



SOS Children's Villages Gaza



The situation in the Gaza strip continues to be pressing as the blockade is still limiting the movement of people, goods and services which in turn has created multiple crises. The unemployment rate is close to 46% and 60% among youth. More than 70% of Gaza's population receive some form of international aid, the bulk of which is food assistance. There is also an electricity crisis as people in Gaza have electricity one to two hours per day due to fuel shortage. In addition, the public sector is also experiencing a crisis as authorities don't have the money to pay salaries. Therefore, thousands of civil servants have reportedly been referred for early retirement. The financial approval for the referral of hundreds of patients outside Gaza has also been delayed or disrupted severely affecting the health of many people. These developments have impacted the availability of essential services and the livelihoods of Gaza's two million residents.

Children are especially vulnerable in this situation and many are at risk of losing parental care as they live in single-headed households, with disabled parents or with parents with chronic diseases and post-traumatic stress leading to increased risk of abuse and neglect. According to the latest assessments run by the United Nations, it is estimated that 1,500 orphans live in the Gaza Strip following the attacks on Gaza in 2014. Also, the assessment identified 6,000 children as living with at least one disabled parent as a consequence of the attack, and more than 373,000 children in Gaza are in need of immediate psycho-social support.

Operational Update

Emergency Care and Long-term Programme

With the support of the Akelius Foundation the Emergency Response project was launched in July 2015 in the aftermath of the war on Gaza. The project included an Interim Alternative Care Center and Emergency Family Support. The Interim Care Center did not admit any new children after June 2017 while the Emergency Family Support was operational until the end of November 2017.

Since the start of the programme, 162 separated and unaccompanied children have been admitted to the Interim Alternative Care Centre. The Emergency Family Support programme has supported a total of 90 families of which 22 are connected to children in the Interim Alternative Care Centre.

As mentioned in the previous report, the long-term care programme faced challenges in the start-up phase. Therefore, a review and evaluation of the current projects in northern Gaza and the plans for long-term care were made in order to decide on the best way forward. The main findings were:

- 1) There is a continued need for short term care in the Gaza strip since there are no other short-term alternative care providers available in Gaza. However, as the needs of these children are more comprehensive and can't be addressed with short-term measures there is a need to transition from the Interim Alternative Care Center towards a new form of care.
- 2) A more efficient and appropriate use of resources is to let the SOS Children's Village in Rafah (South Gaza) serve as the main Children's Village in Gaza, accommodating and integrating children between the ages of two to ten. The Gaza programme office in the North will be fully merged with the office in Rafah to create a unified structure that better supports the beneficiaries.
- 3) Two new components will be added to the programmes: economic empowerment for women that are part of the long-term care programme and security and emergency preparedness assessment of SOS premises and operations.

Therefore, it is suggested to continue with a long-term and a short-term programme in the following format:

Long-term Care Programme

Family Based Care

Children who lost parental care and have no possibility to be cared for by their extended family will join the SOS Children's Village in Rafah or, if suitable, join one of the integrated SOS families that live in the Rafah community. The Rafah village has three homes that will accommodate up to 24 children from the North. Each SOS family in the Village is composed of a mother, an average of seven children in each house. Considering the high level of psychological trauma that the children have experienced, it is important to keep the number of children per family at a low level so that they can receive the right support and care. An aunt will then be supporting the mothers.

Target: 3 new families with a total of 20 children

Kinship Care

The SOS team in North Gaza is already working with children that are living with their extended families and during 2017 the number of children supported through kinship care was 69. These activities will continue and expand as needed. The type of support the families of these children will be receiving includes: service delivery such as food packages and school transportation and capacity building on, among other, child care and parenting and economic empowerment (see below for more details).

Target: An additional 20 children currently supported through the Emergency Care programme will be included.

Family Strengthening Programme



The long-term family support will expand to North Gaza and the families currently receiving support through the Emergency Support Programme will join the long-term Family Strengthening Programme. They will receive the following support:

- Service delivery (food packages, easier access to medication, psychological support, school transportation, extra-curricular activities, securing registration documents etc)
- Capacity building programmes for:
 - Community Based Organizations and partner organizations (financial and administrative management trainings, child protection and family development training etc.)
 - For care-givers (child care and parenting, child protection, life skills trainings etc.)
 - Economic empowerment for youth and caregivers (vocational trainings, Income Generating Activities etc.)



Target: 450 children and 50-100 families that are currently supported through the Emergency Care Programme will be included in the Family Strengthening Programmes

Short-term Care

For children who are separated from their parents for a temporary period of time or under the threat of temporarily losing parental care, the short-term care will focus on their protection until their family and livelihood situation can be improved. The age of the target group will be between two and ten years of age and, in exceptional cases children up to 12 years will be included (for example, in order to avoid separating siblings).

The children will live in a family-like environment in the SOS Children's Village in Rafah (see photo) for up to one year. During this time, a social worker and psychologist will work with the child and their family to set up the necessary conditions for the child to return home. The children will be followed up for a maximum of six months after they leave SOS care. Their families will also be supported with non-food and food items and, if needed, they will be included in the family strengthening programme for longer-term support.

Target: 50 children per year will benefit from the short-term care

Household for short term care



SOS families

SOS school



Economic empowerment for women

As a result of the insight that in both family strengthening and emergency care activities the majority of care givers have been women and considering the challenges faced by women to become self-sustainable and provide for their families, it has been decided to dedicate part of the remaining budget after closure of the Interim Alternative Care Center to conduct a targeted pilot project to support women with economic empowerment and income generating activities. Beneficiaries will be selected from the ongoing long-term support programmes according to their level of vulnerability and their ability to commit to the programme.

This project aims to enhance the ability of women to take care of their children through equipping them with skills to face the difficult circumstances in Gaza. The project will consist of two phases. The first phase will include trainings and capacity building programmes on various subjects that would allow the women to learn and identify the area of interest in which they would like to invest. The second phase will support them in designing and implementing successful income-generating projects.

Target: 30 women will be part of the pilot project

Security and Emergency Preparedness

Due to the unstable situation in Gaza, there has been a growing need for a security and emergency preparedness plan to strengthen SOS Children's Villages Palestine ability to support and provide security to its staff and the children in the programmes in case there is an escalation of violence.

In order to be able to decide where and what type of preparation is needed an assessment will be conducted. The assessment will include an analysis of existing response mechanisms in the Gaza Strip, possible connections with other response networks, a risk analysis and possible response measures, emergency preparation planning, awareness building in the community and among beneficiaries (including the SOS Children's Village in Rafah and families that are part of the family strengthening programme and kinship families).

Outlook

The proposed changes are not expected to affect the original total budget and the implementation of will begin as soon as the changes have been approved.

Financial report

Donated by Akelius University Foundation, EUR	Total budget*	Total Actuals*	2017 Budget	2017 Actuals	2018 Budget
ERP Program	1 047 514	852 580			194 934
Long term care			310 460	0	** 443 120
Total Donation	1 047 514	852 580	310 460	-	638 054
SEK (using exchange rate at the time of payment)	-	8 201 343	2 949 368		6 252 924
Average exchange rate	-	9,62	9,5		9,80

Total budget/actuals, all facilities above, EUR	Total Budget*	Total Actuals*	2017 Budget	2017 Actuals	2018 Budget
ERP Program	997 632	884 000			113 632
Long term care			540 202	171 034	459 125
Total	997 632	884 000	540 202	171 034	572 757
Share covered by Akelius	100%	92%	55%	100%	106%

* The forecasted budget and result calculated for the emergency programme covers the entirety of the programme while result and budget for the long term care covers the calendar year 2017

** Since there were funds left from 2016 and the implementation was delayed no funds have been requested for the Long term care programme during 2017.