



Credit: UNICEF State of Palestine

MULTI-YEAR RESILIENCE PROGRAMME (MYRP) IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

A WORKING EXAMPLE OF THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS IN ACTION FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR.

The MYRP addresses urgent humanitarian needs while at the same time it works across the triple nexus to bridge into longer-term development and building resilience.

With support from Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the MYRP was designed with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and key partners to strengthen the resilience of girls and boys, families and communities in Gaza, East Jerusalem, Hebron 2 and Area C.

The MYRP focuses on systems strengthening for emergencies and improving quality student learning, as well as critical access to education and protection for crisis-affected vulnerable and marginalised girls and boys.

It has three programme outcomes of safe access to school, quality education and capacity development.

Working with the MoE, the ECW/MYRP is made up of five partners who bring a unique set of complementary skills and experience: Save the Children, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNRWA, as well as implementing partners.

The MYRP also has a Programme Management Unit (PMU) that oversees all aspects of the MYRP implementation.

To date, ECW has committed \$18 million of seed funding to the MYRP for a total of three years between June 2019 and December 2022. The total funding required to implement the MYRP in full is \$34.8 million.

MYRP partners are now working together to raise an additional \$16.8 million to secure continuation of the MYRP beyond 2022.

MULTI-YEAR RESILIENCE PROGRAMME KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES:

The ECW/MYRP is targeting a total of 552,680 children – 271,382 girls and 281,298 boys.

TARGETS:

A total of 818 schools – 521 government and 297 UNRWA schools are being targeted by the ECW/MYRP.

COVERAGE:

As of June 2021, the ECW/MYRP had reached 387,964 children – 189,447 girls and 198,517 boys, including 11,618 children with disabilities.

ILLNESS IS NOT AN IMPEDIMENT FOR EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

FOR SHAHD* (11), A SCHOOL DAY LOOKS QUITE DIFFERENT THAN MOST CHILDREN OF HER AGE.

“ I would rather go to regular school with other children, but the teachers and nurses at the hospital are very kind, and they make it okay. ”

Shahd has a chronic kidney problem and needs frequent dialysis. Because of this, she is unable to follow a regular school routine. Instead, the school must come to her at Augusta Victoria Hospital. She attends classes with caring teachers who come to her bedside and make sure that despite her illness, she does not miss out on the opportunity to learn.

To support children receiving long treatment in hospitals, the Ministry of Education has opened four “Determination Schools” in Palestine’s West Bank and within the framework of the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) in Palestine, funded by Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UNESCO is providing support to all four of these schools. These determination schools provide flexible education to children unable to participate in regular classes at their local schools. The MoE recognizes that children who are hospitalized for prolonged periods of time are at a significant risk of falling behind in their studies. Determination Schools are currently operating in Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, An Najjah Hospital in Nablus, the Palestine Medical Complex in Ramallah and in Beit Jala. These schools all provide personalized education to children receiving prolonged medical treatment.

“The students we teach here are often sad and depressed, and many are deeply frustrated because they don’t understand the reason for their illness, or why they have to keep coming to the hospital”, says one of

Shahd’s teachers, Hiba Sonokrot. “This is one of the main challenges. For this reason, we need to be very supportive and teach them in a different way. We need to be not only a teacher, but a friend and a mother as well”.

UNESCO, together with MoE, is scaling up the support it provides to these teachers to empower them with the special knowledge needed to support affected students, including individualized plans, psychosocial support and inclusive education. This helps children to learn despite difficult circumstances and builds their long-term resilience and ability to return to the regular school system in the future.

It is not only the children in hospital who face challenges. Teachers, nurses and families working closely with children who have a closed prognosis, or a low life expectancy are anxious and worried about the child’s future. To cope, the teachers themselves need specialized training and support to daily manage these stresses. In addition to health-related worries, the children and their families hold concerns related to travel through checkpoints: often they must travel far from their families, who are left behind in Gaza or the West Bank due to a lack of travel permits. This limits the number of supportive family members and loved ones who are present thus placing additional strains on all.



Shahd with her teachers at Augusta Victoria Hospital. Credit: Jonathan Condo/UNESCO 2019

Before beginning her treatment at Augusta Victoria, Shahd had been missing education because she did not want to go to school. Not only did her regular school not have a good support system for someone with her illness, she was also reluctant to attend because of the stigma that illness carries. Since she arrived at the hospital four years ago, however, she has learned to read and write and is almost up-to-date with her education.

For Shahd and the other students at Augusta Victoria and other Determination Schools the future is uncertain. Some of them may face chronic illness for the rest of their lives; others may recover. In the meantime, this flexible provision of education helps to achieve important objectives. Attending classes and keeping up with learning creates an enhanced sense of normalcy and helps build resilience and hope for the future.

KEY POINTS

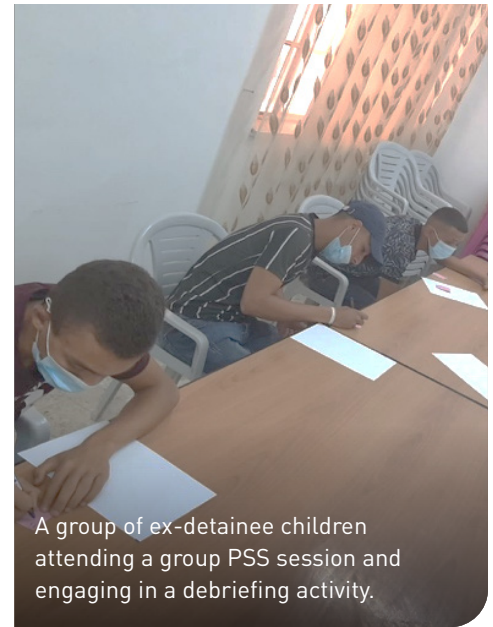
ECW/MYRP is providing hospital-based education to 150 children that are undergoing lengthy medical treatment (cancer patients and children undergoing dialysis) in four hospitals in East Jerusalem and Hebron.

*Name changed to protect identity

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS) FOR CHILDREN

SAMIR* IS A 14-YEARS-OLD EX-DETAINEE CHILD FROM AIDA REFUGEE CAMP, IN BETHLEHEM.

“Samir loves sports, when you [counsellors] encouraged him to join the sports club, his mood shifted, and I finally saw a smile on his face. Sports was always his way of releasing his stress”



A group of ex-detainee children attending a group PSS session and engaging in a debriefing activity.

The camp is surrounded by the separation wall and a military checkpoint. As a result, the camp experiences constant raids and frequent arrests of children and youth. Samir was arrested on 6 November 2019 and was detained for two months. He expressed to the counsellors supported by the ECW/MYRP that he went through a difficult interrogation and detention experience. He was ill-treated and his basic human rights were denied.

The difficult experience he went through negatively affected his psychological wellness and resulted in him being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after his release. His symptoms included sadness and depression, fluctuations in behavior and mood, sleeping disorders, and isolation. During that period, he could not easily socialize with his family and friends and was unwilling to return to school. These symptoms made it difficult to reintegrate back to his normal life.

With funding from the ECW/MYRP, Save the Children (SCI) is providing PSS and remedial education for ex-detainee children and children under home arrest. A key part of this work involves supporting counsellors who are able to direct children to vocational trainings, as well as provide PSS support.

One of the counsellors supported by the MYRP visited Samir’s house and talked to the family about his situation and the traumatic experience that he went through. She also expressed to the family the need to

provide him with the psychosocial support to enable him to overcome the negative effects of detention. Samir’s behaviors and isolation after detention have reflected negatively on his family and their ability to deal with this situation. Samir’s mother expressed: “God, please bring Samir to how he was before his detention, our life at home has completely changed when we started to see Samir always nervous and insisting on sitting alone. If Samir was able to improve, all our lives at home would change for the better.”

A counsellor engaged Samir through a holistic intervention plan, starting with psychosocial counselling sessions to help promote his psychosocial resilience, release stress, restore his psychosocial wellbeing, and equip him with coping and life skills to help him re-integrate back into his community. In addition, the counsellor worked with Samir on the academic aspects of his reintegration to be able to return to school by providing him with educational guidance sessions and enrolling him into remedial courses to help him catch up on the classes he missed while in detention. During the psychosocial sessions, the counsellor noticed that Samir had an interest in sports, so, she encouraged him to join a fitness club and use sports as a healthy outlet for his stress.

Throughout the intervention period, Samir’s response was noted after each session, his relationship with his family and friends improved and he went from isolating himself to becoming socially capable of dealing

with others positively. His view of himself also improved and he became aware of the importance of being responsible and being able to plan his daily routine. He now sleeps better without panicking or being in constant fear during the night. At the same time, his family also noted this change in behavior and was positively impacted with the positive results of the intervention at the family level. Samir’s mother described the change in behaviour since the beginning of the intervention as follows: “Samir was a stubborn person, he did not care about what anyone had to say, and he always imposed his opinion on others. Today, Samir respects everyone who speaks to him. He has become a calmer person, completely different from what he was before. When he took the remedial courses, he was motivated to do well in school because he felt better about being able to understand the subjects.” His mother added: “Samir loves sports, when you [counsellors] encouraged him to join the sports club, his mood shifted, and I finally saw a smile on his face. Sports was always his way of releasing his stress”.

KEY POINTS

Of the total children targeted by Save the Children with PSS, 84.1% reported improvement in their ability to express their feelings and stress caused by the emergency, in comparison to 42.9% prior to the intervention.

*Name changed to protect identity

TEACHERS CHALLENGE COVID-19 AND CONTINUE TO DELIVER EDUCATION

THE ADVENT OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK WORLDWIDE HAS AFFECTED MANY DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF LIFE. EDUCATION WAS NO EXCEPTION.

In Palestine, government quarantine orders saw schools and universities closed and children kept everyone inside their homes. This has presented unprecedented challenges to educators, teachers, parents, and students alike. In March 2020, 1.43 million children needed to access distance learning, blended learning, as well as Psychosocial Support (PSS). 360,000 children from isolated and poor areas without internet connection faced particular challenges in accessing distance learning. Schools and learning facilities also required Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, cleaning, and hygiene kits as part of infection control measures.

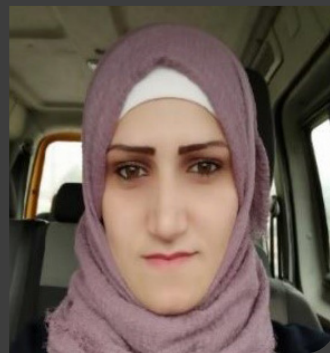
Teachers found themselves under exceptional circumstances that required them to provide prompt responses and adapt themselves to a different set of requirements to deliver education. This happened while they were dealing with the day-to-day struggles and anxieties that came as the byproduct of the pandemic.

Teachers became dependent on telecommunication methods to deliver their education to their students. Social media platforms also became important to remain connected with students.

Furthermore, some challenges affected parents as well, since they found themselves overwhelmed with providing schooling for their children. In order to provide more support to teachers, it is imperative to equip them with the necessary training to ensure that innovative and inclusive education practices are implemented during and after the pandemic. For this, within the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) programme, UNESCO Ramallah Office has prepared a training manual.

REHAM ABU ARQOUB

Teacher



This situation highlights the critical role and importance that teachers have in our societies. Reham Abu Arqoub, a teacher from Yatta/Hebron working in AL-Awda elementary school emphasised the importance of using social media platforms to facilitate communication among students, parents, and teachers when she said, 'the accounts of some parents on the social media networks were also used for facilitating communication with them.'

What's more, a special educational Facebook page was created to publish curriculum lessons and some worksheets, to post students' work and to provide them with feedback on their work."

Some teachers faced challenges applying new technology to communicate with and reach all of their students, as many of them do not have a steady access to the internet. "On the one hand, I encountered obstacles in communicating with some students because they lacked internet access. Thus, I made an effort to communicate with them on the phone." Reham Abu Arqoub focused on reaching students and creating an appropriate methodology to strengthen the e-learning that was appealing to all students studying at home. For example, she made home videos with her son to encourage participation from all students.

IYAD MOUSA ABU ODEH

Teacher



Iyad Mousa Abu Odeh, a teacher from Al-Tawana secondary school, indicated that teachers, including himself, need to dedicate many hours to analyzing and creating appealing content for communicating with students. It is, therefore, not surprising that teachers are overwhelmed with the process, particularly those who are caring for their own families and children during the lockdown.

"I believe that the success of distance learning requires strong motivation, good planning, and the ability to analyze and make use of the information that has been examined". Moreover, obstacles to the learning process are immediately recognized. As a teacher, Mr. Iyad also expressed concerns related to internet accessibility and appropriate information, communication and technology (ICT) training for teachers, students and as well as parents. He also stressed the difficulty to measure learning outcomes and urged for continuous assessment efforts.

It has been used for the inclusive education training of around 3000 teachers in the most vulnerable schools in the West Bank.

Moreover, UNESCO conducted an awareness raising campaign on healthy lifestyles, psychosocial support and prevention of student discrimination, which will target teachers, parents and students. The Ministry of Education and UNESCO are also leading the distance learning task force, established to implement the

Ministry's response plan, which is considering addressing teachers' needs, capacity development, distance learning platforms, infrastructure, and connectivity. On 4 June 2020, UNESCO and the Ministry of Education conducted the first training on setting up online classes from home for about 125 public and private school teachers in Palestine. More teacher training workshops will follow. Teachers play an integral role in the educational process and learning. Their efforts and endeavours are necessary for

the very foundation of all modern societies. The current pandemic has imposed a different and challenging reality that requires the collaboration of different sectors to provide the successful delivery of education. Until the pandemic subsides, teachers will maintain their resilience, creativity and perseverance to give their best to students, student's parents and their communities to prepare them for the future and to ensure sustainable development.

HOW THE MYRP RESPONDED TO COVID-19

The MYRP was the first and quickest donor to offer and re-programme concrete assistance to the Ministry of Education's COVID-19 response. This demonstrates the flexibility of the MYRP funding mechanism, as well as its agility to adapt to changing circumstances. Together, the MYRP partners re-programmed almost \$1 million to support urgent humanitarian response efforts outlined by the MoE National COVID-19 Response Plan and the UNRWA EiE Response Plan, in coordination with Education Cluster focusing on distance education, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), school hygiene and WASH facilities.

ECW also committed an additional \$850,000 to Save the Children and UNICEF through their First Emergency Response (FER) window. UNRWA also mobilized additional funds from ECW to support their COVID-19 Flash Appeal to support Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan. \$80,000 of this funding targeted the West Bank, and \$480,000 targeted Gaza with a focus on self-learning study and PSS.

KEY POINTS

105,201 children – 54,445 girls and 50,756 boys were reached through COVID-19 specific responses implemented by the ECW/MYRP partners.

42,966 children – 20,191 girls and 22,775 boys were supported by UNRWA and UNDP through school WASH and infrastructure rehabilitation.

81,906 children – 42,591 girls and 39,315 boys from 219 MoE schools in the most vulnerable communities in Gaza received hygiene kits from UNICEF as part of the MoE Back to School plan.

370 MoE school counsellors received online training from SCI on dealing with stress and emotional challenges associated with the COVID-19.

1,556 children – 809 girls and 747 boys benefited from UNESCO's provision of PSS through conducting play and drama activities.

2,867 children – 1,413 girls and 1,454 boys from marginalized schools received four months of internet access from SCI.



State of Palestine
Ministry of Education



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