



## gaza field office at a glance

### Gaza in Figures

- Total area: 365 sq km
- Palestine refugee population: over 1.2 million (total population 1.6 million)
- Palestine refugees aged 0 - 17 in 2012: 43 per cent
- Palestine refugee population estimate in 2020: 1.6 million (total population 2.1 million)
- Population density: over 4,500 people per sq km
- Projected population density in 2020: over 5,830 per sq km

### UNRWA Gaza in Figures

- Over 12,000 area staff
- 35 international staff
- 260 UNRWA installations
- 2012 UNRWA core services, emergency and projects expenditure: 406 million USD

### What we do

The core of UNRWA's work is characterised by respect for the needs and best interests of Palestine refugees as well as upholding the principles and standards of the United Nations. In the small coastal enclave that is the Gaza Strip, UNRWA – the largest humanitarian organisation on the ground – is responsible for supporting over 1.2 million refugees, more than 70 per cent of Gaza's total population. UNRWA will continue to play its unique role in advocating and providing for the human development and humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees.

Over the last decade, the socio-economic situation in Gaza has been in steady decline, reaching crisis levels, primarily due to the ongoing blockade that was imposed in June of 2007. Enforcement of the blockade has negatively affected key sectors of society: employment, trade, education and health care. Years of economic deterioration have left the vast majority of the population unemployed or underemployed and dependent on international assistance as a result.

As the United Nations Country Team in the occupied Palestine territory cites in their report, Gaza in 2020, the area will be nearly uninhabitable by 2020 if the blockade is not lifted and the everyday life for Palestine refugees does not significantly improve.

### Supporting a brighter future

UNRWA's top priority is fulfilling refugees' right to education, by providing quality schooling to children in grades 1-9. In 245 UNRWA operated schools throughout the Gaza Strip, over 225,000 students are given the opportunity to realise their full potential with a curriculum covering subjects such as Arabic, English, mathematics, science and social studies. There is also a dedicated Human Rights programme in all UNRWA schools grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and focused on promoting tolerance and conflict resolution.

- UNRWA operates 245 schools, 86 per cent operating on a double shift basis during the 2012-13 school year, with one school in the morning and one in the afternoon in the same building
- There are an average of 38 pupils per classroom

### Feeding those in need

Food security in Gaza is a constant challenge for UNRWA's beneficiaries. Some 827,000 refugees now depend on the Agency for food assistance. Despite good efforts, this assistance is still not enough to guarantee food security to all of our beneficiaries, as assistance is undermined by the blockade, high food prices, persistently high unemployment and low wages.

- Nearly 384,000 abject poor refugees in Gaza cannot meet basic food needs and live on less than 1.50 USD per day
- Over 442,000 absolute poor refugees live on less than 3.65 USD per day
- School feeding reaches 225,000 UNRWA students across Gaza



## Empowering entrepreneurs

Through our Microfinance programme, the Agency offers seven credit initiatives including Solidarity Group Lending, which targets micro-enterprises owned by women. The programme is the largest financial intermediary to the small business and micro-enterprise sector in Gaza and the largest microfinance institution in Palestine.

- Between its establishment in 1991 and December of 2012, over 100,000 loans valued at 115 million USD have been provided in Gaza
- Women micro-entrepreneurs account for 49 per cent of the total number of loans issued

## Creating job opportunities

In Gaza, the blockade has decimated the private sector, resulting in astonishingly high unemployment rates. Imports are severely limited, exports are virtually banned and access to agricultural land and fishing areas is restricted by Israel along land borders and through a naval blockade on the sea, severely limiting fishing opportunities. UNRWA's Job Creation Programme (JCP) is one of the most effective means that we can use to offer the people of Gaza the opportunity for a livelihood, to support communities we serve, and to stabilize struggling businesses.

- UNRWA's expenditure in Gaza amounted to 406 million USD in 2012, generating 21,000 jobs – 13,000 regular jobs with the Agency, 3,000 cash for work positions, and 5,000 through construction programmes
- In 2012, over 11,000 refugees received jobs under JCP; over 15,000 are expected to receive jobs in 2013

## Promoting wellness

Ensuring our beneficiaries have access to quality healthcare is a major focus of the Agency. Recently, our 21 primary health centres shifted to a Family Health Team Approach, which is a collaborative way of providing primary health care to Palestine refugees in Gaza. The team approach brings together family physicians, nurses and midwives to coordinate the best patient care possible for the whole family. This approach focuses on the personal relationship between patient and provider, creating greater continuity of care and leading to healthier families overall.

- 87 per cent of refugees access UNRWA health services
- In 2012 there were over 4.4 million patient consultations

## Healing the community

UNRWA recognises the importance of helping the community to overcome the wounds of perpetual conflict and violence that are not always visible, as well as the daily stress of isolated life under blockade. The Community Mental Health Programme (CMHP) was established in 2005

to assist Palestine refugees who were struggling to cope with the deteriorating conditions in Gaza.

- The programme encourages the development of constructive coping strategies and promotes mental well being
- In recognition of the impact of the November 2012 escalation, CMHP provided 188 short term surge counsellors in addition to the 240 full time counsellors

## Empowering women

Women play a crucial role in every society, and as such, UNRWA has implemented the Gender Initiative since 2007. This comprehensive initiative is designed to improve the capacity of women to exercise freedom of choice, take advantage of opportunities for personal and professional development, and to address inequality at all levels of social, economic and political life. Due to the pressure of daily life in Gaza under blockade, there has been a rise in gender based violence (GBV), which UNRWA is working to tackle. The Gender Initiative, in conjunction with the Community Mental Health Programme and the Relief and Social Services Programme, has created the GBV Referral System, a multi-sectoral approach, where women have been able to find the healthcare they need, as well as legal and psychosocial support.

- Over 90,000 women in Gaza have been supported through the gender initiative to date, including partnerships with 30 community based organisations that support women across the Gaza Strip

## Investing in Gaza's infrastructure

The decades of conflict, nearly seven years of blockade and two major, violent escalations in five years have destroyed much of Gaza's infrastructure, which had already been crumbling prior to conflict. UNRWA is working to help Gaza recover and improve the quality of life for our beneficiaries on a constant basis. From our recovery and reconstruction efforts to work on water and sanitation, the Agency is making a positive investment in Gaza's future through infrastructure.

- Since UNRWA's Recovery and Reconstruction Plan was developed in 2009, out of a planned 100 schools, 10,000 housing units, and 2 health centres, 1945 housing units, 27 new schools and 4 health centres have been completed to date with full implementation expected by the end of 2015
- In 2012, it costs UNRWA an additional 5 million USD to comply with Israeli imposed regulations and subsequent delays on the import of goods into Gaza because of the blockade



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5.2 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.