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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



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Note from the Humanitarian Coordinator

The nature and scope of humanitarian needs in oPt have changed little in recent years. It is estimated that over 2.3 million Palestinians (out of a population of 4.4 million) are vulnerable due to a range of factors, including restrictions applied in the context of the ongoing occupation, the recurrent break up of hostilities, the internal Palestinian political divisions, and natural disasters.

In this context, during 2013 the ERF continued to play a critical role in supporting humanitarian interventions, saving lives, preventing further erosion of livelihood and coping mechanisms, ensuring access to basic services, and preventing forced displacement. The fund worked with cluster coordinators and improved the timeliness of response to emergencies in the oPt.

The November 2012 escalation in hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel (Operation Pillar of Defense) generated a range of urgent humanitarian needs. Parts of these needs were addressed by the ERF, which in 2013 approved projects for a total of US\$ 1.66 million.

Additionally, in January and December 2013, two winter storms, among the strongest recorded in recent decades, struck the oPt. A total of 29 projects addressing needs triggered by these events, valued at US\$ 6.44 million, were approved by the ERF in 2013 and early 2014. The fund proved a flexible and efficient tool to start responding within two days upon the submission of applications.

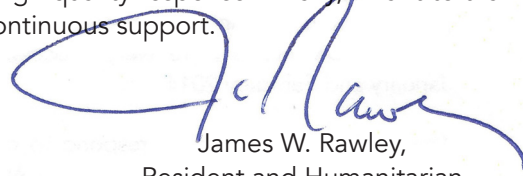
The fund was also used to respond to critical needs in Area C of the West Bank, specifically in the Jordan valley south Hebron and closed areas behind the barrier where access of Palestinians is most restricted.

In the funding of these interventions, the ERF continued to increase the participation of national NGOs. In 2013, 69 per cent of the funds were channeled through national NGOs either directly (38 per cent) or in partnership with international NGOs (31 per cent). I am pleased to report that the ERF has increasingly become a tool for effective coordination in close cooperation with the clusters, from needs assessment, to the establishment of priorities, the identification of the right implementing partners, coordination with line Ministries, to monitoring. Synergies between the ERF team, the Review Board and the Cluster coordinators have improved in 2013 making the system more predictable and accountable.

Following an ERF Advisory Board discussion last year, I am examining the possibility of expanding the ERF focus to better align to the Strategic Response Plan (SRP), including the possibility of covering critical priorities that remain underfunded. This will increase predictability and streamline donor contributions while maintaining the critical emergency response component of the fund.

I am also committed to take serious note of the gender analysis of ERF projects from 2013 that was undertaken by the Gender Adviser deployed to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). We are investing to strengthen gender mainstreaming measures and quality assurance for ERF funded projects in 2014.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the ERF donors (Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland), who in 2013 generously contributed nearly US\$ 6 million. I also want to thank the Review Board and cluster coordinators for their commitment and dedication which enabled ERF to reach the people in need, and ensure a high quality response. Finally, I want to thank OCHA /ERF management for their professionalism and continuous support.



James W. Rawley,
Resident and Humanitarian
Coordinator

Executive Summary

During 2013, the longstanding protection crisis affecting people across the oPt has continued to undermine their ability to live normal and self-sustaining lives. The impact of policies and practices related to the Israeli occupation was exacerbated by an escalation in hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel in late 2012, as well as by two winter storms in January and December 2013. The bulk of ERF projects approved in 2013 addressed the impact of these exacerbating factors.

In November 2012, a large Israeli military offensive, 'Operation Pillar of Defense', was launched in the Gaza Strip and lasted for eight days, affecting the civilian population. During this round of violence and in its aftermath, the ERF approved 10 projects for a total cost of over US\$ 1.66 million to address a range of urgent humanitarian needs triggered by the hostilities. The approved projects include psychosocial support for the most vulnerable including persons with disabilities, women and children as well as to immediately repair affected schools, homes and greenhouses.

Moreover, the mobilization of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) after the November hostilities played an important role in addressing the most pressing needs in a complementary way to the ERF. Throughout the process of identifying needs and determining priorities for response, the cluster system in the oPt played a critical role in using the CERF and the ERF in a coordinated manner. The CERF application consisted of eight projects for a total of \$8.2 million in priority clusters of Protection (including shelter), Health and WASH.

In the winter storm of January 2013, the Gaza Strip experienced five days of intense rains, resulting in flooded neighborhoods, and damaging thousands of households and agricultural infrastructures. The ERF approved five projects for US\$ 1.09 million to address needs that emerged in this context. Most projects submitted in response to the winter storm of December 2013 were processed in January and February 2014.

The fund was also used to respond to critical needs mainly in emergency shelter in Area C of the West Bank, including the Jordan valley, south Hebron area and closed areas behind the barrier.

Overall, during 2013, a total of 30 project proposals were submitted to the ERF for a total amount of US\$ 6.1 million, of which 21 for nearly US\$ 4 million were approved. Almost 1.4 million people benefited from ERF funded projects in 2013 (19.5% girls, 21 % women, 19.5 boys and 40% men).

Of the 21 projects approved in 2013, 15 were implemented in the Gaza Strip and 6 in the West Bank. Of the six projects approved in the West Bank, four were for Agriculture; one was for Health; and one for Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items. These projects were implemented in Area C of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the closed areas between the Barrier and the Green line. Of the 15 projects implemented in the Gaza Strip, four were for Agriculture; four for Protection; three for WASH interventions, two for Health; and one each for the Non-Food Items and the Education sectors. Overall, the Agriculture sector was the largest recipient of funds, followed by WASH and the Health and Nutrition sector.

All projects submitted to the ERF went through a preliminary technical review from the relevant cluster/sector coordinators and OCHA. Winter Storm Alexa provided the opportunity to increase the role of cluster coordinators in facilitating a coordinated approach to need assessments, identification of complementary interventions and partners, and its involvement in monitoring ERF funded projects. Proposals that passed this stage were reviewed by the ERF Review Board (composed of representatives of UN agencies and NGOs) and submitted to the HC for endorsement.

The participation of national NGOs has continued in 2013, with eight projects implemented directly by them and another six in partnership with international NGOs.

In 2013, the ERF received contributions for nearly US\$ 6 million from Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Since 2007, the ERF has received more than US \$32.69 million in total contributions from ten donor countries.



Information on Contributors

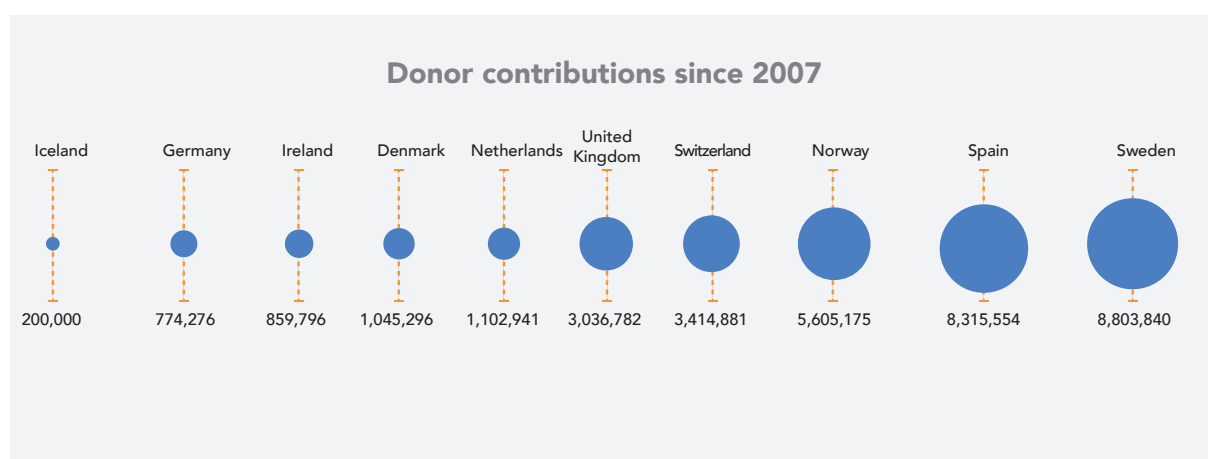
In 2013, donors contributed a total amount of US\$ 5,584,119 to the ERF, bringing the total amount received since the establishment of the fund in 2007 to US\$ 32.69 million. The total amounts of annual donor contributions have ranged from US\$ 2.5 to 7.5 million, with an average of US\$ 4.6 million.

In 2013, Switzerland was the largest contributor to the ERF, followed by Norway, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Iceland and Ireland. Germany and Iceland became ERF donors this year.

On 1 January 2013, the ERF had a carryover balance of US\$ 6,674,550, which by the end of the year increased to US\$ 8,081,861. More than US\$ 4 million received in December 2013 responded to a winter storm that hit the oPt. More than US\$ 5 million were disbursed in the first quarter of 2014.

As per recommendation by the HC and the Advisory Board, the ERF should have a balance of at least US\$ 5 million in its reserves to respond to sudden crises.

Donor (Funding Source)	Total Received Contribution in US\$
Ireland	135,685
Iceland	200,000
Germany	391,134
Spain	391,134
Sweden	447,628
Norway	1,643,115
Switzerland	2,375,423
Total	5,584,119



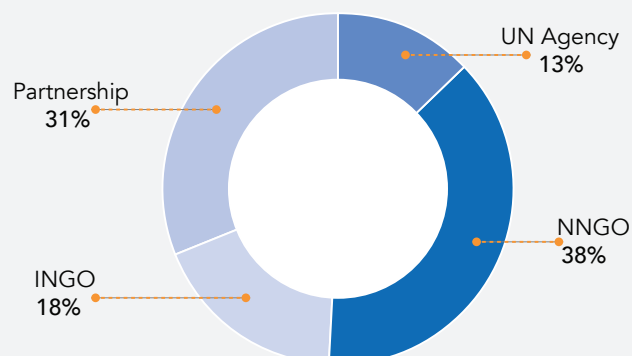
Fund Overview

Summary of ERF Allocations in 2013

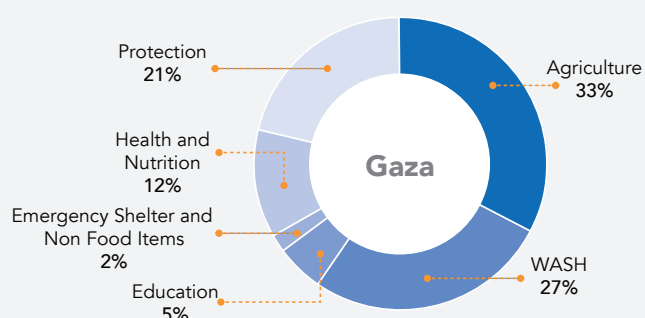
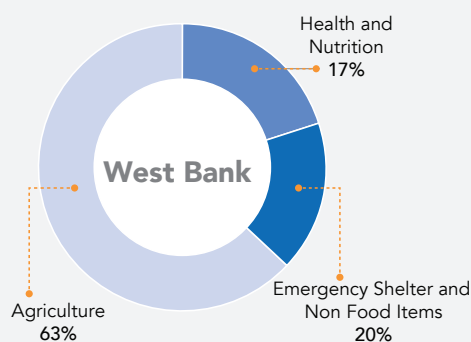
Requested for 2013 in US\$	Carry over from 2012 in US\$	Amount received in 2013 in US\$	Total available in 2013 in US\$
5,000,000	6,674,550 ¹	5,584,119	12,258,669

Disbursed ERF Funds in 2013 by Partner Type in US\$	
UN Agencies	515,070
International NGOs	720,957
National NGOs	1,492,807
Partnership (INGOs and NNGOs)	1,244,568
Total	3,973,402

Disbursed ERF Funds in 2013 by cluster in US\$	
Agriculture	1,674,016
Education	76,650
Emergency shelter & NFIs	302,765
Health & Nutrition	548,886
Protection	589,517.45
WASH	726,273.8
Total	3,973,402



Disbursed ERF Funds in 2013 by Cluster and Location in US\$



Results of ERF Projects per Cluster

Overview of Agriculture

In January 2013, one of the strongest winter storms recorded in recent decades hit the region, bringing rainfall exceeding the normal precipitation for the same period (between 95% to 177% in the West Bank, and between 70% to 119% in the Gaza Strip).

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) reported an estimated 5,700 dunums² of damaged or destroyed greenhouses and open field crop farms; and 660 damaged animal sheds throughout the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, around 3,089 dunums of greenhouses, 16,800 poultry birds, 43 sheep and 130 animal sheds were reportedly destroyed.



Photo 1- West Bank, We Effect , 2013

Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
8	1,674,016	Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Palestinian Al Nakheel Association for Progress and Development, Palestinian Hydrological Group (PHG), Palestinian Center for Organic Agriculture (PCOA), Save the Children, We Effect.	West Bank and Gaza

Outputs

- A total of 2,214 beneficiaries were targeted, i.e. 1,694 men, 327 women, 99 boys and 94 girls.
- Reached beneficiaries: 4,715³

Project results:

- Rehabilitation of 272 animal sheds in 66 communities across the West Bank, which were damaged by the winter storm in January 2013.
- Rehabilitation of 1184 damaged greenhouses in Gaza Strip belonging to farmers affected by the winter storm in January 2013.
- Rehabilitation of agricultural structures, such as cisterns and storage rooms, in Area C of West Bank, in response to demolitions.
- Emergency support to 491 farmers in the seam zone of Jayyous, Nabi Elias, Qalqilia, Tulkarm, Azun Atma and Habla by providing fuel to 13 wells, to support their farming activities during the summer.

ERF's added value to the response:

- Rapid response to damages in agriculture caused by extreme weather conditions:
The animal shelter response funded by the ERF was critical to preventing additional deaths of animals and reducing the risk of fatality among new-borns, which prevents the further erosion of agricultural assets.
Similarly, greenhouse rehabilitation in Gaza prevented the loss of an entire season's crops, a scenario that could have caused severe consequences in an already fragile food security situation.
In addition to a significant reduction in irrigation costs (estimated at 58 per cent), the two projects focusing on the closed area behind the Barrier included an important protection component that allowed farmers to continue cultivating their land. Both projects are also good examples of emergency interventions bridging with longer term development solutions.

Overview of Education

The education sector throughout the oPt suffers from a variety of challenges: sub-standard school infrastructure and a chronic shortage of classrooms; restrictions on building, expanding and rehabilitating schools; and impeded access to educational facilities for teachers and pupils due to physical, bureaucratic and other obstacles.⁴ These factors often result in a high drop-out rate, low learning achievements and, in some cases, means that families have to move to obtain better access to education for their children.



Armed conflict also continues to have a negative impact on the right to education in the oPt, with armed hostilities and other conflict-related violence resulting in disruptions to schooling.⁵ During the escalation of hostilities in November 2012, education in the Gaza Strip was suspended for a total of six days affecting all of Gaza's 460,000 basic and secondary school students, and exams were interrupted or postponed for many students in their final year. 280 educational facilities were damaged or destroyed during the period, affecting approximately 250,000 students; these included schools, kindergartens and tertiary education institutions.⁶ The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) in Gaza reported that 11 students and four teachers and staff members were killed, while more than 300 students were injured.

Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
1	76,650	Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH)	Gaza
Outputs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 14,608 beneficiaries were targeted, of which 924 were men, 397 were women, 7,307 were girls and 5,980 were boys. ■ Reached beneficiaries: 14,608 			
Project results:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rehabilitation of 17 government schools in Gaza which sustained damage during the November 2012 crisis "Pillar of Defense." This response ensured that 13,287 children were able to go back to school without further delays in their education. 			
ERF's added value to the response:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ERF covered a critical gap in funding in the immediate response and in terms of humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) coverage. ■ The ERF prevented any additional drops in learning results and a potential increase in the number of shifts per school, in an already severely challenged educational system. 			

Overview of Emergency Shelter and Non Food Items

The economic and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip had been deteriorating and was chronically strained due to more than five years of the blockade, closure of illegal tunnels with Egypt, a marked reduction in the operation of the Rafah crossing, and the continuing impact of and recovery from the 2008 Israeli Military Operation "Cast Lead." Displacement in this context has been particularly severe. Moreover, continuously growing housing shortage, driven by the rapid natural population growth, cannot be accommodated due to the lack of building materials or financial capacity to procure them. This has resulted in widespread difficulties for Gaza residents to access their right to adequate housing. Prior to the 2012 military operation, a total of approximately 71,000 housing units were already needed to address the unmet shelter needs across Gaza.



Photo 3 Gaza, PU 2013

At the same time, 5,600 refugee families are living in derelict and unsanitary conditions in UNRWA refugee camps that are in need of upgrading. The most vulnerable families are usually the ones most affected during natural or man-made disasters in the Gaza Strip.

Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
2	302,765 ⁷	Première Urgence (PU), MAAN	Gaza and West Bank

Outputs

- 2,855 beneficiaries were targeted, of which 716 were men, 665 were women, 745 were girls and 729 were boys.
- Reached beneficiaries: 3,476
- Rehabilitation of 62 houses for the most affected people after the November 2012 hostilities in Access Restricted Areas (ARA) in the Governorates of Khan Younis and Rafah.
- Mitigation of risks associated with extreme weather conditions in Area C of West Bank by providing weather-proof nylon shades to vulnerable residents and livestock pens in targeted areas.

ERF's added value to the response:

The fund was critical in supporting the needs of families that have been displaced after the November 2012 military escalation by covering the repair of minor shelter damages. Additionally, the fund supported shelter repair projects in the Access Restricted Area, which was a critical unmet need because of the inability of many shelter agencies to operate in this area due to security considerations. Finally, the fund supported the replenishment of non-food items (NFIs), which are an important disaster preparedness measure in the Gaza context. The support provided by the fund is in line with its mandate to target the main humanitarian needs after the escalation of hostilities and to alleviate people's suffering.

Overview of Health and Nutrition

Access to essential health services and referral of patients who need specialized health care remains limited for Palestinians in general, but in particular in Gaza, East Jerusalem and its peripheries, Area C, closed military areas, and "Seam Zones".

Health and Nutrition partners (Ministry of Health, UNRWA, NGOs, and INGOs) are providing at least essential primary health care services to 188 vulnerable communities in the West Bank (primarily Area C, Seam Zones and East Jerusalem peripheries) and Gaza.



Photo 4- West Bank - Medico International 2013

The Health and Nutrition Sector has identified priority health needs and classified vulnerability on the basis of the two following criteria:

- Communities with restricted access to quality and affordable Primary Health Care (PHC) services, including victims of violence who need to be referred to organizations with the mandate and capacity of providing protection and ensuring advocacy;
- Communities with depleted resilience who are exposed to current and potential new health hazards.

Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
3	548,886	WHO, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), Medico International E.V.	Gaza and West Bank
Outputs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 55,800 beneficiaries were targeted, of which 24,900 were men, 25,500 were women, 2,820 were girls and 2,580 were boys. ■ Reached beneficiaries is 50,808 			
Projects results:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In January 2013, WHO rapidly procured 38,000 doses of influenza vaccines for the Palestinian Ministry of Health to respond to the H1N1 Influenza outbreak in West Bank and Gaza in order to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals were protected. ➤ Essential primary health care services was provided to 45,300 people in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) of Gaza, and urgently required medications were provided for 6,000 chronically ill patients in West Bank who were classified as social hardship cases in Area C. ➤ Clinical and therapeutic services were provided through different community centers in addition to running a free telephone counseling service to alleviate the effects of the November 2012 hostilities and to improve the psychological wellbeing of the people in the Gaza Strip. 			
ERF's added value to the response:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The prompt support provided to WHO for the procurement of vaccines mitigated the potential spread of diseases and prevented a rise in the mortality and morbidity rate among the population in the oPt. ➤ The Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) was able to provide services and fill the gap of health care needs of 45,300 persons in the ARA in Gaza. It provided drugs for 6,000 social hardship cases of chronically ill patients in West Bank according to the gaps jointly identified by PMRS and facilities of the MoH. 			

SUCCESS STORY: WHO

ERF supports rapid procurement of vaccines for the Influenza outbreak in the oPt.

Since December 2012, an increasing number of patients with severe acute respiratory tract infections (SARI) were reported being admitted to hospitals across the oPt. By 3 January 2013, 600 cases had been reported to the MoH. Of these, 323 were confirmed as infected with the influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus. By 3 January, 11 patients were reported to have died; all of them were at risk for severe influenza disease, including one pregnant woman. The H1N1 cases were first detected in the north of the West Bank (Jenin, Qalqilya, Tulkarm, Tubas and Nablus) and subsequently spread to all districts of the West Bank.

Vaccination is effective in preventing influenza (including H1N1) and its complications. The Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) had vaccinated approximately 25,000 people by the end of December 2012. In light of the scale of the outbreak, the MoH and WHO identified a need to offer the vaccine to the “at risk” individuals as an urgent priority, particularly pregnant women, individuals with chronic diseases and health care personnel having extensive contact with hospitalized patients. WHO and MoH estimated the number of “at risk” individuals who would accept to be vaccinated to be app. 40,000. However, the MoH had neither the vaccine stocks nor the funds to pay for them. WHO therefore sought to urgently procure the required vaccine stocks on behalf of the MoH.

On the 4th of January WHO submitted a proposal to the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) in order to rapidly procure and deliver 38,000 doses of influenza vaccine. Noting the urgent nature of this proposal, the ERF secretariat processed the application as quickly as possible. The proposal was sent on the 5th of January to the ERF review board (PNGO, AIDA, Sweden and UNICEF) and within 24 hours the proposal was recommended for endorsement by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). The Humanitarian Coordinator endorsed the proposal and an agreement was drafted and cleared. Five days after receiving the proposal the project had started. On 9 January 2013, 38,000 vaccine doses were shipped from Egypt to oPt. A further 8000 doses were delivered by 27 January. A total of 46,000 individual were vaccinated.

The quick reaction by WHO and the ERF allowed the MoH to respond rapidly to the outbreak and to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals were protected.

Overview of Protection

The context in the occupied Palestinian territories is a protracted protection crisis with humanitarian consequences, which is exacerbated by the lack of accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Key drivers of protection concerns and humanitarian needs are:

- The ongoing imposition of the blockade and related restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the Gaza Strip;
- The existence and expansion of settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which are illegal under international law;
- Fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territories due to imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement;
- Military operations and escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip. Such conflicts continue to pose a serious threat to life, liberty and security.



Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
4	589,517.45	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), The National Society for Rehabilitation(GNSR), Palestinian Association for Development and Reconstruction (PADR), Association for Women and Child Protection (AISHA)	Gaza
Outputs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 11,382 beneficiaries were targeted, of which 2,333 were men, 3,549 were women, 2,750 were girls and 2,750 were boys. ■ Reached beneficiaries: 11,530 ■ Children that have been traumatized or re-traumatized by the escalation in hostilities during November 2012 were provided with sufficient and timely support to mitigate the effects of the trauma. ■ Psychological support was provided for the most affected people, especially children. Professionals from local organizations were trained, enabling them to provide basic psychological support services. ■ The projects enhanced the survival, recovery, re-engagement, adaptation and psychosocial wellbeing of people traumatized by the November 2012 hostilities. This includes people with disabilities, women, and youth. 			
ERF's added value to the response:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The fund provided organizations with timely financial support to enable their response to a prioritized humanitarian need (i.e. psychosocial support, as identified by the Protection Cluster). ■ The ERF projects supported the identification and referral of people in need for specialized psychosocial support. ■ The projects supported by the ERF responded to the psychosocial needs of various segments of the Palestinian society affected by the November 2012 escalation of hostilities (i.e. NRC provided support to school children, their caregivers and professionals (school teachers); AISHA provided support to displaced women; GNSR provided support to people with disabilities and deaf children; and PADR provided support to adolescents and youth). 			

STORY: NRC

Innocent dreams (Parent, UNWRA School)

"After the war in Gaza, my daughter started suffering from frequent, strange nightmares about her grandmother. She would picture someone killing or stealing her grandmother. I didn't know what to do. She grew more irritable, would lose her temper easily and began to beat her sisters. Then she started attending sessions with the school counselors inside the school to talk about her nightmares. After the 1st session, she came home with a smile on her face and told me that she had been asked to share her nightmare with the group. She said the counselor listened to her, and then taught her some exercises to make her feel better. Since the start of those sessions, I have noticed a steady decline in the number of nightmares she has. After attending all the sessions, she is much better. She is a more confident girl now. Her relationship with her sisters has improved to the extent that she sometimes practices the exercises with her younger sister before they go to sleep. Both her and her sisters sleep well now."

Testimony given by a parent to NRC staff implementing ERF funded project in Gaza

Overview of WASH

The geo-political and hydro-geological conditions are the two major constraints in providing safe, adequate and affordable water and sanitation services to most of the Palestinian population. These constraints have led to a critical humanitarian situation for the population living in Area C of the West Bank and access-restricted areas in Gaza. Groundwater aquifers of the oPt in general suffer from overexploitation and under-replenishment as a result of the recurrent years of under-average rainfall. These issues have together contributed to the underdevelopment and restricted access to basic services for populations in the West Bank and Gaza.



Photo 6- Gaza 2013 - MAAN Development Center

Vulnerabilities in WASH were heightened following the November 2012 escalation of hostilities which resulted in damage to WASH facilities and infrastructure. Additional factors threatening the wellbeing of the residents in Gaza as a whole and the already fragile environment include:

- **Entry of Materials:** Restrictions to the entry of materials in Gaza has resulted in the delay of major water and sanitation infrastructure projects. This furthers the contamination of drinking water by adding to the sewage infiltration that goes into the aquifers.
- **Lack of electricity/fuel:** The operation of basic services such as water and wastewater pumping stations and treatment plants is threatened due to fuel shortages and electricity deficiencies and the lack of spare parts for repair and maintenance.

Number of projects	Budget in US\$	Implementing agencies	Geographic Area
3	726,273.80	Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), UNRWA	Gaza
Outputs			
■ 1,280,925 beneficiaries were targeted, of which 520,144 were men, 269,961 were women, 242,643 were girls and 248,177 were boys.			
■ Reached beneficiaries: 1, 280,925.			
■ Emergency dewatering and cleaning of wastewater lagoons in Bait Lahia and Rafah wastewater treatment plants.			
■ Enhancing health and sanitation conditions in Gaza City through primary waste collection, transportation and disposal in designated areas using donkey carts.			
■ Emergency supply and delivery of diesel fuel to water and wastewater facilities in Gaza Strip.			
ERF's added value to the response:			
The WASH situation in Gaza is continuously deteriorating due to a variety of factors, including the current severe lack of sufficient energy supplies, the deterioration of livelihoods, high unemployment rates, the closure regime and shutting down of illegal tunnels with Egypt, and marked reduction in the operation of the Rafah crossing. Access to funding continues to be a major challenge facing humanitarian assistance. The WASH Cluster has experienced consistent underfunding over the last few years. ERF funding has allowed WASH cluster partners to mitigate WASH associated risks such as flooding and the spread of diseases and to intervene in a timely manner in order to minimize human suffering in the most vulnerable areas of the Gaza strip.			

Project Monitoring

Monitoring of ERF projects in the oPt is a continuous process that involves three means of verification.

The first is field monitoring visits usually conducted by the ERF fund manager (and the cluster coordinator when possible), to assess the performance and achievements of each individual project. The field visit aims to assess; a) the performance of the project in relation to its implementation plan; b) the suitability of project activities; c) the beneficiaries' perspective; d) the adherence of the implementing partner to international standards; e) coordination with other stakeholders; and f) gender and cross-cutting issues.

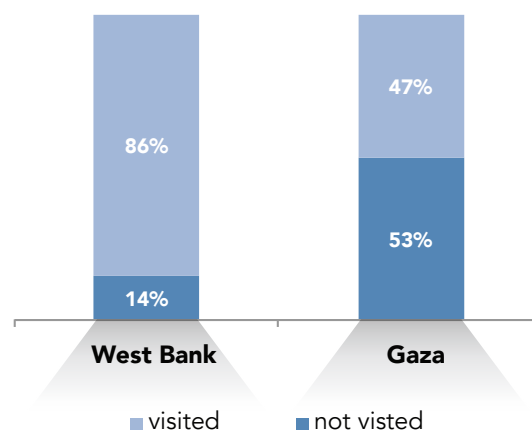
The second means is through the narrative and financial reports submitted by implementing partners. When possible, progress reports are also requested. For projects that require a No Cost Extension, an interim financial report is requested.

The third means of verification entails the contracting of an external audit company for projects implemented by NGOs. The audit report is usually due three months after the end of the project. The company will verify that all financial and managerial activities were correctly recorded and all costs are eligible.

During 2013, 86 per cent of ERF projects in West Bank were visited by the ERF team, cluster/sector coordinators, implementing partners and OCHA field staff. In the Gaza Strip, only 46 per cent of the implemented projects were visited. The visits were conducted by OCHA field office in Gaza and the Deputy OCHA Head of Office. Since May 2013, ERF staff are not able to enter the Gaza Strip due to the Israeli authorities' refusal to issue permits for them.

Two field visits were conducted by ERF Advisory Board members during the year. One of the visits focused on two agriculture projects which targeted farmers whose land is in the closed area behind the West Bank Barrier and whose livelihood had been steadily deteriorating.

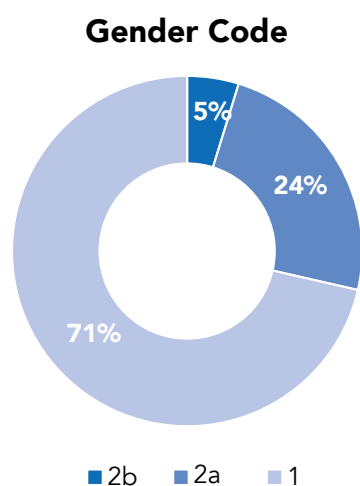
The other field visit took place in the Gaza Strip, focusing on three projects in the Agricultural, Protection and WASH clusters/sectors. The first project targeted farmers who were severely affected during the winter storm that hit oPt in January 2013. The second project supported traumatized people with disabilities to recover, and reintegrate them into society. The third project dealt with sanitation, hygiene and public health needs in 9 neighborhoods. The intervention aimed at filling a gap in funding and preventing health risks that may result from the accumulation of hundreds of tons of solid waste in the streets of Gaza City.



The field visits involving the Advisory Board helped create a better understanding of the impact of ERF projects. The visits also contributed to the definition of a better connection between preparedness and emergency response in the oPt. The links between emergency response and a more sustainable intervention pointing to development were clearly identified during the two visits to the West Bank and Gaza. The Advisory Board provided constructive comments and recommendations which were then included as part of the fund proceedings and local guidelines.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Effective humanitarian response requires a refined understanding of the differentiated impact of an emergency on women, men, girls and boys. The ERF tries to promote gender- and age-specific response through the interventions it supports. It does so through, among other things, the consistent use of the Gender Marker, a tool developed by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) that codes projects on a 0-2 scale depending on whether they are designed well enough to ensure that women/girls and men/boys will benefit equally from it or that it will advance gender equality in another way.



Gender marking aims to strengthen programming and analysis based on the different needs, concerns, capacities and contributions of different sex and age. It ensures the humanitarian response is appropriately designed and targeted.

Of the 21 approved ERF projects in 2013, one project had a 2b gender marker code (the project consisted of targeted action intended to overcome discrimination and advance gender equality), five projects had a 2a code (the projects included measures to mainstream gender in its needs analysis, activities and

outputs) and fifteen had a 1 code (contributed in a limited way to gender equality).

Gender focused projects were in the protection, health, education and WASH sectors. A number of agriculture sector projects were initially coded as 2a, however upon review it was found that they did not meet the criteria.

When reviewing the results achieved by the funded projects, the following observations were made:

Most ERF funded projects in 2013 target greater numbers of men than women especially in agriculture, shelter and WASH projects, while projects in health and protection have more women beneficiaries than men. There is less disparity amongst numbers of boy and girl beneficiaries with the exception of education where girls represent the larger number of direct beneficiaries.

Despite low targets of women beneficiaries in ERF funded projects; the reported numbers of reached women beneficiaries are often even lower than planned. This indicates that there might be a need for specific measures to ensure outreach to all targeted beneficiaries including women, as well as closer attention paid to addressing gender biases when setting criteria for direct beneficiaries especially those that are based on formal registration or ownership of land, greenhouses or shelter.

Taking these observations into account, further efforts will be invested to strengthen gender mainstreaming measures and quality assurance for ERF funded projects in 2014. Moreover, there will be an inclusion of a representative with expertise on gender issues when developing, screening and approving ERF project proposals.

Risk Management

Almost one fourth of the ERF total interventions in 2013 were located in Area C of the West Bank (which cover over 60 per cent of the West Bank area). Palestinians in Area C are subject to a complex system of control by the Israeli authorities. This system includes, among others, restrictions on the ability of people to build and access land. Many of these restrictions are related to Israeli settlements and their infrastructure.

Humanitarian actors, including UN agencies and NGOs, have faced a range of impediments to the provision of adequate and timely assistance and protection to affected communities in Area C. These challenges stem, to a large extent, from the same system of control affecting beneficiaries and include: restrictions on the movement and access of staff; the destruction of humanitarian assistance and equipment; the seizure or confiscation of humanitarian assistance and equipment; the harassment, detention or arrest of humanitarian workers; and lack of effective coordination with the Israeli military and civilian authorities. These restrictions invariably increase the cost of delivering assistance and services, decrease the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian operations and, most significantly, deny some of the most vulnerable communities' access to the protection and assistance they desperately need.

In 2012 and 2013, there were 35 incidents where humanitarian assistance provided through five ERF-funded projects was seized (3 incidents affecting 38 people) or destroyed (12 incidents affecting 156 people) by the Israeli authorities for a total cost of almost US\$ 173,000. In addition there were 11 cases of structures placed at risk of destruction affecting 171 people. In 2013 alone, 103 donor-funded structures were demolished (including shelters, WASH related structures -cisterns & latrines-, structures related to livestock, electricity related, roads, etc.) on grounds that they lacked Israeli-issued building permits.

There is an increased concern about pressure put on humanitarian staff and contractors when delivering humanitarian assistance in Area C. Humanitarian actors face a range of restrictions on their movement and access to and within Area C, in particular Seam Zones and closed military zones (including 'firing zones'). These include the requirement for application for written "permits" or "prior coordination" for accessing certain areas and communities. In 2013, there are five reports of personnel or contractors detained, arrested and harassed while delivering assistance or for accessing closed military areas where the communities in need are located. In some occasions, humanitarian workers have been threatened with criminal prosecution for conducting humanitarian activities in Area C without a permit, or threatened with nonrenewal of work permits. These restrictions invariably impose unnecessary delays on, and increase the costs of, delivering assistance and essential services, decrease the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian operations and, most significantly, deny some of the most vulnerable communities' access to the protection and assistance that they desperately need. The Humanitarian Coordinator has followed up on the reported cases of impediment of the humanitarian action with the relevant Israeli authorities and international partners.

Humanitarian operations in the Gaza Strip continue to be affected by a volatile security situation, a heavily militarized context and the accumulated impact of the blockade imposed by Israel. In November 2012, hostilities in Gaza resulted in emergency needs that were better responded to by national actors as they were able to access more areas and use their integrated connection with the society. The ability of important humanitarian donors to support projects in Gaza continued to be affected by their own domestic legislation on anti-terrorism, which prohibits contact with the de facto authorities in Gaza.

Strategies for treating risks were developed through a risk management framework prepared by the ERF secretariat and endorsed by the HC and ERF Advisory Board. The framework includes the following mitigating strategies:

- Increase advocacy with the host authorities (in this case the Occupying Power) as to the negative consequences of restricting the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Remind the host authorities to their obligations under international law to facilitate the delivery of aid.
- OCHA field staff with access permits to take on responsibilities for monitoring ERF projects. ERF management structure allows for considerable remote management and good communication technology to link up.
- Link the ERF risk mitigation strategy with the HCT Policy on Humanitarian Action in Area C which details the standard operation procedures for humanitarian actors in oPt.
- Link ERF funded project with cluster response plans and early recovery plans to increase the predictability and sustainability of the interventions.

Achievements and Conclusion

Since its inception in 2007, the ERF has funded 140 humanitarian projects in the oPt. The fund proved to be an efficient tool that increased the ability of the Humanitarian Country Team to absorb sudden shocks. The participation of the cluster and sector leads has on one hand allowed for a more timely and strategic response, and on the other hand strengthened the leadership of the HC and cluster/sector leads and improved inter-agency coordination. Also, and for the third year in a row, the number of ERF funded projects implemented by national NGOs has increased; in 2013, 69% of all projects were implemented by National NGOs either directly or indirectly.

In 2013, the ERF was used three times to respond to sudden unforeseen emergencies: at the beginning of the year to respond to the aftermath of 2012 hostilities in Gaza Strip and then twice to respond to medium scale storms hitting the oPt in January and December 2013. The fund continued to prove its efficacy in being a well paced reserve to respond to crises.

The fund was also used in 2013 to fill critical gaps in the cluster response plans in the sensitive areas of protection, including interventions in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

During 2013, OCHA enhanced its monitoring and evaluation process and improved the flow of information with members of the

Advisory Board and humanitarian partners by redesigning the monthly update to include more information about the challenges faced by the fund. Moreover, the ERF's new webpage included more information and guidance to the applicants. In 2013, ERF globally moved towards a web based grant management system; all correspondence with OCHA's Administrative service Branch in Geneva exchanged through a web based system that enhanced efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The timely support of ERF donors who contributed just under US\$ 6 million allowed the fund to keep a good reserve at the end of the year. This enabled the fund to continue responding to the needs that arose in December 2013 into the beginning of 2014.

Challenges remained in 2013; as in 2012, humanitarian assistance provided through projects funded by ERF was seized, destroyed, or placed at risk of destruction by Israeli authorities. Furthermore, Israeli authorities restricted the movement of ERF and OCHA national staff between West bank and Gaza strip and refused to issue entry permits for these staff to East Jerusalem and areas behind the barrier.

In 2014, OCHA will continue exploring with the ERF Advisory Board the potential to realign the ERF oPt to the global pooled funds policy and expand the strategic focus of the fund to

also cover underfunded components of the oPt Strategic Response Plan (SRP). This will increase predictability, streamline donor contributions, and foster a coordinated approach around the SRP; while maintaining the emergency response component.

OCHA will also work on expanding the number of ERF donors, expanding the number of donors would give the fund a more solid base as the relatively small number of donors currently makes the fund susceptible to the consequences of global financial austerity and competing pressures from other crises around the world.

Using the results of the gender analysis conducted in 2013, gender mainstreaming as a way to increase the impact of the projects on those in need through better targeting will continue to be enhanced and supported through the project cycle in 2014.

OCHA will continue to ensure the continued engagement of the clusters coordinators in the decision making process, which will in turn ensure greater alignment with the SRP and ownership by the clusters. OCHA will work with the coordinators to produce more cluster specific guidelines to enhance the success of NGO project proposals.

In 2014, a new grant management system will be introduced for all the 18 pooled funds run by OCHA. The automated system which records the life-span of a project and alerts partners and the ERF secretariat of upcoming deadlines will ensure real-time flow of information to partners on the status of submissions. It will also enable the ERF secretariat to prevent any possible delays and further improve the allocation process which will increase the efficiency of the grant management cycle, from initial application to project closure.

Glossary

ACTED: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development

AISHA: Association for Women and Child Protection

ARA: Access Restricted Areas

Area C: The division of most of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C was agreed in the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and was intended to last no more than five years. The built-up area of Palestinian communities does not correspond to the administrative division of Areas A, B and C. Moreover, between 1995 and 2000, the divisions changed multiple times following the phased re-deployments of the Israeli military from some areas and the gradual transfer of authority to the newly-created Palestinian Authority. Since 2000, there have been no official changes to these areas

ASB: Administrative Service Branch

CERF: Central Emergency Response Fund

COOPI: Cooperazione Internazionale

ERF: Emergency Response Fund

GCMHP: Gaza Community Mental Health Programme

GNSR: The National Society for Rehabilitation

HC: Humanitarian Coordinator

HCT: Humanitarian Country Team

HPC: Humanitarian Programme Cycle

INGO International Non-Governmental Organization

MA'AN: MA'AN Development Centre

MoA: Ministry of Agriculture

MoEHE: Ministry of Education and Higher Education

MoH: Ministry of Health

NFI: Non-Food Items

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

oPt: Occupied Palestinian Territories

PADR: Palestinian Association for Development and Reconstruction

PAH: Polish Humanitarian Action

PCOA: Palestinian Center for Organic Agriculture

PHC: Primary Health Care

PHG: Palestinian Hydrological Group

PMRS: Palestinian Medical Relief Society

PU: Première Urgence

SRP: Strategic Response Plan

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

WASH: Water Sanitation and Hygiene

End notes

1. As in the 2013 Certified Statement of Account issued on 31 March 2014 by OCHA's Administrative Services Branch.
2. Dunum = 1000 m²
3. Disaggregated data not available for all projects.
4. There are 2,707 schools (basic and secondary) and approximately 1,130,000 students throughout the oPt, MoEHE database 2012.
5. In 2011, there were 46 documented incidents which resulted in damage, threats of damage or other disruptions to schools in the oPt, compared to 20 incidents in the equivalent period in 2010.
6. Education Cluster, Gaza Damaged School Database, 4 February 2013.
7. The number is derived from the exact allocation of funds in each of the project budget lines.
8. Breakdown not available.
9. The number is derived from the exact allocation of funds in each of the project budget lines
10. The last one was from November 14-21, 2012.