

For every child  
Health, Education, Equality, Protection  
ADVANCE HUMANITY



# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY IN 2008



**CORE COUNTRY DATA**

Population under 18 (thousands)	2039
U5 mortality rate *	28.2
Infant mortality rate *	25.3
Primary school enrolment ratio, (2005-2006, net)**	87.5
Primary school enrolment ratio, 2005-2006, gross)**	91.2
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3) *	98.7
% population using improved drinking water sources *	87.8
% U5 suffering moderate and severe underweight *	3

Sources: *The State of the World's Children 2008*  
\* Palestinian Family Health Survey, 2006, Preliminary Report  
\*\* Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006

The absence of a lasting political solution to the world's longest running conflict remains the single challenge facing the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), with profound humanitarian consequences for children and women. Beyond violence, most threats to survival and development arise from restrictions to movement and access – whether this translates into healthy births, nutritious food, safe schools; decent health care, or protection from abuse. UNICEF will provide support to 1.8 million children and 0.9 million women.

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2008	
Sector	US\$
Health	7,508,650
Water, sanitation and hygiene	2,792,800
Education	5,160,000
Child protection/psychosocial	2,973,530
Adolescents	2,144,000
<b>Total*</b>	<b>20,578,980</b>

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

### 1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Although the decades-long occupation and the ongoing war with Israel remain the root to the impoverishment and distress across Palestinian territory, 2007 has witnessed previously unseen levels of violence, division and insecurity within Palestinian society itself. The inter-factional fighting in June 2007, the takeover of the Gaza strip by Hamas and the resultant political divide between the West Bank and Gaza have resulted in a new and uncertain operational landscape for UNICEF. Repeated interruptions in the provision of social services due to strike action by unpaid civil servants, especially in the West Bank, have also hindered programme implementation. Two years into the Agreement on Movement and Access, there were some 530 obstacles to movement in the West Bank, or more than 40 per cent above the August 2005 baseline (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2007). Gaza remained under virtual siege.

While indicators on infant and under-five mortality have changed little since 2000, recent numbers on child and maternal malnutrition are disturbing. In 2006, 1 in 10 children was stunted, with proportions reaching almost 30 per cent in North Gaza. Only 26.5 per cent of infants aged 0-5 months were exclusively breastfed. Anaemia prevalence among children and women is above 40 per cent, indicative of a public health problem.

Palestinians consumed an average of 75 litres of water per capita per day (2006), or half the amount the World Health Organization (WHO) says is needed to drink, cook, clean and bathe. Saline sea water and sewage have seeped into the coastal aquifer in Gaza, and wastewater treatment and solid waste collection are far from adequate. Schools and clinics have inadequate water storage systems and poorly maintained connections to networks. About 66 per cent of the Palestinian population is not connected to a sewerage network and approximately 70 to 80 per cent of the domestic wastewater is discharged into the environment without treatment. In March 2007, an overburdened wastewater treatment plant in Northern Gaza collapsed, killing five people, including two children, and displacing thousands.

Primary school gross enrolment ratios have dropped from 96.8 per cent in 2000-2001 to 91.2 per cent in 2005-2006, and the rise in poverty and unemployment in 2006-2007 has put schooling-related costs beyond the reach of many parents. The threat of walkouts by poorly-paid teachers persisted, and morale was extremely low among education professionals. Closures, roadblocks and random checkpoints continued to challenge student and teacher access to schools in the West Bank, while the almost total shutdown in Gaza following clashes in June blocked all education supplies coming for the new academic year. Primary schools in areas hard-hit by the conflict or movement restrictions lack basic teaching materials, library books, laboratory and recreational equipment, and teachers lack the skills needed to make learning enjoyable and productive for children.

The conflict-related violence surrounding children has seeped into their homes, schools and play areas. In a Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics study on family violence in 2005/2006 half the mothers participating said that their children aged 5-17 years had been exposed to one form or another of violence. Children are also reporting extremely high levels of violence in their schools and play areas. While fatalities from the conflict are lower than in 2006 (31 children as of end-July 2007), 26 children died as a result of Palestinian inter-factional fighting. The higher levels of distress have translated into larger numbers of children and families seeking psychosocial support and counselling.

Young adolescents are a particularly vulnerable group and are most often exposed to the frontline of conflict and violence. In 2006, almost 70 per cent of the children killed in conflict were adolescents; all the children placed under detention that year were between the ages of 15 and 17. Due to disruptions in schooling related to violence or closures, the number of teens falling two to three grades below their level and eventually dropping out continues to rise. Two out of three adolescents do not have safe spaces to go to for recreation and interaction with their peers, and most have few opportunities for positive and productive play.

### 2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007

In close collaboration with local, national and international partners, UNICEF's humanitarian response focused on health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, protection, and adolescent development. Key challenges to implementation included the institutional divide within Palestinian authorities; violence related both to the conflict with Israel and internal Palestinian fighting; ongoing public sector strikes by unpaid workers; and restrictions to access and movement.

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Routine immunization rates (over 90 per cent) and services have been improved through increased technical and supply assistance to the Ministry of Health and other partners, reaching around 114,000 under-ones and around 250,000 schoolchildren. Some 24,000 moderately and acutely malnourished children were also provided with nutrition supplies and 600 health workers in about 150 facilities received training on improved childcare practices. UNICEF provided daily drinking water to more than 340 schools and some 40 medical facilities in Gaza, and with partners UNICEF is repairing and improving water and sanitation services and facilities in vulnerable communities in both the West Bank and Gaza. UNICEF provided US\$ 1.5 million worth of emergency teaching and learning supplies to many of the oPt's most affected schools and communities, and supported teacher training for more child-friendly approaches, even during emergencies. As of end August, 18 child-friendly spaces had been set up by UNICEF in isolated or conflict-affected areas, providing educational, recreational and counselling services to more than 85,000 vulnerable children and about 42,000 adolescents. Some 13,375 children and 12,365 caregivers have received psychosocial counselling and care through the 14 UNICEF-supported teams across oPt, with rising numbers visiting newly established psychosocial/legal centres or dialling up the 1-800 helpline.

### 3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2008

#### **Coordination and partnership**

Coordination of humanitarian action is facilitated by the Operational Coordination Group with the participation of both UN agencies and NGOs, while overall coordination of humanitarian activities and development is facilitated by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). UNICEF has the sector lead in education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection (psychosocial support).

#### **Regular programme**

The UNICEF Country Programme for 2008-2009 focuses on the realization of the rights of Palestinian children to survival, development, protection and participation. Its objective is also to support the Palestinian Authority in reaching the Millennium Development Goals and achieving national goals for children and development as set out in the National Plan of Action for Children and the Medium Term Development Plan.

#### **Focus**

The Programme focuses on health, nutrition, education, child protection, adolescents, water, sanitation and social policy, and it targets a total population of 2.7 million of whom 1.8 million are children aged 0-14 years and 0.9 million women of childbearing age.

#### **Health (US\$ 7,508,650)**

Some 1.8 million children and 0.9 million women/mothers are expected to benefit from the following key activities:

- Procure and distribute routine expanded programme on immunization (EPI) vaccines for 160,000 children under two years old, 55,000 15-year-old girls and about 80,000 women of childbearing age, as well as procuring and strengthening the cold-chain system;
- Ensure availability of supplies through procurement and distribution of basic essential drugs for 25 maternal and child health facilities, including prepositioned supplies for 20,000 recipients for three months;
- Train and orient at least 154 skilled providers and 15 supervisors on newborn care, birth preparedness partogram, management of delivery complications and infant and young child feeding;
- Collect, assemble and analyse data and information on humanitarian status and response using the Ministry of Health/Health Information System (MOH/HIS) and other providers' data on newborn, child and maternal survival statistics;
- Train at least 370 health personnel and village health workers at 165 facilities on integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) initiative, breastfeeding, growth monitoring, management of macro- and micronutrient deficiency, and counselling on young child feeding in emergencies;
- Implement social mobilization and awareness-raising campaigns, develop and distribute health and nutrition education materials for caregivers;
- Provide iron/folic acid, vitamin A and D supplements for about 150,000 children and 120,000 women.

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### **Water, sanitation and hygiene (US\$ 2,792,800)**

Some 300,000 students, 35,000 hospital patients and 500,000 people will be reached through the following key activities:

- Rehabilitate/construct water and sanitation facilities at 42 schools and 20 health centres to reduce waterborne diseases;
- Construct eight water networks in the West Bank and Gaza;
- Distribute 1,000 water tanks for selected families who do not have storage facilities in rural areas of Rafat and Khan Younis (Gaza Strip);
- Construct 50 stainless steel filling points (two and five cubic metres) with the goal of expanding access to safe drinking water in rural areas of Rafat and Khan Younis (Gaza Strip).

### **Education (US\$ 5,160,000)**

Some 100,000 vulnerable children and 4,000 teachers will benefit from the following key activities:

- Develop remedial programmes for students in vulnerable areas in the West Bank and Gaza;
- Build the capacity of selected district educational directorates in remedial programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Orient 4,000 teachers on child-centred teaching methodology (child-friendly school concept), including psychosocial care in emergencies;
- Equip 500 primary schools, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Jordan Valley and South Hebron with teaching material to improve teaching and learning processes;
- Together with district educational directorates and various local NGOs, strengthen early childhood care and education (ECCE) and school readiness through home- and community-based solutions.

### **Child protection/psychosocial (US\$ 2,973,530)**

Some 100,000 children and 50,000 caregivers are targeted through the following key activities:

- Through the 14 psychosocial teams established across oPt, provide psychosocial support to 100,000 children and enable 50,000 caregivers to better protect children against violence;
- Maintain the five existing socio-legal defence centres, as well as the toll-free line, and establish two additional centres to provide legal, psychological and social assistance to victims of violence;
- Conduct mine-risk and small arms and light weapons (SALW) education activities for 100,000 children and 40,000 families.

### **Adolescents (US\$ 2,144,000)**

Some 146,000 children and adolescents will be reached through the following activities:

- Maintain 40 adolescent-friendly learning spaces and empower vulnerable adolescents through literacy, maths, information technology, music, sports and life skills sessions, targeting a minimum of 8,000 adolescents per month or a total of 96,000 adolescents throughout the year;
- Provide 10,000 adolescents and caregivers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with psychosocial support through a number of sessions and recreational activities;
- Provide sports and recreational opportunities to 40,000 children and adolescents in 40 safe play areas.