



A Breath of Fresh Air for Palestinian Youth

A Shelter from the Ravages of Conflict

Inside this edition

- A shelter from the ravages of conflict **1**
- Creative UNDP Design Shelters Environment and Children in One Stroke* **2**
- With Japanese funding, UNDP/PAPP establishes summer camps for Palestinian youth across West Bank and Gaza **2**
- White Helmets' Football Training Initiative** **3**
- United Nations Volunteers Partner with the SHAREK Youth Programme** **3**
- Children Playgrounds **4**
- Summer Camps Initiative **4**

Though there is currently a humanitarian crisis and, moreover, much destruction and despair in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNDP/PAPP is not only assisting in the capacity building of local communities but also in the creation and development of a safe and caring environment for Palestinian children and youth.

Deep in the despairing (or tense) corners of Gaza, in one of the poorest areas in the occupied Palestinian territory, called Al-Shujaieh, lays a glimmer of hope in one of the many youth camps sponsored by UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP). The summer camps are organized annually in partnership with 19 Palestinian NGO's and invariably run from the month of June and up to the end of August. An estimated 5000 youth and children benefit from such summer camps.

Upon recently visiting the camp in Al-Shajaieh, called Isaad Al-Tofola, UNDP/PAPP staff members were greeted with a fabulous show of sports, drama, music and dance, in which the tens of children sang songs for the "love of peace" and a "calling to all the children of the world to live a normal life in harmony."

Mohammad, one of the kids in the camp, said: "I like it here because I can play with my friends, and make drawings." Unlike many of the drawings of the other children, who are often influenced by the traumas of the occupation, Mohammad's drawings are

about his eternal love: "the sea." His striking ocean blue eyes, almost poetically reflect the image of his passion—the sea.

Like many other kids, the summer camp has afforded Mohammad an opportunity to develop and express his interest in art, which is one of the purest of human expressions, especially for a child.

According to Ms. Badea' Faisal, the Principle of the summer camp, "the progress in the children's cultural and educational development is clearly visible." In fact the programme is "proving most popular with the children's parents, who see the joy that the summer camp instilled in their neighbors' children, and thus often plead with us to allow their children to participate."

While the camp's popularity is very welcomed by the staff, this intense demand is proving difficult for the camp's organizers, who have to cope with often limited resources. "We have been expanding the number of participants every year, wherein we now have 110 children," says Ms. Faisal. "But I fear that if we keep going at



Mohammed and his new friend Fatima at one of the youth camps sponsored by the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)

this pace of interest, we will not be able to accept any more children with the limited resources we have."

Any visitor to the camp cannot help but be moved by seeing the joy in the children's eyes, as they hold hands and sing. The staff of the camp stress how incredibly important and meaningful such an activity is for the children, who have nothing else to do in the summer months, and are often deprived of the most basic things that kids in normal circumstances enjoy.

In essence, these successful camps are a way of sheltering the children from the ravages of conflict, where otherwise their safety might be compro-



Children playing in the tires playground

*"tell me, I'll forget;
show me, I'll
remember; and
involve me, I'll
understand,"*

Creative UNDP Design Shelters Environment and Children in One Stroke

Wrecked cars; tires, tires and more tires! This is the disconcerting image that one sees whilst entering some West Bank towns, where people live in an unstable political climate, under the regular imposition of closures. Most villages and towns are grappling with how to deal with the problem of solid waste in such difficult circumstances. The lack of financial resources and in some cases the destruction of garbage collection trucks by the Israeli military, do not make things easy.

This is why the UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, in partnership with the Roads and Environment Safety Organization, used a common environmental principle to achieve uncommon things. It applied the simple formula of recycle and reuse to endless mounds of automobile tires, 1,100 to be exact. Added a little dough

(US\$25,000) and spiced the mix with a good deal of creative thinking and the result is: a playground that will not only rid the world of these unsightly tires, but will also serve almost 3,000 children in Ramallah.

Reem, the UNDP project manager behind the idea, asserts that "this children playground, which is constructed with used tire, is a humble attempt to place the concepts of reuse and recycle on Palestinian society's agenda." For Reem, "while these two concepts are by no means new, we are attempting to exact a change in society's appreciation of the necessity of these concepts in the management of our daily lives, wherein we can create such enjoyable and important social venues with very little cost."

With the motto of "tell me, I'll forget; show me, I'll remember; and involve

me, I'll understand," Mr. Rimawi, the Director of the Roads and Safety Organization, suggests that "this project is an attempt to engage the average citizen in the occupied Palestinian territory with the ideas of environmental protection, which often take a back seat in areas of conflict." "We are very grateful to the UNDP for seeing the wisdom in such creative projects: we value their partnership" added Rimawi.

It is noteworthy that this project is a sample of a series of creative endeavors by the UNDP to address environmental issues through creative solutions. The series includes educational workshops that allow school children to take a leadership role in recycling papers and cups in their schools, and a computer rehabilitation programme, that recycles run down PCs to be used in public computing centers, free of charge.

With Japanese funding, UNDP/PAPP establishes summer camps for Palestinian youth across West Bank and Gaza

Despite the tremendous difficulties facing Palestinians in the oPt, UNDP/PAPP signed an agreement with the Government of Japan and 24 Palestinian nongovernmental organizations to initiate summer camps for youth across the West Bank and Gaza. "We are very delighted to assist the Palestinian community organizations with this very important activity."

said Mr. Mizutani, Special Research-political service representing the Embassy of Japan. "Getting the youth off the streets in these difficult summer times of closure and to participate in such productive educational activities is consistent with the UNDP/PAPP'S human development agenda", added Mr. Rothermel. As a result of the cooperative project, 29 youth

summer camps spread across the West Bank and Gaza will be supported. The summer camps provide an opportunity for youth to participate in an assortment of activities that are central to children's development such as: sports, arts, crafts, environmental awareness, and recreational trips. An estimated 6000 youth and children benefit from such camps.



Mr. Rothermel and Mr. Mizutani at the signing ceremony

White Helmets' Football Training Initiative

The existing sport system in the West Bank and Gaza had suffered from lack of facilities, organised structures and trained personnel. Therefore, the initial project addressed the need for the development of a broad-based sport system in selected activities.

Under the White Helmets Initiative, an initiative funded by the Government of Argentina, a UN Volunteer, Mr. Ricardo Carugat took up an interesting position as official trainer of the Palestinian Football team in Gaza. The overall objective was the development of sports activities in Gaza and encourage the Palestinian youth in refugee camps to more actively practice

football. As a result, there has been increased development of sports activities in Gaza, manual on football techniques was produced and distributed in clubs by the Olympic Committee, participation of the football team to matches in Jericho against Jordan, (during the inauguration of the stadium in Jericho), matches in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. Ricardo has worked for almost three years in Gaza under the UNV umbrella.

A second phase of this initiative was implemented where five sport experts in football, volleyball and female fitness worked for six months with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and with

youth centres on developing sport activities in the West Bank and Gaza. The team also worked with Palestinian trainers and sport teachers in schools and youth centres assisting them in developing new training techniques and enhance the importance of development in the sport sector.

The White Helmets' initiative through the UNV programme had made use of the expertise of nine international volunteers and eight nationals benefiting more than 200 sport clubs in the West Bank and Gaza and over 250 trainers.



Youth enjoying a ball game outdoors

United Nations Volunteers Partner with the SHAREK Youth Programme

Sharek: "Participate" is an initiative which targets the youth in the local community in the West Bank and Gaza who are between 14 and 24 years of age and who are ready to donate and to be committed in a voluntary manner. For the fourth year in succession, the project gives the youth the opportunity to be acquainted with the initiatives and the allocation of plans to be executed and then followed by an assessment that guarantees the sustainability of their developmental initiatives.

Several national UNVs

working with UNDP/PAPP's project staff "Sharek" helped foster the participatory philosophy that young people are subjects of their own development by assisting them in specifying their objectives without intervening in them.

International Volunteers under the TOKTEN programme have also contributed in the development process of Palestinian sport. A TOKTEN consultant with the Palestinian Ministry of Youth and Sports, had worked, for 4 years on short term bases, as part of a train-

the-trainer programme in teaching and coaching basketball and racquet sports such as tennis, squash and badminton. The project had covered the cities of Gaza, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus and Hebron.

Another TOKTEN Volunteer is currently assisting the Palestinian Olympic Committee by providing technical assistance in the area of communications as well as conducting seminars and workshops for committee staff on best management and implementation practices.

"Getting the youth off the streets in these difficult summer times of closure and to participate in such productive educational activities is consistent with the UNDP/PAPP'S human development agenda."





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Children Playgrounds

The Neighborhood Playgrounds project aims to physically establish a number of model small scale neighborhood playgrounds and recreational open spaces in the West Bank and Gaza. The project's goals and objectives are as follows:-

On the Social Level

- Community contribution and involvement in planning
- Social interaction among small scale neighborhoods
- Accessible design and safety measures consideration

On the Urban Environmental level

- Preserving green areas
- Creating open public spaces
- Utilizing natural local resources

On the institutional level

- Capacity building for engineers, planners and technicians
- Encouraging private sector investment
- Employment generation

This project is implemented by the UNDP/PAPP in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government and local municipalities, and funded by the Government of Japan.

Summer Camps Initiative

Area	Project
Gaza	<p>Establishment of a football and volleyball playgrounds in the area of El-Mugharaga.</p> <p>Provision of advanced training by the Palestinian Friendship Center for youth groups who are talented in the Chess game to enable them to participate in championships and train female youngsters in ping-pong.</p> <p>Establishment of basketball, football and volleyball playgrounds and provision sports equipment in the Rafah area by the National Committee for public playgrounds.</p> <p>Rehabilitation and maintenance of public playgrounds in El-Baten Esameen and Khan Younis camp.</p>
Jerusalem	<p>Organization of the 1st summer camp at the Princess Basma Center for 25 disabled children with activities including Dabke (folk dance) making musical instruments, basket weaving, swimming, drama, face painting etc.</p>
Jenin	<p>Organization of the International Volunteer summer camp (Volunteers for Development) in the town of Zababdeh for the period of 10 days for 65 national and international participants. The camp was organized by PARC (Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee) in coordination with local institutes and municipality.</p>
West Bank & Gaza	<p>Organization of 20 summer camps for children between 5-15 years old by the PRCS (Palestine Red Crescent Society) with over 3150 participants and 320 volunteers supervising them. The camps, supported by UNDP, were distributed on 19 cities, towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In four of these camps children with special needs were integrated with their counterparts.</p>



During the year of 2002, over 35 summer youth camps were organized mainly in the rural and urban cities across the West Bank and Gaza funded by the Government of Japan through UNDP/PAPP's SHAREK programme and three of which by UNDP/PAPP's own resources. Among the community organizations that have worked with UNDP/PAPP in setting up the summer camps are the Ramallah Municipality, the Jerusalem Ladies Association, the Palestinian Red Crescent, the Spafford Children's Center in Jerusalem, the Anglican School in Ramallah and the Palestinian Youth Association in Gaza.