

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IN EAST JERUSALEM Occupied Palestinian territory



Enhancing positive participation and engagement of children in cultural, recreational, awareness raising and life skills activities at 5 CBOs in East Jerusalem, supported through PalVision.
© UNICEF 2018

With increasing poverty and unemployment, more than 82% of Palestinian children of East Jerusalem live in households that are below the Israeli poverty line. Expenditures into public services are higher – in absolute and per capita terms – in West Jerusalem and in East Jerusalem Israeli settlements than in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. Consequently, the latter areas suffer from lack of parks, playgrounds and classrooms. The streets are dirty because of inadequate garbage collection and little recreational activities are available for children below 6 or above 15.

In addition to that, Palestinian children grow up in vulnerable protection situation: they are exposed to routine violence in public spaces, especially when encountering Israeli Security Forces, Israeli settlers and private security guards. Child arrests and detention including house arrests are a common reality for these families. From January to August 2016, Israeli forces detained 560 children from East Jerusalem. In 2017, according to UNICEF, 729 children were detained or arrested in East Jerusalem alone. Beside arrests, cases of physical and verbal abuse, use of hand-ties and painful restraints, coerced confessions, lack of access to lawyer and to family members as well as a consistent use of night arrests were reported.

As a response to these acute protection needs, Switzerland has initiated a partnership with UNICEF, community-based and non-governmental organisations to formulate a coordinated intervention.

This intervention is based on Switzerland’s commitment to a just and lasting peace based on a negotiated two-state solution. Under this framework, Switzerland has engaged in promoting respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), including East Jerusalem.

The intervention aims at filling protection gaps related to children in East Jerusalem by bringing together prevention, mitigation and response interventions. The project contributes to:

- › Strengthen support and protection services for at-risk children and their families. Prevention programmes are to be established and early child development programmes developed to address the current needs of children under 6 years and their families. Extra-curricular activities can also reduce children’s vulnerability and help build their resilience.
- › Address the needs of children confronted with the Israeli Security Forces, i.e. those under house arrest, those detained for a few hours or those held in prisons. Children and their families should have access to competent legal counselling.
- › Provide and update reliable data on facilities and service delivery gaps, on violations against children in East Jerusalem.
- › Improve coordination among key actors to respond to the impacts of violence, arrests and detention and to provide a continuum of care for children-at-risk and directly affected.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

After having completed an appraisal of vulnerabilities, and a mapping of service providers on the ground, UNICEF has put in place different activities and partnerships since mid-2018, such as:

- Engagement of children in cultural, recreational, awareness raising, life skills, and resilience building activities.
- Provision of safe spaces where children are able to learn and play. It also helps to improve their life skills and strengthen their coping mechanisms.
- Child detainees receive quality and free legal aid and legal awareness. In addition, ex-child detainees receive structured psychosocial support. Grave violations are systematically monitored and documented. At least 80 children have been supported with quality legal aid services between June and July 2018.
- Children in East Jerusalem who are arrested by Israeli security are traced and their families are informed of their whereabouts. Legal counselling and legal interventions on behalf of children who wish to seek redress for abuse and to family members denied the right to visit their children in detention can be provided. Finally, principle cases on selected child rights issues related to children arrested and detained, can be filed.
- Therapeutic and rehabilitation services are provided such as remedial education services (basic skills education).

Enhancing positive participation and engagement of children in cultural and recreational activities to strengthen their coping mechanisms – Burj Laqlaq Community Center – Old city of Jerusalem. © UNICEF 2018



PROJECT IN BRIEF

PARTNERS

UNICEF (contract partner); Palestinian community based organizations, Palestinian or International NGOs; ICRC, OHCHR, UNRWA

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Children in East Jerusalem have improved access to community level child protection prevention and response services which reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience when in contact with the Israeli Security Forces.

TARGET GROUPS

Vulnerable Palestinian children living in East Jerusalem at risk of being in conflict with the law and/or affected by the conflict and their caregivers (boys and girls aged 13-18) from 5 neighborhoods (Old City, Silwan, Issawiya, Jabal Mukaber and Shu'fat refugee camp).

PHASE OF DURATION

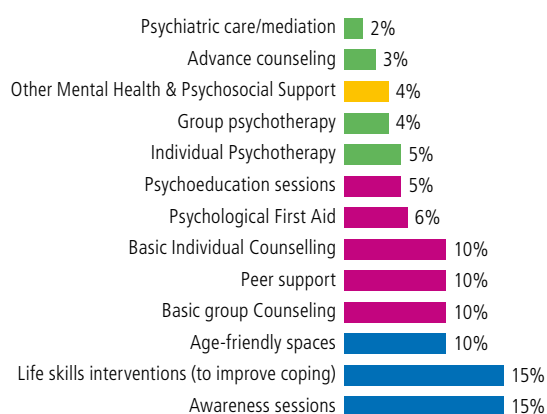
January 2018 to December 2020

PHASE BUDGET (January 2018 to December 2020)

CHF 6'700'000.– from which CHF 2'150'000.– SDC funding

Synergies with other domains/projects: This programme involves different partners, which are supported by SDC either with core or project contributions (ICRC, UNRWA, OHCHR, Human Rights NGOs). It is complementary to other programmes that might be supported by the Humanitarian Fund managed by OCHA and co-funded by Switzerland.

Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support services for children in East Jerusalem



Imprint

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation;
Cooperation Office Gaza & West Bank

Link to SDC's strategy in the oPt:

<http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/gazaandwestbank/>