

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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RAMALLAH, PALESTINE

# Stars of Hope Society for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities

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## *Towards better lives of Women with Disabilities in Palestine and in the Arab States*

### Annual Report 2013

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Throughout the various programs implemented in 2013, Stars of Hope remains to operate for empowering women with disabilities in Palestine and Arab States to the degree they are able assert their dignity as right holders in the society at all levels equal to non-disabled women.

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# 1. Overview

## 1.1 Women with Disabilities in changing contexts in the Arab world

*Persons with disabilities (PWDs) comprise at least 15 % of the global population<sup>1</sup>, with approximately 80 % living in developing countries. While the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) supports participation and access to decision-making as vital for gender equality and the participation in public & political life, WwDs and their representative organizations in the Middle East (ME) as in other parts of the world are still under-represented in political processes and decision-making at local or national levels. Likewise, their distinct experience and concerns remain largely invisible and unaddressed in law and policy making. The lack of information on barriers to and facilitators for their political participation, poor*



*capacities of WWDs and their organizations as regards political processes and effective means of promoting their participation, and the fact that political participation of WWDs is still an emerging issue, contribute to the absence of WWDs and their concerns in the current democratic transformation processes in the region.*

*It is also widely acknowledged that, regardless of where in the world they live, women with disabilities are one of the most marginalized, neglected, violated, excluded and isolated groups in society. Women with disabilities throughout the world suffer manifold discrimination - female, poor and disabled-compounded further by intersections of race and culture. Women with disabilities remain largely invisible and voiceless, ignored by national policies and laws, even though they face multiple forms of*

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<sup>1</sup> WHO (2011), World Disability Report, <http://iashub.org/resources/17>.

*discrimination, structural poverty and social exclusion (UNFPA 2005). Their issues, needs and demands are neglected within services and programs across all sectors. They are excluded from social movements designed to advance the position of women, and the position of people with disabilities. They are subject to oppression and exploitation in all areas of their lives. Women and girls with disabilities are the most vulnerable and least protected (WWDA 2002, UN ESCAP Workshop on Women and Legal 2003.)*

*There are a number of international human rights instruments that delineate the clear and specific responsibilities of governments to address discrimination against women. Examples include: the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993). The need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings, are enshrined in a number of other international human rights instruments, including for example: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).*

*The Arab spring has created new spaces for CSOs engagement and public decision-making and the participation of CSOs will be crucial for lasting democratization. However, these processes are not yet inclusive since the engagement of DPOs is compromised by a lack of capacities and their poor recognition by state / non-state actors as legitimate partners in policy reform dialogues. Given the limited understanding of public authorities of disability and a RBA,*

*discrimination, structural poverty and social exclusion (UNFPA 2005). Their issues, needs and demands are neglected within services and programs across all sectors. They are excluded from social movements designed to advance the position of women, and the position of people with disabilities. They are subject to oppression and exploitation in all areas of their lives. Women and girls with disabilities are the most vulnerable and least protected (WWDA 2002, UN ESCAP Workshop on Women and Legal 2003).*

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*PwDs and their representative organizations are rarely consulted or involved in decision making processes across all levels when decisions and policies are made that impact on their civic freedoms and participation. Likewise, WwDs and their concerns are seldom included and addressed by mainstream women's rights organizations and the women's rights agenda in the region*

*. During periods of civic discontent & unrest and political transition, the popular idea is to achieve change for the majority without considering the interests and needs of marginalized groups such as PwDs and WwDs in particular. This often leads to new governments and civic structures that may improve conditions for great parts of the population but still fail to protect and promote the human rights of marginalized citizens.*

*Development practice shows increased emphasis on activating and involving DPOs in policy-making & reform processes. However, current projects in the region focus on support to the disability movement in general to promote disability rights with civil & political society, DPOs participation in local development and sector-wise interventions (e.g. promotion of education or livelihood for PWDs)<sup>2</sup>*

*Responses to the under-representation of WWDs in political processes also often address only the physical accessibility of polling stations and public buildings. As such, WWDs and their distinct situation and needs are not equally addressed by and benefit from current initiatives. This project aims to address these gaps as the first of its kind in the region: It enhances the understanding of WWDs and their organizations of the concept of politics and WWDs' political participation & rights and mechanisms how to claim them and CSOs' understanding of the relevance and process of political engagement of WWDs enabling them to include and address and their political rights in their initiatives. This way, the program will establish much needed good practice in this field and further the understanding of WWDs' rights and their importance in the political arena WWDs.*

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<sup>2</sup> For example the MUSAWA project: <http://www.musawa-me.org/english.php>

## **1.2 About Stars of Hope**

*Due to discrimination against women with disabilities and the lack of organizations that target this issue, Stars of Hope Society (SHS) was founded as an effort to address the needs of women with disabilities and support them in realizing their rights. Since its foundation in 2006, SHS has been eager to increase awareness about women with disabilities, their status, reality and needs as an endeavor to promote equality in education, employment and all walks of life. Furthermore, SHS has been successful in increasing awareness among women with disabilities on their rights, as well as building their capacities and developing their professional skills to increase their chances when demanding equal job opportunities.*

## **1.3 Our Vision**

*Equal rights and opportunities for women with disabilities*

## **1.4: Our Mission**

*With reference to human rights framework, international agreements, and the need to promote WWD reality, Stars of Hope Society (SHS) was founded with the mission to abolish disability and gender discrimination; and empowering WWD to achieve equality; access to integration; and claiming their rights through implementing and rights-based development programs and projects; and advocating for the implementing, monitoring and evaluating laws, by-laws and policies.*

## **1.5 : Our Governing values**

*Stars of hope Society is committed in its strategic direction to the principles that inform the human rights based approach to our work:*

- *Universality &inalienability: Human rights are universal and inalienable, the entitlement of all people everywhere in the world. An individual cannot voluntarily give them up. Nor can others take them away.*
- *-Indivisibility: Human rights are indivisible .Whether civil, cultural, economic, Political or social, they are all inherent to the dignity of every person. Consequently, all human rights have equal status.*
- *Interdependence & interrelatedness: The realization of one right often depends, wholly or in part, on the realization of others.*
- *Equality & non-discrimination: All individuals are equal as human beings, and by virtue of the inherent dignity of each person, are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind.*
- *Participation and inclusion: All people have the right to participate in and access information relating to the*
- *decision– making processes that affect their lives and well-being.*
- *Accountability: State and other duty –bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights. This includes both positive obligations to protect, promote and fulfill human rights, as well as negative obligations to abstain from rights violations.*

## 1.6: Our Goals

- 1) *Promoting legislative and policy processes and instruments that include, protect and empower women with disabilities*
- 1) *Advance the self- representation of women with disabilities and their engagement in decision and policy making processes*
- 2) *Improve the inclusion of gender and disability in the activities and mandates of relevant national, regional and international non state actors*
- 3) *Promote the development of and access to a pool of knowledge & information on the situation of women with disabilities at local, regional and international levels*
- 4) *Further Develop SHS's profile and organizational capacities to achieve its goals and deliver on the strategy*



# Our Work

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2.

## SHS' Main Activities 2013



## 2. Stars of Hope Main Activities 2013

*Throughout 2013, SHS succeeded with support from diverse donors to implement a wide range of activities. In addition, the research unit succeeded to publish a unique series of publications of different topics related to WwDs and their contexts. Same time, SHS continued over 2013 to act according to its mission and vision toward achieving tangible changes in the attitudes towards women with disabilities and fight negative stereotypes, discrimination and inequality. The summary of our areas of intervention is listed here in details :*



## **2.1: Educational day that has been conducted by the Development Studies Center at Birzeit University.**

On the 12th June 2013, Stars of Hope has been invited to participate in an educational day that has been conducted by the development Studies Center at Birzeit University. The workshop was about the “Women with Disabilities, and their access to justice, challenges and obstacles at both official and non-official levels. This workshop came to present the results of the study that has been done by the Development studies center that shed the light on access to justice for WWDs. Different interventions have been made by different DPOs, higher judicial councils, stakeholders, and other related organizations, where all proved that there are many obstacles that prevent WWDs from accessing to justice. Recommendations have been reached out to have a good interaction between the CSOs, rights based organizations, women organizations and DPOs to work together to meet the needs of People with Disabilities.

## **2.2: Integrated Security Workshop**

Stars of Hope’s focal point in Jenin, Mariam Zyoud, has participated in a workshop organized by Kvinna till Kvinna about integrated security and wellbeing. The Workshop was held in the period between 11th till 17th of April 2013 in Beit Lehem. This workshop was a ToT training for the trainees, which gave them the opportunity to train other group of WWDs in their areas about the same topic, and help them to stay safe and sane, and still do the work that they love.

## 2.3: Meetings with Sharek youth Forum

During this year, we have worked with Sharek Youth Forum in initiative program called let's stand together", in which they target youth. We have also participated in a panel discussion that has been organized by Sharek with the presence of Zeenat Rahman, a Special Adviser for Global Youth Issues. We had a speech in this discussion where we mentioned about the problems that also WWDs face. We have been approached by Sharek for youth to assist in making a survey for a program they had which name was "Friendly cities for people with disabilities"

- . SHS team has supported in making the survey on the municipalities and local councils to see what these places lack to be accessible and how can they be adapted to be friendly cities to people with disabilities. Moreover, in the end of the survey, Stars of Hope has also cooperated with Sharek on making the overall analysis of the data of the surveys done, which enriched their overall report.





#### **2.4: Provide training to the staff, board members and focal points on technical, management and financial thematic areas.**

On the 31st of May and 1st of June 2013, Stars of Hope has conducted a fruitful training session to its staff and focal points on different key thematic areas related to its strategy and mission. The training has been held at Intercontinental Hotel in Jericho. The training was an extensive one that lasted for seven hours each day, and included theoretical, practical and group work sessions. The training covered integrating wellbeing among the staff and focal points, review of Stars of Hope strategic direction for the coming three years, political participation of Women with Disabilities, violence against women with Disabilities, access to Justice, Stakeholders Analysis and Identification of Strategic Partners, and identification of key interventions; roles and responsibilities within the team.

## **2.5: Participate in or implement studies on the situation of WWDs and the barriers they experience enjoying their rights.**

Through our work with Handicap International we participated in a conducted study to look into PWDs satisfaction regarding access to physical rehabilitation services. Our main focus was to insure that WwDs are part of the assessment and also that the analysis is inclusive to their feedback. The report is in its final phase for dissemination. The survey questionnaire was developed with our input based on the six A's of access to service criteria; Quality, affordability, accessibility, availability, acceptance and accountability. The questionnaire consisted of around 60 questions tackling different areas of the service provision. Additionally we have also launched a regional research in Palestine, Jordan and Egypt on WwDs political Participation which is a key activity in UN women project. The research is indicated to be completed in April 2014.

## **2.6: Sensitization and awareness raising on disability right for vulnerable and marginalized persons with disabilities**

Stars of Hope has delivered an initial 2-day local training on sensitization and awareness rising, including the use of the IEC tools. The training was delivered in the 5 targeted areas of the project, and included participants from the selected DPOs and SHG. However, it is worth mentioning that SHS team had to re-identify a number of new PwDs from the targeted area of the project, different from the PwDs that were identified at the initial stage of the project, because some members of the initially identified SHGs have failed to stay committed to the project's activities, due to different reasons; the main reason is that some of them were not convinced that the project's activities would change their lives, or would fulfill their needs, as most of these needs were in kind (technical aids, jobs, financial support...etc).The trainings were delivered in the five targeted areas of the project; Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilia and Nablus, by SHS focal points with the cooperation of trainers



## 2.7: Improving the Status of Women With Disabilities through Systemic Advocacy, and Training 2013

Stars of Hope has continued the last year in its advocacy and lobbying activities, and has concentrated this year on the employment key thematic area. As a way of advocacy, the following main activities have been implemented; On Wednesday, the 20th of November 2013, a conference has been held at Caesar Hotel in Ramallah under the title of “Rights of Employment for People with Disabilities”. This conference was organized by the forum of “raise your voice” with direct technical and financial support from SHS, and it was under the auspices of the Prime Minister, and with the main presence of the minister of Labor, Minister of social affairs, the head of personal affairs division and the representative of the Higher Council. Representatives of the DPOs attended the conference, along with other organizations and NGOs.



## 2.8 : Providing Internships opportunities for WWDs in the West Bank

Stars of Hope has continued during 2013 in providing internships for around 40 Women with Disabilities from various areas of the West Bank, and with various disabilities. This internship project has enabled WWDs to be more socially integrated in civil society organizations, and to know the success of being financially independent and to feel that they are part of the society like others. Permanent jobs were created to some of the Women with Disabilities. In addition to the financial satisfaction that it has added, it left a great impact on them also psychologically. From another side, this project was of added value to Women with Disabilities on the long term, as needs assessment were done at the beginning of the project. It is very important to mention that the project as well mainstreamed the idea of accessible work stations and offices.

## 2.9 MPDL Project

### 2.9.1 National Training for 13 CBR and Management team of Health Work Committee

implemented in three sessions which targeted to build capacities of CBR teams in gender and in consultation with DPOs working for WwDs in particular, to Help the HWC incorporate gender approach addressed to PWD in their general action plan and in their projects and activities specifically and to train staff on how to consider gender perspective in service delivery and programming.



### 2.9.2 Training for WwDs and their Mothers

In total, 31 women with disabilities attended the training plus 4 mothers. Who were capacitated in the following main areas of knowledge of disability laws and how to understand them for better knowledge and advocacy, access to services and importance of environmental adaptation as a way of life for WwDs, and how to advocate!



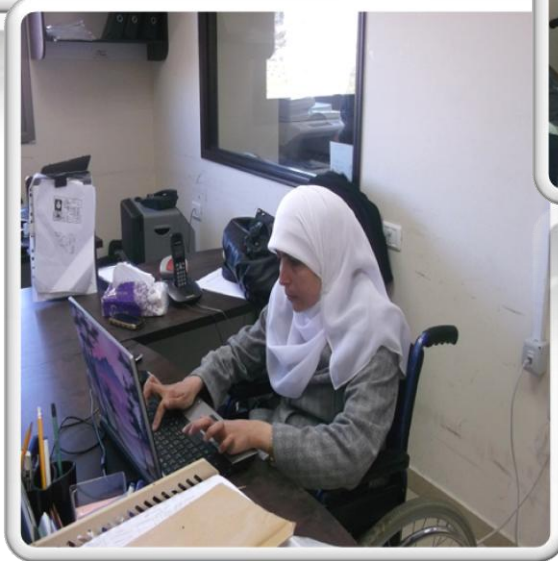
# Our Work

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3.

## Women with Disabilities Changing their Lives

SUCCESS STORIES, MY JOB MY LIFE



Woroud Yasser Jada'  
Habla/ Qlaqilia  
Mobility  
High school  
18 years old

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Worod, a girl from the village Habla in Qalqilya with impaired mobility, "dwarfism", was a girl introverted and isolated and refuses to get out to the community and was unlucky in high school. We at Star of Hope access to this girl, and give different exercises in the rights of which have become able to know their rights and how can be claimed by, and was among those who gave the girl the exercises are girls, women with ADHD, the girl at the beginning of meetings, was refusing to share with the group, but then became involved and became active in the group, and one day we called her mother, the association and expressed her happiness at large, because we targeted the daughter in exercises , she said her meetings with us helped a lot to get out of its isolation and integration of society, such as visiting relatives and integration in community activities, either at the level of the girl has asked at one of the meetings to speak for the group, saying: "I thank the Association Star of Hope who introduced me what are my rights and responsibilities, and helped me out two dimensions of the society when I was ashamed of myself and my disability, behold, I announced that before I'll get a high school diploma and I will continue my university".

**Safia Khalid Ali**  
**Iskaka / Salfit**  
**Mobility Disabled**  
**BA computer**  
**Age 40 years**

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I graduated from the university in 1999 and then started my journey in search of work, but unfortunately I could not find work because I am with ADHD, I would like to multiple jobs, and when I go to the interview and find me with obstruction you do not accept to work because of my disability, and continued the search process these ten years, but during this period, and thanks to the support of my family, I did not despair and headed for volunteer work I was a volunteer with the charity Women in the villages through which you train the children of the village on the computer, and the journey through research long for action identified Association stars of Hope in 2008, and started taking training multiple rights of people with disabilities, especially women and I was taking part in most activities, note that before I know Stars of Hope I did not know anything about the rights of persons with disabilities and the laws and conventions for people with disabilities, and after that I was a volunteer at the stars of Hope for two years, came my golden chance at the beginning of 2010, where I became an employee of the Association of star of Hope, "responsible community outreach" and I'm still up to this moment, since I got my work, especially Star of Hope hired a personal assistance for me. I thought that my suffering will end, but I faced another challenge is to use public transportation, as some drivers do not allow me to ride because of my disability and the presence of a wheelchair, but I did not relinquish my right to move or at work so I spent a long time among the police stations and the Ministry of Transport and Communications and with the support of my family and Stars of Hope until I limited from this problem so much, but the problem did not end for lack of convenient transportation

I am now, and my thanks to this increased my confidence and my experience. And widened my relationships in social network, and I could through my work that to develop myself, and according to the nature of my work I could serve many of women with disabilities,

Then I felt great when we got on this project, "temporary employment for women with disabilities," because I realized that this project would be a good first step for many women with disabilities.

## 4.

## SHS's Regional Activities in the Arab states

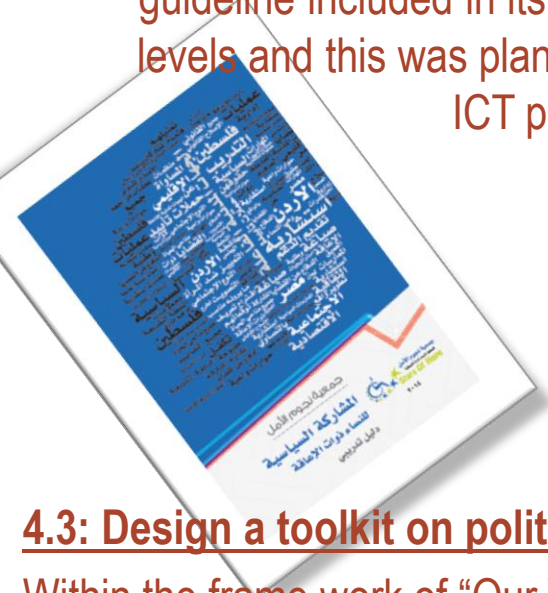


#### **4.1: Establishment of 3 national coordination committees in Jordan, Palestine and Egypt**

Within the frame work of “Our Voice Counts” regional project funded by the Fund for Gender equality / UN Women , three national coordination committees have been developed in Jordan, Palestine and Egypt and that to develop the coalitions between WWDs and their DPOs and relevant CSOs on the national and regional level. In addition to strengthen the cooperation between DPOs and CSOs, through the development of an instrument that will facilitate informed dialogue with national public authorities to generate support for WWDs political participation.

#### **4.2: Design of a guideline on the effective use of social media and ICT and online social media analytics tools**

Within the frame work of “Our Voice Counts” regional project, the guideline was designed by a technical expert in the field and came into 48 pages and 7 chapters on diverse topics essential for effective use of social media as a tool for political participation for WwDs. The guideline included in its parts an illustration on how to plan a media campaign at national levels and this was planned to help participant WwDs to build their own social media and ICT plans per each of the three countries Jordan, Palestine and Egypt.



#### **4.3: Design a toolkit on political processes, disability rights, gender and leadership**

Within the frame work of “Our Voice Counts” regional project, the toolkit was designed by a technical expert to help WwDs in all three project countries (Jordan, Egypt & Palestine) become better informed about public policy and become better advocates for their needs. This tool comes to be the first of its kind in the three countries to be used for training purposes; it is able with proper skilled trainer to capacitate WwDs in all aspects of Political participation main areas of interest in the three countries.



#### **4.4: A situation & stakeholder analysis Report on facilitators and barriers for the political participation of women with disabilities was produced**

Within the frame work of “Our Voice Counts” regional project, this report is the first of its kind to provide direct insight on political participation of WwD’s in the three countries (Jordan, Egypt & Palestine). It has been produced in collaboration with several stakeholders and WwDs groups from the three countries with a versatile tools and rich methodological approaches in data collection and triangulation.

In addition to that and as part of the report , SHS worked on the development of country-specific fact sheets on relevant structures, mechanisms and processes of political participation (electoral and non-electoral and legislative processes and civic engagement that was mostly interpreted in the situation analysis report.

#### **4.5: Conducting of a regional training for 18 WWDs from Jordan, Palestine and Egypt on Political Participation and Media**

Within the frame work of “Our Voice Counts” regional project funded by the Fund for Gender equality / UN Women The training took place over 4 days from 19th-22nd of December, 2013 in Amman and was attended by 18 WWDs (6 from Palestine, 6 from Jordan and 6 from Egypt) and that:

- to increase their skills and knowledge on gender, disability rights, local and national political processes and their rights to participate
- to increase their skills and knowledge on the use of social media and ICT as a most effective means of political action, networking and empowerment
- to capacitate the three WwDs groups from the three countries to be able to produce sound political participation.
- To capacitate the three WwDs groups from the three countries to be able to produce sound media engagement.



# Thank To

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## 5. Our Donors and Contributors

*We sincerely acknowledge and thank the contribution of donors, funding bodies, sponsors and volunteers who have been so vital to making this year such a successful one for Women with Disabilities in Palestine and Arab States, Special Thanks goes to:*



Kvinna till Kvinna



**diakonia**

PEOPLE CHANGING THE WORLD



**UN  
WOMEN**

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

**HANDICAP  
INTERNATIONAL**



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