



“Barriers to Education” Fact Sheet – July 2004

Population Statistics

- 53% of Palestinian population comprise children under 18 years old (67% under 24)¹
- 1.2 million children are of school age²
- 123,600 students are enrolled in higher education³
- One third of the population are students

Education Indicators

- 98.2% literacy rate among 15-24 year olds (89.2% total adult literacy rate)⁴
- Of the total number of schools in the West Bank and Gaza, 74.9% are government schools, 12.9% UNRWA schools (serving primary education to 253,578 Palestinian refugee children) and 12.3% private schools⁵
- There are 11 Palestinian universities, 5 university colleges and 25 community colleges⁶
- The Palestinian Ministry of Education was established in 1994 with the first ever Palestinian national curriculum introduced into schools in September 2000 (replacing the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula in Palestinian schools for the previous 33 years of the Israeli occupation)
- In a recent survey of Palestinian youths between ages of 10-24, 58.9% of the participants stated that their first concern is their education⁷

Since September 2000

- More than 573 children killed⁸
- 495 school children killed⁹
- 196 university students killed
- 38 school teachers and university employees killed
- 2,500 children arrested (650 children arrested in 2003)¹⁰
- 357 children in Israeli prisons today (as of May 2004)¹¹
- 710 university students detained
- 196 school teachers and university employees detained

Barriers to Education

- There are 67 checkpoints in the West Bank and 890 military ‘obstacles’ throughout the West Bank and Gaza (such as roadblocks or earth mounds)¹²
- Over 80% of the population report mobility restrictions in going about their daily routine¹³

¹ UNICEF; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

² UNICEF

³ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), “Report on the Israeli Violations and their Impact on the Higher Education Sector During Al-Aqsa Intifada (29 Sept 2000 – 15 June 2004)

⁴ PCBS

⁵ MOEHE

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Youth Survey 2003, PCBS/UNICEF/UNFPA

⁸ UNICEF, “United Nations OPT International Children’s Day Fact Sheet”, 2004

⁹ MOEHE, “Assessment 10, The Effect of the Israeli Occupation on Education From 28/9/2000-14/6/2004” (same source for all figures ‘Since September 2000’ unless otherwise specified)

¹⁰ Defence for Children International/Palestine Section (DCI/PS)

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

¹³ PCBS, “Survey on the Perception of Palestinian Population Towards the Socioeconomic Conditions”, May 2004

- Surda Roadblock, on the road from Ramallah to Birzeit University, blocked access to Birzeit University for two and a half years between June 2001-December 2003
- The number of new students enrolling at Birzeit University from Jenin (north WB) declined by 100% (101-0) in 3 years due to Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement¹⁴
- 498 schools closed for varying periods during the school year 2002-2003 due to curfew and closure. A total of 1,289 schools have had to close for varying periods since September 2000¹⁵
- 197,599 school children had school days disrupted during the last school year 2003-2004 due to curfew and closure¹⁶
- UNRWA schools lost 1,475 school days in the school year 2002-2003, with a daily average of 145 teachers (9% of total UNRWA teaching staff) unable to reach their schools¹⁷

The Wall's Impact on Education (ICJ, PENGON, PCBS, Al Quds University)

- The projected length of the Wall is 650km (400 miles),¹⁸ more than twice the length of the Green Line, with only 11% actually running along the Green Line¹⁹. One quarter of the Wall has so far been constructed.
- The Wall currently cuts off 22 localities from their schools²⁰
- The Wall has an impact on the student intake of all the West Bank universities, especially Al Quds University in Jerusalem whose main campus is now cut off from Jerusalem along with 36% of its students²¹
- 75% of the teachers affected west of the Wall face difficulties in reaching their schools and universities (with 43% of the teachers affected east of the Wall facing difficulties)²²
- In Qalqilya, a town in the north West Bank which is now completely encircled by the Wall, some teachers have to travel more than 25km to pass a checkpoint which is frequently closed or takes hours to get through, compared to a 5-10 minute ride previously²³
- 42% of school children and 46% of teachers affected by the Wall have been absent at least once from school or university due to closure²⁴
- Half of the 15,000 school children in Ar-Ram area (north of Jerusalem), currently study in Jerusalem and will be cut off from their schools if the Wall is constructed in Ar-Ram as planned²⁵

Military Attacks on Schools and Universities²⁶

- 298 schools have been shelled or broken into by Israeli soldiers
- 8 universities have been shelled or broken into by Israeli soldiers
- 97 schools have had their property either vandalized or bulldozed by the Israeli Army
- 3 children were shot inside UNRWA school classrooms in 2004
- Hebron University and Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron were closed by military order for 8 months in 2003, denying over 6000 students their right to education²⁷

¹⁴ Birzeit University

¹⁵ MOEHE; It is the policy of the Israeli Army that children are not allowed to go to school during curfew. 'Closure' is when the checkpoints and roadblocks encircling towns and villages close, not allowing anyone in or out.

¹⁶ MOEHE

¹⁷ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)

¹⁸ Stop the Wall <http://stopthewall.org/FAQs/33.shtml>

¹⁹ Al Haq, Stop Collective Punishment Campaign, "In Focus: Annexation Wall", 2004

²⁰ International Court of Justice, 7 July 2004. *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Paragraph 133

²¹ Al Quds University

²² PCBS, "Impact of the Separation Wall on the Socioeconomic Conditions of Palestinian Households in the Localities in which the Separation Wall Passes Through", October 2003

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ PENGON <http://stopthewall.org/latestnews/567.shtml>

²⁶ MOEHE

²⁷ International Palestinian Youth League, *Occupied Campus: The Israeli Military Closure of Hebron University*, 2003

- 10 schools have been closed by military order
- 43 schools have been turned into military bases

Deteriorating Quality of Education

- According to Defence for Children International (DCI/PS), almost every Palestinian child suffers a form of psycho-social trauma²⁸
- In a survey of its schools, UNRWA found a 20% rate of hyper-tension symptoms, 16% low achievement rate, and an 11.5% rate of fear and anxiety²⁹
- The quality of education continues to deteriorate due to the barriers to education – roadblocks, curfews, closures and the Wall – as well as the relentless level of violence in civilian areas
- Pass rates in UNRWA West Bank schools declined dramatically in the last school year 2003-2004 compared to 2000-2001³⁰

Barriers to Education³¹

Obstruction	Military checkpoints, roadblocks, closures and curfews prevent students and teachers from getting to school or university.
Harassment	Students are regularly subjected to intimidation, violent assault and arrest by Israeli soldiers on their way to and from school or university.
Attack	Schools and universities have been shelled, shot at and raided by Israeli troops and settlers.
Occupation	Schools have been taken over and turned into military bases.
Curfew	Schools have been closed down indefinitely due to prolonged curfews.
Economic Blockade	Many students are unable to continue with their studies due to severe financial hardship.

The Right to Education in International Law

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	“Everyone has the right to education”
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966³²	“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms”
General Comment 13 on the Implementation of ICESCR, 1999	“Academic freedom includes the liberty of individuals to fulfill their functions without discrimination or fear of repression by the State or any other actor”
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	“States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity...[and shall] Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means”
Fourth Geneva Convention, 1949	“The occupying power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children”

²⁸ DCI/PS, *Fragile Childhood: An Analysis of Human Rights Violations Against Palestinian Children in 2003*, p.63

²⁹ UNRWA

³⁰ UNRWA

³¹ Right to Education Campaign, Friends of Birzeit University

³² Ratified by Israel in 1991