

UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

July 2010

Highlights.....	1
Overview	1
Policy and evidence	2
Reaching vulnerable children and women	4
Feature: Breaking down barriers in HIV/AIDS	5
Basic indicators	6

Highlights

- Over the summer, 250 West Bank schools and 100 in Gaza conducted UNICEF-supported remedial learning and recreational activities reaching over 22,500 students who performed poorly on unified tests. The pupils received extra support in Arabic and Math and participated in recreational activities five days per week, over four weeks.
- UNICEF was one of three “Golden Sponsors” for the 12th Palestine International Festival, highlighting the right to water through musical performances in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron. The events were organised by the Popular Art Centre between 19-24 July, drawing over 10,000 people.
- On 5 August, UNICEF conducted its Mid-Year Review of programme implementation in the West Bank and Gaza with the Ministry of Planning and Development and eight line ministries. This monthly update summarises the outcomes of the review process.

Overview

The 1.9 million children under the age of 18 living in the occupied Palestinian territory make up 49%, just under half of the total population in Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem. Their childhoods unfold in the shadow of a decades-old conflict with Israel that, especially in Gaza, reaches into every aspect of daily life. Recent years have brought a deep socio-economic downturn, marked by the continuing restrictions of the occupation, along with intra-Palestinian violence and division.

Although measurable progress has been made in fulfilling child rights since the establishment of the

SNAPSHOTS OF CHILDREN



©UNICEF-oPt/2010/Izhiman
A first-grader at Khirbet al Mai, in southern Hebron, May 2010



©UNICEF-oPt/2010/Izhiman
A young boy helps his father sell steaming cups of coffee at the old city in Nablus, July 2010.



©UNICEF-oPt/2010/Azar
A girl at a UNICEF-supported “learning for enjoyment” session in Nablus, July 2010.

UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

Palestinian Authority 16 years ago, indicators on child well-being show corrosive trends. Stunting rates are up; enrolment rates are down; and learning achievement has plummeted. Violence is pervasive, especially for adolescents who come into direct contact with the conflict, but also at home and in schools.

UNICEF-oPt's programme supports a two-pronged strategy: a) institutional and capacity building efforts to integrate child rights-based planning and services through the Palestinian Authority and local partners; and b) humanitarian assistance that focuses on emergency response and early recovery.

The programmes focus on five sectors: child protection and psychosocial support; education; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and adolescent development and participation (ADAP). Work with the Palestinian Authority and non-governmental partners emphasizes policy development, technical support, and advocacy. UNICEF programmes implemented by local partners target the most vulnerable communities, providing direct support to households, schools and health facilities.

UNICEF-supported cluster leadership in the WASH and education sectors coordinates over 26 partners. UNICEF also leads the Child Protection and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support sub-sectors, coordinating over 70 members.

Policy and evidence

Data collection for the UNICEF / UNFPA Family Survey is complete in the West Bank and will be finalised in Gaza by end-September. The survey, the third of its kind in oPt, is being conducted at over 15,600 households by over 200 enumerators and 30 field supervisors, and is based on the UNICEF-developed Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) methodology. The findings will reveal trends in terms of progress or declines in child, adolescent and maternal well-being since the 2006 survey, and provide baseline data on children and women for the Palestinian Plan for 2011-2013.

A UNICEF-supported Child Protection Strategy underpins a Ministry of Social Affairs Action Plan to be finalised by end-2010. The Plan outlines definitions, legal frameworks and systemic approaches for mainstreaming child protection multi-sectorally. Included in the plan are the UNICEF-supported Child Protection Networks, implemented in the West Bank with Birzeit University and in Gaza with Community Training Centre and Crisis

BREAKING RECORDS



On 22 July, over 7,000 children dribbled their way into the Guinness Book of World Records by simultaneously bouncing balls for five minutes. National Basketball Association Superstar and UNICEF Spain Ambassador Pau Gasol delivered a video message to the children, as did UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.



"Today, against incredible odds, you -- the children of Gaza -- will break the previous Guinness World Record for the most basketballs dribbled at the same time," Gasol said. "In doing so, you send a powerful message to the world that your hopes and dreams are as real as every other child's, and that if given the chance, you can achieve the impossible. I believe you can achieve your dreams -- and I say -- Go for it!"

The record-breaking attempt was part of the annual "Summer Games" organized by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) involving a quarter of a million children across the Gaza Strip.

Management. Recently in the West Bank, links between social workers and the police have been strengthened and efforts are underway to implement referral protocols.

In 2010, there are 14 countries that report to the Security Council on grave violations against children

UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

in armed conflict. In oPt, UNICEF leads a coalition of Palestinian, Israeli and international organisations in reporting voluntarily on nine conflict-related indicators, including numbers of children killed or maimed; attacks on schools and hospitals; children in detention; and denial of humanitarian access. This year, UNICEF has developed a database including all data for 2010; and delivered three bi-monthly reports to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, for review by the UN Security Council. The database will provide for stronger trends analysis and evidence-based advocacy.

In March UNICEF released the “*Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Survey*” conducted in Gaza following “Cast Lead” by the Palestinian Hydrology Group. The household survey on access and quality of water polled 1,250 households between August and December 2009, pointing to severe degradation of Gaza’s aquifer and water infrastructure; high reliance on costly private water vendors; unpredictable and limited household water supply; and an elevated incidence of diarrhoea among young children.

Together with UNRWA and WFP, UNICEF published the “*Food Security and Nutrition Survey of Herding Communities in Area C*”, based on interviews with 5,200 families in October 2009. The survey revealed levels of household food insecurity and malnutrition among children that equal, or surpass levels in Gaza.

Both studies are available on the UNICEF-oPt website and are summarised in previous Monthly Updates.

Major studies and evaluations underway include:

- An assessment on access to water in the Jordan Valley conducted by the Palestinian Hydrology Group, being finalised in August.
- Two studies on children in detention. One report looks at the treatment of Palestinian children within Israeli civil and military detention systems, judged against 25 international and Israeli juvenile justice standards; the other looks at systemic gaps in Palestinian juvenile justice. Draft reports will be ready by end-October.
- A study on child poverty that looks beyond income indicators to measure deprivation will be finalised by end 2010. The study is intended to sharpen programme planning.
- A Columbia University assessment of the effectiveness of psychosocial programming in Gaza and the West Bank; and agreed tools

A SAFE SPACE TO BE YOUNG



©UNICEF-oPt/2010/EIBaba

An adolescent girl participating in life-skills learning at one of 20 UNICEF-supported family centres in Gaza.

for standardised reporting and monitoring, to be finalised in October.

- A comprehensive child protection assessment in Gaza, covering issues ranging from labour to domestic violence, to be finalised in October.
- A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey among young people on healthy lifestyles, including awareness of HIV/AIDS, to be finalised in December; and a KAP on Infant and Young Child feeding practices, due in September.

Training and other technical support provided to Palestinian Authority and implementing partners has included:

- A School Management Information System tracking attendance and overall performance that is being implemented at 16 West Bank schools and is expected to scale up to all schools by end-2011.
- Work to upgrade the databases used by the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility in Gaza, focused on improving water quality surveillance.
- Improving nutritional surveillance at 134 sentinel sites (87 in the West Bank, 47 in Gaza) for children and pregnant mothers.
- Over 1,600 teachers (1,000 West Bank, 600 Gaza), were trained on interactive and child-

UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

friendly teaching methodology designed to support low-performing students in June.

- More than 500 professionals have been trained on providing psychosocial support to children during acute crises, and tools are being developed to monitor and evaluate the impact of these interventions.
- Over 230 educators and social workers who interact closely with adolescents were trained on raising awareness on HIV prevention, and 132 staff at the Ministry of Youth and Sports trained on a database tracking youth centres.
- Over 50 WASH programme officers, including counterparts from the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, attended capacity building workshops in Gaza and the West Bank on information management and emergency planning.
- A communication for development workshop focused on protecting children from unsafe water, especially in Gaza, connected over 80 water and sanitation, nutrition, and health professionals in Gaza and the West Bank via a one-day videolink. The report and presentations are available on the UNICEF-oPt website.
- Field monitors at Christian Peacemakers and Operation Dove were trained on standards and methods of reporting and monitoring on grave violations against children in conflict.

Reaching vulnerable children and women

Construction and rehabilitation work on sanitation facilities at schools in Jenin, Qabatiya, Hebron, and Gaza has been completed at 29 schools, and is ongoing at 45 facilities, reaching a combined student population of 36,500. UNICEF also provides drinking water to the schools, and to especially vulnerable communities. Teachers in charge of school health at 45 schools will be trained on hygiene promotion and in maintaining the facilities in the coming months. In Gaza, work to rehabilitate a sewerage network serving 1,650 families in Rafah, in southern Gaza, is underway.

To help meet a severe gap in quality after-school learning and recreational programmes for adolescents, 100 UNICEF-supported adolescent friendly spaces (AFS), 40 in Gaza and 60 in the West Bank, are working with community-based NGOs to

provide vulnerable adolescents with structured remedial and life-skills based learning. The AFS provide adolescents at risk of dropping out of school with support in keeping up; guidance in learning critical life skills such as conflict management and how to avoid high-risk behaviour; along with much needed recreational opportunities ranging from IT to art, music and sports. Over 25,000 adolescents have been reached since the beginning of the year.

In Gaza, UNICEF works with Save the Children Sweden and local NGO partners in operating 20 family centres that provide families recovering from “Cast Lead” with a safe space to come to for psychosocial support, learning and recreational activities. Almost 70,000 children and caregivers have benefitted from the services since the beginning of the year.

Sixteen UNICEF-supported psychosocial teams in the West Bank (11) and Gaza (5) provide psychosocial support to children and caregivers, ranging from group / individual and peer-to-peer counseling; emergency assistance; and non-formal education. Since the beginning of the year, more than 20,000 children have received psychosocial support; and more than 16,000 caregivers attended sessions aimed at strengthening family relationships.

Over the summer, 250 West Bank schools and 100 in Gaza conducted UNICEF-supported remedial learning and recreational activities, reaching over 22,500 students who performed poorly on unified tests. The pupils received extra support in Arabic and Math, and participated in recreational activities five times per week. In the West Bank, 11,200 students in grades 2 through 6 in the 68 lowest-performing schools are set to begin remedial support classes when school re-opens.

A Vaccination Week conducted 24-30 April by the Ministry of Health / WHO / UNICEF reached almost 17,000 children (8,370 Gaza, 8,500 West Bank) between 0-18 month with 12 antigens. The effort was part of a first-ever regional initiative focused on reaching marginalised communities, and ensuring that the already high immunization coverage is maintained.

FEATURE: Breaking down barriers in HIV/AIDS awareness

NABLUS, West Bank, July 2010 -- Trainer Sumaya Sayej isn't shy in talking about sex. Masterfully leading a workshop of 23 teachers and field workers, she asks them what they would do if a female student became upset about changes she noticed in her maturing body.

The discussion is heated, as differing views of religion and tradition are brought to the fore. But by delicately embracing such taboo subjects, UNICEF's programme in HIV/AIDS prevention advances awareness among a group of professionals who work closely with adolescents.

"When we first started, the subject was very taboo," says UNICEF Project Officer Hanadi Jaber. "But now there is more acceptance. The way that we are spreading these messages is science-based, professional and takes into consideration the culture."

CULTURAL TABOOS

Health and environment teacher Jilal Odeh ran headlong into tradition when he began teaching his students about HIV and AIDS. His village, Habla, is situated in the northern edge of the occupied West Bank, and he says many of its young men, who work in Israel, are at higher risk of substance abuse and other risky behaviour.

"At first it was difficult for the religious men in the village to accept," says Odeh of the resistance he faced. Some in the village feared that talking about taboo subjects might cause young people to investigate on their own.

"But it was not long before they were bringing their sons to the workshops," Odeh continues, "and even talking in the mosque in support of the classes."

He says he convinced the naysayers by starting with UNICEF life skills training, where adolescents are taught teamwork and communications skills, before moving on to the subject of how HIV is spread and how to prevent infection.

While 87.5 per cent of Palestinian youth aged 15-29 are aware of HIV and AIDS, says the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, only 8.8 per cent of adolescents aged 15-19, know that unprotected sex, unsafe blood transfusion and intravenous drugs can cause HIV infection.

There were an estimated 45,000 youth aged 15-24 in the Middle East and North Africa living with HIV in

RAISING HIV/AIDS AWARENESS



Health and Environment teacher Jilal Odeh says he's seen attitudes on HIV/AIDS change for the better.

©UNICEF-oPt/2010/Izhiman

2008. Young people are globally the group most at risk of HIV infection, and improving their knowledge and skills on HIV / AIDS represents a major thrust of prevention programmes around the world. Across oPt, there are 66 reported cases of HIV and AIDS.

"My specialty is biology," says health fieldworker, Yusef Salah. "I have understanding but the material itself is hard. Our role is to explain the difference between HIV and AIDS and how HIV is transferred from person to person. We use this workshop to try to change student attitudes from negative to positive."

Mirvat al-Bireh, 36, teaches at a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. She says that the training has helped her, other teachers and even students handle cases of incest and sexual violence. "With any subject, if we speak about it and tie it to religion," says al-Bireh, "then the path is very easy. It is easy to get close to the students this way."

The UNICEF workshops, held in Nablus, Hebron and Ramallah, include sessions with a religious leader and a lawyer, who discuss the *sharia*' (Islamic law) and legal background for HIV and AIDS awareness.

Across oPt, UNICEF works with partners to equip children and adolescents with knowledge and skills on how to develop healthy behaviours that protect them from drugs and HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. In 2010, it will carry out a Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Behaviour (KAPB) survey to measure adolescent perceptions on risky behaviours. Funding is provided by the Global Fund to fight HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

UNICEF oPt Monthly Update

BASIC INDICATORS			
1	Total population (2010) West Bank Gaza	4,048,403 2,513,283 1,535,120	PCBS estimates, 2010
2	Child population (under 18 years, 2010) West Bank Gaza	1,971,824 1,172,483 799,341	PCBS estimates, 2010
3	Child population (under 5 years, 2010) West Bank Gaza	596,729 344,900 251,829	PCBS estimates, 2010
4	Child population (under 1 year, 2010) West Bank Gaza	128,242 73,319 54,923	PCBS estimates, 2010
5	GNI per capita (US\$, 2007)	1230	The State of the World's Children 2010, UNICEF
6	People living below the national poverty line (% , 2007)± West Bank Gaza	39.6 23.6 55.7	PCBS, Poverty and Living Conditions in the Palestinian Territory, 2007
Health and Nutrition			
7	Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, 2006) West Bank Gaza	28 26 32	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
8	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births, 2006) West Bank Gaza	25 23 29	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
9	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 1995)	70-80	PCBS, 1995
10	Children 12-23 months fully immunised (% , 2006) West Bank Gaza	96.4 94.4 99.4	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
11	Children 12-23 months immunised against measles (% , 2006) West Bank Gaza	97.0 95.0 99.4	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
12	Stunting prevalence (moderate and severe) among under-5 (% , 2000-2007*)	10	The State of the World's Children 2010, UNICEF
13	Wasting prevalence (moderate and severe) among under-5 (% , 2000-2007*)	1	The State of the World's Children 2010, UNICEF
14	Malnutrition prevalence (underweight) (moderate and severe/severe (% , 2000-2007*) West Bank Gaza	2.9 3.2 2.4	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
15	Births attended by skilled health personnel (% , 2006) West Bank Gaza	98.6 98.2 99.3	PCBS, Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006
HIV and AIDS			
16	Prevalence of HIV/AIDS	No data	
Water and Sanitation			
17	Use of improved drinking water sources (% ,) West Bank Gaza	86.3 100.0 93.8	PCBS, Household Environment Survey database, 2003-2006
18	Use of improved sanitation facilities (% ,) West Bank Gaza	99.2 99.7	PCBS, Household Environment Survey database, 2003-2006
Education			
19	Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds (Total/Male/Female; %; 2006) West Bank Gaza	99.1/99.1/99.0 99.1/99.2/99.1 99.0/99.1/98.9	PCBS, Labor Force Survey Database, 1995-2007
20	Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary West Bank Gaza	99.3 99.0 99.5	PCBS, Education Census, 1994/1995 - 2006/2007
21	Primary net enrolment ratio (Total/Male/Female; %; 2006) West Bank Gaza	83.9/84.7/83.1 82.7/81.7/83.6 85.8/89.3/82.2	PCBS, Education Census, 1994/1995 - 2006/2007

± PCBS uses two measures of poverty: Deep Poverty (absolute) and Poverty. The Deep Poverty line reflects a budget for food, clothing and housing only. For a family of six the deep poverty line in 2006 was NIS 1,837. The Poverty line adds other necessities including health care, education, transportation, personal care and housekeeping supplies; raising the line to NIS 2,300 for a family of 6. Thus, the percentage of households in Poverty includes those in deep poverty.

New UNICEF photos and video are available to be used by UN agencies, partners, and international media outlets. To request photos, please contact: photo@unicef.org; to get videos, please visit: thenewsmarket.com/unicef

For more information, please contact: Marixie Mercado, Chief, Communication, UNICEF-oPt + (972) 54 77 87 604; mmercado@unicef.org