

ACTION FICHE FOR OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

DESCRIPTION OF THE OPERATION

Beneficiaries:	Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
Implementing Organisation:	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
Operation title:	UNRWA: Contribution to the 2008 Regular Budget
Amount	€66 million
Implementing Method	Project approach – joint management with an international organisation (FAFA)

1. CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE OPERATION

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides education, health, and relief and social services to approximately 4.5 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Operation will address priority needs of the refugees through support to UNRWA social services delivery infrastructure and staff. The Operation will also support the streamlining process of the Agency's administrative and financial management. The on-going Organisation Development (OD) process is a key element aiming at increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of essential services within the refugee camps. It is expected to have a positive effect on the general outcome of the Operation.

Implementation of the Operation will be the responsibility of UNRWA, being the Agency mandated with the provision of public services in the refugee camps.

1.1. Context of the operation

UNRWA has gradually adjusted its programmes to meet the changing needs of the refugees. Today, UNRWA is the main provider of basic services – education, health, relief and social services – to Palestine refugees in the Near East. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the United Nations General Assembly has

repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate⁵, most recently extending it until 30 June 2008.

The last few years have witnessed growing concern among the refugee community and in the region generally over the decline in UNRWA services (US\$ 200 per capita in the 1970s compared to US\$ 70 in the 1990s). Successive funding shortages and subsequent austerity measures and cost reductions have prevented programmes from expanding at a rate commensurate with the growth in the refugee population, necessitated curtailments in ongoing programme activities, and precluded certain actions which normally would be part of UNRWA's regular programme of work. Most seriously, these measures have led to increased class size in UNRWA schools, rising patient/staff ratios in the health services, and higher caseloads for social workers dealing with the poorest refugees.

The ability of the Agency to provide its services is entirely dependent on sufficient voluntary contributions made available annually. The EC therefore, aims to assist UNRWA to secure its financial resources to operate on a sustainable and cost-effective basis, without recourse to austerity or other ad hoc cost reduction measures, and to safeguard the quality and level of services provided to the refugees.

The continuing support of the EC for the UNRWA is a key element in the Community's strategy of contributing actively to reducing tension and providing a minimum of stability in the Middle East, which would allow the parties to pursue their quest for peace.

1.2. Rationale of the intervention

Continued EC support to UNRWA is an essential element of EU strategy for the Middle-East Peace Process. One of the key elements of this strategy is to confirm to the Palestinian side that the international community will keep a close watch on the refugees issue, and ensure that it should not be aside during final status negotiations.

The proposed EC-funded operation directly addresses the perceived problems associated with service provision within the refugee camps in the Near East. It comes in addition to what is being provided to UNRWA through ECHO-funded humanitarian operations, contributions through the EC's Food Security operations and other ad hoc contributions. The regular programmes financed under the General Fund include UNRWA's education programme, health programme, and relief and social services programme.

The present grant agreement takes into consideration the support UNRWA is receiving from the international community, including EU member states. An added element of consideration was the increased burden on the Agency imposed by the ongoing crisis in the oPT and the recent crisis in Lebanon, the demographic growth rate of the Palestine refugee population, and cost increases due to inflated operational charges related to the security regime enforced by the Israeli authorities.

⁵ The General Assembly is responsible for renewing the UNRWA's mandate every three years; 2008 is the next year the mandate will be up for renewal.

1.3. Overall objectives

The overall objective of the Operation is to provide support to the education, health and relief and social services programmes of the UNRWA. The Operation will also support the streamlining process of the Agency's administrative and financial management, with a view to increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of essential services within the refugee camps.

1.4. Specific objectives

Education programme: to provide, within the framework of the curricula prescribed by the host countries and by the Palestinian Authority (PA), general basic education, teacher education and vocational and technical education for Palestine refugees to enhance their educational opportunities at all levels of the educational system.

Health programme: to protect, preserve and promote the health of Palestine refugees and to meet their basic health needs; to preserve the sustainable investment that has been achieved in primary health care; to improve the quality of essential health services provided to the Palestine refugees, to streamline health policies and service standards with those of the host governments and the PA.

Relief and social services programme: to ensure a minimum standard of nutrition and shelter to the poorest refugees and to facilitate longer-term social and economic development for all refugees.

1.5. Expected results

The principal anticipated result of the Operation is the sustained delivery of essential public services to the Palestine refugees.

1.6. Activities

UNRWA operates three main programmes:

1.6.1. *Education Programme*

UNRWA provides education to over 481,130 pupils in its 684 elementary, preparatory and secondary schools (secondary schools in Lebanon only). UNRWA also provides educational services to 5,856 trainees at the nine vocational training centres in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza and 1,200 trainees in the three education science faculties in Jordan and the West Bank. The Education Programme has been developed in close co-ordination with UNESCO.

The education programme faces budgetary constraints caused by new requirements by host authorities, like the introduction of English language in Jordan for grades one to four, and other changes in the various national curricula. The education programme must also cope with the increase in school enrolment which resulted, among other factors, from the return of refugee families to Gaza and West Bank with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, and the consequent transfer of their children to UNRWA schools from non-Agency schools in their previous places of residence in Arab countries. In view of the special situation of Palestine refugees in

Lebanon, UNRWA introduced Secondary Education in several areas of Lebanon. Also, the education programme must cope with the introduction of new norms reducing the average classroom occupancy rates to 40 for grades one to five in the five Fields to improve the learning environment inside the classroom.

Overcrowding continues to affect schools in all five fields, due to limited resources to fund employment of teachers or construction of new schools and classrooms. Budgetary constraints have led to massive reductions on the maintenance works of school premises; many of the school premises now require comprehensive maintenance or upgrading. UNRWA needs to replace furniture and equipment in some schools where they can no longer be used due to overuse, mainly in double-shift schools.

1.6.2. Health Programme

UNRWA's health programme is community-based, with the emphasis placed on primary health care and with very selective use of hospital services. Primary care is provided through UNRWA's own 127 facilities. Secondary care is provided through contractual arrangements with governmental or non-governmental hospitals or through partial reimbursement of costs of treatment. Two thirds of the refugee population consist of women of reproductive age and children below 15 years of age, thus making mother and child care, including family planning services, a priority area. UNRWA aims to meet the need for a reasonable increase in human resources allocated to adjust the low medical staff/population ratios, which are far below the current ratios in all host countries and oPt.

UNRWA will address new challenges resulting from major changes in the demographic and epidemiological pattern among the refugees with increased morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, heart diseases, cancers, etc. This is leading the Agency to introduce an active intervention strategy for surveillance, prevention and management of these diseases in an effort to avoid the high cost of treating their complications/disabling effects at the secondary/tertiary care levels. The treatment of diabetic and hypertension patients is in line with the drug management protocols of the World Health Organization.

1.6.3. Relief and Social Services

The Agency's relief and social services programme supports the poorest refugee families who are unable to meet their own basic needs. The programme also facilitates longer-term social and economic development for refugees and their communities.

Relief Services division organises direct material and financial subsidy for those refugee families registered in the Special Hardship Case (SHC) Programme. This assistance is primarily directed to families headed by women, families without a male adult medically fit to earn an income and to the elderly who can not support themselves. Social Services encourages self-reliance in the refugee community through poverty alleviation schemes, and community-based, locally-managed institutions and services concerned with women and development, the rehabilitation

and integration of refugees with disabilities, children and youth activities and leadership training.

2. DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE OPERATION

2.1. Duration of the operation

The overall Operation has an implementation period of 12 months.

2.2. Location of the operation

The Operation will be implemented in all areas of operation, i.e. in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

3. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

3.1. Implementation method

The programme will be implemented through joint management through the signature of contribution agreement with UNRWA and within the framework of the EC-UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).

3.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

For agreements with international organisations, all contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the international organisation concerned.

4. GENERAL MONITORING OF UNRWA PERFORMANCE

A Joint Annual Performance Review of main UNRWA operations will be conducted during the course of the Operation. The review will be based on a predefined set of result-based indicators and targets set to them, as well as milestones identified for implementing the Organisation Development process within UNRWA.

The cost of the review will not be supported by the present contribution to the Operation. The EC may use external consultants to undertake monitoring visits in order to prepare technical documentation for the review. UNRWA will facilitate the work of such consultants. The external expertise will be directly contracted by the Commission.

The below set of selected key result-based indicators should not be interpreted as if UNRWA would not need other indicators to monitor the performance of its Programmes. The set has been developed as a basis for the Joint Annual Performance Reviews between UNRWA and the EC (and possibly other donors). The reviews should never be confined to a mechanical interpretation of the indicators. They should be done in the framework of a policy dialogue, taking into account the influence of prospective internal and external factors.

Type/periodicity	Indicator	Baseline/targets
Health		
Impact/ medium-term	1. Infant mortality rate	03: 22.5 06-07: 22 08-09: 20 10-11: 18
Result/annual	2. Percentage of pregnant women who register during the 1st trimester	05: 57.5% 06-07: 70% 08-09: 75% 10-11: 80%
Result/annual	3. Percentage of newly detected cases managed for non-communicable diseases	05: 8% 06-07: 22% 08-09: 23% 10-11: 25%
Output/annual	4. Average daily medical consultations per doctor	05: 110 06-07: 90 08-09: 80 10-11: 70
Education		
Impact/medium-term	5. Educational achievement trends (new indicator to be measured by UNRWA Monitoring Achievement Test)	To be measured by DoE
Result/annual	6. Average contact time per pupil (new indicator)	To be measured by DoE
Output/annual	7. Percentage of schools operating in a double-shift (to be replaced by contact time per pupil)	05-06: 77% 06-07: 75% 08-09: 70% 10-11: 65%
Result/annual	8. Pass rate of students in the national exams in Lebanon (preparatory school)	04: 53% 06-07: 60% 08-09: 70% 10-11: 80%
Result/annual	9. Percentage of VTC graduates in employment 12 months after graduation	05: 78% 06-07: 80% 08-09: 85% 10-11: 90%
Relief and Social Services		
Result/annual	10. Special Hardship Case families' satisfaction with the quantity of current part-food basket (new indicator)	05: 51% 06-07: 70% 08-09: 80% 10-11: 90%
Impact/medium-term	11. Percentage of refugees below the abject poverty line (food consumption poverty line) (new indicator)	To be measured by RSSP for 2008
Output/annual	12. Number of refugees benefiting from the services of the Community Based Organizations (W: women, D: persons with disabilities, Y: children and youth, to be added by RSSP: SHCs)	(in thousands) 04-05: 11W, 10D, 50Y 06-07: 15W, 25D,

		50Y 08-09:18W, 35D, 75Y
Housing and Camp Improvement		
Output/annual	13. Percentage of SHCs, whose shelters are in need of rehabilitation, which have benefited from rehabilitated, extended or reconstructed shelters	05: 3.4 % 06-07 : 10% 08-09: 20% 10-11: 30%
Microfinance and Micro-enterprise		
Output/annual	14. Percentage of loans given to clients who do not have a business licence	06-07: 80% 08-09: 80% 10-11: 80%

Similarly to the result-based indicators, the selection of the process indicators and the targets set to them should be reviewed, and if necessary revised, during the joint reviews. The suggested key milestones are presented in the below table (they cover the period 2008-2009 which will be covered by the second review).

No	Target	Process indicator/Milestone
1	Q4 2007	AdCom briefed on preparation process of Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2010-2015, including on draft UNRWA performance indicators.
2	Q1 2008	Completion of the Monitoring & Evaluation Frameworks as main M& E tools.
3	Q1 2008	Launch of the social safety net strategy and eligibility criteria reform Pilot completed, launch of the new “needs based” system in at least one Field.
4	Q2 2008	Completion of recruitment of Research and Policy Officers for each Programme and Support Officers for each Field.
5	Q2 2008	Data systems and statistical capacity for M&E of programmes and projects in place.
6	Q2 2008	Consolidated UNRWA Monitoring Achievement Test piloted by the end of school year.
7	Q2 2008	Completion of the PCM Operational Handbook, the core of PCM methodology and tools.
8	Q2 2008	PCM competencies built Agency-wide: training started, PCM tools being adopted Agency-wide.
9	Q3 2008	Draft MTS for 2010-2015 finalised and approved internally, incl. priorities and indicators.

10	Q3 2008	2nd joint review of Programme performance Adjustment of targets and indicators. Forward planning.
11	Q4 2008	Completion of the social safety net strategy and eligibility criteria reform. Launched in all Fields.
12	Q2 2009	2010-11 biennium budget prepared based on a Strategy, Agency-wide, by Programme and by Field, and application of PCM and other achievements of OD.