

brussels

unrwa



# eu and unrwa together for palestine refugees

Since 1971, the European Union and UNRWA have maintained a strategic partnership governed by the shared objective to support the human development, humanitarian and protection needs of Palestine refugees and promote stability in the Middle East. At a time when the Middle East faces rising radicalization and a multiplicity of refugee flows in the region and beyond, the role of UNRWA is both unique and hugely important.

Through multiannual Joint Declarations, the EU has provided reliable and predictable support to the UNRWA Programme Budget, which covers the Agency's crucial services in the fields of education, health and relief and social services. In addition, the EU and its Member States collectively are also among the largest contributors to the Agency's humanitarian emergency appeals in Syria, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory, and projects in response to various crises and specific needs across the region, such as the construction of new shelters for poor refugees and the Agency's renowned Education in Emergencies programme.

In the course of four decades, the EU and its Member States have become the largest provider of international assistance to Palestine refugees.

*"With its tireless work, UNRWA keeps supporting Palestine refugees, providing education, promoting socio-economic development and stability in the Middle East. The international support is key to UNRWA: the European Union will keep investing in one of the pillars of its Middle East peace policy."*

*Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission*

## EU-UNRWA partnership in numbers (2010-2016)

**€664  
million**

EU contribution to the  
UNRWA Programme Budget

**€166  
million**

EU contribution to UNRWA  
humanitarian emergency  
appeals in Syria, Lebanon  
and oPt

**42%**

of the total UNRWA budget  
is provided by the EU and EU  
Member States

*"For the past four decades, the European Union has stood shoulder to shoulder with UNRWA, both providing the necessary humanitarian assistance in times of crisis and supporting the long-term human development of Palestine refugees. Today, its strong and reliable support – both political and financial – continues to be instrumental in mitigating the impact of multiple regional crises. It also strengthens the dignity and preserves hope for millions of Palestine refugees."*

*Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General*



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# WITH EU SUPPORT, UNRWA PROVIDES

## Quality Education for Half a Million Children



Every day, approximately 500,000 children receive an education in nearly 700 UNRWA schools. Over time, UNRWA schools have built a reputation for high academic achievements and low dropout rates, while gender parity has been maintained since the 1960s. Since 2000, UNRWA has been teaching human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance, empowering Palestine refugee students to enjoy and exercise their rights, uphold human rights values, be proud of their Palestinian identity and contribute positively to their society and the global community.

## High-Standard Health Care for 3.5 Million Patients



UNRWA operates more than 140 health centres and delivers comprehensive primary health-care services. Every year, UNRWA medical staff handle more than 9 million patient visits. The Agency also subsidizes access to secondary and tertiary health care for lower-income refugees.



## Continued Services and Humanitarian Assistance in Situations of Emergency



In times of crisis, UNRWA provides humanitarian assistance (cash, food, shelter) and adapts its services to continue responding to both the new and existing needs of Palestine refugees. When needed, it deploys mobile health clinics, opens new health points and increases the provision of life-saving secondary and tertiary health care. When conflicts affect children and prevent them from attending class, UNRWA offers the necessary psychosocial support, develops innovative educational tools to allow them to continue their studies – including self-learning materials and television programming on UNRWA TV – and offers catch-up classes and remedial programmes to ensure they do not fall behind.

## Improved Living Conditions for the Poorest



To help refugees meet their basic human needs of food, shelter and environmental health and achieve a decent standard of living, UNRWA provides welfare support to low-income refugees in the form of cash assistance and shelter rehabilitation. It also improves infrastructure and living conditions in the 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps.

## Better Skills and Increased Livelihood Opportunities for the Youth



Through eight UNRWA Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres in the region and targeted projects, such as the scholarship fund in Lebanon and the Engaging Youth project in Syria, UNRWA provides young refugees with opportunities to acquire professional skills, helping them integrate better into the labour market. UNRWA also supports the creation of employment opportunities by supporting the creation of private businesses through its microfinance program and subsidizing short-term jobs in Gaza.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## The European Union supports UNRWA achievements:

Nearly 50,000 Palestine refugee youth are benefiting from **fully renovated safe recreational spaces** where they can play, exercise, socialize and learn.



The **person-centred and holistic Family Health Team approach** is now implemented in all five fields, significantly improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of health services.



UNRWA schools **continually and consistently outperform public schools** by a margin equivalent to more than one additional year of learning, according to a 2014 World Bank report.



The immunization rate for young Palestine refugee children **exceeds the immunization target** sets by the World Health Organization.



Since 1950, over **2 million Palestine refugee children** have attended UNRWA schools.



UNRWA provides basic education and primary health services at a **fraction of the cost spent by OECD countries on their populations** (approximately ten per cent and one per cent of the costs per pupil and per patient respectively).



In 2016, UNRWA transitioned from the provision of in-kind food assistance to a **more effective and empowering cash-based approach** in Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank.



"The European Union is committed to support UNRWA in further reform efforts, building on the important work underway, to ensure the provision of quality core services to vulnerable Palestine refugees. I am delighted that the EU-UNRWA partnership will from 2017 take an increasingly visible form in support to selected schools and health clinics."

*Johannes Hahn, European Union Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*



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# UNRWA AT A GLANCE

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established by the General Assembly in 1949. It is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance, protection and emergency assistance. The UNRWA mandate has been renewed every three years by the UN General Assembly.

UNRWA is unique as it provides vital services that are akin to those normally provided by governments and does so directly through over 32,000 staff (including teachers, doctors, nurses, social workers and engineers), most of whom are Palestine refugees themselves. The uninterrupted provision of such services requires stable and predictable funding to the Agency's Programme Budget. However, UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions (up to 97 per cent).

As a neutral and impartial UN agency, UNRWA has rigorous processes and mechanisms in place for the implementation and enforcement of its rules, regulations and policies relating to UN neutrality. This includes bi-annual checks of staff names against the relevant UN sanctions list and regular inspections of its installations. Through its education programme, UNRWA also promotes universal values and the principles of the United Nations, and a system is in place to ensure that the host governments' curricula implemented in UNRWA schools reflect these values.

By implementing its activities directly through its own staff, it maintains strong control over the spending of donor funds. UNRWA is also audited by the UN Board of Auditors, and donors, such as the European Union, conduct regular reviews and missions to ensure their

funds are being used appropriately.

UNRWA works closely with a wide range of partners including donors and host authorities, UN agencies (UNESCO, WHO, WFP, etc.), other organizations (International Committee of the Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, etc.) and the private sector.



## Who is a Palestine refugee for UNRWA ?

**The operational definition of Palestine refugees is “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.” Similar to descendants of refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNRWA also registers descendants of Palestine refugees.**

## OUTLOOK

Over the years, financial support has not kept pace with increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding needs, deepening poverty and multiple emergencies in the Agency's five fields of operations (armed conflict in Syria and its ramifications in Lebanon and Jordan; consequences of the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank; illegal blockade of and recurrent hostilities in Gaza).

Within this challenging context, the Agency's priority is to preserve the quality and continuity of services and thus to ensure its financial sustainability by implementing structural and operational reforms, diversifying its donor base and deepening its partnership with key traditional donors, including the European Union.



## Protecting Palestine Refugees and Advocating for their Rights

For a wide range of reasons, Palestine refugees often do not enjoy basic human rights, and the vulnerability of women and children to violence and abuse is increasing. To safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees under international law, UNRWA:

- Provides protection in and through its service delivery programmes by meeting minimum protection standards;
- Follows cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities;
- Promotes the rights of Palestine refugees under international law, through the monitoring and reporting of alleged violations of international law and by engaging in private and public advocacy.

## Promoting Gender Equality

UNRWA strives to achieve gender balance and is committed to promoting gender equality as part of its support for the human development and protection of refugees. As part of the Agency's comprehensive approach, targeted interventions are combined with gender mainstreaming to address gender gaps. As such, UNRWA offers:

- Legal counselling and psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and partners with external organizations to ensure access to other required services;
- Preventative measures such as workshops, trainings and awareness-raising activities on GBV;
- Opportunities for women to become economically self-reliant through microfinance opportunities, skills development training and work placements.

## UNRWA and the Sustainable Development Goals

With EU support, UNRWA contributes to achieving the targets set out as part of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensures that no Palestine refugee is left behind.



[www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu)

[www.ec.europa.eu/echo](http://www.ec.europa.eu/echo)

[www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/southern-neighbourhood](http://www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/southern-neighbourhood)

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

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*This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of UNRWA and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.*



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