

unicef 
for every child

November 2018

CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

#GAZA4CHILDREN
#PALESTINE4CHILDREN



CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

UNICEF works in the State of Palestine to help every child attain her or his rights and realize their full potential. To help mobilize support for the children who are most disadvantaged, UNICEF and partners track key indicators, analyse gaps and bottlenecks in the realization of rights. The aim of this publication is to provide up-to-date information about the situation of children, to inform decisions by Palestinian authorities and other duty bearers, including Israeli authorities, donors, partners, and civil society stakeholders. UNICEF uses this data to target programmes and contribute to private and public advocacy efforts.¹

Major strides have been made in the last decades to improve the situation of children in the State of Palestine, with some social indicators like near universal immunization coverage and high school enrolment rates – including for girls – in primary education, showing progress well beyond other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

But much remains to be done for every Palestinian child to realize his/her full potential. This entails addressing the many obstacles children and young people face in accessing basic services and fulfilling their rights. Such obstacles are due to many factors, not least the very high levels of violence they are exposed to in their schools and communities and as a result of the continuing conflict.

2.5 million people (a little over half the population) including more than 1 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance. Almost one-third of Palestinian families live below the poverty line, defined as a monthly income of less than US\$640². Unemployment rates are high: 32.4 per cent across the State of Palestine – 53.7 per cent in the Gaza Strip, one of the highest rates in the world, with unemployment reaching 60 per cent of youth in the Gaza Strip, where 80 per cent of the population relies on some form of humanitarian assistance. Coping mechanisms are eroding fast, with some children and families resorting to negative strategies like school drop-out, child labour, substance abuse and early marriage.


However, every day Palestinian children display inspiring stories of resilience and hope. Many adolescents demonstrate great skills and talents, a determination to continue to learn and to succeed despite the odds, and a drive to come up with innovative solutions to the problems their communities face and help build a brighter, more peaceful future.

1 Assessments and surveys are underway as part of the Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) and other initiatives that will provide baseline data that is currently missing, such as rates of stunting or wasting

2 According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics



WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

2.3 
MILLION CHILDREN
out of a population of
4.8 MILLION

1.3 MILLION CHILDREN
in the West Bank

1 MILLION CHILDREN
in the Gaza Strip





UNICEF Strategic Plan **GOAL 1: Every child survives and thrives**

SDGS 2,3 &5 | CRC ARTICLES 6 & 24

Exclusive breastfeeding rates remain relatively low in the State of Palestine due to local customs, which promote bottle and mix feeding, as well as an early introduction of complementary feeding from the age of four months.

Infant mortality in Palestine is among the lowest in the region with 17 deaths per 1,000 live births, but more remains to be done to reduce neonatal mortality, which accounts for two thirds of the infant mortality and half of the under-five mortality rates.

Restrictions in the movement of persons, both from Gaza to the West Bank, and within the West Bank, can affect referral to adequate health care services and in some cases, deprive a child of her or his right to get the medical care they need.

EARLY CHILDHOOD



Infant (0-11 months) mortality rate is

18 PER 1,000

LIVE BIRTHS

(17 in the West Bank,
20 in the Gaza strip)



Neonatal (0-28 days) mortality rate is

11 PER 1,000

LIVE BIRTHS

(11 in the West Bank,
12 in the Gaza strip)



Under 5 mortality rate is

22 PER 1,000

LIVE BIRTHS

(20 in the West Bank,
24 in the Gaza strip)



Only

1/4

of children aged
3-4 years attend
Early Childhood
Development
programmes



One quarter of children under
5 suffer from anemia
(21.5% in the West Bank,
30.7% in the Gaza strip)



Three children under-5 out of
three suffer from vitamin A
and D deficiency



Nearly two-third of children
under-5 suffer from zinc
deficiency (42.2% in the West
Bank, 76.2% in the Gaza strip)



Only

40%

of infants are
exclusively breastfed
in the first 6 months
of life

Only **40%** of infants
are exclusively
breastfed in the first
six months of life



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UNICEF Strategic Plan **GOAL 2: Every child learns**

SDGS 4 | CRC ARTICLES 28 & 29

In the State of Palestine, very few children of primary school age are excluded from education, but by age 15, nearly 25 per cent of boys and 7 per cent of girls have dropped out, and nearly five per cent of 10-15 year-old children and one out of three 6-9 year-olds with disabilities are out of school. Children from vulnerable households, children with disabilities, and 14-15-year-old boys are all affected by this system-wide barrier related to the inclusiveness, quality and equity of education services in Palestine.

While the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has made great strides in improving the quality of education with the promotion of child-centred teaching and learning, there is still a need to fully incorporate life skills and citizenship education.

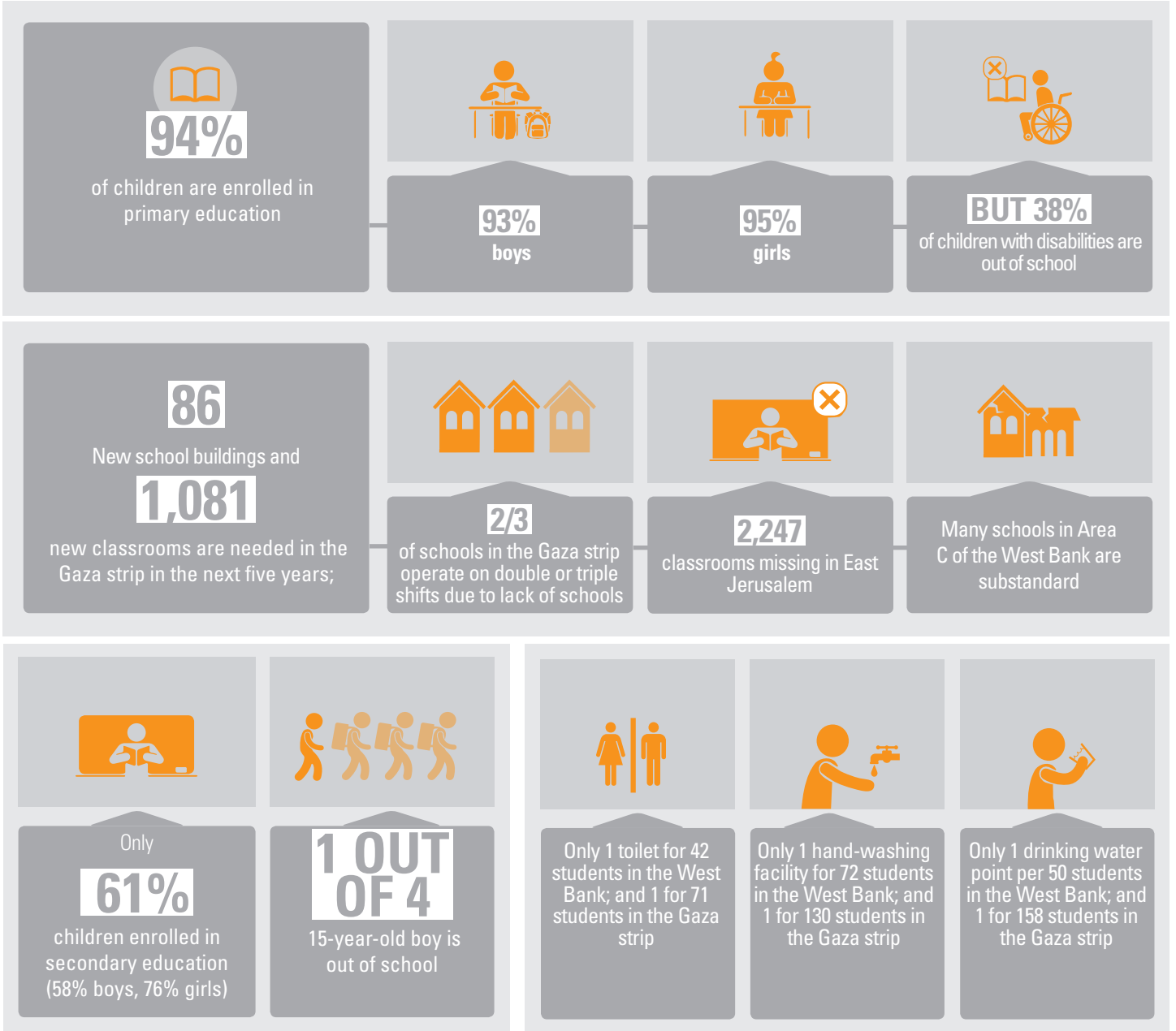
Multiple barriers due to movement restrictions result in a lack of safe access to school and in insufficient infrastructure. For example, in Area C – of the 60 per cent of the West Bank which is under Israeli security and administrative control – 36 per cent of residential areas lack a primary school due to restrictions on the construction of new, adequate schools and classrooms, and limited investments in these communities. In the Gaza Strip, the lack of sufficient classrooms forces two-thirds of schools to operate on double or triple shifts, with learning hours reduced to 4.5 hours a day. In East Jerusalem, there is a need for more than 2,000 additional classrooms in municipal schools.

Many Palestinian children face daily obstacles in accessing education. According to estimates of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, there are currently over 8,000 children and 400 teachers in need of protective presence to safely access school in the West Bank. In Hebron, Palestinian children living and/or studying in schools in the Old City must walk through up to four Israeli military checkpoints just to reach school.

Palestinian students in the West Bank



SCHOOL - AGE CHILDREN



UNICEF Strategic Plan **GOAL 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation**

SDGS 5 & 16 | CRC ARTICLES 19, 34-38

Violent discipline in Palestinian homes and schools, as well as peer-to-peer violence among adolescents is widespread. Some 61 per cent of students witnessed physical violence at school and 91.5 per cent of Palestinian children have experienced psychological aggression or physical punishment.

Conflict-related violence leaves a significant impact on the physical and mental well-being of children. In 2017, 15 Palestinian children were killed and 1,160 injured; 4 Israeli children were reported injured – all in incidents related to the armed conflict. Children continue to endure violations of due process when held in Israeli military detention in the West Bank, and when detained pursuant to Israeli domestic law, which Israel applies in East Jerusalem.

In addition, child rights data shows that the number of children affected and displaced as a result of demolitions of Palestinian homes, water wells and infrastructure has increased – 3,120 children were affected or displaced in 2017. In the Gaza Strip, children have been exposed to many cycles of violent conflict over the past decade; they also face impediments in accessing specialized medical care outside of the coastal enclave due to ongoing restrictions on movement. All across the State of Palestine, children should be protected, not targeted, exposed to violence, or encouraged to participate in violence.

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH



1/4

One quarter of children aged 1-14 years have experienced violent child discipline (71 % in the West Bank, 31% in the Gaza strip)



320,439

children are in need of protection programmes, including psychosocial support (25,246 in the West Bank and 295,193 in the Gaza strip)



17,916

children are in need of specialized case management support (6,311 in the West Bank and 11,605 in the Gaza strip)



On average
310

children were in Israeli military detention in the West Bank in 2017, and five held in administrative detention.



1/4

of women aged 20 to 49 years were married before turning 18, when they were still adolescents (most of them after 15)



17

Palestinian children (of which 16 were between ages 15 and 17) were killed as a result of the armed conflict in 2017 and

1,160

Palestinian children were injured



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Fatina stands in a nearly completed library which she and other students built out of recycled materials at their school. This was part of a UNICEF programme that encouraged them to brainstorm on projects that would improve their lives.

UNICEF Strategic Plan **GOAL 4:** Every child lives in a safe and clean environment SDGS 6,11 & 13 | CRC ARTICLE 24

High population growth and weak resource management, coupled with access restrictions, have contributed to increasingly dire shortages of safe drinking water and of sanitation access. In the Gaza Strip, only 10 per cent of households have direct access to clean and safe drinking water; 97 per cent of the water drawn from the coastal aquifer is now unfit for human consumption and the shoreline is polluted. Unless major investments are made in the water sector urgently, the Gaza Strip may become 'unliveable' by 2020.

In the West Bank, a significant majority of the population has direct access to a water source but in insufficient quantities; consumption per person is 79 litres per day, compared to the WHO recommendation of 100 litres for optimum public health, and much less for communities living in Area C.

Only 38 per cent of people in the West Bank and 82 per cent of people in the Gaza Strip are connected to sewage lines.

WATER, SANITATION, HYGIENE AND ENERGY



Only

10%

of households in the Gaza strip have direct access to safe drinking water (as compared to 60% ten years ago).



108 MILLION

litres of raw or poorly treated wastewater discharged into the Mediterranean Sea from the Gaza strip every day -- equivalent to 43 Olympic pools



73%

of the Gaza Strip shoreline is contaminated by sewage



Only

4%

of water from the the Gaza strip aquifer is fit for human consumption. People have access to less than 50 liters of water per person per day in the Gaza strip (compared to 80 liters in 2014) -- half of the international standard.



There was only

4-5 HOURS

of electricity per day in the Gaza strip in December 2017



around

20,000

people in Bedouin / herding communities in Area C of the West Bank are not connected to a water network. They have access to only about 30 litres per day, at a cost ten times higher than through the network.

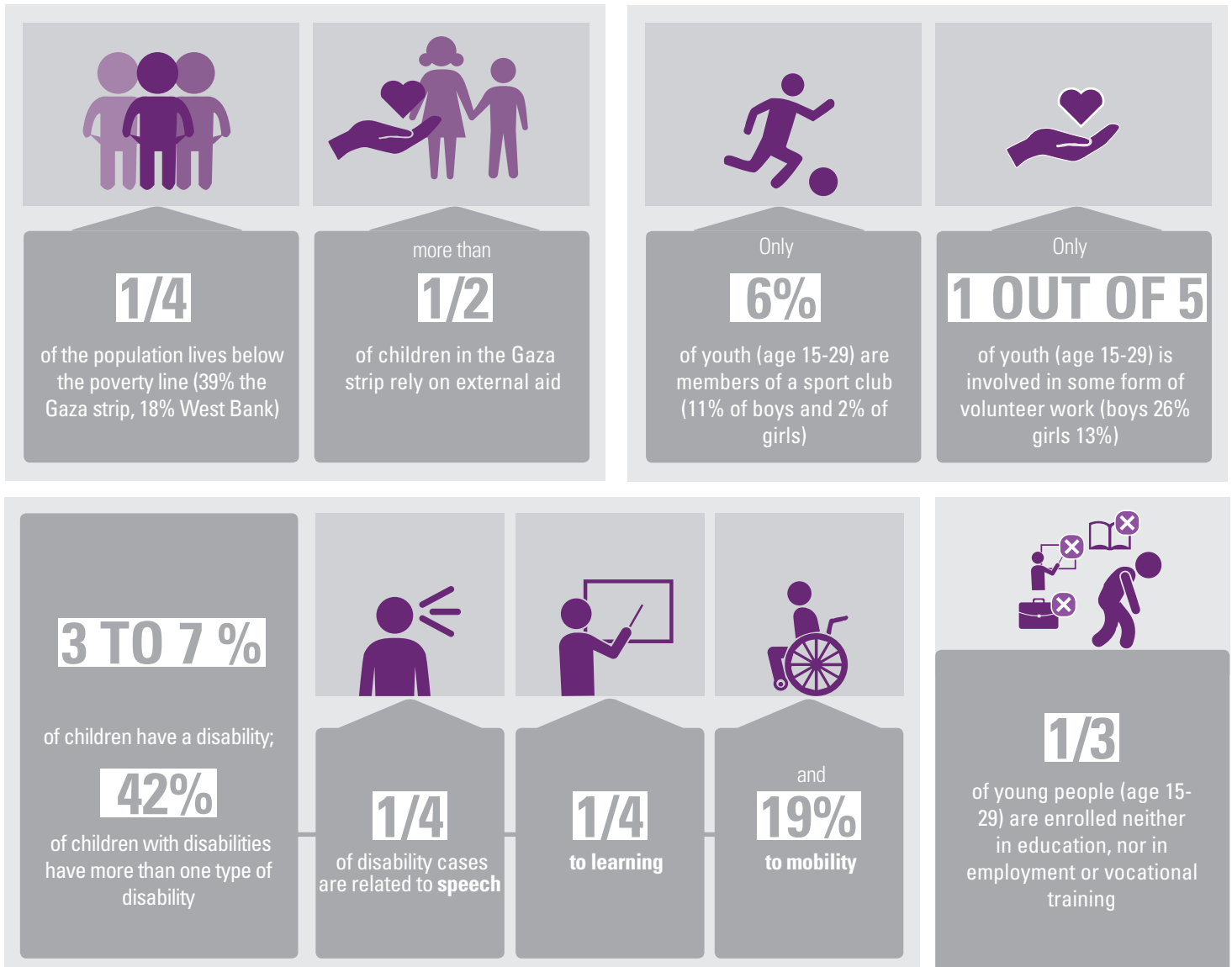


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Only **4%** of the water drawn from the aquifer in the Gaza strip is fit for human consumption.

UNICEF Strategic Plan **GOAL 5:** Every child has an equitable chance in life
 SDGS 1,5 & 10 | CRC ARTICLES 2, 12, 23, 26 & 30

Many Palestinian children face daily obstacles that limit a meaningful contribution to society. In the Gaza strip, high rates of unemployment mean that many children live below the poverty line, affecting their access to quality educational or vocational training. This is particularly significant for children with disabilities. Over half of children in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank rely on some form of external assistance.





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10-year-old Hamam AlMadbouh looks through the magnifying glass block he uses as a reading aid in class, at Blind Charitable Society School in the city of Hebron, in the West Bank.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Damian Rance | drance@unicef.org

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