Psychosocial Assessment of Education in Gaza and Recommendations for Response

Report on the findings of an assessment conducted by Kathleen Kostelny, PhD and Michael Wessells, PhD of the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity.

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UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

OFFICE OF H.H. THE AMIR'S CONSORT

Education is a good thing, but there is no future…no job opportunities. I am less focused on doing well on the Tawjihee. If I succeed, it does not matter – I'll go to the tunnels anyway. Why spend 5 years [at university] but have no job when I finish? Instead I can go to the tunnels and work, and at least make money.

(Male preparatory school student)

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Acknowledgements

Acronyms

FGD   Focus group discussion

IASC   Inter-Agency Standing Committee

INEE   Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies

MHPSS   Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

MoEHE   Ministry of Education and Higher Education

NGO   Non-governmental organization

OCHA   United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

oPt   occupied Palestinian territory (comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip)

PA   Palestinian Authority

SPSS   Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNDP   United Nations Development Program

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF   United Nations Children's Fund

UNRWA   United Nations Relief and Works Agency

WHO   World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Between December 27th, 2008 and January 18th, 2009, the Israeli army waged a major military operation in the Gaza Strip, bombarding the territory from the air, ground and sea, and conducting a large scale ground incursion. 'Operation Cast Lead' resulted in significant loss of life and damage to infrastructure. Moreover, military operations continue on a regular basis, notably in the areas near the border with Israel (the so-called buffer zone), resulting in death, injury and displacement. These operations occur against the backdrop of a severe, long-term blockade. While movement and access restrictions have long been a way of life in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), in 2006 restrictions imposed on Gaza escalated until just a short list of imports were permitted from 2007 to this day (with some modifications to the list in June 2010 following the international reaction to the army action on the Gaza flotilla). As has been well documented by the United Nations, the blockade negatively affects almost every aspect of life for the people of Gaza. It has also prevented the physical reconstruction and recovery of the Gaza Strip.

Although much has been made of the physical damage that remains unaddressed, equally important are the less tangible impacts of the prevailing humanitarian situation. In the aftermath of the war, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 25,000 to 50,000 people – including some 14,000 to 28,000 children – were in need of some form of psychological intervention to address the longer-term psychological effects that had resulted from the hostilities. WHO noted that:

> *The loss of care and protection of parents or primary caregivers, disruptions to daily life including school and play activities, and loss of adequate nutrition [meant] that children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to psychosocial distress.[1]*

A key sector to consider in this regard is education. Education is not only a basic human right, one that cannot be postponed or neglected during conflict or emergency, but also has a key role to play in protecting and sustaining the lives of children and young people. This is particularly true in the occupied Palestinian territory where generations have grown up living under military occupation, conflict and political instability. In the context of their ongoing statelessness, historic displacement and continued threat of forced displacement, education has a key role to play in equipping children and youth with the tools to succeed and to make positive contributions to a future Palestinian state. While data on the physical

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[1] UNICEF (2009). Page 2.

impacts of the military operations on the education system exist, less is known about the psychosocial impacts, and in particular how the psychosocial situation has affected access to and quality of the education sector, a sector vital to the recovery and rehabilitation of Gaza.

One year after the war, UNESCO sought to understand how the education system has been affected by the current situation in Gaza from a psychosocial perspective. In particular, how are learners, teachers, students and professors across the system coping? To answer this question, a large scale assessment that covered all levels of education and all the governorates in Gaza was conducted in the period December, 2009 to March, 2010. To provide a broad and deep picture of the strengths and challenges in the current education system, the assessment used a combination of qualitative methods and a quantitative survey that was administered by Palestinian researchers to a large, representative, multi-level sample of schools throughout Gaza. In all, 90 schools and four universities participated, with over 6,000 learners included in the sample. The survey does not seek to assess the situation relative to a previous baseline, but itself provides an inter-agency baseline that may be used to gauge the effects of future psychosocial interventions. The qualitative methods brought forward the voices and perspectives of those who make up the education system, asking how the situation has impacted them in their work and their learning, and probing what this means for the agencies that seek to support the education sector.

Overall, the assessment reveals worrying trends. While education remains highly valued among students, their families and teaching staff– indicative of the positive role it can play in helping children and youth heal and grow even in highly adverse conditions –the education system is clearly suffering under the current blockade and military campaigns. The findings show that learners, as well as teaching staff, are functioning under immense strains and this strongly affects their abilities to learn and to teach. The key research findings can be summarized as follows:

- Learners at all levels of education experience problems such as nervousness, sadness, and fear of attack.

- Learners' ability to learn and perform well in school has decreased due to internal problems, such as inability to concentrate, and external problems, such as lack of electricity at home for studying. Challenges to learning and performance in school have increased across grade levels.

- Both teachers and learners reported that learners have lower learning outcomes in comparison to before the war.

- Teachers and other education staff such as counselors and directors experience significant challenges to their psychosocial well-being.

- ▶ Teachers consistently report that they need more support since they have been affected, are uncertain how to support students who have been affected, or are unable to manage their students' unruly behavior and learning difficulties.

- ▶ Overall, boys experienced greater problems in learning and performing in school than girls; whereas girls experienced greater challenges to their psychosocial well-being.

- ▶ Learners' psychosocial challenges are particularly severe at higher levels of education, where feelings of hopelessness are pervasive.

- ▶ At all levels, learners report that they lack the psychosocial support needed to enable full educational participation and high levels of achievement.

The data upon which these findings are based is presented in both quantitative form and in a narrative form that illuminates the agency and perspectives of learners and educators. Education policy makers and planners are encouraged to use both the data and findings to ensure coordinated, responsive psychosocial support and programming throughout the education system. Policy makers and planners are also urged to provide greater physical and psychological protection for educational facilities, students and staff not only in Gaza but also elsewhere in the oPt (notably in Area C and East Jerusalem) where the education system faces many challenges and constraints.

Introduction

The education system in Gaza has weathered many challenges, including long-term military operations and violations of schools as protected spaces. Of increasing concern is the challenge imposed by the chronic poverty that has afflicted the population of 1.5 million people in Gaza, over half of whom are under 18 years of age.[2] In light of this, the relative resilience provided by the education system in Gaza is of great importance to residents, who appreciate that education is a fundamental right,[3] and who view education as a source of hope for rising generations.

Destroyed wing of a secondary school in Beit Lahiya, Northern Gaza, November 2009

Recently, however, the education system in Gaza has had to contend with two challenges of enormous magnitude: the blockade and large scale, deadly military attacks. After Hamas gained control of Gaza in 2007, Israel tightened the military blockade of Gaza's borders, allowing in only limited humanitarian supplies such as food and medicines, while prohibiting items such as building materials. Residents' entry and exit from Gaza are severely restricted. Because of the blockade, people are effectively imprisoned in a small, densely populated, and highly impoverished space.

From 27 December, 2008 to 18 January, 2009, Israeli forces carried out massive military operations that killed 1,440 Palestinians and injured 5,380.[4,5]Four hundred and thirty one of those killed were children, while another 1,872 children were injured.[6] During the attacks, of the 214 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools and 346 government schools, 18 schools and kindergartens were destroyed and 262 schools were damaged. Two hundred and fifty students and 15 teachers were killed, some while taking refuge in UNRWA schools. An additional 856 students and 19 teachers were injured. Schools and universities were deliberately targeted and damaged, with six university buildings destroyed and 16 damaged.[7] During the military attacks, approximately 441,452 students from government, UNRWA, and private schools were unable to attend school.[8] More than one year later, the damaged schools remain unrepaired. Restrictions on

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[2] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2009)

[3] Protection of education facilities is provided for under International Humanitarian Law while the Right to Education is enshrined in numerous legal frameworks including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[4] UNICEF, (2009)

[5] UNICEF, (2009)

[6] UNICEF, (2009)

[7] AIDA (2009)

[8] UNESCO (2010)

construction materials have meant that many schools do not have windows or doors. Where classrooms have been destroyed, children attend school in containers which are hot in the summer and cold in winter. From primary school to university, nylon bags cover windows that were shattered from the shelling.

Exacerbating the pressures of these two factors on the education system are severe economic hardships and difficulties meeting basic needs in Gaza. The military incursions have amplified the poverty, stress and insecurity that accompanied the blockade. In addition to the loss of life, approximately 15,000 homes were destroyed resulting in the widespread forced displacement of more than 100,000 people.[9] In August 2009, 20,000 people remained forcibly displaced, living with host families and in tent camps.[10] Unemployment is widespread as the restriction of nearly all travel in and out of Gaza prevents Gazans from working in Israel; an additional 120,000 people became unemployed after the military operations.

A buffer zone between Israel and Gaza along the entire northern and eastern perimeter – a military no-go area– has eliminated much of the land available for farming, resulting in loss of livelihoods for half of the population. Other protection threats in the buffer zone include house demolitions, decreased personal security, and difficulty accessing health services and education.[11] Moreover, the area for fishing was severely reduced, drastically limiting the fishing industry. Sixty-five percent of the population lives in

Headmaster at school in Gaza displaying weapons found in the school yard between 2003-2009.

poverty, and half of those live in extreme poverty.[12] These hardships threaten to undermine hope, and create pressures on young people and adults in the education system to spend less time on education in order to support their families' survival.

Although the physical destructiveness of the attacks and the ongoing blockade and the ensuing hardships have been covered widely in the media, the psychological and social (or psychosocial) effects of this situation have received less attention. However research conducted prior to the military operations in Gaza reported that children who have experienced violence, threats, property destruction or loss tend to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and behavior problems.[13]

With regard to the education system, there is potential cause for concern. In other zones of armed conflict and political violence, children's exposure to attacks and the related hardships of loss of family members, displacement, and loss of livelihoods has had

[9] WHO (2009)
10 OCHA (2009)
[11] Save the Children UK (2009)
[12] UNDP (2009)
[13] Espie et al (2009),. Elbedour et al (2007), Garbarino & Kostelny (1996), Qouta et al (2003), Qouta et al (2008), Thabet et al (2008)

profound psychosocial impacts.[14,15] In such contexts, learners have had difficulty concentrating and learning, and many children experience problems such as increased aggressiveness, social isolation, somatic complaints and reduced hope for the future. Where schools have been attacked, children may be afraid to go to school. Teachers have also been strongly affected, as they too, suffer reduced ability to concentrate and teach. Many teachers feel that they are emotionally distraught and not in a good position to support their learners' emotional needs. The reductions in people's ability to teach and to learn effectively can diminish the quality of education and the attainment of desired educational outcomes, just as economic pressures can blunt the ability or willingness of young people to attend school. If there is no prospect of obtaining good jobs following a career of educational achievement, hope declines and education participation may be undermined.

These issues of psychosocial impact are of considerable concern in Gaza, where education has been strongly supported by families and enthusiastically sought after by young people. Education is intended to provide a protective space in which young people can experience safety and learn holistically in ways that advance their development. In conflict situations, education is one of the primary sources of resilience.[16] In the Palestinian context, education promotes the resilience of both learners and teachers and has long been a source of meaning and hope.[17] Furthermore, education in the Palestinian context is also viewed as a crucial foundation for economic development, cultural identity, and social progress. In its first five-year plan and subsequent strategic plans, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) emphasized that education was the basis for citizenship, values, and democracy, a tool for social and economic development, and contributes to a national identity.[18,19] Education is viewed as an important means of gaining employment, as well as of obtaining self-sufficiency and transitioning to adulthood.[20] Enrolment rates have been traditionally high, with virtual gender parity, and university enrolment higher than other Arab countries at approximately 25-30 percent.[21]

The question that arises in the current context is how has the education system been affected by the mixture of profound challenges outlined above. Although the evidence from other zones of armed conflict is suggestive, the context of Gaza is unique, and its people have exhibited remarkable resilience in the face of multiple hardships. Rather than make assumptions about how the education system has been affected, it is preferable to take an empirical stance and collect evidence to determine whether and how learners, teachers, and the education system have been impacted.

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[14] Apfel & Simon (1996); Barber (2009); Boothby, Strang & Wessells (2006); Cairns (1996); Garbarino, Kostelny, & Dubrow (1991); Jones (2002); Machel (2001); UNICEF (2009); Wessells (2006); Yule et al. (2003)
[15] UNESCO (2010)
[16] INEE (2010) Minimum Standards
[17] Arafat & Musleh (2006)
[18] Nicolai (2007)
[19] Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2008)
[20] Sharek Youth Forum (2009)
[21] Jaramillo and Katayama (2009)

The assessment was conducted within a framework of resilience, which is defined as the capacity to adapt to difficult circumstances. The resilience framework fits with the observation that the majority of war-affected people actively engage and cope with challenges and are able to function in challenging circumstances. Although resilience is usually discussed in individual terms, it applies equally to systems, which also cope and adapt to difficult circumstances. The resilience framework offers a more holistic approach to understanding how children and the education system have been affected. It contrasts with the frequently used deficits approach, which emphasizes overwhelming problems such as trauma and depression, and which can cast into medical terms problems that have complex social, economic, political, and historical dimensions.[22]The resilience framework recognizes that not all people are affected in the same manner by an emergency,[23] and that it is too simplistic to speak of a 'traumatized population.' In regard to education, it is important not to take a medical approach but to recognize that the education system is attempting to cope and adapt under enormous pressures.

Conducted approximately one year after the attacks of December, 2008 to January, 2009, the assessment offers a window into the psychosocial distresses, coping strategies, and challenges that are faced by learners, teachers, and other education staff at the primary, preparatory, secondary and university levels. Although the assessment does not attempt to make causal attributions about the main sources of distress and psychosocial challenges, it aims to provide a foundation of information to guide education practice. In particular, it identifies significant, unmet needs that the education system needs to address, and it provides a population oriented baseline against which one can gauge the effectiveness of education interventions by diverse ministries and agencies.

Because it looked at the education system in Gaza as a whole, the assessment was deliberately ambitious in scale. It included survey data from a representative sample of 6,282 students at the primary, preparatory, secondary and university levels. The survey data also included a convenience sample of 588 teachers and professors, 70 counselors, and 77 headmasters. Qualitative data included 54 focus group discussions with 670 students, teachers, counselors, parents and staff from local NGOs, as well as 24 key informant interviews with headmasters, administrators, and UN, ministry and international NGO staff engaged in education and psychosocial programming. Body mapping activities, aimed at eliciting young children's perceptions about school, were also conducted with 30 children in grades 1-3.

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[22] Punamaki (1989)
[23] IASC (2007); INEE (2010)

Methodology

T he assessment investigated all five governorates of Gaza and covered primary schools, preparatory schools, secondary schools and universities. The schools included those administered by UNRWA and those administered by the Palestinian Authority. A mixed methods approach, which intermixes qualitative and quantitative methods, was used to tailor the methodology to the context in Gaza, enable analytic depth and richness, and achieve a broad scope of coverage. The data collection team consisted of the two principal investigators (Drs. K. Kostelny & M. Wessells), a key translator and secondary translator, a field coordinator, a data entry coordinator, and a team of 13 Palestinian field researchers selected according to criteria of prior experience as data collectors, at least some university education, and understanding of the context, language, and culture in Gaza. Throughout the data collection, care was taken to protect the participants' rights to informed consent and confidentiality.

Secondary students participate in the Psychosocial Assessment conducted by the Colombia Group.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

The aim of using qualitative methods was to elicit and probe how local people situated in diverse roles, schools and levels of the education system understood how they themselves and other people had been affected by the military operations and the blockade. This elicitation and probing of local understandings was important for identifying the main subjective impacts of the military operations and blockade, and avoiding the imposition of outsider preconceptions and categories. Throughout the data collection, care was taken to avoid asking aggressive questions that might re-open psychological wounds. The qualitative data were collected primarily by Dr. K. Kostelny, who was in a position to organize psychosocial support during and after discussions for any participants who needed it.

Broadly, the qualitative data collection strategy was to use and triangulate different methods and to learn from a wide array of education actors and participants at diverse

levels. Using a funneling strategy of starting with key informant interviews at high levels of the education system and then narrowing down to lower levels, the assessment team conducted 24 key informant interviews with headmasters, administrators, heads of counseling departments, UN (including UNRWA) and NGO staff engaged in education and psychosocial programming, and other key informants involved in the education sphere.

Additionally, focus groups discussions (FGDs) were conducted with groups of approximately 10-15 people in different schools or educationally oriented agencies. A total of 54 focus group discussions were conducted with 680 participants, who were selected with an eye toward including people who might have different perspectives. The FGDs included:

- 26 with learners (N=380 participants)
- 16 with teachers/professors, counselors and other education staff (N=210 participants)
- Four with parents/family members (N=42 participants)
- Two with former university students who had dropped out of university (N=24 participants)
- Six with staff from local and international NGOs (N=24participants)

The participants in 12 of the 26 FGDs with learners and five of the 16 FGDs with teachers were identified through a random sampling process, while the participants in the other 42 FGDs were a convenience sample. A significant limitation was that most FGDs and discussions with learners were conducted in English, with translation from Arabic provided by expert translators from Gaza.

For participants such as learners and teachers, the FGDs explored questions such as:

Learners: "What are the challenges you face at school?"
"In the last year, have there been any changes in your ability to learn?"
"How has your situation changed since the blockade?"
"Are there teachers that help you when you have problems?"
"Are there students who have had to drop out of school?"
"What do you think your situation will be in 10 years?"

Teachers: "How has the blockade affected your ability to teach?"
"Are there changes in student's behavior since the war?"
"What are your biggest worries?"
"Did you receive any emotional or social support after the war?"
"What are the reasons learners miss school and drop out of school?"

However, because Palestinian participants were eager to talk about their situation and challenges, and how they attempt to cope, the methodology was highly flexible. In effect,

questions were kept 'waiting in the wings' and were introduced when the interviewer felt the timing was right.

Because highly verbal methods such as FGDs are often poorly suited to working with young children, body mapping activities were used with three groups (N=30) of young children (grades 1-3) to elicit their perceptions and experiences regarding school. The body mapping methodology consisted of inviting groups of approximately ten children to trace the shape of one of the children who volunteered, and then color the figure, drawing the eyes, nose, ears, etc. The children were then asked a series of questions about the drawing, such as "What do eyes see at school that they like?" "What do eyes see at school that they don't like?" "What do ears hear at school that they like?" and "What do ears hear at school that they don't like?" Drawing activities were also conducted with eight groups (N= 84) of children in grades 4 -9 to provide additional data on children's current situation and perceptions about the future. The drawing methodology consisted of inviting groups of 8-15 children to draw "anything you want" as well as to draw "a picture of the future."

The FDG data and drawing data were collected by the principal investigators working together with trained Palestinian translators. The body mapping data was collected by the Palestinian field researchers.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS

The quantitative method used a strategy of population-based sampling from different educational levels and administration of survey instruments to different subgroups within the education system.

i) Survey Construction

In addition to providing in-depth information on learners' and educators' experiences and current challenges, the qualitative data were used to guide the construction of contextually appropriate quantitative survey instruments for learners, teachers/professors, counselors and headmasters, to evaluate how they have been affected. Using a grounded methodology approach,[24] the principal investigators sorted the narratives and issues identified into emergent categories. For learners, these included five areas: ability to learn/perform in school, relationship with teachers, resilience related to education, psychosocial well-being and family relations. Drawing on the wording and categories used by learners, the investigators developed specific questions, which were then reviewed, revised, translated, and back translated with the advice of the Palestinian field researchers.

In regard to teachers, six areas emerged from the narrative data: ability to teach effectively, relationships with students, resilience, pedagogy and psychosocial support for learners,

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[24] Charmaz (2004)

learners' psychosocial condition and family support for learners. Here too, the investigators developed specific questions which were then reviewed, revised, translated, and back translated with the advice of the Palestinian field researchers.

Seven surveys were developed from the qualitative data for the following groups: 1) primary school students, 2) preparatory, secondary, and vocational students, 3) university students, 4) teachers, 5) professors, 6) counselors and 7) headmasters. All the surveys included a common core of questions but also included questions geared to each specific group.

To promote accuracy, the surveys were pilot tested, and refinements and adjustments were made to the survey questions based on inputs from the field researchers, learners, and teachers. The pilot testing included efforts to ensure that questions had the intended meaning for participants, were readily understood and yielded consistent responses. Two of the main adjustments were the use of simpler language that younger children could understand and the reduction of the number of questions.

ii) Sample

A random, multi-stage cluster sampling strategy was adopted for targeting schools by level (i.e., primary, preparatory, secondary and university) across all five governorates.[25] The sample targeted 90 schools and five universities: 30 school clusters at the primary level, 30 school clusters at the preparatory level, 30 school clusters at the secondary level, and 30 clusters at the university level. For the 90 primary, preparatory and secondary schools in the sampling frame, 100% participated in the assessment while four of the five universities (80%) participated. Furthermore, more than 95% of the primary, preparatory, secondary and university students in the sample completed the survey.

The primary through secondary schools were randomly selected through a random number generator. At each school, up to three classrooms were selected as a cluster.[26] The random sampling was based on lists of schools that were obtained from both UNRWA and the MoEHE. To insure statistically robust comparisons of results across grade levels, specific grades at the primary, preparatory, and secondary levels were selected: 5th grade

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[25] Cluster sampling is an effective sampling methodology that can produce results that are generalizable to the population of interest, assuming bias is not introduced. Cluster sampling is particularly useful when natural groups are evident in a statistical population. For example, in this study, schools served as natural clusters. Cluster sampling also has the advantage of being faster and less expensive that other population-based sampling methods such as simple random sampling. The main disadvantage of cluster sampling is that it introduces a higher sampling error. The sampling error can be accounted for as a design effect, and can be accounted for in the design and analysis phases of a study such as this. In this study, a standard 30x30 cluster sample was used. This standard cluster design assumes a prevalence of 50% for the outcomes of interest; a precision of +/- 5 percent; a design effect of 2 (to account for sampling error); and a non-response rate of 15%. This random, multi-stage cluster sampling strategy was adopted for targeting schools by level (i.e., primary, preparatory, secondary, and university) across all five governorates. The sample targeted 90 schools and 5 universities. Thus, a sample of 30 school clusters was undertaken at the primary level to allow for a fully powered representative primary school sample; another 30 school clusters were sampled at the preparatory level to inform on a representative sample of preparatory students; a third sample of 30 school clusters at the secondary level allowed for a fully powered sample of that population; and finally, 30 clusters of university students were taken from five universities.

[26] If there were one to three classrooms in a selected school, all were included. If there were more than three classrooms, random selection was used to select three classrooms.

for primary school, 8th grade for preparatory school, and 11th grade for secondary school. The largest universities were selected for inclusion, as well as an additional randomly selected university. For two of the universities, attendance rosters were available and used to obtain random samples of students. For the two universities where the attendance roster was not available, students were randomly selected across grade levels from different faculties. The composition of the sample of learners by district is illustrated in Table 1, and the distribution of participants by gender and education level is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Sample Distribution of Learners by District

Gender	Primary	Preparatory	Secondary	University	Total
Male	460	1156	961	591	3168
Female	779	960	957	418	3114
Total	1239	2116	1918	1009	6282

Table 2: Sample Distribution of Learners by Gender and Education Level

District	Primary	Preparatory	Secondary	University	Total
North Gaza	465	432	260	213	1370
Gaza	317	731	750	4232	2230
Deir El Balah	180	106	278	173	737
Khan Younis	218	460	229	118	1025
Rafah	59	387	401	73	920
Total	1239	2116	1918	1009	6282

At each primary, preparatory and secondary school, the headmaster and counselor were asked to complete the survey. As it was not possible to obtain a random sample of teachers and professors, who faced an array of responsibilities and time pressures, a convenience sample, comprised of who was available during the survey, was obtained instead.

iii) Data Collection

The quantitative data was collected by a team of 13 Palestinian field researchers and coordinated by a Palestinian field supervisor, whose work was overseen and backstopped by K. Kostelny. The data collectors initially worked in pairs in order to support each other, dialogue about how to handle any challenges that arose, and ensure that the data collection protocols were followed.

To prepare for the data collection, there was a multi-day workshop with the 13 field researchers, the field supervisor, and the data entry coordinator. Key topics included refining the surveys, survey administration, protocols for entering schools, issues of confidentiality and informed consent, how to work with children, child protection issues, and how to respect the 'Do No Harm' imperative.

Approximately half the data were collected in December, 2009, following which data collection was suspended due to exams, holidays, and school closings. The other half of the data were collected in February-March, 2010. The field researchers administered the survey to 7,716 participants during the period December, 2009 to March, 2010. However, the data analysis did not include surveys that had been administered to non-target grades or information from students who had not been selected randomly (including 86 vocational students). Thus the final number totaled 7,017 participants, including 1,239 primary school students, 2,116 preparatory school students, 1,918 secondary school students, 1,009 university students, 560 teachers, 70 counselors, 77 headmasters and 28 professors.

Learners at the primary, preparatory and secondary levels completed the surveys in the context of their classroom. Because classroom administration was infeasible at universities, students completed the survey in a designated space at the university. At all levels, learners were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were given the option of not participating or ending their participation at any time and for any reason.

iv) Data Analysis

Data were entered into a SPSS database by the data coordinator in Gaza. Data were checked and cleaned by one of the principal investigators and the statistician at Columbia University. Data were analyzed by the Columbia University statistician and the principal investigators using SPSS.

In addition to analyzing specific items on the questionnaires, questionnaire items from the surveys were used to create scales for the five outcomes for learners that had emerged during the focus group discussions: ability to perform/learn in school, relationship with teachers, resilience towards education, psychosocial well-being and family relationships. These scales achieved moderate levels of statistical reliability (see Annex Two) and are described further in the discussion of key findings regarding effects of grade level, gender, governorate and school type. Higher mean scores indicate higher levels of difficulty for a particular outcome. For example, a high score on the relationship with teachers scale indicated that learners encountered extensive difficulty in their relationships with teachers. Conversely, lower mean scores indicate lower levels of difficulty.

v) Limitations

One limitation of the study is that the survey data collected from teachers/professors and from vocational students was from a convenience sample, and thus cannot be considered representative. A second limitation was the reliance on self-report measures. While a strength of the study was its use of locally developed items, thus increasing the likelihood of construct validity, this method did not ensure criterion validity, as it relied on self-reports that were not correlated with direct observations of behavior. The use of self-reports is helpful in generating participation, enabling insight into local understanding and perspectives, and learning through group discussions. Nevertheless, self-reports are subject to numerous limitations and biases, not least of which is the tendency of participants to try to please the interviewers or to make the case for aid. These issues were managed to a large extent through the triangulation of information from different sources. For example, the data collected from learners and education staff correlated with each other, and the survey data supported the qualitative data.

Impact on Learners

One of my children is in secondary school. He had always studied hard. He wanted to study abroad. But now he says, "What's the point – I won't get out". Now he doesn't care about studies because of the siege.
(Parent)

As the above quote indicates, learners have been profoundly affected by the war and blockade. At all levels they exhibit increased fear, anxiety, aggressiveness, and sadness. The main findings regarding the impact on learners are described under the various headings listed below.

1) *Fear and Lack of Safety*

Learners at all levels suffer from fear and worry that they are not safe (see Table 3). Over three-quarters of learners worry there will be another war, and most learners say they do not feel safe at school or in coming or going to school. Feelings of being unsafe at school were particularly widespread among preparatory, secondary and university students, with significant increases at each education level (p <.001) (see Figure 1).

Final year 'Tawjihee" students participating in a UNESCO program, May 2010.

Table 3: Psychosocial Distress

Some or Most of the Time	Primary	Preparatory	Secondary	University	Total
Not feel safe at school	36.4% (N=449)	59.5% (N=1253)	62.9% (N=1204)	67.2% (N=686)	57.4% (N=3592)
Not feel safe going to and coming home from school	59.4% (N=730)	69.0% (N=1456)	67.9% (N=1300)	69.0% (N=695)	66.8% (N=4181)
Worry there will be another war	79.1% (N=974)	77.2% (N=1612)	76.3% (N=1461)	71.8% (N=689)	76.5% (N=4750)
Have bad dreams	77.2% (N=952)	72.7% (N=1535)	71.6% (N=1371)	61.3% (N=617)	71.4% (N=4475)
Feel sad	81.6% (N=1007)	84.3% (N=1776)	88.6% (N=1696)	87.8% (N=885)	85.7% (N=5364)
Feel nervous	76.2% (N=941)	81.6% (N=1717)	86.3% (N=1650)	86.2% (N=868)	82.7% (N=5176)
Treated badly by other students	46.8% (N=576)	51.9% (N=1093)	32.6% (N=624)	20.4% (N=205)	39.9% (N=2498)
Fight with other students	32.6% (N=402)	42.5% (N=895)	29.0% (N=555)	16.7% (N=168)	32.2% (N=2020)
Feel angry	60.8% (N=751)	76.8% (N=1620)	80.1% (N=1535)	75.4% (N=760)	74.4% (N=4660)
Not hopeful about the future	26.3% (N=324)	38.2% (N=806)	48.5% (N=928)	71.8% (N=721)	44.4% (N=2779)

Figure 1: Learners' Reports of Feeling Unsafe at School (Percentage of Learners)
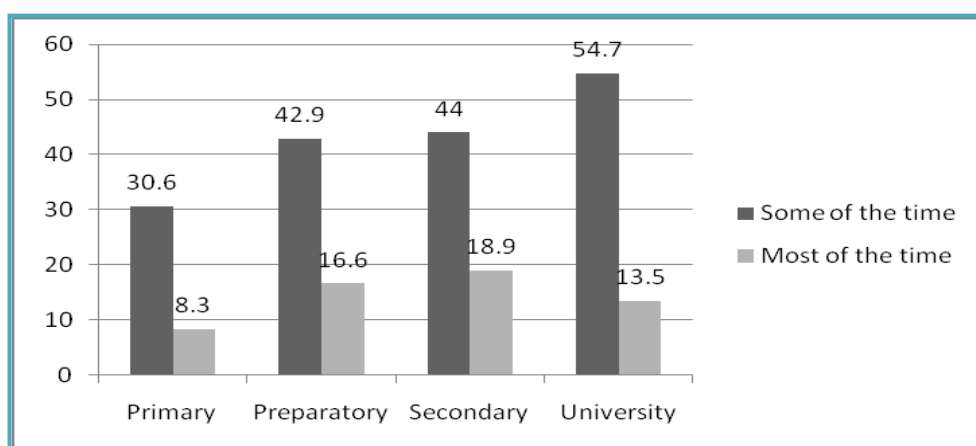
The theme of lack of safety was evident also in the qualitative data. As one secondary school teacher said,

> *They think there will be another war at any time. They don't feel safe in any place.*

In addition, qualitative data from young learners in grades 1-3 found they disliked the sound of aircraft, missiles and bombing that they heard at school. Across grade levels, most learners reported that parents or teachers are unable to protect them if there are additional attacks.

2) Anxiety

Learners' fears and worries impose heavy burdens of anxiety and sadness. As shown in Figure 2, over three-quarters of learners say they feel nervous some or most of the time. Primary school students report nightmares, bedwetting and excessive fear reactions. Indeed, primary students reported having bad dreams "most of the time", significantly more than students at other levels ($p<.001$) (see Figure 3). However, anxiety was conspicuous at higher levels as well. Secondary and university students reported being significantly more nervous than students at the primary and preparatory levels ($p<.001$). Also, at university level there is an increase in the abuse of substances such as tramadol,[27]

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[27] Tramadol is an opiod designed for the medical treatment of moderate to severe pain. It has been found to alleviate depression and anxiety and is associated with physical dependence.

which students report takes their mind off the events they experienced during the war as well as the social and economic devastation caused by the blockade.

Both students and teachers at the levels of secondary and higher education reported this problem stating:

> *We are seeing addiction...anything to take their mind off the current situation. They are willing to try smoking, drugs, tramadol.*
> (Secondary school teacher)

> *More students began using tramadol after the war. It's a way to cope, to escape the stress of the current situation.*
> (University student)
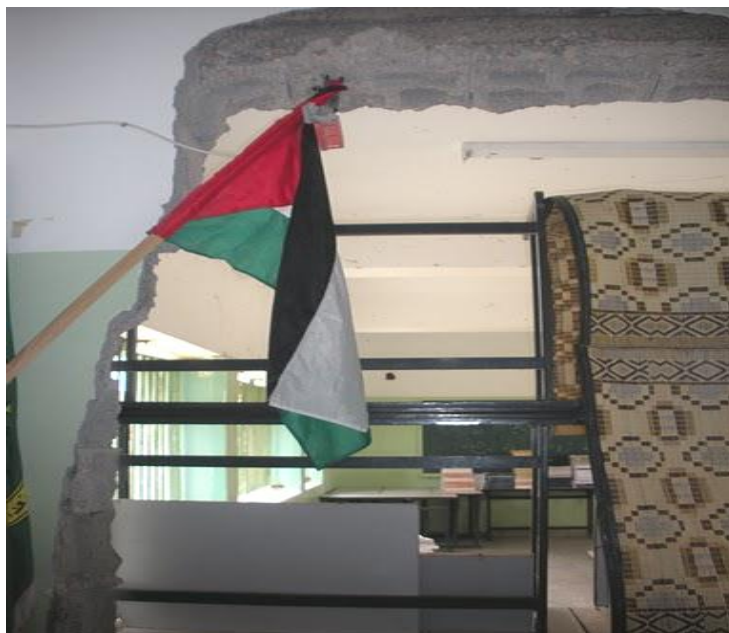
Classroom wall destroyed during the military operations, North Gaza, October 2009.

Figure 2: Feeling Nervous by Education Level (Percentage of Learners)
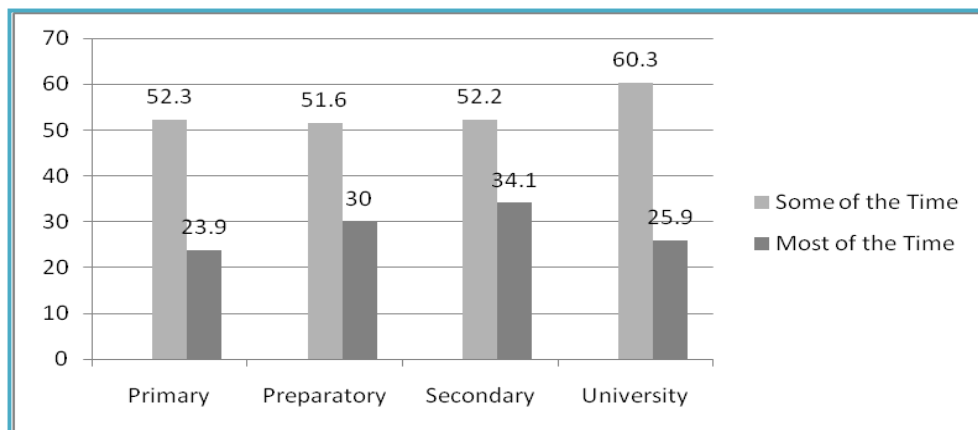
Figure 3: Bad Dreams by Education Level (Percentage of Learners)
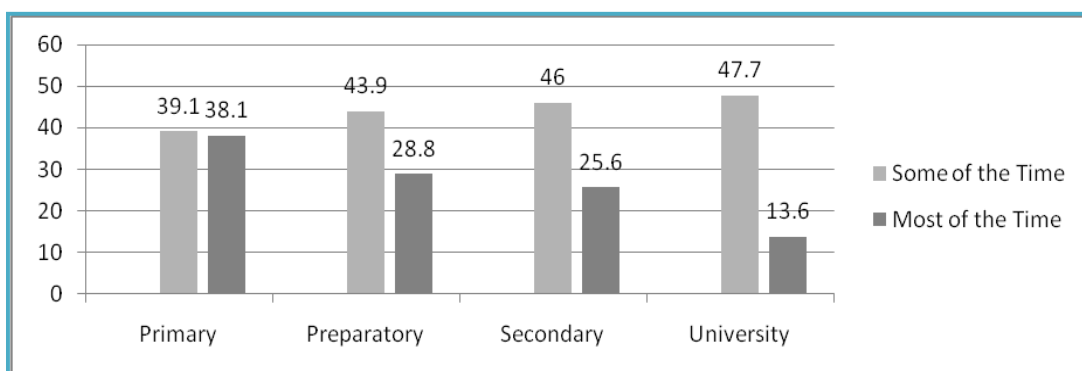
3) Sadness

> *The war affected me a lot. The situation is depressing. My friends died. All I can think about is what the future will bring.*
> (Male preparatory school student)

A striking outcome was that over 80% of learners reported feeling sad some or most of the time. Secondary students reported that they were sad "most of the time" more than students at other levels (p<.001) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Feelings of Sadness by Education Level (Percentage of Learners)
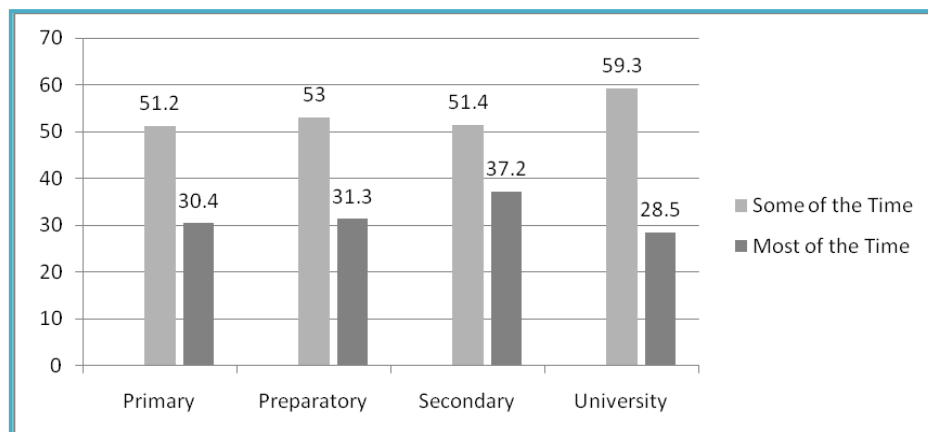
4) Aggression

Feelings of anger and aggressive behavior were also widespread problems (see Table 3 above). Nearly three-quarters of students report feeling angry most or some of the time. At preparatory and primary school levels, students often reported that being treated badly by other students, and fighting among students were problems. Problems of aggression were also evident in the qualitative data, as students at preparatory and secondary levels reported increased aggressiveness toward other students and decreased respect for teachers and those in authority. Young students reported they did not like students hitting each other, fighting, and saying bad and insulting remarks. Strained relationships between older students, especially males, and their parents were also reported as having increased, and this was attributed to the inability of fathers to find work, and the pressure on sons to

help support the family. Teachers noted both anecdotal evidence of this as well as general trends among their students. For example:

> *Their aggression is so much more than last year with the same students.*
> (Preparatory school teacher)

> *The boys play Israelis and Palestinians. They want to be the Israelis because they have power and can shoot and hit...they get hurt while playing.*
> (Primary school teacher)

5) *Everyday Distress*

In the literature on how children and young people have been affected by armed conflict and political violence, there has been a tendency to focus on traumatic reactions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as caused by exposure to life-threatening events. However, the present assessment indicated that much of the distress lay not with memories of past violence but with daily concerns or what may be called 'everyday distress.' As shown in Figure 5, which summarizes the percentage of university students listing their three biggest problems relating to education, these concerns had to do with lack of money for tuition, low grades, lack of transportation fees and the bad economic situation. The fact that these stresses are 'everyday' should not distract attention from their impact. The daily presence of severe economic and other stresses can be expected to accumulate over time and to take a heavy psychosocial toll on young people. This was eloquently expressed by a male university student who told researchers:

> *It's the simple details – not having pencils, electricity – that affects us most.*

Figure 5: Biggest Concerns of University Students (Percentage of Students)
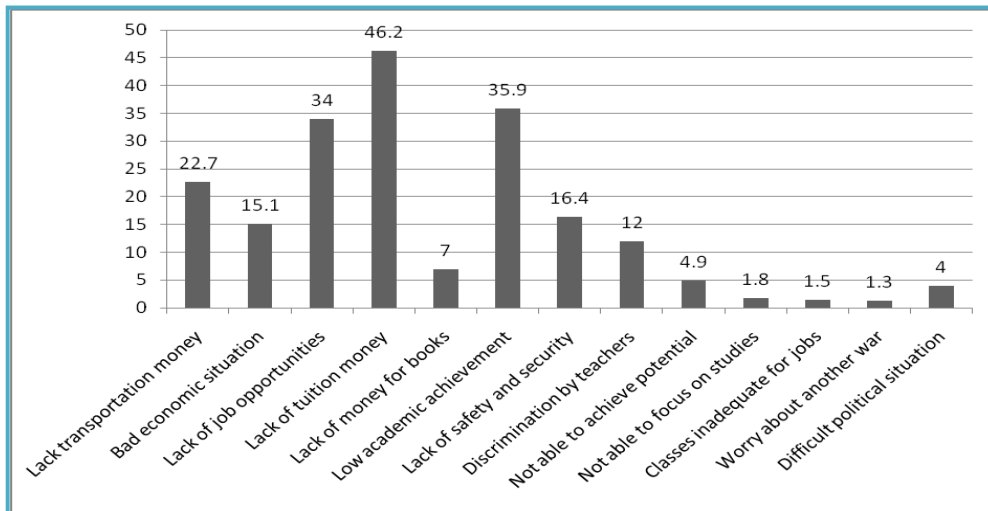
6) Hopelessness

Having hope and a sense of a positive future is a cornerstone of psychosocial well-being. As Figure 6 shows, however, hope is under threat in Gaza, particularly for university students. In fact, over one-quarter of university students say that they are not at all hopeful about the future.

Figure 6: Learners Reporting that they are "Not at All Hopeful About the Future" by Education Level (Percentage of Learners)
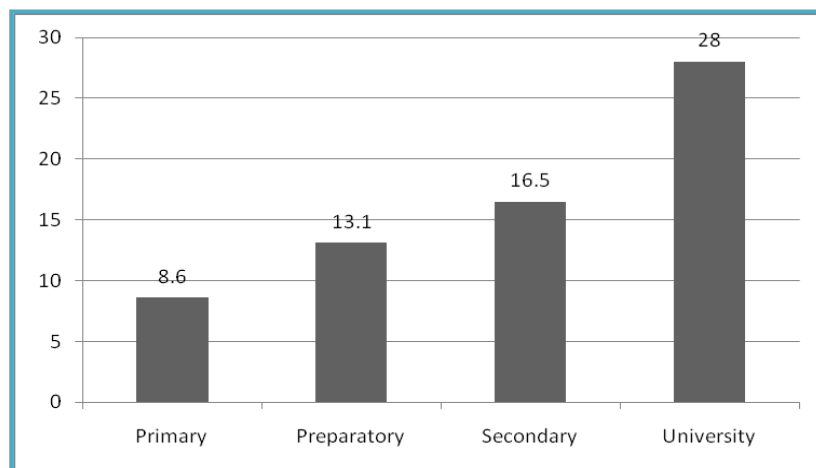
This was indicated in numerous narratives from students. Across education levels, reasons given for feeling hopeless revealed a mixture of a sense of impending death and diminishing opportunities for jobs. Two learners reported, for example:

> *When I go to bed, I don't expect to wake up. I expect to die.*
> (Girl in secondary school)

> *I was at the top of my class in school. At 11th grade I had more than 90% average. I wanted to go to university and study forensics…my biggest dream. But after the siege everything was different. I lost hope. I couldn't study. I didn't go to school until exams and then only got 60% so couldn't register at the university. I've been working in the tunnels for 2 years.*
> (20 year old male)

At all levels, students believe another Israeli attack is imminent, causing ongoing daily stress, and blunting hopefulness about the future. At the university level, the inability to leave Gaza – especially for pursuing advanced education – is a major impediment to hope. Male university students especially felt profound pessimism about their current situation and the future, feeling limited by the economic stresses of the blockade and their inability to obtain the jobs and income needed to marry, start a family, and provide for them. At all levels students felt ongoing stress and anxiety over not being able to afford books,

stationary and school expenses, while at the university level students were profoundly affected by not being able to afford tuition and transportation.

Despite these sentiments, however, a considerable number of students continue to harbor some hope for the future. As one female university student expressed,

> *We are a small land. We must have hope about the future and we must teach this to younger students. We must become doctors and architects.*

Some degree of hope was also evident when students responded to the question: "What do you think your situation will be in 10 years time?" One-third of university students said that they expected to be engaged in specialized work, 4% said that they expected to have completed a higher degree, and 3.8% said they would have a better status than they have currently (see Figure 7). Yet 10.6% responded that they were uncertain about the future, and 6.9% said they expected to be dead or martyred.[28] Significantly more males expected to be dead (5.8% versus 1.1% for females). Results for secondary students were similar with regard to expecting to have professional employment (one-third) and uncertainty about the future (10.8%), though more expected to be either dead or martyred in 10 years (11.2% versus 6.9%) (see Figure 8).

Figure 7: University Students Responses: "What do you think your situation will be in 10 years time?" (Percentage of Students)

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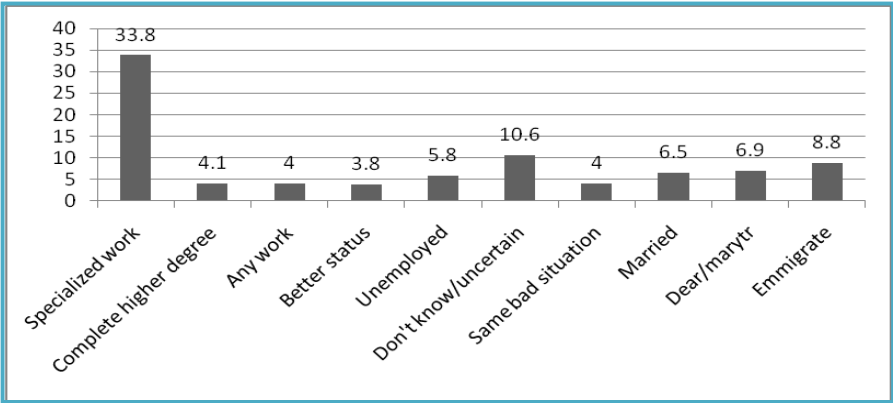
[28] The term "martyrs" is specifically used in Gaza to mean people, including civilians, who die as a result of Israeli attacks or those dying in the process of resisting the Israeli occupation.

**Figure 8: Preparatory and Secondary Students' Responses:
"What do you think your situation will be in 10 years time?"
(Percentage of Students)**
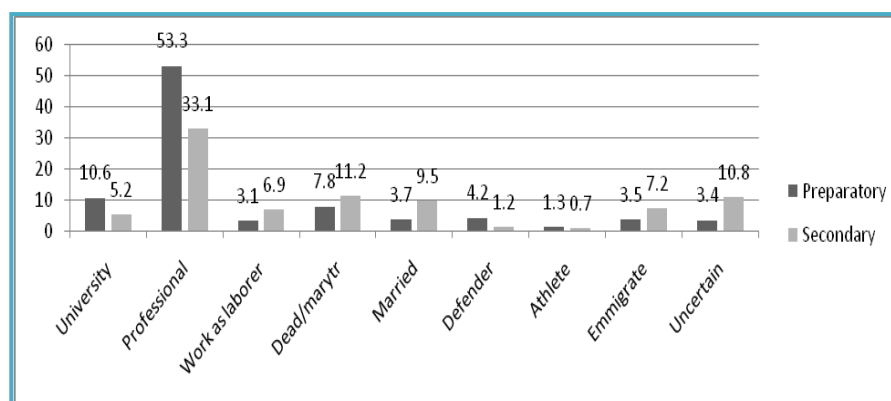
7) Resilience Related to Education

For many learners, feelings of hopelessness intermixed with a sense of resilience that related specifically to their education. A frequent theme in FGDs was that education is a means of overcoming the Israelis. Many students said that they wanted education in order to be able to stand up to the Israeli Occupation and to avoid giving in to Israel. Thus students exhibit a complex mixture of hopelessness and hope, with the latter being shaped in part by an ideology of resistance:

> *To overcome, we must keep our education level high, keep studying.*
> (Male, primary school student)
>
> *The Israelis have powerful weapons. We must use our heads and hands. We must use education to achieve a victory.*
> (Female university student)

Qualitative data from young learners in grades 1-3 found that they liked their teachers, headmasters, going to school, playing with friends at school, and doing their lessons. Moreover, the quantitative data found that most students reported liking school some or most of the time: 90.7% for primary students, 84.8% for preparatory students, 80.7% for secondary students, and 91.6% for university students. Taken together, these findings indicate that in a very difficult psychosocial landscape, education remains a powerful potential source of resilience.

Following the military operations, a week of psychosocial activities for students was organized and overseen by school counselors and carried out by teachers at the primary, preparatory, and secondary level for both PA and UNRWA schools. Activities included debriefing, sports, recreation, play and a free day to do whatever students wanted. In addition, local and international NGOs provided various psychosocial activities – including debriefing, counseling, drama, and play activities – for students at many schools, community centers and agencies in the months following the war. A summer games program organized by UNRWA also provided psychosocial activities to at least 250,000 children from both UNRWA and PA schools.

In Gaza, people often speak of psychosocial support as consisting of counseling, although as indicated in the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*, counseling is only a small part of the comprehensive supports that are needed.[29] At higher levels of education, learners were more likely to report that counseling support was available "none of the time" than were learners at lower levels (see Figure 9). The fact that nearly half the university students indicated that they had no access to counseling most of the time is worrying in light of the diverse, impactful nature of the stresses on university students identified in this report. The implications of this finding for practice are explored in the final section of this report.

Figure 9: Access to Counseling Support if Needed (Percentage of Learners)

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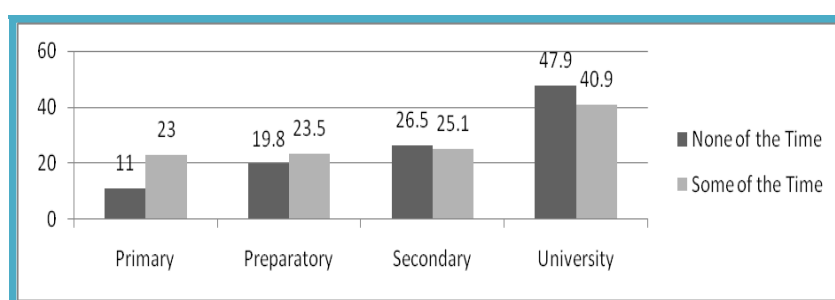
[29] IASC (2007), see especially pages 11-13.

Impact on Teaching Staff

The teachers are struggling. Some had their houses destroyed. One teacher had her son killed on the first day of bombing.
(Preparatory school headmaster)

In addition to the impact on students, it was clear that the situation of many teachers has been worsened by the attacks and the blockade. Teachers at different levels described how they had lost homes or taken into their homes large numbers of extended family members, and how they now struggled economically more than before. In addition, teachers expressed their distress over the damage to schools, deteriorating physical conditions and lack of access to technical equipment and supplies. At all levels, teachers noted that students' behavior had changed, and they found it distressing to try to manage unruly behavior and support students when they themselves had been affected and felt too frail to help.

Boys in North Gaza (Beit Lahiya) taking part in enrichment classes for grades 10-11, June 2010.

1) Increased Distress

Asked whether their levels of stress at present are less, about the same, or more than before the war, approximately two-thirds of teachers/professors reported that they experience more stress now (Figure10). University professors reported the greatest increases in stress ($p<.001$). Teachers'/professors' increased levels of stress were also evident in their problems sleeping (see Figures 11 and 12) and increased difficulties concentrating (see Figure13).

Figure 10: Increased Stress of Teachers/Professors Since the War (Percentage of Teachers / Professors)
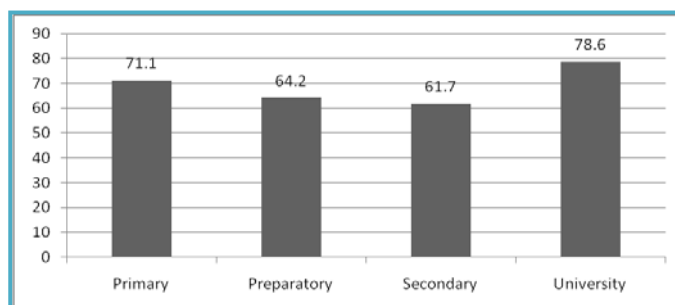
Figure 11: Increased Difficulty Sleeping Because of Bad Dreams Since the War Reported by Teachers/Professors (Percentage of Teachers/Professors)
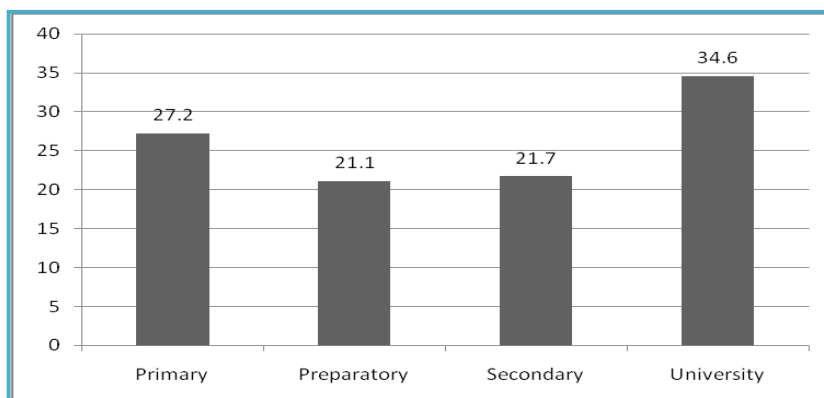
Figure 12: Increased Difficulty Sleeping Because of Worries Since the War Reported by Teachers/Professors
        (Percentage of Teachers / Professors)
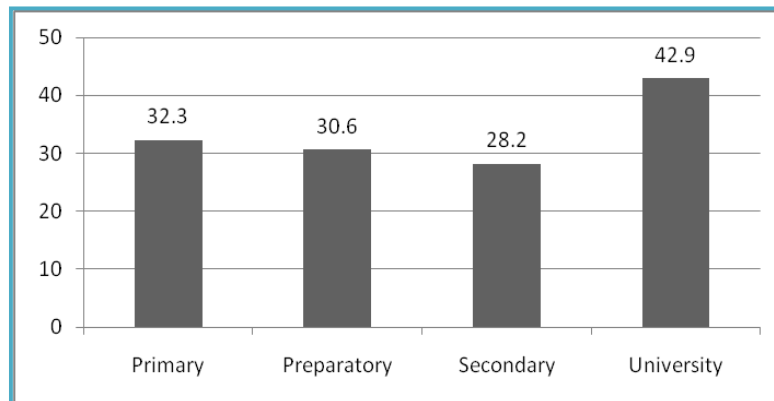
Figure 13: Increased Difficulty Concentrating for Teachers/Professors Since The War
        (Percentage of Teachers / Professors)
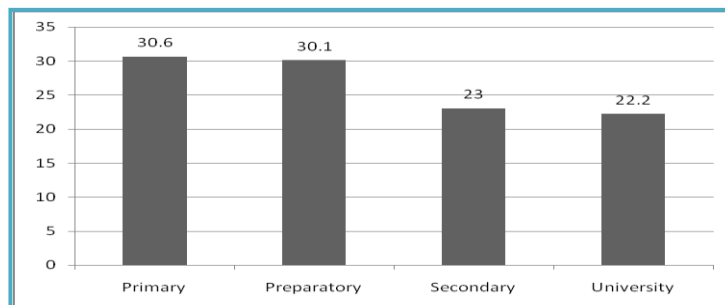
Figure 14: More Difficult Living Situation for Teachers/Professors and Their Family Since the War

 (Percentage of Teachers / Professors)
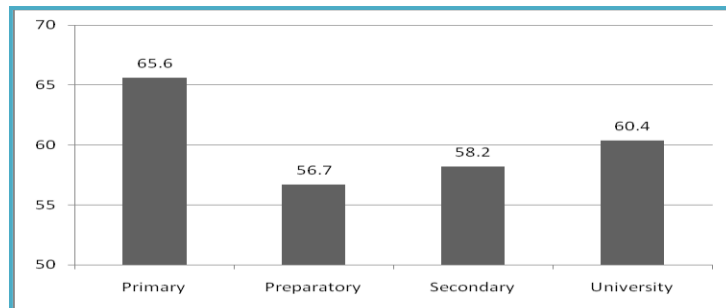
An integral part of teachers' distress was the difficulty of their current living situation for themselves and their families. One secondary school teacher told us,

> *My house was destroyed. We now live with relatives in a small space. My husband can no longer work in Israel. I am always thinking of how we can provide for our children. My mind is distracted with all these worries at school.* (Secondary school teacher)

Overall, more than half of teachers/professors reported that their living situation is more difficult since the war (Figure14). These and related difficulties have been apparent not only to teachers, but also to school counselors. The counselors who responded to the survey indicated overwhelmingly that one of the biggest problems teachers faced at school was psychosocial distress and needs related to sadness, nervousness and hopelessness (see Figure15). Another problem was difficulties managing students who were aggressive, disrespectful or otherwise engaged in problem behavior. Also mentioned were economic problems associated with high prices and low salary, and a lack of interest in teaching.

Figure 15: Teachers' Biggest Problems at School as Reported by School Counselors
(Percentage of Teachers)

Category	Percentage
Difficulties managing Student Behavior	24.3
Psychosocial Distress	85.7
Lack of Interest in Teaching	15.8
High Prices and Low Salary	22.9
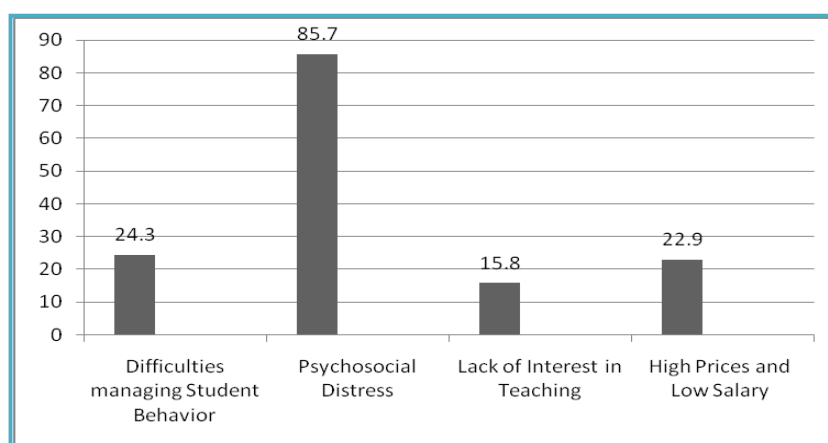
University students also spoke of the difficult situation of their professors. One student noted that,

> *Some of our professors are optimistic. They are our role models and we study for them. But some are pessimistic and don't help.*
> (Male university student)

At lower educational levels, students said that they appreciated that their teachers had endured the same hardships that had affected students. An important question, however, was whether teachers received the psychosocial support they felt they needed in order to support their students.

2) Teachers' Need for Psychosocial Support

Although a number of agencies and NGOs provided psychosocial activities to students below university level in the months following the war, the overwhelming majority of teachers reported that they did not receive any psychosocial support themselves (see Figure16). Those teachers who did receive support, including from the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, UNRWA's Community Mental Health Program, and various NGOs, reported that the support was very helpful. However, the need far exceeded the availability of services.

Figure 16: Teachers Who Reported Receiving Psychosocial Support After the War (Percentage of Teachers)
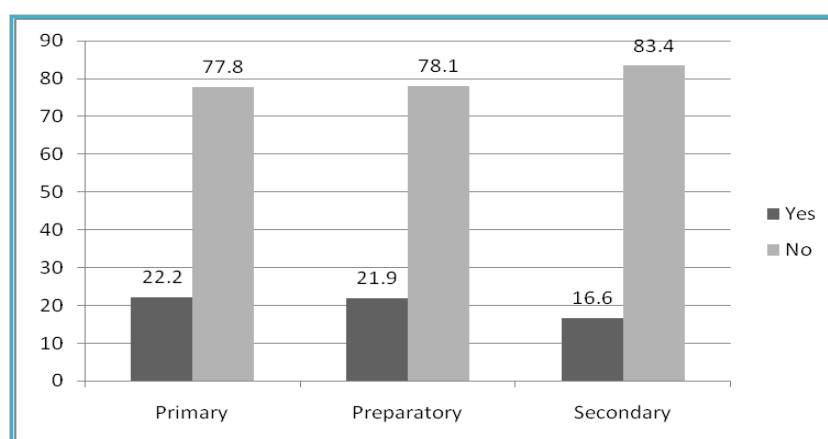
Most teachers interviewed said that although the initial psychosocial activities had helped them respond to their students, it had been too brief and had offered only temporary support for the students. Some teachers reported that the 'real issues' such as students' fear and aggression had emerged over time and hence had not been dealt with.

That teachers were simultaneously coping reasonably well, yet struggling was apparent in that most reported that their religious beliefs helped them to cope, yet only half said they have people to rely on for emotional support most of the time (see Table 4).

Table 4: Teachers' Sources of Coping and Support

Survey Item	Percentage 'yes'
Colleagues at school support me most of the time	76.0%
I have people to rely on for emotional and social support most of the time	52.3%
Religious beliefs help me cope with the current situation most of the time	89.2%
I am able to access emotional and social support most of the time	39.0%

Teachers also made impassioned pleas for additional psychosocial support, not only to help themselves, but also to enable them to support their students more effectively:

> *We give support, but we also need support.*
> (Primary school teacher)
>
> *The help needs to be continuous, because it hasn't helped so far.*
> (Preparatory school teacher)
>
> *We also need psychological treatment. It would be the greatest help to the university.*
> (University professor)

The assessment also revealed that teachers felt poorly equipped to deal with the long lasting psychosocial impacts of the war on their students, and said they require support and guidance in addressing the increased anxiety, aggression and fearfulness of students. More than 40% of teachers reported that they allow students to talk about the current situation in class, and more than 75% said that after military operations, they spend time helping students calm down. Yet many teachers felt their actions were not often effective and that they do not have the necessary skills. One teacher noted how,

> *When students hear the planes overhead, they grab their bags and run home. I try to talk to them, to calm them, but it doesn't help.*
> (Preparatory school teacher)

On a more positive note, overall, teachers and professors were optimistic that if they received support they would recover and be able to support their students. As a primary school teacher noted,

> *If we get support, then we can give support.*

3) Psychosocial Impact on Counselors and Other Education Staff

Although the research was designed to assess the impact on learners and teachers, it is essential to recognize that all education staff – education ministers, administrators, headmasters, counselors, teachers' aides, cooks and cleaners – have been affected by the military operations and the blockade. Although it was not possible to document fully the impact at all levels, the narratives of counselors and headmasters underscored the holistic ways in which they and the system had been affected.

▶ *Impact on Counselors:* Counselors reported that their biggest problems were lack of equipment, books, stationary, and other tools due to the siege (see Figure17). They also pointed out that there had been a worrying decrease in the level of parental support, which is essential for students' learning and success in school. Their third most significant problem was their own psychosocial distress. Counselors also spoke of the magnitude of their work overload and underscored the urgency of their own need for psychosocial support. As one counselor reported,

> *A positive impact following the war was the urge of giving and helping people. But the negative was the lost feeling of safety as a person. If you don't feel safe, you can't help students feel safe. There was no program to help counselors themselves.*

Indeed, with great consistency, counselors emphasized their desire to support learners, yet questioned their ability to do this well in the absence of supports for their own psychosocial well-being.

Recreational activities in Gaza City, UNESCO Summer Camps 2009.

Figure 17: Counselors' Biggest Problems (Percentage of Counselors)
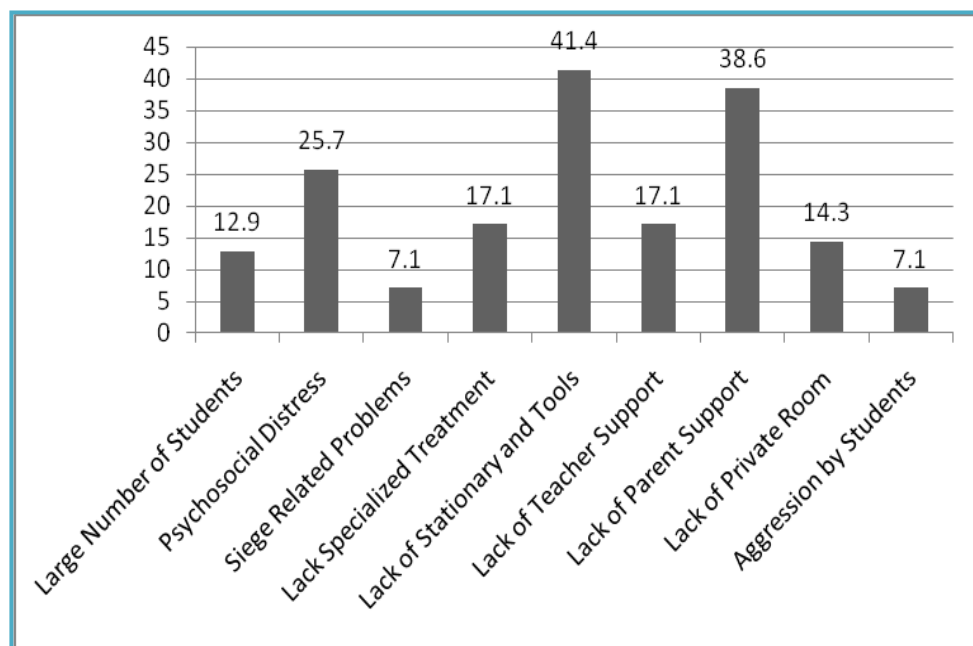
▶ *Impact on Headmasters:* Headmasters' narratives resonated with stories of ongoing hardships for their schools and their students. In a secondary school in the north, the headmaster reported that much of the school had been destroyed and that attacks had killed two students and injured ten others. During the war, Israeli soldiers had used the school as a base for their army. Some students had suffered long-term physical injuries. Nearby, some students lived in overcrowded tents or in houses that were unsafe since bombing had destroyed most of their foundations.

Because of their position, headmasters carried heavy burdens associated not only with the damage to their schools and to its personnel and learners but also with the challenges of supporting people and providing quality education in a situation of great deprivation and hardship. One such example was recounted by the Headmaster of a preparatory school:

A girl came to me with a four page note she had written, apologizing for her low marks. She is clever, and last year had high grades. But this girl's house was destroyed. The family used to live in a big house with 14 people, but now the whole family lives in one room in a relative's house. She has health problems in her kidneys from the phosphoric bombs. Her father was shot near his spine. She would like tutoring, but her family cannot afford it. I told her I would try to help. I told her to take a rest and go to the counselor. I'll try to get her free tutoring, but it is difficult.

Despite these hardships, headmasters exhibited remarkable commitment to helping their students and teachers. One headmistress used her own money to pay for the readmission fees for three girls who had missed a year of school due to economic hardship. This is but one indication among a wider pattern of evidence that the education system continues to have resilience. This resilience, however, has its limits, which were evident in the challenges to student learning and performance.

Effects on Learning, Teaching and Participation

I do want to learn. I study and study hard. Even with candles at night because there is no electricity. But the curriculum is long and I don't comprehend my lessons as well as before.
(Female secondary school student)

Despite the hardships and suffering experienced by students, teachers and professors, the education system in Gaza remains functional in many respects – the overwhelming majority of school-aged students continue to go to school, teachers continue teaching and preparing students for the rigors of Tawjihee exams[30] and most people continue to view education as being highly important. Nonetheless, a number of worrisome signs appeared.

Games and recreational activities. Gaza City, UNESCO Summer Camps, 2009.

1) Students' Ability to Learn and Perform in School

Learners and teachers both agreed that learners' ability to learn and perform well in school had suffered due to the military operations and blockade.

The main difficulty is how to get students to learn. They cannot concentrate. They are distracted by thoughts of what happened before and fearful of what may happen again. For children who have lost a parent, they say they want to be with their mother or father in heaven instead of in school.
(Primary school teacher)

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[30] The Tawjihee is a set of examinations at secondary level which determine which universities and which areas of study learners will be able to pursu.

> *I had always gotten high marks and wanted to study architecture. But I*
> *couldn't study. My marks were low. I couldn't get into the university I wanted.*
> *I now study business administration at a different university.*
> (Male university student)

There is a mixture of internal and external barriers to students' ability to learn and perform well in school. Psychosocial distress created internal barriers such as difficulties concentrating in school. Beyond the primary level, over 70% of learners reported having difficulty concentrating in school some or most of the time (see Figure18). Difficulties concentrating in school were particularly prominent at secondary and university levels, with a significantly higher percentage of difficulties reported than at lower levels (p<.001).

Figure 18: Difficulty Concentrating at School by Education Level (Percentage of Learners)
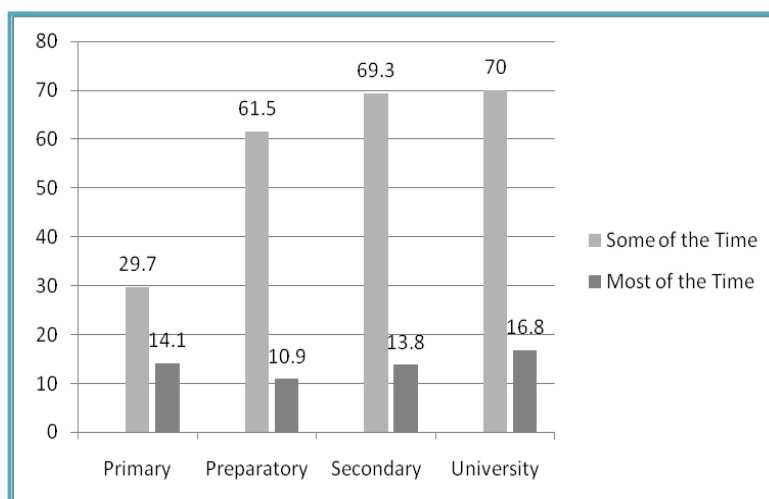
In addition, learners reported having difficulty concentrating when studying at home, and this difficulty was greater beyond the primary school level. Adding to the problems in learning and concentrating were difficulties remembering what had been learned or studied (see Table 5), an effect that was more pronounced for secondary and university learners. Furthermore, across all grade levels learners reported very high levels of worry about doing poorly on exams. At the secondary level, preparing for the comprehensive Tawjihee examination creates further stress and pressure.

Table 5: Learners' Ability to Learn and Perform in School

Some or most of the time	Primary	Preparatory	Secondary	University	Total
Difficulty Concentrating in School	43.8% (N=539)	72.4% (N=1531)	83.1% (N=1590)	86.8% (N=932)	72.3% (N=4533)
Insufficient Energy to do Homework	94.6% (N=1168)	95.8% (N=2025)	96.7% (N=1851)	92.7% (N=934)	95.4% (N=5978)
Difficulty Concentrating when Studying at Home	49.6% (N=613)	66.7% (N=1407)	78.0% (N=1493)	83.7% (N=842)	69.5% (N=4355)
Not Feeling Free to Express Opinions at School	44.9% (N=553)	64.1% (N=1354)	72.1% (N=1377)	83.5% (N=844)	65.7% (N=4128)
Work to Help Support Family or Pay for School Expenses	17.8% (N=219)	12.2% (N=256)	20.3% (N=388)	20.4% (N=198)	16.8% (N=1061)
Come to School Hungry	27.3% (N=337)	39.1% (N=827)	39.1% (N=750)	N/A	36.3% (N=1914)
Difficulty Remembering what you Learned and Studied	36.8% (N=453)	63.2% (N=1329)	81.1% (N=1548)	83.0% (N=913)	67.5% (N=4243)
Difficulty getting to School by Walking or Other Transportation	51.4% (N=612)	55.2% (N=1161)	46.6% (N=892)	65.2% (N=1161)	52.8% (N=3317)
Do not Participate in the Classroom	21.6% (N=267)	33.2% (N=701)	43.7% (N=836)	49.4% (N=492)	36.6% (N=1920)
Worry About Doing Poorly on Exams	87.3% (N=1076)	91.6% (N=1931)	91.3% (N=1750)	92.1% (N=1022)	90.6% (N=5691)

External barriers also limited learning and performance (see Table 5). Problems learning at home were compounded by a lack of electricity, which made it difficult to study at night. Also, many learners said they had to work to help support their families or pay for school expenses –responsibilities that often competed with their study time at home. One preparatory student told us:

> *My father is unemployed. He was a farmer, but Israel destroyed his farm. There are no job opportunities for him. I began working in the tunnels one year ago during the war because there was no other source of income for my family. I work 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., sleep, then go to school at 11 a.m. There is no time to study.*

Over one-third of students said they came to school hungry, and over half said they had difficulties getting to school by walking or other transportation:

> *Transportation is a problem…some students don't have one shekel for the bus. They don't have a change of clothes. They can't buy books. Ninety percent of students are struggling with poverty.*
> (University professor)

There was also evidence that external barriers arose from teaching methodologies. Many students reported that they did not participate in the classroom some or most of the time, and the lack of reported participation was noticeably higher at secondary and university levels than at primary and preparatory levels (Table 5 above). At the university level, in focus group discussions students reported frustration with classes that required rote memorization rather than discussion and critical thinking. Students also reported that most of their courses did not prepare them for work that was available in Gaza – for example working with UN agencies or international NGOs.

In addition, some teachers admitted that they used coercive, punitive methods to manage classrooms. Results from the survey data indicated that 39.5% of primary, 40.1% of preparatory, and 27.3% of secondary school teachers physically disciplined their students "much more" than before the war. Students from primary through secondary school reported that most of their teachers used yelling and hitting as methods of disciplining students who misbehaved: 85% of primary, 93.1% of preparatory, and 91.0% of secondary students reported that their teachers yelled "some" or "most of the time" at students who misbehaved. Moreover, 85.2% of primary, 82.0% of preparatory, and 53.9% of secondary students reported their teachers hit "some" or "most of the time" students who misbehaved. Students and parents both cited this as an issue impeding on their learning process.

The qualitative data with young students in grades 1-3 also found that students intensely dislike teachers hitting and using the stick on students. These and other comments indicated that this is not an isolated problem, but part of a wider pattern in which teachers are experiencing difficulties in managing learners' behavior and teaching well.

Even though teachers report spending time helping students calm down after military operations, focus group discussions revealed that many teachers felt their actions were not very effective and that they do not have the necessary skills. As one secondary teacher told us:

> *I try to help the students the best I can. Sometimes it helps, but not always. It would be good to have training on helping children.*

2) Teachers' Ability to Teach Well

Teachers reported that they are now unable to teach as well as they had before the military operations. Many feel that they are not equipped to deal with the long lasting psychosocial impacts of the war on their students, who show increased anxiety, aggression, fearfulness, and problems learning. One secondary school teacher noted how,

> *We have been affected by students' reactions. It's hard to deal with students. They are aggressive and hard to control since the war.*

Teachers at diverse levels reported that students were more likely to have concentration problems, act out aggressively, and be unruly and difficult to manage. The survey data shows that over two-thirds of teachers reported that students' behavior needed to be managed "much more often" than before the war. Teachers felt unprepared to deal with these problems, sometimes reacting forcefully, using methods such as verbal criticism and corporal punishment. At the same time, some teachers showed awareness that different methods were needed:

> *We need a peaceful environment instead of holding sticks [to beat the children].*
> (Preparatory school teacher)

> *The students' behavior has changed, and teachers have become aggressive in tone in talking with students. We need to learn better ways to deal with students who have been affected.*
> (Primary school teacher)

Although teachers called overwhelmingly for more training in how to work effectively with and support learners, they also felt stressed from having to teach a heavy curriculum and were ambivalent about whether they had sufficient time to fulfill their role in supporting

students' well being. For example, some teachers said that they thought the psychosocial support program they had received in the first week following the military operations had helped, at least temporarily, and wanted continued support. Other teachers said they wanted ongoing support but were unsure how to do this without sacrificing their ability to cover the full curriculum required.

3) Academic Performance

> *The students have lower learning outcomes. Their grades are not the same. Students cannot comprehend all of what is being taught. Before the war, only one or two students out of 100 in my classes would fail. After the war, more than 12 out of 100 students now fail.*
> (University professor)

At all levels, teachers reported that more students were having lower learning outcomes and that some of the students' grades have suffered since the war. Although the assessment was unable to confirm whether grades had dropped, across all levels students reported that their grades have suffered since the war (though fewer students failed at UNRWA schools).[31] The proportion of learners reporting that their grades are lower this school year than they had been in the preceding school year varied by level: 26.0% at primary level, 39.4% at preparatory level, 40.9% at secondary level, and 21.6% at university level. Moreover, 76.8% of teachers at the primary, preparatory and secondary levels reported that their students were performing at a lower level than before the war "most of the time" or "always" (See Figure 19).

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[31] According to UNRWA education officials, the number of students who fail at UNRWA schools has decreased over the past several years due to focused initiatives on raising grades and providing special academic summer programs for failing students

Figure 19: Teachers Reporting Lower Academic Performance Since the War (Percentage of Teachers)
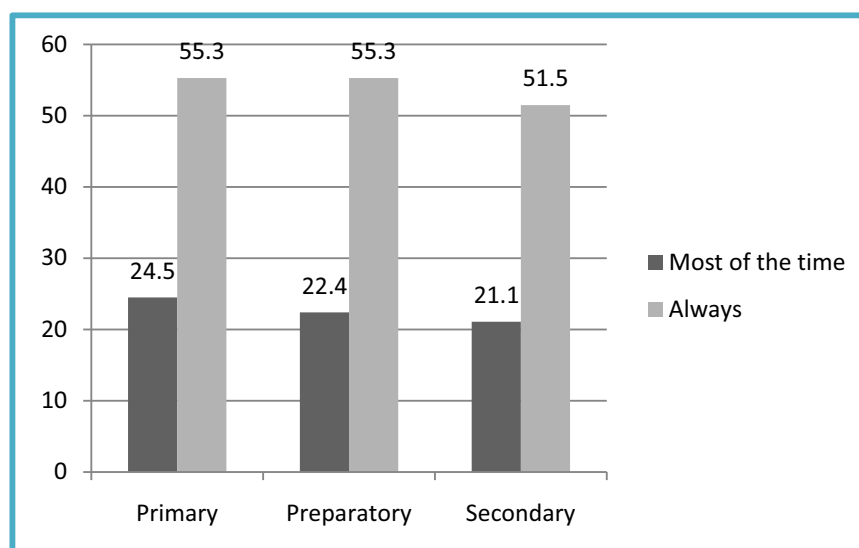
4) Absenteeism and Drop Outs

> *My brother dropped out of secondary school. He works in the tunnels so I can go to school.*
> (Male preparatory school student)

Across primary, preparatory and secondary levels, teachers and headmasters reported that they had students who were absent from class more than 10 days during the current school year because they were working;55.4% of headmasters reported having students who missed more than 10 days of the school year (mean = 14.4 students). In addition, 59.6% of headmasters reported that students at their school dropped out because of needing to work to help their family (mean = 10.4 students). As one headmaster reported,

> *The number of students dropping out has doubled. Before the war, 15 students dropped out. Now, 30 students have dropped out.*
> (Preparatory school headmaster)

At the university level, 91.3% of professors surveyed reported they had students (mean = 47.5 students) who missed at least 10 days of school because of needing to work, 91.3% had students (mean = 40.3 students) who missed at least 10 days of school because they could not afford transportation, 89.5% had students (mean = 31.0 students) who missed at

least 10 days because of other siege related problems, and 78.6% had students (mean = 10.6 students) who had dropped out of university because of economic circumstances.

Students also missed school because of other issues related to the war or blockade, including poverty and forced displacement:

> *Before, parents and teachers would instruct children about safe places to hide, but now fear for their children, so they don't allow them to go to school. Other children fear for themselves and stopped going.*
> (Primary school headmaster)

> *There was a girl who refused to go to school because she had nothing to wear. Everything was destroyed. Her father couldn't afford to buy her new clothes. She didn't have a change of clothes to wash. She had been wearing the same clothes for weeks.*
> (Preparatory school teacher)

> *My father used to be a construction worker in Israel. Now he has no work. I had to leave university to help support the family. I'm the oldest. Now I work in the tunnels. Of course I would like to return to university and continue with my studies, but that's not possible with the current situation.*
> (Former university student)

Economic stresses were identified as causing the increase in the number of students dropping out of school. To increase their safety and stability in the economic downturn resulting from the blockade, some preparatory and secondary school girls are reportedly subjected to arranged marriages at an earlier age, leading them to drop out of school. A preparatory school student in Rafah mentioned the following:

> *Three girls in my class dropped out this year to get married and one is engaged but still in school. Some boys and most girls get engaged at 14. I became engaged this year, and next year I will get married.*

The number of secondary school boys working was also reported to have increased due to the blockade. In Rafah especially, many boys perform hazardous and life threatening work in the tunnels during the night to help with expenses for their family. Some dropped out of school because they are exhausted and cannot keep up with their studies. At university level, some students reportedly had to drop out of or postpone school because they cannot afford tuition, books, and other materials for school:

> *I had to drop out of university. First my mother-in-law was sick, then my brother-in-law was sick. My brother died 6 months ago. Now I'm the only*

provider for the family. I very much wanted to continue my studies, but I had to sacrifice university for my family.
(Male university student)

Other students were unable to pay transportation expenses to attend classes.

5) *Postponing education*

University students reported that even if they did not drop out of school permanently, they had to postpone their education due to economic problems:

Instead of finishing in four years, I will finish in seven or eight years because I can't afford to pay tuition. When I first registered I could afford 18 hours, but now I have to cut down my hours to half. I can't afford more. I have to help support my family.
(University student)

We have hard circumstances so I had to drop out of university to help. If there is an opportunity for a job, you take it, even if you have to postpone your studies.
(University student postponing studies)

Disaggregating the Findings

Important issues addressed in this assessment include whether the psychosocial impacts on learners varied according to grade level, gender, governorate and school type, as well as specific vulnerabilities such as forced displacement. To analyze these issues, it was useful to focus not on the particular items discussed above but to obtain a more holistic perspective by examining the five subscales that had been constructed (see Annex Two). In summary, these subscales and some sample items used in the questionnaire are:

(1) Ability to learn/perform in school
- Is it difficult for you to concentrate in school?
- Is it difficult for you to concentrate when you study at home?

(2) Relationships with teachers
- Do your teachers treat you well?
- Do your teachers help you when you are upset?

(3) Resilience related to education
- Do you have friends at school who can help you when you have problems?
- Do you think education will help you stand up to the occupation?

(4) Psychosocial well-being
- Do you feel nervous?
- Are you hopeful about the future?

(5) Family relationships
- Do your parents yell at you?
- Do your parents encourage you to do well in school?

For each subscale, each learner received a composite score that averaged across his or her responses to the individual items in the subscale. Because the assessment sought to identify unmet psychosocial needs, the composite scores are presented in the negative. That is, higher scores on the sub-scales indicated greater challenges in the ability to learn/perform, relationships with teachers, resilience related to education, psychosocial well-being, and family relationships, respectively. Annex Three shows the outcomes of the statistical analyses.

1) Education Level

As students advanced in education level, they reported greater difficulty in their ability to learn/perform in school. University students evidenced the greatest difficulties, followed by secondary students, preparatory students, and primary students, respectively (see Figure 20). Similarly, learners at higher grade levels reported greater effects on their relationships with teachers, resilience related to education, psychosocial well-being and family relations (see Annex Three).

Figure 20: Difficulties in the Ability to Learn/Perform in School by Education Level
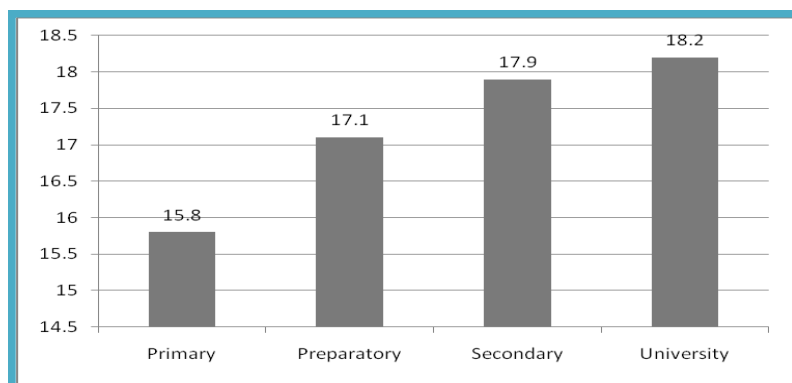
2) Gender

Across all grade levels, males had more difficulties than females in their ability to learn/perform in school, resilience related to education, and family relationships (see Table 6 and Annex Three). However, females had more difficulties than males in regard to their psychosocial well-being.

Table 6: The Effect of Gender

Gender	Learn/Perform in School	Relations with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
Male	17.4*	9.2	9.0*	18.6	6.4*
Female	17.0	9.1	8.5	18.9*	6.2

* p<.001

Gender differences also occurred at particular grade levels. While males had more difficulties than females in their ability to learn/perform in school from primary to secondary school, it was females who had more difficulties learning at university level (see Figure 21). At the secondary and university levels, females had significantly greater difficulties than males in regard to relationships with teachers (see Figure 22) and psychosocial well-being (see Figure 23).

Figure 21: Difficulties in the Ability to Learn/Perform in School by Education Level and Gender
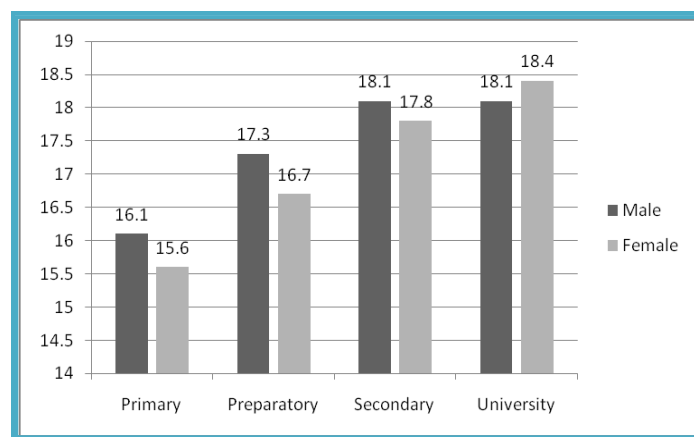
Figure 22: Difficulties in Relationships with Teachers by Education Level and Gender
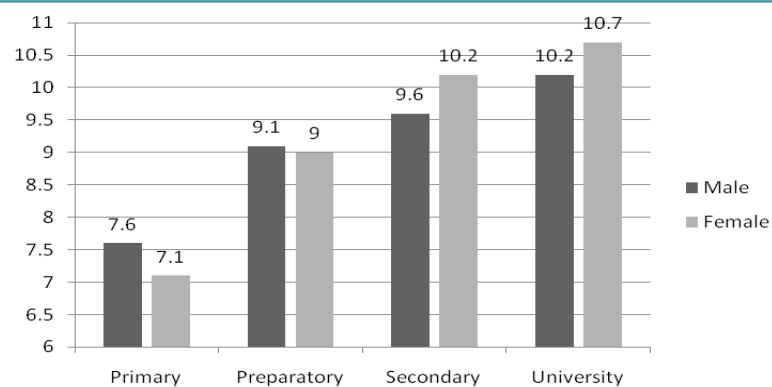
Figure 23: Difficulties in Learners' Psychosocial Well-being by Education Level and Gender
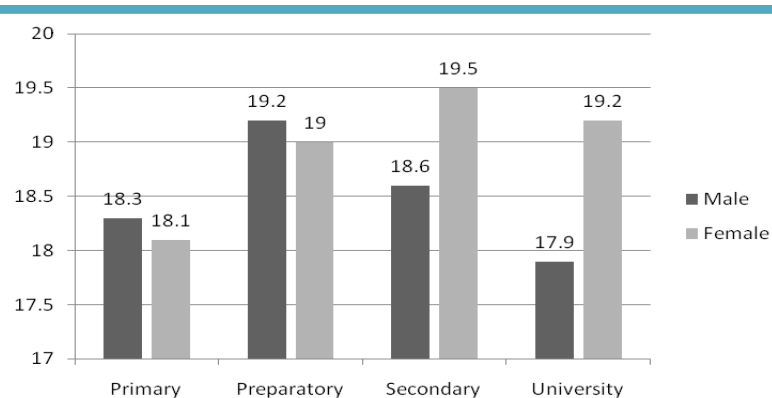
Governorate / geographical area

Differences between governorates occurred in regard to three of the five subscales. In Gaza, Deir al Balah and Rafah students had higher rates of difficulty in relationships with teachers and resilience related to education, compared to students from North Gaza and Khan Younis. Students from Rafah also had the highest rates of difficulty in regard to family relationships while students from North Gaza had the lowest rates of difficulty in regard to family relationship (See Annex Three).

3) Type of School

Across the primary and preparatory grades, no significant differences were found between PA and UNRWA schools. However at the primary school level, UNRWA students reported more psychosocial distress than PA students. At the preparatory school level, UNRWA students reported more problems with relationships with teachers and resilience related to education than PA students (See Annex Three). It was beyond the scope of this assessment to identify the possible sources of these differences.

4) Effects of Displacement

Because displacement occurred on a large scale, an attempt was made to identify the effects on displaced learners. Students, who had been displaced, were going to a different school, or had their school damaged because of the war, reported significantly more difficulties than students who did not experience these events. Across all grade levels, 19.2% (N=1205) of learners were living in a different place, and 26.3% (N=1655) attended a school that had been damaged during the war. In primary to secondary grades, 5.3% (N=280) of students in the sample were attending a different school than the school they were attending before the war.

Students who were displaced had greater difficulties in regard to learning/performing in school, relationships with teachers, resilience related to education, and psychosocial well-being (p<.001) (see Table 7). Students whose school had been damaged had greater difficulties in learning/performing in school and in psychosocial well-being (p<.01) (see Table 8). Students who had to attend a different school had greater difficulties in regard to learning/performing in school, resilience related to education, and psychosocial well-being (p<.001) (see Table 9).

Table 7: Effect of Being Displaced by the War

Live in Different Place than Before the War	Learn/ Perform in School	Relationship with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relation-ships
Yes	18.1**	9.5**	9.3**	19.6**	6.4
No	17.0	9.1	8.7	18.6	6.3

**(p<.001)

Table 8: Effect of Attending a School that was Damaged

School Damaged because of the War	Learn/ Perform In School	Relationship with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
Yes	17.3*	8.9	8.7	19.1*	6.3
No	17.0	9.9	8.6	18.8	6.3

*(p<.01)

Table 9: Effect of Going to a Different School Because of the War

Go to Different School because of the War	Learn/ Perform In School	Relationship with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
Yes	18.3**	9.4*	9.4**	20.1**	6.5
No	17.0	9.0	8.6	18.8	6.4

**(p<.001)
*(p<.01)

5) Vocational Students

The data collected from learners at vocational schools (which included both UNRWA and PA schools) was not based on random sampling and was too limited to include in the cluster analyses previously described. Even the limited data collected, however, indicated that vocational students' psychosocial well-being had suffered,though less so than secondary school students in the same grade (see Table10).

Table 10: Comparison of Vocational and Secondary Students' Psychosocial Well-being		
Reported some or most of the time	**Vocational Students**	**Secondary Students**
Feel nervous	80.2%	86.3%
Have bad dreams	69.6%	71.6%
Feel sad	81.2%	88.5%
Feel angry	76.3%	80.1%
Worry there will be another war	67.1%	76.3%

Vocational students also showed significant differences from their secondary school counterparts in regard to their anticipated future (Figure 24). Vocational students reported they would have more work as a laborer or employee (12.7% versus 6.9%) but would be professionally employed significantly less (10.5% versus 33.1% for secondary students). Vocational students also reported they expected to be dead/martyred less often (5.9% versus 11.2% for secondary students), and would be more likely to emigrate (10.5% versus 7.2%). Vocational students had similar rates to secondary students of uncertainty about the future (10.5% versus 10.8%).

Figure 24: Vocational Students' Responses:
"What do you think your situation will be in 10 years time?"
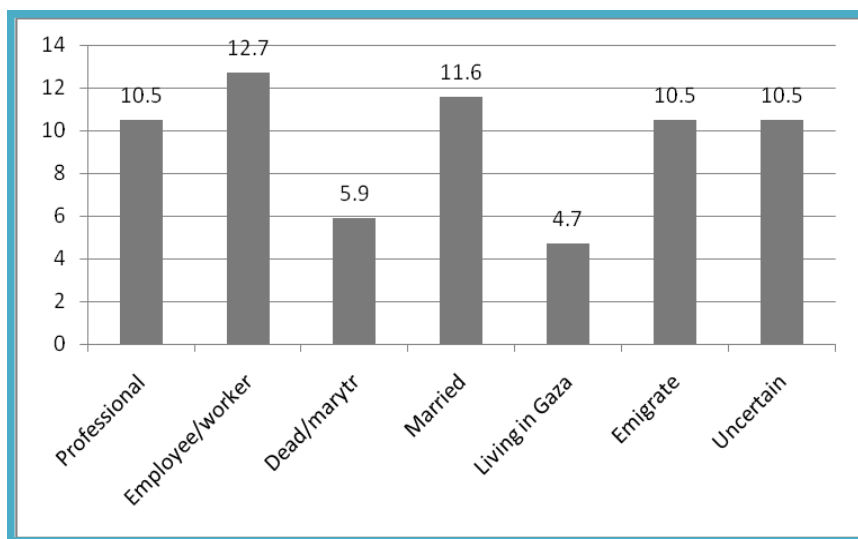
Coordination and 'Do No Harm'

Overlying the need to address these specific vulnerabilities and issues are concerns related to coordination and the 'Do No Harm' principle.[32]Problems of coordination are endemic to humanitarian efforts, and the Cluster system is in part an attempt to improve inter-agency coordination and accountability. Although the Cluster system is operative in Gaza, coordination of psychosocial work was reported to remain a challenge. As stated by various UN, NGO, and education staff:

> *There are no standards for quality.*

> *The missing link is psychosocial and education. There is no coordination.*

> *There is no standardization of psychosocial support. Everyone is doing their own thing. There are no criteria to distinguish if counselors should see a child, or refer for specialized services. This results in negative results.*

> *There is a need for professional training. Psychosocial activities are being conducted without support or follow-up. Under "psychosocial", you can do anything.*

The problems of poor coordination–particularly the tendency of NGOs to set up their own programs–are felt keenly both in schools and at the MoEHE in Gaza. As one counselor stated,

> *Every time they come with their own program. It may have already been done. They don't ask what are the needs of the Ministry.*

Workers in the psychosocial and protection sectors also pointed out that the provision of psychosocial support is a gap at all levels of the education system. The gap is particularly apparent in universities, which have organized little if any psychosocial support for

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[32] Anderson (1999)

learners or teachers. At the same time, it appeared that little or no work within universities or the wider education system is being done to build capacities for psychosocial support.

There was also indication of the use of psychosocial support methods that may cause unintended harm. For example, the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* caution against methods such as critical incident debriefing, that ask or compel students to talk about the worst things that had happened to them. Yet a number of focus group discussions indicated that although there was variation across schools, some students had been asked as part of psychosocial support activities to talk about the worst events of the war. In one case, a teacher pushed a child to talk when the child was not ready to talk. In another case, a teacher said she could not handle what students were telling her because she had her own losses to contend with. Questions of 'picking open wounds' and stigmatization were evident in some people's narratives:

> *Today the counselor wrote the names of the most affected. When students heard their name, they put their heads on their desk and started crying because they remembered.*
> (Primary school Headmaster)

It was beyond the scope of the assessment to observe directly the psychosocial methods being used in the education system. Nevertheless, it was worrying to hear reports of people doing psychosocial support activities without supervision or follow-up. Also, without any unifying framework, there was a sense of 'anything goes.' In addressing the widespread needs for psychosocial support, it will be essential to have a well coordinated effort guided by an appropriate, comprehensive framework and keen ethical sensitivities.

Implications and Recommendations

T he education system in Gaza is functioning reasonably well under the enormous burdens imposed by the military operations and the blockade. This functionality owes in no small part to the commitment of educators to fulfilling their responsibilities and to the strong motivation of learners to succeed. The ability of the education system and its participants to cope with extraordinary circumstances gives testimony to the resilience of the education system and the residents of Gaza.

At the same time, the results of this assessment indicate that there are significant psychosocial impacts on the education system and the learners and education staff who contribute to its operation. These impacts are sufficiently powerful and pervasive that, if left unaddressed, they threaten to undermine the functionality and resilience of the education system in Gaza.

This assessment has indicated that across educational levels, learners experience sadness, anxiety, fear, and have concentration problems that limit learning and memory. As a result, learners are not in a good position to participate fully or to learn effectively, and many exhibit unruly behavior and disrespect that undermines order in educational environments and relations with teachers. Education staff have also been strongly affected. Teachers struggle with their own losses and with the extensive economic burdens and lack of freedoms imposed by the military operations and blockade. Teachers report having problems concentrating, decrements in their ability to teach, and uncertainty about how to manage increasingly unruly classrooms and to support learners in their hour of great need. Counselors, directors and other education staff have also been strongly affected and face challenges of considerable magnitude. Across levels of education, both learners and education staff report having a strong need for additional psychosocial support, and the needs for support are particularly urgent at the secondary and university levels.

These findings have significant implications for policy and practice in regard to education systems, and to the Gaza context in particular. Although these are interlinked, they are presented separately below for purposes of clarity.

1. Psychosocial support should be integrated into the education system and should enable effective learning, teaching, and educational support.

All learners, teachers and other education staff should have regular, ongoing access to psychosocial support. In addition, the education environment and classroom activities should be conducive to the psychosocial well-being of all education participants. Capacity building is required to achieve this integration. For example, teachers should receive training, follow-up support, and supervision or mentoring in regard to supporting learners and managing unruly students and classrooms.

2. Psychosocial support should be holistic and guided by the framework established by the IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings and the INEE Minimum Standards.

Historically, the field of psychosocial support has been divided into two camps. As applied to children, one camp focused on clinical supports for the most severely affected children who suffer from problems such as depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The other camp focused on non-specialized, community-based supports for children such as those who have been separated from their families, had been recruited into armed groups and need to reintegrate into civilian society, or had dropped out of school due to extreme poverty and may be living or working on the streets. This division had a crippling effect in many countries, where supports tended to reflect one camp or the other and were seldom comprehensive.

A remedy for this division and the construction of a more comprehensive approach was achieved through the development of the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*. These inter-agency, consensus guidelines outline the minimum responses, that is, the first steps that are needed, even in protracted emergencies such as Gaza, to protect and promote mental health and psychosocial well-being. These guidelines called for the integration of psychosocial dimensions into different sectors, including education, and provided for a mixture of mental health and community-based psychosocial supports. Consistency with these guidelines has been an explicit objective of the revision of both the *INEE Minimum Standards* and the *Sphere[33]* guidelines.

Recognizing that different people in an armed conflict may be affected in different ways, the IASC Guidelines call for multiple layers of support as represented in an intervention pyramid (see Figure 25). As applied to war-affected children and youth, the bottom of the pyramid includes the majority of children and youth, who may show initial stress reactions such as fear and difficulties sleeping but who will recover provided that security is established and their basic needs are met. When this happens, children and youth are able

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[33] The Sphere Handbook – *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for Disaster Response*, is a compilation of core principles and minimum standards for the humanitarian sector, www.sphereproject.org.

to benefit from the naturally occurring sources of psychosocial support such as that provided by interaction with family, friends, religious leaders and teachers.

However, many children and youth need additional family and community supports. For example, separated children need family tracing and reunification. If education has been disrupted, children and youth will benefit from the establishment of non-formal and formal education. The third layer consists of the children and youth who need focused supports. For example, children and youth who had been recruited into armed forces or groups might need a specific mixture of livelihood, educational and social supports. The top layer consists of children and youth who have been so severely affected that they are unable to function, or experience profound suffering. Consequently, they need specialized supports such as those provided by psychiatrists, counselors or traditional healers.

From a policy standpoint, this framework is essential because it provides for comprehensive supports that include both clinical, specialized supports and holistic, community-based supports. Four features of this layered system, however, warrant attention. First, referral mechanisms are needed across various layers, enabling, for example, a student in school who becomes dysfunctional to be referred for specialized support. Second, affected children and youth may need supports at multiple levels. For example, students who need specialized support may also need access to basic necessities. Third, the system is dynamic in the sense that individuals who fit initially in layer two may subsequently move into layer three if their vulnerability increases. For example, if a learner who witnessed violence directed against her parents needed focused support but did not receive it, her condition could deteriorate, thereby creating the need for specialized support. Perhaps most important, inter-agency collaboration is needed to construct this comprehensive system. It would be unrealistic for any single agency to attempt to address all four layers, particularly since few agencies have the capacity to provide specialized supports.

Figure25: The IASC Pyramid Illustrating Comprehensive Supports

Specialized
services

Focused, non specialized
supports

Community and family supports

Basic services and security
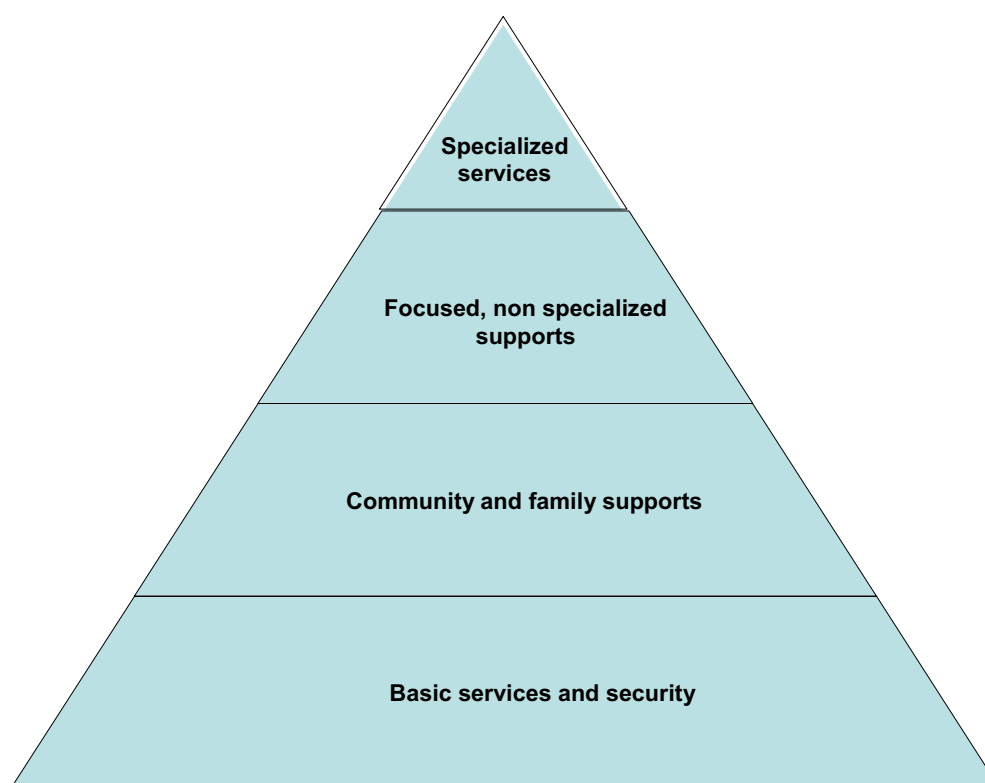
It may not be within the purview of the education system itself to establish all layers of support, yet the four layers of support may be developed in collaboration with other government sectors, UN and NGO partners, and community based organizations. In countries such as Jordan, various NGOs and UN agencies, working together with the Jordanian government, have used the IASC Guidelines as an advocacy tool for promoting the development of more holistic approaches. Similar work conducted in Iraq and Lebanon suggests the value of engaging multiple sectors and the government using the IASC Guidelines as an advocacy tool.

More specific implications and recommendations for educational practice in the Gaza context may also be drawn. Nearly all learners and education staff in Gaza have been affected by their horrendous experiences and daily challenges. For this reason, it is appropriate for practice to be oriented toward supporting all participants in the education system. However, it is important to balance this concern for the larger population with focused efforts to fill current gaps in psychosocial support, such as those pertaining to higher education as outlined above. Specific recommendations stemming from the findings of this report are listed below.

a) Enable effective inter-agency coordination of psychosocial support in education via the Education Cluster.

Coordination is a significant challenge in all humanitarian settings, and the assessment identified difficulties of inter-agency coordination in the Gaza context. Effective coordination that responds to gaps in support will be challenging in Gaza if for no other reason than the large scale on which psychosocial support is needed. In most emergencies, there is typically little communication or collaboration between agencies and people who address clinical issues such as PTSD and those who address everyday distress and organize non-specialized psychosocial supports.

To enable a comprehensive approach, the Education Cluster and Psychosocial sub cluster to the Protection Cluster in Gaza, working in close collaboration with the MoEHE in Gaza and UNRWA, should be empowered to coordinate the psychosocial support that is needed at all levels of the education system, and that embodies the approach set forth in the IASC Guidelines. Operationally, it should develop a strategic plan for psychosocial support in the education system that identifies key needs and gaps in support, identify and mobilize key partners (e.g., UNICEF, government ministries, NGOs) to fill those gaps, and ensure that a coordinated, comprehensive approach is taken.

b) Organize comprehensive psychosocial supports for learners at all levels.

Multiple layers of psychosocial support should be available to learners at all levels on a continuing basis as the psychosocial problems faced by learners are ongoing. The supports should include referrals for counseling or specialized support for severely affected children, but should also include non-specialized supports, including those which are provided by a supportive educational environment and teachers who use child friendly methods. The supports should be designed to meet the needs of girls as well as boys, and should be adapted to the needs of children and young people at different stages of development. Capacity building and ongoing back-up support and mentoring should be core parts of the efforts to organize effective psychosocial support. Most importantly, steps should be taken to ensure that the psychosocial support provided is ethical and does not cause harm.

c) Organize psychosocial supports for teachers and other education personnel, such as counselors, who have the most direct contact with learners.

A key lesson learned from emergency response in different contexts is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to support learners' well-being without also supporting the well-being of teachers and other key education personnel. Psychosocial supports for teachers and other education personnel should be holistic and multi-layered. It should include not only counseling but also non-specialized (nonclinical) supports such as those outlined in the following section on programming suggestions.

d) Advocate for increased attention and response to the psychosocial impacts on the education system.

At present, too little attention is given to psychosocial issues and means of supporting learners and education staff. To enable effective programming, it is vital to leverage the human and financial resources that are required for integrating psychosocial support into the education system. Because of the scale and the long-term nature of the needs, it is essential to engage diverse partners in a coordinated effort to raise awareness about the scale and importance of the unmet psychosocial needs, and to influence different stakeholders to invest in developing comprehensive psychosocial supports.

e) Document the effects of the wider, multi-partner efforts to address the psychosocial impact on the education system.

Empirical data that document the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions are important levers in the policy arena, and they are indispensible for strengthening practice. The current assessment data provide a population baseline against which one can gauge the changes in the psychosocial well-being of learners and education staff following the implementation of psychosocial supports. By re-administering the psychosocial survey instruments an appropriate amount of time following the implementation of psychosocial support programs, it is possible to track changes in psychosocial well-being over time. Using a wait-list methodology that does not deny access to psychosocial intervention of any school that needs it, the effects of the interventions could be isolated. The key is to strengthen practice by discarding or improving approaches that do not work, and by scaling up approaches that have been shown to work.

APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS

Because of the unique situation in Gaza, it is wise to avoid being prescriptive and to instead adopt a strategy of learning from, and building on, what is already working in Gaza. Where gaps exist, it is also useful to fill the gaps by adapting, testing and refining approaches to psychosocial support that have proven useful in other contexts. It is beyond the scope of this assessment to identify psychosocial approaches that are currently working in Gaza. The collection of this information could be a useful first step by the Education Cluster, undertaken in close consultation with the MoEHE in both Gaza and the West Bank, UNRWA, and different education stakeholders.

In a spirit of enabling learning across conflict-torn areas, this section outlines several program options that warrant additional consideration in moving forward.

◆　　*1. Learner-centered approach to teaching*　　◆

As recommended in the IASC Guidelines and INEE Minimum Standards, an essential form of psychosocial support for learners is the use of learner centered teaching methods and approaches. These stand in contrast to traditional educational methods that tend to be teacher-centered and authoritarian, and that may include the use of methods such as corporal punishment that can harm learners. The specific approach would be developed through a consultative process, but could include:

▶ management of classrooms and learners' behavior through methods that do not involve corporal punishment or humiliation;
▶ participatory methods in which learning occurs through learner-guided or selected activities, rather than through lecture;
▶ expressive, recreational activities that enable a sense of play and joyfulness;
▶ development of life skills for coping with hardships;
▶ cooperative activities that help to develop tolerance and values of nonviolence;
▶ support for and, where appropriate, referral of children who are emotionally overwhelmed.

The topics and approaches to be included would also draw on widely used global resources such as the UNICEF Teacher Training Manual (2009), the AVSI Teacher Training Manual (2003), the IRC Psychosocial Teacher Training Guide manual (2004), and the UNESCO Embracing Diversity Toolkit (2008).

This approach could be implemented by training all teachers in the use of these methods and giving other education staff orientations that enable them to create more supportive environments for learning. Since one-off trainings have limited value, it would be appropriate to use a training-of-trainers method in which key teachers from each school

receive additional training and serve as mentors, coaches and supporters for other teachers.

◈ *2. Collaborative approach to teacher and learner psychosocial support* ◈

Numerous approaches exist for preparing teachers in the Middle East areas of conflict to develop skills for effectively supporting their students. A key lesson from these areas is that one-off trainings will not succeed, as ongoing follow-up, mentoring and support are essential for enabling teachers to develop and use the appropriate skills.

UNICEF/Iraq, in partnership with the Heartland Alliance, developed an inter-sectoral approach that involved collaboration between the education system and the Ministry of Health, and between teachers and parents, with ongoing support from school administrators. Using a training of trainers approach, ten selected teachers from each governorate received training on the effects of violence on learning and development, how to respond to children experiencing difficulties, how to engage with parents, and how to create a safe environment that minimizes additional stress. Subsequently, 5-day cascade trainings were provided for 1800 teachers. With the lead trainers providing ongoing support, teachers provided classroom psychosocial support using creative and recreational methods to enable expression and participation in a supportive environment. In collaboration with a network of community mental health workers, teachers also made referrals for individual children who needed additional support. Teachers also encouraged the formation of parent-teacher associations and encouraged parents' participation in their children's education. In addition, teachers received psychosocial support via peer support discussions, and mental health referrals as needed. The preliminary results indicated improved teacher-student relations, more cooperative behavior among students, a more supportive environment for affected children, reduced violence in schools, and stronger school-family connections. The most positive results occurred when entire schools participated, thereby reducing the confusion that arises when different teachers take divergent approaches.

◈ *3. Enabling school counselors and other education staff to support children more effectively* ◈

UNICEF/Jordan has developed an approach for enabling psychosocial support by school counselors. In all 37 Jordanian directorates, a core team of 60 school counselors participated in a 10-day workshop on psychosocial problems and how to support affected children. The trainings were based on the IASC Guidelines, as adapted to the Jordanian context by the Ministry of Education in Jordan. An additional 1,700 school counselors received a 5-day training on psychosocial support for learners. All school principals and deputies received a one-day orientation on the psychosocial program to gain their support and understanding. Preliminary results indicated that counselors felt better prepared to provide psychosocial support, and developed and implemented work plans to support

learners. Schools reportedly became more protective environments for children, and partners helped to implement all levels of the IASC intervention pyramid. An ongoing challenge was the lack of nonviolent skills of behavior management among the education staff.

4. Peer group support for teachers and other education staff

Experience in a diverse range of settings indicates that the well-being of teachers and other education staff can be improved by creating reflective spaces, in which small groups of education staff reflect on and discuss the challenges they face in teaching and providing services to learners. This is done in a supportive context, and by engaging in group problem solving. The methodology consists of hour-long discussions held each week among a constant group of approximately 10 educators organized by category (e.g., teachers). Using a reflection methodology and facilitated by a colleague who has been selected through a democratic process, groups explore questions such as "How has teaching/education changed as a result of the attacks and the blockade?" and "What makes it difficult for you to carry out your educational responsibilities?" Having identified some of the main problems or obstacles, groups discuss various ways of managing the problems and coping with the situation. They also learn methods of relaxation and behavior management in educational settings. In advance of facilitating such reflections, the facilitators receive a multi-day training in methods of active listening, debriefing, relaxation, and behavior management. They also learn how to pose scenarios for discussion, reflect feelings, offer social support, manage difficult behavior, and recognize and refer colleagues who need additional assistance. Over time, the group could shift toward a mode in which it mixed discussion of teachers' support issues, and challenges associated with the use of the learner-centered pedagogy.

These sample program options are by no means an exhaustive list but are exemplars from the region that merit consideration. Several of them do illustrate, however, that it is possible to take a large scale approach to addressing psychosocial needs in the education context. In light of the vast unmet needs in Gaza, such a large-scale, comprehensive response is warranted and should be a high priority among all education policy makers and practitioners.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of this assessment indicate that psychosocial and related economic distress is harming the learning environment in the Gaza education system. Although psychosocial supports at various levels are urgently needed to address this distress, they will be helpful only if they are well coordinated and of high quality. While some valuable services have been provided for particular learners and teachers in some schools, they do not address the comprehensive educational needs identified in this assessment.

More specifically, the results of this assessment establish two key points:

1) Education is fundamental for the resilience of young people in Gaza. With great consistency, children and young people pointed to the importance of education as a means of helping them to cope and to enable their development. Thus a high priority is to maintain access to quality, supportive education as a means of protecting children and young people and developing their full capacities.

2) The education system is being strongly affected by the combined impacts of the blockade and military operations. Although the education system has exhibited considerable resilience, it should be recognized that this resilience has its limits. Indeed, this assessment found evidence of cracks in the education system that related to the enormous psychosocial burdens on learners, teachers, and other education staff. If education is to support learners' resilience, and if the education system itself is to retain its resilience, attention to the psychosocial needs of children, young people and education staff is a necessity.

> *The Israelis fought us with phosphorus bombs, which is illegal. We will fight them with our education.*
> (Female secondary student)

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ANNEX ONE

Sample Quotations from the Qualitative Data

i) Impact on Students

Feelings of safety

No place is safe. Not home. Not school. Not the streets.
(Parent of primary school student)

Even UNRWA is not safe. Five people going to the bathroom were killed at the UNRWA school.
(Preparatory school teacher)

Last week we had a field trip to Khan Younis. The children heard planes and thought the war was beginning again. They all wanted to go home.
(Primary school teacher)

Feelings of sadness

Our house was bombed and now we live with my uncle with many people. We used to have a big house, but now all my family lives in just one room. All my toys, my clothes, my school materials were destroyed. My father used to work in Israel, but now has no work. Life now is very difficult. It makes me very sad.
(Female primary school student)

Everywhere in the world is wonderful – except here. That is the reaction of our students.
(University professor)

Everything is black … no prospect of jobs, no money to get married.
(Male university student)

Aggression among students

They build guns and weapons from paper… even girls are playing with guns.
(Primary school teacher)

They show less respect to teachers and are aggressive in class. The boys shove each other. They question the authority of the teachers.
(Preparatory school teacher)

Feelings of hopelessness

I don't care about death anymore. I am going to die anyway. What is the reason to be alive? What is the situation in life? If I don't die in the tunnels, I'll die in the bombing.
(Former male university student who dropped out to work in the tunnels)

Everything is difficult. Before the war we led a good life. It is true we were under siege, but at least we had a little fun. Now we have a lot of stresses. Every second we are expecting to be the next target.
(Male university student)

We start thinking... where are we going to be after graduation? There are no jobs. If we can, we'll go anywhere, because there is no place for us to work here.
(Male university student)

If I live, I would like to be a teacher, and teach students to love their homeland and religion. We believe there is a big war, a second war coming. So we don't think of the future.
(Female university student)

After the war I started sewing traditional Palestinian embroidery. I made a wallet covering for my aunt so she can remember me if I die. Now I'm making them for my other family and friends so they can remember me. I'd like to finish studies, marry, and have a family. But this is the reality of our lives – we know we may die at any time.
(Female university student)

We would like to marry. But I need 12,000 shekels to marry. There are no jobs and no prospect for jobs.
(Male university student)

The students started the beginning of the last school year filled with hope. They had uniforms. They were well prepared. But they saw one of their school buildings totally destroyed. They think, if they [Israelis] bombed this, when will they bomb next?... Some students can't commit to a uniform because there is no money.
(Teacher, preparatory school)

Notions of hope and resilience

I must have hope for the future, that the situation will be better. But we will never forget – especially those who lost someone. I want to have a job where I can help children...to help children who have been burned...I want to have many children and teach them to love our land.
(Female, secondary school student)

We have hope and ambition for the future, but we are not optimistic now because we know what is happening.
(Male university student)

I want to teach children to read, to develop new ideas, new ways of thinking…not to ask for sympathy, but to demand rights…this will enable a better future for children, for our land.
(Female university student)

The Israelis try to affect our education system. But we want to develop. Palestine is our land. We will do anything for our land. That is why we must study hard and be very well educated. It is our way of overcoming our oppression.
(Female preparatory school student)

Israel aims to stop us from learning and make us illiterate. But we will never stop learning.
(Male preparatory student)

Israel wants generations to be illiterate. But we will study in tents, in containers, anywhere. We have talent, so we will study no matter what.
(Female primary school student)

ii) Impact on Teachers, Professors, and Counselors

Teachers come to school, but their heart is at home.
(Primary school teacher)

The economic and social situation is very bad. My son asked me to bring him new shoes, but I can't afford them. I am afraid he will go work in the tunnels so he can have things that I can't provide. Every night I get up three times in the middle of the night to see if he is still in his bed.
(Preparatory school teacher)

My professor was acting strange, starting to act out what happened…he would laugh, then cry, describe what had happened. He couldn't control himself.
(Female university student)

How am I supposed to help the students when I am still suffering from my own family members being killed?
(Primary school teacher)

Teachers want to help students in class, but can't help much because they are not qualified. We had material aid, but none for psychological support–the greatest effect.
(Secondary school teacher)

We had five days of activities for the students, but we need five years! We are seeing more problems with students now than immediately after the war…Students are angry and destroy things at school. They are fearful of what will come. We try the best we can, but need training on how to deal with children in crisis.
(Preparatory school teacher)

Some teachers give a pessimistic picture, but I want to give an optimistic picture. I want to recover the structure of education as it was before the war. Students will recover. It's a process… They have to recover the process as it was.
(University professor)

There should be a focus on teachers, counselors, headmasters…because if we are happy, we will be able to help children more. If we are depressed, we won't be able to help.
(Preparatory school headmaster)

Each counselor is responsible for 600-1,000 students. I don't think there is a counselor in the world who can deal with that many. Everyone is trying as hard as they can, but it is more than they can do.
(Primary school counselor)

We need programs of our own. Teachers and counselors lost their own children. Their own houses were destroyed. Even those giving psychological support need support.
(Preparatory school counselor)

iii) Learning and Participation

The main difficulty is how to get students to learn. They cannot concentrate. They are distracted by thoughts of what happened before and fearful of what may happen again. For children who have lost a parent, they say they want to be with their mother or father in heaven instead of in school.
(Primary school teacher)

I had always gotten high marks and wanted to study architecture. But I couldn't study. My marks were low. I couldn't get into the university I wanted. I now study business administration at a different university.
(Male university student)

Maybe 50% of students [at this school] work in tunnels. A lot work secretly. Some parents force them to work because there is no other income. Most parents don't want them to work, but students work anyway. They get 100-150 shekels – 100 for less heavy labor and 150 for hauling heavy loads. I had high grades before, but now I have to work.
(Preparatory school student)

How can we teach when we suffered so much?
(Preparatory school teacher)

Before, I was able to give more, perform more. Now my performance is lower than before as a teacher, but also as a mother, as a wife.
(Primary school teacher)

My father was killed. Instead of being a son, I'm now responsible for my family of nine members.
(Preparatory school student)

More females are dropping out of university to get married because of the bad circumstances of the siege. Their parents feel it is more secure for them and a better economic situation. But then it is harder to remain in university if you are married. My biggest fear is that I will have to marry before I finish my studies.
(University student)

Teachers will hit students on the hands with a narrow stick or three or four rulers for misbehaving...for side talk, talking loud, interrupting lessons, and writing letters.
(Preparatory school girl)

My child's teacher humiliates children... They don't know how to treat children.
(Mother of primary school student)

Today the counselor wrote the names of the most affected. When students heard their name, they put their heads on their desk and started crying because they remembered.
(Primary school Headmaster)

ANNEX TWO

Outcomes Subscales, Question Items, and Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability					

Outcomes	Associated Question Items	Primary School	Preparatory School	Secondary School	University
Ability to Learn/ Perform in School	-Is it difficult for you to concentrate in school? -Do you have enough electricity to do your homework? -Is it difficult for you to concentrate when you study at home? -Do you have difficulty remembering what you learned in school? -Do you worry you will do poorly on exams? -Do you participate in the classroom?	0.440	0.589	0.554	0.605
Relationships with Teachers	-Do your teachers treat you well? -Do your teachers help you when you are upset? -Do your teachers listen to your opinion? -Are you able to talk to the school counselor if you need to? -Do your teachers treat all students	0.581	0.679	0.705	0.707

Outcomes	Associated Question Items	Primary School	Preparatory School	Secondary School	University
	equally?				
Resilience Related to Education	-Does your learning in school help prepare you for the future? -Do you think education will help you stand up to the occupation? -Do you like going to school? -Do you help other students when they have problems? -Do you have friends at school who can help you when you have problems? -Do you have friends at school you socialize with?	0.511	0.547	0.531	0.614
Psychosocial Well- Being	-Do you feel safe at school? -Do you feel safe going to school and coming home from school? -Do you worry that there will be another war? -Do you have bad dreams? -Do you feel sad? -Do you feel nervous? -Do other students treat you badly? -Are you hopeful about the future? -Do you fight with other students at school?	0.611	0.673	0.665	0.688

Outcomes	Associated Question Items	Primary School	Preparatory School	Secondary School	University
	-Do you feel angry?				
Family Relationships	-Are your parents able to protect you from danger? -Do your parents yell at you? -Do your parents encourage you to do well in school? -Do your parents hit you?	0.578	0.566	0.551	N/A

In order to determine whether these relevant questionnaire items reliably constituted a scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated and used to assess the reliability of the scales for each of the five outcomes.

The scales achieved moderate levels of statistical reliability. According to Shrout and Fleiss, when evaluating reliability, a coefficient of 0.40 or lower is considered poor, and the associated items should not be considered to constitute a scale. A coefficient between 0.40 and 0.75 is considered a sign of moderate reliability and a coefficient of 0.75 and higher is considered excellent. Because all of our reliability coefficients were above the cutoff of 0.40, it was deemed reasonable to progress with analysis based on the proposed outcome categories. However because the scales were moderately reliable (versus excellent), we included only results that were significant at the level p<.001.

Outcomes by Educational Level, Gender, Governorate and School Type

Overall Outcomes by Education Level

	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	Primary	1194	15.75	2.678	
	Preparatory	2070	17.06	2.874	
	Secondary	1886	17.94	2.753	
	University	998	18.23	2.639	
	Total	**6148**	**17.27**	**2.894**	<0.001
Relationships with Teachers	Primary	1190	7.32	2.062	
	Preparatory	2074	9.06	2.515	
	Secondary	1900	9.89	2.580	
	University	999	10.43	2.234	
	Total	**6163**	**9.20**	**2.624**	<0.001
Resilience Related to Education	Primary	1204	7.82	1.889	
	Preparatory	2086	8.67	2.200	
	Secondary	1901	9.05	2.227	
	University	999	9.74	2.280	
	Total	**6190**	**8.79**	**2.245**	<0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	Primary	1201	18.17	3.358	
	Preparatory	2062	19.10	3.622	
	Secondary	1896	19.05	3.513	
	University	996	18.41	3.252	
	Total	**6155**	**18.79**	**3.500**	<0.001
Family Relationships	Primary	1215	5.38	1.518	
	Preparatory	2095	6.41	.983	
	Secondary	1908	6.82	1.110	
	University	n/a	n/a.	n/a.	
	Total	**5218**	**6.32**	**1.293**	<0.001

Overall Primary School Outcomes

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn/Perform in School	1194	15.7479	2.67820
Relationships with Teachers	1190	7.3210	2.06199
Resilience Related to Education	1204	7.8173	1.88924
Psychosocial Well-Being	1201	18.1690	3.35816
Family Relationships	1215	5.3844	1.51801
Total (N)	**1104**		

Primary School Outcomes by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	Male	441	16.0522	2.67216	
	Female	753	15.5697	2.66742	0.003
Relationships with Teachers	Male	444	7.6351	2.32801	
	Female	746	7.1340	1.86259	<0.001
Resilience Related to Education	Male	450	8.0822	2.04730	
	Female	754	7.6592	1.77087	<0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	Male	442	18.3122	3.40432	
	Female	759	18.0856	3.33041	0.260
Family Relationships	Male	446	5.6704	1.60655	
	Female	769	5.2185	1.43945	<0.001

Primary School Outcomes by School Type

	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	UNRWA	720	15.7861	2.62360	
	PA	474	15.6899	2.76088	0.544
Relationships with Teachers	UNRWA	711	7.3235	2.02157	
	PA	479	7.3173	2.12268	0.960
Resilience Related to Education	UNRWA	722	7.7161	1.82326	
	PA	482	7.9689	1.97623	0.023
Psychosocial Well-Being	UNRWA	727	18.4333	3.20694	
	PA	474	17.7637	3.54301	0.001
Family Relationships	UNRWA	725	5.2979	1.38143	
	PA	490	5.5122	1.69350	0.020

Primary School Outcomes by Governorate

	Governorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	North Gaza	454	15.7379	2.50466	
	Gaza	297	16.0471	2.76277	
	Deir al Balah	180	15.9444	2.63140	
	Khan Younis	207	15.1981	2.89197	
	Rafah	56	15.6429	2.68618	
	Total	**1194**	**15.7479**	**2.67820**	0.009
Relationships with Teachers	North Gaza	462	6.7857	1.69840	
	Gaza	299	7.6957	2.33539	
	Deir al Balah	163	8.0123	2.22774	
	Khan Younis	210	7.3571	1.92219	
	Rafah	56	7.5893	2.20559	
	Total	**1190**	**7.3210**	**2.06199**	<0.001
Resilience related to Education	North Gaza	455	7.5692	1.76828	
	Gaza	304	8.1414	1.99911	
	Deir al Balah	180	7.9444	1.88710	
	Khan Younis	207	7.7005	1.80537	
	Rafah	58	8.0862	2.23438	
	Total	**1204**	**7.8173**	**1.88924**	0.001
PsychosocialWell-Being	North Gaza	462	18.4437	3.17939	
	Gaza	300	17.8600	3.69856	
	Deir al Balah	180	18.4389	3.26341	
	Khan Younis	204	17.6912	3.14943	
	Rafah	55	18.4364	3.69065	
	Total	**1201**	**18.1690**	**3.35816**	0.023
Family Relationships	North Gaza	461	5.1323	1.31788	
	Gaza	307	5.4919	1.72707	
	Deir al Balah	180	5.4500	1.21570	
	Khan Younis	213	5.5164	1.55283	
	Rafah	54	6.1852	2.11976	
	Total	**1215**	**5.3844**	**1.51801**	<0.001

Overall Preparatory School Outcomes

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn/Perform in School	2070	17.0618	2.87420
Relationships with Teachers	2074	9.0617	2.51461
Resilience Related to Education	2086	8.6735	2.20036
Psychosocial Well-Being	2062	19.1043	3.62177
Family Relationships	2095	6.4124	.98258
Total (N)	**1979**		

Preparatory School Outcomes by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform inSchool	Male	1115	17.3336	2.87187	
	Female	955	16.7445	2.84573	<0.001
Relationships with Teachers	Male	1117	9.0949	2.51446	
	Female	957	9.0230	2.51554	0.516
Resilience Related to Education	Male	1130	8.9646	2.19602	
	Female	956	8.3295	2.15650	<0.001
PsychosocialWell-Being	Male	1107	19.1807	3.70985	
	Female	955	19.0157	3.51677	0.303
Family Relationships	Male	1139	6.4109	1.03867	
	Female	956	6.4142	.91180	0.938

Preparatory School Outcomes by School Type

	Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	UNRWA	1249	17.1433	3.04761	
	PA	821	16.9379	2.58510	0.100
Relationships with Teachers	UNRWA	1249	9.2162	2.59555	
	PA	825	8.8279	2.36929	<0.001
Resilience Related to Education	UNRWA	1256	8.8408	2.29327	
	PA	830	8.4205	2.02703	<0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	UNRWA	1247	19.1123	3.73374	
	PA	815	19.0920	3.44563	0.900
Family Relationships	UNRWA	1259	6.4249	.95680	
	PA	836	6.3935	1.02046	0.474

Preparatory School Outcomes by Governorate

	Governorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	North Gaza	429	17.4499	2.90672	
	Gaza	714	16.8361	2.83185	
	Deir al Balah	100	17.0700	2.94480	
	Khan Younis	457	16.8950	2.95246	
	Rafah	370	17.2514	2.75348	
	Total	**2070**	**17.0618**	**2.87420**	0.004
Relationships with Teachers	North Gaza	432	8.6713	2.49330	
	Gaza	715	9.4629	2.57976	
	Deir al Balah	102	9.2059	2.75874	
	Khan Younis	450	8.7244	2.22149	
	Rafah	375	9.1120	2.56326	
	Total	**2074**	**9.0617**	**2.51461**	<0.001
Resilience related to Education	North Gaza	432	8.3773	1.94441	
	Gaza	714	8.8880	2.28079	
	Deir al Balah	104	9.4808	2.39733	
	Khan Younis	456	8.2763	2.06018	
	Rafah	380	8.8632	2.30228	
	Total	**2086**	**8.6735**	**2.20036**	<0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	North Gaza	429	19.6317	3.59835	
	Gaza	712	18.7556	3.59431	
	Deir al Balah	100	18.9800	4.19230	
	Khan Younis	456	19.3180	3.31062	
	Rafah	365	18.9315	3.83065	
	Total	**2062**	**19.1043**	**3.62177**	0.001
Family Relationships	North Gaza	431	6.3573	.98237	
	Gaza	721	6.3870	.91972	
	Deir al Balah	104	6.2981	.93352	
	Khan Younis	458	6.4410	.97777	
	Rafah	381	6.5197	1.10394	
	Total	**2095**	**6.4124**	**.98258**	0.085

Secondary School Outcomes

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn/Perform in School	1886	17.9385	2.75285
Relationships with Teachers	1900	9.8858	2.58017
Resilience Related to Education	1901	9.0484	2.22682
Psychosocial Well-Being	1896	19.0469	3.51257
Family Relationships	1908	6.8192	1.11024
Total (N)	**1838**		

Secondary School Outcomes by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	Male	936	18.1303	2.78999	
	Female	950	17.7495	2.70393	0.003
Relationships with Teachers	Male	947	9.6114	2.69425	
	Female	953	10.1584	2.43251	<0.001
Resilience Related to Education	Male	947	9.2112	2.30308	
	Female	954	8.8868	2.13740	0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	Male	947	18.6399	3.73320	
	Female	949	19.4531	3.22882	<0.001
Family Relationships	Male	955	6.7822	1.20303	
	Female	953	6.8562	1.00801	0.145

Secondary School Outcomes by Governorate

	Governorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	North Gaza	258	17.9767	2.64932	
	Gaza	739	17.7253	2.75986	
	Deir al Balah	278	18.1007	2.81383	
	Khan Younis	221	18.5837	2.65064	
	Rafah	390	17.8359	2.76941	
	Total	**1886**	**17.9385**	**2.75285**	0.001
Relationships with Teachers	North Gaza	258	9.3760	2.38390	
	Gaza	743	9.7672	2.55472	
	Deir al Balah	277	10.1155	2.76514	
	Khan Younis	225	10.4800	2.57405	
	Rafah	397	9.9421	2.54835	
	Total	**1900**	**9.8858**	**2.58017**	<0.001
Resilience related to Education	North Gaza	258	8.6822	2.14815	
	Gaza	745	9.1826	2.28399	
	Deir al Balah	275	9.3491	2.29128	
	Khan Younis	227	8.9780	2.01421	
	Rafah	396	8.8662	2.20006	
	Total	**1901**	**9.0484**	**2.22682**	0.001
Psychosocial Well-Being	North Gaza	257	19.1712	3.20185	
	Gaza	742	19.1078	3.53303	
	Deir al Balah	278	18.6906	3.87037	
	Khan Younis	223	19.3767	3.35736	
	Rafah	396	18.9167	3.47951	
	Total	**1896**	**19.0469**	**3.51257**	0.206
Family Relationships	North Gaza	258	6.7558	.98553	
	Gaza	747	6.8434	1.15005	
	Deir al Balah	278	6.7374	1.01226	
	Khan Younis	227	6.9075	1.18817	
	Rafah	398	6.8216	1.12934	
	Total	**1908**	**6.8192**	**1.11024**	0.387

University Outcomes

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn/Perform in School	998	18.2325	2.63874
Relationships with Teachers	999	10.4324	2.23364
Resilience Related to Education	999	9.7437	2.27965
Psychosocial Well-Being	996	18.4106	3.25176
Family Relationships	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total N	**977**		

University Outcomes by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	Male	582	18.0997	2.69832	
	Female	416	18.4183	2.54465	0.060
Relationships with Teachers	Male	583	10.2264	2.25372	
	Female	416	10.7212	2.17525	0.001
Resilience Related to Education	Male	584	9.8870	2.30390	
	Female	415	9.5422	2.23229	0.018
Psychosocial Well-Being	Male	581	17.8640	3.29531	
	Female	415	19.1759	3.03210	<0.001

University Outcomes by Governorate

	Governorate	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Learn/Perform in School	North Gaza	211	18.3507	2.45730	
	Gaza	424	18.3302	2.62006	
	Middle Gaza	166	18.2711	2.44305	
	Khan Younis	118	17.9915	2.98571	
	Rafah	73	17.4795	3.02815	
	Total	**992**	**18.2218**	**2.64159**	0.094
Relationships with Teachers	North Gaza	213	10.3239	2.20489	
	Gaza	423	10.5556	2.15207	
	Middle Gaza	167	10.4072	2.25526	
	Khan Younis	117	10.5385	2.35086	
	Rafah	73	9.9863	2.55763	
	Total	**993**	**10.4371**	**2.23749**	0.291
Resilience Related to Education	North Gaza	213	9.5493	2.26409	
	Gaza	423	9.7943	2.23029	
	Middle Gaza	166	9.5723	2.23557	
	Khan Younis	118	10.1356	2.57176	
	Rafah	73	9.6438	2.03012	
	Total	**993**	**9.7341**	**2.27047**	0.174
Psychosocial Well-Being	North Gaza	213	18.3474	3.21134	
	Gaza	421	18.4537	3.12758	
	Middle Gaza	169	18.5207	3.36666	
	Khan Younis	117	18.4872	3.49289	
	Rafah	70	17.7000	3.30283	
	Total	**990**	**18.3929**	**3.24375**	0.442

Outcomes by Gender and Education Level

Gender	Education Level		Learn/Perform in School	Relationships with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
Male	Primary	Mean	16.05	7.64	8.08	18.31	5.67
		N	441	444	450	442	446
	Preparatory	Mean	17.33	9.09	8.96	19.18	6.41
		N	1115	1117	1130	1107	1139
	Secondary	Mean	18.13	9.61	9.21	18.64	6.78
		N	936	947	947	947	955
	University	Mean	18.10	10.23	9.89	17.86	n/a
		N	582	583	584	581	
	Total	Mean	17.54	9.26	9.09	18.64	6.42
		N	3074	3091	3111	3077	2540
Female	Primary	Mean	15.57	7.13	7.66	18.09	5.22
		N	753	746	754	759	769
	Preparatory	Mean	16.74	9.02	8.33	19.02	6.41
		N	955	957	956	955	956
	Secondary	Mean	17.75	10.16	8.89	19.45	6.86
		N	950	953	954	949	953
	University	Mean	18.42	10.72	9.54	19.18	n/a
		N	416	416	415	415	
	Total	Mean	16.99	9.15	8.50	18.94	6.23
		N	3074	3072	3079	3078	2678
Total	Primary	Mean	15.75	7.32	7.82	18.17	5.38
		N	1194	1190	1204	1201	1215
	Preparatory	Mean	17.06	9.06	8.67	19.10	6.41
		N	2070	2074	2086	2062	2095
	Secondary	Mean	17.94	9.89	9.05	19.05	6.82
		N	1886	1900	1901	1896	1908
	University	Mean	18.23	10.43	9.74	18.41	n/a
		N	998	999	999	996	
	Total	Mean	17.27	9.20	8.79	18.79	6.32
		N	6148	6163	6190	6155	5218

Outcomes by Governorate

District		Ability to Learn/Perform in School	Relationships with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
North Gaza	Mean	17.08	8.50	8.36	18.92	6.00
	N	1419	1433	1428	1427	1217
Gaza	Mean	17.19	9.36	8.93	18.66	6.33
	N	2407	2412	2419	2406	2007
Deir al Balah	Mean	17.31	9.31	8.92	18.65	6.19
	N	802	787	803	804	640
Khan Younis	Mean	17.03	9.10	8.53	18.81	6.32
	N	1175	1175	1183	1173	1074
Rafah	Mean	17.38	9.49	8.87	18.77	6.64
	N	940	953	959	938	885
Total	Mean	17.18	9.15	8.73	18.75	6.29
	N	6743	6760	6792	6748	5823

Outcomes by School Type

School Type		Ability to Learn/Perform in School	Relationships with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
UNRWA	Mean	16.65	8.53	8.43	18.86	6.01
	N	1969	1960	1978	1974	1984
PA	Mean	16.48	8.27	8.25	18.60	6.07
	N	1295	1304	1312	1289	1326
Total	Mean	16.58	8.43	8.36	18.76	6.04
	N	3264	3264	3290	3263	3310

Outcomes by School Type and Level

School Type	Level		Ability to Learn/Perform in School	Relationships with Teachers	Resilience Related to Education	Psychosocial Well-Being	Family Relationships
UNRWA	Primary	Mean	15.79	7.32	7.72	18.43*	5.30
		N	720	711	722	727	725
	Preparatory	Mean	17.14	9.22*	8.84*	19.11	6.42
		N	1249	1249	1256	1247	1259
	Total	Mean	16.65	8.53	8.43	18.86	6.01
		N	1969	1960	1978	1974	1984
PA	Primary	Mean	15.69	7.32	7.97	17.76	5.51
		N	474	479	482	474	490
	Preparatory	Mean	16.94	8.83	8.42	19.09	6.39
		N		825	830	815	836
	Total	Mean	16.48	8.27	8.25	18.60	6.07
		N	1295	1304	1312	1289	1326
Total	Primary	Mean	15.75	7.32	7.82	18.17	5.38
		N	1194	1190	1204	1201	1215
	Preparatory	Mean	17.06	9.06	8.67	19.10	6.41
		N	2070	2074	2086	2062	2095
	Total	Mean	16.58	8.43	8.36	18.76	6.04
		N	3264	3264	3290	3263	3310

* p<.001