

Health



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I'm happy now and I like school. I like my teacher
Ms. Helen and Ms. Majda.

I want to be a doctor to treat sick people. I like my head teacher.
My favorite subject is Arabic. I like math, too.”

-Bashar Nabil Abu-Aser, Gaza Strip, occupied Palestinian territory

Bashar is an UNRWA student living in Gaza who grew up with heavy Israeli military activity in his neighbourhood. As a result he faced difficulties in school and relating to his friends and family. UNRWA community and mental health counselors worked with him and his family to address his needs.

Health

UNRWA provides one of the most cost-effective and efficient health delivery systems in the Middle East. Some 4,200 health workers provide health care to Palestine refugees in 134 centres across UNRWA's five fields of operations – Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. For 2008-2009 the health programme accounts for \$212 million out of UNRWA's regular budget of \$1.1 billion.

What health care services does UNRWA's health programme offer?

- Primary health care such as general medical checks, preventive maternal and child care, radiology and dental care.
- Vaccination campaigns in UNRWA schools.
- Subsidised secondary and tertiary health care (such as hospital procedures) for registered Palestine refugees in host authority hospitals.
- Family planning services.
- Mental health interventions.
- Physical rehabilitation services.

Do UNRWA health clinics only serve refugees?

- Yes, but services are extended to non-refugees during emergencies.
- For example, during a strike at the Palestinian Ministry of Health in early 2007, UNRWA filled a void in preventative care for the entire Palestinian population in the West Bank. During that period, UNRWA health care staff administered over 16,000 vaccinations to non-refugees in the West Bank.

How does the UNRWA health programme service refugees in times of crisis?

- Access restrictions in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip) have compelled UNRWA to increase its delivery of services to maintain standards of care, through recruiting more staff, establishing mobile clinics and increasing the number of health centres.
- In the West Bank, UNRWA provides mobile health teams dispatched to refugees and non-refugees in 140 villages with limited access to health care due to imposed closures.



A Palestine refugee gets her blood pressure checked by an UNRWA doctor, Deheisheh health clinic, West Bank

- Due to the protracted emergency in Gaza, there has been an increase in the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly in children. UNRWA provides counseling and mental health awareness activities, primarily in UNRWA schools, through its community mental health programme launched in 2005.
- During the conflict in Lebanon from May to September 2007, UNRWA coordinated much of the emergency activities of the crisis and extended its health services to over 30,000 Palestine refugees displaced from Nahr el-Bared camp.
- In Syria, some 3,000 Palestine refugees who fled the war in Iraq receive full health care services from UNRWA in partnership with UNHCR.

What other health-related services does UNRWA provide?

- In most of the 58 camps across the five fields of the Agency's operations, UNRWA also provides environmental health services such as water, sewerage and drainage systems integrated with those of municipalities.
- In 2007, sanitation workers cleared over 65,000 tons of domestic and commercial waste and conducted approximately 1,290 tests on water supplies.
- UNRWA takes a preventative approach to ensure that refugees living in camps are safe from infectious diseases that can spread through contaminated water and unhygienic surroundings.

About UNRWA

Some 4.6 million Palestine refugees in UNRWA's five fields of operations – Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – are eligible for Agency services, including education, healthcare, social services, shelter, micro-credit loans and emergency aid. UNRWA employs nearly 30,000 staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees. UNRWA's operations are financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions from donors. The Agency's regular budget for 2008-2009 is \$1.1 billion, which covers the recurrent costs of the Agency's education, health and relief and social services activities. UNRWA's headquarters are in Gaza City and Amman.