

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

DONOR UPDATE 12 April 2005

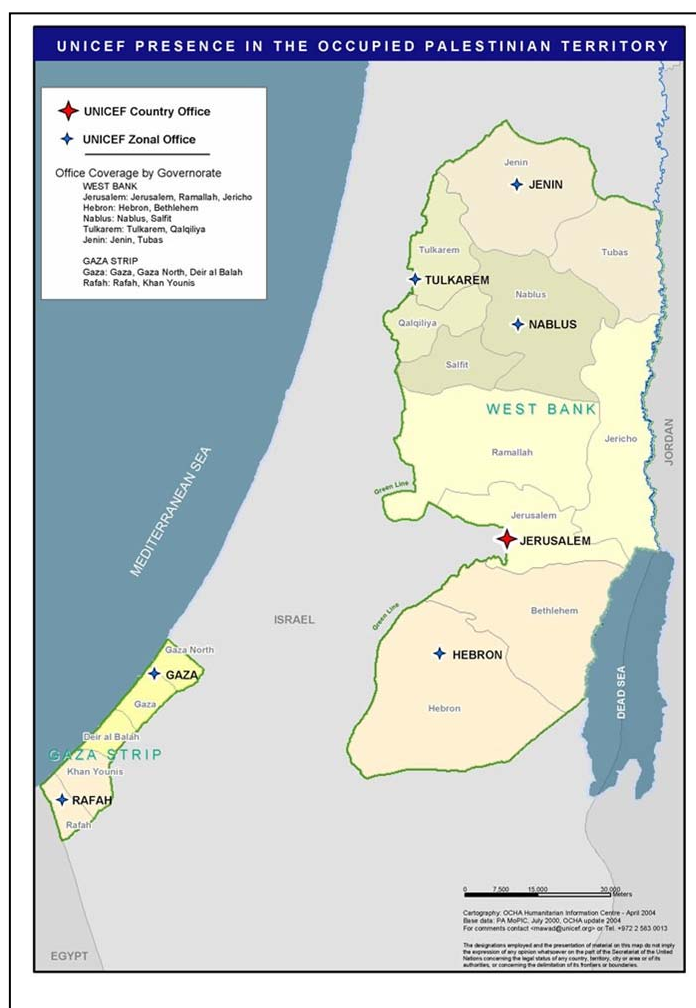
- To date, only 13 per cent of the appeal requirements for 2005 have been received.
- US\$ 8.5 million is urgently needed for health services, educational and psychosocial support for children in oPt

1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Children's rights are continuously challenged throughout the West Bank and Gaza in terms of access to health and education services. Children have few opportunities for recreational activities and living normal lives. For several weeks as of mid-February 2005, the situation in the West Bank and Gaza was characterized by an unprecedented period of calm – and by a gradual easing of movement restrictions. In Gaza, the changes meant that women and children conducted their day-to-day lives more freely and with much less concern for incursions. Children could sleep through the night without being awoken by the sound of gunfire. Despite the unprecedented period of calm, since the beginning of the year, 27 children were killed due to the conflict, including three children who were killed while playing soccer in Rafah on April 9.

Health and Nutrition

Chronic malnutrition in children under five has now increased to almost 10 percent - meaning that close to 100,000 children have less height for age than they should have and will never be able to regain the deficit. Basic equipment for maternal and new born health is lacking, meaning that the quality of health services is declining. Most recently outbreaks of rubella and mumps have been reported in several heavily-populated areas in the West Bank – raising the need for urgent control measures to avoid further outbreaks.



Education

The right of Palestinian children to education is threatened by the restrictions of movement which hinders access for children and teachers to schools. As a result, children lose school days or have their school days disrupted. The quality of education is showing signs of decline and in the worst affected areas, the learning achievement for students are deteriorating. Few children have the opportunity to experience a child-friendly learning environment with safe spaces and opportunities for sports and recreation. In addition, children lack educational materials and schools lack good teaching aids.

Adolescents

Adolescents have limited opportunities to play and exercise in areas safe for them. Close to half of the children in West Bank and Gaza spent very limited time on extra-curricular activities like sports or playing outdoors. Overall, young Palestinians spent their spare time at home and fewer girls get opportunities to interact with peers outside their homes. Violence in the lives of adolescents is on the increase – both at home and in school. There is now, more than ever, a need to create safe and friendly spaces to foster opportunities for play and exercise.

Psychosocial Well-being and Child Protection

The levels of conflict-related violence have decreased over the few months, particularly in Gaza. However, after more than four years of conflict and continuous violence, children are still living with distress and continue to be vulnerable. The chronic anxiety, undermined self-esteem and feelings of loss of control being felt due to the erosion of households' coping mechanisms adversely affect family relationships. A study indicate that 1/3 of the children in 1,800 households were reported to have been exposed to some type of violence both in homes (68%), in schools and in their communities. The problem of unexploded ordnance continues to present a threat to children in the West Bank and Gaza. Three children ages 8, 10 and 16, have died as a result of such devices and 7 children injured. In one incident alone in March in the southern border town of Rafah, four children were seriously injured when a UXO device exploded in a confined residential area.

2. ACTION FOR CHILDREN

UNICEF's humanitarian action is based on our core commitments for children and focuses on child survival, nutrition, ensuring that children are able to continue learning despite schooling being disrupted and catching up once schooling resumes. Children receive psychosocial support after occurrence of violent events and receive follow-up support for them and their caregivers. Safe spaces are created for children and adolescent to meet with their peers and to enjoy recreational and sports activities.

In the West Bank, UNICEF focuses on five main areas: Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, Nablus and Hebron. In the Gaza Strip the focus is on three flashpoints: Rafah, Khan Younis and Northern Gaza. In addition three other areas (Al Mawasi, Siafa and Al Ma'Ani) are of key concern. The UNICEF zonal offices in Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Hebron, Rafah and Gaza ensure assessment, swift response and monitoring of humanitarian assistance. UNICEF has a total of 11 international and 59 national staff on the ground in OPT.

Health and Nutrition

All vaccine and vaccine-related supplies needed for 2005 and the first quarter of 2006 were procured and partially delivered to the Ministry of Health (MOH) warehouse. The preparation for a sub national Polio mop-up campaign was completed. The campaign will be launched on 9 April for immunization of some 88,000 children under five years. To respond to the current outbreaks of rubella and mumps and to ensure sustainable control of vaccine-preventable diseases, the MoH and UNICEF have started planning for supplementary immunization activities for measles, mumps and rubella, to start before the end of the school year. As a follow up to the national measles immunization campaign carried out in July 2004, a serological survey is being prepared. This survey will test immunity levels among children under five immunized during the campaign and among older children who were not targeted in the campaign. UNICEF has positioned emergency health supplies in Gaza to ensure swift responses to childhood illnesses and medical staff is being trained in order to better detect and respond at both community and health facility levels.

Education

Approximately 10,000 children living in impoverished areas of the Gaza Strip received a boost in the form of educational supplies to support their commitment to education. Included in the School-in-a-Box kits were pencils, erasers, plastic cubes for counting and other materials needed in primary schools to ensure education continued in an innovative manner. It also consisted of a set of teaching aids that helped teachers conduct hands-on classroom teaching. An orientation programme on the use of the teaching kits was conducted in Rafah District. 390 School-in-a-Box kits were so far delivered to Gaza and another 56 kits are on their way. Provision of emergency education supplies to schools and families facilitated the rapid return of children to school after military incursions, hence restoring structure and routine as quickly as possible.

UNICEF's remedial education in West Bank and Gaza has so far this year helped 90,000 children continue their education despite regular interruptions to their schooling. New remedial worksheets for Grades One to Six have been distributed to schools. To help teachers and parents guide their children in the use of remedial worksheets, orientation workshops for Government and UNRWA schools were conducted across the West Bank. A set of 18 lessons on remedial education were developed by a team of curriculum experts and over 3,600 copies delivered to schools affected by the crisis. A 20-hour training package on how to work with children under crisis situations was also prepared and 80 teachers from the West Bank were trained.

To ensure all school age children, especially girls, have access to quality learning and complete basic education, UNICEF has commenced a programme with the MOEHE to assess teacher training and develop a system teacher training programmes at both the central and district levels. In Gaza, over 2,000 students participated in UNICEF-supported life skills activities. Integrated into weekly lessons, children were provided with information and practical skills for dealing with stress, conflict management, aggression, peer pressure and tolerance.

Adolescents

As part of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, 20,000 children were given access to recreational activities in eight safe play areas in Gaza. In the West Bank the development of 4 new play areas is underway. Animators and volunteers from each community are currently being trained to ensure the provision of regular activities in each of the sites. Sports competitions have also been launched in 172 schools allowing some 6,500 boys and girls to participate in weekly sports programmes. Sports and recreation help adolescents to relieve their stress and are an important strategy towards mitigating the damaging effects of violence on children. Promoting adolescents positive participation in their communities, over 12,000 boys and girls went to the polls to elect two Children's Municipality Councils in Tubas and Nablus. Girls made up 50% of the voter turn out which saw the election of 66 boys and girls as council members. In Khan Younis and Hebron 20,000 boys and girls went to the polls to participate in primary elections. The final elections will take place in April.

Psychosocial and Child Protection

Psychosocial emergency teams provided psychosocial support to children and parents. From January through to March, 3,225 children in Khan Younis, northern Gaza and the middle area of the Gaza Strip attended debriefing sessions with the teams of trained psychologists and social workers, aimed at reinforcing their capacity to cope with distress. Approximately 1,491 children in Hebron, Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarem attended similar sessions. Working in parallel, 1,965 parents attended sensitisation sessions in northern Gaza, Khan Younis, Gaza City and the refugee camps in the middle area while approximately 2,519 parents attended similar sessions across eight governorates of the West Bank. All of them have been equipped with basic skills on how to detect signs of distress among children and to provide increased care and protection. Parents also learned how to manage their own stress in crisis situations. Working under challenging circumstances, the teams in Gaza also carried out 37 home visits to bring support to injured children in Khan Younis in December. Cases requiring specialized services were referred. In order to anticipate a changing situation in Gaza, the teams have gradually started to introduce issues of abuse in homes and schools in their sessions with parents and children. So as to assist children to help each other in overcoming psychosocial stress caused by the crisis, a peer-to-peer psychosocial support network was set up. As a part of this programme, 72 university students were qualified through an intensive professional training course to become peer counsellors for adolescents. Following the training, the university students started a series of peer to peer psychosocial support sessions whereby over 1000 adolescents will be provided with opportunities to relieve their stress and frustration, learn stress management techniques and express their opinions and concerns.

UNICEF in cooperation with the National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) has launched a mine risk education project which addresses the problem of UXOs, including giving special attention to areas of high risk. Materials have been produced to engage children between the ages of 6 to 18, including colouring booklets for the younger children and more detailed information booklets for the age group 12-18. The booklets are being distributed to all schools and to key partners. The materials are complemented by an awareness campaign.

3. 2005 APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

As part of the 2005 Consolidated Appeal for the OPT, UNICEF requested US\$ 12.7 million to provide humanitarian relief to the affected children and women in the territory. To date, some **US\$ 1,722,782 (only 13%)** has been received as follows:

Table 1: CONTRIBUTIONS TO 2005 APPEAL BY DONOR AS OF 12 APRIL 2005	
Donor	Funds Received (US\$)
Government of Sweden	727,802
Spanish National Committee for UNICEF	94,980
UK National Committee for UNICEF	(pipeline) 900,000
TOTAL¹	1,722,782

In order to implement the activities mentioned above, UNICEF has fully utilized the resources that were made available, including balances of funds received in 2004. There is therefore now an urgent need to ensure further funding to ensure that UNICEF can fulfill its core commitment to children. The Government of Canada provided US\$ 191,520 for mine action as part of the oPt regular programme.

4. CURRENT PRIORITIES

The immediate funding needs from April to end July amount to US\$ 8,500,000, which includes activities for preparation and response to the Gaza disengagement, as described below:

Table 2: IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS AS OF APRIL 2005	
Sector	US\$
Upgrade of maternal and child health services (provision of supplies and equipments, upgrade of skills of health professionals, logistic support) in order to provide an extended range of front line health services, i.e. management of child emergency conditions, emergency obstetric care, outbreaks, in closed and difficultly accessible areas.	1,300,000
Supplementary immunization activities for measles, rubella and mumps	3,000,000
Provision of emergency health kits, midwifery and obstetric kits and other medical supplies in areas susceptible to acute crisis.	900,000
Distribution of safe water supplies (collapsible water tanks, family water kits, oral rehydration salt).	400,000
Provision of school-in a box and stationary items for 90,000 primary school students.	600,000
Provision of teaching kits and associated training to 10,000 teachers in 1,000 primary schools to facilitate teaching and learning processes and to ensure that quality learning continues.	800,000
Provision of recreation kits and programmes to 1000 schools.	500,000
Provision of basic supplies such as recreational kits, drawing materials, clothes, shoes and toys for children affected by house demolitions.	300,000
Keep the 9 psychosocial teams ready to be mobilized at all times – An average of 1,000 caregivers/month to be equipped with support techniques; number of children to attend debriefing sessions will depend on circumstances.	700,000
TOTAL	8,500,000

Further details of the emergency programme can be obtained either by visiting the UNICEF OPT website at www.unicef.org/opt or from:

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¹ The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 12%. The actual recovery rate on individual contributions will be calculated in accordance with the Executive Board Decision 2003/9 of 5 June 2003.