



Moravian Church
Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center
الكنيسة المورافية – مركز جبل النجمة للتأهيل



Annual Narrative Report

2019

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center
Moravian Church

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Contents

About us.....	3
Vision	3
Values	3
Strategic Goals	3
SMRC works with local government and other civil society organizations to include PwIDs in their agendas and programs	4
Employment of PwIDs.....	4
Inclusion of PwIDs in Schools	4
Inclusive Activities with Schools.....	5
Awareness Raising Lectures for School Students	5
Application of MOVE Program in SMRC School	5
Staff Capacity Building	5
Training for SMRC students	6
Celebration of Mother's Day.....	6
Participation of SMRC in the Special Olympics World Games 2019.....	6
New SMRC Cooperation and Outreach.....	6
Capacity Building of UNRWA Personnel.....	7
Nuwwar Nissan Child Festival	7
Inclusive Activity organized by Ramallah Municipality	7
Celebration of Palm Sunday & Easter	7
Advocacy Campaign on Protection of PwDs from Abuse & Violence	8
SMRC continues to offer internship opportunities for university students	8
Graduation Ceremony of SMRC Students in Acrobatics	8
Participation of SMRC in Palestine International Festival	8
Opening Ceremony of the Renewable Energy Project.....	9
Star Mountain's Summer Camp	9
Star Mountain's Student Trip to Murad Tourist Resort	9
Women Charity Breakfast.....	9
Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Arab Sports Center.....	10
Graduation Ceremony of Halima Ladadweh	10
Renewal of Employment Agreement	10
Visit of the Redeemer Church to SMRC	11
Participation in Product Exhibitions / Bazars	11
Launching the Right to Protection Campaign	11
Inclusive Activity organized by the Student Council of Birzeit University	12
Advent Season & Christmas 2019	12

About us

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center (SMRC) is an institution of the Worldwide Moravian Church working in Palestine. It contributes in securing a life in dignity for persons with intellectual disability (PwIDs), through the provision of rehabilitation and training, integration and inclusion, awareness building and community mobilization, on the basis of love, dignity, justice and equality.

SMRC is located in a village called Abu Qash, in Ramallah and Al-Bireh District, West Bank, Palestine, 25 km to the north of Jerusalem. SMRC trains and rehabilitates around 192 PwIDs of all ages inside and outside the center. Thirty seven qualified staff members work with great commitment and pride in this special mission.

Vision

To be pioneers in securing a life in dignity for PwIDs in Palestine

Values

- Love
- Dignity
- Transparency
- Justice and equality
- Innovation and excellence.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide distinctive rehabilitation and training services to PwIDs regardless of disability level in Ramallah and Al-Bireh District.
2. Raise the awareness of the Palestinian community including families, individuals, institutions and policy-makers on the rights and capacities of PwIDs.
3. Strive to change local and national policies in accordance with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Palestinian Law through the Advocacy Committee and partners.
4. Reinforce cooperation and relations with local, Arab and international individuals and organizations in Palestine and abroad.

SMRC works with local government and other civil society organizations to include PwIDs in their agendas and programs

SMRC, the local councils of Dora, Ein Sinia and Jifna, and a community institution have signed a memorandum of understanding in January 2019 to cover the salary of a rehabilitation worker and provide her with all necessary equipment to carry out her assignment in the local community. The rehabilitation worker will assist PwIDs to access their rights and receive the necessary services. SMRC shall play the role of a professional supervisor to oversee the work pace of the rehabilitation worker. This is considered one of the most outstanding success stories that contributed in encouraging local community institutions to assume their role towards PwIDs.



Employment of PwIDs

SMRC has managed to find employment opportunities for 6 PwIDs in the local community. One of the 6 persons is a person with severe intellectual disability who found an employment opportunity in January 2019 in a warehouse at a sanitary ware company. Subsequently, another person with moderate intellectual disability has found an employment opportunity at the aforementioned company in January 2019. Moreover, two persons with mild and moderate intellectual disability have found employment opportunities as packaging workers at Star Company for Cleaning Materials in April 2019.

During the second half of the year 2019, SMRC has managed to find employment opportunities for another 2 male PwIDs as packaging workers at Star Company for Cleaning Materials.



Inclusion of PwIDs in Schools

SMRC has followed up the cases of 4 PwIDs who have been included in regular schools in 2018. In 2019, SMRC has approached the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MoE) to include 1 male child with intellectual disability in a regular school. Based on SMRC assessment of the said child, the MoE has accepted to partly include him in one of the schools in his community. The said child attended his school twice a week.



Inclusive Activities with Schools

In cooperation with around 15 regular schools, SMRC students have participated in different inclusive activities (i.e. sport, dance, music, entertainment...etc.) to give them the opportunity to interact with children and persons without disabilities and raise the awareness of school students on disability rights. It is important to note that such inclusive activities play a major role in presenting the capacity of PwIDs to the general public to change its attitude towards this marginalized group.



Awareness Raising Lectures for School Students

SMRC has conducted 37 lectures to regular schools to raise the awareness of school students on the importance of inclusion and voluntary service, and the rights of PwIDs. These awareness raising lectures can play a major role in creating a generation which respects and accepts the other.



Application of MOVE Program in SMRC School

SMRC has applied MOVE Program for Persons with Severe Physical Disability in SMRC School in January 2019. MOVE (Mobility Opportunities via Education/Experience) is an activity-based program used in homes, schools, day programs and the community. It assists PwDs to develop their mobility skills including sitting, standing, walking, and transitioning – leading to improved health, independence, dignity and inclusion of the individual in the family and community.



Staff Capacity Building

The staff members of SMRC have attended a number of important trainings that were essential for their work with people with disabilities (PwDs). Most important was a training of 60 hours to all staff on special education. The training was funded by CBM. Al-Haq Organization has conducted training workshops related to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child for 2 SMRC staff members. Three staff members have participated in workshops organized by Bethlehem



Arab Society for Rehabilitation and the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center on Child Protection Policy and the Shadow Report as a formal review of the Palestinian state report prepared by a coalition of civil society organizations for review by the CPRD committee.

Moreover, staff members have participated in the following workshops individually including Autism, Music Education, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and employment of PwIDs.

Training for SMRC students

In cooperation with local community institutions, some of SMRC students have participated in a pastry making training. These students would benefit from this training either by working at SMRC or by working on their own. SMRC has added pastry production to its list of SMRC student produced products/sales.



Celebration of Mother's Day

SMRC has celebrated Mother's Day in March 2019 in the presence of SMRC staff members, students and their parents. The ceremony began with a word by the Director Mrs. Ranya Karam who welcomed the guests and praised their efforts in supporting their children as well as a word by one of the mothers that thanked SMRC for all their services in supporting and empowering SMRC students. A group of SMRC students performed Dabkeh (traditional dance), a play about the role of mothers in raising their children in front of the audience as well as other talents.



Participation of SMRC in the Special Olympics World Games 2019

Two students from SMRC have participated in the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in March 2019. Nihad Shehada was awarded the silver medal and Halimah Ladaddwa was awarded the bronze medal in the long jump competition.

Issam Al-Qadoumi the General Secretary of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports has honored players and trainers of the Palestinian Delegation who participated in the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi in April 2019 including SMRC distinguished students Halimah Ladaddwa and Nihad Shehada.



New SMRC Cooperation and Outreach

In cooperation with the Evangelical Church of Westphalia and the Village Council of Burqin, SMRC visited Burqin in March 2019 to assess the needs for starting a rehabilitation program in the village. In June 2019 SMRC physiotherapist and Speech therapist together with an occupational therapist from Jenin University assessed the different therapy needs of 25 PwDs in the village.



Capacity Building of UNRWA Personnel

Upon a request from UNRWA, SMRC provided a training workshop on inclusion of PwDs in the local community to 25 UNRWA personnel of the Psychological Health Department to develop their capacity in working with PwDs. They learned how to professionally work with PwDs through accepting them like other human beings and including them in different activities. They enjoyed the training and are interested in taking further training organized by SMRC.



Nuwwar Nissan Child Festival

SMRC hosted Ramallah Municipality Nuwwar Nissan Child Festival under the slogan “Eco Diversity” in April 2019. SMRC provided the visitors with information on organic farming and composting. Ramallah Municipality chose SMRC to host the festival given its luxuriant vegetation nature especially in the spring to introduce children to different the different plants and herbs that grow on SMRC.



Inclusive Activity organized by Ramallah Municipality

Ramallah Municipality has organized an inclusive activity for persons with and without intellectual disabilities to train them how to make mosaic in April 2019. A group of SMRC students has participated in the activity which took place in the vicinity of the Ottoman Courthouse in Ramallah.



Celebration of Palm Sunday & Easter

SMRC has celebrated Palm Sunday and Easter in April 2019 in the presence of Rev. Imad Haddad. The ceremony started with carrying palm branches to the forest where Rev. Haddad has preached the resurrection story to SMRC students and staff. SMRC students performed the Palestinian traditional dance (Dabkeh) and other entertainment activities in front of the audience. A group from Taybeh Latin Secondary School came on that day to celebrate Easter with the students and give them some presents.



Advocacy Campaign on Protection of PwDs from Abuse & Violence

The Advocacy Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disability where SMRC is a member, the Palestinian Disability Coalition and the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Against Domestic Violence Against Women have launched an advocacy campaign on protection of PwDs from abuse and violence in May 2019 to raise the awareness of the community and policy makers on sexual abuse of women with disabilities and highlight the importance of enacting a penalty law which shall hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.



SMRC continues to offer internship opportunities for university students

During the year 2019, SMRC has hosted 22 university students to give them the opportunity to be trained in different SMRC rehabilitation programs. Four students out of 22 have assisted SMRC in May 2019 in assessing PwIDs, providing them occupational therapy sessions and developing the capacity of SMRC staff in Occupational Therapy.



Graduation Ceremony of SMRC Students in Acrobatics

The Palestinian Circus School has graduated 11 SMRC students in May 2019 at SMRC forest after receiving intensive acrobatic trainings. SMRC students and trainers have performed an acrobatic show to all attendees including SMRC students, family members and staff. The Palestinian Circus School distributed certificates to all graduates.



Participation of SMRC in Palestine International Festival

Once again SMRC Dabkeh students shine with their Dabkeh performance at the Palestine International Festival in Ramallah Palace of Culture. The performance of the students triggered an outburst of applause among the whole audience. Following the event SMRC was contacted by international media to cover SMRC



participation in the event. It is worth mentioning that SMRC students were trained once a week by volunteers from the Palestinian Popular Art Center (Al Funoun).

Opening Ceremony of the Renewable Energy Project

In June 2019 SMRC, the representative office of the Czech Republic in Ramallah, the Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority celebrated the completion of the renewable energy project at the center. The project including the necessary electrical upgrading was funded by the Czech Republic, the Evangelical Church Württemberg and other individual donors. The new solar panels will save SMRC around 30% of the annual electricity cost.



Star Mountain's Summer Camp

SMRC has organized a summer camp under the slogan “My Right” for PwIDs in July 2019 for a period of 9 days to give them the opportunity to access their right to entertainment including swimming, playing and other activities. SMRC shed the light on the importance of engaging volunteers in this Camp to change the negative attitudes of the youth towards PwIDs.



Star Mountain's Student Trip to Murad Tourist Resort

SMRC has organized a recreational trip for PwIDs to Murad Tourist Resort in Beit Sahour in September 2019 to give them the opportunity to enjoy meals, play games and swim for a period of two days. They have stayed at the said Resort during the trip.



Women Charity Breakfast

In cooperation with Birzeit Municipality, SMRC has participated in the Women Charity Breakfast which was organized by Birzeit University Friends Association in September at Carmel Hotel to support students in need and enable them to further their education. This participation is the product of community partnerships made by SMRC with local community institutions in Birzeit area.



Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Arab Sports Center

SMRC students have participated in the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Arab Sports Center for People with Disabilities in the presence of the Governor of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Dr. Laila Ghanam at Ramallah Recreational Complex in October 2019. The ceremony was concluded with several sport activities including sport presentations made by SMRC students.



Graduation Ceremony of Halima Ladadweh

Based on SMRC belief in the right of PwDs to education, training and employment like their peers and in cooperation with Ronaldo Training Center and the Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center (ETVTC), the former SMRC student Halima Ladadweh has managed to harvest the effort following a training period of four months to take part in the fourth batch of graduates in catering and hospitality organized by the ETVTC in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development in October 2019.



Renewal of Employment Agreement

SMRC has held a meeting with the local councils of Ein Sinia, Jifna and Dura Al-Qari and the Charity Association for Disabled Rehabilitation and Counseling (Karama Jalazon Center) in November 2019 to evaluate the experience of SMRC and the relevant stakeholders in hiring a rehabilitation worker to conduct home visits to PwIDs. All participants have stressed the importance of sustaining this experience and applying it to other areas as it is considered effective and successful in mainstreaming disability rights and issues in the agendas of local councils.



Visit of the Redeemer Church to SMRC

As in every year the Redeemer Church in Jerusalem came to SMRC in November 2019 to make more than 50 Christmas wreaths to be sold in the Christmas Bazaar which took place in the vicinity of the Redeemer Church.



Participation in Product Exhibitions / Bazaars

SMRC has participated in 8 product exhibitions / bazars organized by different community institutions including SMRC, Surda Women Society, First Syrat Ramallah, Beit Al-Rabi Kindergarten, the Grand Park Hotel, Ramallah Women's Training Center, the Redeemer Church in Jerusalem and Birzeit Women Society. It is important to note that PwIDs have participated in the aforementioned product exhibitions through marketing and selling SMRC products particularly during Christmas.



Launching the Right to Protection Campaign

In December 2019, the Advocacy Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities has launched a campaign to advocate for the right of PwIDs to protection from sexual abuse and violence. Accordingly, the Advocacy Committee for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities has formulated a position paper to call for suspending Article 29 paragraph 2 of the Palestinian Decision of the Council of Ministers No (9) 2011 concerning Protected Homes of Abused Women "The Home shall not host any woman with mental or physical disability or suffers from a psychological disease to avoid affecting other women". This position paper was presented to the Palestinian Council of Ministers as it is considered a violation to the right of women with disabilities to protection. Moreover, PwIDs from the rehabilitation institutions of the Advocacy Committee have presented several shows to the audience to reflect their capacity as PwIDs who are able and creative.



Inclusive Activity organized by the Student Council of Birzeit University

The Student Council of Birzeit University has organized an inclusive activity for SMRC students and University students to give them the opportunity to interact with each other in December 2019. The University students invited PwIDs to take part in Telematch games to draw a smile on their faces and have a great time together. On the other hand, a group of SMRC students has performed acrobatics and Dabkeh to the audience.



Advent Season & Christmas 2019

The Advent Season is a very special time at Star Mountain. We have celebrated the Advent on Monday mornings, in the presence of the Representative of the Moravian Church Rev. Niels Gärtner and Rev. Imad Haddad. It involved a number of activities including singing, storytelling, playing, dancing, distribution of chocolates, and listening to Christmas songs. SMRC has made a Christmas party to bring joy and happiness to students. SMRC hosted the Hope Band to sing Christmas carols and songs. By the end of the party, Santa came to give Christmas presents to students.



Best wishes from Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center