

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

23 October 2008

UNICEF ASSISTED PROGRAMMES FOCUS ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, PROTECTION AND ADOLESCENTS

- Strikes in Gaza disrupt health and education services: Israeli blockade continues
- Intra-Palestinian violence in Gaza kills 5 children, injures 24 in three months
- Children killed and injured in Barrier demonstrations and attacks by settlers



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Despite the truce declared with Israel on 19 June 2008, Gaza remains under virtual siege. In August, imports into Gaza were only 23% of the amount in May 2007¹. Shortages of electricity, fuel, safe water and sanitation frame daily life. The flare up in July of intra-Palestinian violence was the worst since Hamas wrested control in June 2007.²

The fulfilment of children's rights is further compromised by the intra-Palestinian divide that is impeding the delivery of critical public services. In Gaza the school year opened to a strike by education workers to protest transfers / removals of "Fatah-affiliated" principals and teachers by the Hamas authorities in Gaza. Striking workers were immediately replaced with new staff, many of whom have not received proper training. Health workers joined the strike on 30 August.

Across the West Bank 630 physical obstacles to movement (compared with 376 when the Access and Movement Agreement was signed in November 2005) and ongoing construction of the 723-km Barrier wreak untold suffering and indignity for children and their families. The number of children injured by Israel security forces during anti-Barrier protests has risen and attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers have intensified. A severe drought affects huge swathes of the West Bank.

UNICEF's assisted emergency programmes focus on health, education, protection and adolescent development, targeting eight districts where the needs are greatest – Gaza City, North Gaza, Deir Al Balah and Khan Younis in Gaza, and Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah / El-Bireh and Hebron in the West Bank. UNICEF is the sector lead in education, nutrition, water and sanitation and child protection, providing leadership for the coordination of programme sector planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

Health and Nutrition

At end-September, around 28% of hospital health workers and 41% of primary health care workers were on strike in Gaza.³ All eleven Ministry of Health (MoH) hospitals were still functioning but with delays in services and a reduction in elective surgeries. Immunization services sustain high coverage for all antigens and vaccines are secure. Of 416 essential drugs, 45 were at zero level in Gaza, 73 in the West Bank. In July, a fire incident in the central medical warehouse in Ramallah destroyed the consumable drugs and supplies, causing acute shortages. At least 51 people including 11 children died after denials or delays in accessing medical care outside of Gaza between October 2007 and July 2008.⁴

Between January and July 2008, food prices rose by 20% in the West Bank and 23% in the Gaza, compared with the same period last year.⁵

UNICEF supports MoH, UNRWA and NGOs to maintain health service delivery through:

- Provision of all EPI vaccines and related supplies for all children under 15 months old (117,000 children) and vaccine forecasting (2009-2013) support to MoH
- Pre-positioning medical supplies with MoH and union of health workers committee including 452 first aid kits, 13 emergency health kits, 10 midwifery kits, 16 obstetric surgical kits and 60 newborn resuscitation kits to meet the needs of up to 7,170 beneficiaries
- Supplying MOH, UNRWA and NGOs with vitamin A and D and other micronutrient supplements for all children (over 107,000) below 1 year old as well as salt-testing kits
- Support for a rapid nutrition survey in three Gaza districts
- Support to Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI), Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), maternal and child health (MCH) and nutrition activities including training on newborn care; strengthening information management; training and monitoring on micronutrients; and behavioural change communication related to fortified food
- UNICEF is the sector lead in nutrition

¹ OCHA Humanitarian Monitor, August 2008

² OCHA Humanitarian Monitor, August 2008

³ WHO oPt highlights Sept 24-29

⁴ WHO, Access of Patients to Specialized Medical Services, Summary Situation, July 2007-July 2008

⁵ OCHA Humanitarian Monitor August 2008

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Due to power shortages in Gaza, a quarter of the population receives only 4 – 6 hours of water every four days. None of the waste water treatment plants function normally; around 80,000 m3 of raw or poorly treated sewage is pumped into the sea daily.⁶

The most severe drought in a decade is affecting communities as far north as Jenin. Average per capita domestic water consumption in hard hit areas is as low as 15 litres per person per day, a tenth of the WHO minimum requirement. The majority of villages in the north-east rely totally or partially on trucked water with some families spending as much as 30% of their income on water.⁷

Many families have cut back water consumption, leading to poor hygiene. Children face the risk of water-borne infections such as trachoma, conjunctivitis, dysentery, gastro-enteritis, ascariasis and hookworm. Unsafe drinking water also raises risks of diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, paratyphoid and gastro-enteritis.

UNICEF works with the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipal Water Utility (CMWU) to strengthen and improve water and sanitation systems, especially in schools and health centres. Support this year has included:

- In Gaza, restoring nine sewage pump stations damaged in Israeli military incursions; constructing two water wells that serve about 40,000 people, meeting around 15% of urgent needs in marginalized areas in the middle and south; tankering water to 120 schools, reaching 220,000 students and teachers; constructing 10 sanitary units at a girls school for 1,700 students; pre-positioning water pumps, spare parts and fuel to run the water pumps; and delivering six mobile fuel tanks. UNICEF also provided protective clothing and 60 bicycles to enable water and sanitation workers to access work sites when there was little or no fuel for transportation
- To respond to the drought in the West Bank, UNICEF provided water and storage tanks to 922 families (over 5,600 people) in the Jordan Valley and east Jenin
- Developing a contingency plan and partnership roster; and in partnership with a national NGO, monitoring water quality in the West Bank
- UNICEF, as the sector lead in WASH, coordinates workshops and other WASH related activities

Education

Around half of Gaza's 9,000 teachers adhered to the initial call for a strike. According to Hamas-affiliated Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in Gaza, around 1,000 have since resumed work. While teachers have been replaced, few are qualified to teach, especially math and sciences. UNICEF-supported remedial education assistance is being temporarily re-programmed through NGOs.

In Gaza, prices of school uniforms and supplies have risen between 50% and 100% since last year.⁸ More than 100 students who have secured entry into universities abroad, and others who wish to study in the West Bank remain stranded in Gaza.⁹ Between July 2007 and July 2008, there were at least 23 reported attacks on schools; 15 by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and eight by Israeli settlers.¹⁰

UNICEF is working with the MoEHE and NGOs to improve education quality and student performance. Support this year includes:

- 50,000 school bags and supplies provided in early October; 50,000 sets of copy books en route to meet the needs of 50,000 children
- Remedial classes in Math and Arabic and recreational activities (sports, music, art and drama) for 3,400 low-performing students in 90 schools (60 in the West Bank and 30 in Gaza) for one month during summer
- Activating 50 libraries to promote reading. Support included training facilitators and animators on story telling, and supplies such as stationery and books
- Strengthening information management by producing 68,688 student profiles covering first graders; and developing/distributing 30,000 copies of an early childhood development booklet for teachers and caregivers
- Remedial support programmes are being reprogrammed temporarily through NGOs
- UNICEF is the sector lead in education

⁶ UNICEF weekly update 25 September 2008

⁷ OCHA Humanitarian Monitor August 2008

⁸ UNICEF/UNRWA education fact sheet 2008

⁹ OCHA-oPt, Protection of Civilians Weekly Report No 275, 27 August – 2 September 2008

¹⁰ 1612 Working Group

Child Protection

As of end-August, 77 children had died in the conflict with Israel since beginning of the year, and at least 387 were injured, many seriously.¹¹ In the first three months of the year alone 40 children were killed in comparison to 43 in the entire 2007. Intra-Palestinian violence has killed six children and injured 29 since the beginning of 2008.

In July and August, 110 children were injured by Israeli security forces, more than half of them in anti-Barrier demonstrations in western Ramallah. In July, two boys were shot in the head following demonstrations.¹² July also recorded the highest number of incidents of settlers targeting Palestinians and their property.

Some 293 children including five girls remained in Israeli prisons and detention facilities as of end August. Among them, 13, including two girls, were being held in administrative detention (without charges or trial).

UNICEF supports Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and NGO partners in activities to reduce stress; mitigate the impact of violence; and strengthen coping mechanisms of children and caregivers. Support this year includes:

- Psychosocial assistance for 20,767 children and adolescents; and in-depth counselling for 3,739 children in distress
- Fun days to relieve stress and encourage interaction for 25,986 children
- Emergency home and hospital visits following violent events benefiting 3,047 children; and
- Socio-legal assistance to more than 2,179 children provided through three centres, not including 1,029 children who received advice through the centre's toll-free line
- UNICEF is the sector lead in psychosocial support. Ongoing activities within the sector include training for caregivers on children in distress; reporting and advocacy within the 1612 working group on children in conflict; and support to MoSA in establishing a national child care and protection protocol towards building a child protection system

Adolescent Development and Participation

The conflict has had a particularly damaging impact on adolescents, who comprise a large, vulnerable and volatile group. Adolescents who are two or three levels below their normal grade often end up dropping out of school and joining the unskilled labour market. Most adolescents have no access to learning or recreational programmes outside schools, and spend the majority of their time at home. There are around 500 youth clubs in the West Bank and Gaza, but most lack funding, and are poorly managed and equipped.

In Gaza over 184 community-based organizations, including 10 UNICEF-supported adolescent friendly learning spaces (AFLS), were shut down in July. Many remain closed, including two AFLS, and most of around US\$65,000 worth of confiscated equipment has not been returned.

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and NGO partners to improve secondary school retention; reduce violence among adolescents; increase the participation of adolescents in planning; and improve their knowledge on healthy lifestyles. This year UNICEF has supported:

- 68 adolescent friendly learning spaces with literacy and numeracy activities to improve secondary school retention, along with recreational activities such as sports, music and drama, that reach approximately 44,000 adolescents in the West Bank and Gaza
- Equipping these adolescent-friendly spaces with sports and musical instruments to implement activities throughout the year
- Life skills-based education (communication and leadership skills, awareness on HIV/AIDS and protection from abuse and exploitation) for 11,000 adolescents
- Training for 350 adolescents on action research covering topics that impact their lives – violence, poverty, environmental issues, and participation in their communities

3. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

UNICEF component of the UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) was US\$20.5 million based on the needs assessment framework completed in November 2007. The target was revised downwards during the Mid-Year Review to US\$17 million. To date, UNICEF had received more than US\$10.5 million, or around 62% of the target. UNICEF-oPt expresses its deep gratitude to the donors that have provided timely funding.

¹¹ OCHA Humanitarian Monitor August 2008

¹² OCHA Humanitarian Monitor July and August 2008

Table 1: Funds received against Appeal (US\$)

Appeal Sector	Original 2008 HAR requirements	Funds received	Revised funding requirements	Unmet Requirements	% Unfunded
Health & Nutrition	7,508,650	2,250,357	6,140,321	3,889,964	63%
Water and Sanitation	2,792,800	1,542,478	2,792,800	1,250,322	45%
Education	5,160,000	2,639,211	3,424,701	785,490	23%
Child Protection	2,973,530	2,259,525	2,973,530	714,005	24%
Adolescents	2,144,000	1,857,147	1,676,458	-180,689	-11%
Total	20,578,980	10,548,719	17,007,810	6,459,091	38%

*Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

**The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

Details of the occupied Palestinian Territories' emergency programme can be obtained from:

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