the local communities. The areas were chosen in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

During the year of 2015, the following was achieved:

Adaptations	Number of units
Houses	60
Schools	17
Clinics	7
Public buildings	4
Total	88

Medical urgent assistive aids

For many persons with disability, the rehabilitation process cannot be real without providing some basic and urgent assistive aids. Therefore the YMCA succeeded in serving 133 persons with disability by either subsidizing physiotherapy and occupational therapy or offering technical assistive aids (like wheelchairs, crutches, artificial limbs, etc.), medicine, and financial contributions to surgery costs. Some participants needed more than one aid to help them live better. Further details to follow:

Medical urgent assistive aids	Number of participants
Technical aids	87
Physiotherapy	43
Medicine	2
Contribution to surgery costs	1
Total	133

Vocational Rehabilitation

Within the year of 2015, the YMCA supported the vocational rehabilitation of 403 participants of 15 years and older. Of those, 347 participants received career counseling through the support of our counselors that enabled them to set a vocational goal for their lives. The career counseling entailed discussing the abilities and interests of the participants and the economic reality of their respective communities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Department as well, was able to assess 235 participants from all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Of those, 137 were reached through the mobile unit which proved to be an imperative asset for the YMCA. 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 136 participants from the West Bank districts in the subjects of computer technology, maintenance of mobile devices, hairdressing, autotronics, etc. In addition, the YMCA facilitated the employment of 12 persons with disabilities in the private and public sectors. 20 self-employment projects were supported to help the participants 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, shops for selling stationery and accessories, women's clothes, livestock and poultry, barber shop, sewing machines, etc. 30% of those projects were established by empowered females.



The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program

Update Bulletin #2
January 1st to December 31st, 2015

During the reporting period, the YMCA supported the vocational rehabilitation of 403 participants, as follows:

Academic rehabilitation services	Number of beneficiaries
Vocational assessment	235
Facilitation of employment of PWD's	12
Self-employment projects	20
Vocational training	136
Total	403

Towards the last few months of 2015, the Vocational Rehabilitation Department underwent a thorough review and evaluation of its work and the scales used. Adaptations to scales and questionnaires were proposed and discussed among senior staff.

Academic Rehabilitation

Following the YMCA's quest in enabling its participants 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, the YMCA supported the academic rehabilitation of 229 participants, as follows:

Academic rehabilitation services	Number of beneficiaries
Remedial Education	183
Transportation (back & forth)	45
School fees	1
Total	229

Objective 3: Upgrading the skills of the Palestinian social workers and counsellors



The Training Unit continues to implement 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

The following trainings were provided to other NGOs and GOs:

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
Building supporting groups	Children's Village (S.O.S), (social workers and volunteers)	18	2 days, May 5-6th 2015
Post-traumatic stress disorders in the aftermath of emergencies (upgrading training)	Early Childhood Programs, (social workers and volunteers)	37	1 day, May 20th 2015
Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings - IASC	Social workers and volunteers of a number of Community-Based Organizations , West Bank districts	136	8 trainings during the period of May 20th – June 9th 2015
Psychological First Aid	Social workers and volunteers of local organizations from Jerusalem	15	1 day, May 25th 2015
Psychological First Aid	Social workers and volunteers of local organizations from Ramallah	24	1 day, May 26th 2015
Guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings – IASC	Ministry of Education and Higher Education, West Bank districts of Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Salfit, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron (counselors and social workers)	242	trainings during the period of 11 April 8th – May 11th 2015

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
'Butterfly Hug' technique in working with children	Counselors of local organizations in Tulkarem	10	February 28th 2015
Crisis intervention	Counselors and members of local organizations in Jerusalem	22	2 Days, February 2nd and March 9th 2015
Right to health for persons with disabilities'	Ministry of Health in Hebron (field workers)	15	1 day, July 26th 2015
Right to education for persons with disabilities'	Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Hebron (field workers)	16	1 day, August 4th, 2015
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in the West Bank (counselors and volunteers)	32	1 day, September 29th 2015
Positive parenting	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in the West Bank (counselors and volunteers)	32	1 day, September 30th 2015
Psychological First Aid	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in East Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem, and Hebron (counselors)	13	2 days, November 29-30th 2015
Psychosocial First Aid	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in Hebron (volunteers)	16	1 day, December 15th 2015
Initial skills in expressionist art	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in Bethlehem (counselors and volunteers)	14	1 day, November 7th, 2015
Initial skills in expressionist art	Psychosocial Emergency Teams in Nablus (counselors and volunteers)	18	1 day, November 9th, 2015
Positive adaptation in children	Psychosocial Emergency Teams (counselors)	27	3 days, December 1st -3rd 2015

At the internal level

The following trainings were provided to our staff:

Training subject	Organized by	Participants	Number	Duration
Accountability	ACT Alliance	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	1	February 2015
Group counseling - advanced	East Jerusalem YMCA – Rehabilitation Program	Rehabilitation Program, Hebron (counselors and volunteers)	19	2 days, May 14-15th 2015
Adopting child safeguarding policy	Save the Children oPt	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	1 day, May 20th 2015
Guidelines and procedures of UNICEF in partnership agreements	UNICEF	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	2 days, May 26-28th 2015
Initial skills on EMDR	East Jerusalem YMCA – Rehabilitation Program	Rehabilitation Program (counselors)	32	1 day, September 29th 2015
Basics of monitoring and evaluation	UNICEF	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	1 day, June 2nd 2015
Resilience Practitioners' Manual	Save the Children oPt	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	3 days, August 11-13th 2015

Training subject	Organized by	Participants	Number	Duration
Fundraising	Embrace the Middle East and Y Care International	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	7 days, September 2015
Quality Humanitarian Response	Save the Children oPt	Rehabilitation Program (administrative staff)	2	5 days, November 22-26th 2015

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	67	4 months

At the international level

The following trainings were arranged abroad:

Training Subject	Participants	Number	Duration
EMDR ² – level 1 ³	Psychologists and mental health practitioners from Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Palestine, who work with the refugees and the victims of political violence in their countries	28	4 days, May 12-15th 2015
EMDR – level 2	Psychologists and mental health practitioners from Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Palestine, who work with the refugees and the victims of political violence in their countries	22	5 days, October 12-16th 2015

Research

On April 1st 2015, the YMCA's Research and Training Unit in partnership with Save the Children International 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, which represents a professional asset of knowledge for advocacy and interventions, as the research shows 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 enable this marginalized group to practice its rights. This research will be used as an important resource in addressing issues on the rights of persons with disability in the fields of education, health, and social affairs.

2 Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. EMDR therapy has proved highly effective in working with cases that suffer from repeated trauma and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders in particular, and in maintaining their psychological wellness. It has been used in Palestine since 2005.

3 The training came as a response to the urgent need in various parts of the Arab world to intervene with cases that suffer from repeated trauma and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders. It was implemented by the Rehabilitation Program in partnership with HAP UK & Ireland.

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



The main highlight of the year 2015, was the adoption of the **Disability Policy** by the mother organization, East Jerusalem YMCA, which has been produced and developed by the YMCA with consultation with groups of persons with disability. This policy which aims at preserving the rights of persons with disability either working within the YMCA or being participants within any of its projects. The policy is binding to the management as well as staff working for the YMCA.

In September 2015, the Rehabilitation Program's Director and Development Coordinator were also privileged to attend Embrace the Middle East Annual Service in both the Cathedrals of Glasgow and London where they met with the main supporters of Embrace the Middle East and talked about the work of the YMCA, the challenges it faces given the conflicted areas it works in, and its partnership with Embrace.

During the reporting period, the YMCA through its field teams was able to implement many activities aiming at advocating and lobbying for the rights of persons with disability and the survivors of the political violence. 193 activities were implemented in partnership with other organizations with whom the YMCA has established networks for cooperation.

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

During the reporting period, 121 coordination meetings and field visits were held on 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. Those efforts resulted in the following:

- A number of workshops were held targeting different groups from local communities, to local governance, civil society, and governmental organizations.
- Coordination and participation with the Child Protection Network and the Palestinian Network for

Children Rights in organizing the Palestinian Child Day in April 2015.

- A number of periodic meetings were held for the Advocacy Coordination Committees for Disability at the districts level aiming at coordinating efforts to jointly implement advocacy activities.
- 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.
- Visiting several 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.
- Holding a series of coordination meetings with governmental organizations such as the Directorate of Education in the different districts in order to facilitate the work of the YMCA teams.
- Coordination field visits were carried out to governmental and private sector organizations to facilitate the employment of persons with disability.
- Coordination and participation with the Coordination Committee of Persons with Disabilities Organizations to plan and arrange for the Disability Day celebrations in different areas of the West Bank.
- Visiting a number of stakeholders and partners aiming at setting clear referral mechanisms to ensure that participants receive comprehensive support.
- A meeting was conducted in Jenin and included the YMCA, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Health Work Committee, and Tubas Governorate to form a committee to enhance and activate referral mechanisms in their area for the benefit of persons with disability.

Awareness raising activities

During the reporting period, 138 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. The main outputs were as follows:

- 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.
- Through the workshops held, we were able to familiarize the participants with 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. The impact of those workshops was positive especially in the case of the organizations' representatives who learnt the appropriate terminology to be used when addressing persons with disability. The participants in these workshops explicitly talked about the importance of their support to activate the disability law and the crucial role the persons with disability themselves can play in being part of advocacy campaigns.
- Reaching out to a number of local institutions from different areas to raise the awareness of persons

with disabilities and their families on the appropriate terminology to be used when addressing them in addition to giving them space to talk about their stories, the challenges they face, and the way to cope with the disability.

- Addressing the mothers of children with disability in several villages and remote areas and raising their awareness on the appropriate terminology to be used when communicating with persons with disability in addition to enhancing their skills in positively communicating with their children, understanding their rights, and teaching them on disability prevention.
- 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.
- A number of awareness raising workshops were organized in Area C in Hebron targeting local mothers, persons with disabilities, decision-makers, and stakeholders in the field of disability, including the General Union for Disability, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Palestinian Children Relief Organization, municipal councils, UNRWA, among others.
- The workshops conducted in the northern districts came out with significant outputs, including: making recommendations to the government on the main services needed within the health and educational sectors; setting priorities in developing services for persons with disability; assigning a staff member at Kafr Qaddoum municipal council to collect data on persons with disability in their area and to facilitate referral to other specialized service providers; capacity building of young women with disabilities to form youth leadership groups; reporting the main recommendations and outputs of the organizational meetings in Tulkarem District to the Governor who in his turn reached out to the Minister of Local Government.

Activities with educational institutions

During the reporting period, 71 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 participants 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 outputs were as follows:

- Raising the awareness of the supervisors/counselors/teachers of the Directorate of Education in different districts on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and the appropriate terminology to be used when addressing them. An agreement was reached to reactivate the school radio and the formation of a cultural committee to activate the school board where they can write success stories of persons with disability and hold interviews with students with disability who managed to reintegrate into their school.
- Different activities targeted school children and staff to sensitize them on issues related to disability and how to communicate with and provide support to colleagues with disabilities. The activities also aimed at raising their awareness on the reasons for disability, the different types and prevention methods. The impact of those efforts was evident when schools began forming friendship committees to provide support for students with disabilities. 26 friendship committees were established in all West Bank areas through which a positive attitude was evident within the school community to enable the students with disability to reintegrate successfully in their academic lives. Action plans

were set to facilitate the accessibility of persons with disability to educational, medical and social services. Through forming those committees, we raised the community's awareness on the disability law and the challenges that persons with disability face and the importance of reactivating the role of the General Palestinian Union for Persons with Disability. A petition was submitted to the Ministry of Health to demand it to provide needed medicine for persons with disability.

- A set of activities targeted university students of Social Work during their internships as well as students of Law from the different universities of the West Bank districts. Those efforts resulted in the students' initiative to establish a '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 their universities.
- The 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.
- Organizing a documentary show in Ramallah in partnership with Jerusalem Abu Dis University, Jerusalem Open University, and Palestinian Medical Relief Society which focused on the personal story of one of the YMCA's participants who live with disability, Duaa'.

Celebratory and public events

During the organization of the Palestinian Child's Day celebrations, the YMCA successfully implemented 27 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 YMCA participated in all activities organized by the Child Protection Network as well as the Palestinian Network for Children's Rights. Children with disabilities have participated in many of those activities which 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.

The main outputs can be summarized as follows:

- Implement stress release activities and artistic activities like dance, sing, play, Muppets, circus, poetry, clowns, etc. in addition to theatrical performances that aimed at raising awareness on rights of children. Some areas witnessed drawing on the walls of the schools to call for the rights of children with disabilities. Many activities were implemented by the children themselves who called for their basic human rights and sent appeals to local and international stakeholders to provide them with protection and safety.
- A number of initiatives and voluntary activities were implemented by children, which included the cultivation of forest trees and perennial trees, and cleaning the streets of the villages and water resources. Those initiatives aimed at raising children's awareness on the importance of volunteering and social solidarity. The children included areas endangered by the Segregation Wall in their planting efforts and organized a peaceful march along the side of the Wall holding banners calling for their rights. Among the initiatives, the children visited the elderly, the homeless and the children with disabilities residing in specialized institutions to share stories and experiences and socialize in

a fun atmosphere while bringing roses for them as a caring gesture.

- The children participated with representatives of partner institutions in a peaceful march that started from the Governor's office in the district of Jenin and heading towards the office of the Red Cross carrying a letter to the Director of the Red Cross demanding the international community to provide protection and safety to the Palestinian children from the Israeli violations to their rights through the arrest, detention and violence used by the military against them.
- In another peaceful march in the district of Bethlehem that headed towards the office of the Governor, 200 children carried a letter to be submitted through the Governor to the President of Palestine to emphasize the rights of the children as stipulated by international conventions. The march was carried out with the participation of members of organizations at the Child Protection Network and the Palestinian Network for the Children's Rights. Similar letters were also submitted to the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights, the Director of Bethlehem Police Department, the Directorate of Education, and the Ministry of Labor. A special petition calling for protecting children from economic exploitation and enhancing their ability to question the accountability of decision makers and pressuring them to implement the law was submitted to the government and the private sector.
- Another march was done in Hebron calling for protecting children and abiding by the law on children rights. A session with decision makers was held and aimed at sending out a clear message to local and civil organizations on the importance of protecting children's rights. Decision makers represented the Governorate office, the Directorates of Education, Health, Labor, and Social Affairs, the police, the public prosecution and the civil defense.
- A number of festivals were held for children living in areas that are exposed to harassment and provocations by the Israeli military and settlers that purposely target children, particularly the areas of Madama and Qasra as well as in Hebron city and Jerusalem. Festivals were also held in remote and marginalized areas that suffer from political violence, military attacks, home demolitions and evacuations, particularly in Bedouin communities and the Jordan Valley. Another significant festival was organized for the children of Duma and Jorish after the burning and killing of the baby Ali Dawabsha by Israeli settlers, an incident that moved the whole nation in Palestine.
- As part of organizing the World Day against the Exploitation of Children, the YMCA in partnership with the Child Protection Network and Defence for Children International – Palestine Section carried out an awareness campaign on the risk of economic exploitation of children which included distributing leaflets, posters and other printed materials. The campaign was carried out in partnership with representatives of partner organizations and 40 children who headed towards the industrial zones and targeted 150 children who actually work there and the owners of the workshops.
- Organizing an honorary event for students with disability who passed the General Secondary Examination 'Tawjihi' successfully in several areas of the West Bank.
- Organizing a protest in front of Jenin Governorate offices calling for the rights of persons with disability which was attended by 250 participants, and another protest in Bethlehem, attended by 100 participants.
- Organizing a debate among persons with disability and organizations working in this field on one side and the governor of Qalqiliya on another side. The Governor stressed the important role that persons with disability play in the society, while the representative of the Union of Persons with Disability highlighted the weak application of laws and the need for local organizations to stand together to call for law enforcement which should enable persons with disability to practice their rights.

- In Tulkarem as well, the Governor was part of the public events organized for persons with disability and highlighted the importance of applying the law in saving the rights of persons with disability especially in employment at the levels of government and civil society organizations.
- The YMCA participated with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Women Renaissance Society in Ramallah, in holding a three-day summer camp dedicated for persons with disability which included stress release activities, awareness on rights and responsibilities, and highlighting the importance of inclusion of persons with disability into the society.
- Organizing a number of festivals in different areas of the West Bank to celebrate the Disability Day during which clear messages were sent out calling for the rights of this marginalized group, and changing the society's attitude towards them to be based on a human-rights approach.
- A major output of the organized public events was the promise made by the Governorates and Country President's office to follow up on distributing wheelchairs to persons with disabilities as well as securing a number of bursaries to enroll persons with disabilities into higher education programs.

Meetings with decision-makers

- 4 meetings were held by the "Child Detention Working Group" led by the YMCA with its main members being: Save the Children- oPt Country Office, Commission for the Affairs of Detainees and Ex-detainees, Defence for Children International – Palestine Section, UNICEF, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Social Affairs. 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.
- 3 meetings were held by the Coordination Committee aiming at planning for the Disability Day at the national level, referring persons with disabilities to receive holistic support, and planning for setting a central debate to hold public and private sectors' decision-makers accountable on applying the rules and regulations set for disability. The meetings targeted the Governorate of Hebron, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Justice, Chambers of Commerce, Business Men Consortium, Engineers Union, among others.

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.
- The YMCA was hosted at 'Mumken', a program developed by Ma'an News Agency and aired through its satellite channel, to introduce the results of the research conducted on the services provided to persons with disabilities within the social, health, and educational sectors.
- Through the YMCA's Media Unit, 91 media articles were disseminated through the different social media networks, newspapers, and YMCA website.
- Live coverage by a number of media outlets of the solidarity campaign organized in Hebron to support the victims of the conflict.

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	2,322	1,896	4,218
Ex-detainees	93	270	363
Children and families	9,441	10,939	20,380
Staff of educational institutions	1,126	834	1,960
Staff of local institutions	621	733	1,354
Staff of international institutions	46	78	124
Students of schools and universities	3,167	1,974	5,141
Total	16,816	16,724	33,540

Looking forward

In April 2015, the YMCA was able to restore hope for one of its earlier plans to build a professional stress management center through an agreement with the Institute of Light Finders from South Korea. The center is planned to be built towards the year 2017, in the heart of the Shepherds' Field in Beit Sahour adjacent to the YMCA's premises, with the support of the Institute of Light Finders which will be able to put foundation for such an important center that will respond to the national need to heal the traumatised and care about the mental health practitioners. The YMCA is still looking for potential supporters to help it achieve its plan.



Fact Sheet: Our Work in Numbers



Direct participants receiving rehabilitation support	796
Counseling sessions	8053
Participants receiving vocational assessment	235
Participants receiving career counseling	347
Participants receiving vocational training	136
Facilitation of employment of persons with disability	12
Self-employment projects	20
Participants receiving academic rehabilitation	229
Adaptations of residences, schools, clinics, and public buildings for the use of persons with disability	88
Participants receiving medical urgent assistive aids	133
Trainees from other organizations who received training	687
Trainees from our staff	62
University students trainees	67
International trainees	50
Activities implemented in partnership with other organizations	193
Coordination meetings and field visits held on the local level	121
Awareness raising workshops / lectures / meetings, etc.	138
Activities organized with schools and universities within the different districts of the West Bank	71
Celebratory and public events	27
Targeted groups by the advocacy and awareness activities	33,540

<i>Through our projects</i>	
Emergency interventions	1930
Children and adults reached through emergency interventions	31,187
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	291
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for ex-detainee children	2179
Families of detainee and ex-detainee children evaluated	250
Psychosocial counseling sessions conducted for families of detainee and ex-detainee children	706