



## Special Miles

*Every Child is Gifted.*

*They Just Unwrap their Packages at Different Times*

**July 8, 2021**

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Special Miles (S-miles) reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Abboud  
Managing Director

## Special Miles Overview

**Special Miles - S-miles** is a specialized inclusive center, founded on January 2011 at Beirut-Lebanon. It includes students divided by age groups 5-8, 9-13, 14-18 and 19-25 years, with and without learning difficulties/disabilities and mild to moderate special needs, targeting both leisure and intervention purposes simultaneously based on our tailored curriculum taking into consideration international methodologies. It's recreational and therapeutic at the same time.

Special Miles Objective is to break down barriers so individuals with learning disabilities and special needs are welcomed in the same range of schools and society services as all other community members.

S-miles center offers:

- Early detection and intervention for nurseries
- Academic programs and assessments (special education tutoring & intervention)
- Individualized therapies and assessments: psychological follow-up, speech therapy, psychomotor/occupational therapy
- Skills: organizational and study skills, computer skills, social and life skills, money management skills, executive functioning skills, career guidance, work skills
- Therapeutic Activities: Research based extra-curricular activities targeting both leisure and intervention purposes simultaneously
- Transition program: academic, functional, pre-vocational & vocational program. (as of age of 14)
- Consultancy/professional development/training for nurseries, schools, colleges, universities and parents
- Establish inclusive departments in schools

The approach & techniques adopted by S-miles are what makes it unique & innovative.

We emphasize on the holistic development of each person including moral, intellectual, social, emotional, physical development & well-being.

We are also dedicated towards increasing awareness among parents & society as a whole.

We believe that every individual with learning difficulties has the right to receive appropriate care without labeling, in an inclusive setting where he/she develops feelings of security and confidence in order to merge and progress within the society.

Special Miles cooperates with the Lebanese public and private sectors (related ministries, nurseries, schools, technical schools and universities). Special Miles is currently scaling internationally by building new partnerships and providing its services in several countries.

Special Miles is a member of the United Nations Global Compact Network in which is targeting the following SDGs:

SDG#3. Good Health and Well-being, SDG#4. Quality Education, SDG#5. Gender Equality, SDG#8. Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG#10. Reduced Inequalities, SDG#17. Partnerships for the Goals.

Other SDGs# 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15 are being integrated in the social and life skills program enrolled at Special Miles through awareness and role play sessions for students with learning disabilities, mild special needs and their community.

## Special Miles Roles

One of my roles was to set the stage to integrate the UN ten principles into Special Miles programs. By incorporating some of these principles into strategies and procedures that led students and employees to respect the rights of one another and hold responsibilities.

### **Human Rights:**

Respect and support human rights where students with learning disabilities and special needs are encouraged to receive quality education, to be socially integrated, to be protected from abuse and bullying, to enjoy life as any other person by showing us their skills and talents, to work within a group.

### **Labour:**

We make sure to respect the rights of all employees, address any problem-solving between staff and management.

Students with learning disabilities and special needs are highly at risk of being sexually abused in addition to child laboring and drugs addiction and trafficking. For this matter we insist on having awareness sessions to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable work for children at different ages and stages of their development.

Employees are selected on the basis of their ability to do the job under the non-discrimination ethics.

### **Environment:**

Special Miles support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges. We ensure that the activities within the center do not cause harm to the environment.

### **Anti-Corruption:**

We work against corruption on all its forms. Confidence, trust and transparency are our beliefs among customers and employees.

## Special Miles Interest in Sustainability

We first became interested in sustainability when in 2005, 16 years ago, Ms. Mireille Chrabieh a Co-founder and Managing Partner, was working with students who had different learning disabilities topped by social emotional issues. She used to think about their life. How does it look like? Are they enjoying life? Do they have enough time to play? When bullied, do they know how to react or what to do? To what extent are they dependent or independent? Are they socially well respected and appreciated? Do they know how to defend themselves? Do they know how to build friendship? Do they know how to communicate with others?

Many questions kept on roaming in her head.

How will the parents deal with such a situation? Who will guide them to do what? Will they accept their child's difficulty? Will they ignore it? Are they ready to do whatever it costs to take that extra mile to alter the reality?

She has realized how much this situation was challenging for both parents and their kids who have multiple difficulties.

Sustainability was an answer to all those questions and a blueprint to advance on reducing inequalities and promoting human rights as well as providing access to quality education through innovation and partnerships, leaving no one behind.

### **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that S-miles is keen to advance:**

Of course, good health and well-being, quality education and reducing inequalities are at the core of Special Miles' programs however, we also indirectly promote decent work and economic growth and partnership for the goals. The 2030 agenda with all its SDGs is being integrated in the social and life skills program enrolled at Special Miles through awareness and role play sessions for students with learning disabilities, mild special needs and their community.

S-miles has led to the development of innovative services that targeted particular SDG goals such as:

#### **SDG#3: Good Health and Well-Being:**

Through the implementation of therapeutic recreational and social & life skills activities that develop the students' social-emotional well-being, independence, self-defense, balance, eye-hand coordination and others.

#### **SDG#4: Quality Education:**

Students with learning difficulties and special needs are given the chance to receive quality education through modifying, accommodating and differentiating their individualized educational plan.

#### **SDG#10 Reduced Inequalities**

People with challenges will have the opportunity to be integrated in the work environment, particularly girls.

All SDGs are interconnected. Students, parents and the entire community are trained and informed on how to transform the society into an inclusive one.

Special Miles and throughout its journey realized the importance of starting up such a project according to the community needs. During those years, while students were growing, their needs were changing and new programs were implemented to cater their unmet requirements.

**Improvement/benefit that our idea brings to the SDG discussion and the ideal outcome:**

Putting effective actions in place, setting appropriate goals and indicating tangible impacts have led to set ambitious SDG targets. Applying creativity and innovation to solve sustainable development challenges in the field of special education have also led for the development of innovative services through the implementation of therapeutic recreational activities, work skills, career guidance, online platforms (EdTech and HealthTech) to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, awareness and acceptance of individuals with learning difficulties to be engaged in society and enhance quality education, gender equality and other SDGs.

**The most challenging part of bringing our project to life:**

We have faced several challenges, yet the most challenging part was that professionals, parents and society realize the importance of integrating such programs in one's life. Life does not only rotate around academics but also the social-emotional well-being is as important.

It was so difficult to convince that every single person has a gift but they just unwrap it at different times using different ways. Yes, **ALL** kids who have learning difficulties are skilled and talented. It is our job to help them reveal their talents. We need to give them the tools to nurture their skills, unleash their potentials, push them towards the action and realize what are they good at and can achieve. We need to headhunt and train the suitable coaches, facilitators and therapists.

**Importance of private sector to join in to help achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda:**

The private sector is a major player in delivering the 2030 agenda as it fosters investment in people through employment opportunities, innovation, technology and finance. The private sector, specifically in Lebanon, has been a drive for economic growth and social impact by engaging with communities, governments and other stakeholders.

**This project is an inspiration in which we are proud of:**

Throughout our profession and life experience, we have learned and believed that Education is for ALL; empowering children through their strengths and passions allows them to learn in different creative ways since all kids with learning difficulties and special needs are talented, skilled and have a great future ahead only if we grant them the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential and show their talents to the world. We have realized that when you love your students and when you are patient with them, then you would overcome all obstacles.

We are mostly proud of the fact that we built our own center from the ground up. We are touched by parents' appreciation, acknowledgement and trust.

## Special Miles Services

### Programs Enrolled at S-miles:

S-miles have led the development of innovative services and business model through the implementation of therapeutic/recreational activities, skills and programs: (NB: Each program is targeting specific SDGs)

All programs are goal oriented at S-miles, where individualized plans combine cognitive thinking and physical movement to ensure a healthy body and mind. Further, one of the main approaches adopted at S-miles aim to contribute to the development of social and emotional well-being of the child. Upon registration, children are advised to enroll in activities that research has proven to be beneficial for their challenges.

Special Miles curriculum is tailored for each student's profile independently taking into consideration international methodologies with a combination of all therapeutic activities and social & life skills. Further, S-miles' groups include a maximum of 5 to 6 students per session to support individuals to be integrated socially within a group and at the same time benefit from the session. Finally, a 3 months plan (IP-individualized Plan) underlying specific objectives is developed to assess the development of the child.

<b>A. Early Detection &amp; Intervention</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4, 10</b>	<b>B. Academic Programs &amp; Assessments</b> <b>(Special Education) SDG# 4</b>	<b>C. Therapeutic Activities</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4, 5, 17</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nurseries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutoring</li> <li>Intervention</li> </ul>	<p>Research based extra-curricular activities, targeting both leisure and intervention purposes simultaneously.</p>
<b>D. Individualized Therapies &amp; Assessments</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4</b>	<b>E. Consultancy /Professional Development Workshops /Training</b> <b>SDG# 4, 17</b>	<p>It's fun and therapeutic at the same time:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological Follow-up</li> <li>Speech Therapy</li> <li>Psychomotor/Occupational Therapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day Cares (Nurseries)</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>Parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dance/Movement Therapy (Dance/Rhythmic)</li> <li>Art Therapy (Art/Craft)</li> <li>Drama Therapy (Theater)</li> <li>Culinary Therapy (Cooking Therapy)</li> <li>Bodily-Kinesthetic board games</li> <li>Educational movies /documentaries</li> <li>Computer educational logic board games</li> </ul>
<b>F. Transition Program</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4, 8, 10, 17</b>	<b>G. Skills</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic, Functional, Pre-Vocational &amp; Vocational Program: Students as of age of 14</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational and Study Skills</li> <li>Computer Skills</li> <li>Social and Life Skills</li> <li>Money Management Skills</li> <li>Executive Functioning Skills</li> <li>Career Guidance</li> <li>Work Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story reading - puppet show</li> <li>Football / Basketball</li> <li>Health and nutrition</li> <li>Gardening, Ping pong, Darts</li> <li>Taekwondo &amp; Boxing</li> <li>Music, Yoga</li> <li>Science Experiment</li> </ul>
<b>H. Establish Inclusive Departments</b> <b>SDG# 3, 4, 10, 17</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Inclusive Departments in Schools</li> <li>Train staff to build up Individual Educational plan (IEP), Accommodate, Modify, Differentiate Curriculum &amp; Assessments</li> </ul>		

### Skills' Program Structure

A 3 months plan (IP-individual plan) underlying specific objectives is developed to assess the development of the student

Organization & Study Skills	Work Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting goals</li> <li>• Preparing to study</li> <li>• Study habits</li> <li>• Controlling procrastination</li> <li>• Tips for remembering</li> <li>• Note taking</li> <li>• Participating in class</li> <li>• Taking tests strategies</li> <li>• Reducing test anxiety</li> <li>• Raising self-esteem</li> <li>• Improving concentration</li> <li>• Motivating yourself to study</li> <li>• Managing your study time</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for Work Placement</li> <li>• Learning from Work Placement</li> <li>• Managing Your Own Money</li> <li>• Introduction to Health Safety at work</li> <li>• Conduct at Work</li> <li>• Working in a Team</li> <li>• Developing Personal Presentation</li> <li>• Skills for the Workplace</li> <li>• Personal Behavior for Success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy for the Workplace</li> <li>• Numeracy for the Workplace</li> <li>• The Internet and World Wide Web</li> <li>• Solving Work-related Problems</li> <li>• Self-Management for work</li> <li>• Building Working Relationships with Colleagues</li> <li>• Produce a CV</li> <li>• Applying for Jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving Success at Interview</li> <li>• Skills and Qualities for Employability</li> <li>• Investigating Rights and Responsibilities at Work</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Using a CV and Covering Letter to Apply for a Job</li> <li>• Career Progression</li> <li>• Managing Transition into Work</li> </ul>

### Programs' Benefits: (Demonstrated Outcomes)

Therapeutic Activities & Skills	Transition Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate easier / understand and express feelings and emotions</li> <li>• Promote self-control / manage ways to relieve anger &amp; stress</li> <li>• Understand and take responsibility for one's own action</li> <li>• Manage money independency</li> <li>• Manage time effectively</li> <li>• Develop interpersonal relations</li> <li>• Increase attention span</li> <li>• Build self-esteem &amp; confidence</li> <li>• Enhance motor skills &amp; eye-body coordination</li> <li>• Maintain healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Foster emotional intelligence, creativity &amp; imagination</li> <li>• Improve memory, enhance recall &amp; increase retention of information</li> <li>• Develop problem solving skills</li> <li>• Enhance knowledge</li> <li>• Career Guidance help students understand their strengths &amp; weaknesses, match their skills &amp; interest, make mature &amp; informed decisions suitable for career choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help individuals to be financially independent</li> <li>• Give opportunities for social integration in job environment</li> <li>• Create stability of emotional and psychological aspects within individuals</li> <li>• Decrease the risks of: Substance and Sexual Abuse, Bullying, etc.</li> <li>• S-miles program develops learner-centered pedagogy, flexible learning approaches and real-life experiences which have a positive impact on student motivation</li> <li>• Less drop out from college and work</li> <li>• Give students the opportunity to have a better labor market prospects than those with a less practical qualification</li> </ul>

### Special Miles: Female/Male Percentage

- Shareholders: Female: 67% - Male: 33%
- Staff: Female: 73% - Male: 27%
- Students: Female: 50% - Male: 50%