

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY IN 2007



CORE COUNTRY DATA

Population under 18 (thousands)	1938
U5 mortality rate	23
Infant mortality rate	21
Maternal mortality ratio (1990-2005, reported)	n/a
Primary school enrolment ratio, 2000-2005, net (male/female)	86/86
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)*	83.4
% population using improved drinking water sources	92
Estimated no. of people (all ages) living with HIV, 2005 (thousands)	n/a
% U5 suffering from moderate and severe underweight	5

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2007*

* Demographic and Health Survey 2004

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2007

Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	8,631,000
Water and environmental sanitation	4,345,100
Education	6,337,300
Adolescents	3,158,640
Child protection	3,366,815
Total*	25,838,855

* 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

2006 witnessed the detrimental unraveling of the institutions and systems that children rely on for protection and support. Across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the ongoing conflict, the withholding of resources to the Palestinian Authority, the decrease in donor funding, and internal strife, have generated a massive rise in poverty and pushed the humanitarian crisis to the brink of disaster. Whether it is health care and education, protection from violence and abuse, or opportunities to play without fear – children have never had it so bad.

Escalations in both external and internal fighting have generated abuses of child rights on an unprecedented scale, including extraordinary levels of violence both inside and outside the home. By the end of September 2006, 91 children had lost their lives due to the conflict, double the number as compared with the same period last year (47), and 348 children were in detention facilities. Health, education, water and sanitation and adolescent and psychosocial needs are at critical levels, with a risk of further deterioration. UNICEF's commitment to protect and support Palestinian children has never been greater. If ever there was a time to scale up support to children, now is it.

This year, the withholding of funding from the Palestinian Authority also prevented the Government from assuming its normal role in providing basic social services. Tighter restrictions on access and movement, and continued military incursions affected the entire population in the West Bank and Gaza extensively. The protracted non-payment of civil servants salaries and the open strike called in September added a new dimension to the humanitarian crisis.

The impact on children is corrosive and enduring. Indicators on child well-being have deteriorated and will continue to decline without scaled-up action. Access to quality health care and education, water and sanitation, and activities for children and adolescents have been severely restricted. Violence among children on the streets is rising, as well as in homes and schools, where children are supposed to be safest. A 2005 study by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Secretariat for the National Plan of Action for Children titled *Psychosocial Wellbeing Indicators for Palestinian Children and Families* revealed that children are showing signs of acute distress including anxiety, nightmares, and withdrawal. Because prolonged exposure can leave lasting impact on child development, psychosocial support for both children and their caregivers has become more important than ever.

In the health sector, the lack of essential drugs and equipment, along with power, fuel and water shortages in Gaza, has cut services back significantly. One in ten children is stunted, one in two is anaemic, and 75 per cent of children under the age of five suffer from vitamin A deficiency. Deepening poverty and food shortages in Gaza are also exacerbating nutrition deficiencies. The majority of children die in the first month of life because they are born prematurely or with low birthweight, and due to the lack of drugs and equipment to provide proper care. (According to the Demographic and Health Survey 2004, low birthweight rates are as high as 8.2 per cent in the West Bank and 8.3 per cent in Gaza.)

A number of marginalized rural communities are not served by piped-water systems or other potable water sources, and many children lack safe drinking water at home and in schools, particularly in Gaza. Public hospitals and clinics, again in Gaza, are also in need of reliable and steady supply of drinking water, as well as appropriate storage facilities. Sanitary conditions in schools and in the most vulnerable district hospital buildings are a significant public health concern.

The simple act of getting to school on a daily basis remains a serious challenge for both students and their teachers. When children are unable to access their schools, it is difficult for them to maintain their studies, and when they do return to school, they need help in catching up with their missed lessons. Education quality also continues to be a major challenge. Schools lack basic teaching and learning materials, and few teachers have the skills needed to create child-friendly

learning environments. Outside classrooms, students have few opportunities for sports and recreation.

The conflict has had a particularly damaging impact on adolescents, who comprise a large, vulnerable and volatile group. At least two-thirds do not have safe spaces for recreation and most of the 300 youth clubs across oPt lack funding and are poorly managed and equipped. Worsening socio-economic conditions point to the likelihood that the numbers of adolescents exposed to abuse, violence, and exploitation will increase.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

In the area of health, UNICEF provided all vaccines for children and tetanus toxoid for 75,000 women of reproductive age. Children's vaccines included BCG, HepB, IPV, DPT, OPV, measles, MMR, Td, Dt. A new vaccine, Hib-DPT, against *Haemophilus Influenzae*, was added to the immunization schedule and administered to children in November. The groups of beneficiaries included an estimated 200,000 children under two years of age and 245,000 students. UNICEF also provided logistical support (fuel and vehicle maintenance) to the Ministry of Health outreach services. Emergency supplies and equipment, including eight generators, were provided to primary health care clinics and neonatal units of 17 general hospitals. Essential medicines, including paediatric drugs and disposables, were delivered to around 400 primary health care clinics. UNICEF distributed more than 400,000 bottles of iron syrup, 13 million iron/folic acid tablets, 108,000 bottles of vitamin A and D supplements, and promoted breastfeeding and appropriate child feeding.

In the area of water and sanitation, UNICEF provided large water tankers, water testing kits, and family water and hygiene kits to around 2,200 households in communities in Gaza where water networks were destroyed. Five wells were drilled to provide emergency supplies of water to 25,000 residents in Gaza city (Beach refugee camp and Al Nasser suburb), Khan Younis, and Nusseirat refugee camp, which were previously unserved areas. An awareness-raising campaign targeting at-risk populations on hygiene, food and water safety helped lower diarrhoea incidence. Siafa community, previously not served by piped-water systems or other potable water sources, was provided access to water. In Gaza, sanitation and safe drinking water facilities were upgraded in 342 schools (reaching 230,000 students), 10 hospitals and 25 health centres (reaching about 7,500 patients and hospital staff).

In the area of education, 10 schools in former enclaves or conflict zones received a comprehensive package, including lab and sports equipment, library furniture and books, computers, and training. To support the back-to-school programme, UNICEF procured emergency supplies worth US\$ 4 million, including 380 school-in-a-box kits, 1,000 maths and science kits, 151,000 sets of remedial worksheets, 110,000 schoolbags with stationery, and 50,000 school uniforms. During a period of unprecedented incursions and shelling, activities were organized to provide children with a much-needed respite from violence and stress.

To help adolescents overcome their frustration through meaningful programmes outside schools, UNICEF supported 15 adolescent-friendly learning spaces in larger cities that reached at least 20,000 adolescents aged 13-18 years, and 22 youth clubs in smaller towns or remote areas that offered learning as well as recreational activities. In deprived, isolated or incursion-prone areas 37 safe play spaces gave some 37,000 children aged 5-12 years opportunities to play in a safe environment, both indoor and outdoor.

In 2006, 12 psychosocial teams in the West Bank and Gaza have reached more than 50,000 children and 25,000 caregivers with skills on how to cope with violence. Twenty outreach centres were opened in Gaza following the fighting to provide individual counselling, as well as five socio-legal defence centres and three child protection networks involving the police, judiciary, social protection, and health and education sectors across the territory.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2007

Coordination and partnership

The 2007 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) is based on a needs assessment framework completed with the participation of UN agencies, relevant Palestinian Authority ministries and international and local NGOs. UNICEF has the sector lead in education, WES child protection (psychosocial support) and participates in the health and nutrition sector. Coordination of humanitarian action is facilitated by the Operational Coordination Group with the participation of both the UN and NGOs. Overall coordination of humanitarian activities and development is ensured through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT).

Regular programme

The UNICEF regular programme for 2006-2007 aims at realizing Palestinian child rights to survival, development, protection and participation. It aims at supporting the Palestinian Authority in reaching Millennium Development Goals and realizing their national goals for children and development. The programme focuses on Health, Nutrition, Education, Child Protection, Adolescents, Water, Sanitation and Social Policy. The programme focuses on capacity building, service delivery and policy development and is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the prevailing operational conditions.

In 2007, UNICEF's humanitarian programme will focus on protecting children and women from the impact of the worsening humanitarian crisis, and on supporting the Palestinian Authority in its work to prevent and, where possible, reverse further declines in child well-being.

Health and nutrition (US\$ 8,631,000)

Some 1.5 million children and mothers living in the most vulnerable areas in the West Bank and Gaza will benefit from the following key activities:

- Provide vaccines, immunization-related supplies and cold-chain equipment to reach all children aged 0-15 months, as well as more than 240,000 schoolchildren aged 6-15 years;
- Procure essential drugs for under-five children;
- Upgrade and provide equipment, supplies and medicine for neonatal units in hospitals;
- Provide tetanus toxoid to 75,000 women, covering 10 per cent of all women of reproductive age;
- Provide routine vitamin A and D supplementation to children aged 0-12 months;
- Train 600 mother and child health doctors, nurses and village health workers on growth monitoring, management of macro- and micro-nutrient deficiency, and young child feeding during emergencies;
- Assist the Ministry of Health in establishing an efficient drugs management information system, including training on effective procurement, forecasting, logistics, warehousing and distribution.

Water and environmental sanitation (US\$ 4,345,100)

Some 1.7 million poorly served people will be reached through the following key activities:

- Rehabilitate/construct wells in some 40 primary schools in the West Bank and Gaza;
- Rehabilitate/construct 15 wells and boreholes, and install handpumps to provide safe drinking water to 1.4 million individuals in areas not reached by water networks;
- Rehabilitate/construct sanitation facilities for 10 schools and 10 clinics/hospitals, benefiting around 15,000 students and 5,000 patients;
- Supply 25 primary schools with two-cubic-metre water tanks and 15 hospitals/clinics with 3- or 10-cubic-metre water tanks;
- Distribute drinking water to 400 schools and 120 hospitals/clinics, reaching approximately 300,000 students and 35,000 patients;
- Rehabilitate 14 water networks, reaching more than 700,000 people.

Education (US\$ 6,337,300)

Children, teachers and schools in most conflict-affected areas will benefit from the following activities:

- Provide 800 schools in Gaza and the West Bank with school-in-a-box and recreation kits for 50,000 primary school-aged students;
- Equip 300 primary schools, especially in Gaza, with teaching equipment;
- Provide needy schoolchildren with 200,000 schoolbags and stationery items and 50,000 uniforms and footwear;
- Orient 1,000 teachers on using remedial worksheets to enable children to keep up and catch up with their studies, as well as on how to use teaching and recreation kits. Orientation will also include improved teaching approaches and psychosocial counselling in emergency situations.

Adolescents (US\$ 3,158,640)

Key interventions will include:

- Establish 16 adolescent-friendly learning spaces within larger cities to provide learning and recreational activities, and pro-actively reach out to marginalized adolescents. The centres will offer sessions over six-week periods in literacy, numeracy and information technology, music, sports and life skills benefiting 8,000 adolescents;
- Establish and rehabilitate 35 safe play areas in conflict-affected or deprived zones to offer regular, structured recreational activities for 35,000 younger children.

Child protection (US\$ 3,366,815)

Children and caregivers suffering from conflict-related distress and violence will be the focus of the following activities:

- Establish 14 psychosocial emergency teams to reach 100,000 children and 50,000 caregivers with support aimed at strengthening their capacity to protect themselves and cope with violence. Caregivers will also learn skills to better support children in distress and foster healthy home environments;
- Support seven existing socio-legal defence centres and a toll-free line providing legal, psychological and social assistance to children who are victims of violence, conflict-related or otherwise;
- Organize 'fun days' and festivals in order to get children out of their homes and provide them with an outlet for stress;
- Conduct mine-risk education activities for 100,000 children and 40,000 adults.