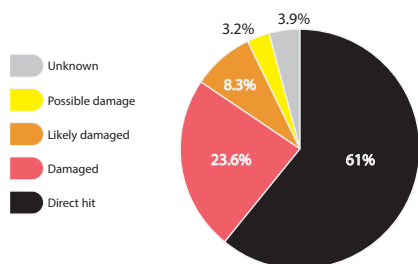
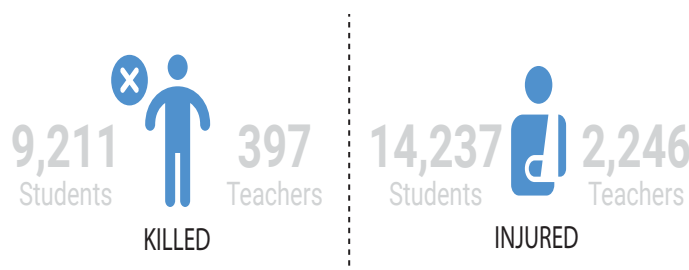


A YEAR OF SILENCE IN GAZA'S CLASSROOMS: THE URGENT NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL REVIVAL

CHILDREN IN GAZA HAVE LOST ONE YEAR OF EDUCATION

As of 30 July 2024, all the **625,000** enrolled students in Gaza have lost one full scholastic year. 39,000 students missed the Tawjihi (12th grade official exams) for the first time in decades. This means none of them can transition to higher education, and the majority of them may never return to school again. In place of being full of children eager to learn, school buildings are housing displaced families desperately seeking safety, when they are not being damaged. Mattresses and blankets fill classrooms and hallways; desks are repurposed as walls and wardrobes, and playgrounds are filled with tents and tarpaulins. This places a massive strain on the limited WASH facilities. At the same time, overcrowding contributes to an unhygienic environment and rapid spread of disease, increased protection risks due to lack of privacy, and damage to furniture and equipment. These conditions have had a significant negative impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of children, teachers, and caregivers, as well as severely harming the ability of children in Gaza to exercise their right to learn.

As of 30 July, according to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) – State of Palestine, **9,211** students and **397** educational staff members have been killed by the Israeli forces, while more than **14,237** students and **2,246** teachers have been injured since 7 October in the Gaza Strip.



The educational infrastructure in Gaza has also been significantly affected with 92.9% of schools sustained some level of damage to their buildings, including **Direct hit**, **Damaged**, and **Likely damaged**. At least 84.6% of schools require full reconstruction or significant rehabilitation before resuming schooling. One-third of directly hit or heavily damaged schools are UN-run schools under UNRWA's jurisdiction.¹

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO LEARN DURING AND AFTER THE HOSTILITIES

Children's right to learn has been set out in international law, including through the Convention on the Rights of the Child and this right remains even in emergency contexts, as affirmed by the UNGA in 2010. The right to learn has been and remains very significant for Palestinian children. However, the children in Gaza are currently being prevented from exercising their right to learn by:

- The systematic damage and destruction of education facilities across Gaza.
- The continued hostilities in Gaza make it unsafe and challenging to establish safe learning spaces.
- The use of education facilities for military operations.
- The required use of education facilities as shelter for people whose homes have been destroyed or who have been forced to move to avoid hostilities.

Moreover, the ending of the hostilities does not mean that children will be able to access their right to education right away. Children need to have homes that are safe as well as being a place where they can study. While school buildings in Gaza are currently providing much-needed refuge in emergencies, lack of alternative accommodation can cause a barrier to access to education after active hostilities cease. In addition, the widespread damage caused will require extensive work (starting with extensive rubble removal) to reinstate learning spaces as well as to provide both temporary and durable housing that supports the right to learn.

Transitional solutions, including temporary learning spaces, will allow children to resume learning and educational activities while displaced and educational structures are repaired or rebuilt. The number of temporary learning spaces required will be dependent on restoring access to existing structures and availability to alternate sheltering options. Investment in mobilizing teachers, provision of education supplies, and children's recreational activities are much needed at a large scale to leave no child behind.

¹ Education Cluster: Satellite-derived analysis, July 2024

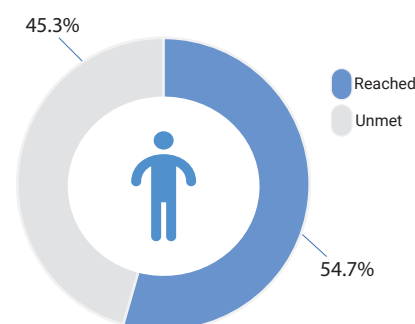
Enabling children to exercise their right to learn will require a significant investment of both human and financial resources. Moreover, a sustained and sensitive effort to support the mental health and well-being of children and teachers who have suffered during the hostilities is also required. The design of learning spaces should enhance children’s physical, social, and emotional well-being. Children, teachers, and caregivers will need significant, long-term, and careful psycho-social support to support an effective learning environment. The provision of appropriate accommodation is a critical component in protecting people’s mental health as well as children’s ability to learn. Furthermore, as so many children have and continue to lose limbs in the bombing of their place of shelter, adapted teaching and learning materials, and assistive devices, will have to be provided in great numbers to ensure children and adolescents with disabilities are allowed to return to school and resume their learning.

Education Cluster Response

It is important to prioritize education in the humanitarian response and provide the required support. This includes ensuring cluster’s partners have the funds to support the immediate education requirements, including protection and well-being-related activities with children. The cluster partners are doing a lot to support children’s well-being and learning compared to the limited resources available.

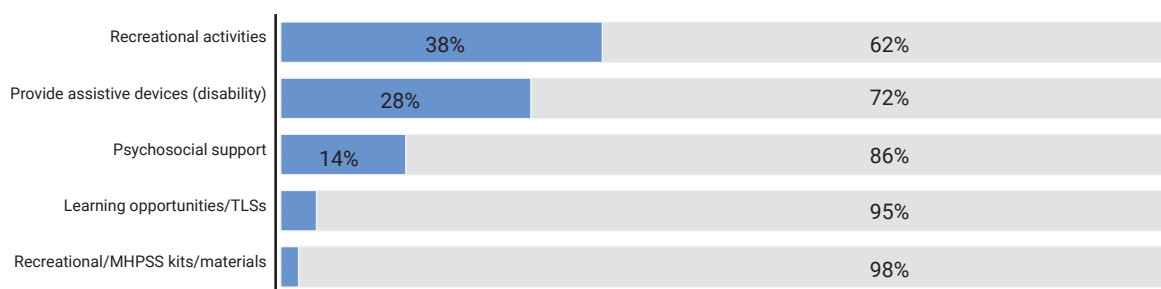
625,000 enrolled students in Gaza remain without access to formal education in Gaza. Since 7 October, only 365,000 children have accessed Education in Emergency services, only **54.7%** of the Cluster target in the Flash Appeal.²

Moreover, over 101,000 children who were accessing these services in Rafah lost the opportunity following the invasion that forced the population to evacuate and the suspension of education services along with other services. Given the several episodes of displacement and exposure to traumatic scenes, the continued absence of schooling in the Gaza Strip has left these children traumatized, with no opportunities for their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Children and adolescents with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and risk being left out of the limited activities taking place.



Many have lost their assistive devices, and many more children will need additional support as a result of injuries sustained in the war.

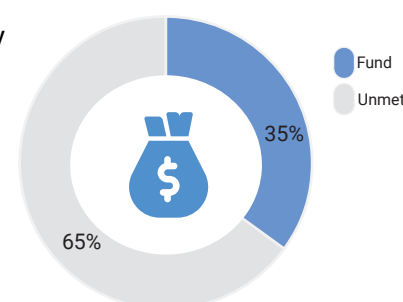
REACHED VS. TARGET, TOP 5 ACTIVITIES



In the absence of access to formal education, cluster partners deliver Education in Emergencies. In the first few months of the crisis, the cluster focused on providing recreational activities, emergency learning kits, and Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) to children, youth, caregivers, and teachers in shelters. In the last few months, the cluster partners have focused on the continuity and restoration of learning in non-formal settings.

However, the current response is constrained by:

- Restrictions on the entry of education supplies, including recreational and psychosocial support kits, which are also unavailable on the local market, are hindering the implementation of critically needed response activities. These gaps are eminent in the temporary learning spaces in the informal sites.
- The restriction of humanitarian access across the Gaza Strip also limits the delivery of humanitarian response. Moreover, Gaza remains unsafe, and parents have concerns over the safety of their children.
- The education response remains significantly underfunded, with less than 35 percent of the required funds received as of 1st August. Unless funding is received, partners’ capacity to respond is constrained.
- Fuel is needed to facilitate the implementation of the education activities. Unfortunately, none of the Education partner requests have been approved. This is undermining their capacity to implement planned activities.





A CEASEFIRE IS URGENTLY NEEDED TO RESTORE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The casualties among children and teachers and the huge education infrastructure damages highlight the urgent need for a full, complete, and sustained ceasefire to:

- Stop further loss of life of children and educational personnel.
- Facilitate an increased humanitarian response, including learning and recreational activities with children.
- Allow children in Gaza the chance to build a better future by restoring learning opportunities.

The education cluster calls for the following actions to help protect the Palestinian children's right to education:

Call to Action to the Parties to the Conflict:

- To cease fire immediately.
- To take all possible measures, as required under international humanitarian law, to safeguard schools to be used for educational purposes and remain safe.
- To recognize the right of children to learn as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including during emergencies as set out in UN Resolution 64/290 of 2010.

Call to Education Service Providers:

- To support cluster efforts in resuming Education in Emergencies activities. In doing so, paying close attention to children's psychosocial, cognitive, and physical health and well-being development.
- To prepare and implement alternative learning solutions – such as distance learning, learning in non-formal settings, and self-learning materials for children to continue learning.
- To establish more learning spaces closer to the affected communities, which requires breaking all odds to scale up the response.

Call to Action to Donors:

- To recognize the catastrophic damages to the education system in Gaza.
- To advocate for a long-term ceasefire and the stop of the war, and advocate for safeguarding of schools, so they can be used for educational purposes and remain safe for children.
- To ensure that the funds needed to support the immediate education requirements and the long-run reconstruction of the education structures.
- Push for Education materials and supplies to enter Gaza.
- Advocate for allocation of fuel to education partners including National NGOs that are directly implementing activities with children.

In the face of a year marked by silence and deprivation, we must come together with urgency and resolve to restore the vibrancy of Gaza's classrooms, ensuring that the voices of tomorrow are heard!

For more information on the oPt Education Cluster and other education resources
please visit our [Web page on Relief Web](#)

Occupied Palestinian Territory: Education | ReliefWeb Response

SCAN ME 

