

The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre

Courtesy of Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre



The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC).

Established in 1965, the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC), located on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, is a charitable, nongovernmental, nonprofit organization under the auspices of the Anglican Episcopal Church within the Diocese of Jerusalem. JPBC envisions increased access to quality health services and inclusive education for all Palestinian children with disabilities (CWD), and an increase in their participation in and influence on society, giving them hope and equal opportunities. Therefore, JPBC works on the integration and empowerment of CWD and their families in their communities through physical rehabilitation, inclusive education, the development and dissemination of best practices, and the influencing of policy and legislation.

JPBC is a member of the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN) and one of the four big national rehabilitation centers in Palestine; it is also the Palestinian Ministry of Health's main national referral center for physical medicine and rehabilitation services for children with disabilities.

Children with disabilities receive special training and care at Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre.



A physiotherapy session.



Occupational therapy.



Speech therapy.

In November 2018, the Child Rehabilitation Centre successfully passed the second audit of the Joint Commission for International Accreditation, maintaining its record of high-quality service provision in the field of rehabilitation, and is the only Palestinian rehabilitation center so far to receive this kind of accreditation.

The center runs three main operations: the Child Rehabilitation Center, the Inclusive School, and the Vocational Training Workshop.

The Child Rehabilitation Center treats various kinds of disabilities, including cerebral palsy, neuromuscular diseases, pediatric limb deficiencies,

congenital malformations, post-musculoskeletal traumas, autism, and ADHD. Children are provided with one or a combination of the following therapies: physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy, sensory therapy, music therapy, recreational therapy, and psychosocial support.

Children with disabilities from the West Bank and Gaza are referred for a cycle of comprehensive rehabilitation services for a period of two to three weeks; they are admitted together with their mothers and are fully accommodated at the center's dormitory. During this cycle, the children receive therapy services while the mothers are enrolled in the mother's empowerment program. This program is designed by JPBC to ensure a holistic intervention throughout the entire rehabilitation process, where the mothers receive training on performing exercises for their children and are provided with a home-care plan to continue with the therapies at home. In addition,



At the inclusive school of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, children with and without disabilities learn together.

mothers are provided with psycho-social support through individual and group counselling sessions along with awareness-raising sessions about the needs and rights of their children. In 2018, the Child Rehabilitation Center treated 1,179 Palestinian children with disabilities (425 from the West Bank and Gaza, and 754 from East Jerusalem).

The Outreach Program is the spinal cord of the tangible work done at the JPBC. It aims to reach out to rural areas and marginalized groups in the community, thus providing children with disabilities the opportunity to access the medical and therapeutic resources they need in order to reach their full potential and highest level of personal independence. The program also aims to engage community-based rehabilitation organizations by providing their practitioners with new methodologies and best practices in the field of rehabilitation. It is also formulated to actively involve the community and members of families in the entire rehabilitation process of children with disabilities.

JPBC has established strong rapports with eight intermediate rehabilitation centers, where the JPBC multi-disciplinary team conducts weekly visits in the West Bank governorates of Ramallah, Nablus, Qalqiliya, Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron, Jericho, and in Jerusalem and its surroundings. During these visits, CWD are diagnosed, and those in need of

advanced treatment are referred for comprehensive rehabilitation services at the center in Jerusalem.

Al-Irاده Rehabilitation Centre (Silet al-Harthyeh, Jenin) and JPBC established a long-term partnership in 2011. Mr. Mohammad Shawahneh, municipal director of Silet al-Harthyeh and the supervisor of the center, explains: "JPBC's multi-disciplinary team trains our staff and provides us with the required rehabilitation support, thus building the capacity of our staff and improving the center's efficiency and performance. JPBC also provides us with the required equipment, according to our needs." He adds, "At first, we received children with disabilities only from Silet al-Harthyeh, but with the partnership with JPBC, our services have expanded to serve the whole Jenin Governorate."

JPBC also runs an inclusive school where children with and without disabilities study together in regular classrooms from kindergarten up to high school. For the current academic year 2018/2019, the school has around 400 children, 38 percent of whom are children with disabilities who, in addition to their education, also receive rehabilitation services at the Child Rehabilitation Center.

JPBC also provides vocational training through its sheltered workshop designed to support and provide a space for adults with disabilities to

gain skills, work on projects, and socialize together. At this time, 24 adults are enrolled in the vocational training program.

JPBC's Child Rehabilitation Center provides comprehensive rehabilitation services for CWD referred from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through contracts with the Palestinian Ministry of Health and other child rehabilitation services buyers. The Ministry of Health covers around 70 percent of the actual cost of the children because of their financial limitations and ongoing challenges. The cost of supporting the mothers is not included, and thus JPBC has to fundraise to cover this additional expense.

Given the current financial and political challenges of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, it was unable to commit to covering its bills to JPBC, which left a huge accumulated debt at the end of 2018. In order to sustain the service, USAID used to cover approximately 80 percent of the annual bill of the Ministry of Health, whereas the EU and the Ministry of Health provided some coverage for the accumulated debt until the end of 2017.

In September 2018, the Trump administration froze \$25 million in funding to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network members as part of its punitive campaign against the Palestinian Authority for refusing to participate in its peace effort. The East Jerusalem Hospital Network, which comprises the six main Palestinian hospitals, has routinely received US aid to cover some of the debt of the Palestinian Ministry of Health. In legislating threats of aid cuts to the Palestinians, Congress has always made exemptions for humanitarian care, such as hospital funding. This decision has led to warnings of the collapse of crucial support

The Princess Basma Rehabilitation Centre provides services for children from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, working in rapport with eight intermediate rehabilitation centers throughout the West Bank. At its inclusive school, 400 children are enrolled in classes that range from kindergarten to high school, and 38 percent are children with special needs. The sheltered workshop trains adults with special needs, providing them with skills and a place to socialize.

to the Palestinian health services provided by the EJHN, including the rehabilitation services provided by JPBC.

With thanks and appreciation for donations and support:

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