



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

Press Release No. HQ/2007
27 June 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUMMER DAYS FOR CHILDREN IN GAZA

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY

East Jerusalem, 27 June 2007: Say the word "Gaza" and you think of death, destruction, poverty and despair, which is sadly the reality for the entire population living in the coastal strip. However, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, is endeavoring to mitigate the worst effects of the current crisis not just with the provision of food, medicine and other vital assistance to sustain life, but also through wider and creative human development initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for its beneficiaries, with a particular focus on youth. The Agency's two pronged summer programs for children is an excellent example of creativity and staff dedication in the face of what would seem insurmountable challenges. "Summer Games", delayed by one week because of the recent fighting is now fully underway, involving nearly two hundred thousand children in a broad range of recreational and educational activities. In addition, the "Summer Learning" program, also up and running, providing Forty Two Thousand children who underperformed in their recent examinations with a chance to catch up and achieve their full academic potential through daily remedial classes for the next two months.

"Behind the headlines there are many good things happening in Gaza and our summer program for children is an initiative that we are very proud of, particularly in the current circumstances", said John Ging, Director of UNRWA Operations, Gaza. "Young Gazans have few or no outlets for recreation. They are surrounded by insecurity and despair and in such circumstances the importance of recreational opportunities, taken for granted in so many of our countries, cannot be overstated in terms of physiological and physical well being. People would be forgiven for thinking that UNRWA is just about emergency food rations or the delivery of medicine at this time, but our Summer Program for Gaza's children is living proof of the dedication and commitment of our staff to make even more sacrifices in terms of their time and effort in the interests of the welfare and development of Gaza's next generation".

UNRWA is hosting a wide range of activities throughout the summer period: art and craft classes, mural painting, kite festivals, book fairs, theatre performances, sporting activities including a mini-marathon, supervised beach and swimming activities. Local community groups are actively participating. "For us, this is about supporting civil society, too", said Ging, "which is why we are working with grass roots organizations. We are working with them to deliver measurable results in improving the quality of life for the citizens of Gaza. There's a human interest story behind every young face."

-Ends-

Note to Correspondents:
For interviews, filming opportunities and stills photographs,
Please contact Christopher Gunness on +972 542 402 659 or +972 2 589 0267.
Attached photos for usage by journalists.
Not an official document. For information only