



Gaza Field Office

Programmes

Through approximately 10,600 staff in 218 installations, UNRWA delivers education, healthcare, relief and social services, microcredit and emergency assistance to more than one million Palestine refugees in Gaza, accounting for more than 70 per cent of the population.

The Education Programme provides primary and vocational education to refugee children.

- Nearly 200,000 children are taught in six elementary grades and three preparatory grades.
- Approximately 7,200 teaching staff utilise the Palestinian Authority curriculum supplemented with enrichment materials.
- 221 schools operate in 124 school buildings through double shifting, whereby one school attends in the morning and the other attends in the afternoon.
- Nearly 1,300 students receive vocational training in the Gaza Training Centre and 200 at the Khan Younis Training Centre, with a further 600 students to soon be accommodated.

The Health Programme provides primary health care to the one million Palestine refugees in Gaza.

- Operates 19 primary health care facilities.
- Provides one health centre for every 66,200 refugees.
- Provides mental health services, with 82 per cent of beneficiaries being children who suffer from several problems including fear, aggression and lack of motivation.

The Relief and Social Services Programme maintains the refugee register, seeks to alleviate the worst impact of poverty amongst the poorest of the poor, and assists community-based organisations.

- Every quarter 100,000 rations are distributed to the most vulnerable people through the Social Safety Net Programme.
- UNRWA provides technical and logistical assistance to key Community Based Organisations including Women's Programme Centres, which offer skills training, literacy classes, and recreational activities and also to Community Rehabilitation Centres, which support refugees with physical disabilities.
- UNRWA oversees the operations of the Rehabilitation Centre for the Visually Impaired, established in 1962. The Centre provides both vocational and educational training to visually impaired youth.



The Micro-enterprise and Microfinance Programme aims to alleviate poverty and support economic development by providing working capital loans. This Programme is the largest financial intermediary to the small business and micro-enterprise sector in Gaza.

- Offers five loan products including Solidarity Group Lending, targeting micro-enterprises owned by women, of which 73 per cent are refugees.
- Has nearly 2,400 active loans valued at approximately \$3.5 million.

Infrastructure Programme plans, designs, constructs, and maintains UNRWA installations, including its major re-housing projects, and spearheads camp improvement efforts:

- The outstanding construction portfolio consists of \$93 million worth of projects, which have been on hold since June 2007, due to the absence of construction materials.
- Maintains and constructs sewage, drainage and electrical systems in the 8 camps.

Emergency Programme aims to help mitigate growing impoverishment in the Gaza Strip. Emergency relief efforts include:

- A Job Creation Programme, employing approximately 10,000 refugees.
- Food assistance to over 650,000 refugees consisting of a food basket providing 60% of the caloric needs and a school feeding programme benefiting 110,000 pupils.
- Shelter reconstruction for those families whose homes were damaged by the IDF.
- Emergency support to municipalities to ensure the delivery of critical water and sanitation services.
- Cash assistance to help with the purchase of vital household supplies and rental subsidies for the displaced while they await shelter reconstruction.
- Additional medical supplies and medical equipment.
- Support to Community Based Organisations for the most vulnerable refugees, particularly youth.

About UNRWA

UNRWA provides education, healthcare, relief and social services, micro-credit loans and emergency aid to more than 4.4 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. UNRWA employs more than 28,000 staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees, including 20,000 educational staff and 4,000 health workers.



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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Initiatives

Gaza Field Office (GFO) has a number of reform initiatives underway to improve the quality of its core programs. On going community outreach is key to ensuring that these initiatives are responsive to community concerns and priorities. The community outreach approach established a formal response mechanism to address issues raised by the community and a commitment to meet with community leaders and open-invite beneficiary meetings every 6 months. During these biannual town hall meetings conducted in every governorate throughout the Gaza Strip, UNRWA staff update the community on the status of reforms, and seek their views on impact and opinions for further and other improvements to the services being provided by the Agency. To complement these efforts, 15,000 copies of a bi-monthly newsletter are issued, supplemented by other issue specific information leaflets as appropriate.

Schools of Excellence

The cumulative effects of the occupation, closures of the crossings, poverty, violence and chronic under funding made a collapse in education standards inevitable. In response, a Schools of Excellence Action Plan was devised, key elements include: ending the practice of automatic upgrading of students; reforming the management structures; merit only appointments, including female teachers to boys schools; reducing class size to 30 in preparatory boys schools and in all first grade classes; implementing a school feeding programme; providing evening homework sessions for elementary and preparatory boys and increasing the number of teaching hours in Arabic and Maths. Curriculum support materials for students and teachers, and intensive and extensive teacher training.

Summer Learning – students in grades 4-9 who do not pass their exams in Arabic and Mathematics attend remedial classes for six weeks during the summer to ensure that they learn the grade appropriate basics. Classes are capped at 25 students per teacher to maximize individual attention. In 2008, over 45,000 students participated with an 81% pass rate.

Special Children, Special Needs – an estimated 40,000 UNRWA students in Gaza have special educational needs. This initiative seeks to build knowledge and understanding of these needs amongst teachers and parents, introduce a system to diagnose these needs and to mobilize the necessary resources in schools and the community to ensure that each child is provided with an opportunity to achieve their potential

Respect and Discipline in Violence Free Schools – this initiative is focused on improving student behavior and eliminating all forms of violence from UNRWA schools. It is guided and supported by an expert group of University professors. Each school develops their individual action plans, with objectives to build mutual respect amongst

students, between students and teachers, and between the school and the community.

Human Rights Education – Since 2002, UNRWA has integrated human rights into the teaching of Arabic, Islamic studies, and Social Science as part of its non-violent conflict resolution and human rights programme. Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the GFO is now introducing a dedicated curriculum for each grade with examinations to ensure that all children in UNRWA schools in Gaza have a comprehensive understanding of the international human rights framework - with the Universal Declaration at its core. Students will also gain an increased sense of individual responsibility and tolerance in both thinking and behavior.

Excellent Health Services Initiative

In August 2007 GFO launched its Excellent Health Services Initiative aimed at improving services in UNRWA's 19 health centres. Despite impressive achievements in terms of health indicators, notably in the area of maternal and child health, recent years have witnessed a sharp rise in the number of visits to UNRWA health centres, which is not being matched by increased donor funding. This initiative seeks to enhance efficiency of the use of current resources in the first instance – it focuses on creating more time for patient consultations, improving prescription practices, computerising data management, improving school health service, improving health centre management and governance and preventing the preventable through health education.

Equality in Action

Guided by international human rights conventions and based on extensive community outreach, Equality in Action addresses the needs of Palestinian girls and women by seeking to: reverse the current trend of rising rates of abuse within the home; maximise employment opportunities; build the capacity of workers' organisations so they are better positioned to equip women with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to deal with work-place issues; create space for girls and women to engage in social and recreational activities; support the development of a radio station and build on UNRWA's successful Microfinance and Microenterprise programme to strengthen the existing service provision to women and men.

Summer Games

Gaza's children and youth – 50% of the total population have few or no outlets for recreation, particularly during the long summer months. In response, UNRWA runs a massive recreation program, which in 2008 catered for 250,000 children in 324 locations, over a ten week period. Summer Games is designed as a creative learning experience, encouraging self-expression and opportunities to develop a wide variety of skill sets. Activities include: swimming, football, volleyball, gymnastics, athletics, arts and crafts, kite making, theatre, music and visits to Gaza's only Museum.

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