

EDUCATION SECTION  
PROGRAMME DIVISION



# CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

## CASE STUDY: OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

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# **CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY: A CASE STUDY**



**UNICEF**  
**Occupied Palestinian Territory**  
**2011**

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## ACRONYMS

EMIS	Education Management Information System
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This case study examines UNICEF's engagement with the Palestinian National Authority in strengthening education quality through child-friendly schools (CFS), from 2003–2010. It reviews and analyses the CFS approach as adapted to the challenging Palestinian context of occupation and chronic emergency. It seeks to identify what is working and what has not, with a view towards planning future initiatives in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as sharing lessons learned with others who are working in a similar context. The study used qualitative and quantitative data, collected through interviews with key actors in the initiative as well as field visits, observations and a desk review of documentation.

Much has been accomplished since 2003 in promoting child-friendly schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and valuable experience has been gained. During implementation, the CFS approach has demonstrated its intrinsic value of being adaptable to circumstances ranging from chronic to acute emergency to development. The Palestinian experience provides good examples of innovative ways to integrate child-friendly schools into an emergency education response and to maintain quality education by turning schools, homes and communities into quality learning environments.

The CFS approach has been recognized by the Palestinian Authority as a major mechanism for responding to multiple issues affecting education quality. Early buy-in and ownership of the initiative contributed to uptake throughout the territory and at the individual school level. Well-planned and continuous capacity development by the Palestinian Authority and UNICEF contributed to building a critical mass of education actors who are now knowledgeable on the approach and skilled in its implementation. Although individual capacities have been strengthened at all levels, greater efforts are needed to institutionalize child-friendly schools through improving school management and building 'school ethos,' an environment that promotes students' academic achievement.

The 2010 evaluation of the pilot phase<sup>1</sup> indicates that a positive impact has been made in terms of improved learning environment, improved teaching practices, increased motivation among students for learning and strengthened school-community links. Less successful, however, were attempts to create protective environments in schools, reduce violence and encourage greater student participation.

The pilot experience also highlighted the need for more integrated, cross-sectoral programming within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as well as UNICEF, and for greater collaboration with other development partners as the approach is taken to scale and mainstreamed across the education system. Any plan for scaling up will need to be designed with stakeholders' involvement and support, and its implementation will require development partners to be engaged in both technical and financial support.

Pilot implementation of child-friendly schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has created momentum for strengthening efforts throughout the territory to reverse the trend

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<sup>1</sup> Optimum, 'Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories' (Draft), 2010.

of declining learning achievement and increasing school dropout. The next few years will be critical for the CFS approach to really take root in the education system. The key to success is an ability to use the CFS framework to establish policies and standards – enabling activities and interventions that meet the needs of individual schools in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

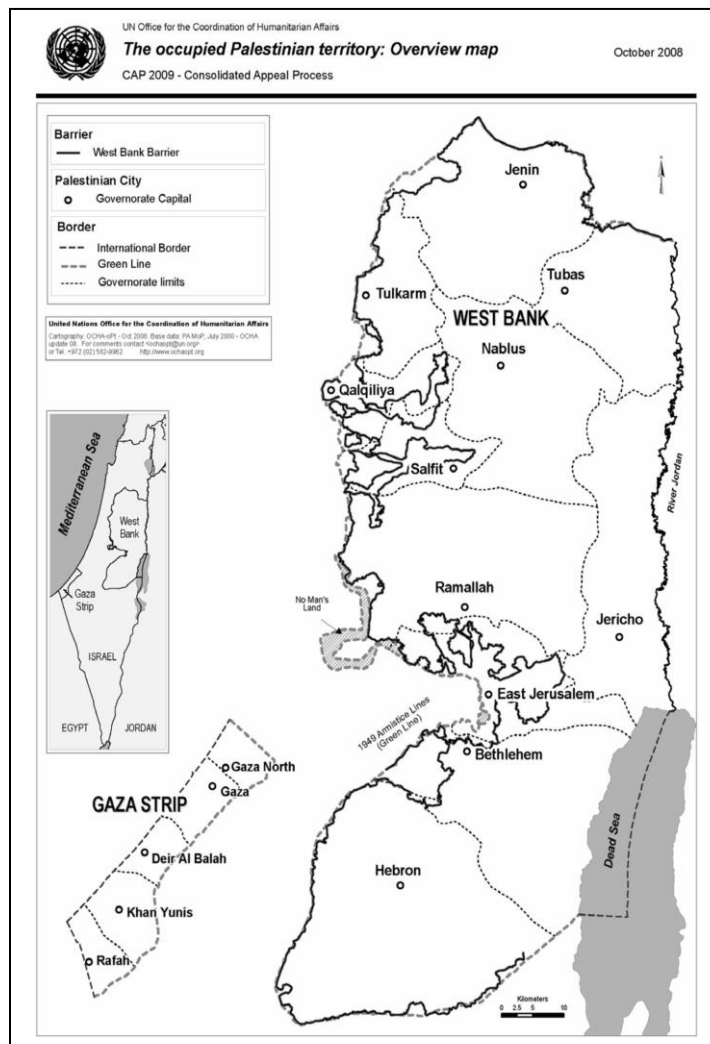
It is hoped that with strong Palestinian ownership of the process, solid capacity already created on the ground, and continued support from UNICEF and other partners, child-friendly education can be brought to all schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and will ensure quality education for all Palestinian children.

## II. CONTEXT

### Political context

Understanding the political context is paramount to comprehending education and development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to fostering positive change. The division of the former British Mandate for Palestine and establishment of the State of Israel after World War II has been a source of conflict in the Middle East for the past 60 years. In 1948, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution dividing the territory into two parts, with 51 per cent assigned to the new Israeli State and 49 per cent to the native Arab population.

In 1949, Israel was formally founded, ushering a period of protracted conflict between the new State and its neighbours. Between 1949 and 1967, several wars were fought involving Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, but none had such serious consequences as the 1967 six-day operation during which Israeli forces occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip and annexed East Jerusalem, creating what is now known as the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Since



then, Palestinians living under Israeli occupation have experienced deprivation, conflict and violations of basic human rights.

Numerous attempts have been made since the early 1990s to bring resolution to the conflict. The most significant was in 1994, when the Oslo Accords were signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. The accords effectively established the Palestinian National Authority as an interim body, with a five-year term and administrative control over parts of the West Bank and Gaza (*see map, above*)<sup>2</sup> until a final status agreement between the two parties could be reached. The Oslo peace process hoped to bring resolution to the conflict and to establish a Palestinian state by 1999. Sixteen years later, however, the two-state solution remains elusive. The main stumbling blocks include the status of Jerusalem, borders between the two states, and the fate of Palestinian refugees and Jewish settlements.

In response to the occupation, two uprisings, or intifada, were initiated by the Palestinians in 1987 and 2000, involving actions of mostly peaceful resistance, non-violent civil disobedience, boycotts of Israeli products, barricades and refusal to pay taxes. There were some violent actions, however, which resulted in severe retaliation by Israel.

During the years since it was launched, the second intifada resulted in intensified conflict, restrictions of movement, settlers' violence, systematic displacement and economic downturn – all affecting the lives and well-being of the 4 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza, and diminishing prospects for peace in the territory. In 2003, under the pretext of improving its security and preventing terrorist attacks from the West Bank, Israel began construction of a 705-kilometre barrier between its territory and the West Bank. At present, about 58 per cent of the barrier is complete.

While the security situation has recently been relatively stable in the West Bank, the population is still affected by rising settlers' violence, systematic displacement and destruction of property. At the same time, Gaza continues to suffer difficult security and political conditions. With the 2006 electoral victory of the Hamas party in Gaza, Israel imposed an economic blockade and severe restrictions on movement in and out of the territory. With a few humanitarian exceptions, most of the 1.5 million Gazans still cannot exit to Israel or to Egypt. In the winter of 2008–2009, Israel conducted a military attack on Gaza that included air raids and large-scale ground operations, causing numerous casualties and destroying most of its infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

Palestinians have also faced internal challenges. Following the electoral victory of Hamas in Gaza, the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority split between Fatah, the traditionally dominant party, in the West Bank, and Hamas in Gaza. This had a significant

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<sup>2</sup> The Palestinian Authority was given control over both security-related and civilian issues in Palestinian urban areas (known as Area A), and only civilian control over Palestinian rural areas (Area B). The remainder of the territories – about 60 per cent, including Israeli settlements, the Jordan Valley region and bypass roads between Palestinian communities – remained under exclusive Israeli control (Area C). East Jerusalem was excluded from the Oslo Accords.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council, 'Human Rights in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict', United Nations, New York, 25 September 2009.

impact on political and economic stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and has affected social cohesion among Palestinians.

## **Economic and social context**

The Palestinian economy is heavily dependent on external aid. Its four major sources of revenue are foreign donor assistance, domestic taxes, clearance revenues from the Government of Israel and domestic lending. A major source of funding for humanitarian relief projects has been money raised through the UN Consolidated Appeals Process. In the education sector, external aid has been used for system development, including infrastructure, while recurrent costs are covered by domestic funds.

When it was founded in 1994, the Palestinian Authority became responsible for providing social services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Recognizing the authority's limited resources and capacities, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) extended support that is typically provided to a refugee population and became the second-largest provider of social services in the territory.<sup>4</sup>

Although the first years of the Palestinian Authority's operations were marked by relative growth and stability in economic terms, the second intifada caused a severe economic downturn for the Palestinian population. This has been largely a result of Israeli closure policies, which have disrupted labour flow, manufacturing and trade. In addition, the 2006 takeover by Hamas in Gaza resulted in suspension of foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority and freezing of clearance revenues, causing further fiscal crisis.<sup>5</sup>

By 2007, the per capita gross domestic product was 40 per cent below its 1999 peak. The average annual per capita income dropped from US\$1,622 in 1999, to just more than US\$1,000 in 2008. The unemployment rate of up to 50 per cent among 15- to 24-year-olds is another major challenge to economic growth.<sup>6</sup> The most difficult economic situation, however, is in Gaza, where 90 per cent of the population is dependent on humanitarian aid and 35 per cent live in deep poverty. The Palestinian population in Area C and the communities living in the "seam zone" between the separation barrier and the Green Line also face grave difficulties because access to social services is minimal and sometimes non-existent.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Since 1948, UNRWA has been in charge of providing education, health care, social services and emergency aid to refugees living in the West Bank and Gaza, whose number has grown from 750,000 in 1948 to 4.7 million in 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The crisis ended in July 2007 with the appointment by the President Abbas of a new caretaker government, which declared the Hamas authority in Gaza illegal.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, 'Self-Assessment on the Utilization of Education in Emergency and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT)', United Nations Children's Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, 'Country Office Annual Report 2009', United Nations Children's Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010, p. 7.



Despite all the challenges, the Palestinian Authority has made considerable progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ensuring the right of Palestinian children to survival, development, protection and participation. While the territory is on track to achieve most MDGs by 2015 (with exception of goals 1 and 7<sup>8</sup>), the most recent trend data point to decline or stagnation in children's health and education indicators since 2000. Similarly, while MDG 3 is attainable, with the ratio of girls to boys in basic education in 2007 at 98.2 per cent,<sup>9</sup> women's economic and political participation remains low<sup>10</sup> and, as UNICEF points out, "adolescent girls have few opportunities for development and participation and the median age at first marriage for women is 18 years."<sup>11</sup>

It is against this political and socio-economic background that the education system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been attempting to provide access to quality education for all Palestinian children. The key features of that system and the challenges it faces are examined in section III.

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<sup>8</sup> Palestinian National MDG Steering Committee, 'Millennium Development Goals: Occupied Palestinian Territory 2005 Progress Report', United Nations Development Programme, Jerusalem, December 2005, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Palestinian National Authority Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Millennium Development Goals: Statistical Report', Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, January 2009, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme, MDG Attainment in the Palestinian Context, < <http://www.undp.ps/en/mdgs/mdgopt.html>>, accessed 12 July, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women, < [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/overview\\_5631.html](http://www.unicef.org/oPt/overview_5631.html)>, accessed 12 July, 2011.

### III. EDUCATION SYSTEM

The education system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is only 16 years old and has operated under the exceptionally difficult circumstances of occupation, conflict and internal division. It has nonetheless produced one of the most educated populations in the region and has some of the highest indicators of education achievement. Enrolment rates are high, with no gender gap at the primary-school level and higher rates of enrolment in secondary schools for girls. Adult literacy rates, particularly for women, are the highest in the Arab world, at 90.9 per cent in 2008.<sup>12</sup>

Since its establishment in 1994, as the first Palestinian ministry of education in history, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) has made remarkable progress in addressing a broad range of needs, including: school construction and provision of furniture and equipment; policy design, curriculum development, recruitment and training for teachers, and provision of salaries; and building the planning and management capacity of the education system.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is one of the largest providers of social services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is responsible for administration and funding

**Table 1. Education facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2008/09**

2008/09	Government	UNRWA	Private	TOTAL
<b>Schools</b>	1,871 (75%)	315 (13%)	302 (11%)	<b>2,488</b>

*Source:* Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, Palestine, May 2010.

of all public schools as well as supervision of private schools; 13 per cent of schools in the territory are managed by UNRWA and serve mainly children who are refugees.<sup>13</sup> (See table 1, above.) UNRWA schools, however, cover only nine grades, so all students complete their free compulsory basic education cycle (Grades 1–10) in government schools. The secondary education cycle consists of either an academic track or vocational education track and includes Grades 11–12.

Total education expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product was 11.5 per cent in 2003.<sup>14</sup> An estimated 90 per cent of recurrent expenditure is allocated to salaries. Approximately two-thirds of non-salary recurrent expenditure goes towards textbooks and examinations.<sup>15</sup>

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education developed its second five-year Education Development Strategic Plan. The plan guides development for the education sector and contributes to the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (2008–2010) by setting goals to improve access to education for all students at all levels, to improve the

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Data Centre, 2010, Montreal, <[http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF\\_Language=eng](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF_Language=eng)>.

<sup>13</sup> In Gaza, for example, 50.4 per cent of children attend UNRWA schools.

<sup>14</sup> Middle East and North Africa Region Social and Economic Development Group, 'West Bank and Gaza Public Expenditure Review Volume 1: From crisis to greater fiscal independence', Report No. 38207-WBG, World Bank, Washington, D.C., February 2007, p. x.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

quality of teaching and learning, and to develop the education system's capacities for planning and management. The plan makes the CFS approach one of the key means for improving school quality in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The MOEHE National Institute for Education Training has also developed standards for effective schools based on the CFS concept.

There is no general education law in the Palestinian Occupied Territory because the decision was made by the Palestinian Authority to defer development of a general law until the final status negotiations for the territory are completed. Instead, international law is used to guide education rights and responsibilities, and a number of regulations have been issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education on such issues as exam procedures, recruitment policies and procurement.<sup>16</sup> There is currently no sector-wide approach to programming for education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has indicated its intention to develop a sector-wide approach in the near future, with support from the Education Sector Working Group chaired by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and co-chaired by the French Government, with UNESCO serving as a technical adviser.

Although the first six years after the transfer of authority for the education system to Palestinians were marked by the growing pains of transformation, they were also years of relative peace and stability. Education indicators were high and stable, with high enrolment, attendance and completion for both girls and boys and relatively low drop-out rates.

The second intifada, however, delivered a severe blow to the education sector and caused a reversal of positive trends. Much of the school infrastructure was damaged, students and teachers were psychologically affected, and children missed months of schooling due to military operations, curfews and closures. In Gaza, the situation became even more difficult after Israel's 'Cast Lead' military operations, during which 280 schools were destroyed,<sup>17</sup> causing already overcrowded classrooms to reach their maximum capacity. Because Israeli authorities did not recognize education supplies as humanitarian aid, hundreds of thousands of children were left without school supplies in the aftermath of the operation. The Palestinian Authority was forced to plan for a complex mix of emergency and regular situations. This has defined the nature and pattern of education provision in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to this day.

Against this background, drop-out rates increased to 0.6 per cent at the primary-school level (girls, 0.5 per cent; boys, 0.8 per cent) and 2.6 per cent at the secondary level (girls, 2.9 per cent; boys, 2.3 per cent).<sup>18</sup> Net enrolment rates (NER) dropped significantly, from

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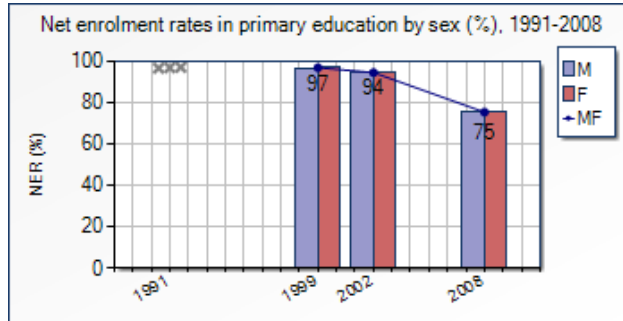
<sup>16</sup> Nicolai, Susan, *Fragmented Foundations: Education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris and London, 2007, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Council, 'Human Rights in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories: Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict', United Nations, New York, 25 September 2009, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, Palestine, 2007, <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabID=3354&lang=en>; non-government data identified the primary-level drop-out rate at 1.5 per cent.

97 per cent in 1999 to 75 per cent in 2008 (see graph 1, below).<sup>19</sup> Among preschool-age children, enrolment rates declined sharply, from an estimated 34 per cent among children aged 4 in 1996/97, to 25 per cent in 2006/07.<sup>20</sup>

**Graph 1. Primary-school enrolment rates, 1991–2008.**



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, learning outcomes, as measured by the standardized tests and national matriculation exam (Tawjihi), have been declining. In 2007–2008, only one in five sixth-graders in Gaza passed standardized tests in math, science, English and Arabic, as did half of their peers in Nablus and Jenin. Tawjihi results showed alarming trends in learning achievement in sciences and literature, with the West Bank's results in literature dropping by 12.7 per cent and Gaza's results in science dropping by 9.6 per cent between 2008 and 2009. In 2007, the performance of Palestinian students in tests conducted under Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for Grade 8, was 7.1 per cent lower in science and 5.8 per cent lower in math than in the 2003 TIMSS tests.

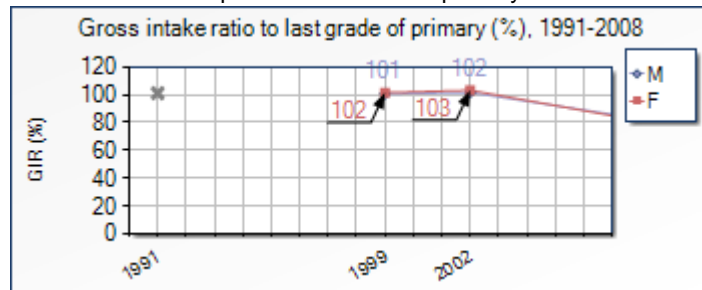
A UNICEF study on school dropout offered important information on causes of this alarming trend, revealing that perceptions about learning quality and achievement led most young people to drop out – not poverty or the existence of conflict (although these may be underlying factors).<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, poor academic achievement was cited by

three-fourths of those interviewed as the primary (47 per cent) or secondary (27 per cent) reason for dropping out, while “no interest in studying” ranked almost equally. More than

**Graph 2. Progression and completion in primary education, 1991–2008**

82% of children complete a full course of primary education



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Data Centre, 2010, Montreal, <[http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=5880&BR\\_Region=40525](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=5880&BR_Region=40525)>.

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, ‘Country Office Annual Report 2009’, United Nations Children’s Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Data Centre, 2010, Montreal, <[http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF\\_Language=eng&BR\\_Country=5880&BR\\_Region=40525](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=5880&BR_Region=40525)>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, ‘Reasons, Protective and Remedial Measures’ (Study on dropout in Palestinian schools), United Nations Children’s Fund, East Jerusalem, 2006.

50 per cent of interviewees expressed the view that “education is useless” or ascribed their decision to drop out to “feelings of desperation.” A public perception study carried out by Institut universitaire d’études du développement (Graduate Institute of Development Studies) in late 2005 identified the new more demanding school curriculum as the greatest obstacle to school success of children, as perceived by parents.<sup>24</sup>

The quality of education has therefore become a serious concern in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Some of the factors contributing to its decline are examined below.

## Factors affecting quality

*School infrastructure:* In 1996, the Palestinian Authority inherited poor infrastructure from Israel’s administration. Since then, the authority – supported by donors and often communities – has invested in school building and repair. In many areas, most notably Gaza, school infrastructure is in dire condition, and lack of classrooms is a major obstacle to both access and quality. About 80 per cent of all schools in Gaza now run double shifts to accommodate students, reducing class time by almost one-third. Classroom shortages are also prevalent in Area C and in East Jerusalem.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2008 survey of school sanitation and infrastructure environment, 27 per cent of schools in the West Bank and 30 per cent of those in Gaza did not meet territory-wide standards for water and sanitation facilities in schools of 1 toilet per 30 students. A large number of co-educational schools in Gaza do not have separate toilets. A recent study by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has also highlighted the deteriorating level of hygiene in a large number of government schools.<sup>25</sup>

*Teachers:* There are currently close to 28,000 teachers in government schools in the West Bank and 9,096 government schoolteachers in Gaza,<sup>26</sup> for 1.1 million students (*table 2*). Each year, 1,800 new teachers are hired through 16 Education Directorates across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

**Table 2. Numbers of students and teachers in basic education, 2008/09**

2008/09 school year	Male	Female	Total
Students	554,611	554,515	<b>1,109,126</b>
Teachers	11,680	16,213	<b>27,893</b>

**Note:** Data include teachers in West Bank only.  
*Source:* Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, Palestine, May 2010.

Although there is no teacher shortage, the Palestinian Authority has struggled with teacher quality since 1994. Inheriting a cadre who for decades had no opportunity for professional development due

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, ‘Country Office Annual Report 2005’, United Nations Children’s Fund, East Jerusalem, 2006, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, ‘Country Office Annual Report 2009’, United Nations Children’s Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010, p.19.

<sup>26</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ramallah, Palestine, 2009.

to Israel's lack of investment in Palestinian teachers, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was challenged with the task of bringing their skills up to date. Most of the newly recruited teachers possess good knowledge of a particular subject, but their formal education often does not prepare them for the classroom. As a result, the authority must provide in-service teacher training to all recruited teachers as soon as they enter the system. Internal strife has also gravely affected the quality of the teaching force. As a consequence of the teachers' strike in 2006, for example, 5,000 new teachers were recruited in Gaza to fill the gap, many of whom were not sufficiently qualified, particularly in math and science.

There are concerns that the pre-service teacher training programmes, delivered by five universities and 25 teacher training colleges, are not attracting the best individuals into the teaching profession nor are they successful in training recruits in effective classroom practices. Classroom observations show that teacher-centred approaches, characterized by lecturing, dictation, note-taking, rote memorization and exam-based assessment, are predominant in Palestinian schools.<sup>27</sup>

The first Palestinian Teacher Education Strategy, launched in 2008, aims to rectify this situation and ensure the development of a cadre of qualified teachers through pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. The strategy sets out guidelines for teaching methodologies that include student-centred teaching, case-based approaches that incorporate reflective practice, and action research activities that relate to actual classroom situations and practical application of course material. In 2010, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education formed a National Task Force to detail a framework for pre-service and in-service teacher training delivery based on the Teacher Education Strategy. Along with these efforts, in 2009, the ministry created the Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession, which is tasked with developing teacher and principal recruitment standards and creating a teacher licensing system.<sup>28</sup>

*Curriculum, assessment and supervision:* The first Palestinian curriculum for Grades 1–12 was developed between 1998 and 2006. One of the most important departures from the old Jordanian and Egyptian curricula was inclusion of civic education, health and environment as well as English language in the Grade 1.

The volume and complexity of the curriculum, however, coupled with the requirement for teachers to cover it fully during a school year, has often been identified as one of the obstacles to achieving quality education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Although the curriculum promotes active learning and child-centred pedagogy, its heavy content and the tendency of teachers to teach to the syllabus rather than to learning outcomes leads to outdated, rote learning methodologies being used in the classroom.

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<sup>27</sup> Shinn, Chris, and Said Assaf, 'Model Schools Network Program: Recommendations for policy and practice in Palestinian education' Discussion Paper no. 1: In-Service Teacher Professional Development, 2010 (draft).

<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, Commission for Developing the Teaching Profession data indicated that standards set by the Teacher Education Strategy effectively exclude 70 per cent of the existing teaching force. By 2019/20, these teachers will need to obtain relevant credentials in order to remain in the system; this will be a significant challenge for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education during the years to come.

Closely tied to this issue is the assessment of learning achievement done through the infamous Tawjihi, which is the final examination for the secondary school and entry exam for the university. Its key feature is emphasis on memorization of a great number of facts rather than testing problem solving, analytical or critical thinking skills.

Although the supervisory system has seen a transformation effort during recent years to move from the more rigid, old-fashioned inspector functions, it has been suggested that “much of the traditional hierarchical and non-participatory approach to supervision remains entrenched.”<sup>29</sup> There is often a lack of transparency in the supervision process, and teachers report feeling unsupported and neglected. Any effort to transform teaching practices into a child-centred approach requires attention to the role of supervisors in facilitating that transformation and in taking a continuous supportive role.

Taken together, these three elements – heavy curriculum, outdated learning assessment and inadequate evaluation support to teachers – undermine teachers’ abilities to translate the training they receive into effective classroom practices that would eventually promote student learning achievement.

*Violence in schools:* In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, violence is part of children’s lives and adolescents are most affected. According to the 2006 survey on domestic violence, 93.3 per cent of children were exposed to violence at home and 45.2 per cent to violence at school.<sup>30</sup> The violence takes verbal, physical, psychological and sexual forms, and occurs between students as well as teachers and students. Although the Ministry of Education and Higher Education issued a number of regulations and instructions to prohibit corporal punishment by teachers and principals, evidence shows that this form of violence is widely practised. The ministry is currently in the final stage of adopting a comprehensive policy against violence in schools.

A number of factors contribute to increasing violence in and out of schools, most importantly the persistent conflict, deteriorating economic conditions and lack of enforcement of regulations against violence. Although mechanisms for violence-prevention monitoring and reporting have been set up in many schools, with counsellors and governance councils having a critical role, these have not been sufficient to curtail the disturbing trend – which seriously impacts the quality of learning and schooling experiences for Palestinian children. Students also lack information about the rules against violence and their right to be protected in school. A lack of communication between parents, teachers and students is another obstacle to mitigating violence.

In sum, despite impressive achievements in the education sector, the Occupied Palestinian Territory is facing significant challenges in maintaining quality and ensuring learning achievement for all Palestinian children. To meet the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of its development plan, the Palestinian Authority needs to

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<sup>29</sup> Nicolai, Susan, *Fragmented Foundations: Education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris and London, 2007, p. 99.

<sup>30</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Press Conference on the Preliminary Results : Domestic Violence Survey 2005 Ramallah, Palestine, February 2006, p.6

invest heavily in strategies for quality improvements. One effective strategy has been identified through piloting of the CFS approach. Results of its initial phase and prospects for the future are examined in section IV.

## **IV. CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

### **Overview**

Since 2003, UNICEF's Occupied Palestinian Territory office has promoted the rights-based, holistic approach of child-friendly schools (CFS) as a way to improve education quality. CFS has become the overarching framework for UNICEF's planning and implementation of education interventions. The Palestinian Authority embraced the concept at an early stage and has integrated child-friendly schools in the Education Development Strategic Plan 2008–2012, as a quality indicator, and in the curriculum.

In the course of seven years, the CFS approach has been recognized by the Palestinian Authority and at the school level as a tool for making positive changes for quality education. Many education actors in the territory share the view that child-friendly schooling will yield effective outcomes because it focuses on 'whole child' development rather pedagogy and textbooks.

Implementation of child-friendly schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was carried out in two phases. From 2003–2005, the approach was piloted in 100 schools across the territory. Intensive training on child-friendly schools was provided for key stakeholders at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), in districts and in schools. And the concept was implemented at the school level through a series of interventions.

At the beginning of the second phase, in 2006, the 90 lowest-performing schools were identified to receive support in creating child-friendly environments and strengthening teachers' capacities to deliver remedial education as a way to improve quality both in emergencies and post-emergency situations. While markedly different in the type of interventions, this second phase used the CFS framework and demonstrated its adaptability in a variety of circumstances.

In 2008, MOEHE, UNICEF and UNRWA began a joint initiative for capacity development on child-friendly education in 10 schools – 6 run by the Palestinian Authority and 4 by UNRWA – in the most disadvantaged districts of the West Bank; as of 2010, this project was ongoing.

According to the 2009 CFS evaluation, the learning environment in pilot schools was better in comparison to non-CFS schools. There is evidence of positive changes in both teaching and learning in child-friendly schools. Active learning methodologies have taken root in the classroom, albeit with varying degrees of success. There is also evidence of stronger parent-community engagement with schools, resulting among other things, in better support to children's learning at home and community involvement in improvement



of school environments. At the same time, the evaluation points out to the loss of momentum and sustainability in a number of the initial pilot schools, and to the need for CFS revitalization, especially in Gaza.

UNICEF's total contribution to the CFS project, for 2003–2006, was US\$477,500. Out of this sum, US\$332,500 was invested in CFS activities and US\$145,000 was provided as direct cash funding and supplies assistance to 190 schools (US\$1,000 each for the first 100 schools and US\$500 each for 90 schools that joined the initiative in 2006).<sup>31</sup> In addition, the total amount of funds spent from 2007 to 2010 on CFS-related activities provided by the Government of the Netherlands was US\$586,000.

Two initiatives preceded the introduction of the CFS approach in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In 1996, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Italian Development Cooperation, initiated 'School Health Promotion' to introduce health education in schools and promote behavioural change. School health committees were formed in each selected school, and school health coordinators received training on effective teaching methods for health and environmental issues, needs assessment and planning skills. The training was later expanded to all teachers in the selected schools.

The MOEHE project assessment concluded that beyond improving teachers' capacities, the programme succeeded in improving school environments and in promoting community participation. Based on this experience, the ministry became interested in expanding life skills education as essential for 'whole child' development.<sup>32</sup>

In 2000, UNICEF launched a life skills education initiative, coordinated by MOEHE, in partnership with the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, UNRWA and local non-governmental organizations. The initiative aimed to improve education quality by making life skills education available to children and adolescents. Because the new Palestinian curriculum was being developed at the time, this was seen as a major opportunity to integrate life skills into the syllabus.

The initiative included 40 secondary and vocational schools, and benefited 10,500 children and 702 teachers who received training on life skills education. Through a series of strategies aimed at policy design, capacity development, and training for teachers and curriculum developers, the initiative succeeded in integrating life skills into the new Palestinian curriculum in the subject areas of civil education (Grade 4) and health and environment (Grade 9).

Both these efforts included elements of the CFS approach in that they promoted the creation of healthy and safe learning environments for children, strengthened links to the community, and made the curriculum and teaching practices relevant to children's lives. Both became important lessons learned and provided the basis for the much broader and

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<sup>31</sup> Optimum, 'Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories' (Draft), 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Information drawn from email correspondence with Dr. Mohammed Rimawi, Director General for School Health, Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

more comprehensive approach that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was soon to take in its quest for improving education quality for Palestinian children.

## **Phase One: 2003–2005**

In 2001, a high-level MOEHE delegation attended a UNICEF sensitization workshop on child-friendly schools in the Sudan. Following this event, the ministry made the decision to bring the CFS concept into schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

That same year, the ministry initiated a study to determine how elements of the global CFS framework fit the Palestinian context. The study involved stakeholders including teachers, principals, directorate staff, parents and community members as well as students in Grade 4 and Grade 8. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education adopted criteria to build a framework for CFS implementation in the education system. The criteria specified that child-friendly schools in the Palestinian context should aim to provide:

- (1) An appropriate, safe and healthy environment for the child in and outside school.
- (2) Education for all, with a structured, child-centred curriculum and teaching-learning methods appropriate to the child's developmental level, abilities and learning style.
- (3) A democratic environment that encourages debate, expression of opinion and participation.
- (4) Encouragement of local partnerships in school-based management.
- (5) Family-focused activities to strengthen their involvement.
- (6) Support for children, parents and teachers in establishing harmonious and collaborative relationships that are community-based.
- (7) Support for actions in the community for the sake of children.

In 2003, UNICEF and MOEHE started the first CFS pilot project in 34 schools, gradually adding 34 and 32 in subsequent years, for a total 100 schools by 2005. Two or three schools were typically selected from each of the 16 directorates; criteria included location (areas with greater needs, those closer to the barrier, exposed to settler's violence or close to roadblocks and checkpoints), presence of a school counsellor and school health worker, and equal representation of girls' and boys' schools.

Preceding the school-level activities, UNICEF and MOEHE conducted a 'training of trainers' for the key ministry and directorate staff, teachers, school health personnel and supervisors, who then became responsible for disseminating the concept at the school level through cascade training. The training provided a three-day introduction to the CFS concept and was developed by the ministry with technical input from UNICEF. According to its first 'graduates', this original training generated a lot of enthusiasm among ministry staff, and their commitment became the driving force in implementation of child-friendly schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education formed a CFS technical committee consisting of representatives from the following departments: curricula, field follow-up, activities, education supervision, counselling, school health, general education, planning,

and the National Institute for Education Training. The committee is headed by the director-general of school health.

A training manual for CFS sensitization was produced and used in all subsequent training during the years to follow.

**Figure 2. Setting up the CFS pilot at the national level**

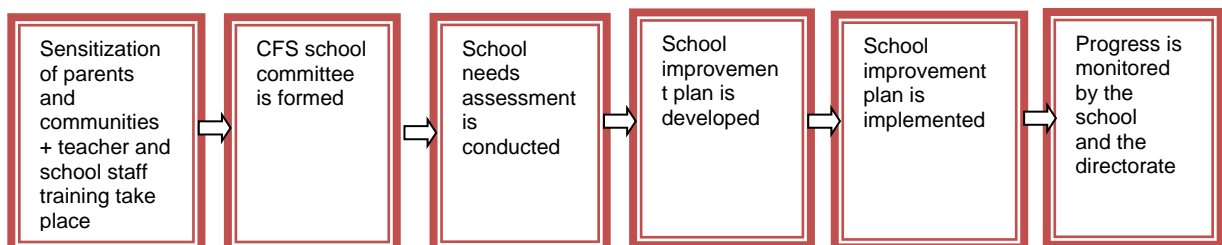


Work then moved into the schools. Each selected school formed a CFS committee composed of the principal, counsellor, two teachers, five students, one parent and one community member, who all received training on child-friendly schools. The assessment tools/checklists to guide schools in identifying needs and gaps were developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, based on seven CFS criteria for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The committee was responsible for conducting an assessment to identify key areas that needed improvement.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also developed a self-evaluation tool for schools to monitor and track their progress annually (see *Annex A*). School improvement plans were then developed to identify the key areas for action. Pilot activities in each school included training for teachers and principals on CFS and child-centred methodologies, and sensitization meetings for parents and communities, during which they were introduced to the CFS concept, its implementation in schools and their own potential roles in the process.

Each education directorate also formed a CFS committee, consisting of heads of the curricula, field follow-up, supervision, school health, general education and counselling departments – led by the director-general and coordinated by the school health department.<sup>33</sup> The committee staff coordinated pilot school activities in their districts and monitored implementation by reviewing the schools' annual progress reports. A group of five or six directorate staff regularly visited schools to monitor progress and make recommendations for improvements. In addition to funding received from UNICEF, these schools received some funds from the directorates for general school improvements.

**Figure 3. Process of establishing CFS pilot projects at the school level**



<sup>33</sup> Optimum, 'Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories' (Draft), 2010.

Although the 100 school improvement plans differed in details, four key areas were common to most:

- (1) Improving pedagogy by introducing child-centred teaching.
- (2) Reducing school violence.
- (3) Developing stronger links with parents and with the community.
- (4) Improving the learning environment through improved infrastructure.

UNICEF's support for activities centred on developing stakeholder capacities for teachers' training on CFS and child-centred methodologies, offered to the pilot schools annually; improvements of school infrastructure and water and sanitation facilities; and provision of seed money (US\$1,000 each) for schools to kick-start CFS activities.

In 2005, recognizing its own resource and technical limitations, UNICEF partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to help repair pilot school infrastructure. UNDP provided financial and technical support to 100 schools, an example of successful cross-agency collaboration within the common CFS framework.

At the end of 2005, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education conducted an internal evaluation of the project, which indicated that the pilot had a positive impact in key areas under improvement. The ministry decided to continue promoting CFS at the school level and throughout the territory. UNICEF concluded the pilot project in 100 schools, leaving further implementation to Palestinian partners. In the next Country Programme, promotion of the CFS concept took on a different shape and scope.

The 2009 evaluation suggests that from this point forward, the CFS approach began to lose momentum in many of the pilot schools. Although the lack of UNICEF's direct support to the project did not necessarily cause this gradual shift, more sustainable support could have provided a real 'rooting' of the CFS concept in pilot schools. The most likely culprits identified by the evaluation as well as Palestinian partners interviewed for this study were frequent school staff turnover, lack of resources, and lack of continuous training for teachers and principals. In addition, the present study argues that the failure to build institutional capacity at the school level also caused some of the momentum to wind down; this will be elaborated later.

## **Phase Two: 2006–2010**

As security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory deteriorated, in 2006, the UNICEF country office began working on integrating child-friendly schools into the education emergency programme – creating an opportunity for the approach to be implemented in the acute emergency conditions that existed in Gaza and parts of the West Bank.

UNICEF selected the 90 lowest-performing and hardest-to-reach schools in Gaza and the West Bank. The programme aimed to improve education quality by establishing child-friendly learning environments, delivering education services through provision of education materials, and building better prevention and preparedness for emergencies through additional education strategies. Beginning in 2008, it has been supported by

funding from the Government of the Netherlands as part of the global education in emergencies and post-crisis transition programme.

This phase of CFS implementation did not follow the original format. Given the instability of the situation, in which schools could be closed at short notice or children were not able to get to school, rather than focusing on individual school-improvement interventions, UNICEF focused on students and teachers to ensure that the effects of emergencies are mitigated and that children learn with the support of knowledgeable and skilled teachers wherever they may be located. The project and its related activities were considerably different from the first phase, but the key CFS principles of child-centredness, inclusion and participation were applied in all interventions.

The activities included life skills training for teachers, creation of thematic clubs offering extra-curricular and recreational activities, and delivery of school supplies to enable access to school for children affected by conflict. Teachers also received training on effective methodologies in the emergency context and ways to prepare worksheets, and instructional and educational aid material for emergencies and beyond.

The key goal in the effort was to find the most strategic interventions to ensure that education quality is improved and maintained – and to contribute to quality outcomes in the long run. The best example of this is the development and introduction of the math and science kit to improve children’s learning outcomes in these crucial subjects. Teachers received training on methodologies for using the kits while simultaneously upgrading their subject knowledge. The content of the kits and the methods for their application can facilitate learning and teaching in any setting, emergency and non-emergency, and as a result, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education asked that similar kits be provided to other schools in the territory.

What is notable is that UNICEF interventions during the second phase infused the CFS approach with two critical elements: resilience to continue with quality learning and teaching under all circumstances; and flexibility to make every location (schools, home, the wider community) a quality learning environment.

In 2008, an additional 10 schools became part of the CFS pilot, with MOEHE, UNICEF and UNRWA partnering to create a protective school environment for an estimated 2,000 children in the West Bank. The project’s action plan included development of training materials; training for teachers, principals, administrators and counsellors on classroom management methods; an advocacy campaign to promote equality, respect, non-discrimination and inclusiveness for all children within safe and healthy school environments; and parental involvement and community empowerment activities. As of 2010, this initiative is ongoing.

## V. CFS ACHIEVEMENTS

### Outputs

In terms of project outputs, both phases of the pilot achieved most of the planned objectives. When the CFS pilot began, in 2003, it aimed to ensure that a more effective learning environment for teachers and students was established to improve teaching and learning quality, to promote healthy and hygienic behaviour among children, and to address violence in schools.

By the end of the 2005 implementation period, an estimated 45,000 girls and boys benefited from the pilot, and training was provided for 4,800 parents and community members on child-friendly schools, 2,400 teachers on child-centred methodologies as a way to improve quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, and 100 principals on the CFS approach and its application at the school level through strengthening community-school links, monitoring teachers' performance and creating a better working environment for school staff. (*See Annex A for details on the activities and outputs.*)

The first phase also prompted development of the Palestinian CFS indicators and strong MOEHE support of the concept, paving the way for inclusion of the CFS approach in the second Education Development Strategic Plan (2008–2012). Through the pilot, the key concepts of child rights were integrated in the territory-wide curriculum in the subjects of civics education and social studies, as were other topics typically promoted through child-friendly schools, such as health and a sustainable environment.

At the onset of the implementation process, a few important mechanisms were put in place by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to ensure sustainability of the CFS initiative. These included capacity development/sensitization training on CFS for ministry staff and relevant education actors at the national, directorate and school levels, accompanied by relevant capacity development tools such as the CFS training manual. In addition, monitoring mechanisms and tools were developed to ensure proper follow-up and guide improvements throughout implementation, and CFS technical committees were established at all three levels to support the implementation. All these mechanisms are now embedded in the education system and will facilitate development of future child-friendly schools across the territory.

At the school level, pilot activities contributed to the creation of safe and healthy learning environments through infrastructure repair and the establishment of health committees in each school. Investments were made in enhancing the skills of school staff to monitor children's health status, provide first aid and health services during emergencies, and improve school environments through maintaining gardens and monitoring cleanliness, school safety, and the quality of food and water available to students.

To mitigate the effects of school violence, the project contributed to training and activating school counsellors and established such mechanisms as governance councils within schools for reporting and resolving violent incidents. Links with communities have been established and their stronger engagement in schools promoted, although this has been more prevalent in the West Bank than in Gaza. Parent-teacher associations have

been set up or reinvigorated, and community involvement in developing and implementing school improvement plans was encouraged.

During the second phase, the key education programme objectives were to:

- Generate child-friendly learning environments and improve the quality of primary education through the CFS approach.
- Ensure education services are delivered in chronic crisis situations through provision of basic education materials.
- Contribute to better prevention and preparedness through other educational alternatives.

With strong national- and district-level coordination, UNICEF ensured delivery of basic education services to children in need: In the 90 pilot schools, an estimated 2,000 teachers and school principals were provided with life skills training in Gaza and the West Bank; 240 thematic clubs were established and provided with school-based learning and recreational activities to serve 10,000 students (Grades 4, 5 and 6); and 204 teachers, both women and men, received initial training to organize and animate different types of thematic clubs.

Since 2006, 2,500 math and science kits have been provided to government schools and selected UNRWA schools,<sup>34</sup> and 500 teachers received training on effective use of the kits and on teaching methodology in emergency contexts. An estimated 4,500 parents and community members benefited from sensitization meetings on child-friendly schools, and 20 principals received training similar to that in the first phase.

The pilot reached an estimated 25,000 students in 90 schools. At the time of this writing, there was no information available on outputs of the joint MOEHE-UNICEF-UNRWA 10-school project.

## **Impact**

In 2009, UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory commissioned an external evaluation to assess the impact of the CFS project; the evaluation included 31 schools from the initial phase and 2 from the second phase. The results are presented next and confirm findings from the interviews conducted as part of this study. Other impacts can be gleaned from assessments made by UNICEF in its reporting on the emergency programme.

Examining the impact of the CFS project in the key areas of inclusiveness, democratic participation and child-centredness, the evaluation concluded that the initiative promoted respect for children's rights, increased inclusiveness and increased equality in pilot schools. Evaluators observed improvements in child-centred and democratic learning, in children's engagement in school activities, and in family and community participation in school life. The 'health' of school environments has been enhanced. At the same time,

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<sup>34</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, 'Self-Assessment on the Utilization of Education in Emergency and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT)', United Nations Children's Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010.

however, the evaluation found that further efforts are needed to ensure protection of children within and outside school.

Compared to non-CFS facilities, child-friendly schools promoted inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the classroom, for example, 61 per cent of students indicate that “teachers treat everyone equally when committing a mistake.” Only one-third of the schools under the evaluation, however, had appropriate facilities to receive children with a physical disability. Similarly, the evaluation found that teachers’ abilities to address specific needs of children with disability in the classroom should be strengthened.

The evaluation results indicate that child-friendly schools promote gender awareness and equality; 70 per cent of students in child-friendly schools stated that “male and female students have the same chance in succeeding.” In the classroom, students report equal treatment by teachers of both girls and boys. In the co-ed schools, however, girls are still not allowed to play sports or play in the open yard, while boys complain that “girls are treated better in the classroom.”

Findings made while looking at how the approach helped mitigate violence in schools were, however, alarming: The child-friendly schools performed worse than the control group, and about 50 per cent of students interviewed stated that they “were beaten by teachers” and a little less than 40 per cent said they were “cursed at by teachers.” The evaluation reveals that “surprisingly, students were beaten and cursed at by teachers and directors much more than they were beaten or cursed at by their parents for the sample under test.”<sup>35</sup> This was particularly prominent among boys in higher grades.

Examining the overall impact of CFS implementation on children, teachers, parents and school staff, the evaluation found that all stakeholders overwhelmingly support the concept and are committed to promoting it even in challenging circumstances. They also assert that child-friendly schools have changed the way they think about schools, education and children.

Testimonies of children as well as parents and school staff indicate that CFS has a positive impact on children’s learning and their well-being at school. Parents observe their children as having greater confidence and ability to express themselves. Teachers noted greater engagement, interactivity and collaboration between children in the classroom as a result of changed teaching methods. Children themselves indicate that they “like their school; enjoy the subjects taught; feel safe and secure; have developed their personalities; are more aware of their rights and practice them in their lives; are better equipped with life skills tools; and are more aware of health, hygiene, environmental and nutrition issues and practice-related behaviours.”<sup>36</sup>

Girls and children in urban areas seem to be more satisfied with their child-friendly schools than boys and children in rural-area schools.

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<sup>35</sup> Optimum, ‘Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories’ (Draft), 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



Teachers indicated that as a result of CFS training, their teaching methods have improved and their work to some extent became easier. The CFS approach also improved their assessment methods, moving them from exams-only practice and focusing them on learning rather than teaching. “I am more interested in getting students to understand and practice correctly what I give them, not only to finish my lesson” was one comment teachers made to the evaluators.

The CFS training seems to have increased teachers’ sensitivity to diverse needs of children in the classroom. At the same time, understanding of the need to diversify approaches to each child does not always translate into classroom practice. Many children in CFS pilot schools still report that there are teachers who discriminate between “smart” students and those they perceive as less capable. Teachers indicated their own greater awareness of children’s rights as well as improved interaction between themselves and children, especially in use of alternative forms of discipline.

The impact of the initiative on school counsellors has been evident in their enhanced abilities to provide counselling and health-related support to children. At the same time, child-friendly schools show weakness in preventing violence in schools – which points to the need to better equip counsellors to deal with the specific causes of violence as well as create proper mechanisms in schools to detect, address and monitor incidences of violent behaviour.

Principals in child-friendly schools reported greater awareness of the issues affecting child rights as well as their own increased capacity to promote more effective communication and interaction between school staff, communities and parents. They also report increased ability to plan, implement and monitor improvements in their schools.

Parents report better relations with schools and greater collaboration with teachers in following up and supporting their children’s education. The link with school counsellors is especially highlighted as many indicated that this type of interaction is helping them improve their children’s behaviour and ability to deal with psychological issues.

Promotion of links with partners in child-friendly schools has also benefited some poor families, whose children became beneficiaries of much-needed resources (school uniforms, supplies, etc.) delivered by the school. At the same time, the evaluation found that although child-friendly schools promoted parent-school interaction, the quality of that interaction was not always good. In a number of schools, interaction with parents was limited to teachers’ reporting on students’ learning achievement rather than parents’ active participation in decision-making or school activities.

Communities around child-friendly schools report greater engagement with the schools and greater participation in decision-making. Schools are benefiting from community involvement, which in many cases results in direct funding and resources support. At the same time, interviews and focus groups have revealed that “18 out of 31 CFS schools have established relations with communities, while others were not setting such relations,

mostly due to the schools and inactive principals, although some were due to the lack of interest of the local community.”<sup>37</sup>

Experiences during the second phase of the pilot demonstrate successful integration of the CFS approach in both chronic and acute emergency situations. The following assessment of progress made by UNICEF highlights that fact:

“There are indications that the provision of the math and science kits together with the training manual generated breakthrough impact on the traditional talk-and-chalk pattern in the classroom learning process. The hands-on approach on the use of the teaching kits in the classroom teaching shortened the distance between the student and teachers, which made the learning process more lively and enjoyable. ... In Gaza the MoEHE identified gaps in the knowledge of the math and science teachers and a need for them to strengthen their skill set. After some further consultation and piloting on the use of kits, both math and science kits became standardized education material in the UNICEF catalogue to be used globally. ... Similarly, the thematic club activities conducted in the child-friendly schools have improved the students’ abilities to cope with stress and reduced the degree of trauma.

“It is too early to conclude that the provision of educational supplies and other materials improved the quality of education. However, basic school supplies such as school bags and stationary items enabled the children to return to school and continue learning in a more timely manner, thereby increasing attendance and preventing large number of school dropouts under the emergency situation. It also helped parents keep their children in schools to continue learning despite the hardships they were experiencing.”<sup>38</sup>

Based on the review of outputs and the external evaluation findings, it can be concluded that implementation of child-friendly schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has yielded important results and created a momentum for strengthening the Palestinian Authority’s efforts to reverse the trend of declining learning achievement and school dropout. Some key features of the implementation process that contributed to these results are examined in section VI.

## VI. LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Important lessons on what contributes to a successful CFS implementation have been learned through the pilot experience. Six key factors are outlined in the following points:

- **Early buy-in and ownership of the initiative by the Palestinian Authority contributes to sustainability.** The Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s early engagement and leadership of the initiative was critical for the successful uptake of child-friendly schools at the directorate and school levels. The ministry has systematically

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory, ‘Self-Assessment on the Utilization of Education in Emergency and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT)’, United Nations Children’s Fund, East Jerusalem, 2010.

engaged in advocacy and building institutional capacity through continuous training of key MOEHE and directorate staff and through establishing specific entities at the ministry and directorate levels (CFS committees) responsible for CFS planning and implementation.

Anchoring child-friendly schools in key policy and planning documents and setting up mechanisms within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to plan, implement and follow up on progress form a solid foundation for any future scaling-up and mainstreaming efforts. Both advocacy and capacity development, however, did not extend sufficiently to all MOEHE departments, resulting in some departments, such as school health, having better understanding and capacities than others.

*In the future:* For CFS concepts to be properly integrated in all aspects of planning and implementation throughout the territory and at the district level, greater efforts are necessary in advocacy for sensitizing and equipping staff in all MOEHE departments with relevant knowledge of the child-friendly schooling and its practical application.

• **Consistent, well-planned and relevant capacity development of all stakeholders is critical for the implementation and rooting of the CFS approach at all levels.** The Palestinian Authority and UNICEF have invested a great amount of both human and financial resources in ensuring sufficient capacity at the national, district and school levels to carry the pilot through and ensure its sustainability. The initial training of trainers, accompanied by the training manual and various tools for assessment and monitoring developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, contributed to building a critical mass of experts to take the initiative forward. In addition, sensitization across the territory has been consistent and continues to this day.

It was recognized, however, that the original training was too broad/generic in its content and that it could not sufficiently respond to specific capacity development needs of all stakeholders. Although MOEHE leadership in capacity development and advocacy for child-friendly schools was certainly desired, the project implementation could have benefited from stronger UNICEF oversight and input into the content of capacity-strengthening efforts.

*In the future:* There is a need to customize training for the different roles of education actors in the process. In addition, UNICEF's work on the CFS concept has been continuously evolving, bringing in new ideas for a more strategic and effective ways to plan, design and implement child-friendly schools on the ground. Because these innovations and improvements can enrich the implementation process, they need to be shared continuously with Palestinian partners. For example, UNICEF's *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*, recently published in Arabic, contains the new framework for thinking about child-friendly schools and should be used to update the original training of trainers and inform future planning and implementation practices.

• **Teachers, principals and counsellors are crucial for CFS success at the school level.** As the evaluation points out, although the pilot was successful in sensitizing these three key school actors on the CFS approach and engaging them in its implementation in schools, continuous, systematic and more customized training for teachers, principals

and counsellors has been somewhat lacking and has contributed to slowing down of the momentum. Teachers found training infrequent and too brief to meet their learning needs, while principals required more guidance on operationalizing the concept in their schools. Although counsellors have been successful to a large degree in offering psychosocial support to children, they have not been fully trained and enabled to respond to the issue of school violence.

Sustaining the CFS approach at the school level has been affected by high staff turnover. Teachers, principals and counsellors who left child-friendly schools took the concept away with them, while incoming staff lacked knowledge and capacity to carry the CFS agenda forward. In Gaza, this has been even more dramatic as the whole cadre of teachers and principals was simply replaced and the capacity was lost. This implies that through the pilot phase, school institutional capacities have not been built sufficiently.

*In the future:* Greater efforts are needed to develop the CFS culture or 'school ethos' in schools. All interventions at the school level should be guided and reinforced by long-term school improvement plans, with a clearly spelled out vision and mission that serve as a road map to becoming child-friendly.

Directorates have a critical role in strengthening school management capacity to develop policies and guidelines infused with CFS principles. These policies should identify roles and accountabilities of incoming staff and ensure that understanding of child-friendly schools is not lost with each staff turnover. Proper documentation and recording of past activities and results achieved through the schools' implementation plans shows some weaknesses in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and needs to be encouraged. District education directorates also need to have a more active role in monitoring progress in schools and ensuring continuity of child-friendly schooling.

Another strategy to ensure sustainability and greater rooting of the CFS concept in schools is stabilization of already trained and sensitized teachers, principals and counsellors. Activating teacher and schools networks through connecting classrooms or schools and opening platforms for teachers and school staff to exchange experiences and support each other is one way to achieve this. Teacher turnover can be seen in a positive way as well, because those who have participated in training could carry knowledge, skills and ideas to their new schools, which may not be part of the CFS project.

• **The quest for quality education requires engagement by all sectors.** From the onset of the CFS initiative, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education sought to create cohesion and encourage coordination between its different departments; one example is the creation of the Palestinian CFS committee and corresponding committees at the directorate level. The organizational collaboration has not been fully developed and achieved in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, however, and there is a sense of disengagement from within MOEHE departments due to what some describe as dominance of one department over the others. Similarly, within UNICEF, work on child-friendly schools has been exclusively managed by the education sector, with little strategic integration of the relevant work done by the sections for child protection, health, nutrition, adolescents, or water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

*In the future:* The coordination and greater alignment of priorities and plans needs to be established at different levels – within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and its various departments, between MOEHE and other line ministries, and between the different sectors within UNICEF’s country programme.

Strengthened coordination and equalized capacity of all MOEHE departments can ensure better planning and implementation of the approach on the ground. Given that many CFS-related interventions require engagement of sectors outside education, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education will need to work in partnership with social affairs, health, justice, finance and other line ministries to ensure that child-friendly schooling is part of their plans and interventions. UNICEF should consolidate its technical support to Palestinian partners under the CFS umbrella to provide a more effective range of interventions, from capacity strengthening to policy design in various areas – including child protection, WASH and health – and across the life cycle.

• **Inter-agency partnerships create synergies and opportunities for leveraging funding.** The collaboration with UNDP and the ongoing UNRWA project show the potential for integrating child-friendly schools into the interventions of other agencies. Collaboration with UNDP is an example of good leveraging of resources, while cooperation with UNRWA shows the potential for spreading the concept widely throughout all schools in the territory.

Although the MOEHE-UNICEF collaboration has been strong and fruitful throughout, apart from the examples mentioned above, no other agencies or partners have been substantively involved in piloting the CFS initiative.

*In the future:* The multiplicity of interventions, strategies and technical capacities required for CFS implementation calls for increased collaboration and alignment of interventions between development partners. Stronger advocacy for child-friendly schools among key development partners is necessary in any future effort to take CFS to scale. Key to this would be to build on each partner’s comparative advantage, to establish clear roles and responsibilities for all, and to enable more strategic use of resources through pooling funds. In this regard, linking CFS interventions in teachers’ training with other partners’ work on reforming in-service training for teachers (UNESCO, World Bank) or renewing collaboration with UNDP on school construction and rehabilitation should be strongly considered.

• **In emergency situations, the CFS approach can provide an overarching framework for both short-term interventions and longer-term planning for transition.** UNICEF’s experience in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has demonstrated how using innovative approaches makes it possible to deliver quality education services that extend beyond emergencies well into the post-crisis and development phases. Math and science kits are one example. Similarly, MOEHE-UNICEF work on creating remedial education for underperformers can affect overall teaching practices in schools, as well as have an immediate impact on children, through demonstrating how active learning methodologies promote learning achievement. These types of innovative UNICEF approaches should be used to strengthen future CFS programming in emergency areas.

## Scaling up and mainstreaming

The current Education Development Strategic Plan has identified child-friendly schools as one of the key indicators of improved education quality. One of the goals articulated in the plan is to increase the percentage of schools following the CFS approach from 18 per cent in 2007–2008 to 36 per cent in 2011–2012.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, UNICEF's country programme document for 2011–2013 outlines support for “national capacity to obtain evidence of and adjust declines in education quality and shift the professional focus from inputs and teaching to outputs and learning” as a key objective.<sup>40</sup> By 2013, UNICEF plans to reach the 450 lowest-performing schools and schools affected by emergencies in order to, among other things, increase learning achievement results for children.

At the outset of the new country programme, there is a great opportunity for UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and other partners to move towards bolder and faster scaling up and mainstreaming of the CFS approach that will eventually reach all schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Scaling up can take a form of gradual roll-out through replicating the CFS model from one location to another, while continuously putting in place new variations of CFS features based on the particular situation of a new district/school. The seven core features of quality outlined in the Palestinian CFS model serve as the ‘gold standard’ all schools should strive to reach. The potential for achieving all core CFS quality features can then be assessed against the reality of individual schools and districts, and the short-term (immediately possible) and long-term (aspirational) plans for attaining those can be put in place throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Depending on the specific context, the scale-up can also take the form of modelling, with all desired features of the approach tested on a small number of schools and then gradually replicated. It can also be done through a combination of both.

Whichever approach is chosen, a carefully designed scale-up plan based on the comprehensive assessment of needs, and including specific timelines and appropriate budget projections, needs to be developed. As noted earlier, engagement by different national and development partners in the CFS scale-up is critical for providing both resource and technical support to the effort, and for ensuring a harmonized implementation process and a strategic use of resources.

To ensure sustainability of all these efforts, it will be necessary to infuse the CFS approach into the education system through its mainstreaming into key policies, curriculum and territory-wide standards for quality education.

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<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine, ‘Education Development Strategic Plan 2008–2012’, MOEHE, Ramallah, Palestine, July 2008, p. 112.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund Executive Board, ‘Draft Country Programme Document: Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory’ (E/ICEF/2010/P/L.14), United Nations Economic and Social Council, New York, 6 April 2010, p. 12.

In support of CFS implementation, continued advocacy and provision of technical support to Palestinian partners in developing key policies – such as non-violence in school and inclusion of children with disabilities – are needed. Similarly, as the curriculum is revised, this would be an opportune moment to work with the Palestinian Authority to ensure that both content and methodologies reflecting the CFS approach are incorporated. Recent publication of the MOEHE-National Institute for Education Training standards for effective schools<sup>41</sup> is an important development, and there is an opportunity to support the authority in rolling out these standards as part of the scale-up process.

Finally, efforts to mainstream child-friendly schools throughout the education system must not neglect the key challenge of teacher quality. In the long term, it will be important to engage with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education on revising current pre-service teacher training curricula with the view of inserting the CFS approach training content. In this way, true mainstreaming of the CFS approach into the teaching profession can be ensured.

## Strategies

Key strategies through which UNICEF can continue to ensure promotion and rooting of the CFS concept in the Occupied Palestinian Territory include:

**Advocacy and sensitization on CFS:** This has been and will continue to be a crucial strategy for UNICEF, particularly as it attempts to bring partners on board within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and other line ministries as well as other agencies. Generally high interest and the involvement of international donors creates room for broad partnership, policy dialogue and cooperation in educational development work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Advocacy for child-friendly schools is also critical at throughout the territory, at the district and school levels, and among various stakeholders responsible for and participating in CFS implementation and mainstreaming.

UNICEF should also make advocacy efforts in the area of professional development for teachers, particularly as it relates to aligning in-service teacher training on child-centred methodologies with adequate supervision and examination.

**Developing capacity:** As the CFS approach is taken to new districts and schools, UNICEF needs to continue to support the Palestinian Authority in strengthening capacities for child-friendly schools through various types of training, customized for different actors. Alternatives to face-to-face training – distance learning, connecting classrooms approaches, etc. – need to be included in order to reach more practitioners, provide greater continuity of training, and establish networks of learners and practitioners. In Gaza, where local capacity for child-friendly schools has been depleted due to high teacher replacement, special efforts will be needed to replenish capacity at the central, directorate and school levels and reinvigorate the CFS concept.

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<sup>41</sup> National Institute for Education Training, 'School Improvement Based on Standards: The Palestinian standards of effective school', Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ramallah, Palestine, 2010.

Strengthening UNICEF's own programme team capacity for effective CFS programming will be critical for taking the work forward under an integrated, multi-sectoral framework.

**Improving monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring tools developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at the onset of the initiative were useful for tracking progress on individual school improvements. However, they did not include any baseline data on enrolment, dropout or achievement, or any other qualitative indicators; therefore, any changes in those indicators cannot be attributed to the CFS initiative.

During the years ahead, there is a need to strengthen systematic collection of data through the Education Management Information System (EMIS) on key indicators for access and quality in the schools that are or will become part of the CFS transformation.

UNICEF has already engaged with the Palestinian Authority in supporting development of the EMIS, piloted in 16 schools, and this can be used as an opportunity to include these relevant indicators into this system. Some suggestions from the global evaluation could serve as guidance: "Performance metrics should focus on how schools are doing in terms of inclusiveness, child-centredness and democratic participation as well as academic outcomes. Metrics should include measures of how students are experiencing the school and how students are improving over time, which can be used for performance measurement and accountability."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> American Institutes for Research, 'Child Friendly Schools Programming: Global evaluation report', United Nations Children's Fund, New York, December 2009, p. 135.



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## Annex A. Monitoring tools: Checklist used for tracking progress in school improvement plans<sup>43</sup>

Domain: Healthy environment		
Sub-domain	Description	Monitoring mechanism
<b>1. School environment</b>		
1.1 Training for both students and teachers on health topics	Training (15-hour minimum) for each member of the health committee concerning first aid, evacuation, fire fighting and road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing health committee records</li> <li>• Observing school records</li> </ul>
1.2 Training for both students and teachers on various health domains	Conducting annual training on health topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing record showing number of students (at least seven) and teachers (at least two) receiving training, including the date and time of training</li> </ul>
1.3 Forming school health committees	Forming committees at the beginning of each school session, including students, teachers and local community members under supervision of the headmaster, to implement activities related to the school health plan	<p>A list showing names and addresses of every member of the committee</p> <p>A special record with the committee coordinator including school health topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive plan, with clear goals; procedures and activities are documented and signed by the headmaster or headmistress</li> <li>• Programmes, circulars and guidelines for school health</li> <li>• Following up implementation of health activities (at least two each month) such as a symposium, voluntary work, medical “open day” or organizing plays, which would be documented in the committee record</li> <li>• Following up the job of coordinator of the health committee and responsibilities of the school health department in the directorate (<i>Note: At least two meetings were held per month, including all members; these meetings were also documented, signed by the headmaster, and added to committee’s record.</i>)</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> ‘Monitoring tools: Checklist used for tracking progress in school improvement plans’ is a replicated from Optimum, ‘Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories’ (Draft), 2010.

1.4 Presence of an emergency committee at the school	Forming committees of teachers, supported by students, which are able to work in such emergency situations as war, earthquakes or fire	A special record for the emergency committee, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of each committee member's name, defining a clear role for each member</li> <li>• A procedural plan for emergencies, signed by the headmaster</li> <li>• Students are informed about instructions for emergencies</li> <li>• Application of evacuation and firefighting drills, at least once each semester, which are also documented in the emergency committee's record</li> <li>• Adequate and appropriate fire extinguishers that are valid for use and well distributed at school, especially in laboratories and libraries</li> </ul>
1.5 Presence of a school 'eco' (ecology) club	Members are both teachers and students; the local community, donor countries or the school itself can take responsibility for the club's budget; teachers and students may choose the governing body and subcommittees; various environmental activities are carried out according to a plan that has clear objectives and procedures	Observing eco club rules of procedure through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting members' names (the public and administrative body)</li> <li>• Preparing a procedural plan for activities, signed by the headmaster, consistent with the general plan for school health</li> <li>• Checking the club's budget and the mechanism of exchange</li> <li>• Recognizing achievements of the club in addition to the periodic reports</li> <li>• Observing students running the club under teachers' supervision</li> </ul>
<b>2. School infrastructure</b>		
2.1 Existence of a garden	The existence of a garden or basins for planting at school	Ongoing follow-up of school garden by the eco club, concerning sanitation and allocating a corner for each class in this garden
2.2 School sanitation	Making sure classrooms, playgrounds, toilets and corridors are clean, so that no dirt, stagnant fluids and bad odours are found anywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanitation questionnaire follow-up</li> <li>• Field visits and check-ups for school utilities</li> <li>• Recognizing related reports</li> </ul>
2.3 Students' distribution of school facilities in proportion to their needs	Facilities consider students' ages and needs, for example, first floor should be specialized for smaller and handicapped students, in addition to facilitating use for those students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing students' distribution on classrooms through field visits</li> <li>• Observing the presence of special facilities for small and handicapped students</li> </ul>
2.4 Blackboard, chalk, comfortable desks	An appropriate blackboard in terms of location, colour and height in addition to adequate seats in terms of size and the number of students; using 'Chalk-ROM', which does not produce dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing blackboard paint and cleanliness</li> <li>• Observing the quality of chalk used and the seats' suitability in terms of student sizes</li> </ul>
2.5 Adequate lighting and ventilation; doors and windows are suitable and safe	A sufficient number of lamps, windows and curtains with a working mechanism	Observation of lighting, ventilation and materials in classrooms through field visits

2.6 School is surrounded by high walls with fixed and safe gates	Availability of suitable high walls and gates to regulate movement of students and to provide protection and privacy for the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring the construction of surrounding walls and fixed gates through field visits</li> <li>• Observation for school reports in terms of students coming late to school and violent incidents</li> </ul>
<b>3. Health-care services</b>		
3.1 Monitoring vaccinations for all targeted students	Vaccinations reaching a coverage of 100% for targeted students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports from the Ministry of Health and the school health team</li> <li>• Student health cards</li> <li>• Monitoring absences and ensuring that every student is vaccinated</li> </ul>
3.2 Monitoring investigation tests	Tests including first primary grade (length, weight, look, teeth), 7th grade (teeth, consideration), 10th grade (teeth, consideration) and any other tests approved by both the Ministry of Health and of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring reports of the Palestinian Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Monitoring models of conversion</li> <li>• Following up students' health cards</li> </ul>
3.3 Monitoring detected-disease cases	Monitoring detected-disease cases by school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following up students' health cards</li> <li>• Monitoring reports of the Ministry of Health</li> <li>• Monitoring models of conversion and informing parents</li> <li>• Monitoring reports of school health in addition to other relevant authorities</li> <li>• Observing monthly reports of students' injuries and illnesses</li> </ul>
3.4 Providing essential medical support for students when needed	School should provide stakeholders and authorities with the number and names of targeted students	Observing the number of devices provided, such as eyeglasses, headphones, wheelchairs, and treatment
3.5 Cases of epidemiological diseases	Reporting cases of epidemiological diseases discovered by the school and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filing students' health cards</li> <li>• Monitoring reports and conversion forms</li> <li>• Field visits</li> </ul>
4. Hygienic water	Permanent supply of sufficient, healthy water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring biological and chemical status at the beginning of each semester</li> <li>• Monitoring cleaning of wells and water tanks, to be fully sterilized at beginning of each semester</li> </ul>
5. Health units	Should be clean and free of any bad smells or dirt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent monitoring of water resources and cleaning materials, e.g., soap and paper tissues</li> <li>• Monitoring availability of health opening slots (one for 40 students)</li> </ul>

6. Cafeteria/canteen	<p>Cafeteria should be clean and appropriate in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of cafeteria windows and height of its walls must be appropriate for each student (considering age, height and number of students)</li> <li>• A refrigerator to store food</li> <li>• Hygienic water source</li> <li>• Shelving and cabinets to store the items sold at the cafeteria</li> <li>• Window screens for protection from insects</li> <li>• A covered trash barrel</li> <li>• Foods at the cafeteria should be healthy in terms nutritional value and freshness; prices should be affordable for students</li> <li>• Workers at the cafeteria should follow health instructions by wearing gloves, a white apron and plastic head covers</li> </ul>	Monitoring reports of the Ministry of Health and relevant institutions
7. Public safety	<p>The existence of public safety rules and policies, which teachers and students must be aware of, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surfaces, walls, at school should be free of cracks, which lead to unstable humidity</li> <li>• Walls should be free of thin edges, iron objects, unsafe electrical wires and exposed drilling</li> <li>• Stairs and passageways should be safe and surrounded by balustrades</li> <li>• Special protection for windows on higher floors</li> <li>• Solid and liquid trash must be discarded in a safe way</li> <li>• Hurdles, safety bumps and traffic lights should be set at the school entrance to prevent road accidents</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance for various utilities and equipment at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing monitoring reports of relevant authorities</li> <li>• Field visits</li> </ul>
8. Existence of a safe laboratory	<p>The existence of safety guidelines and essential cautions while working in the laboratory, including a first aid closet and a fire extinguisher, in addition to a source of water used for chemical burns or any accidents in the laboratory</p>	Observing school committees' commitment to Ministry instructions for organizing laboratory materials

<b>Domain: School interaction with the local community</b>		
1. Involving students in voluntary social activities	Forming various committees (health, scouting, sports) that communicate with local community institutions in order to undertake activities or projects at least one each month	Follow up by documenting activities in special records.
2. Establishment of joint activities in cooperation with the local community	The establishment of joint activities (social, scientific, sport, cultural) in cooperation with the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up the establishment of such activities through documentation in special records</li> <li>• Ensuring these activities take place at least three times annually</li> </ul>

3. Keeping school doors opened for the local community, even after school days	School should provide services and suitable facilities when needed, during the implementation of a specific, justified programme, according to the school capacity	A particular programme that justifies providing the services to the local community should be documented in the school-official records
4. Parents' awareness of school guidelines and achievements	Parents should be aware of the school guidelines and constantly informed about achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up documentation in official records.</li> <li>• Follow up with holding parents' meetings at least twice a year (once each school semester)</li> </ul>
5. Intensifying school visits to local community institutions	School should organize visits (social, sport, cultural) to local community institutions in coordination with those institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits should be documented in official school records</li> <li>• Visits (social, sport, cultural) should be carried out at least three times each year, one time for each type of visit</li> </ul>
6. Parents are constantly provided with written declarations/reports to inform them of their children's status at school	Providing parents with continuous written declarations to inform them of their children's status at school (social, health, academic), whether positive or negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written declarations must be documented in school officials' records</li> <li>• Child's certificate should be sent to parents at least four times each year</li> </ul>
7. Availability of a list showing names of social cadres/qualified teachers for sustainable education	School should organize special programmes of sustainable education through lectures, in cooperation with local community education	These programmes should be documented in school officials' records
8. Highlighting the role of media concerning the relationship between the school and the local community	Through using such media as brochures, websites, newspapers and interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure should be documented in school-official records</li> <li>• Production of at least two results in the form of websites or advertisements, etc.</li> </ul>
9. Cooperative planning (between the school and the local community) in order to carry out various activities	School should draw up plans through cooperation with local community institutions in order to carry out various activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation in school officials' records</li> <li>• Carrying out at least two meetings to discuss planning for various cooperative activities</li> <li>• Documenting names of institutions and organizing them according to services they provide</li> <li>• Cooperation mechanism must be clear and well documented</li> </ul>
<b>Domain: Child-centred education</b>		
1. Using a variety of educational methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying and using the most suitable method</li> <li>• Producing methods through projects conducted by students</li> <li>• Diversifying educational methods, according to curricula, and making use of the surrounding environment, according to available materials and school capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up the annual plan in a special annex including useful methods</li> <li>• Observing the availability of methods</li> <li>• Observing results through students</li> <li>• Observing method using the preparation book</li> <li>• Follow up in cooperation with the school headmaster</li> </ul>

2. Qualified teacher	A teacher needs to be fully aware of the educational material; she or he must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teach materials within her or his academic specialization</li> <li>- use effective teaching methods</li> <li>- take students' differences into account</li> <li>- participate in academic and educational courses</li> <li>- be aware of educational updates</li> <li>- use the preparation plan (plainly)</li> <li>- make use of creative ideas and educational experiences</li> </ul>	Items to be followed up include the teacher's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance during lectures</li> <li>• Production of learning manuals</li> <li>• Lessons schedule</li> <li>• Diversity of methods (acting, playing roles, etc.)</li> <li>• Fairness of lesson plans concerning goals and content</li> <li>• Evaluation methods for students, such as worksheets and examinations</li> <li>• Performance, taking students' differences into account</li> <li>• Participation in courses</li> <li>• Involvement in various clubs and committees</li> </ul>
3. Exchange visits	Existence of a special plan at school for exchange visits (inside and outside school), to take place at least twice a semester	Following up and monitoring the plan includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures before or after implementation of exchange visits</li> <li>• The presence of a headmaster or an instructor during those visits</li> <li>• Monitoring model reports of exchange-visit lectures</li> <li>• Teachers' and headmasters' reports concerning exchange visits</li> </ul>
4. Convenient student-assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are aware of their own points of strength and weakness</li> <li>• Methods followed must take into account students' individual differences</li> <li>• Using several methods for assessing students (diagnostic, formative, final)</li> <li>• Diversifying in questions, activities, examinations and accuracy</li> <li>• Questions, examinations and activities must be comprehensive.</li> <li>• A teacher should use a separate carnet/ booklet to follow up students' situations</li> <li>• A teacher must set students' development plans based on examination results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing the presence of an individual record for each student</li> <li>• Monitoring whether questions and examinations take into account individual students' differences</li> <li>• Observing examination and report results</li> <li>• Observing students' assessment and development plans</li> <li>• Observing the teacher's separate booklet</li> <li>• Observing whether questions, examinations and activities are consistent with measurement and assessment principles</li> <li>• Observing whether teachers keep a set of questions relevant to the material they teach</li> <li>• Observing how advantageous diagnostic results are</li> </ul>
5. Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework should be consistent with students' individual differences</li> <li>• Teachers should cooperate with each other before setting homework assignments</li> <li>• Homework should be used as a real advantage for students</li> <li>• Cooperating with parents before and after setting homework assignments</li> <li>• Consulting students in setting homework assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring students' homework carnets constantly</li> <li>• Observing the presence of a separate panel in the classroom, on which homework assignments are written after being set</li> <li>• Observing teachers' cooperation with each other and with the headmaster/mistress</li> <li>• Observing students writing and doing their homework, taking their individual differences into account</li> </ul>



<p>6. Educational utilities, equipment and facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should make use of various educational utilities</li> <li>• Involving students in managing those utilities</li> <li>• Making use of utilities, where brochures should be posted and homework should be viewed</li> <li>• Organizing races and competitions, with incentives provided for best candidates</li> <li>• Distributing art materials and sports equipment conveniently and making use of them</li> <li>• Activating the system of lending books in the school's library</li> <li>• Activating the use of schools' science and computer laboratories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing students' performance in various activities</li> <li>• Follow up the school library lending system</li> <li>• Observing the ease of access to the school's various utilities</li> <li>• Observing a special programme that activates use of the school's utilities</li> <li>• Attending students' exhibitions, competitions and programmes</li> <li>• Observing the plan including the distribution of tools among students</li> <li>• Observing a special record for the computer and science laboratories</li> </ul>
<p>7. Various educational programmes and activities</p>	<p>Characteristics of and actions for educational programmes and activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- investing in and benefiting from various school activities</li> <li>- allowing participation and informing students of similar levels about the activities</li> <li>- implementation of at least two activities each session for students of all levels</li> <li>- involving supervisors in organizing some activities</li> <li>- setting a plan for school activities, through cooperation between both teachers and students</li> <li>- implementing several activities (cultural, sport, scientific, recreational, etc.)</li> <li>- teachers and students work on activating school broadcast</li> <li>- involving students in volunteer activities to serve the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up school activities that involve students of all levels</li> <li>• Observing cooperation between teachers, headmaster and supervisors at school</li> <li>• Observing involvement of students in various celebrations, especially national events</li> <li>• Observing involvement of students in volunteer and charity activities</li> </ul>
<p>8. Child-centred activities</p>	<p>Students' assessments of the child-friendly schools, allowing them to give their opinion on CFS activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out meetings with student committees</li> <li>• Questionnaires to explore students' points of view</li> </ul>
<p>9. Various educational clubs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of various clubs, according to available school educational materials or students' talents, hobbies, etc.</li> <li>• Involving students in managing those clubs in cooperation with teachers</li> <li>• Specialized arts and sports lessons to implement activities for students of convergent grades</li> <li>• Activating the role of educational clubs, in cooperation with local society institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up school exhibitions, exploring essential achievements.</li> <li>• Follow up club records, especially participants' records.</li> <li>• Observing cooperation and networking between clubs and local community institutions</li> </ul>

<p>10. Qualified educational instructor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for the educational instructors to become more qualified and experienced</li> <li>• Monitoring different attitudes and behaviours.</li> <li>• Developing positive trends at school</li> <li>• Life skills training for students</li> <li>• Instructor should be able to express her or his needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing the presence of a clear plan, with content and goals clearly set</li> <li>• Follow up records for monitoring unusual behaviour under treatment</li> <li>• Observing students' acceptance of instructions set by the instructor</li> <li>• Observing cooperation between the instructor and other people</li> </ul>
<p><b>Domain: Teacher-friendly school</b></p>		
<p>1. Teachers' development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving teachers in the assessment process</li> <li>• Discussing the assessment process (subjective, convenience, etc.)</li> <li>• Commitment of both teachers and headmaster/mistress concerning visits, terms and assets</li> <li>• Preparing a development plan and monitoring its implementation, especially for teachers who have a civil assessment</li> <li>• Monitoring teachers' activities in committees (sport, cultural, health)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up reports of both teacher and headmaster/mistress.</li> <li>• Observing the presence of a special space for teachers to sign and to give their opinion whether positive or negative</li> <li>• Follow up teachers' development plans</li> </ul>
<p>2. Teachers' class load</p>	<p>The majority of a teacher's classes should be relevant to her or his specialization; teachers should also learn subjects beyond their specialization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up schedule of class distribution</li> <li>• Observing the presence of a list showing teachers' names, specializations and courses they have previously taken</li> <li>• Observing involvement of teachers in courses beyond their specialization</li> </ul>
<p>3. Teachers' qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher should identify his or her needs.</li> <li>• Headmaster/mistress should nominate teachers for significant courses</li> <li>• Presence of a plan aiming to assure teachers' vocational development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up training and make sure it meets educational needs</li> <li>• Observing the impact of training on teachers, through questionnaires and quantitative records</li> <li>• Observing the presence of various educational tools that assess teachers' vocational development</li> </ul>
<p>4. Involving teachers in decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting teachers when writing schedules of various subjects</li> <li>• Involving teachers in forming school committees</li> <li>• Involving teachers in solving unexpected troubles at school</li> <li>• Involving teachers in setting plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying out plans and records</li> <li>• Follow up teachers' expressing their needs and any troubles they may face</li> <li>• Observing the performance and activities of school committees</li> </ul>
<p>5. Special spaces, utilities and equipment for teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every teacher should be fully provided with office supplies and furniture, as well as essential reference materials, according to their specialization</li> <li>• Teachers should make use of available computers</li> <li>• Presence of separate sanitation facilities for teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing teachers' office and the office supplies available, in addition to observing other utilities</li> <li>• Observing teachers making use of available computers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Domain: Reducing violence and promoting self-confidence</b></p>		

<p>1. Presence of introductory programmes and activities relevant to children's rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of programmes identifying and viewing children's rights in the school plan</li> <li>• Implementing at least two documented activities related to children's rights and human rights</li> <li>• Presence of a separate introductory panel/board in classrooms, showing children's rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up implementation of various activities through field visits</li> <li>• Follow up documentation of plans and programmes in school records</li> </ul>
<p>2. Presence of a plan to reduce violence at school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting a plan to reduce violence at school</li> <li>• Implementing at least two documented activities in cooperation with the local community to reduce violence at school</li> <li>• Presence of an induction panel/board clarifying policies and instructions on the issue of violence</li> <li>• Presence of a "complaints fund" under supervision of teachers and students; follow-up should be documented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up school's plan</li> <li>• Follow up implementation of meetings and activities through school records</li> </ul>
<p>3. Involvement of students in school committees and various activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of specific plans to activate students' involvement in volunteer school committees</li> <li>• Presence of a school committee (with names and tasks should be documented) to monitor violence level at school</li> <li>• Involving students in assessing activities that work on reducing violence at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up school committee plans</li> <li>• Follow up the presence of a "disciplinary and order committee" and document reduction of violence through school records</li> <li>• Observing students' participation in school activities through school records and reports</li> </ul>
<p>4. Effectiveness and activities of teachers and instructors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A teacher should never use violence</li> <li>• Every case of violence should be documented, in addition to documenting the mechanism followed in dealing with violent incidents</li> <li>• Training and educating teachers on children's rights and life skills</li> <li>• Holding a monthly meeting, which should be documented, where faculty and the school instructor discuss and assess the status of violence in the school</li> <li>• Holding a meeting each term, which should be documented, between the school and the local community to discuss mechanisms to reduce violence and promote self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing the absence of all types of violence at school</li> <li>• Observing records of violent incidents and the "disciplinary and order" committee</li> <li>• Observing the number of teacher trainees</li> </ul>

## Annex B. Implemented activities and outputs of the CFS project, Phase One: 2003–2005 and Phase Two: 2006–2010

		2003	2003/04	2004/05	2006–2010	TOTAL/Output
Implementation in schools and community awareness	# of schools participated	34	34	32	90	190
	Families and community meetings	64 meetings; 3,200 participants (estimated)		36 meetings; 1,600 participants (estimated)	90 meetings; 4,500 participants, average 50 per school (estimated)	10,250 families and communities attended 5,000 leaflets distributed
	Community awareness workshops			18 workshops, 950 attendees	5,000 leaflets on CFS distributed	
	Plans prepared and activities undertaken	Each school prepared improvement plan with specific context-determined activities				190 improvement plans
	# of students benefited	Approximately 85,000 students in 190 schools				85,000 students
	Training for directorates				240 trained 15 from each of the 16 directorates	
Training on CFS	Material preparation	Preparation of manual, CFS concept book and materials		Review and updating of all materials		36 hours training, manual, CFS concept book and training materials prepared
	Training of trainers	Starting and TOT (120) Starting with 39 in 2003		Training 60 trainers (36 West Bank, 24 Gaza)		4,984 trained: - 180 trainers centrally and in directorates - 240 directorate staff - 4,534 principals and teachers
	Training for directorates				240 trained 15 from each of the 16 directorates	
	Training for teachers	678	908	850	1,980	
	Training for principals	100			20	120 principals trained
Monitoring	National level	CFS committee at the MOEHE				National committee
	Directorate level	16 CFS committees at directorates				Directorate committees
	School level	CFS committees in each implementing school				190 committees while implementing

Source: Optimum, 'Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories' (Draft), 2010. Information in this table is from CFS reports prepared by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE); table has been modified by the author.

## **Annex C. List of counterparts met and interviewed for this study**

### **National counterparts**

Dr. Mohammed Rimawi (through email), Director General, School Health, MOEHE  
Ms. Hanan Abed, CFS Focal Point, MOEHE  
Ms. Shahnaz el-Far, Acting Director General, National Institute for Education Training  
Ms. Nuha Otiel, Teacher Training Department, National Institute for Education Training  
Mr. Sadek Khodeir, Trainer, National Institute for Education Training  
Ms. Naila Fahmawi, Education Directorate, Tulkarem  
Mr. Mohammad Khaseeb, Principal, Zeta Boys School, Tulkarem  
Ms. Amal To'meh, Principal, Nazlett Isa Girls' School  
Mr. Diyyab Turkman, Education Directorate, Jericho  
Mr. Mohamman El-hawwash, Director, Education Directorate, Jericho  
Dr. Tayseer El Shurafa, Education Directorate, Gaza  
Mr. Fayez El Serhi, Education Directorate, Gaza  
Mr. Hussein Elaila, Principal, Learning through Enjoyment Site, Gaza  
Ms. Wafa Elmetrabeeiy, Principal, Learning through Enjoyment Site, Gaza  
Ms. Randa Hilal, Head, Optimum (CFS Evaluator)  
In addition, a number of teachers, counsellors and students in four Learning through Enjoyment sites were interviewed.

### **Other partners**

Chris Shinn, America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Chief of Party, Model School Network  
Karen Exel, United States Agency for International Development, Director of Education Office  
Nadia Basel, United States Agency for International Development, Model School Network, Agreement Officer's Technical Representative  
Louise Haxthausen, UNESCO, Director  
Frosse Dabit, UNESCO  
Rula Abu-Safieh, Regional Coordinator, CHF International  
In addition, a number of cluster coordination colleagues were interviewed at the Hebron Consolidated Appeals Process workshop.

### **UNICEF Occupied Palestinian Territory Country Office Staff**

Jean Gough, Special Representative  
Douglas Higgins, Deputy Special Representative  
Potung Shao, Chief, Education  
Basima Ahed-Ahmad, Education Officer  
Joan Assli, Programme Assistant  
Saudamini Siergist, Chief, Child Protection  
Bilas Dongol, Chief, Water and Sanitation  
Marixie Mercado, Chief, Communications  
Linda Sall, Programme Officer, Adolescents  
Sharon Mous, Education Officer, Gaza  
Ibtisam Abu-Shammamala, Education Officer, Gaza  
Kanar Quadi, Education Officer, Nablus

## Annex D. Basic education indicators for the Occupied Palestinian Territory

<b>Population</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Preschool age, 2006	255,000	130,000	125,000
Primary-school age, 2006	463,000	226,000	226,000
Secondary-school age, 2006	730,000	373,000	357,000
Total population, all ages, 2007	4,017,000	2,044,000	1,974,000
<b>Official school age (years)</b>	<b>Entrance age</b>	<b>Graduation age</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Preschool, 2006	4	5	2
Primary school, 2006	6	9	4
Secondary school, 2006	10	17	8
Compulsory Education, 2006	6	15	10
<b>Net enrolment ratio (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Preschool NER, 2006	25.0	25.2	24.7
Primary school NER, 2008	75.0	75.0	75.0
Secondary school NER, 2008	87.0	85.0	90.0
<b>Gross enrolment ratio (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Preschool, 2008	32	32	31
Primary school, 2008	80	80	79
Secondary school, 2008	90	87	93
<b>Repetition and completion</b>	<b>Total</b>		
Primary repetition rate (%), 2008	1%		
Survival rate to last primary grade (%), 2008	99%		
School life expectancy, International Standard Classification of Education (1–6 years), 2008	13.1		
<b>Teaching staff</b>	<b>Pupil-teacher ratio</b>	<b>% trained teachers</b>	<b>% female teachers</b>
Preschool, 2005		100	99.2
Primary school, 2008	29	100	67.5
Secondary school, 2005			49.9

*Data sources:*

**Population:** Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'World Population Prospects: The 2006 revision', Population Division, United Nations, 7 March 2007; **Administrative Data**

**Education:** UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Data Centre, January 2008.