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, 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 persons with intellectual disability 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 people with intellectual disabilities in Palestine

Values:

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

Strategic Goals:

1. Provide distinctive rehabilitation and training services to persons with intellectual disability 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 persons with intellectual disability.
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 People with Intellectual Disability 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 persons with intellectual disability 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 persons with intellectual disabilities.

Inclusion of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Schools

In coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Education, SMRC has assessed 3 persons with intellectual disabilities and included them in three regular schools in January 2019.

Employment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center has managed to find employment opportunities for 4 SMRC students in the local community. One of the 4 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.

Application of MOVE Program in SMRC School

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center 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 persons with disabilities 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 program staff at Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center has attended a number of important trainings that were essential for their work with people with disabilities. Most important was a training of 60 hours to all program 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.

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 is planning to add pastry production to its list of SMRC student produced products/sales.
Celebration of Mother’s Day

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center 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 Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center 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 persons with disability in the village.

Capacity Building of UNRWA Personnel

Upon a request from UNRWA, Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center provided a training workshop on inclusion of persons with disabilities in the local community to 25 UNRWA personnel of the Psychological Health Department to develop their capacity in working with persons with disabilities. They learned how to professionally work with persons with disabilities 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

Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center 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 Star Mountain 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 Star Mountain.

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.

Inclusion of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Vocational Training Centers

Halimeh Ladadweh, one of SMRC vocational training students has been training in a vocational training center since April 2019 to become a chef assistant. The young lady has managed to take this training opportunity after acquiring several vocational training skills including hospitality and housekeeping at SMRC.
Advocacy Campaign on Protection of Persons with Disabilities 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 persons with disabilities 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 first half of 2019 Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center hosted 13 University students to give them the opportunity to be trained in different SMRC rehabilitation programs. Four students out of 13 have assisted SMRC in May 2019 in assessing persons with intellectual disabilities, 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.

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 were 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.

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 are trained by volunteers from the Palestinian Popular Art Center (Al Funoun).

Business Development

During the first half of 2019 SMRC in cooperation with SMRC board of directors developed several proposals to continue funding and developing its current programs. Proposals were submitted to Heidehoff Foundation, Conemund, a Spanish development organization, the Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD), Sternstunde, the Valdesian Church, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees. Heidehoff Foundation approved a four year 100,000 EURO grant that will partially fund the school program. Sternstunde approved a generous 220,000 EURO grant that will partially fund the new Kindergarten building. SMRC are still waiting to hear from Conemund for the school program, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for finishing the Kindergarten building, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees for a new greenhouse for organic farming and the Valdesian Church for the continuation of the vocational training program.