

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

Annual Report

2012

A word to be said...

The year 2012 has witnessed a perceptible success for the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program in rendering its holistic services to persons with disability, traumatized, and survivors of political violence.

The continuous commitment of the Program to the human mission for the sake of which it was established continued to constitute the corner stone on which its achievements have been built.

Rehabilitation, psychosocial intervention, advocacy and networking were the main focus of our work. The unique services we render and the holistic intervention we follow with our beneficiaries have not only highly met their needs, but also have increasingly attained the respect of their families, organizations, and local communities who were also involved.

People we serve are regrettably facing systematic disadvantages. They are individuals who have their own needs, ambitions, capabilities and rights; but still, they share the same hope to have equal opportunities as everyone else in the Palestinian society for a productive, fulfilling and decent life. They are people who are hoping to live in a dignified society where opportunities are equal for everyone.

What these people lack is not ability, but OPPORTUNITY... And that's what we try to make possible for them.

This can be achieved when we succeed- along with our stakeholders- to make the essential psychosocial, economic and political real and lasting changes.

Breaking down the walls, removing the barriers and achieving the change cannot be realized without the non-stopping loyalty and commitment of our dedicated staff who hold on their shoulders the responsibility of securing a better life for our targeted groups. It is also the support and generosity of our partners and friends that always give us a big push forward towards achieving our mutual human missions.

Together, we exert strenuous efforts for the sake of realizing a better life for our beneficiaries; a life without discrimination, injustice, oppression, ignorance, isolation and rejection... a better life for all.

Accomplishments

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

Intervening with our beneficiaries has left a significant impact on positively changing the life of our beneficiaries, thereby affecting their future perspectives.

Counseling has not only raised their self-awareness and confidence in their capabilities, but also increased the level of challenging their disability and facing difficulties and problems. It also gave them the capacity to plan for their future.

In fact, following the holistic approach in rehabilitation has always proved to achieve very satisfactory results in terms of reintegrating persons with disability into community, hence securing a better life for them. Besides, many of our beneficiaries cannot reach the state of stability without holistically intervening with them.

An example is a ten-year old girl who has hemiplegia and used to suffer of complete isolation. Upon evaluation her situation, the need for holistically intervening with her was utmost. At the individual level, counseling helped her to accept her disability, raise her self-esteem and enhance her self-confidence.

She has become willing to go to school, to go out of her isolation and to interact with the surrounding environment. To achieve this, there was a need to work with her family to accept their daughter and help her reintegrate into society, as well as with her teachers and colleagues. Besides adapting her home and school to meet her needs, we have referred her to an organization to receive medical rehabilitation.

Today, this girl is enjoying a good mental health, she regularly goes to school, she can move in and out of her house independently, and she socially interacts with her surrounding.

Amongst the statements which many of our beneficiaries with whom we have holistically intervened, the following are to be highlighted:

- *“Today, I feel a big change in my life.”*
- *“Today, I’m born again.”*
- *“My life has changed 180 degrees to the better. Where was I before?”*
- *“Today, I have become capable to plan for my future and specify my priorities.”*
- *I have become capable to deal with others and interact with them without the feelings of shyness and confusion.”*

Furthermore, counseling has apparently helped our beneficiaries to reach a state of stability which thereby constitutes a base for the reintegration process.

A young man who has a physical disability was feeling ashamed of his disability. Accordingly, he used to avoid interacting with people, and in case he was obliged to be present in a public place, all his body began shaking. Upon receiving counseling, this

symptom disappeared and he has become no more isolated, but rather capable to interact and be present amongst people with confidence and without being stressed.

The feedback we got from our beneficiaries and their parents clearly indicated the positive change which our intervention has left on their life, thereby affecting their relationships with their families as well as with their surroundings in the aftermath of accepting themselves and their disabilities.

A 30-year old beneficiary who suffers of paraplegia expressed the positive change by saying:

“Now, I’m more comfortable. I accept myself as a person with disability and I know how to interact with my mother and brother. I also know how to deal with the issues that make me worried, scared and stressed. I see myself of more value.”

Another 29-year old female beneficiary said:

“My perception towards myself and towards society has become positive. I can now deal with people more strongly. I learnt how to think of my future, and I’m now satisfied with myself and my personality. I have also become more capable to communicate with people. Today, I play a leading role since I help people who have disabilities like me.”

What is worth mentioning here, is that counseling significantly contributed to altering the negative thoughts and beliefs which used to control the minds of our beneficiaries to positive ones.

Before terminating the intervention with one of our beneficiaries, he said:

“Counseling helped me to see my future in a positive way after I was living in frustration and isolation.”

From one hand, increasing confidence in them as well as in the others was one of the impacts which counseling left on our beneficiaries. In this regard, a beneficiary said: *“Counseling was reflected on different aspects of my personal life. Long after I was thinking that all people are bad and after I cut my relationships with them, my thoughts have totally changed and today I see them as being good people.”*

From another hand, counseling helped some beneficiaries go back to work and develop a positive perspective towards their future.

Other realized the importance of education in their life and regained the necessary ability and concentration to continue their education.

Upon being exposed to an accident, one of our beneficiaries has become unable to use his left hand and accordingly felt incapable of continuing his professional life. At the end of the counseling process, he expressed that he was born anew and that counseling helped him reconsider the idea of getting back to work, especially after he accepted himself and his disability. Today, this beneficiary is working in a factory in an adequate job that coincides with his capabilities.

During this reporting period, 8193 individual counseling sessions were held for our beneficiaries all over the districts of the West Bank, and a total of 825 beneficiaries both females and males from the entire West Bank were served according to the following distribution:

As noticed from the table above, 80% of our beneficiaries are between 12 and 25 years of age. It is also apparent that a focus was given to the remote areas wherein this was clear from the 68% that reflected the percentage of working with beneficiaries from the different villages.

Area	Gender		Age Group				Location		
	Male	Female	0-11	12-18	19-25	< 26	Town	Village	Camp
Hebron	172	28	11	111	52	26	28	117	55
Ramallah	81	10	7	43	34	7	3	74	14
Jenin and Tubas	107	16	8	55	45	15	14	103	6
Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho	84	19	18	42	25	18	13	78	12
Tulkarem and Qualqilia	98	14	4	42	49	17	23	74	15
Nablus and Salfeet	166	30	22	87	75	12	52	118	26
Total	708	117	70	380	280	95	133	564	128
Percentage	86%	14%	8%	46%	34%	12%	16%	68%	16%

Moreover, we have also focused on working with groups of parents, mothers, children, traumatized, and persons with disability. 505 group counseling sessions were provided.

In fact, the group counseling sessions greatly contributed to altering many negative feelings and approaches of the beneficiaries by means of exchanging experiences amongst the group members, being introduced to the difficulties and problems of others, and supporting one another.



As some of the beneficiaries who participated in group counseling sessions expressed, these sessions constituted a safe place where they can get the support, express their feelings, and ventilate their stresses.

A mother of three children who have complex disability and use wheelchairs said:

“Our situation is very difficult. My husband left me and married another woman because he doesn’t want to be responsible of our children. As a reaction, my parents tried to let me marry another man, but I totally refused and decided to live with my children.

As a result of my decision, everyone left me and since ten years, I have been living the suffering alone and struggling to live. My psychological as well as social circumstances continued to become worse and worse, I became weak and I isolated myself. I only got out of home to meet my children’s needs. Upon participating in group counseling sessions for parents of persons with disability, I found myself there; I found people who can share with me my pain and grief. I felt that I’m not alone and I found the safe and comfortable place where I could talk about my feelings and difficulties. They used to support me and I waited for every session anxiously.

I even used to be the first to arrive and before time just like a child who was waiting for a gift. I have learnt a lot about my rights and the rights of my children. Today, I can control my feelings and I have become more stable in my life. The group has become a source of security and support for me. There, I feel that I am within my family. We have strong relationships with each other, we trust each other and we share many things together. I’m not anymore lonely, I’m not isolated and I refuse stigma and shame of disability. Today, I have the ability to ask for my rights and I don’t anymore feel excited in my society. In life, there is hope.”

Vocational Rehabilitation:

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

In order to receive the vital service of vocational assessment, 403 beneficiaries were referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Program during the year 2012.

As a result of receiving career counseling, 393 beneficiaries were assisted to set a vocational goal through bridging any possible gap amongst their abilities, interests and the job market in the local community. This was followed by cooperation and coordination with different local vocational training centers, organizations, workshops and factories in the purpose of helping these beneficiaries find suitable vocational training opportunities, thereby enabling them to obtain the needed skills and be prepared to join the job market.

This reporting period has witnessed the facilitation of vocational training for 139 beneficiaries and the employment of 35 beneficiaries, thereby constituting a turning point in their lives and leading them to live a decent life.

In the same context, 19 self-employment projects were carried out for the beneficiaries, hence contributing to enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem and enabling them to become self-dependent, productive individuals who can earn their living and live a stable life after being exposed to different types of suffering as a result of disability, detention or/and being exposed to political violence.

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

Type of self-employment project	Number of projects
Grocery	4
Developing a grocery	2
Hair dressing salon and cosmetics corner	1
Internet Café	1
Sheep farm	4
Developing a kitchen utensils shop	1
Kiosk for cleaning materials	1
Moving kiosk	1
Maintenance of bicycles	1
Gift shop	1
Sewing machine	1
Fruits and vegetables shop	1
Total	19

A 23-year-old woman with a disability since birth remained at home until the Rehabilitation Program intervened with her. Upon providing her with psychosocial counseling which was followed by vocational assessment, the beneficiary was enrolled in a hair dressing course after which she began working from home. Later on, she benefited of a self-employment project wherein she began working in her own hair dressing salon where she began also selling cosmetics for the customers. She expressed her happiness and satisfaction; she said that she has become a productive member and that through earning an income she has become self-dependent and self-reliant. She has even become capable of helping her family in some expenses.

Academic Rehabilitation:

There's no doubt that rendering the service of academic rehabilitation to persons with disability contributes to their full reintegration into society. This is true since obtaining their right to learning not only positively affects their psychological status, but also significantly contributes to altering the negative perception of the community towards them, as upon being enrolled into school they can proof to themselves and to the others that they are successful people who can achieve good results.

An example is an eleven-year old girl who has a disability in her foot and cannot stand. The poor financial situation of her parents deprived her from going to school which is far from her residence. Contributing to the transportation fees of this beneficiary to and from school enabled her to return to school and changed her life.

In the same context, contributing to the costs of remedial and literacy eradication lessons for some of the beneficiaries helped in improving their educational achievement and enabled them to continue their studies. One of our beneficiaries could not continue her studies after the eleventh grade due to her disability. Her ability in reading and writing was very weak thereby limiting the choices in front of her. In the aftermath of being enrolled in an illiteracy eradication course, the beneficiary can now read and write. She said:

“Giving me the opportunity to take part in this course equals the whole world for me. I have discovered that I’m living in another world. Today, I can go through a new path.”

Her family said: *“We will not forget what you did to our daughter; the course has changed her and turned her upside down.”*

These two beneficiaries are a sample of success of 53 beneficiaries, both females and males, whose lives have positively changed as a result of receiving the vital service of academic rehabilitation.

The following table sheds more light on this service:

Type of Service	Beneficiaries	
	Male	Female
Transportation to school	17	20
Transportation to university	1	0
Remedial education courses	3	5
Illiteracy eradication lessons	1	1
Maintenance of computer course	1	0
School fees	0	2
Maintenance of mobile phones course	2	0
Total	25	28
Grand Total	53	

Objective 2: Enhance the beneficiaries' physical economic independency.

Adaptation of facilities to become accessible for persons with disability:

There's no doubt that adaptations which took place at the residences of persons with disability, at schools, and public places have facilitated the reintegration process of these disadvantaged persons. This is true since these adaptations have positively affected the psychosocial status of these beneficiaries, enhanced their self-confidence and independence. Moreover, they could move more freely.

This impact was reflected in the words of some of our beneficiaries who benefited of this service; they said:

- *"I don't anymore need anyone to help me go to school."*
- *"I have become capable to go to school without the need for anyone to accompany me."*
- *"I feel more independent and my self-confidence has increased."*

What is worth to be mentioned as well is that these adaptations constitute one of the key factors that contribute to maintaining the psychosocial goals of the counseling process in the sense that executing these adaptations help the beneficiaries feel their importance, maintain their dignity and be able to plan for their future and reach their goals.



Adapting the house of a six year old boy who suffers of hemiplegia and uses a wheelchair has contributed to changing his life. The beneficiary said:

"I couldn't play with my friends; I only used to watch them from far away. I was sad because I like playing, but I couldn't. Today, I can descend easily and play with them."

The adaptation has also enabled this boy to go to school on a regular basis.

The following table sheds light on the adaptations that took place during the year 2012:

Type of Adaptation	Number of Adaptations	
	Male	Female
Adapting a bathroom	11	9
Ramp + Handrail	1	2
Ramp	4	3
Bathroom + Ramp	6	5
Handrail	1	0
Handrail + Bathroom bar	1	0
Adapting the entrance of the house	0	1
Adapting the entrance of the house + bathroom	0	1
Adapting the entrance of the house + handrail	2	0
Adapting the entrance of the house + Ramp	0	1
Wooden Ramp	1	0
Total	27	22
Grand Total	49	

The adaptations that took place at schools have also facilitated the reintegration process of persons with disability into academic life and helped them regain their self-confidence and depend on themselves. Furthermore, the existence of accessible schools has encouraged other students with disability to be enrolled into academic life.



26 schools were adapted during the year 2012 according to the following table:

Name of School	District
Salfeet Secondary School for Boys	Nablus
Samir Abdel Hadi School	Nablus
Tal Secondary School for boys	Nablus
Foqueen Secondary School for Girls	Tulkarem
Shwaikeh Primary School for Boys	Tulkarem
Beit Leid School	Tulkarem
Banat Al-Yamoun School	Jenin
Catholic School	Bethlehem
Al Ameen Boys' School	Hebron
Al Rashdeen Boys' Secondary School	Hebron
Radi Al Natsha Girls' School	Hebron
Halhoul Boys' Secondary School	Hebron
Nuba Girls' Elementary School	Hebron
Salah Al Deen School	Hebron
Palestinian Red Crescent Society – Idna Branch	Hebron
Tarqumia Charitable Society	Hebron
Al Shyoukh Municipality	Hebron
Um Al Shuhada Boys' Elementary School	Bethlehem
Al Zawahra Boys' School	Bethlehem
Manshiya School	Bethlehem
Joret Al Shama Boys' Secondary School	Bethlehem
Office and Sports Facilities of the Ministry of Youth and Sports	Bethlehem
YMCA Handicrafts Production Unit	Bethlehem
Al Quds Open University	Bethlehem
YMCA Vocational Rehabilitation Unit	Bethlehem
House of Hope	Bethlehem

Urgent Medical and Assistive Help:

During the reporting period, 72 beneficiaries received the vital service of urgent medical and assistive aid according to the following table:

Type of Service	Beneficiaries	
	Male	Female
Medical apparatus	21	20
Maintenance of medical apparatus	1	0
Physiotherapy sessions	9	6
Medicines	2	1
Wheelchair	1	2
Transportation to clinic	3	1
Crutches	1	0
Batteries for a wheelchair	2	0
Maintenance of a wheelchair	2	0
Total	42	30
Grand Total	72	

Rendering such a vital service to our beneficiaries positively affected their lives in the sense that their health and psychological situation have significantly improved and accordingly, they have become able to access their rights to education and/or work, and participate in the social life.

From one hand, many of them expressed their feeling of satisfaction in the aftermath of such an improvement and said that receiving this service has increased their motivation towards life. From the other hand, this improvement was reflected on their relationship with their families. Besides, rendering this service has contributed to achieving the goals for the sake of which we intervened with our beneficiaries.

Providing an 18 year old beneficiary with a medical boot along with intervening with him at other rehabilitative levels has contributed to lessening the pains from which he suffers, thereby facilitating his movement to and from school. In fact, this supporting service has left a noticeable impact on the psychological status of this beneficiary and as a result, his academic achievement has improved.

In so many cases, providing the beneficiaries with such a vital service contributes to lessening the impact of disability. This is true since in these cases the level of the physical disability has increased due to the delay in using a medical apparatus or the inability to continue doing the needed physiotherapy sessions which are all due to the poor financial situation of the beneficiaries' families.

An example is a beneficiary who- upon being assisted in receiving the needed physiotherapy sessions- has reached a very good health situation to the extent that he

could get along without using the crutches. At the psychosocial level, the impact was obvious in the sense that this beneficiary has become able to depend on himself, to interact with the surrounding environment, and to be reintegrated into community.

Another example is a 12 year old girl who benefited of this service. Through providing her with a medical apparatus, the situation of this beneficiary has not deteriorated.

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

There's no doubt that providing support to the families of our beneficiaries has contributed not only to ventilate their feelings towards the stresses they face mainly due to the situation of their children, but also their acceptance to their children and the means of dealing with them have also changed. By means of understanding the different needs and challenges that face their children, the families become more supportive thereby affecting the psychosocial status of these beneficiaries in a positive way.

What is worth to be mentioned here is that intervening with the family members has left an apparent impact on changing the quality of life of our beneficiaries. Mutual positive relationships were rebuilt and enhanced amongst the family members wherein the individual has become an important part of the family where he/she undertakes his/her role. Besides, the family has become capable to accept and support him/her.

A 35 year old man who suffers a physical disability said: *"For so long, I neglected my wife and children. Upon intervening with me by the counselor, I have become close to them, I take care of them and I feel that I went out of the prison of myself. I began anew."*

Upon receiving the service of family counseling, the family of one of our beneficiaries expressed the feeling of satisfaction and happiness. As they said, they have become ready to help their son achieve his goals in life. They also have become able to support him and deal with his feelings and accept him and his disability. They also expressed that the nature of the relationship amongst the family members has positively changed wherein love, understanding and the ability to express feelings and thoughts prevailed.

A family of another beneficiary said:

"Today, we are able to accept the disability of our daughter, be a source of support for her, and meet her needs. Her brothers accept her as an equal family member who has rights. The relationship within the family is now full of love and understanding. We love and support each other."

Another family said: *"We are now able to understand the needs of our son and support him. His brothers can interact with him much better than before. We are happy that our son can go out of home, have friends and seek a job. We now understand that our son has rights just like any other person in this world."*

Following are quotations from families who benefited of this service:

- *"Now, we feel more comfortable since we have recognized the needs of our son."*
- *"I am more capable to deal with my son in a better way."*

- *“Today, we have become more aware regarding the needs of my son and meet them.”*

Advocacy Work:

The year 2012 has witnessed a big focus on the advocacy work particularly through the project of “Empowering Disabled Young People to Access their Rights in the West Bank” and the project of “Social and Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disability in the Middle East”

The project of “Empowering Disabled Young People to Access their Rights in the West Bank” was launched in 2010 and aims at reducing poverty and social exclusion of young persons with physical disability within the Palestinian society through enabling 2772 young persons with disability, their family members, representatives from CSOs and government service providers, UK youth workers and young people to tackle stigma and discrimination and address disability rights of young persons with disability in the West Bank.

Within this project and during the year 2012, 153 young persons with disability received counseling sessions, thereby increasing their ability to cope with and understand disability issues. Moreover, 45 beneficiaries benefited of the service of vocational training and 54 beneficiaries benefited of the academic reintegration service.



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

The project - of which the targeted groups include the public sector, the private sector, the regional civil society, and persons with disability- is supposed to achieve the following results:

- Effective action by policy makers at regional and national levels to support the application of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the implementation of the disability laws at the national, district and community levels to improve resource allocation and services.
- The role of the private sector is motivated to better respond to the rights of persons with disability.
- Greater capacity of local, national and regional civil society to support persons with disability to achieve their rights.
- Persons with disability in Palestine have developed marketable skills and are able to access employment or income generation activities.

Since April 1st, the following ought to be highlighted:

- The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program has built a database encompassing all private companies in the West Bank that are employing more than 20 employees to be the target of work during the years 2013-2014.
- The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program has also built a database encompassing qualified persons with disability to be the base for lobbying private sector in order to employ the suitable and qualified persons with disability in the available vacancies.
- In cooperation with the Independent Commission for Human Rights as well as four relevant institutions in Palestine, the first national comprehensive research regarding the rights of employment for persons with disability is being conducted. This step is considered an indispensable base for building the advocacy strategy in the Palestinian context.
- The East Jerusalem YMCA is conducting its own research on the comparison between the UNCRPD and the Palestinian Disability Law and on the extent to which the Palestinian government is implementing the initial Palestinian law concerning the rights of persons with disability.
- Six cooperation agreements were signed between the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program and private companies in Tulkarem district wherein it was agreed to employ 23 persons with disability in these companies, ten of whom have already been employed. In the same district, 12 cooperation agreements were also signed with the Local Municipal Councils under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Governance to provide facilitating services for persons with disability including adaptation of public places, specifying parking lots for persons with disability in the public places, and employing 5% of persons with disability in administrative vacancies.

At the community level, 177 meetings were held with organizations working in the sphere of disability and rehabilitation as well as human rights organizations and organizations of the local community of which the outcomes are illustrated under (objective 5) of this report.

At the level of raising community awareness:

During the year 2012, 94 awareness activities were carried out with the following outcomes:

- Persons with disability have become more aware regarding the Palestinian Law of Disability, regarding their rights, and duties and regarding demanding these rights.
- Some persons with disability perceive the issue of disability from a holistic perceptive in the sense that the person with disability realizes that his/her issue, case, rights and needs are not merely his/her own, but rather the issue of so many other persons with disability.
- More persons with disability both females and males are approaching the offices of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with disability asking for membership.
- The number of persons with disability who participated in the different activities related to disability has increased.
- Students of many Palestinian universities and schools have developed new concepts about disability and the reintegration process and have also developed more positive approaches towards persons with disability.
- Teachers of schools and universities as well as social workers and parents have become more aware regarding the Palestinian Law of Disability and the rights of persons with disability.
- The Traffic Police members in Jenin and Nablus districts have become more aware regarding the Palestinian Law of Disability as well as the traffic laws related to this sector.



- A supportive committee consisting of persons with disability, their parents and able-bodied persons was formed in the purpose of activating the role of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability.
- Mothers and fathers of persons with disability obtained a good knowledge regarding the rights of their children and what to do to advocate their rights.
- Eleven principals of governmental and UNRWA schools in Hebron have become more aware regarding the Law of Disability, especially with respect to the reintegration process.
- The counselors at many governmental schools have become more knowledgeable regarding the laws as well as the importance of the reintegration process and developing new means of dealing with students with disability particularly children.
- Many nominees of the Municipal and Villages Councils all over the district of the West Bank gave a commitment to support and advocate for implementing the Law of Disability within the Municipalities in case they win the elections.
- The Employees of the Municipalities in some districts have become more aware regarding the rights of persons with disability and realized that they have a community responsibility towards this issue.
- The awareness of 15 journalists in Tulkarem has been raised with respect to their role towards the issue of disability and their role in agitating the public opinion.

Community Activities:

The community activities carried out during the reporting period reflect the policy of the Rehabilitation Program in supporting the right of persons with disability to live their life in a normal way and to be reintegrated into society thereby contributing to securing a decent life for them as well as for their families. This is in addition to removing, as much as possible, the psychosocial, cultural, and environmental impediments that stand in front of their reintegration.

In the purpose of enhancing the role of the community in the rehabilitation process of persons with disability, numerous activities were carried out during the year 2012. These included recreational activities and joy days with children which aimed at reintegrating persons with disability with able-bodied persons and contributed to ventilating the negative feelings of the affected persons as well as to



lessening the negative perspective towards these marginalized persons in the Palestinian community.

Awareness raising activities that were held at schools, universities as well as with parents and families of persons with disability have left a very positive impact on the beneficiaries, their families, colleagues, and peers in the sense that such activities enabled them to realize their needs and rights and enhanced their feelings that they can overcome the difficulties they face and become active members in their communities. Furthermore, positive communication skills and positive perspectives have been acquired, thereby creating more support to the beneficiaries.

In the same context, the friendship committees which were formed at schools have left a very notable impact in helping students with disability accept themselves, be accepted by other students and teachers, and ultimately reintegrate them into academic life.

Working with Palestinian Governmental Organizations:

During the year 2012, 134 meetings were held with different governmental organizations, including the Directorates of the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Education, the Governorates, the Municipalities, the Police Office, the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, the General Bureau of Employment, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

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



- A list including the names and addresses of companies and organizations that encompass more than 20 employees was obtained from the Ministry of Labour in the purpose of trying to help in the employment process of persons with disability, as a result, and as mentioned above, six cooperation agreements were held with the employers sector in Tulkarem district to employ persons with disability in their entities.
- Coordination took place in the purpose of carrying out mutual workshops in order to tackle the issue of employment.

- Obtaining the samples of the questionnaires used by the Ministry of Labour in the inspection process on the organizations and employing entities in the purpose of discussing mechanisms and procedures which guarantee targeting persons with disability and the commitment of all sectors in employing them.
- The Ministry of Labour also accepted to make any amendments or additions to these samples in case they positively affect the reality of employing persons with disability in congruence with the relevant laws and legislation.
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- A cooperation agreement with the Directorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Nablus was held to carry out adaptations at the houses of four beneficiaries.
- The Directorate of Education in Jenin accepted to carry out adaptations in some schools in the District to be accessible for persons with disability.
- Cooperation agreements were signed with the Municipalities of Tulkarem, Hebron and Bethlehem in the purpose of implementing the law of disability particularly in relation to accessibility and employment.
- As a result of a meeting that took place between the East Jerusalem YMCA, the General Union of Palestinian Persons with Disability and The Palestinian General Bureau of Employment, the Head of the Bureau asked us to prepare bylaws to administer the employment process of persons with disability in the governmental sector with a ratio of 5%. Accordingly, a first draft for these bylaws was prepared. This was followed by a workshop that encompassed GOs and NGOs working in the sphere of rehabilitation along with some persons with disability who are activist and specialists in the issue of disability in the aim of discuss the draft and make any needed amendments.
- Gaining the support of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs -represented by the Minister – for the campaign of amending the ministerial decision related to the free-of-charge governmental health insurance for persons with disability.
- As a practical step, the minister of social affaires sent a letter to the Ministry of Health asking them to form a committee -in which the General Union of Persons with Disability is a member- to approve the degree of disability under which the person with disability has the right to benefit of the free-of-charge health insurance.
- The Municipality of Al-Birah agreed to specify special parking lots for persons with disability in the newly adapted streets. Besides, it changed the type of tiles they use in the streets due to its being inadequate for wheelchairs.
- 42 persons with disability, mostly persons with physical disabilities, have been employed at the Ministry of Education offices all over the districts of the West Bank in different positions according to the following distribution: one in Jericho, four in Bethlehem, ten in Hebron, three in Jenin, two in Tubas, four in Ramallah, three in Nablus, one in Salfeet, eight in Tulkarem, three in Qualquilia and three in Quabatia.

Working with schools, universities, vocational centers and factories:

During the year 2012, 27 meetings were held with schools at the different districts in the purpose of:

- Carrying out awareness activities.
- Forming friendship committees at schools and allocating work plans for them.
- Following up the reintegration process of persons with disability.
- Coordination to carry out adaptations.

One of the significant outcomes of this work was employing a person with disability to work at a school in Hebron.

15 meetings were also held with the different universities of which the following outcomes were achieved:

- Forming a friendship committee in Al-Quds Open University in Tulkarem and another one in Ramallah's branch.
- Coordinating to carry out awareness and reintegration activities at the universities.
- Enhancing partnerships with the universities.
- Al-Quds Open University in Jenin issued a decision that imposes students of social work to do their 80-hour training merely in organizations working in the sphere of disability.

As a result of 21 meetings that were held with the vocational centers and factories, the Creative Technology Centre in Jenin agreed upon accepting the cases referred by the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program to be trained while making a special discount for them. The Chamber of Commerce in Hebron as well as Halhoul Techno Centre have also enrolled persons with disability in the purpose of vocationally training them.

In the same context, an agreement was held with Yasser Cultural Centre in Hebron to open a new training branch in the sphere of air-conditioning in the purpose of opening broader opportunities and providing more choices for persons with disability in which they can receive vocational training.

Another agreement was also signed with Navartiti Training Institute in Ramallah to accept persons with disability to receive vocational training. Accordingly, the Institute was adapted to be accessible for persons with disability.

Media:

- 125 activities were covered by the local stations, newspapers, Ma'an News Network, Panet, and PNN and part of these activities were published on the facebook page of the youth group as well as on the You tube.

- A spot highlighting the topics of health and employment was produced on the page of Ma'an News for three continuous months. The spot was linked to the Palestinian Law of Disability.
- A theatre show (<http://youtu.be/7E96Vn1eNJs>) was designed and acted by the youth group under the Supervision of the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program. The Show, which aimed at shedding light on the rights of persons with disability and forming a community power to press towards achieving their rights, was attended by more than 100 persons including representatives of organizations of the local community, university students as well as persons with disability and their parents. 500 DVD copies of this show translated to English and sign language were distributed.
- A short reportage tackling the issue of accessibility, the reintegration process and the role of friendship committees at schools was transmitted on the local radio station (Ramatam). The reportage was also displayed in various activities including an activity that took place at Bethlehem University. <http://youtu.be/HTfb9nO61bc>
- In the purpose on shedding light on the role of media in activating the Palestinian Law of Disability, a T.V. session was transmitted on Al-Fajer Al-Jdid T.V. station in Tulkarem. The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program and the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability participated in the session.
- An oral agreement was held with “Al-Quds” and “Palestine Today” T.V. stations to cover some activities held by the youth group in Hebron and to hold interviews with some of them.
- A radio session was held on the Hebron local Radio Station in the purpose of discussing a reintegration activity as well as the issue of the rights of persons with disability.
- A T.V. session was held by the youth group in Jenin in order to emphasize their rights and discuss the impediments that stand in front of them.
- Two radio sessions were transmitted on “Nisa” Radio Station in Jenin. One of our beneficiaries as well as the Public Relations Manager at the Palestinian Ministry of Labour participated in the first session entitled “Forgotten Rights” after which a list of the names of persons with disability who graduated from Universities was submitted to the Ministry of Labour. The second one tackled the issue of the right to employment for persons with disability and the existing obstacles.
- In the purpose of raising the public interest regarding the issues of disability and implementing the law, a T.V. station – in which representatives of different NGOs including the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program participated – was transmitted on “Mix” T.V. station.

- In the aftermath of a workshop that was held in cooperation with the Journalist Union, The Journalists Assembly Association and the Media Department at Hebron University and Al-Arroub College, 65 journalists have increased their knowledge regarding how to tackle the issue of disability in media in a professional way in the purpose of advocating the implementation of the Law of Disability.
- A discussion was held on Al-Balad Radio in Jenin highlighting the importance of advocating persons with disability.
- In cooperation with the Media Department at Bethlehem Bible College, three T.V. sessions about adaptations and accessibility for persons with disability as well as the difficulties and impediments faced by them especially lack of medicines were registered. Shortly after the first session, the Head of Engineering Department at Bethlehem Municipality asked to meet us in order to discuss horizons of cooperation in this regard.
The sessions, which hosted relevant figures including the Heads of the Directorates of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Health, were traumatized on “Mix” T.V. station for a period of 45 days. Part of the sessions was also transmitted on You tube.
- A meeting with the advocacy coordinator at the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program about the International Day of Persons with Disability was held at Palestine Radio Station.
- On the International Day of Persons with Disability, 6000 mobile messages were sent including the following logos:
“Education + work = A decent life”
“Together in making buildings accessible for persons with disability”
“Be cooperative; employ 5% of persons with disability”
- Eight billboards were hanged in six districts of the West Bank tackling the issue of employment and the community perspective.
The billboards, which held the logo:
“77% of persons with disability are absent from the labour market, who is responsible? You might be responsible!” , included expressive drawings designed by a member of the Youth Group.
Moreover, 5000 postcards with the same design of the billboards were printed out and distributed.

Cooperation with the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability:

During the year 2012, 35 meetings were held with the central office as well as the branches of the Union.

Amongst the outcomes of this cooperation, light ought to be shed on the following:

- An employee of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability has obtained new skills regarding how to design a training material about disability, advocacy and leadership. The capacity of this employee in the above-mentioned topics as well as in the sphere of facilitation and training was built by the Advocacy Coordinator.
- The capacity of “Teacher’s Creativity Centre” was also built by the Advocacy Coordinator who provided 15 staff of the Centre with a training course tackling the issue of disability and how to include it in the programs, projects, and activities in a way that guarantees the complete, efficient, and equal participation of persons with disability. The impact of receiving this training was obvious in the sense that their perspective and attitudes towards disability have changed.
- Following up with the PLO in the purpose of changing the status of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability in order to formally consider it as one of the Unions of the Organizations and Popular Work Department in the PLO.
- The role of persons with disability themselves in demanding their rights and following up their issues has significantly increased. In the same context, their partnership with organizations working in the sphere of disability has been strengthened.
- In fact, the youth groups that were formed and followed up within the project of “Empowering Disabled Young People to Access their Rights in the West Bank” have played an apparent role in developing the demanding movement for this sector in the Palestinian Society wherein many of these youth groups members have become very active members in activities and programs carried out by relevant organizations.
- Actively participating in planning for and establishing the system of the “Disability Card” which represents the package of services for persons with disability and mechanisms for obtaining them. So far, a first draft for this system has been distributed to organizations working in the sphere of disability as well as active individuals in the field for feedback.

- As a result of the existence of the Advocacy Coordinator, a significant positive change has occurred. Not only the capacities of the General Union of Persons with Disability were developed in numerous topics including preparing training materials about disability and advocacy that coincide with the legal and developmental approach, but also the role of the General Union of Persons with Disability was developed at the level of intervening to design and formulate comprehensive national policies for the sake of the rights of persons with disability. In the same context, people with disabilities who approach the Union have become able to write the complaints in a legal and right-based way.

The Youth Groups:

Within the project of “Empowering Disabled Young People to Access their Rights in the West Bank”, the youth leaders have held numerous meetings in the purpose of following up the work plans and the advocacy activities. They have also carried out peer training for a total of 400 youth (206 females and 194 males).

Amongst the achievements of the youth groups, the following ought to be highlighted:

- Many members of the Youth Groups transmitted their training experience and knowledge to their peers as well as to able-bodied persons in their areas, particularly in the sphere of disability issues and rights of persons with disability.
- The Youth Groups have become partners in planning for the advocacy campaigns related to their issue in their areas. They have also become a fundamental motivator to execute these plans. Furthermore, many of them have become representatives for the issues and rights of persons with disability in the local and national media.
- The participation of the Youth Groups members in the activities and programs carried out by working in the sphere of rehabilitation and advocacy has noticeably increased.



- Many members of the Youth Groups played an efficient and important role in planning for and executing the activities carried out by the coordinative committees and the Network of organizations working in the sphere of disability, particularly on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disability.
- Two female members of the Youth group were employed. The first one at the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program office in Nablus and the second at the Directorate of Education in Tulkarem.

Moreover, a summer camp (<http://youtu.be/FVgyZ6XSIcA>) was organized targeting the youth groups and included several activities amongst which the following are to be mentioned:

- Receiving training about the legal concept of disability, the framework and samples of disability, mechanisms of influencing policies when planning for and executing advocacy campaigns.
- Paying a visit to the Governorate of Hebron during which a number of requests related to persons with disability in the district were set forth, specifically with respect to securing parking lots in the district as well as supporting them in their campaign which targets the Chamber of Commerce.

Celebrating the International Day for Persons with Disability:

As it has been the case since more than two decades, the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program celebrated the International Day for Persons with Disability.

The central activity to celebrate this occasion was a press conference which was held in Ramallah in partnership with the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program, the General Union of Persons with Disability, the Handicap International, Stars of Hope and Teacher's Creativity Centre. During the conference- in which the Ministries of Social Affairs, Education and Transportation participated –a request statement was set forth highlighting the difficulties faced by persons with disability in accessing the health committees and obtaining an assessment and classification for the type and degree of disability and thereby accessing their rights to receiving services.

Furthermore, a series of activities were held all over the districts of the West bank according to the following:

In Hebron, two central festivals were organized encompassing about 2250 participants and four awareness-raising meetings for children as well as for parents of persons with disability were held. This is in addition to carrying out a workshop with Al-Quds Open University in which students, representatives of organizations, as well as persons with disability and their parents participated.

In Jenin, a central festival encompassing 250 participants of persons with disability, their parents and representatives of local organizations was carried out. Besides, a locomotive march took place all over the streets of Jenin during which logos assuring the rights of persons with disability were held.



In Nablus and Salfet, more than 500 participants attended the central activity that was held with the Ministry of Education. This is in addition to organizing a sport day, a cultural competition, a drawing competition and eight awareness-raising activities. A workshop tackling the issue of implementing the law was also carried out in Salfet and included an exhibition for handcrafts made by person with disability.

In Ramallah besides the central activity mentioned above 110 children with disabilities and able-bodied

along with their parents attended a theatre show entitled “It’s my right”.

A workshop for parents of persons with disability was carried out during which they exchanged their experiences



in dealing with their children and discussed new mechanisms for communication as well as for dealing with challenges they face.

In Tulkarem, a workshop was held in the Directorate Office with the Municipal Councils and local bodies. Of the significant outcomes of this workshop –in which 120 persons took part – cooperation agreements were signed with 22 local bodies in the purpose of implementing the Law of Disability.

Furthermore, an open day in Tulkarem Camp was organized with the participation of 100 children. Besides the festival which encompassed numerous artistic sections and an explanation about the Law of Disability, the open day was terminated by a march all over the main streets of the district in a train holding logos demanding the implementation of the law.

In Bethlehem, a central festival was held with the participation of 150 persons including the Governor of Bethlehem, the Mayor, and representatives of Bethlehem, Beit-Jala, Beit- Sahour and Al-Doha Municipalities. Besides, a recreational activity- which aimed at reintegrating persons with disability with able-bodied -was held for 30 students with disability and able-bodied and another one for 500 children from Jerusalem.

To mark this occasion, three relevant T.V. sessions were also held at “Mix” local station for a period of one month recurrently.

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

During the reporting period, the Training Unit of the Program built the capacity of social workers, counselors and supervisors who are working in the sphere of mental health, counseling and rehabilitation through providing them with a series of training courses both at the external and internal levels.

At the external level:

1722 trainees received training in a variety of topics including the impact of emergencies on children, stress-management and shapes of offense, counseling standards of mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies, draw therapy, the red ball (a technique in organizing joy days with children), communication skills as well as raising awareness regarding the Disability Law and advocacy campaigns, how to deal with children victims of sexual violence, how to deal with children during emergencies, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (ISAC) guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings, psychodrama, therapeutic expressive arts, and how to fill questionnaires.



Being acquainted with the psychological effects of which children suffer during emergencies was one of the outcomes which the social workers- who are members of the Psychosocial Support Teams in the West Bank and Jerusalem- received. Furthermore, the trainees received new skills and applications that enable them to effectively deal with these children.

Training teachers of the governmental schools in “stress-management” aimed at raising their awareness regarding the psychosocial effects that result from stress and how to deal with it.

The training they received in the “shapes of offense” contributed to helping them become a source of support for children through being acquainted with the phenomena of offense

and violence to which children are exposed and how to protect children of the different shapes of offense.

Upon receiving a training course in the “counseling rules of mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies”, the social workers of the psychosocial support teams in the West Bank as well as the members of Childhood Protection Network in the West Bank have become knowledgeable on how to use the international counseling manual of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (ISAC) guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Besides, this training contributed to unifying the efforts of the workers in the sphere of mental health and psychosocial support to develop and activate the coordination and referral process amongst organizations in the purpose of increasing the efficiency of the service rendered to people who are exposed to disastrous incidents.

The training in ISAC which the educational supervisors- who are working at the Ministry of Education/ Educational Supervision Department –received helped them become acquainted with the international counseling manual of the ISAC as well as with the international experiences in responding to the needs of people who are exposed to emergencies. It also provided them with the needed knowledge and skills that enable them to transfer this knowledge to the social workers at schools.

The psychosocial supervisors of the UNRWA who also received training in the same topic have gained the needed knowledge regarding how to use the ISAC manual and how to adequately respond during emergencies.

A two-day training course in “draw therapy” contributed to providing the trainees with basic theoretical and practical skills in this curriculum, thereby increasing their knowledge in intervening with their beneficiaries.

Knowing how to organize and manage joy days for children was one of the outcomes of the training in “the red ball” which aimed at introducing the trainees to exercises and applied activities to manage the work with groups of children.

The training course which was held for members of the youth group in “communication skills” aimed at providing the trainees with skills of self-awareness as well as effective communication and listening. As a result, the participants have become more efficient in communicating with themselves as well as with the members of the group.

As a result of the training in the Law of Disability and advocacy campaigns, the trainees not only gained knowledge and raised their awareness about the concept of disability, the person with disability, the concept of advocacy and the mechanisms of asking for the rights, but also they have acquired basic skills on how to execute an advocacy campaign. They have also referred persons with disability to relevant organizations and formed a friendship committee in Jaba’ Village to follow up the issues of persons with disability. The training in this topic which parents of persons with disability received have raised their awareness regarding the concept of disability and the legislative laws related to persons with disability. They have also gained skills of forming advocacy groups to ask

for the rights of their children and to press on decision-makers to execute the laws related to the rights of persons with disability.

Amongst the outcomes of the training course- which the social workers who are in different CBOs all over the districts of the West Bank in “how to deal with children during emergencies”- was obtaining theoretical knowledge and practical skills and tools that enable them to intervene with children as soon as they are exposed to emergencies.

In the sphere of psychodrama, the trainees have become familiar with this topic and its impact on treating the psychological trauma as well as how to use the expressive drama in treating the painful experiences to which individuals and groups are exposed.

The social workers who received training in “therapeutic expressive arts” have become knowledgeable of how to use music, drawing, painting, movement and rhythm, story and poetry in ventilating stresses and expressing the psychological difficulties from which those who are affected of emergencies suffer.

Obtaining the needed knowledge and skills in dealing with children who are victims of physical violence was amongst the outcomes of the training which the social workers in Hebron received after which they have been acquainted with a theoretical knowledge about the impact of sexual harassment against children and how to diagnose these cases and deal with them.

The training in “how to fill questionnaires” enabled the trainees to be aware of how to fill the questionnaires in a professional way and gave them the opportunity to gain basic skills regarding the ethics of scientific research.

Internal training:

During the reporting period, 19 social workers, counselors and supervisors of the Rehabilitation Program attended a training course entitled “Supervising the EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) Curriculum”.

As a result, the participants have become knowledgeable regarding the therapeutic role of the supervisor in EMDR besides being acquainted to different supervision samples.

Moreover, they obtained new practical and applied skills on supervising cases. As a whole, this training contributed to developing the theoretical as well as the practical knowledge of the staff, thereby improving the quality of intervention with traumatized cases through using EMDR.

As a result of the training in (ISAC) which seven supervisors of the Rehabilitation Program received, six training courses introducing (ISAC) was held by these supervisors to a group of social workers from all over the West Bank.

Seven social workers from the Rehabilitation Program received training on “how to fill a questionnaire with children”. Consequently, they gained new skills on how to fill

questionnaires with children, thereby becoming more experienced on how to deal with children while filling the questionnaires, besides lessening the possibilities of making mistakes when filling these questionnaires in the future.

A training course in “psychosocial diagnosis of psychological disorders” was also held for 28 social workers and supervisors of the Rehabilitation Program wherein they gained knowledge about the psychological diagnosis and the scientific classification of psychological diseases, the personality disturbances, and the sexual trauma, thus helping them to assess and diagnose the cases in a scientific way while psychologically intervening with the beneficiaries.

Within the project of “Social and Economic Inclusion of Persons with Disability in the Middle East”, 11 relevant staff from the Rehabilitation Program received training in “ways of making the private companies inclusive for persons with disability”. Carried out by the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU), the training tackled the needed tools for motivating the private sector to better respond to the rights of persons with disability as well as the impediments of reintegration in the workplace. Numerous topics were also highlighted during the training including the legal international framework regarding the right to work for persons with disability, how to interact with persons with disability in the workplace, how to include diversification within the policies of the companies besides benefiting of the LPHU’s rich experience in intervening with the private sector.

The trainees also attended lectures and discussions by representatives of the private sector about hiring persons with disability in the Lebanese context as well as a lecture by



the representative of the “ILO” in Lebanon about the ILO system in relation to the rights of persons with disability.

Training University Students:

In the purpose of developing their capacities in the field of their specialization, 73 sociology, social work, and psychology students from the local Palestinian Universities were trained and supervised at the Rehabilitation Program.

As a result, the students have obtained practical skills in different aspects of work at the Rehabilitation Program and have consequently become more aware regarding the profession they are going to work in after graduating from University, thereby becoming ready and capable of finding adequate job opportunities in the future.

During the first half of the year, a third-year social work student from Sweden has spent two months of internship at the Rehabilitation Program where she received intensive training and supervision. Consequently, she was given the opportunity to be acquainted with the reality of counseling in the West Bank as well as being introduced to the difficulties and impediments faced by the social workers in the field. Furthermore, the student obtained communication and interaction skills and was acquainted with the local environment, traditions and values of the Palestinian community.

The following table reflects- in details- the training that took place during the reporting period:

External Training:

Training topic	Number of trainees	Trainees	Duration
The impact of emergencies on children	125	Psychosocial workers	10 Days
Stress-Management and shapes of offense	440	Teachers from governmental schools	44 Days
Counseling standards of mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies	164	Psychosocial workers	7 Days
ISAC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency	195	Supervisors of the Educational Counseling Department at the Ministry of Education + psychosocial supervisors of the UNRWA	8 Days

Settings			
Draw therapy	19	Fresh graduates from Birzeit University	2 Days
The Red Ball	15	Psychosocial workers from Bethlehem	1 Day
Communication Skills	11	Youth members (Males + Females)	1 Day
Raising awareness regarding the Law of Disability and Advocacy Campaigns	478	Youth members (Males + Females) + workers in rehabilitation organizations + parents of persons with disability	25 Days
How to deal with children victims of sexual violence	20	Psychosocial workers in Hebron	2 Days
How to deal with children during emergencies	70	Social workers of different CBOs	8 Days
Psychodrama	95	Members of the Psychosocial Support Teams in Nablus, Salfeet, Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarem and Qualquilia	6 Days
Expressive therapeutic arts	48	Psychosocial Support Teams in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah and Jericho	4 Days
How to fill questionnaires	42	Social workers of mental health organizations in Jerusalem	3 Days

Internal Training:

Training topic	Number of trainees	Duration
Supervising the EMDR Curriculum	19	3 Days
ISAC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings	7	1 Day
How to fill a questionnaire with children	7	1 Day
Psychosocial diagnosis of psychological disorders	28	3 Days
Ways of making the private companies inclusive for persons with disability	11	8Days

Training University Students:

Purpose of training	Number of students	Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving and developing the capacity of the students from the local Universities in the field of social work.• Empowering and promoting the experience of the trainers with new counseling and vocational intervention skills.	73	4 months

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

Over the reporting period, 164 meetings were held with organizations working in the sphere of disability and rehabilitation including the networks and the coordinative committees. This is in addition to the human rights organizations as well as the organizations of the local community.

These meetings aimed at:

1. Supporting and advocating the issue of persons with disability.
2. Planning and coming out with mutual annual work plans focusing on the issue of employment and health.
3. Coordinating and planning for carrying out mutual activities that enhance the legal aspect of persons with disability.
4. Contributing to influencing and changing the followed policies.

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

- The annual plans allocated for the networks and the coordinative committees and which focused on the right to employment and the right to health were efficiently executed.
- Carrying out advocacy activities in cooperation with the organizations of the local community in an attempt to change the prevailing philanthropic approach to the right-based approach when dealing with the issue of disability.
- Beneficiaries of the Program were referred to relevant organizations to receive medical aiding tools as well as other needed services.
- 12 parking lots were prepared to be used by persons with disability in the roads of Nablus and a committee- consisting of the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program, the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability, Nablus Municipality, The Directorate, the traffic office and the Local Governance- was formed to follow up this issue.
- Six cooperation agreements were held with the employers sector in Tulkarem district in the purpose of being committed to employ 5% of persons with disability in their entities.
- Two supportive committees for persons with disability were formed in Jericho.
- 120 organizations all over the districts of the West Bank signed the petition related to the advocacy campaign of the health insurance for persons with disability mentioned in objective number 3.
- Five persons with disability who are members of the Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disability were employed in the Independent Commission for Human Rights in one of their projects for a period of extendible six months.

With respect to the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disability in which the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program is a member, the final copy of the bylaws

was enacted. Furthermore, during the first half of the year, a workshop was held by Birzeit University – which is the party carrying out the strategic planning process. During the workshop, which was attended by the members of the Council as well as representatives of the participating organizations, the findings of the disability strategy of Palestine were displayed for feedback to be sent by the organizations so as to be put in the final shape.

During the second half of the year 2012, the Executive Office of the Council was formed. This is in addition to forming the committees of the Council that work in coordination with the Executive Office and that undertake the responsibility of executing the plans which are decided by the Council.

Difficulties:

Alongside the hard work and the accomplishments we achieve in every aspect of our work, difficulties always face us in our work at the Rehabilitation Program constituting not an impediment, but rather a challenge which we always insist to face in order to ultimately achieve our human mission and serve people who are in need for our services and intervention.

From one hand, the instability which our country is unfortunately undergoing continues to constitute a real difficulty in front of our dedicated staff, particularly those who are working in the field wherein the siege, the Apartheid Wall, the checkpoints, the segregation between areas alongside the other measures of the occupation face many of them sometimes on a daily basis, thereby restricting their movement and affecting their schedules. Moreover, since our work during this year was intensified in the Eastern slopes of the West Bank- where the communities are facing the threat of eviction- reaching these areas on a daily basis constituted a real hardship, particularly due to the fact that no cars can reach these remote, isolated and hard-to-reach areas where no normal roads to use exist. Furthermore, the intensification of the settlers' violence made it hard for our staff to reach some areas besides working with fear in many cases, especially in the old city of Hebron as well as in the villages that are close to the settlements.

From the other hand, the lack of the vocational training centers in some districts constituted an impediment in front of vocationally rehabilitating some of our beneficiaries. Moreover, despite being vocationally-trained, many of our beneficiaries did not easily find adequate employment opportunities.

A story to tell....

In an environment of isolation, hopelessness and fear, Sama* has grown up. Throughout twelve continuous years, she faced non-stopping barriers to living a normal and happy childhood.

Instead of playing, going to school, spending time with cousins and friends, Sama spent her years of childhood struggling against numerous unmet needs.

Her disability from which she has suffered since her early childhood not only confined her to a wheelchair, but also constituted a significant barrier to her inclusion.

When the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program knocked their door, Sama and her brother – who also suffers of a physical disability- realized that their mother was right when she said that light must be there at the end of the tunnel.

Like many of persons with disability in Palestine, Sama was not lacking the ability, but rather the opportunity.

Upon holistically intervening with Sama at different levels, she and her brother were reintegrated into school. Furthermore, their house was adapted leading Sama and her brother through a pathway of opportunities that most of the children in their age have.

What Sama experienced for so long was a disadvantage, exclusion, isolation, stigma, and right-denying.

Now, she can live with her disability, she can live a fulfilling life...

Now, the barriers are removed and Sama can enjoy her life, a better life...

Now, she has a place not at home, but within the community...

After years of experiencing discomfort in her daily life, Sama is now living a meaningful, happy life... A life not at all shaped by exclusion.

Today, Sama has a desk at school, has friends and has a future to look at; she even dreams to become a doctor.

Today, Sama has a sense of identity to build, and a worthy place in this World to live in.

Sama said:

“All over twelve years, I used to go out of home only for receiving medical treatment. I always dreamt to play with my cousins in our backyard and to go with them to school. My brother also shared with me the same dreams. We felt hopelessness and nobody could help us to put an end to these complications and difficulties despite the promises of many organizations and persons. When the YMCA Rehabilitation Program visited us, we first didn’t expect so much from them, but then, we began regaining confidence and hope. Today, we are not anymore prisoners at home; we can feel the taste of freedom and the blessing of dealing with people around us. We are not anymore lonely. Today, we can depend on ourselves, we can go in and out of our home, we can go to school, we can learn, play, draw and we have friends.”

In a letter addressed to the YMCA Rehabilitation Program, Sama said:

“We love you as you loved us, helped us, and facilitated the return of life in our souls. Thank you. Our message to you is to help all children who are living like us.”

Sama's mother said:

"Now, I feel that I'm not alone. There's someone who stood besides us and who helped us. Today, I'm very happy for all what you did to my children. Thank you."

It is worth mentioning here that Sama is living with her family in an area that is controlled by the Israeli military forces and that is surrounded by settlements. Not only the settlers attack the houses of the Palestinian citizens on a daily basis, but also the private cars are only allowed to reach areas that are hundreds miles from the houses; the thing that adds to the hard life which Sama and her family are living, add to this the non-stopping fear from the attacks of the settlers.

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

Psychosocial Support Teams in West Bank Project:

Occupation-related violence and associated restrictions on all aspects of life across the West Bank continue to significantly affect children and the community as a whole. The physical dangers as well as the ongoing psychological stress threaten children's wellbeing and healthy development. The everyday life of children across Palestine includes such phenomena as military incursions and killings, night raids, demolitions and forced displacement, settler-related violence, and delay and harassments at checkpoints. Additionally, access and movement restrictions cause severe hardship and isolation for children and families, especially for those living in areas near the Barrier, military zones, settlements and Area C. Children and families, particularly those living in conflict affected areas, suffer from lack of access to basic support services and normal routines as schooling and play.

Military occupation has also contributed to increased social violence and child maltreatment, societal instability, diminishing of resilience and damage to family and community relationships. This had resulting effects on the structure of communities, the wellbeing of families and the ability of caregivers to communicate with their children.

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

During the reporting period, light ought to be shed on the following:

- **Emergency response:**

The Psychosocial Support Teams were immediately mobilized in response to political and social emergencies, particularly when children are victimized. During this period, the teams responded to a total of 292 emergency cases, affecting more than 3230 children (1734 Males, 1496 Females) and 3046 caregivers (1623 Males, 1423 Females). Interventions were also focused on reaching the most vulnerable, distant and neglected areas. Despite difficulties in reaching those areas, the teams worked hard to ensure the rapid and efficient response.

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

Intervention plans were developed based on the needs assessed. Group counseling sessions for girls and boys, recreational activities and caregivers' sensitization sessions were offered accordingly. Additionally, 94 cases in need for in-depth counseling or other services were referred based on their needs, and this included disability, financial aid, legal aid and other.

- **Children group counseling sessions:**

More than 1182 girls and 1369 boys in the West Bank who are victims of political and social violence were offered group counseling sessions. The sessions helped children decrease stress level, reduce anxiety, build self-confidence, ventilate and express their feelings. The sessions are also designed to reinforce their resilience and coping mechanisms which empower and enable them to cope with their difficulties. A total of 1213 sessions were offered; each group of 15 children received around 7 counseling sessions.

- **Recreational activities and trips:**

106 recreational activities covering a total of 8517 children (4043 Males, 4474 Females) were held at areas of intervention. Those included activities that enhance self-expression and self-confidence, as well as help children reduce tension and anxiety following

exposure to traumatizing incidents. Additionally, recreational activities provided a space for children to interact with other children through structured psychosocial activities, drawing, games and play.



12 trips were held for a total of 993 (463 males, 530 females) deprived children who live under ongoing political violence and who are subjected to recurring attacks. Children were able, for one day, to leave behind their daily struggles and enjoy a day trip. Children enjoyed activities such as sports, swimming and sightseeing.

- **CRC (Child's Rights Convention) Day parades:**

On CRC Day, four parades for children were held covering the West Bank. In the South (Hebron and Bethlehem), in the Middle (Jericho and Ramallah), in the North (Tulkarem, Qualquilia, Jenin, Tubas, Nablus and Salfeet), and a CRC parade held in East Jerusalem. A total of 1983 children (989 males, 994 females) participated in the parades and wore unified hats and shirts and carried banners calling for their rights to live a life with no violence.

Children also called for rights of education, participation, health, and many others. Activities held included musical shows, traditional dance (dabkeh), plays, as well as recreational activities. The



parades helped bring noticeable feelings of happiness to children who are deprived of such activities.

- **Caregivers' sensitization sessions:**

A total of 1816 mothers and fathers attending the sensitization sessions were better equipped with skills on how to protect and support their children and develop more positive skills when dealing with them. The sessions also offered caregivers the opportunity to ventilate and express their feelings, in addition to increasing their awareness and encouraging them to approach institutions that offer psychosocial services when needed.

- **Coordination and Supervision:**

Coordination meetings were conducted on a monthly basis in the 11 districts and attended by team members. Areas and emergencies in need for intervention were identified. Joint plans for intervention and implementation of activities were set, with the active participation and involvement of team organizations.

A total of 440 hours of supervision were offered to the 11 teams. 14 sessions of training were also held for team members based on the needs assessment which was held. The training and supervision contributed to the professionalism and efficiency of the psychosocial teams to ensure that interventions are executed to the best professional standards. Trainings on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Mental Health and Psychosocial guidelines were conducted to professionals working in the field, and this included UNRWA staff, Ministry of Education school supervisors and members of the five Child Protection Networks (CPNS) of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

- **Empowerment and Training of CBOs:**

Identified vulnerable communities were empowered through the training and enabling of CBOs to conduct activities with girls, boys, mothers, fathers, and other community members. Eight training sessions were conducted, and 156 professionals were reached from 76 CBOs. The CBOs were also given the needed supplies and material to conduct the planned activities.

- **Mapping:**

The East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program is in the final stages of completing the activity of Mapping of Mental Health and Psychosocial Service Providers in the West Bank.

The mapping of MHPSS service providers in the West Bank will contribute to the coordination and referrals between organizations, especially during times of emergencies. This will increase collaborative work and will be a significant source of information of Who does What, and Where in the West Bank. The mapping will also identify and categorize organizations which provide MHPSS services. A website (MHPSS.ps) is being produced and will include all organizations providing MHPSS service in the West Bank.

www.ej-ymca.org/psetwb

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

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

Throughout the project, YMCA is supporting four community-based organizations (CBOs) so that they become instrumental within their perspective neighbourhoods in strengthening the projective environment for children and adolescents, and providing psychosocial supports services to both children and caregivers. Each CBO is focusing on building individual capacities of wide range of caretakers and givers working and living in the selected neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Psychosocial workers, counselors, teachers and parents are expected to improve their knowledge and skills to be able to protect girls and boys and appropriate support during emergency and crisis situation.

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at Birzeit University has conducted a needs assessment of the selected CBOs and respective community to establish a baseline for this action as well as guide the formulation of a “capacity development” action plan that meets the specific need of each CBO and neighborhood. The selection criteria of CBOs was agreed between the partners (YMCA, PCRC, Ma’an, and PCC) to ensure targeting of needy neighbourhoods that serve the most vulnerable boys and girls, male and female adolescents in East Jerusalem, and taking into consideration political and socio-economic factors, more specifically incidents related to the occupation (settle violence, house demolitions, .. etc).

Based on findings, YMCA has been selected to target the following CBOs Jabal Al Mukaber Club, Shufat Women Centre, As Saraya Centre, and African Community Society. They mutually share the nature of providing child protection, prevention and care, youth employment, community, women and youth development in addition to education, sports and cultural activities.

Psychosocial activities are implemented by the support of four psychosocial counselors hired from YMCA to be part of the CBO. Activities include recreational activities and ventilation days as well as importantly structured group sessions for both children and caregivers, for higher involvement in participation and real engagement within the local community. Psychosocial structured groups are provided to invite children to participate in teams, however children identified requiring additional support will be referred to receive individual counseling sessions by specialized professionals. Awareness rising activities for caregivers are conducted through sensitization sessions and discussions; empowering both females and males, enhancing their skills and strengthening their roles. In addition, a number of training workshops as well as frequent supervision are provided to professionals in order to build capacities to offer a better quality.

In 2012, the four CBOs working in coordination with YMCA have targeted 371 girls and boys, 146 caregivers with the participation of 11 professional and 6 staff and volunteers.

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

Post-trauma Rehabilitation of the Palestinian Ex-detainee Children in the West Bank Project:

The project of “Post-trauma Rehabilitation of the Palestinian Ex-detainee Children in the West Bank” which has been implemented by the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program since 2009 targets ex-detainee children (up to the age of eighteen years old), their families and their communities throughout the cities of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This initiative came as a response to the severe post-traumatic stress disorders detected in children who were detained by the Israeli military occupation in ways that gravely violate their rights as stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and are usually worsen due to problematic relations with their families and surrounding environments.

According to reports issued by DCI-Palestine, an average of 700 children are detained yearly by Israel by illegal means. <http://www.dci-palestine.org/content/child-detentionm>, and according to an article <http://www.alquds.com/news/article/view/id/407105> issued by Al-Quds Newspaper on December 28th 2012, prepared by the Department of Statistics at the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees, Israel has detained 3484 Palestinians during the year 2012 of which 881 were children and thus marking an increase of 16% in detention rates since last year. 97.7% of those cases come from the West Bank and East Jerusalem while the rest are from Gaza.

In his report, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations said: “The detained Palestinian children at the Israeli prisons are exposed- on a continuous basis- to ill-treatment, physical harassment and verbal assault. This is in addition to threatening, intimidation and solitary confinement. This ill-treatment amounts to torture”.<http://www.pal-home.net/ar/categories/67051.html>

The Program's main aim is to reintegrate ex-detainee children into society and help them get rid of the psychosocial impact of the arrest. It adopts a holistic approach towards rehabilitation by providing psycho-social rehabilitation services to ex-detainee children; providing psychosocial support to families of ex-detainee and detainee children; and by liaising with community institutions to facilitate the integration process of children back into their schools or work enterprises. The intervention of the Program consists of various activities like: individual and group psychosocial sessions for the ex-detainee children, family intervention and group support for families of detainee and ex-detainee children, ventilation weekends for children and families, vocational assessment, vocational training and remedial education for children, workshops for school principals and teachers, and public awareness events.

During the year 2012, 309 ex-detainee children were assessed through the Program, of which 120 undertook vocational assessment, 73 received vocational training, and 66 received remedial education. In addition, 217 parents of child detainees and ex-detainees were assessed and took part in either group support or family intervention. During the same period, the psychosocial teams working on this Program conducted 2701 sessions

for child ex-detainees and 608 sessions for family members of child detainees and ex-detainees.

Furthermore, the Program succeeded in targeting over 80 school principals and/or teachers of governmental and UNRWA schools to educate them on the issue of child detention and how they can contribute to the integration of those children back to their schools. Moreover, two public awareness events were planned to disseminate information about child detention and over 4000 informative brochures and DVD's on the rights of detained children were distributed to the different districts we approach within the Program.



The impact of our intervention during the year 2012 can be summarized as follows:

- 63% of the targeted child ex-detainees have developed a higher self-esteem, 71% reported using more positive coping mechanisms, and 88% have developed a more positive attitude towards life. 69% of these children reported having the ability to articulate and express plans for the future, and 65% have become integrated in educational or /and vocational institutions (vocational training) according to their abilities and interests.
- 99% of the family members have developed positive interaction and communication with their children following detention.
- 96% of the targeted families have become more supportive to their children and advocate for their rights, 98% of them have become more aware with respect to the psycho-social needs of their children.
- 84 school teachers have raised their awareness regarding the repercussion of detention and how they can contribute to the reintegration of child ex-detainees.

During the reporting period, Sant and Usant- a film-making Norwegian company-produced a documentary film entitled "When the Boys Return" which tells the struggle of Palestinian ex-detainee teenagers trying to re-integrate into their societies upon release. The protagonists of this film were chosen from the beneficiaries of the "Post-Trauma Rehabilitation of Palestinian ex-detainee children in the West Bank" Program, and they were invited to attend the first screening of the film in November 2012 together with their

counselor and the East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Program's Director in Amsterdam where they were interviewed by media to talk about their stories and how the Program helped them. The documentary was first shown through the IDFA Competition for Mid-length Documentary – idfa 2012 and is scheduled to be shown in different parts of the world during spring and summer 2013.