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UNRWA

Emergency Appeal 2007



Crowds of people are gathering in front of a water desalination plant, Gaza Strip

Progress Report

Thirty Third Progress Report: July – December 2007

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Emergency appeal progress report July – December 2007

Introduction

Palestinian living conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) deteriorated further during the second half of 2007. Following Hamas's takeover of Gaza in mid-June, after several months of clashes with the rival Fatah movement, the Government of Israel (GoI) imposed a series of punitive measures, which caused major hardship for the 1.4 million residents. These included the closure of major crossing points, restrictions on the entry of 'non-humanitarian' goods and a *de facto* ban on exports, and reductions in power supplies. Following continued firing of rockets and mortars into Israel from Gaza, the GoI declared Gaza 'a hostile entity' in September and enforced further reductions in supplies, including fuel.

The impact of the sanctions imposed by Israel was widespread. A range of basic food commodities, including fresh meat and dairy products, became unavailable or were in short supply during the reporting period, leading to increased demand for humanitarian assistance. By the end of the year, it was estimated that over 80 percent of the population of Gaza was dependent on food aid from either UNRWA or WFP¹. Further, the lack of spare parts prevented repairs of essential hospital equipment and water sanitation machinery, whilst WHO reported shortages of certain medicines. Palestinians seeking access to medical care outside Gaza also faced increasing difficulties; all but the most urgent medical cases were effectively imprisoned inside Gaza's borders.

The GoI imposed fuel sanctions on Gaza in October, leading to major reductions in imports of diesel and industrial fuel. The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) reported in November that it was only receiving half the amount of fuel needed to operate wells, pumping stations and treatment plants², and power and water cuts in Gaza homes became increasingly frequent.

The private sector in Gaza has suffered major and possibly irrevocable damage due to the closures. Most of Gaza's industry, which generated over half of all employment during the first half of the year, is export-driven and dependent on Israel for raw materials, and was unable to function under the siege conditions that were imposed. The Palestinian Federation of Industries reported in November that 95 percent of Gaza's factories had closed, leading to 32,000 job losses³. For its part, UNRWA was forced to suspend \$93m of construction projects due to a lack of materials; these projects remained on hold at the end of the reporting period.

The lifting of the embargo on the Palestinian Authority in June 2007, following the Hamas takeover in Gaza and the collapse of the National Unity Government, did help to relieve some of the pressure on the population. Aid flows to the PA resumed and the GoI also began to release hundreds of millions of dollars in PA tax revenues frozen since Hamas's victory in the January 2006 elections. As a result, the PA was able to resume full salary payments to over 160,000 employees, who collectively support around one million persons, or a quarter of the population. However, the positive impact of these actions was offset by the sanctions on Gaza and tightening restrictions on movement in the West Bank, due to the continued illegal expansion of the barrier and its associated regime and other settlement infrastructure.

¹ Gaza Strip Humanitarian Fact Sheet, OCHA, December 2007.

² Gaza Strip Humanitarian Fact Sheet, OCHA, November 2007.

³ Palestinian Economic Bulletin, the Portland Trust, November 2007.

Labour force survey data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for the third quarter of 2007 was indicative of an economy in severe distress. Unemployment rates in the oPt remained the highest for the entire Middle East and North Africa region, which has had the highest unemployment rates in the world for the past decade.

There were significant increases in unemployment in Gaza, where 37.6% of the work force was jobless during the third quarter of the year. A further one third of all persons recorded as employed described themselves as 'absent from work' during the reporting period, suggestive of higher levels of job losses not fully captured in official employment data. Included in this group were public sector workers who did not report to work as a reaction to Hamas's rule in Gaza, prompting reductions in municipal services and some health service provision.

In the West Bank, levels of unemployment also remained high, affecting over 25 percent of the workforce.

On the security front, the second half of the year was a period of relative internal calm, following several months of internal clashes, particularly in Gaza. Data collected by OCHA indicates that 69 Palestinians were killed and 646 injured in internal fighting in Gaza, down from 385 and 1873 respectively during the previous reporting period. In the West Bank, casualty levels from internal conflict increased slightly (21 Palestinians killed and 128 injured from July – December compared to 15 killed and 79 injured between January – June), but remained much lower than in Gaza. Despite reduced casualty levels the situation remained extremely tense.

Direct Palestinian conflict with the IDF increased during the reporting period in Gaza, reflecting increased IDF operations in the oPt. In total, 200 Palestinians were killed compared to 101 during the first half of the year. Injuries also increased, but on a less dramatic scale (311 to 352). In the West Bank, 38 Palestinians were killed and 420 injured, compared to 53 and 760 respectively during the first half of the year. Seven Israelis were killed and 189 injured during the reporting period.

As the year drew to a close there were signs of some progress on the political front, following several months of dialogue between Israel, the international community and the Abbas Government. This culminated in the Annapolis conference in November and Paris donor conference in December, at which over US\$7 billion was pledged to boost the Palestinian economy, including funds to support initiatives that would provide immediate support to Palestinians and help to stabilize the economy. Unfortunately, the weeks following the Annapolis conference saw little in terms of positive changes on the ground for Palestinians either in the Gaza Strip or West Bank.

By the end of December 2007 UNRWA had received pledges for \$141.8 million, or 57% of total financial requirements for the 2007 Emergency Appeal.

Emergency employment programmes

a. Direct hire

Aim: to relieve economic hardship at the household level for families without a breadwinner through provision of temporary work opportunities

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: the creation of 2,969,900 work days for 35,250 job holders (contract duration 3 – 12 months)

West Bank: the creation of 828,000 work days for 23,000 job holders (18,000 one month positions and 5,000 three month positions)

Temporary employment creation programmes are a central plank of UNRWA's emergency response in the oPt, as the Agency seeks to relieve economic hardship at the household level for families without a breadwinner or other means of support through provision of short term jobs inside UNRWA and with external partners, including NGOs and local municipalities.

Report on activity:

In **Gaza**, 9,967 refugees were hired by UNRWA in Gaza between July and December, supporting close to 46,000 dependants. A total of 1,777 Special Hardship Cases were employed on the programme and 7,000 contracts were active at the end of the reporting period. In total 18,500 contracts were active between July - December, around 30% of which were held by women.

Overall, 995,000 job days were created through unskilled, skilled and professional placements. Around half of all job opportunity days were in unskilled positions, whilst a further 20 percent were created through the Graduate Training Programme, for unemployed refugee graduates from universities and technical training colleges and 30 percent in skilled and professional posts⁴. This represented a shift away from unskilled work, which previously represented around 85 percent of all jobs, as the Agency ran large scale recreational and remedial education programmes for refugee children and youth. Over 4,000 teachers, support staff and other contractors were recruited to implement special programmes over the summer, whilst 1,600 additional teaching staff were placed in elementary classes and preparatory boys' schools at the start of the 2007 – 08 school year, as part of UNRWA's efforts to tackle declining standards in Agency schools.

UNRWA had planned a major expansion of its JCP during 2007, but was unable to effect this due to funding shortfalls and operating constraints resulting from the ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip. As such, the programme fell far short of targets.

The programme continued to work with the fisherman's syndicate in Gaza, employing out of work fishermen to rehabilitate and repair fishing nets and guard boats. JCP contractors were also assigned to the Palestinian Industrial Estates and Free Zones Authority and contributed to the maintenance and cleaning of premises, facilities and surrounding areas.

⁴ For unskilled posts, contract duration was typically 3 months, whilst for all other types of work contracts were between 9 – 12 months.

As part of a broader gender equality initiative, UNRWA is seeking to maximize employment opportunities for women of all abilities and capacities in the JCP. During the reporting period, the Agency began working with Al Sayafa Strawberry projects, a small scale agricultural enterprise, through which 20 unskilled women and one female agricultural engineer are employed. Initial feedback was positive and the Agency is looking to identify similar projects employing women in the agricultural sector.

In terms of programme development, the JCP monitoring team was strengthened during the reporting period, and by December consisted of 17 field monitors, three area monitors and 17 project assistants. Monitors took responsibility for verifying the attendance and eligibility of job holders and also monitoring and evaluating project progress and results.

In the **West Bank**, 19,228 persons were hired during the second half of 2007, supporting over 130,000 persons or around 20 percent of the registered refugee population. Job holders were employed in a range of unskilled and manual positions inside UNRWA and with municipalities and village councils. Jobs inside UNRWA were of three months' duration, whilst positions within municipalities and village councils were rotated on a monthly basis. The Agency employed 6,816 persons in its installations through the JCP, thereby exceeding planned targets, and placed 12,412 persons with municipalities. During the reporting period, UNRWA worked with 154 municipalities and village councils across the West Bank. The programme was active in all 19 camps. Over 30 percent of job holders were women and close to 760,000 job days were created. Around 5,000 contracts were active at the end of the reporting period.

Summary of work created:

	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	NATURE OF WORK	JOB OPPORTUNITY DAYS PROVIDED
GAZA	Inside UNRWA	Unskilled	297,072
		Skilled	123,370
		Professional	9,072
	Graduate work experience	Graduate Training Programme	186,458
	Outside UNRWA	Unskilled	178,144
		Skilled	199,144
		Professional	1,269
SUB TOTAL			994,529
WEST BANK	Inside UNRWA	Unskilled	441,558
	Outside UNRWA	Unskilled	316,793
SUB TOTAL			758,351
TOTAL			1,752,880

By the end of 2007, UNRWA had created over 13,000,000 days of employment under its job creation programme, since its inception in January 2001.

b. Indirect hire (West Bank only)

Aim: to relieve economic hardship at the household level for families without a breadwinner through provision of temporary work opportunities, whilst improving living conditions through development of infrastructure

Objectives July – December 2007

West Bank: the creation of 37,680 workdays for 2,900 labourers (based on monthly and fortnightly rotations)

UNRWA operates a separate indirect hire programme in the West Bank field, where camp committees and village councils take responsibility for hiring contractors to work on labour intensive works in camps and villages. Projects aim to provide temporary income support for refugee households without a breadwinner through the improvement, rehabilitation and development of physical infrastructure.

Report on activity:

During the second half of 2007, 31,756 job days of employment were created for 2,564 labourers, supporting around 19,000 dependents. Most works were linked with agricultural projects in 17 villages in the northern West Bank and Jordan valley. Other works were in Jenin camp, where 10,704m² of pathways were paved and 6000m of drains constructed and in Arroub and Jalazone camps, where 1989m² of sewer pipes were laid.

Emergency food assistance

Aim: to alleviate problems of constrained economic access to adequate nutrition amongst refugees

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: Delivery of two rounds of food aid to 158,000 families (approx. 791,450 persons), covering an estimated 76% of recommended daily needs

West Bank: Delivery of two rounds of food assistance to 102,000 families (approx. 612,000 persons), covering an estimated 35% of recommended daily needs

Report on activities:

In **Gaza**, the Agency delivered two rounds of food assistance to around 160,000 families during the reporting period. The size of the food parcel varied according to family size (with different rations for families of 1-2 persons, 3-4 persons, 5-6 persons, 7-8 persons, 9-10 persons, 11-12 persons and 13+) and covered on average 60 percent of daily calorific needs. The Agency had planned to meet 76% of daily needs as part of an expansion programme outlined in the 2007 emergency appeal, but was unable to meet this target due to underfunding.

In West Bank, UNRWA also delivered two rounds of assistance during the reporting period. Under the first of these close to 100,000 families were assisted. Parcels were designed for three persons, with larger families receiving multiple parcels, and covered an estimated 35% of daily calorific needs. The second round was only a partial round, as funding shortfalls prevented the Agency from purchasing sufficient commodities for a full round of assistance. Around 27,000 families were assisted, with priority given to families in the northern West Bank and Jordan valley, where levels of food insecurity have been assessed to be highest⁵. Access problems prevented UNRWA from distributing food in Barta' village (pop. ~4,000 persons) in the northern West Bank.

⁵ See WFP/FAO Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment, 2006.

During the reporting period, Karni crossing, Gaza's main commercial crossing point, remained closed to container traffic⁶. As a result, all humanitarian cargo has had to enter Gaza via alternative crossings at Sufa and Kerem Shalom, which do not have adequate facilities to handle container traffic. All container shipments had to be palletized at port prior to transport to the Gaza Strip, leading to considerable additional costs. In total during 2007 UNRWA incurred excess charges for storage, demurrage, transportation and palletization totaling an estimated US\$1.9m, largely due to closures at Karni and the requirement from June 2007 to palletize container shipments for entry through Sofa and Kerem Shalom crossings.

In both fields, parcels included flour, rice, sugar, powdered milk, lentils and sunflower oil. In Gaza, luncheon meat was added to the food parcel in the final round of 2007 and in future rounds will be included as a substitute to lentils. This decision follows consultations with beneficiaries, who indicated a strong preference for animal protein, due to market shortages and high prices caused by the prolonged closure.

Food assistance was delivered during the reporting period as per the table below:

Dates of Food Rounds	Number of Parcels delivered	Number of families targeted	Estimated Number of individuals benefiting	Tons of food Delivered
Gaza				
1 July – 9 September	160,720	160,720	771,456	14,493
21 October – 21 December	160,272	160,272	769,306	16,324
TOTAL	320,992	160,720	771,456	30,817
West Bank				
2 July – 6 October	186,786	96,288	416,490	8,961
18 October – 31 November	48,480	27,005	111,423	2,320
TOTAL	235,266	96,288	416,490	11,281

During the second half of 2007 UNRWA delivered food parcels to 257,000 families, or around 60 percent of the registered refugee population in the oPt. Since the start of emergency operations in late 2000, UNRWA has delivered around 4.5 million food parcels in Gaza and over 3.2 million in the West Bank.

Emergency cash assistance

Aim: to alleviate increasing poverty amongst Palestine refugees through the provision of cash subsidies and in-kind assistance

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: Distribution of cash grants of \$10,130,270 to 38,500 households

West Bank: Distribution of cash grants of \$5,250,000 to 21,000 households

⁶ The crossing was closed to container traffic on 12 June and has not reopened since Hamas's takeover of Gaza. The conveyor belt at the crossing has operated, allowing the passage of wheat and animal feed.

As part of its emergency programme, UNRWA provides cash subsidies to particularly vulnerable refugee families with pressing emergency needs. Beneficiaries include: (i) families that have lost their source of income due to lost unemployment or the death or injury of the breadwinner; (ii) families whose homes have been destroyed or damaged; (iii) families in need of support to cover the cost of post-injury social care; and (iv) families unable to cover funeral costs.

Report on activities:

Cash assistance activities in **Gaza** remained largely on hold as a result of funding shortfalls. The programme was suspended in December 2006, with the exception of the continued payment of emergency relocation fees – on a quarterly basis - for families made homeless and a small number of payments in other categories. In total, 1,939 families received rental assistance during the reporting period, including 773 families assisted twice and 1,166 families assisted once only. A further 264 families were supported through the other components of the programme (loss of income, post-injury social care, selective cash assistance for Special Hardship Case families). In total, 2,203 families (11,662 persons) were assisted and \$1.2 million was disbursed. The average size of each rehousing grant was around \$300, whilst grants for other types of assistance were around \$260.

In Gaza, the Agency also distributed NIS100 to all 195,406 pupils at Agency schools during October on the occasion of the Eid Al Fitr festival, in an effort to assist cash strapped refugee families during a particularly difficult period. Around \$4.8m was distributed. In November, similar payments were made to 805 disabled refugee students, in coordination with Community Based Rehabilitation Centres.

No in-kind assistance was distributed in Gaza by UNRWA between July – December.

In the **West Bank**, 10,491 families received cash assistance payments during the reporting period. 427 families received assistance for damage to basic household goods, whilst a further 10,054 were supported for loss of income, and 10 for other needs. A total of \$3.4m was disbursed to 62,631 individuals, with grants for loss of income averaging \$400 and grants in other categories around \$300.

In the West Bank, UNRWA provided 1,037 blankets to OCHA for distribution to 269 families from Bedouin and herding communities. This came in response to an OCHA appeal for blankets, mattresses and fuel to support West Bank communities living in sub-standard housing during unusually severe weather conditions over the winter. It was estimated that extreme conditions, including serious frosts, led to the deaths of four Palestinians in the West Bank during the winter, including an eight year old Bedouin child living in the Negev. In total, 2,400 households were assisted under the OCHA appeal.

Since UNRWA's emergency operations in the oPt began in late 2000, over \$70 million has been issued in emergency cash assistance.

Emergency health

Aim: to guarantee access to primary health care services for Palestine refugees in the oPt, mitigating the impact of closures and responding to increased demand for services

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza:	To purchase additional medical supplies and replacement equipment in anticipation of increased demand on UNRWA primary health care services
West Bank:	To improve outreach of services in isolated areas and those most affected by the Wall through the operation of six mobile health clinics
	To establish a new health centre for refugees no longer able to reach Jerusalem
	To operate six mobile clinics in 60 remote locations for approximately 98,000 persons

Report on activities:

Demand for services at UNRWA clinics remained high in both fields during the reporting period. The number of patient consultations continued to increase in Gaza, with 2,196,709 consultations recorded during July – December 2007, compared to 1,869,546 over the same period in 2006, i.e. a 17 percent increase. Meanwhile in the West Bank, 885,657 consultations were recorded during the reporting period, up two percent on the corresponding period in 2006.

Demand at UNRWA health centres has increased since the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in January 2006, for several reasons, including financial sanctions on the PA and erratic operations of PA health facilities and the inability of refugees to pay nominal prescription fees at PA and NGO facilities. Following the lifting of the international embargo on the PA in June 2007, demand for services at UNRWA clinics in the West Bank stabilized, but has remained high in Gaza.

During the reporting period, in both fields contributions were received for procurement of equipment and medical supplies under the emergency programme.

Five mobile health clinics remained operational in the **West Bank**, providing services to refugees and non-refugees unable to access regular care facilities due to restrictions on access and movement. Health teams offered a range of services for communicable and non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, anaemia, osteo-arthritis, parasitic infections and infectious diseases, as well as first aid. Plans to operate a sixth mobile clinic were cancelled, as the Agency diverted resources to health centres to address increased demand.

During the reporting period, 747 visits were conducted by mobile clinics, with 64,750 patients seen. Mobile teams were unable to visit Barta'a enclave in Nablus area from October onwards due to access restrictions. As a result, the Barta'a catchment area, which includes five localities with an estimated population of 4,500 persons, was deprived of services during the reporting period.

In addition, the Agency continued to operate from three fixed locations in the West Bank, and expanded its services to provide preventative as well as curative care. A fourth fixed location was rented in Beit Awwa and services are due to begin in January 2008.

Demand for support to cover hospitalization expenses in the West Bank was also high, but the Agency was forced to limit its support due to funding constraints. A total of 11,000 patients were assisted during the period under review at 12 specially contracted hospitals. A total of \$1.7m was spent on this activity.

Physiotherapy support was provided in West Bank, in the form of exercises, heat and electrotherapy. A total of 600 patients were treated in 9,170 sessions. Patients with particularly serious problems were visited at home, whilst others were treated at physiotherapy centres.

During the reporting period no Palestinians injured in clashes with Israeli troops were treated at UNRWA clinics.

Emergency environmental health (Gaza Strip only)

Aim: to prevent public health catastrophes in the Gaza Strip and ensure adequate water and sanitation services

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: To provide emergency relief and assistance to municipalities to ensure maintenance of vital public utilities

This intervention was first included in the UNRWA Emergency Appeal at the time of the revised 2006 appeal in response to the PA financial crisis, which left many municipalities and public health service providers in the fields of water treatment, sewage, waste disposal, water wells and pest control unable to replenish fuel stocks and other vital supplies to implement ongoing operations. UNRWA sought funding to enable it to respond flexibly to the evolving situation on the ground and assist municipalities and service providers to ensure the ongoing delivery of essential environmental health services and mitigate possible public and environmental health risks.

Report on activities:

During the reporting period, UNRWA donated 438,900 litres of gas oil (at a cost of \$425,146) to 22 Gaza Strip Municipalities and two Solid Waste Management Councils to meet solid waste management requirements.

The Agency also provided the following support:

- 30,000 litres of gas oil to the CMWU to enable it to operate municipal diesel generators of water plants and waste water pump stations
- 4,000 litres of gas oil to Khan Younis municipality to operate wheel loaders for leveling work at the Khan Younis governorate building
- 10,000 litres of gas oil to Shifa hospital for operation of diesel generators and other machinery

Emergency community mental health programme (Gaza only)

Aim: to ensure access to psycho-social and mental health services for the most vulnerable refugees in the Gaza Strip

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: To assist refugee family coping mechanisms by addressing psycho-social distress caused by the prevailing violence in the Gaza Strip, with a particular focus on children and youth

UNRWA launched a psychosocial support programme in the oPt in 2002 to provide assistance to refugee children and youth living in extremely violent and stressful circumstances. The programme aims to mitigate the effects of the prevailing violence on the refugee population and encourage the development of positive coping strategies. Previously funded through bilateral arrangements, which continue in the West Bank, the programme was included in the EA for the first time in 2007.

Report on activities:

Funding was used to maintain the operation of 189 specially recruited and trained psychosocial counselors working from Agency schools, health centres and relief offices. Counsellors provided a range of support services on a group and individual basis, including training in basic life skills, stress / coping mechanisms and self-confidence building. Care givers were also offered support in managing the treatment of chronically-ill patients, whilst parents were advised on handling stressed children and healthy child-rearing practices. A range of mental health awareness activities were also undertaken, including on gender and child protection matters. In total during the reporting period, counselors conducted 4,247 group sessions, 11,646 individual sessions, 9,600 group guidance and public awareness initiatives and 1,726 home visits.

Support to community-based organizations

Aim: to ensure access to essential community services and activities for vulnerable refugees in the Gaza Strip and West Bank

Objectives July – December 2007

Gaza: To provide emergency financial support to community-based organizations across the Gaza Strip offering services to children and youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and women

West Bank: To provide safe recreational areas in various locations for refugee children and youth, including persons with disabilities

Report on activities:

No activities were carried out in the **West Bank** during the reporting period due to underfunding.

In **Gaza**, UNRWA ran a large scale recreational and educational programme for almost 200,000 children and youth. Beginning in mid-June, the Summer Games programme ran until the end of August and covered a range of activities across 300 different locations in Gaza, including 200 community-based organizations. UNRWA worked with several other partners, including the Canaan institute, the Palestinian Artists Association and the Palestine Athletics Federation, as well as the Qattan Centre for the Child, Sharek, the Arab Association and Theatre Day. Activities including mural painting, mini-marathon, mobile library/creative reading, swimming, environmental awareness, arts, crafts and drama.

Building a protective environment (West Bank)

Aim: a pilot project to develop a protective environment in a West Bank refugee camp for refugee children and youth

Objectives July – December 2007

West Bank: To support children and youth in Balata camp, Nablus and those working with them to formulate strategies, build capacities and implement projects to create a more protective local environment in the context of widespread protection failures

Report on activities: no activities were carried out due to lack of funding.

Emergency shelter and shelter repair (GFO only)

Aim: To provide temporary shelter and shelter repair to refugees whose shelters are damaged by flooding or collaterally damaged during the course of IDF military operations

Report on activities:

During the reporting period, repairs on 142 shelters across Gaza were completed, either through direct intervention by UNRWA, in coordination with third party contractors, or financial support, in the event of minor and moderate damages. Works valued at \$650,700 were completed. Other activities were planned but had to be halted due to shortages of construction materials.

Operations Support Officer programme

Aim: to reinforce UNRWA's education, health and relief social services programme in the context of the emergency situation in the oPt

Objectives July – December 2007

Both fields: To provide logistical support, facilitate access to humanitarian aid and enable UNRWA to respond quickly and alleviate any undue suffering in the current crisis

To ensure the integrity and neutrality of the Agency's installations and programmes

Report on activities:

In both fields, OSOs continued to assist UNRWA programme departments in ensuring efficient and effective service delivery.

In **Gaza**, OSOs provided support to the ongoing Schools of Excellence initiative by facilitating consultations with all head teachers in UNRWA's 214 schools and a selection of teachers, parents and community representatives.

OSOs also worked closely with health department staff to prepare the Excellent Health Services initiative, which aims to improve health services in UNRWA clinics through enhanced management and information systems, increased consultation time and additional health awareness activities. OSOs held consultations with staff of all health clinics and a selection of beneficiaries in August 2007, which contributed to the identification of action points for follow up.

OSOs supported the introduction of a gender equality initiative in Gaza, Equality in Action, which aims to address the specific needs of women and girls in Gaza. OSOs held focus groups across Gaza and identified candidates for the project steering committee⁷.

In November, OSOs began to assist departments with preparations for Summer Games 2008.

OSOs continued to follow up on community outreach visits conducted during the first half of 2007, assisting departments with addressing issues identified as key concerns by meeting participants and addressing on individual cases of concern.

OSOs continued to coordinate UNRWA's responses to the aftermath of the Um El Nasser sewage spill in Northern Gaza of 27 March. The sewage flood led to five deaths, 25 injuries and damage/destruction to over 250 homes. OSOs helped to monitor the disbursement of cash assistance to families whose homes were damaged.

Beginning in November 2007, OSOs have also supported inter-agency efforts to improve data collection on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, participating in the development of a standard set of indicators and statistics, published by OCHA in the form of a monthly fact sheet.

OSOs conducted 59 formal installation inspections during the reporting period, in addition to the visits to schools and health centres as part of the Schools of Excellence / Excellent Health Services initiatives.

In the **West Bank**, the core functions of the OSO programme continued, including monitoring humanitarian conditions in camps, villages and towns and ensuring that UNRWA's emergency programmes respond adequately and efficiently to any perceived need for support. Monitoring and reporting focussed on refugees affected by the West Bank Barrier, Bedouin communities, displaced persons and camps. OSOs also continued to monitor access of Agency personnel, vehicles and supplies into, out of and within the West Bank, particularly in relation to proposed new access procedures for UNRWA staff to enter Jerusalem⁸.

OSOs continued to work with OCHA-oPt and ICRC on monitoring the impact of the Barrier on 67 (predominantly refugee) communities in the West Bank, some of which was published by OCHA in the form of a 'special focus' report (http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ICJ4_Special_Focus_July2007.pdf).

OSOs assisted with the movement of Agency personnel, vehicles and supplies into, out of and around the West Bank and intervened with the Israeli Army and police to safeguard the privileges and immunities to which UNRWA is entitled under international law. OSOs conducted 454 formal installation inspections during the reporting period.

Emergency capacity

Aims: to strengthen the capacity of the Agency's emergency programme, including improved coordination, management and monitoring, emergency preparedness and contingency planning

⁷ For more details on various Gaza Field initiatives, including Schools of Excellence, Equality in Action and Excellent Health Services, see: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/Gaza.html>.

⁸ UNRWA was advised by the GoI in mid-2007 that changes in procedures for staff to enter Jerusalem would mean that WB-ID holding staff could no longer cross checkpoints into Jerusalem in vehicles.

Objectives July – December 2007

Both fields: To enhance planning, management and monitoring / evaluation of emergency activities through dedicated capacity at field and HQ level, in order to ensure that UNRWA is able to efficiently and effectively respond to increased demand for emergency services

To maintain consistent and coordinated planning and implementation of emergency programmes in the two fields, in accordance with UNRWA's programme activities in other areas of UNRWA's work

Report on activities:

In **Gaza**, UNRWA developed detailed plans to respond to a rapid onset emergency, including: the identification of emergency shelters; the pre-positioning of reserves of vital commodities; and preparation for the maintenance of basic standards of health and social services. Through the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM), the Agency's Gaza Field Office enhanced its capacity to respond to humanitarian needs of families affected and displaced by an emergency and is now capable of providing a comprehensive humanitarian response to two medium-scale emergencies simultaneously – where a medium-scale emergency is defined as affecting a population of 20,000. The effectiveness of this enhanced capability rests on streamlined reporting and management lines; establishment of field emergency report teams; decentralised decision making structures; and comprehensive emergency operating procedures.

In response to the deterioration of the security situation and breakdown of law and order evident in the Gaza Strip, provision for enhanced security arrangements was introduced. As part of the ongoing assessment and continuing designation of the duty station as phase IV, armored vehicles were procured to facilitate staff movement and close protection personnel employed to mitigate assessed operational risks.

In the **West Bank**, funding shortfalls prevented the Agency from carrying out activities planned under this heading. The Agency was unable to establish a monitoring and evaluation unit or an Emergency Programme Coordinator function.

UNRWA also continued to monitor the socio-economic impact of the crisis in both fields, in particular on refugees, through continued cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and issued a detailed report on Palestinian living conditions in 2006. (See: <http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pubs07/RecentSoEcDev.pdf>)

Obstacles encountered:

Security situation

The reporting period witnessed a reduction in inter-factional fighting in Gaza, allowing restrictions on movement of staff to be relaxed, facilitating delivery of Agency operations and services. Concurrently, and following the Gol's designation of Gaza as a hostile entity after Hamas's takeover in June, there was an increase in Israeli-Palestinian violence. Due to IDF activities near UNRWA schools and health facilities, Agency operations were occasionally interrupted.

Access restrictions

The closure of Gaza's crossing points following Hamas's take over in mid-June placed severe strain on UNRWA's operations and led to shortages of food, medicines and other basic supplies, including paper for school books. UNRWA was also forced to suspend \$93m of construction and infrastructure projects, due to the unavailability of materials on local markets and restrictions on their import.

In the West Bank, UNRWA staff members reported 226 access problems, involving 1,508 staff, which accounted for a total of 2,075 hours lost, as illustrated below:

Access Summary	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. of incidents	38	45	37	30	34	42
No. of employees	322	211	340	113	283	239
No. of hours lost	231	152	1,368	64	122	137

This represents a 35% increase in the number of employees affected over the first six months of the year and an increase of 130% in the number of hours lost⁹.

Access restrictions for WB-ID staff entering Jerusalem were increased during the reporting period. As of December 2007, only 434 employees held valid entry permits out of 562 who need a permit to reach the Agency's offices in Jerusalem, i.e. almost 25% of staff could not enter Jerusalem because they did not have entry permits. This is an increase of over 3 % since June 2007 and includes a number of staff members whose permits had previously been issued without difficulty.

UNRWA access to the seam zone has also been severely restricted, negatively impacting on the Agency's ability to provide assistance to vulnerable communities in these areas.

Damage to installations

Four UNRWA installations in Gaza (all schools) sustained damage during the reporting period as a result of reported Israeli military activity, at a total estimated cost of \$3,900. In the West Bank minor damage was reported as a result of IDF incursions into Balata and Fara camps and Ramallah Men's Training Centre.

Annexes:

- A. UNRWA emergency activities fact sheet, July – December 2007.
- B. Spreadsheet: pledges and contributions received, all appeals, as of 31 December 2007.
- C. Spreadsheet: expenditure report, 2007 Emergency Appeal; combined expenditure report, other appeals.

⁹ Figures only refer to reported incidents and are therefore likely to underestimate the real impact on UNRWA operations.

UNRWA Emergency Activities Fact Sheet

July - December 2007

Category	Gaza Strip	West Bank	Total
Emergency Employment Creation			
Direct Hire			
Persons Hired	9,967	19,228	29,195
Job Days Provided	994,529	758,351	1,752,880
Dependants Supported	45,745	137,703	183,448
Indirect Hire			
Construction Job Days Generated	n/a	31,756	31,756
Emergency Food Aid			
Parcels Delivered	320,992	235,266	556,258
Families Targeted	160,720	96,288	257,008
Est. Number of Individuals Benefitting	771,456	416,490	1,187,946
Tons of Food Delivered	30,817	11,281.00	42,098
Cash and In-kind Assistance			
Number of families assisted	2,203	10,491	12,694
Number of individuals assisted	11,662	62,631	74,293
Mass cash distributions	196,211	n/a	196,211
Total value of cash distributed / US\$	6,026,000	3,385,750	9,411,750
Emergency Health Services			
Mobile Clinics			
Number of Clinics	n/a	5	5
Patients Served	n/a	64,750	64,750
Hospitalization			
Patients Served	n/a	11,000	11,000
Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy			
Sessions	n/a	9,170	9,170
Patients Served	n/a	600	600
Environmental Health			
Assistance to public health providers	438,900L of gas oil	n/a	438,900
Community mental health			
Number of counsellors	189	n/a	189
Number of group sessions	4,247	n/a	4,247
Number of individual sessions	11,646	n/a	11,646
Number of group guidance sessions	9,600	n/a	9,600
Number of home visits	1,726	n/a	1,726
Emergency Shelter repair			
Number of shelters repaired	142	n/a	142
Emergency Operations Support			
Operations Support Officers (OSO)	6	10	16
OSO National Staff	6	19	25