Supported by CBM, BASR CBR team organized two social gatherings for persons with disabilities:

one on 28th March 2013 at Al-Thahrieh Municipality Park, targeting six self-help groups of persons with disabilities from Al-Thahrieh, Dair Samet, Dura, Ithna, Beit-Ula and Taffou in the Hebron district totaling 100 participants, and;

another on 13th April 2013 at Beit-Sahour Municipality Park, targeting six self-help groups of persons with disabilities from Al-Doha, Teqou, Nahhalin, Za'tara, Janata+Hendaza and Marah Rabah in the Bethlehem district totaling 56 participants.

The main objective of such activities is to offer persons with disabilities access to leisure and
recreational activities on equal footing with other community groups – a unique opportunity they are deprived of particularly in rural areas. Another objective is to enhance communication and interaction among the different self-help groups in a friendly enriching environment to jointly serve their cause.

Both activities were opened by the Mayors and the CBR program manager who stressed the importance for persons with disabilities to be involved in self-help groups to advocate their rights in their local communities. Several activities were facilitated by the CBR team such as ice breaking activities, competitions, fun games, football matches, poetry recital, singing, playing music and socializing, in which all participating members of the self-help groups were involved.

The participants immensely enjoyed the activities, interacted and socialized with each other, exchanged personal experiences and got the chance to meet new people. Most of them expressed their joy and satisfaction. “I talked to everyone and helped everyone; I really had a great time”, a female with physical disability from Al-Thahrieh self-help group said.

Some of the old self-help groups were significantly encouraged and enthusiastic to work more on activating their role as self help groups. As for the new ones, it was a good opportunity for them to understand the influential role self-help groups can play in advocating the rights of persons with disabilities in their communities, which would encourage more participation.

It is worth mentioning that Al-Thahrieh Municipality contributed towards the cost of the meals offered to the six self-help groups and exempted them from the entrance fees, while Beit-Sahour Municipality exempted the six self-help groups from the entrance fees.
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