

Rapid Needs Assessment Report Education Cluster

Lead Agencies: Cluster Co-lead agencies, UNICEF and Save the Children

Partners: UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, WFP, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Tamer Institute, International Medical Corps, Relief International and Islamic Relief.

Source of Secondary Information:

1. Ministry of Education in Gaza.
2. UNDP/PAPP –Gaza Office: Damaged Schools.
3. Web site: <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabID=3778&lang=en>
4. UNESCO: Assessment for higher education.
5. Preschools/Kindergarten information.

Tools and Methodology:

1. Rapid Assessment form developed by Save the Children and the education cluster members
2. Site visits conducted by UNDP engineering team to assess extent and nature of damage to school buildings
3. Telephone calls conducted by UNICEF
4. Individual meetings and sector working group meetings conducted by UNICEF

Assessment Results:

The rapid assessment team comprised of UNICEF and Save the Children teams from Gaza. 56% of the population of Gaza consists of children, thereby making children and youth the primary victims of the recent conflict. The education sector is serving approximately 450,000 children and adolescents, through 373 government schools (230 premises), 221 UNRWA schools (119 premises) and 36 private schools.

The main findings in the Education Sector Rapid Assessment were:

- A total of **447,609** children and adolescents have been impacted by the recent conflict. The break up of this number is 237,202 students in government schools grade (1-12); 198,268 students in UNRWA schools in grade (1-9), 12,139 students in private schools (Source: MoEHE).
- **245** schools (government, private and kindergarten) were severely or partially damaged. Out of this, 8 government schools were severely damaged and approximately 156 government schools were partially damaged, two private schools were severely damaged and 12 private schools were partially damaged, 8 kindergartens were severely damaged and 60 were partially damaged (out of 220 ECD institutions licensed by MoEHE), refer to attached Annex 1.
- Initial reports suggest that **98 students and 16 teachers** were killed in North Gaza. **320** students have been injured. Further information is still needed from the MoEHE or other sources.
- The number of injuries also suggests that there are a significant number of children with disabilities or with special needs within the educational system.

- The recent conflict has had a profound impact on the mental health of children and their families and educational staff, with many reporting psychosocial distress, nightmares and fear. There is currently a shortage of school counselors and psychosocial programmes that can adequately address the psychosocial support needs of children in schools.
- There is currently a shortage of textbooks, school stationery and equipments, student supplies (school bags, uniforms, stationary) and furniture as many of these items were destroyed during the conflict.

The main findings in the Preschool sub-sector were:

- Save the Children teams carried out assessments in six localities in North and South Gaza and Gaza city. Approximately **2,176 children** are attending **14 preschools** in these areas.
- Almost 90% of preschool aged children had started attending school at the time of the assessment with only 1 preschool being used as a shelter in South Gaza.
- 10 schools were partially damaged and 5 did not have adequate water and sanitation facilities.
- 14 schools did not have school counselors or access to any type of health support
- The key factors affecting attendance in preschools were displacement and damage to homes, injuries caused during the conflict, psychosocial distress and fear causing children to refuse to be separated from parents to attend school.

The **immediate needs** as identified through the assessment are:

- Repair of existing buildings
- Provision of alternative education spaces (in existing structures)
- Provision of alternative education spaces (new, temporary structures)
- Provision of school equipment (blackboards, furniture)
- Distribution of teaching/learning material (stationary, textbooks)
- Distribution of recreation material (sports equipment)
- Training and capacity building of education personnel
- Coordination and capacity building of agency staff
- Psychosocial support (this would refer to specific psychosocial programmes and courses, though all of the above provide psychosocial support)
- School feeding
- UXO awareness campaign
- Development of safe and child-friendly schools

Although the rapid assessment was limited in scope and coverage due to time and logistical constraints, it provides an overview of the status of education in the immediate aftermath and the physical and psychological impact of the recent conflict. It also provides a good foundation for planning certain response activities based on the immediate needs identified by school personnel, parents and children.

Dated: 30 January 2009