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**THE INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCY SERVICES  
TOWARDS THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES ESPECIALLY IN  
THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

Master's Thesis

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Tallinn 2015

I declare I have written the master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The topic of this paper addresses the United Nations' services toward Palestinian refugees. It seeks to explain the functions of the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) in Palestine toward refugees in different sectors with especial concern toward education, where it is regarded as a very important sector in society and the first priority for the UNRWA. This paper is based on a functionalist approach rather than analytical studies of a larger sample. It provides a description of the successful achievements of the UNRWA in making basic education free, available to all and compulsory for more than half a million children of Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank.

The UNRWA has many achievements in aiding Palestinian refugees in order to improve their poor situation in different sectors. The UNRWA has provided assistance to refugees through improving education in schools, health in hospitals and by creating job opportunities for many Palestinian refugees. Thus, the UNRWA has been very functional in improving the general lifestyle of refugees economically, politically and socially.

This paper is going to argue that concentrating a stronger effort at the education sector would play a crucial role in contributing positively to the situation of the Palestine refugees for a better life and society.

The United Nation Relief Work Agency contributes positively to supporting and developing the education sector in Palestine for Palestinian refugees. In cooperation with the United Nations Relief Work Agency and the Palestinian Refugees, if they work well then the quality of the basic, primary, secondary and higher education will increase, because UNRWA acts as both a financial source and a means of protection for Palestinian Refugees.

Therefore, the UNRWA shall have a better cooperation with Palestinian authorities in improving educational curricula to be more satisfactory to the needs of Palestinian refugees. In addition, it shall adopt a systematic policy and organize negotiations in order to solve all outstanding issues with both Israeli and Palestinian sides. This would improve the projects to becoming more comprehensive and with no later difficulties such as the daily challenges of the free movement of workers and students within or outside the area of conflict.

The paper will undertake the tough political situation as the main obstacle in the area, which has created many difficulties for Palestinian refugees in improving themselves and has

hampered the UNRWA in many of its educational programs and services in Palestinian territories.

Keywords: Palestinian History, Palestinian Refugees, UNRWA Services and programs, The Educational Curriculum, UNRWA Obstacles, Prominent Roles, Education Instability.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is a subsidiary agency established by a United Nations General Assembly resolution in 1949 after the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to carry out commitments towards many Palestinian refugee groups in different sectors. The main function of the UNRWA is to deal with humanitarian issues of Palestinian refugees who need assistance and are legally registered with the agency.

The agency began its field operations on the first of May, 1950. Since that time, the UNRWA has been struggling to achieve its aims and provide educational, health, relief and social services for all Palestinian refugees and asylums seekers in need. Thus, the UNRWA is not only an educational agency, it is a comprehensive agency which deals with all humanitarian services in order to save people and improve their lives. According to statistical studies, the UNRWA has reached more than 5 million Palestinian refugees who live in five different agencies of the UNRWA. These agencies are located in different areas of middle-east: the West Bank, the Gaza strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. (Tessler – 1994, 273, 465-469).

The UNRWA is almost entirely funded through voluntary contributions made by members of the United Nations Organization countries, besides its own regularly financial resources that come out by its functional operations, in order to follow the rise in the number of refugees and people in need. It is worth noting that globally speaking, Scandinavian countries are the highest percentage of contributors to the UNRWA from their national incomes.

Human rights declarations and conventions around the world are highly respected and supported by the UNRWA through its programs where it promotes tolerance and undertakes the concepts of peace and non-violent communication skills. In addition, the UNRWA cooperates with partners in order to achieve its aim in Palestine and help refugees to achieve their full potential in human development such as the OHCHR, OCHA, UNCT and many donors of international institutions. These institutions have a very functional role in seeking protection for Palestinian refugees and donation for nations.

The UNRWA's responsibility is limited to providing services only to one group of refugees who are “Palestinians” and who live within its area of operations or agencies. Thus, there is limited liability of the UNRWA in the camps on the provision of services and the



management of its facilities where the agency does not possess, manage or work to maintain security in the camps where these matters rest with the host authorities.

The UNRWA is always present to take action and respond to any need or emergency which may occur for Palestinian refugees within the area of its agencies in order to alleviate all losses and effects of war on the lives of Palestinian refugees. These activities are clearly noticed in the numerous conflicts and wars that happened in the middle-east area such as the Lebanese civil war, the first intifada in 1987, the second intifada in 2000, the siege on Gaza and many other stifling restrictions of the Israeli occupation. Such has created the need to find quick and functional processes and programs to deal with emergencies and provide assistance to all Palestinian refugees who have experienced such situations. Those procedures shall be flexible enough to be provided until the end of the conflict and to all people in need. (Wm Roge, Shlaim – 2012, 126-128).

This research is based on a functionalist approach besides analytical methods. The functionalism approach is a theoretical aspect in sociology, which construes each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. Society is more than the set of its parts, each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions of society, each of which is regulated to fulfil different needs and each of which has particular outcomes to the form and shape of society, where all parts depend on each other.

The research is considered important to undertake the main objectives of the UNRWA and determine the roles of the UNRWA in contributing the different sectors of Palestinian territories; especially the educational sector. In addition, the study has specific goals of exploring the general aspects and basis of the Palestinian education system; identifying the problems and constraints that encounter the development of the Palestinian educational system; identifying the positive and negative aspects of UNRWA's existence in Palestine and comparing the Palestinian Education system and the UNRWA Education Systems.

This thesis addresses the following research questions: What is the role of the International Relief Agency (UNRWA) in dealing with the problems of the Palestinian refugees? What is the impact of the education sector on the development and improvement of the situation of Palestinian refugees? This thesis is important as a scientific approach to

explaining the functions of the UNRWA in Palestine toward refugees in the education sector lacking so far.

The first chapter of this thesis will explain the different historical aspects of Palestinian refugees throughout the ages which crystallized the genesis and emergence of the international relief agency (UNRWA) and how the attention and importance of education was clearly noticed six decades ago.

The second chapter is much more specific where the reader will be able to realize the UNRWA's services in different sectors. The chapter will show the work and the structure of the UNRWA's functions, the main roles of the UNRWA towards the Palestinian refugees and the role of donor's states.

Finally, the third chapter will undertake education's role as a sector towards Palestinian refugees, showing the UNRWA's education system and programs and the reader will be able to see different statistics of the UNRWA's education achievements in dealing with Palestinian refugees through its different agencies.

# **1. HISTORY OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES**

This chapter will explain the different historical aspects of Palestinian refugees throughout the ages which crystallized the genesis and emergence of international relief agency (UNRWA) and how the attention and importance of education was clearly noticed six decades ago.

## **1.1. Balfour Declaration 1917**

Many consider the 2nd of November 1917 as the issuing of the famous British promise to grant Jews a national homeland in Palestine. The promise was carried out by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arthur Balfour in order to help the war efforts against Russia. Arthur Balfour had his own conservative religious beliefs, which were based on beliefs that God promise to return the Jews to the Promised Land, where the return is a prerequisite for the return of the Messiah. This return carries the salvation of humanity from evils and tribulations to bring peace and prosperity for a thousand years after the resurrection and everything ends as it began.

The religious factor was not the only reason behind the issuance of the promise. There was also a rise of strategic interests, which shall be developed through working and nurturing along with the religious faith of Christian Zionism. This led to the promise to be committed and implied in Britain, where many Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe, who were being persecuted, started to immigrate in order to live in a so called “holy land and promised land”.

A first suggestion proposed by the British prime minister was that the El Arish area in Egypt be a homeland for the Jews. However, the committee of Expert Zionists rejected the proposal because Arish lacked water which would raise many conflicts between Britain and Egypt. Later, the British government, headed by Lord Arthur Balfour, suggested the area of Uganda to be the home of the Jews. However, the Sixth Zionist Congress did not accept this proposal because of a lack of gravity, which was very necessary to attract Jews to migrate to it.

Therefore, Belfour submitted a bill to the House of Commons in order to stop the migration in 1904, which became law the following year. The Declaration was inevitable after legislation to stop immigration from securing alternative shelter came in force. Balfour's decision was a necessary method to grant a legitimate reason to grant Palestine as a homeland for Jews. The occupation of Palestine was considered a strategic necessity. However, Balfour's

ambition contradicted the principles of the American President, Woodrow Wilson, on the right of peoples to self-determination.

Thus, Balfour issued a promise on the 2nd of November 1917 for the possibility of Britain to intervene in order to prevent the displacement of Jews from Eastern Europe. Britain found its interest in employing this process in the program of expansion in the Middle East and to provide the Jewish with necessary protection and assistance.

The Balfour Declaration was considered part of the British Mandate over Palestine. It was the assignment of the decision in the San Remo Conference in 1920 by the Supreme Council of the Allied forces. In 1922, the League of Nations approved the British Mandate including the promise. Later, following World War II, Jews expanded immigration from Western Europe to Palestine. The promise of a national home for the Jews transformed to that of a state, which was granted recognition by both Moscow and Washington and then by the UN in 1948. The Balfour Declaration is regarded as the most important stage for Jews because the declaration gathered all Jews around the world who had suffered oppression and persecution and gave them a national home. (Schneen – 2010, 107).

## **1.2. Al-Nakba 1948 or Declaration of the Israeli state**

The Israel leaders had embarked on the preparation of detailed military plans since the beginning of 1945 in anticipation of a possible confrontation. In 1946, the Haganah's plan was drafted and introduced to Israeli militants, where the public policy of this plan was to eliminate the so called counter measures in May 1946.

In 1947, the presence of the Jewish militias was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on a resolution recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and a Palestinian state. The Israeli government welcomed the project division, while the Arabs and the Palestinians felt this to be unfair.

In 1948, war between Israel and the Palestinian people erupted; this is known as Al-Nakba according to Palestinians and the Israeli statehood according to Israelis. This war occurred in Palestine and led to the establishment of the state of Israel and the migration and displacement of Palestinians from their land. For the Palestinian people this was a tragic period

of their life because they lost their own lands and many people were killed by the Israeli Haganah and other Jewish militia organizations.

The British Mandate over Palestine ended on May 14th, 1948. The next day the State of Israel as a valid state was proclaimed and war started directly between the new entities and neighbouring Arab countries. The fighting in Palestine had begun in May 1948, after the termination of the British Mandate over Palestine and the declaration of the Israeli state's establishment of the state of Israel on the areas under their control in Palestine. (Sa'di, Abu-Lughod – 2007, 27-31).

According to Jews in Palestine, the presence of their entity is based on the historical and religious right to have evidence of their identity. For example, Solomon's temple is located down Al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Nakba day, or the declaration of the Israeli state, represents the Israelis' heroic and legitimate right to declare the Jewish state. It is regarded from the Jewish side as Independence Day with the announcement of the establishment of the state of Israel in Tel Aviv.

As a result of Al-Nakba, Palestinians were divided into three sections instead of being one body. The land of Palestine split became part of the occupied territories within the Green Line, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Despite the different branches of the two sides, these remained within the land of Palestine. However, the third section fled to neighbouring Arab countries and some other countries of the world.

According to Jews, the State of Israel was recognized by the United Nations, America and the Soviet Union. The state had a free hand to deal with immigration issues after it had occupied wider territories than the territories of the State of the Jews, which was proposed by partition resolution 181. The occupation of this territory had created the displacement of more than half a million Palestinians, which led to the creation of a new reality represented in many issues of Palestinians; such as reclaiming land, housing projects and the return of refugees. The number of Palestinian refugees in 1948 was more than 805,067 around the world and the number of villages which were demolished in 1948 totalled 531. (Sa'di, Abu-Lughod – 2007, 27-31).

### **1.3. Resolution 194: the Right to Return in 1948**

The decision issued by the General Assembly of the United Nations after Al-Nakba day in 1948, called for the establishment of a conciliation commission of the United Nations and the status of Jerusalem under permanent international supervision.

The report of the right of refugees to return to their homes in order to modify the conditions was designated to achieve peace in Palestine in the future and on the right of everyone to access holy places. Decisions to allow the return as soon as possible for those refugees wishing to return to their homes and to live in peace with their neighbours, stipulated that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for either the loss of or damage to property in accordance with the principles of law that compensates for the loss or damage by the Governments or authorities responsible.

The Commission issued decisions to facilitate the repatriation of refugees and resettlement of new and economic and social rehabilitation. In addition, payment of compensation was stipulated in order to maintain close contact with the director of the United Nations Relief for Palestinian refugees, through its bodies and specialized agencies in the appropriate United Nations Organization.

The importance of the decision lay on the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties and that their return will depend on free choice. The decision of the Assembly was not binding, but only as recommendations and most of what came in the resolution. On the Israel side the main obstacle to the peace process was the right of return for Palestinian refugees and settlements that did not amount to a transfer of refugee status to the children of Palestinian refugees who had left their villages and towns after the establishment of Israel (Feldman, Toukan – 1997, 37-38).

### **1.4. UN Security Council Resolution No. 242-1967**

In 1967, Israel was involved in a war against the Arab states. Israel attacked Egypt , Syria , Jordan and Iraq. As a result, Iraqi leaders decided to send troops to Syria, Egypt and Jordan because Israeli military forces seized the Sinai Peninsula right up to the Suez Canal, to the West Bank and the Golan Heights beside the Gaza Strip.

Later, the UN Security Council adopted the 242 resolution which stated that Israel had to leave the Arab territories occupied during 1967. This statement was binding to Israeli, with the termination of all claims or states of belligerency and was a respectful statement for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country in its region. This resolution also stated political independence and the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, which shall be free from threats or use of force including the recognition of Israel. Despite Israel being only one state against four Arab states, Israel successfully achieved to be the victor against four Arab states. (Wm Roge, Shlaim – 2012, 126-128).

### **1.5. UN Security Council Resolution No. 338-1973**

A decision was made by the UN Security Council after the 1973 war, which was between Syria and Egypt on the one hand and the state of Israel in the other hand. The UN Security Council Resolution number 242 did not work and Israel did not find the interest to implement this action. Thus, the UN Security Council issued a new act number 338. This decision was made after the 1973 war, in the October War and on both fronts in the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai.

Resolution 338 intended to create a full ceasefire and to call on all parties involved in the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 in 1967 in order to withdraw from the Sinai and the Golan Heights, Gaza and the West Bank. The launch of negotiations between the parties concerned under the supervision of an appropriate meant to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this situation the Arab states demanded that there had to be a clear difference between the Israeli security requirement and its territorial aspirations.

Israelis felt that the benefits from the truce had deepened political unity and had increased the truce and the dispute over the resumption of fighting doubts and Arab conflicts (EL-Khazen – 2000, 133).

### **1.6. The Ongoing Expansion of Jews in Palestine**

Figure 1: This figure shows the Palestinian situation from Balfour's declaration in 1917 until the end of 2012. Since Balfour's declaration was made, many Jews have started to immigrate, buy and settle in the holy land as the British government had granted full rights to Jews in order

to establish a statehood in Palestine. The figure clearly shows the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlement in Palestinian territories.

In 1948, 90 percent of land was owned by Palestinian people. However, many conflicts have occurred since then and the number of Jews is increasing still today. A year earlier, in 1947, the UN partition plan suggested the separation of the country into many states between the Palestinian and Israeli people. However, this suggestion was rejected by Palestinian leaders. In 1948-1949 the Israel government declared the state of Israel. As a result, Palestine has been divided for three parties, where Israel controlled of 77 percent.

The last section of the map shows the number of total lands in 2012, which Israel seized and put under its control which is approximately 88 percent of the land occupied by the Israeli army in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Later, Israel left the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the West Bank.

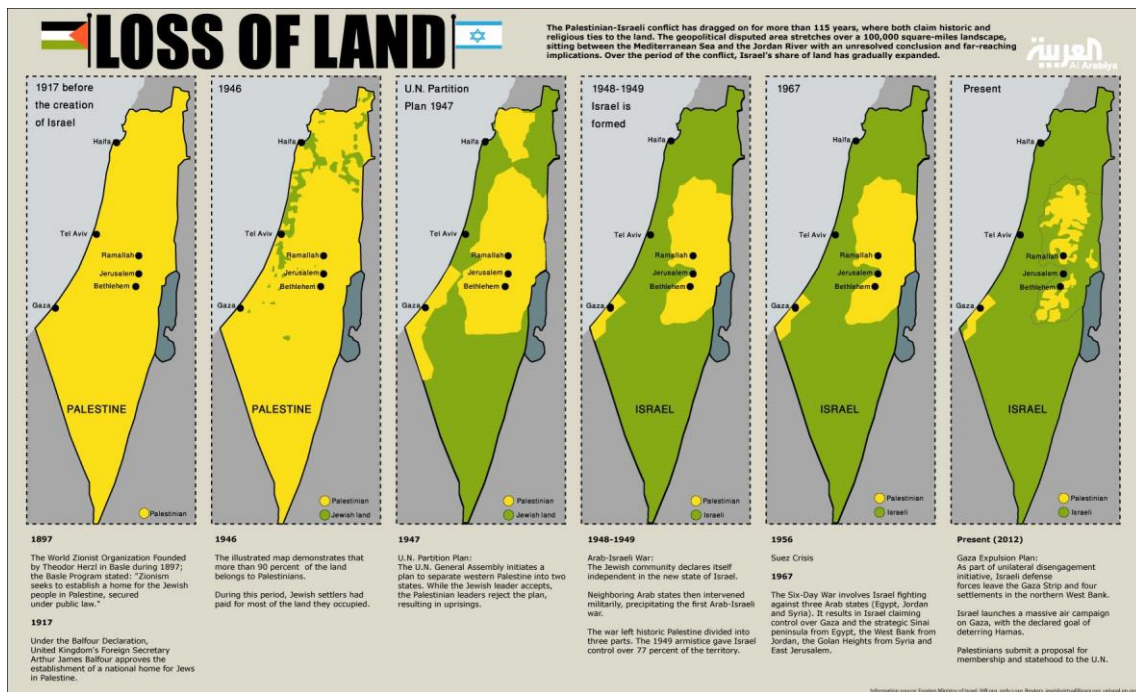


Figure 1: Map of Israeli Domination (1948-1967).

Source: (Map Loss of lands. The Militant Negro. Rakovina-Israel –Palestine. 2014).



## **1.7. Palestinian Refugees (Definition)**

Refugees are people or nations who have to leave their own lands and go abroad through an international border because they have suffered abuses and human conflict. This is an example of human rights violations, so they seek to live in a safe place in order to practice their normal life; but there are some reasons preventing them from attaining this in their home land.

Political asylum relates to the status of people who have crossed to another country outside their country of origin because of political persecution from a regime or because of some problems with political parties. This is applied to people seeking refugee protection but who have not yet attained the official refugee title. However, they are considered as asylum seekers.

There is also religious asylum, which is asylum to another country because of persecution based on religious beliefs, whereas, humanitarian asylum is asylum to another country inside or outside the home because of war or ethnic conflict. Those people are considered as seekers of food or shelter and to find a safe place to live (Betts, Loescher – 2011, 1).

## **1.8. Palestinian Refugees**

Palestinian refugees are those people who were living in Palestine during the period between 1946 until 1948 and lost homes and livelihoods as a result of the Israeli war. All the Palestinians who left Palestine fully anticipated being able to return to their homes after an early Arab victory.

Palestinian refugees suffer a tragic situation in the world. In addition, Palestinian refugees are regarded as the oldest and largest refugee population in the world. The issue of Palestinian refugees started when the state of Israel was established, where Israeli started to displace the Palestinian people within and outside Palestine.

The decision to return is the right of Palestinians who were expelled or left their home for any reason in 1948 or at any time thereafter to return to their home, land or house in which they lived a normal life before 1948. This right applies to every Palestinian regardless of gender. The decision to this right applies to everyone who was displaced from 1948. Palestinian refugees have the right to get a passport in order to live in Palestine according to UN resolution 149. This resolution was accepted by the Israeli government in the beginning but later not.

In 1948, the General Assembly subsequently voted in order to establish the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR). This agency was expected to provide aid to Palestinian refugees. The UNRPR was replaced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in December 1949 and was given a budget. However, after the Oslo agreement, Israel rejected the decision and they denied the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to Palestine.

Palestinian people and the PA government did not surrender the refugees' right to return to Palestine and gave them rights to live in their lands. Palestinian refugees crossed the international borders from many Arab states in 1948. Nevertheless, the dire situation in Arab states and the lack of UNRWA funding forced some refugees to leave those locations and start to find other places, such as Europe or somewhere else in order to live a better economic, political and social life (Brynen, Elrifai – 2007, 1-3).

## **1.9. Palestinian Refugee Distribution**

After Al-Nakba day in 1948, the Palestinian people were divided into two; one group consisting of those who had gone abroad and the other made of refugees who stayed in Palestine but not in their original place. The Gaza Strip is a small land for huge population of 1.5 million and the number of refugees is 1.1 million. The UNRWA is still responsible for delivering education, healthcare, relief and social services, and providing loans and emergency assistance to registered Palestine refugees.

### **Gaza Strip UNRWA Camps**

According to UNRWA statistics, there are 1,203,135 Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip. As well as 243 schools, vocational and technical training centres, women's program centres and community rehabilitation centres.

An overview of the camps:

#### **Beach Camp**

This camp is located to the north-west of Gaza City, about 4km from the city centre. This camp is located on the shore of the sea from the northern side.

## Bureij camp

The Bureij camp is located in the south of Gaza City, which is a remote camp in the Gaza Strip. The camp borders the east of the armistice line, the west of Green Line, north of Nuseirat Wadi Gaza and south of the Maghazi refugee camp. The camp has shown a great increase in population growth compared with other camps.

## Deir al Bala

Deir al Balah refugee camp is the smallest refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The camp is located on the beach of the Mediterranean Sea, northwest of the city of Deir al Balah. This camp was established after Al-Nakba in 1948.

## Jabalya Refugee Camp.

The Jabalya refugee camp is located to the northeast of Gaza City and one kilometer from the main Gaza-Jaffa road. The camp is located between the village Jabaliya and Beit Lahiya.

## Khan Yunis

Khan Yunis is a major trading centre which has been regarded as a stopping point on the ancient trade route to Egypt. The camp was established in 1949.

## Maghazi Refugee camp

The Maghazi camp is located in the middle of the Gaza Strip and almost to the south of Gaza City. The camp borders Gaza City on the east, the Khirbet Zawayda Bureij refugee camp on the northwest and Deir al-Balah on the south.

## Nuseirat

Nuseirat is one of the major camps in the Gaza Strip in terms of population and area. The camp includes the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees who were displaced from their homes in 1948.

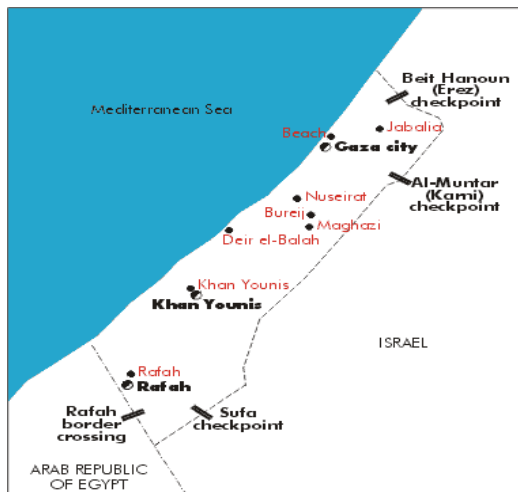
## Rafah camp

Rafah camp is located in Rafah, south of Gaza near the Egyptian border. The camp was established in 1949.

These camps have been a shelter for Palestinian refugees from 1948 until today. The UNRWA has tried to develop the Gaza Strip for a long period in all sectors, health, education and agriculture for people who were displaced from their own lands in Palestine. The UNRWA achieved the implementation of services in the Gaza Strip and improved the poor situation there. In addition, the UNRWA worked in order to develop the camps in Palestine through improving academic achievement and the value of schools in the Gaza Strip. The UNRWA has tried to promote gender equality in order to promote entrepreneurship in Palestinian society.

Source: (Palestinian Refugees in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA, 2013).

(1) Camps in Gaza



(2) Camps in the West Bank



Figure .2 Division of camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

Source: (Palestinian Refugees in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA. 2013).

Source: (Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank. UNRWA. 2013).

## The West Bank

The West Bank camps are located in the West Bank area which has been controlled by the Palestinian authorities since 1994. People inside these camps suffer from bad conditions imposed on the West Bank by Israel authorities, such as low wages and a high rate of unemployment. The UNRWA tries to help people as much as they can but it is still not enough

for leading a normal life due to the huge number of refugees in camps. In addition, Palestinians who have jobs in Israel depend on the considerable higher income attained there.

### **The West Bank UNRWA Camps**

The number of the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank is huge, amounting to 741,409, according to UNRWA figures. The UNRWA has built 98 schools and many others facilities such as women programs centres, vocational and technical training centres, primary health centres and community rehabilitation centres.

#### Overview of Camps:

##### Aida Refugee Camp

The Aida refugee camp is located in the western region, between Bethlehem and Beit Jala, on the western side of the main Hebron, - Jerusalem road..

##### Camp No. 1

Camp number was the first Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This camp was established in 1948 on land belonging to the city of Nablus. This camp is located in the north-west of the city.

##### Jenin Camp

This camp is located to the west of the city of Jenin and near the Jezreel Valley, surrounded by the Valley Heights and Capricorn passes, in addition to a plain crowded area known as the Sahel.

##### Deheishe

The Deheishe camp was created in 1949 by the relief agency. The camp is located to south of the city of Bethlehem. The camp is also away approximately 3 km to the left of the main Bethlehem – Hebron road and 23 km from the city of Jerusalem.

## Jalazoun

Jalazoun camp is located to the north of the city of Ramallah and to the west of the main road between Ramallah and Nablus. The camp is surrounded by lands north of Jaffna and Signa eye and to the east by the town of Bir Zeit village of Dura.

## Shu Fat Refugee Camp

The Shu Fat refugee camp was established in the period “between” (1965-1966) in order to be a shelter for Palestinian refugees. The camp is located to the north of Jerusalem and is approximately 5.5 km from the city center.

## Camp Arroub

Camp Arroub was created in 1949 by the UNRWA for Palestinian refugees in an area called the Valley of Frost. The camp is 15 km south of the city of Bethlehem and is located to the left of the main street of Bethlehem Hebron. The camp is also 35 km south of the city of Jerusalem.

## Fara Refugee Camp

The Fara refugee camp is located to the north of the city of Nablus. The camp shows the Al-Fara fortress on a hill surrounded by a mountain range. The camp was established after 1948.

## Fawar Camp

The Fawar camp is located 8km to the south of Hebron. The camp is located in the low area surrounded by mountains. This camp is approximately 730 m above sea-level.

## Camp Deir Ammar

The Deir Ammar camp is located between the north-west of the village of Deir Ammar and Southeast village Jamala tracking administratively Brigade Ramallah. The camp is approximately 32 km from the city of Ramallah. This camp was created in 1949.

## Aqbet Jabr Camp

The Aqbet Jabr camp is located to the southwest of Jericho at a distance of 3 km from the city centre. The camp was founded in 1948. This camp was comprised of about 3,000 refugees in 1976. This camp is considered as one of the largest Palestinian communities.

### Qalandia Refugee Camp

The Qalandia refugee camp is founded in 1949. The camp is located in east Jerusalem Airport (Qalandia). This camp accommodates 3,000 Palestinian refugees in communities around the city of Ramallah and Al-Bireh.

### Askar Refugee Camp

The Askar refugee camp is a Palestinian refugee camp located in the West Bank. The camp is located within the municipal boundaries of Nablus, about 5 km north-east of the centres of the city of Nablus.

### Ain al-Sultan

The Ain al-sultan is located to the west of the city of Jericho. The camp was established after ALNakba in 1948.

### Tulkarm refugee camp

The Tulkarm refugee camp is one of the Palestinian refugee camps. The camp was established in of the city of Tulkarm and its adjacent area on the "149" square acres. The camp is surrounded by the city on three sides except the eastern ones where there is a village belonging to indigenous refugees in the camp to the villages and towns of the regions of Haifa, Jaffa and Caesarea.

### Amari camp

The UNRWA took over responsibility for this camp in 1950. It worked on the construction of housing units in 1957. The UNRWA has completed the replacement of all tents to houses and found shelter for each family.

### Nour Shams Refugee Camp

Nour shams refugee camp is a Palestinian refugee camp in Tulkarm which was founded in 1951 after three years of the Nakba 1948.

The major problem with the UNRWA in camps is the high population. The UNRWA cannot efficiently provide the desired high level of services in the health or education sectors. The total students in one class of some schools are approximately 50. Thus, the UNRWA faces a huge

problem in teaching such huge numbers, where high populations exist as the UNRWA cannot change the old sewage networks.

In 1948, many Palestinians immigrated within Palestine to the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and other territories inside Palestine or the neighbouring Arab states of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

(Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank. UNRWA. 2013).

### **Refugees in Jordan.**

In Jordan the number of refugees according to the UNRWA totalled 2,034,641.

The number of camps was 10 with 172 UNRWA schools.

The programs in Jordan suffer from a lack of financial support, thus being a major obstacle to their development.

### **Refugees in Syria.**

The statistic of the refugees in Syria is 499,189 and there are nine camps. The UNRWA built 118 schools besides many training centres and rehabilitation centres.

The UNRWA operates 118 double-shift schools and offers basic elementary and preparatory education for Palestinian refugee children. In addition, the UNRWA runs healthcare centres, along with other services.

### **Refugees in Lebanon.**

Palestinian refugees constitute 10% of the population of Lebanon', which is currently a small densely populated state. The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not enjoy many civil and social rights. They do not also have the right to work in more than 20 specific job fields. The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not citizens and they do not take advantage of any responsibility from the Lebanese government. Thus, they are not able to gain the equal rights enjoyed by foreigners who live and work in Lebanon. The number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is 441,543. They are divided into 12 camps and 68 schools, besides some training centres, community and rehabilitation centres.



## **Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon**

The situation of Palestinians in Lebanon toward the Lebanese conflicts and tensions depends on the interests and benefits of local political goals, regardless of the rights, needs, demands and hopes of the refugees themselves. The Palestinian camps lack the basic necessities to exist. The refugees are mostly peasants who have lost their land and home. Thus, they have had to sell their land to the enemy. In addition, they have lost the necessities of safety and stability and all aspects of social life, since the dispersion of the reunification of families, the detriment of all segments of society and the breakdown of all political and social elites.

Source: (Bard, M. (2013). The Palestinian Refugees, History and Overview. May).

### **1.10. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is a subsidiary Agency established by United Nations General Assembly resolution in 1949 after the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to carry out commitments towards many Palestinian groups of refugees in different sectors. The main function of the UNRWA is to deal with humanitarian issues of Palestinian refugees who need assistance and are legally registered with the Agency.

The agency began its field operations on the first of May 1950. Since that time, the UNRWA has been struggling to achieve its aims and provide educational, health, relief and social services to all Palestinian refugees and asylums seekers in need. Thus, the UNRWA is not only an education agency. However, it is a comprehensive agency which deals with all humanitarian services in order to save people and improve their life. According to statistical studies, the UNRWA has reached out to more than 5 million Palestinian refugees who live in 5 different agencies of the UNRWA. These agencies are located in different areas of the Middle East: the West Bank, the Gaza strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

The UNRWA is always present to take action and respond to any need or emergency which may occur for Palestinian refugees within the area of its agencies in order to alleviate all losses and effects of war on the lives of Palestinian refugees. These activities are clearly noticed in many conflicts and wars that happened in the Middle East area, such as the Lebanese civil war,

the first intifada in 1987 the second intifada in 2000 the siege on Gaza and many other stifling restrictions of the Israeli occupation. This creates the need to find quick and functional processes and programs to deal with emergencies and provide assistance to all Palestinian refugees who have experienced such situations. Those procedures shall be flexible enough so they can be provided to all people in need until the end of the conflict.

The education system was started by the UNRWA following the catastrophe day (Al-Nakba),.The UNRWA had seven schools in Jerusalem at that time and has been trying to develop the education system and to open many schools for refugees since 1948.

## **2. UNRWA SERVICES**

This section will explain the UNRWA's services in various sectors. It will show the work and the structure of the UNRWA's functions, the main roles of the UNRWA towards the Palestinian refugees and the role of donor states.

The UNRWA is an agency founded to help Palestinian refugees in different fields. The UNRWA has a very large staff of employees in different sectors, totalling 18,000 employees in UNRWA offices. These employees are divided into five political jurisdictions, where every sector has its own office in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. In addition, the UNRWA has been considered to be the largest organization in the Middle-East because of its various tasks in different fields, which concern almost every aspect of a refugee's life. For example, UNESCO provides assistance with education and the WHO help with healthcare. The United Nations relief work agency is a very large institution which focuses on helping Palestinian's refugees in every Arab state and in the Middle-East.

The UNRWA began functioning in 1951 in order to save all refugees in Palestine. Those people eligible under UNRWA aid were Palestinians who had been living in Palestine for at least two years in the conflict area in 1948 and who lost their home and livelihood. (G. Ferris 2011, 40).

Previously, UNRWA policy had been limited to include only those refugees who had lost their livelihood. However, the role of the UNRWA was later extended in order to include many other fields and programs. These fields included healthcare; agricultural; education; relief and social services; support; infrastructure and campus improvement community and micro lending.

### **2.1. Healthcare**

Medical and therapeutic services are provided for Palestinian refugees. These services are provided for free and are extended to different aspects of a refugee's health. There are 59 centres and international relief agencies that provide services for Palestinian refugees, including 41 centres in the West Bank and 18 centres in the Gaza Strip. The agency has played a very important role in the field of immunization for children, nutrition and maternal and childcare.

The UNRWA is concerned with directing very special attention to healthcare. The UNRWA's healthcare programs are diverse and have existed for a long time; some programs started more than 60 years ago. The UNRWA's programs include comprehensive services in primary healthcare, whether the services are preventive or therapeutic. These services are provided for Palestinian refugees in order to make them able to access healthcare services and specialized secondary assistance.

As a result of a long life, where people's needs are in development, the beneficiary groups of the UNRWA's services are in the process of demographic transition; in particular, those people who need special requirements related to non-communicable diseases and chronic conditions, who require the provision of care for life, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. A healthy life is a continuous series of stages that begins with the period of lactation and extends up to the senior age, where every human has special needs. Thus, the UNRWA's programs are based on a life-cycle approach to provide preventive and curative services.

A family health team provides comprehensive services in primary healthcare based on total care for the entire family, with a focus on long-term relationships between service providers and auditors. The UNRWA tries to ensure the provision of individual care is comprehensive and continuous. Moreover, a family health team helps in addressing the cross cutting issues that affect health, such as diet, physical activity, education, violence based on gender, child protection, poverty and community development.

UNRWA health programs are much related to the field of environmental health. This is clearly shown in many environmental health programs, where it adjusts the quality of drinking water, provides sanitation services and controls disease vectors and rodents in refugees camps that contribute to reducing the risk of an epidemic. In addition, UNRWA health programs are related to help refugees of all ages, especially seniors, women who have given birth, breast-feeding women, pregnant women and people with disabilities.

The UNRWA is concerned with the agency on both preventive and curative services. These services follow up post-natal and infant care, medical consultations, family planning, prenatal care and dental treatment. In addition, the UNRWA provides secondary services dealing with patients with diabetes and patients with blood pressure by controlling viral diseases through extensive coverage of vaccines and the early detection or control of the spread of epidemics. The UNRWA highlights the rise in diseases such as diabetes and high blood

pressure, cancer and obesity as a significant threat to the ability of refugees to live long and healthy.

Source: The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA.

Movement restrictions prevent Palestinians from reaching many Palestinian civil hospitals in East Jerusalem, where these hospitals are the main provider of specialist care in the Palestinian territories. The conflict in neighbouring Arab states directly affects UNRWA services because the distribution to families will be lower or refugees will not receive high quality services in either the health sector, education or other areas.

### **Health Sector**

Table.1 Health Sector

The table below shows low figures due to different economic and political challenges that are dictated by weak decision making and political negotiations. These difficulties have all contributed to weakening the health system in general.

The total primary health facilities and the number of health staff in the UNRWA do not satisfy the high numbers of refugees and patient visits every year, which are increasing annually. This clearly shows that there is an urgent need for assistance and support from different responsible bodies in balancing between annual refugee victims of and the provision of health services and staff in order to treat every refugee in need.

Table 1: Health Sector.

Primary Health Facilities	138
Health Staff	3,107
Refugees Accessing UNRWA's Health Services	3,134,732
Annual Patient Visits	9,290,197

Source: (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).

## **2.2. Relief and Social Services**

As a fundamental right, everyone has the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living for his / her health and welfare. Thus, the UNRWA provides a relief program in a range of fields in social services and protection. The United Nation collects data and information on the needs and problems of a refugee family based on a scientific basis through the classification, arrangement and analysis of Palestinian refugees for the purpose of providing needs and problems. There are also studies and research conducted to identify and evaluate refugee services and capabilities and family care institutions in order to achieve development and improve performance.

In addition, progress by the United Nation Relief Work Agency facilitates the access of Palestinian refugee to economic, health and social services in its care institutions. These services are provided in all local community institutions in order to take advantage of the resources and capabilities available in the community. This benefits refugee families in health centres, care centres, clubs, schools, among other areas. The UNRWA also directs refugee families in order to take advantage of services available in other community institutions, which will lead to establishing a strong society on different levels. (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).

The main idea of relief services is to develop and help the human mentality for life in order to overcome life's challenges and obstacles. The UNRWA supports refugees in relief programs via food or monetarily in order to reduce poverty. Relief service offices cooperate with job creation programs to grant refugees some form of monthly income.

### **Relief Sector**

Table.2 Relief Sector

The table shows huge and important UNRWA achievements through different fields of relief and social sectors. The UNRWA has shown special concern in improving the welfare of refugee life's, taking into account all categories of society, including women and those with special needs, as they are one of the important categories that are marginalized in Palestinian society due to different cultural beliefs. This involves the education sector by raising awareness

between Palestinian genders and groups in order to find a link between the social and education sectors, thus improving both sectors.

Table 2: Relief Sector.

Relief social services staff	858
Women's Programme Centres	65
Community Rehabilitation Centres	39
Community Managed Fund Schemes	47

Source: (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).

### **2.3. Microfinance**

The UNRWA grants financial services for entrepreneurship, small businesses and refugee families in order to create job opportunities and reduce poverty. This action leads to helping refugees in society, regardless of gender.

UNRWA's program provides microfinance loans for young people to start their own business in order to create self-employment opportunities for young people aged 18-30 years. The UNRWA tends to increase the high industrial activity between the Palestinian people. There are many financial program clients in many fields; such as fishermen, woman centre employees, sewing workers, vegetable stall holders and those employed in other jobs.

Many ongoing projects are led by the UNRWA including project lending to small enterprises, solidarity group lending, small credit institutions and household credits for women.

#### **2.3.1. Project Lending to Small Enterprises**

This UNRWA project is the oldest project of the microfinance department which aims to directly promote economic development and job creation. It is dedicated to supporting capital investment, modernization and expansion of the market in order to create a national product.

#### **2.3.2. Solidarity Group Lending**

This is designed for groups of business women who are collectively responsible for the repayment of earned profits. The project operates those loans on the sustainability of the institutions as well as household spending on education, health, basic needs and provides the most important necessities of life and livelihood.

### 2.3.3. Small Credit Institutions

This technique targets the vast majority of regional business that employs less than five employees, where most of the small companies have no access to formal credit and are thus vulnerable to shocks. The technique aims to maintain the capital of small investments with success and the development of small enterprises. Small enterprises often need larger loans with extended repayment periods to continue and expand their capital and staff. The UNRWA offers advanced credits to small enterprises which have demonstrated the ability to repay the loan. This project is an important element in the growth of the West Bank and Jordan, which is also available in Gaza.

### 2.3.4 Household Credits for Women

This type of loan collective solidarity accommodates domestic institutions run by women inside the house. It allows women to build on household assets for the purposes of work and which is based on the promotion of understanding and raising awareness in the community. Consumer loans are a personal loan for the working class families which do not have access to bank loans. The purpose of this loan is to help them rebuild their home in order to cope with unemployment, ill-health or social expenses paid.

## Microfinance Sector

Table.3 Microfinance Sector

The table below shows the structure that has been adopted by the UNRWA in distributing their annual loans. The table shows a huge concern towards youth and women as they achieve 71% of those total loans awarded. The systematic structure to give assist those two fundamental categories of society has a great development in the long and short terms of Palestinian society in general and in the education sector in particular, through decreasing the number of unemployed and increasing the level of the economy.

Table 3: Microfinance Sector.

Loans Awarded	324,994
Value of Loans Awarded	368.1M
Youth Outreach	33%
Women Outreach	38%

Source: (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).



## **2.4. Infrastructure and Improvement Community**

The relief program aims to improve the housing conditions, hygiene and health of Palestinian refugees through the care of camp infrastructures. The program includes the treatment and improvement of infrastructure by improving the water supply and sewerage networks, as well as the construction of drainage rainwater networks, sewage networks, paving and treatment of all roads and lanes in the camps and many other works which preserve the environment and refugees.

The UNRWA improves the environmental services that protect individuals from the risk of diseases. Healthcare works in public places, schools and clinics for the population depending on needs of individuals. In addition, the UNRWA builds urgent shelters and camps for refugees who have lost their homes and lands during the armed conflict and natural disasters. The UNRWA provides immediate temporary housing and direct assistance, such as water, sanitation and electricity.

## **2.5. Emergency Response**

The UNRWA intensifies its work in emergency situations during each conflict that might occur in the areas. It provides protection for refugees during war and ensures a decent living for them, such as food, shelter and a minimum income. In addition, it gives special protection to displaced families who are suffering from emergency situations which require quick action to provide basic needs.

The first case of an emergency was in Palestine in 1949, as a result of the displacement of Palestinians from their homes, where they no longer had shelter or any kind for protection. The second emergency situation were hostilities that occurred in 1967 and in subsequent conflicts.

In addition, two very serious emergency situations were in 1987 and 2000, the first intifada and the second intifada, where UNRWA programs worked both very hard and quickly as a special emergency need to help Palestinian refugees. Later, the UNRWA worked on a state of emergency in the Gaza War and worked for the urgent needs caused by the Israeli military actions against Palestinian refugees.

Source: (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).

The UNRWA is able to provide help for urgent and rapid responses to Palestinian refugees in need. The assistance is provided according to specific documents and studies in order to be fair and helpful to refugees. The UNRWA provides food, water, sanitation, temporary housing, emergency cash assistance and cash for work, emergency education, emergency health services and reconstruction.

## **2.6. Education**

The UNRWA's education program is considered to be one of the basic programs which provide services to refugees. They work diligently in order to make their programs available to all Palestinian refugees and grant them access to a basic education. These programs are issued by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational and the Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The methods of the UNRWA's education programs differ with worldwide development and technology. In the past, the level of education was not very important and not easy to access for everyone as a result of world conflicts and social tensions. However, getting basic education is much easier today, where all countries obligate the basic education for each person regardless of gender.

The UNRWA has built 666 schools and 9 colleges besides many teacher training faculties. Thus, the UNRWA has achieved very important developments for the education system. There are half a million Palestinian students registered each year with UNRWA programs.

Over the last few years, the UNRWA has started to fix and create many new programs which aim to develop the education sector and provide good services for Palestinian refugees in schools and training centres with many experts or professional teachers.

As access to education is a fundamental right for every child, the UNRWA has worked to ensure that basic education is available to all, where education is the key element for refugee and human development in every community. Thus, the UNRWA helps refugee children and youth to acquire knowledge and skills through the provision of basic international education, which boosts a refugee's self-confidence and understanding of the community and accept others. In addition, the UNRWA grants educational programs for 8-10 year-olds with no fees or expenses.

The curriculum and teachers in the UNRWA are very educated and experienced. In addition, UNRWA students are well-organized compared with other schools in conflict areas. As UNRWA's education is provided for free, this creates an opportunity for each child to access education, where many families cannot afford the high cost of private education.

The high Palestinian population and huge numbers of students may hamper the UNRWA's programs from exercising their functions in many conflict areas. In addition, many families may face a challenge to find a place for their children to get the basic education in the West Bank and Gaza. These areas are the most areas which suffer from bad the political-economic situation.

Checkpoints, obstacles and partition walls may impede access to education and affect the quality of education for children. In case of political situations, the UNRWA has lengthened the school year to provide additional classes to make up for lost time. This needs more time and financial resources in order to follow up the political challenges.

The educational system is also extended to include vocational training centres, where children could learn more about tolerance, human rights and find solutions between each other. In addition, the UNRWA has many colleges in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, where refugee could gain degrees in high education level.

The UNRWA has many institutions for training and developing teachers, principals and supervisors in various regions of the agency operations. These institutions have issued many programs cooperating with UNESCO in order to develop the education and teachers through courses system and by new methods and technologies.

UNRWA training centres continuously promote human rights as part of its training programs in its five regions of operations. These centres aim to raise the awareness in its faculties and school's administrators through using different means that promote the values of tolerance and basic human rights.

The UNRWA always tries to access its students to high level of education and universities. However, there are only a very limited number of refugees who can study at universities. This is related to their bad economic and social situation, as well as the unemployment and hard to get job in future problems.

## **UNRWA Scholarship**

The UNRWA scholarship granted to superior students every year. The scholarships are usually covered the university fees and some other housing and living expenses.

## **Education sector**

Table 4. Education sector

The table shows huge and important achievements of the UNRWA in the education sector as it gives special concern toward raising the awareness of refugees through different educational programs. The UNRWA has showed successful achievement in improving the sector and resolving the gender difficulties in stressing the rights of females to education, who have usually many social and cultural obstacles that hamper them from getting a good education. UNRWA female students are estimated to comprise 50% of the yearly student quota, which is considered to be a very important achievement in the Palestinian education system. In addition, the UNRWA clearly shows through its strategy the adoption of the educational sector as the main sector and first priority in a refugee society that has an impact in reforming the whole of society.

Table 4: Education Sector

Students	476,323
Educational Staff	23,366
Female Students	50%
Annual Cost Per Student	755\$

Source: (The distribution of the functionalist in the UNRWA institutions. UNRWA).

The figure below shows UNRWA's expenses and funds according to its priorities. The UNRWA pays very special attention to education as one of the most important aspects of a refugee's life, where 57% of its funds go towards education. In addition, the UNRWA has done a remarkable job and significant improvement in health sector. This refers to the UNRWA's beliefs that development will not occur without good health and education. However, the figure highlights the problem of infrastructure and camp improvement, where the sector needs more attention as a result of many other economic-political problems.

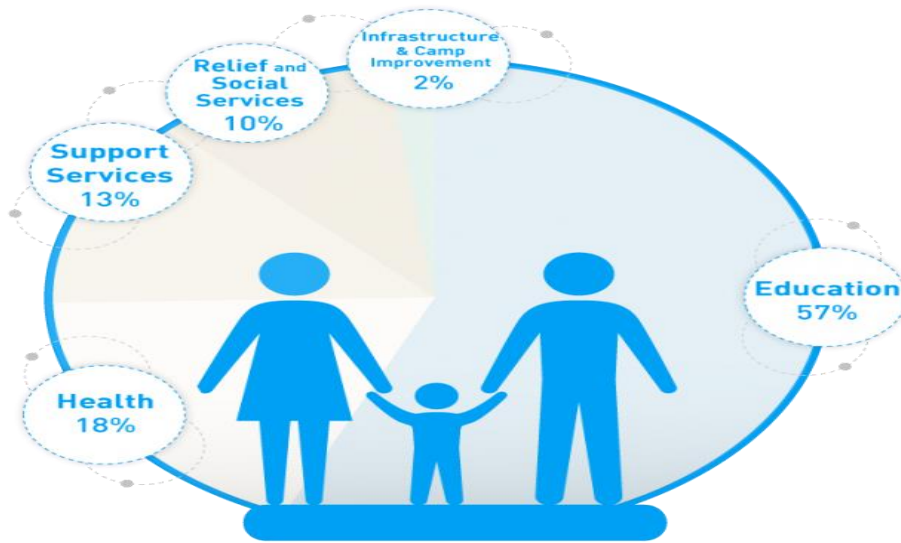


Figure 3 The distributions of budget for UNRWA Institutions.

Source: (How does the United Nations spend funds? UNRWA).

### **The Role of Donor States.**

The United Nations has adopted a resolution which calls for donors to provide assistance for higher education for students of Palestinian refugees. The international community contributes to help the UNRWA not only through the immediate tasks but also in the long-term efforts for refugees in other countries. Major donors come from European Union, which provides 43.7% of the UNRWA budget. The donors are exceeded to the UNRWA's sectors to include many other agencies contribute with the UNRWA; such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The chart below shows the top 20 donors countries in 2010. This chart includes all contributions provided overall the year. The role of United States of America and European states is clearly showed in the chart and USA could be regarded as the biggest donor country in the world.

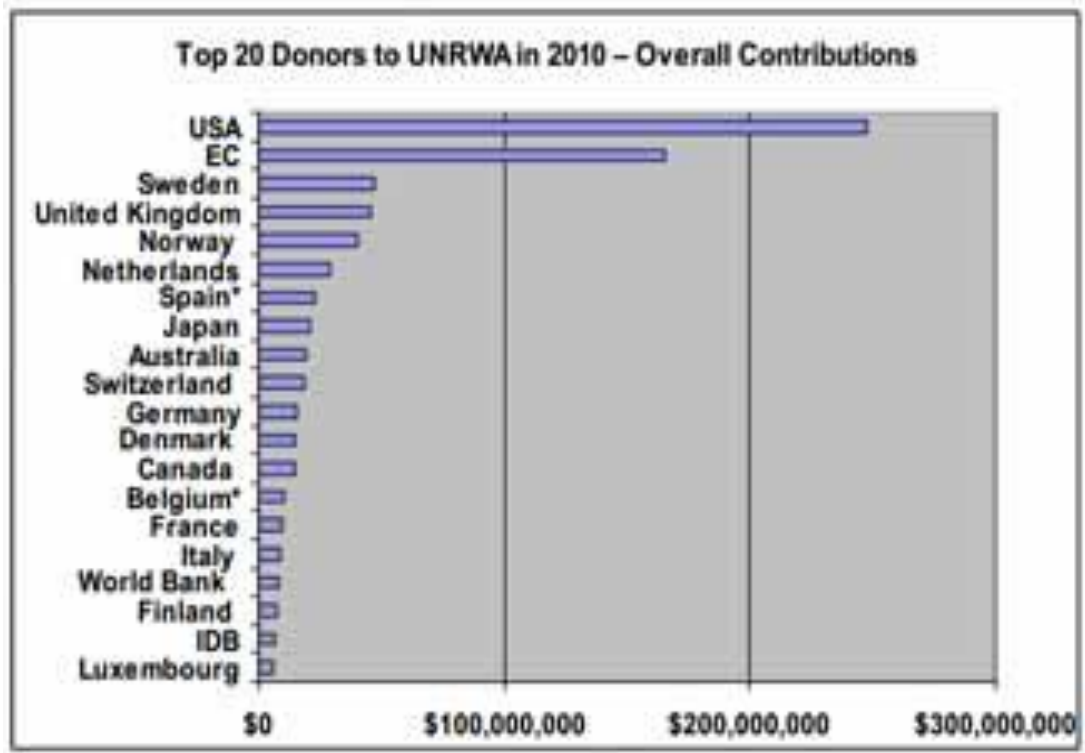


Figure 4. Donor States of UNRWA.

Source: (Top 20 Donors to the UNRWA. Overall contribution, 2010).

### **3. EDUCATION SECTOR IN PALESTINE**

#### **3.1. Education System**

The Palestinian issue has been deeply affected by political, social, economic and demographic changes that have had consequences on the reality of Palestinian people and the education system. Education in Palestine has been affected clearly by political events and military disputes. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has formed the core part of learning methods and curricula in the Palestinian education system. The instability, contrast and dispersion of the political situation will determine any development or new features of philosophy and trends of education that may be created. (Mattar 2005, Vol.40, 130-133).

In the Ottoman era, Palestinian education was limited and restricted for a long period of time to a certain class of society, comprised of only rich males. The level of education was also limited and did not exceed writing, reading and knowing basic mathematics issues. In some cases, women were only able to learn at home with only female teachers.

Later, following the end of the First World War in 1918, the British Mandate emerged. This period was characterized by the facilitation of Jewish immigration to Palestine, according to the Balfour Declaration. This led to the decision to partition Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish, in 1947, which was rejected by all Arabs. The British Mandate fought education in Palestine as it did not focus on the establishment of schools and other educational institutions. Education was limited to the rich who were able to pay tuition fees, which resulted in only a few people knowing how to read and write, which in turn led to ignorance and deepened illiteracy.

In 1948, the tragedy and war of the Palestinian people started, which resulted in the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians to neighbouring Arab countries as well as the emergence of the Jewish Israeli state. This hampered many aspects of Palestinian life and decreased the number of educated people as a result of bad political-economic situations.

In 1967, Israel was able to occupy the Gaza strip and the West Bank, which lie beside many neighbouring Arab states; for example, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. However, Palestinian education in that period changed and improved after the displacement of Palestinians from their

homes inside and outside Palestine. This was as a result of Palestinian awareness in the importance of education in order to free their land.

Subsequently, Palestinian education went through a new period, where the application of the Jordanian curriculum in the West Bank and the Egyptian curriculum in the Gaza Strip was really useful for raising awareness among Palestinians. This has greatly affected the structure of Palestinian people in terms of the repeated tragedy of immigration. (Mattar 2005, Vol.40, 130-133).

### **3.2. Who Rules the Education System in Palestine?**

The first attempts of improving the Palestinian education system was realised in the Palestine Liberation Organization, the PLO, in 1964, which took care of Palestinian families and provided universal primary and secondary education by opening its private schools.

In addition, in 1970, the School House *Child Happiness* in Lebanon was founded by the Union of Arab Palestine, which had been in charge of the institution of Social Affairs in order to secure its budget and management through its professional and academic sectors. This institution stopped operating following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

The educational system was changed in 1994, as a result of the Oslo agreement and the establishment of the PLO. The agreement was signed between both the PLO and Israel, where it transferred powers from the civil authority of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian National Authority and thus Palestinians took over the functions of education in the Palestinian National Authority.

Today, the Ministry of Education oversees public education in all public schools in Palestinian territories. In addition, it oversees all UNRWA and private schools, colleges and universities in Palestine. Fatah (a very strong political party in Palestine) still covers the educational system in the West Bank, and Hamas (a strong political party in the Gaza Strip) still has control in some places and in Islamic universities in Gaza. This partition is a result of having different political parties who dominate different areas of Palestine. (Taweel 2007, 37-44).



The educational system in Palestine has gathered all Palestinian secular and left parties in the Palestinian curriculum which was drafted during the advent of the Palestinian National Authority. However, the method of teaching the Palestinian curriculum is really weak and based on the indoctrination and centred on the teacher. This prevents students from using any critical thinking and practical experience, which has led to an increase of the impact of a cultural tragedy on younger generations. (Taweel 2007, 37-44).

### **3.3. Types of Schools**

The educational system in Palestine consists of two types that are supervised by the Ministry of Education. The first stage of pre-school education is kindergarten, which continues for a period of two years of education for children who meet the age requirement of 4-5. The pre-school education kindergarten is aimed at early education and knowing basic issues. Children build their capacity to becoming an active element within the community. In addition, they absorb the basic life skills and adapt to the standards and values of the community.

The second stage of education is primary and secondary school. These schools serve the students in regular school hours over two semesters per academic year. The duration of those schools is 12 years, starting from the first class of primary school and ending in twelfth grade, where students sit a final examination to be granted the General Secondary Education Certificate. Thus, schools are divided in Palestinian public education into two parts:

- 1 .Stage of basic education compulsory, which includes grades 1-10.
2. Stage of secondary education, consisting of academic education. This includes classes 11-12 and considers science and literature, according to student abilities.

Vocational education, which includes classes 11-12 and teaches the following disciplines: commercial, agricultural, industrial and nursing. Nowadays, many Palestinians have a high education and most of them can at least read and write.

There are many types of schools in Palestine that are controlled by different sectors. First, the Public schools, these schools are controlled by the Palestinian authority in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, they do not dominate all schools in the city of Jerusalem as result of Israeli occupation. In addition, there are also two other types of public schools. First, schools were governed before the attack in June 1967, which are dominated by the Ministry of

Education of Jordan. Second, other public schools dominated by the Islamic endowment which indirectly managed by the Ministry of Education and the Palestinian.

Second type of schools, is the international relief agency schools. These types of schools oversee Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Most of these schools are located in the Palestinian camps. Those schools have been ranked as the second schools in term of students' numbers after public schools. UNRWA's schools are concentrated in the Gaza Strip, where they estimated more than the half of the schools in the sector.

The last type of schools are private schools. These schools are dominated and funded by charities, religious groups and individuals. The ministry still have limited supervision over private schools. In many cases, private schools could be considered better than public schools, where they provide high level and quality of education, although they are more expensive than public schools or UNRWA schools. (Abi-Mershed 2010, 125-145).

### **3.4. The Obstacles to Palestinian Education**

There are several challenges facing education in Palestine:

1. Poor infrastructure in many schools, where students lack basic needs and some leisure facilities to play and exercise their activities. They also lack most means of communication and transportation as well as the lack of good environmental health for schools, which is really affects negatively the academic level and the health of the student.
2. Insufficient number of schools for Palestinian students. This has led to weaken the functions and performance of the educational direction for students and their future. Despite what has been established from schools by the UNRWA, there are many needs that affect the progress and development of refugee education. There are some areas still with no schools or a large number of students in the same classes. This has led to lack of coherence, repetition, overcrowding and lack of necessary knowledge. In addition, teachers will suffer from double shifts working, where he/she will find lack in provision of suitable learning environment for their students, which will increase the pressure imposed on the facilities and the crew. As a

result, they often lead to shortening the school day and skip times organized for leisure activities.

3. High classroom density. The density of classroom is one of the prerequisites for the quality of educational services. However, the very high density could be an obstacle to any development of the education service, where student cannot concentrate on his studies and does not take his right to express and participate in classroom. In addition, teachers will suffer and be under a great hardship and burden in his educational life.

4. Job security for teachers and low teacher's salaries is a big problem in education sector in Palestine. Comparing to the high standard of living, this will affect adversely their job satisfaction and performance in the community. In addition, the hard economic and political situation, which has led to delays of salaries and in some cases working for free in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where this will decrease the desire for teaching or give good quality of education. This violates all labour organizations law, which protect employee rights and the right for teacher to get his salary every month without delay or decrease. Moreover, the salary satisfies the minimum standards of living and wages.

5. Educational attainment and low levels of attainment in national examinations and international students in Palestine. There are several direct and indirect factors for the low educational attainment. The main problem is the political situation and the lack of salaries. This will lead to lack of teachers and a lack of skills for academic level of teachers. In addition, the lack of schools and overcrowded classrooms has been seen as being an important reason for such low achievements. Moreover, the lack of educational environment suitable for study or even living, where all home problems will affect the child in school and extent the problem as well as lack for indicative crew and psychological aid in order to discuss with the students and help them.

6. Financial resources. The lack of financial resources is problematic. This will lead to restricted and limited possibilities of development to put an end to the worsening crisis. UNRWA schools suffer from many fiscal deficits, where they cannot be spent on the educational activities, national participation and international competitions such as private schools. This will limit the student's thought and also will limit the expansion of the scientific vision towards the future's development in all directions.

7. Communication problems due to barriers, lack of staff, lack of transportation and low budgets. The tragic situation in the Palestinian territories dramatically affects the teaching life, including UNRWA schools. The issue is not merely educational issue, but it also deeply affected by the difficult political situation through Israelis borders that prevent students and teachers for reaching the schools or in some cases being arrested. Israeli forces hinder mobility between areas and provinces in order to weaken the educational and economic Palestinian life. In addition, there is a lack in having well organized organization in Palestinian transportation system that will help people to mobile and move from area to another.
8. The large number of Israeli military checkpoints that cut across the Palestinian territories has led to difficulties in communication between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Thus, Education system between UNRWA schools is indirectly disconnected between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There is no possibility to move, take work permits and exchange of experiences between the West Bank and Gaza because of the Israeli occupation and control over all the Palestinian areas.
9. The apartheid wall around the holy city and military checkpoints that are fixed in every city's entrance have very negative impact on the educational process. This would hinder the arrival of students and teachers to their schools as well as in some cases it will be a main reason for some students to skip classes and coming to school.
10. The lack of clarity over the continuity of loans programs and student aids, especially in the absence of a mechanism to repay the loans obtained by the students in higher education institutions. The educational loans have really high standards for students in any educational institutions, whether school or university. The loans have also the possibility to stop in any time due to poverty and absence of competent authority for collection of loans. (Taraki 2006, 33-35).

## **The weak Points of Curricula in the Palestinian Education System**

Palestinian society has suffered a lot throughout the ages and modern history from lack of having one good curricula and courses related to all Palestinians. There have been always differences between different areas depending on every area location. There should be a kind of unification for Palestinian curriculum, which contributes towards the development in the society as one society and one people with taking into account the small different characteristics of population such as gender and age group. Palestinian curriculum shall seek to provide different training systems on technical and life skills through the creation of programs for vocational and technical training in order to meet the needs of different regions and people overall the country.

The key solutions for weak points of the Palestinian education system require several steps to be followed steps in order for the system to be reformed;

1. Put a full and clear definition for the general objectives of adult's education in Palestine that is connected to the reality and meet Palestinians needs. In addition, an awareness of the political situation arises among people in order to be aware of all life aspects living there. This will ensure the development of the community and the establishment of educated generations to serve and protect their homeland.
2. Reconsideration of all current programs or those programs which have been used in basic and adult education. Introducing the Palestinians basic needs in different curriculums and educational programs shall be as first step to achieve these objectives in the community.
3. Find multiple programs and different environments according to the group's interests and benefits. In addition, improve the different classes in different ages of the society and increase the quality of education in order to establish an independent state.
4. Find specialist teachers for each course field separately than other courses. Programs and courses shall fully describe the different objectives of each course included. In addition, courses shall be appropriate to every class ages. This will lead to a better understanding from students and improve the quality of education.
5. Enhance specialized courses for women to meet their need as an active member of the community and human being. For example, open centres for women in various types of

professions and find some courses learned by specialist trainers in order to teach women in different aspects of life and society.

6. Enhance literal and vocational training programs in order to improve the different skills and increase the level of professions along with finding jobs to people trained in order to use and improve the skills that they already acquired.

7. Adopt curriculum modules that are flexible for any political situation and problem which may occur. In addition, adopt some curriculum modules that are enough flexible for student who are not able to reach schools and they must study at homes. Finally, check the principle of interaction between education and the labour market.

8. Provide several types of special programs such as Software Vocational training as well as enhance the cultural, public, private programs. This will raise awareness among people and improve skills and income in the labour market. (IBP, Inc 2008, 96-102)

### **Education in Jerusalem:**

The education sector in east Jerusalem is one of the worst sectors in Palestinian territories. The huge number of population, the increasing of student numbers and limited numbers of schools and educational institutions have increased the level of problems and make Jerusalem as problematic area. The sector is under the Israeli control, where Israel tries always to hamper any process for educational development. However, Palestinians authorities try to improve and develop schools in Jerusalem because they regard it as the capital city of Palestine. . (Taraki 2006, 33-35).

### **3.5. School and Student Statistics in Palestine**

There are 2753 schools in Palestinian territories: 2059 schools in the northern areas of the West Bank and 694 in the southern areas of the Gaza Strip. The number of schools run by the government number 2038, where 344 are supervised by the international relief agency and 371 are supervised by the private and public sectors. There are only 8 schools in the West Bank for evening learning and 264 schools in the Gaza Strip. The rate of evening schools is 39% of the northern areas and 38% of the southern areas.

The statistics based on the ministry of Palestinian education. The ministry has estimated the number of enrolled students in schools is 1136739 students, where 673172 students of them in the West Bank and 463,567 students in the Gaza Strip. In addition, there are 762,499 students enrolled in public schools and 100,624 students in private schools. The government schools in Gaza are 224,976 school and 222,032 school created by the UNRWA agency. Thus, 48% of the students in the Gaza Strip are enrolled in the schools of the international relief agency.

The proportion of female students constitutes 50.4% of the total number of students in all schools and in all basic stages. The number of female students has raised to 54.9% in the secondary stage of the total secondary school students.

### **The Distribution of Students and Schools in Palestine**

Statistics from 2007- (2012-2013)

Number of Schools

Table 5: Number of Schools in Palestine

The table describes different numbers of Palestinian schools, where they are supervised by different institutions and sectors. Despite of the table shows that the number of governmental school is the highest number among others, the UNRWA is still very important body in providing education for refugees. The UNRWA budget is very little compared with the governmental one, where Palestinian authority is the first responsible and representative for Palestinian refugees. The table concludes that the UNRWA and Palestinian authority shall increase the cooperation between each other in order to achieve the development in education system and increase the numbers of schools.

Table 5: Number of Schools in Palestine.

Number of Palestinian Schools	2337
Number of governmental Schools	1775
Number of UNRWA Schools	286
Number of private Schools	276

Source: (Achievements of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. MOEHE, 2007).

## Number of Students

Table 6: Number of Students in Palestine.

The table shows the different numbers of students overall Palestinian territories where they are supervised by different agencies and institutions. According to table number 5, the number of UNRWA students is very high compared with the numbers of the schools that are supervised by it. This would stress the need for cooperation between different bodies in order to make the education available to all. The donations from different countries and systematic approach in distribution the budget would have a great impact in developing the sector.

Table 6: Number of Students in Palestine.

Number of students Palestinian Schools	1085274
Number of students governmental Schools	760069
Number of students UNRWA Schools	252830
Number of students private Schools	72375

Source: (Achievements of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. MOEHE, 2007).

## Number of Teachers

Table 7: Number of Teachers in Palestine.

The table shows different numbers of teachers overall Palestinian territories, where they are supervised by different agencies and institutions. According to table number 5 and 6, the highest number of teachers in governmental schools would be referred for a reason of having the highest number of schools and students that need more labour in order to be satisfied. Despite governmental schools being more attractive to teachers than UNRWA schools due to work conditions and higher salaries, the number of UNRWA teachers is still high and proportionate according to its number of schools.

Table 7: Number of Teachers in Palestine.

Number of teachers in Palestinian schools	42394
Number of teachers in governmental schools	30174
Number of teachers in UNRWA schools	8081
Number of teachers in private schools	4139

Source: (Achievements of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. MOEHE, 2007).



Table 8: Institutions.

The table shows the high number of students who have completed their education and have successfully enrolled in universities and colleges through UNRWA's and other Palestinian's schools. However, the data shows that the students who prefer to study at universities are much higher than the students who prefer to study in colleges. This would be directly referred to the Palestinian special culture in believing that the education of university is better than education of college regardless to the quality of the institution. Therefore, the UNRWA and other basic schools shall have a role in increasing the awareness between students and their families in this point in order to achieve the balance in society. The data is also showing that the number of institutions is proportionate with the number of students in comparing with other factors such as the small area of Palestinian territories and the hard Palestinian situation.

Table 8. Institutions.

Number of universities	11
Number of students	169373
Number of colleges	32
Number of students	21835

Source: (Achievements of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. MOEHE, 2007).

#### Literacy Field

Table 9: Literacy.

This table shows the high rate of illiteracy in Palestinian society due to the hard political and economic situation in the area. Despite the importance of literacy centres for Palestinian refugees, the number of people who enrol to those centres is very small in comparing with the high rate of illiteracy. The UNRWA and other Palestinian institutions have the responsibility to increase the awareness between people about the importance of education and find the suitable programs which shall be suitable and attractive for this type of people.

Table 9: Literacy.

The illiteracy rate	11,06
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Number of literacy centres	113
Number of students Literacy	3251

Source: (Achievements of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. MOEHE, 2007).

### Statistics 2012-2013

Tables: 10, 11, 12. (2012-2013).

The tables below are comparative tool that would undertake the role of UNRWA and its achievements in education sector within five years (2007-2012). The number of UNRWA schools and teachers has been increased gradually with stable number of students, which shall expressly show the functional role of the UNRWA in improving the education sector successfully and achieving its goal in making the education available to all in good quality manner whether in The West Bank or the Gaza strip. In addition, tables below are important to notice the progress of the programs adopted by the UNRWA and all other Palestinian institutions in the education sector as fundamental sector in reforming societies within (2007-2015). Despite of all achievements, the Palestinian society still need more comprehensive and intensive work between different agencies and sectors in order to resolve big obstacles that are still occurs; such as the problem of free movement of teachers and students within the West Bank and the Gaza strip

Table 10: Number of Schools – 2012-2013.

Number of Palestinian Schools	2753
Number of governmental Schools	2038
Number of UNRWA Schools	344
Number of private Schools	371

Source: (Educational Statistical Report, 2013).

Table 11: Number of Students – 2012-2013.

Number of students Palestinian Schools	1136739
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Number of students governmental Schools	762499
Number of students UNRWA Schools	273616
Number of students private Schools	100624

Source: (Educational Statistical Report, 2013).

Table 12: Number of Teachers – 2012-2013.

In the West Bank	40532
In the Gaza strip	21578

Source: (Educational Statistical Report, 2013).

## Literacy Field

Table 13: Literacy Field.

The table below is important to show the rapid improvement in raising the awareness between Palestinian refugees within five years (2007-2013). The rate of illiteracy is noticeably decreased and the trend is going toward increase the number of people who are interesting in education in comparing with 2007 statics. This would refer to the UNRWA's efforts and systematic policies that are adopted in order to increase the awareness of people about the importance of education in reforming the society in different aspects as whole.

Table 13: Literacy Field.

The illiteracy rate	4.1%
Number of student's literacy	105 000

Source: (Educational Statistical Report, 2013).

## 3-6. The Education System in Palestine with UNRWA

### Prominent Roles

As an institution, the UNRWA has many tasks to do with refugees in Palestine, such as healthcare, micro lending, relief services and many other program and sectors. However, the

most important sector is the education sector, where it has been considered as the basic sector to establish a strong society and to raise the awareness among people, which will led to improve the society economically, politically and culturally.

The UNRWA was established in 1948 under resolution number 302, the UNRWA is considered as a specialized agency of the Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees. The basic functions of the UNRWA are providing relief through food and education. The education is included primary and secondary schools. Although the primitive roles of schools were in the camps, the educational level was good and the succeed rate was high, where education was the only way for Palestinian student to improve the living conditions of the family. (Rachel 2006, 86-88).

UNRWA in the context of state solution based on the rights of the Palestinian refugee issue, put some ideas on the agency's role in bridging the gap between the current political impasse and solution-based on the basis of rights. Reviews the thinking and practice of the agency with regard to suitable solutions over the past sixty years and research which was emerging about the role of the agency depend on the suitable solutions for Palestinian refugees as defined in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, the Security Council Resolution 237 and in the broader framework of international law.

The UNRWA adopted new approaches in order to reach a permanent solution. These approaches are marked by two characteristics: first, the direct approach, introduced in the 1950s, where the agency tried to ensure a solution through economic integration of refugees. This approach has proved to be indirect and limited in the preparation of refugees in the manner of their plight, as well taking the tutorial approach as the basis foundation of the UNRWA. The second characteristic the UNRWA adopted is what might be termed a "promotional" approach to suitable solutions. This approach, introduced during the years of the 1960s and 1970s is contained in the annual reports of the UNRWA on refugee views on the right to return, which emphasized that any workable solution must take the rights of refugees and interests into consideration.

The problem of first approach was that the agency tried to distance itself from the large-scale development policies, which has been noticed later that it should not have to be involved in such development, in order to achieve a final solution. This language has disappeared in the

mid-seventies during the aftermath of the international recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Later, the UNRWA in a short period of time has adopted third approach for suitable solutions in the late seventies. It developed a detailed plan about the role that could be played by the agency regarding to the implementation of return Palestinian refugees in stage as a response plan to the solution that is based on two states drafted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Palestinian people's inalienable. The UNRWA noted that the provisions of adequate funding, powers, the cooperation of governments, emergency nutrition and the medical care in emergency situations can help in determining the identity of the refugees.

In the nineties, the UNRWA approach is characterized towards suitable solutions that are prime and direct in its approach, which was first adopted in the sixties of the last century. The agency aimed in its services program to implement peace and prepare the refugees to the solution through individual and community development.

The UNRWA has also played a promotional role in the sense that they quoted the views of refugees and attitudes toward the peace process that is emerging through their annual reports. It has warned donors and heads of parties in the 1994-1995 about the refugees' feeling of the growing of marginalization in the peace-making process, especially the feeling of refugees living outside the territories occupied in 1967.

The adoption of the UNRWA curriculum third sub suitable solutions, a subsidiary but is likely to be important. In 1996, the agency announced that its facilities in the Dheisheh refugee camp are temporal facilities in order to facilitate the holding of the First People's Congress of the refugees and give the opportunity for a wider participation of refugees in the peace-making process. Over the years of nineties, the broad support of a large international actors and Israel promoted the agency resolutions after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement under the official discourse about the future role of the Agency.

Current thinking of the UNRWA and suitable solutions:

In the past decade, a handful of activists, academics and professionals have begun to look closely at the potential roles of the UNRWA agency in the research and implement of solutions regarding to the issue of Palestinian refugees. These studies have clearly adopted a methodology based on the rights in dealing with the refugee issue. The researchers identified a

number of reasons that require the participation of the UNRWA in durable solutions for Palestinian refugees. As the standpoint of standard theory, the UNRWA is one of the agencies of the United Nations have an obligation to promote and respect human rights and international law.

In the late years of the nineties and as part of a broad reform process in the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the United Nations assigned to all agencies and bodies to follow the approach based on human rights in all aspects of its work. The UNRWA has begun to do so in the context of the current regulatory reforms for the same proxy process.

According to a practical or executive point of view, all studies shed light on how it can contribute to knowledge of the UNRWA and its relationship with the refugee community in its practical experience of six consecutive decades. In addition, it shows how it can contribute to reaching a permanent solution for Palestinian refugees in the physical and human resources.

The UNRWA can ensure that the refugees are well familiar with the efforts to find a solution to their situation. In addition, they are completely familiar on the rights, interests and views of the participants in the official refugee negotiations. The agency could also be in a good position to work together with the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian non-governmental organizations and grassroots in order to involve refugees on a regular basis in the peace making process.

The potential roles that can be played by the UNRWA regarding to the application of durable solutions, including these roles to provide information and register informed choices, in order to facilitate the actual return, integration, or resettlement on the basis of the conscious and enlightened choice for refugees, social and economic rehabilitation long term. It is likely that these roles are performed in cooperation and joint action with other agencies of the United Nations and with international, regional and national organizations because of the complexities and breadth of scope and size of the required resources.

UNRWA has also begun in recent years to consider more systematically in the role that could be played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a in the context of a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. At present, the UNRWA approach includes two main components.

On the one hand, the UNRWA is recognized as a humanitarian and development organization and that in spite of its limited capacity to facilitate the solution based on the basis of rights, they have a role in highlighting the need to resolve that respects the rights and interests of refugees and provides room for representation. In recent years, use the Commissioner-General of the UNRWA, a number of public events and interactions with representatives of Member States in the General Assembly and the Security Council to talk about this subject. On the other hand, the UNRWA has already begun to implement their own research in the "internal affairs" on the possible roles of the Agency in the context of a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue.

Source: Education in the Gaza Strip -The human rights curriculum.

### **The Future of the UNRWA**

The fundamental gap about the future role of the UNRWA in that it does not address how to bridge the gap between the current political impasse and the solution based on the rights of the Palestinian refugee issue. There are three possible areas of the UNRWA can play the role of the decree and dilated depend on the previous methodologies agency UNRWA towards durable solutions and in light of the broader practice of international bodies in cases of other asylum. These roles include indirectly and directly roles.

First, UNRWA considers the educational curricula on human rights and tolerance in order to include a discussion of curriculum-based on Human Rights in reaching a permanent solution. It should include a discussion on the refugees' rights, obligations of the parties, including its duty, according to the available mechanisms in order to claim their rights. In addition, UNRWA should include a set of rights granted to individuals and groups in the communities in which refugees may eventually choose in order to return, integration or resettlement in their societies.

The expansion of its Platform for Human Rights in accordance with UNRWA's obligations in order to respect and promote human rights and international law, where refugees be able to become more active participants in the search for durable solutions in the implementation of these solutions.

In contrast, the exclusion of the rights of refugees would undermine the legitimacy of the existing curriculum of UNRWA, where teachers who put in the impossible position of

choosing between the "silence" or face the consequences of teaching basic rights in clear violation of agency policy and practice status. Finally, the "politicization" of recognized human rights discourse as a key element would not be considered as the perfect way in finding lasting solutions to the refugee issue and the conflict as a whole.

Secondly, UNRWA may consider ways in which they can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience gained during the reconstruction and rehabilitation camps, while contributing to conceptualize and design for durable solutions. Whether refugees eventually decided to return, or to stay current in the host country, or chose to resettle in another place; the reconstruction and rehabilitation will be key elements in the development and implementation of durable solutions.

The participatory approach emerged along with UNRWA in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the camps. The lessons learned with respect to practices that should be replicated and those that should be avoided on the basis of partnership and combine local knowledge from the base to the summit with the help of experts' advice from top to bottom.

The participatory approach is an important model to start thinking about how to rehabilitate the communities in the issues of right of refugees to return and integrate. In conjunction human rights framework, the development of design concepts and models as a permanent process for refugees participate in accessible can provide a strong incentive towards the enhancement that is based on resolving the rights of the Palestinian refugee issue.

Finally, UNRWA may think of ways in which they can facilitate broad participation of refugees in search-based solutions on the basis of rights, either through direct negotiations or through parallel forums. It is generally acknowledged that participation aims to promote local ownership and legitimacy of the agreements that are reached, as it facilitates access to knowledge, experience and resources of local and enhance communications.

Public relations and reconciliation shall contribute to each of factors in the solutions in order to be more sustainable and durable in the long run. It is possible to be involved directly or indirectly through parallel forums. While both forms proved to be effective in different contexts, the underlying weakness in the indirect participation is that the decisions do not usually commit official negotiator.



The increasing numbers of Palestinians population has increased the demand for sciences and increased the numbers of students, classes and schools. The situation has forced UNRWA to apply the payments system and to take responsibility of the lack for adequate buildings for student's accommodation.

UNRWA education is comprised of three stages of education: primary schools, middle schools and centres for preparing teachers. Later after the system was established, secondary schools were also built. In addition, private and public schools compete along with UNRWA schools in order to improve the educational system in Palestine.

The Department of Education in UNRWA has a distinctive attention for the vocational and technical education. This attention has obsessed by the heads of the education and regional educational programs of UNRWA in order to improve the sector and introduce new methods of education which shall have an important and prominent role in the development of the sector.

In the West Bank, there are three vocational and technical centres that are concerning special kind of technical modern education. Those centres offer a variety disciplines according to each own systematic concerns and educational programs. The women's community, Community College of Ramallah and training centre in Qalandia are the three vocational and technical centres which are all located in Ramallah city.

Many of new professional disciplines has been introduced, abolished or merged according to several stages of systematic process and scientific studies of UNRWA experts and specialists. Professional disciplines have been diversified and adjusted into the UNRWA centres thorough special comprehensive studies for the needs of Palestinian market

The reality of technical education in Palestine have been improved by various multiple and similar technical educational institutions that are located in different areas of Palestine. Those institutions could be governed by private sectors or governmental ones under the Ministry of Higher Education, or even other institutions are belonging to UNRWA.

Despite of the dependence of all colleges of the Ministry of Education and their adherence to uniform some disciplines plans, the colleges which are affiliated to UNRWA, have considered the weakness credit hours that occurred in the Ministry of Higher Education, where they focus on providing specialize staffs and advanced students in some disciplines. For example, do

international exams for students in software and databases in order to make the student able to get international certificates with wide knowledge.

UNRWA has considered the education as the most important sector that would achieve the stabilization for future generations. UNRWA's education programs has achieved very high rate in United Nation programs. There 70% of staff appointed by UN and 50% of UN budget has been issued for UNRWA's programs. In addition, UNRWA has participated in the Palestinian political problems, where many of its students and teachers were killed and injured in the Israeli attack in first and second intifada. Many UNRWA staff suffers violence and crime as do all other Palestinian people. Although there is violence that UNRWA staff suffers every day, the UNRWA tries to progress and follow its programs in the Gaza strip and the West Bank in order to achieve their education dream.

The curricula used in West Bank schools is the Jordanian curricula, which differs from that in the Gaza Strip, where they use the Egyptian curricula. This has created a big problem for many Palestinians students who felt that the foreign curricula does not meet their culture and needs. Those curriculums describe their own nations and cultures, where Palestinian nations have not included or even mentioned in the curriculums. As result of the several problems, donor's countries have cooperated along with UNESCO to establish one unified Palestinian curriculum for all Palestinians.

### **UNRWA Obstacles in Schools**

The UNRWA adopted a policy of automatic promotion, which is successful in somehow for a certain class of people and students but not all. UNRWA has prohibited the policy of corporal punishment in schools, where the abolition of this policy has increased the misbehaviour among students because they know very well that teachers will not punish them for breaching their duties.

The UNRWA's policy has weakened some teachers' personalities in front of parents of students or even students themselves. The teacher became threatening by any formal complaint against him may be submitted to UNRWA that could lead his dismissal. UNRWA decisions to intensify administrative work hampered the work of the teacher and made him perform administrative work at the student's time.

The United Nations wish to find long term solutions for education problems. The political situation is very hard to extent that UNRWA do not know if their programs could be continued in the close future. The problem is that no one can guarantee the political situation in Palestine. In addition, the huge budget which UNRWA spends from donors and UN bodies in order to build schools and pay expenses will be affected in case of any bad political situation may occur.

UNRWA has granted the Department of Education a great function in vocational and technical education. The department of education has a very functional role in the development of the education sector. There are 3 centres in the West Bank for technical education; the women's community college in Ramallah, the College community of Ramallah and Qalandia training centre. (Rachel 2006, 86-88).

Although the United Nations works very well to achieve development in the education sector in Palestinian territories, the UNRWA still faces many criticisms about some subjects in curricula; for example, the absence of Palestinian history and geography in curricula and the fear of its impact on successive generations in deepening their ignorance of their homeland. By other hand, there are many argue that the educational curriculum of UNRWA schools follow the states regulations and what has been offered in other Arab countries and thus the UNRWA should be excepted from such liability.

The UNRWA's spokeswoman Huda al-Turk said that they are following the regulations of host countries and what has been offered in the state's curriculum in all five places of its organization. She explained in a statement that the agency has developed alternative materials to teach the history and geography of Palestine in their schools during social studies classes, (UNRWA celebration spokeswoman al-Turk.

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews>, Al-Jazeera NET/06,11,2011).

Hamas accused UNRWA for its deliberately ignoring of the two subjects, where UNRWA has regards those two materials as not essential materials and replaced them by extracurricular activities. The Palestinian authorities have organized campaigns in order to avoid confusion, but UNRWA has given different arguments, which it referred all lacks of good curriculum to the hard availability of funds. However, Palestinians consider UNRWA as the main responsible of all these inadequacies.

The Ministry of Higher Education highlighted the importance of training for teachers as a central priority in its reform schedule. This would improve the quality of education and teaching. UNESCO supports the process of the implementation of the national strategy for all UNRWA's teachers through systematic programs with technical assistance for a period of three years. The program aims to improve the administrative and institutional capacity of the education system, improve the status of teachers, the degree of motivation and enhance the level of coherence and cohesion in teacher training and professional development.

UNESCO also provides technical assistance and support for each certain body in their institutions in order to develop the teaching profession. It has improved the degree of professionalism and professional status, the motivation of teachers, increased of own national standards for teachers, improved the school's behaviours, gave professional licenses, achieved the high framework of special qualifications, studied and monitored the terms and conditions of teacher's work and developed teachers of all aspects of life, which shall reflect to positive results in students and schools of UNRWA. (Rachel 2006, 86-88).

UNRWA achieved many goals in its different sectors; specifically in the education sector. Since the UNRWA was established and the occurrence of Al-Nakba, the UNRWA has started to work to reach all refugees in Palestine and all Palestinian refugees abroad in order to provide a basic and good education, raise an awareness of society, abolish all gender differences, teach people to accept each other, and to achieve economic and political development.

UNRWA is working with the Ministry of Education to find optimal solutions for students and to develop the educational programs. For example, UNRWA has worked on student participation in human rights, school management issues and improve curriculum to meet Palestinians needs.

The agency has set up a program in schools on human rights, tolerance and conflict resolution. This program works in collaboration with other bodies, such as the United Nations, host nations and non-governmental organizations. The program includes a series of tools and educational activities in order to make learning more interesting and enjoyable by students. The programs include technical and clerical competitions and sporting events. This way or this program had a great effect on UNRWA's school discipline, where it raised the awareness of

students and enhanced the parent's participation in order to improve the academic level. (Rachel 2006, 86-88).

### **3.7. The Impacts of the Education Sector**

The UNRWA achieved many accomplishments throughout ages on different levels of the Palestinian educational system. The UNRWA has worked on the development of the education system in Palestine and in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education. In addition, UNRWA has been helping and supporting the Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA has an important and clear role in improving the educational process in various psychological and constructional levels of education system. UNRWA has been working to achieve the goals of many Palestinian refugees in exercising the right to get good education, where UNRWA improved the buildings and curriculums of its schools besides to bring high qualified teachers and opened education programs and training centres.

On the schools level, the education system was initiated by UNRWA from many years ago after the catastrophe date (Al-Nakba). Nowadays, UNRWA has seven schools in Jerusalem. After 1948, UNRWA has been trying to develop the education system and open more schools for refugees.

The UNRWA grants scholarships to young people at universities for Palestinian refugees in order to complete their high levels of education. There is special concern of the UNRWA towards students who have disabilities and find difficulties in learning. The agency seeks to provide good quality programs in order to strengthen the disabilities students, where there is 13 camp for disabilities students out of 19 in the the West Bank refugee camp.

In 2005, the agency has set up a program in schools on human right, tolerance and conflict resolution. This program works in collaboration with other bodies, such as the United Nations, host nations and non-governmental organizations. The program includes a series of tools and educational activities in order to make learning more interesting and enjoyable by students. The programs includes technical and clerical competitions and sporting events. This way or this program had a great effect on UNRWA's school discipline, where it raised the

awareness of students and enhanced the parent's participation in order to improve the academic level.

Young parliamentarians are working as leaders in resolving conflicts between students and teachers. They also participate in a number of committees such as sports, health and financial social Affairs and committees.

Educational attainment is one of the most important roles for UNRWA. Starting from 2008, The UNRWA has improved the rate of success and reduced the rate of failure among students in UNRWA schools. The improvement has included specific activities and interventions in order to reduce the number of students in the classroom, increase the numbers of teachers and provide courses during the summer time.

The rate of success has increased from 50% of students in mathematics and 40% in the Arabic language to be 80% of students from grade 4 to grade 12. The numbers of successful students are 131 thousand students out of 166 thousand. These achievements have been increased after UNRWA improved its programs to be more flexible and meet the Palestinian needs.

Source: (Education Statistic of Palestine – Knoema, 2013).

### **Other Achievements**

#### 1. Internet in UNRWA schools

This statistic has proofed that Palestinian schools are in continuous progress. These achievements referred to the cooperation of UNRWA along with Palestinian education authority. For example, UNRWA has introduced the internet to Palestinian schools to be 99.7% of UNRWA's schools followed by Gaza schools where the percentage of public schools using Internet in the Gaza Strip is 99.1% and finally Palestinian private schools in the West Bank are 69.4%.

In 2000, the laboratories of UNRWA schools did not exceed 45% of all Palestinian schools. However, the number of scientific laboratories increased in 2012 to 59.02%.

UNRWA has enhanced the implementation of teacher's rights along with the Palestinian law. The main aim of UNRWA is to maintain the minimum level of living and wages for teachers and their families. In addition, the UNRWA works to provide job security and social protection for all Palestinian teachers and ensures community justice.

## 2. The UNRWA Striving to Increase Financial Resources

The UNRWA has a huge fund and donors that are granted by different states. There are thirteen donor countries for UNRWA; such as America, European Union, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Britain, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Canada and Saudi Arabia. The annual budget of UNRWA is US \$ 350 million and the education sector consumes 49% of the budget. This is a very problematic issue, where the political situation is always getting worse in Gaza and in the West Bank and the UNRWA spends a considerable amount of money to build shelters and schools for refugees, which may be destroyed by Israeli forces at any time.

UNRWA's achievements have exceeded the domestic level to be coordinated with other ministries and associations. This international work aims to achieve development in the Palestinian community; for example, the Association of Continued Education, the International Youth, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education.

In addition to classic education types, the UNRWA provides other types of education in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which have produced remarkable results; for example, the illiteracy rate in 2007 was 11.06%, which decreased to 4.01% in 2013. These are:

1- Literacy and adult education: This type of education is provided for everyone who is over 15 who has neither enrolled in school for short periods, nor ever enrolled, and do not know how to read and write.

2- Special education: This type of education is provided for those with special needs, who have disabilities or who need special care. This type of education tries to integrate people with disabilities and special needs in the educational system and at work.

3-The non-formal education: This type of education is provided in form of short-term courses in special centres. The Ministry of Education grants licenses under specific conditions in order to practice profession of these centres.

The UNRWA aims to work for the eradication of illiteracy all over Palestine. It tries to achieve this goal at the lowest cost and with fast results. It develops programs for uses of policy for literacy and adult education in Palestine through unification and coordination between all regions.

The UNRWA provides programs for rehabilitation and holds training seminars for employees in the program sessions. In addition, it works on creating a public library for adults and provides the necessary financial support to fund the program.

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum imposed the political imperatives through the reality of the Palestinian diaspora. In past, the agency was not able to develop special educational system for Palestinians that applied independently of the host countries. However UNRWA is doing considerable efforts in order to create its special curriculum that are only taught in UNRWA schools and do not depend on the curriculum of the Palestinian Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, the curriculum remains within the political boundaries and has not transferred to serious practical steps. . (Newman, Dajani – 2011, 234-235).

The UNRWA has contributed to reducing the phenomenon of students dropping out from schools by raising awareness and finding serious solutions to them through different programs and academic competitions. It has also focused on raising the educational attainment as one of the main reasons for dropping out from schools.

The UNRWA as an institution is fighting to face the challenges in order to help refugees by building schools and laboratories, giving courses for teachers and students and providing many other services for Palestinian refugees. However, UNRWA still suffers from some obstacle that would hamper its work. For example, UNRWA is not able to help in political issues and conflicts which prevent students and teachers to arrive to their schools in time because of checkpoints and instability.

The political situation in Palestine has reached to very dangerous area, which negatively affected the education sector and the economic development in all Palestinian territories. For example, In the West Bank and Jerusalem mostly affected by the political conflicts, where Israel has built the apartheid wall and the intensification of military checkpoints, there is an impediment for students' free movement in reaching their schools and colleges. UNRWA has been trying to assist the Palestinian refugees in several ways during the war. For example, during the war on Gaza, UNRWA has opened its schools as shelters for refugees who demolished their homes.



UNRWA faces a big challenge in providing shelters for refugees who have lost their homes. This would refer to the increasing number of refugees and people who displaced from their homes. UNRWA provides shelters for 5000 refugees which may hamper its role in providing and funding the necessary education. There are also 145 schools that have been used as shelters for refugees as a result of Gaza war.

UNRWA is working in coordination with UNICEF and international institutions in order to improve education by providing school bags, stationery for students and furniture for many schools, which have been destroyed during the aggression in Gaza.

The relief agency in the Gaza Strip works on different aspects of student's life after the war on Gaza. A very high number of students have suffered from different psychological symptoms from the war, where they lost their homes, land, trees, relatives and friends without prior warning. In addition, students who live outside the separation wall have a real and daily problem in reaching their schools through the gates. This has led to a high number of students giving up and leaving their education.

Teachers and students are suffering of malice and violence from Israeli soldiers in military checkpoints. The education for women and girls is harder and more affected by checkpoints and the fear of soldiers to harass them. In addition, the cost of transportation is very high and the journeys to schools and universities may takes hours, which has led parents to enforcing daughters to abandon their schools.(Newman, Dajani – 2011, 234-235).

The Palestinian child is one of the few children in the world who struggles to arrive at school, where he faces everyday military checkpoints, arrest and instability. There are 183 children who got killed in the recent war on Gaza and 400 thousand children in Gaza need for rehabilitation a result of aggression.

There have been 140 thousand Palestinians displaced from their homes since the beginning of the aggression on Gaza, where Palestinians have used UNRWA schools as shelters. In its wars, Israel has always targeted schools belonging to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees; for example, the Abu Hussein School in the Jabalya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip was exposed to many shells fired by Israeli artillery, where many of students and teachers were killed.

The Israeli military aims to limit the expansion of education services in many of its orders; for example, the Israeli occupation authorities issued orders to prevent the international relief agency and the faculties of Al-Azhar schools in Gaza to work without obtaining new permits from the Israeli military authorities. In addition, Israeli orders have stopped UNRWA workers crossing checkpoints without entry permission from them.

#### UNRWA HUMAN RIGHTS/ CURRICULUM

Through the conflict resolution and non-violent human rights program, UNRWA incorporated human rights education in its Arabic, Islamic and social education materials and courses. The curriculum was developed for human rights in 2008, in collaboration with several international institutions of the Red Cross, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and several local human rights organizations; such as Al Mezan Centre, the Centre of conscience and the centre of the Palestinian Human Rights.

The aim of imposing human rights subjects in the UNRWA curriculum is to consolidate and understand the knowledge of the scientific principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One subject has been allocated in order to introduce the human rights in nine levels of education once a week. This subject has adopted several materials and methods, which depend on engaging the student effectively and developing critical thinking skills according to different behaviours and attitudes.

The implementation of human rights in UNRWA's education today is in improving stage, where the crew of teaching consists by 179 specialist teacher and 3,000 generalist teachers. The preparation of the approaches and developed dozens of educational specialists is participated by all the levels of the educational administration at UNRWA.

The purpose of human rights education is to support the formation and activation of the human personality in each student. It shall provide the knowledge to children about global perspective of human rights and helps to restore the children's faith for the world in the far future. The programs and courses are arranged according to the human rights principles that are consisted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As one of the aspects of human rights education is to help children to embrace the values and principles of human rights as one of the alternative methods of violence in order to enjoy a

future free of violence, which is a very important issue for the children of Gaza and the Palestinian child.

The life of Palestinian children in war and violence make them suffer from the scourge. This created the need to balance their personality and make them learn to respect human rights and humanity in general. The UNRWA / Gaza Program for Human Rights Education is working on the development of tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious, and supports United Nation peace-promoting activities.

The human rights education program seeks to provide knowledge, understanding and adhere to all students enrolled in UNRWA schools by the basic principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each student is required to be able for the realization of human rights including the intellectual and behavioural tolerance, historical references that led to the birth of the Universal Human Rights Declaration, historical struggles for human rights and international standards of accountability in the field of human rights at the international level.

UNRWA schools are compelled to follow Israeli regulations and orders, which could regard the UNRWA as being indirectly under the control of Israeli power. The education sector has been compelled by many oppressive and brutal practices as a result of Israeli control on the education sector.

Source: (Student Parliament Forum – UNRWA, May /2014).

## CONCLUSION

The refugee issue is crucially important and complicated at the same time. Obviously, the UNRWA has achieved a lot of progress and several important reforms in almost every aspect of a Palestinian refugee's life. There are many new forms adopted and strategic objectives implemented by the UNRWA in regards to education, health and the labour market. However, Palestinian refugee problems are not limited and the search for a good level of human welfare in Palestinian territories is still needed.

The tragedies of Palestinian refugees are not only a result of armed conflict, occupation and disregard for human rights, which are the main obstacles indeed. However, tragedies also result from a failure to resolve Palestinian refugee problems. This would refer to that the UNRWA has always been working in very limited cooperation with other bodies and policies. In addition, it has given special attention to Palestinian refugees in Palestinian territories among other refugees all over the world.

For these reasons, the UNRWA has been the main organisation responsible for Palestinian refugees for many years, where it offers all kinds of supports and circular aids as the only assistance to them. This would raise the question about the role of Palestinian authorities and those host countries of refugees, where they shall form a cooperation with the UNRWA and the international community in order to increase their responsibilities in dealing with the issue humanely away from political views and interests.

Consequently, the United Nation's system lacks financial resources in their general budget for all sectors in Palestine. This has limited the possibilities of development and efficient contribution to many sectors, where donations and cooperation may need more openness and communication with different countries and the international community.

Thus, the Palestinian authorities and the UNRWA must work together in order to increase the quality of basic education, along with primary, secondary and higher education. They should provide qualitative education in order to allow Palestinian refugees to achieve their full potential in both the local and global communities and towards active and productive participation in social, political, economic and cultural life.

The role of the International Relief Agency (UNRWA) in dealing with the problems of the Palestinian refugees has been achieved through all humanitarian services which are provided by UNRWA. The services of UNRWA has increased the knowledge and skills of refugees as well as created jobs to them which shall improve the standard of living in Palestinian camps. For the society it has resulted improved humanitarian system.

In addition, the education sector has a great impact on the development and improvement of the situation of Palestinian refugees. The sector could be regarded as one of the main factors toward rapid economic and social progress through promoting the technologies, entrepreneurships and smart minds in the Palestinian society. This would affect the health sector indirectly by increasing the level of lives toward healthier and long lives. In addition, Palestinian refugees would be able to reach for suitable solution in politics through opening negotiations and modern discussions without violence through education.

Palestinian refugees would find more difficulties and obstacles to live and defy any challenges without the assistance of the UNRWA. The UNRWA offers new projects and means of education to all Palestinian refugees; such as, educational courses, the establishment of schools and vocational centres and the imposition of mandatory basic education. All these achievements and assistance have played a great role in creating and developing Palestinian society and projecting the real picture of Palestinian tragedies to the whole world through the UNRWA.

Therefore, the UNRWA's introduction of human rights as a course in primary schools has been a very important step in the reform, which may raise the level of humanity between Palestinians in the conflict area and create a tolerant society that respects cooperation and negotiation between its different policies and bodies. It has also decreased corruption in authorities and a desire towards revenge, which will create a stable society in all aspects in the long term.

Serious actions should be taken by the UNRWA to allow both the Israeli and Palestinian sides to cooperate, where it does not exclude one side in its conferences and important projects. This would help make projects to be more comprehensive and free from later difficulties, such as the daily difficulties of the free movement of workers and students within or outside the area of conflict.

The United Nations must take attention towards those children who have disabilities and special needs with special support which will be in the interest of both sides in the future. In the same way, Palestinian refugees should be able to accept the UNRWA situation and understand the fiscal deficit in its budget, as well as trying to improve the agency with their feedback and by fulfilling their obligations.

Finally, the hypothesis would be regarded as it is achieved according to the deep analysis of this paper, where the United Nation Relief Work Agency contributes positively to supporting and developing the education sector in Palestine for Palestinian refugees. However, if the cooperation between the United Nation Relief Work Agency and the Palestinian Refugees works well then the quality of the basic, primary, secondary and higher education will increase, because the UNRWA acts as a financial source and means of protection to the Palestinian refugees.

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