



# NEED ASSESSMENT OF OVERCROWDING IN GAZA REFUGEE CAMPS

JABALIA REFUGEE CAMP

2014

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This study is part of facilitation of needs assessment related to the issue of overcrowding in Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza with the aim of improving housing conditions and related impacts of refugees living in the camps

2014



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**HEKS** 

Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz



**American Friends  
Service Committee**

Quaker values in action

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## List of acronyms

AFSC	American Friends Services Committee
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
MoHPW	Ministry of Housing and Public Works
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PHC	Palestinian Housing Council
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USSD	Unified Shelter Sector Database
UUSC	Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program



## Preface

The Right of Return of Palestinians refugees has been internationally recognized by Human Rights bodies and enshrined in UN Resolutions, the main one being the General Assembly Resolution 194 adopted in December 11th 1948. Since their expulsion and displacement in 1948 and 1967, the Palestinian refugees have remained the most marginalized and impoverished segment of Palestinian society to this date. In particular, the Gaza Strip is home to 1.1 million refugees, representing more than 70% of the population in the Strip. Refugee camps in Gaza are, by and large, overcrowded and lacking quality services.

AFSC Gaza has been engaged in the past in looking at issues of overcrowding and its impact on the people living in the camps. In particular, and due to larger focus on its work on youth, AFSC Gaza has done this by looking at how overcrowding affects the youth. In 2014, AFSC Gaza received the support from HEKS (Hilfswerk des Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz) to advance on this work and to focus on the Jabalya Refugee Camp, the largest and most densely populated camp in the Gaza Strip.

The report you have in your hands, presents the findings of the assessment carried out during the first half of 2014. It maps out the current assistance and interventions provided by organizations and agencies in the field of housing and shelter. The assessment was done through a series of consultations with organizations and with refugee communities living in Jabalia in order to understand what kind of assistance is provided and what the gaps are. The approach was highly participatory, fostering the engagement of communities and the youth in order to identify the priorities to alleviate the overcrowding problem, minimize its impacts and to overcome its cause.

We are hoping that this report will be used as the basis to develop new projects by the different organizations working in the Gaza refugee camps and to cover needs not yet addressed.

We would to give special thanks to Dr. Mohammed Al Eila for his sincerity and devotion; this work would not have reached its present form without his invaluable dedication. We would like to thank Angela Elmiger and Rola Hamdan from HEKS for their generous assistance to prepare this report and for their trust in AFSC Gaza to carry on this intervention.

Without the readiness and participation of the organizations working in the Camp was to key to undertake meaningful and constructive discussions. Special thanks go to Mr. Scott Anderson, Deputy Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza and the rest of the UNRWA team for their valuable support that provided much information and insights.

And finally, this report would not have been possible without the participation of the refugees themselves. We would like to thank their readiness and patience to answer our questions without hesitation and to participate in much lively discussion. May their dream of return become a reality in the future.

Amal Sabawi  
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## Summary

Overcrowding is the most pressing issue facing Palestinians living in Gaza's refugee camps. Social and psychological effects of overcrowding are experienced both individually and within relationships, as well as by all segments of society. Overcrowding poses serious direct and indirect health risks, particularly affecting those most vulnerable: the elderly, children and the disabled

The aim of this report is to identify the needs and priorities of the residents of Gaza Refugee Camps in General and Jabalia Refugee camp in Specific, the majority of which are youth, in order to alleviate overcrowding: minimizing its impact and overcoming its causes. The research methodology consists of qualitative information gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions which conducted in March 2104. The study is limited to refugees living inside of the camp and focused on Jabalia camp specifically. The study maps the services, interventions, and programs related to overcrowding, as well as identifying service providers such as UNRWA, UN agencies, and local and international NGOs

The study identified several gaps mainly; the high population density compared to the area of Jabalia Camp, in particular, congestion, lack of public spaces and public services such as health and education, as well as insufficient infrastructure and utilities are among the gaps highlighted by camp residents. Through focus groups, it came to light that the priorities and appropriate interventions for Jabalia Camp's community included Palestinian refugees' Right to Return to their homes, job creation, housing development, establishment of housing projects outside the camp, development of infrastructure, improving health and education facilities, increasing public and youth participation, and establishing new sports and recreational facilities. The study has also focused in depth on community relations within the camp as an important lens in which to review camp needs beyond what is traditional and understand how refugee voices can be heard

## 1- Introduction





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places on earth, with 1,760,037 Palestinians<sup>1</sup> living on 373 square kilometers (144 sq. mi.).<sup>2</sup> About 70% of Gaza residents are UNRWA-registered refugees. The population density of Gaza is approximately 4,718 persons per square kilometer as of 2014. Around 17% of the Gaza Strip's land is inaccessible due to the restrictions imposed by Israeli Occupation.

Palestinian refugees are eligible to attend UNRWA schools, as well as receive medical care, food aid, and emergency and long-term housing assistance. Most refugees believe that they will forfeit their right of return to their homes and lose their UNRWA benefits if they settle permanently outside UNRWA refugee camps. For this reason, refugees refused to leave their homes in the camps since for a long time. In the last few decades some refugees' families began to accept the idea of leaving the camp if it was for a higher standard of living and did not compromise their right of return, but the issue of overcrowding persists. There is a great concern about the impact of overcrowding in the refugee camps of the Gaza Strip on their residents. Previous studies responded to the causes and effects of overcrowding in the refugee camps, with particular attention to youth and women. The most recent studies in this field are; a study by NRC (2013) on the effects of overcrowding in the Gaza Strip, another study by AFSC (2012) in cooperation with UUSC and Islamic Relief on efforts to understand and address overcrowding in Gaza homes damaged by operation Cast Lead. In addition Mona Mershy (1999) had published a study on social and psychological effects of overcrowding in Palestinian camps in the West Bank and Gaza. Therefore this study is a complementary work to the previous studies focusing on needs and priorities of the refugees living in Gaza camps.

1- PCBS (2014) statistics found at [www.pcbs.gov.ps](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps)

2- The area of Gaza according to UN UNSCR 242 and subsequent resolutions for 1967 delimited by the 4 June 1967.



This study focuses on the needs and priorities of the refugees around alleviating the issue of overcrowding. It is the culmination of a three year initiative between the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), which began by repairing housing damages for Gaza's families after the 2008/2009 Gaza War and continued to involve youth in community assessment and repair work. This work has been developed to be responsive to family needs in order to maximize its positive impact. Small-scale repairs of 26 homes were completed in 2009. That project was designed so that families has the aspects of their home repaired that were most necessary to their well-being as part of doing humanitarian aid in a responsive way, led by the community. AFSC and UUSC continued to work with the support of Architecture for Humanity based in U.S. and designed and carried out a detailed, on-the-ground assessment titled "Gaza Repair Strategies" of the damages sustained to homes in six of Gaza's rural and urban communities. Recommendations from the assessment focused on developing innovative, viable, safe, and affordable home-repair options using locally available materials. In 2012, AFSC and UUSC, and Islamic Relief Palestine carried out a youth-led study in Al-Zaitoon and Beit Lahiya on overcrowding's impact on educational attainment and privacy in the lives of young people. The recommendations of the study were then integrated into the repairs work.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to assess and document the current assistance provided by organizations in the field of housing, shelter, and overcrowding, to Gaza's refugee camps through consultation with the organizations and refugee communities. It is important to understand both the service providers and beneficiaries and to engage the youth and broader community in the refugee camps to address the gaps in assistance which they experience. An additional aim of the study is to build a network with all actors to meet and identify the needs of the refugee community around overcrowding and how they can be fulfilled, identifying lessons learned and best practices together. Therefore the specific objectives of the assessment are:

- Mapping and documenting the work of organizations addressing housing in Gaza refugee camps to understand who is doing what and where.
- Identifying the needs and priorities of refugees living in Gaza's refugee camps, particularly youth, in alleviating the overcrowding problem.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on both qualitative and quantitative data gathered directly from the refugee camps, including:

- Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with specific segments of the population and service providers
- Quantitative survey research on a representative sample of the camp's youth
- Qualitative research included four focus groups discussions with children, youth, community leaders, and women.

A semi-structured questionnaire was used over a one-week period in March 2014. The questionnaire included information on the key community stakeholders, services and interventions provided to them, the current gaps in these services, and the stakeholders' real needs and priorities related to overcrowding. The sample of this study consists of 120 young men and women from Jabalia camp aged 18 to 45 years old, distributed as follows: 40% from 18 to 25 years, 43% from 26 to 35 years and 20% from 35 to 45 years. The sample population is from all 12 blocks of the camp to include all residents of Jabalia Camp, and is 47% female and 53% male.



## 1.4 LIMITATIONS

Literature on the housing conditions in the camps is rather limited.<sup>3</sup> Most of the previous studies focused on the impacts of overcrowding on the daily life of refugees in terms of health, education, social, and psychological aspects, but not housing. Examples of previous studies are (AFSC, 2012), (NRC, 2013) and (Marshy, 1999).

This study was also conducted with limited time and resources, so the priority was given to refugees' needs within the camp.



Photo credit: Khaled Al Helou for AFSC

<sup>3</sup> - Henri Rueff and Alain Viaro (2010). Palestinian Refugee Camps: From Shelter To Habitat. UNHCR Refugee Survey Quarterly, Vol. 28, Nos 2 & 3 (2010).

## 2- Mapping of the overcrowding problems in Gaza Refugee Camps





## 2. Mapping of overcrowding problem in Gaza Refugee Camps

### 2.1 REFUGEE CAMPS IN GAZA

Approximately 711,000 to 726,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes and lands by the Israeli Occupation Forces during the 1947–1948 and forced to live in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. In December 1949 total refugees of Gaza Strip are 202606 inhabitants (Cheal, 1986). Jabalia Refugee Camp is among the Gaza's refugee camps that were created by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to accommodate 35,000 refugees. In the beginning, the camp was composed of tents. In 1952, the UNRWA built one room for each family, without a kitchen or toilet facilities. There were communal toilets distributed throughout the camp and a single communal water source for each group of houses. Living conditions were difficult and the health situation was poor for the refugees living there during the 1950s and 1960s. It was not until the beginning of the 1970s that electricity was brought to the camp.

Since 1967, Israeli Occupation Forces prevented expansion of homes and expansion of the area allotted to the camp. In the 1990s, camp residents began to expand vertically, as every family's new generation needed a home, not just one room as had been planned at the establishment of the camp. Because the land area of the camp was limited, people could not expand horizontally. With the gradual increase in the population, the issue of housing has become more complicated, and continues to have a negative impact on the daily lives of camp inhabitants. It is clear from Table 1 that Jabalia camp has the highest population density of the refugee camps of Gaza, at 52,041 persons per square kilometer. Thus Jabalia camp is the focus of this study.

**TABLE (1) GAZA REFUGEE CAMPS**

Name of the Camp	Population (2014)	Area Km <sup>2</sup>	Density (person per Km <sup>2</sup> )
Jabalia	54,123	1.04	52,041
Al-Shati	42,349	0.82	51,645
Deir Al-balah	8009	0.18	33,371
Al-Bureij	29,867	0.73	40,914
Al-Nuseirat	34,950	0.96	36,406
Al-Maghazi	19,998	0.55	36,360
KhanYounis	46,059	1.00	46,059
Rafah	43,405	1.36	31,915
Total	278,760	6.64	Average density 41,982

Source: Population figures from PCBS, 2014 <http://pcbs.gov.ps> the areas of the camps calculated from Google earth <http://earth.google.com>

## 2.2 JABALIA REFUGEE AS A CASE STUDY

According to PCBS<sup>4</sup> records for 2014 the total area of Jabalia camp is 1.04 Km<sup>2</sup> with about 54123 inhabitants living in about 7400 housing units, shelters and sub shelters. The population density is about 52000 inhabitants per square Kilometer. Jabalia Camp is surrounded by several housing projects established since 1970 in attempts to alleviate the overcrowding problem.

**TABLE (2) HOUSING PROJECTS AROUND JABALIA CAMP**

Name of the Housing Project	Year of establishment	Land ownership	Number of Population (2014) <sup>5</sup>	No. of Housing Units <sup>6</sup>	Area in Km <sup>2</sup>
Beit Lahia Project	1970s	Governmental	22,000	3000	0.75
Al-Sheikh Radwan Project <sup>7</sup>	1970s	Governmental	22,500	3400	0.88
AlFaluja neighborhood	1980s	Private	750	100	0.06
Tal Zater Project	1980s	Private	20,000	2700	0.50
AlAlami Project	1980s	Private	1000	150	0.05
Al-Saftawi Project	1980s	Governmental	4,200	600	0.08
Amer Project	1980s	Private	700	100	0.07
Sheikh Zayed Project	1990s	Governmental	5,000	730	0.22
Alesra' Project	1990s	Private	850	120	0.20
Al-Karamah Project	1990s	Governmental	10,000	1500	0.52
Ezbit Beit Hanoun (Awda and Nada Projects)	1990s	Governmental	5000	750	0.5
Eastern Jabalia (Seka)	1990s	Private	7000	1000	0.1
Western Jabalia (Beir El-Na'ja)	1980s	Private	14000	2000	0.2
<b>Total</b>			<b>113,000</b>	<b>16150</b>	<b>4.13</b>

Source: Areas estimated based on Google Earth images

<sup>4</sup> Population projection made by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics found in <http://pcbs.gov.ps>

<sup>5</sup> The author estimated the population projection for the year 2014 based on population of 2007. Most of the populations (70%) were previously living in Jabalia camp according to the popular committee of the camp.

<sup>6</sup> The total housing units were estimated based on recent maps of these areas accessed from Google Earth.

<sup>7</sup> Around 30% only of this housing project is originally from Jabalia camp.



**FIGURE 1**  
**MAP OF JABALIA**  
**REFUGEE CAMP**

According to the field survey, the family size inside Jabalia camp ranges between 2 and 13 persons. 70% of the families have between 6 and 13 members. Mean family size is 7.3 persons. Youth make up a significant proportion of the camp: 46% of families surveyed had 2 to 6 young men and women age 18 to 25 years. 62% of the sample had families with six persons or more aged 6 to 17 years. About 50% of these families are extended families with two or more families living together. Almost all the homes in the camp are owned by the residents: only 3% of the population sample lived in rented homes. Over half of the population sample lives in shelters (one floor buildings). Mean house area is 94 square meters, and 73% of households have three or fewer rooms. The vast majority of households (89.0%) had a bathroom inside the home. As far as income, 77% of the families have monthly income less than 2000 NIS (580 USD). The majority of them (98%) do not own another house or a piece of land. 44% of these families have one or more persons with disabilities or chronic disease, but 72% of these families are depending on one breadwinner only.

### 2.3 OVERCROWDING IN PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS

This study deals with overcrowding on two main levels: the household level, measured in persons per meter squared of living space; and the community level, measured in persons per area of land. This study uses the subjective meaning of overcrowding, which refers to one's perception of not having enough space in the home, school, clinic, sporting facilities, and other private and community spaces. These concepts are all pertinent to the context of Palestinian refugee camps in Gaza.

I live with my old and ailing grandfather in a small room, where I always look after him. This room is a guest room and part of a small house consisting of two bedrooms: one for my father, mother, and younger sister, and the other for my two aunts and two of their divorced daughters. The residents of the house used to be 16. Most of the time, the house accommodate more than 25 persons. I never feel comfortable in my house. (Bilal from Jabalia Camp, 21 years old)

The notion of subjective crowding comes into play as refugees link the conditions of overcrowding in the camps to their long-standing frustrations with the wider political issue of Right to Return. The sense that their plight has for so long been ignored and remains unresolved increases their frustrations with conditions in the camps and affects how they experience the objective conditions of overcrowding. Overcrowding in Jabalia Camp is a serious problem, meaning there is no personal space for the individual. Young people are forced to study in kitchens, on roofs, and in their grandparents' homes. Several recent studies have shown lack of study space is linked to lower academic achievement. Young married couples can hardly enjoy their privacy as well. The Israeli blockade on Gaza has made life more difficult for nearly all refugees in the camp. According to UNRWA records unemployment rate among Jabalia camp's labour forces have risen dramatically and reached about 48% which is higher than the national unemployment rate (23%). Nearly 80% of the population living in refugee camps are depending on UNRWA's food and cash assistance.

The health and social problems from overcrowding have been compounded by a lack of adequate urban planning: the original shelters expanded first horizontally, and then vertically, built in an anarchic fashion by the refugees themselves. Neither UNRWA, nor the Palestinian Authority ever took responsibility for managing the evolution of housing in the camps. Though UNRWA has contributed to development of physical infrastructure and maintaining it, the camp is still plagued with unsatisfactory environmental conditions in terms of ventilation, access to sunlight, humidity, privacy, and lack of open spaces and recreational areas. Such conditions provoked domestic violence and provided children with a poor study environment, encourage school dropout numbers, and heighten illiteracy.

## 2.4 SERVICES, ASSISTANCE AND INTERVENTIONS ARE CURRENTLY PROVIDED RELATED TO OVERCROWDING

### 2.4.1 HOUSING RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION

The majority of housing renovations were made by the residents of the camp themselves without external help. Some of the camp shelters, especially those located on the main roads of the camp, have been rebuilt as multi-story buildings with shops or stores on the ground floor. UNRWA had developed several programs for hardship cases among to help them in renovating their homes. UNRWA started with shelter program aiming at rebuilding small houses less than 100 square meters of poor families.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> According to the Refugee Popular Committee in Jabalia, This system of construction is not applicable since UNRWA constructed a small units and do not solve the problem of overcrading niether inside the housing unit not in the neighbourhod. However this program had been stopped since 2013 due to the unavailability of construction materials and changes in the UNRWA Plans.

The Shelter Rehabilitation Program lowers the cost of rehabilitation by providing cash, material, and employment assistance to the family, or by using local contractors to help complete the work. Shelters are brought up to international standards for disaster relief, making them safe and healthy – places to live with dignity.<sup>9</sup> UNRWA is also providing services related to infrastructure i.e. roads, sewer, water and solid waste collection inside the camp and in specific cases outside the camp where refugees are living .

UNRWA had launched Infrastructure and Camp Improvement programme (ICIP) in 2007 to address the deteriorating environments of the camps. ICIP operates on the premise that the spatial and environmental conditions in which Palestine refugees live cannot be divorced from their livelihood or well-being. Consequently ICIP adopts an integrated, comprehensive, participatory and community-driven improvement of the built environment of Palestine refugee camps, utilizing urban planning tools.

Currently UNRWA is preparing master plans for the camps as part of a two year camp improvement program. To respond to the housing damages during the two wars on Gaza in 2008 and 2012, UNRWA has contributed to the repair program and provided cash assistance to families for the purpose of housing repair. UNRWA also constructs additional classrooms and rebuilt the only health clinic in Jabalia camp. However, overcrowding still persists. Classrooms are full, with at least 35 students per class. Similarly at UNRWA health clinic one doctor is treating around 110 patients per day.

“UNRWA is limited its shelter renovation program to the hardship cases only and based on the available area of their original home regardless of the size of the family. For example, a family of 10 members can get only two rooms, because the principle of the Agency is [for refugees] to find shelter only [and not permanent homes]. Two rooms, regardless of whether it is appropriate for the number of family members or not” (A member of Popular Committee in Jabalia).

“Sheikh Zayed City solved a big problem for many people, so they are living in apartments and not in asbestos houses” (Woman from Jabalia Camp).

During the last 20 years, the Palestinian Authority has constructed one housing project, Sheikh Zayed Project, around Jabalia camp with around 1440 low-cost housing units for the Palestinians regardless their refugee status and based on socio-economic criteria. These projects are usually funded by Gulf countries. Sheikh Zayed accommodates 400 families mostly from Jabalia camp who lost their houses during the Israeli military invasions. One small health clinic inside the camp is operated by Ministry of Health for people whom subscribe to governmental health insurance. No governmental school inside the camp since Government is operating outside the camps. As a result of Israeli aggression against civilian areas, local and international organizations helped in reconstruction of many houses destroyed either partially or completely.

<sup>9</sup> According to UNRWA's Shelter Rehabilitation Program administration, this program aims to rehabilitate, repair or reconstruct of the most hazardous shelters inside the refugee camps mainly for families living in deep poverty with an area less than 100 square meters.

According to UN Report (2010) around 71,000 housing units are needed for Gaza residents by the year 2020. There will be virtually no reliable access to sources of safe drinking water, standards of healthcare and education will have continued to decline, and the vision of affordable and reliable electricity for all will have become a distant memory for most. The already high number of poor, marginalized and food-insecure people depending on assistance will be increase<sup>10</sup>.

### 2.4.2 JOB CREATION PROGRAMS

According to UNRWA records, 48% of the residents of Jabalia camp are unemployed. UNRWA and Palestinian Authority are the main job providers for the refugees. NGOs and the private sector inside the camp also provide jobs to residents.

### 2.4.3 HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES

UNRWA currently has 20 school buildings, all running on two shifts in order to accommodate 40 schools. There are no governmental schools inside Jabalia camp.

The UNRWA health clinic has been renovated in 2012 and is also working two shifts served by 16 doctors and 25 nurses. The clinic is receiving around 2,000 patients per day with one doctor serving approximately 110 patients daily.

UNRWA also operating one food distribution center and one health center inside the camp. Jabalia refugees are able to benefit from health facilities outside the camp such as governmental and NGO-run hospitals and clinics.



ALNADA housing project north of Jabalia Camp had been destroyed by Israeli Occupation Forces in July 2014

10- UN (2012) Gaza 2020- A liveable place? A report by the United Nations Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory.

#### 2.4.4 SOCIAL SERVICES

**Sports areas** do not exist inside the camp or even outside the camp. There is only one sports club with an area less than 1000 square meters. It is being operated by UNRWA for a limited number of the camp's residents. Children and youth use the narrow streets to play football, creating noise for the neighborhood's residents and putting the children themselves at risk. They also play near the border areas controlled by the Israeli military, where they have been targeted in the past.

**Cultural centers** and libraries do not exist except for a small library run by a local NGO, visited by less than 20 children per day.

**Psychosocial support:** Upon the availability of funds, local NGOs initiate psychosocial support for children, youth, and women, though these activities are often not permanent programs.

**Womens' centers:** Two centers for women are operating in Jabalia, established by UNRWA and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society for Women and Child. These two centers serve women through awareness programs, health consultations, relief services, and small-scale income generation activities.

### 2.5 SERVICE PROVIDERS

The main service provider for the refugees in Jabalia camp is UNRWA, followed by the Palestinian line ministries, local municipalities, local NGOs, international NGOs and other UN agencies.

**UNRWA:** The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East was originally intended to provide jobs on public works projects, housing units, education, and health services for all refugees and social welfare (food and cash assistance) for hardship cases only.

**Palestinian Authority:** According to the residents of the camp, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MoHPW) in cooperation with Ministry of Social Affairs is providing low-cost housing units to families that meet specific criteria. The MoHPW is also providing infrastructure, utilities and services outside the refugee camp. The previous political division between the two governments in West Bank and Gaza is still apparent in duplication and overlapping in assistance to some families.

**Local government units:** According to residents of the camp, the municipality is the local authority responsible for planning and urban development outside the camps. Very limited interventions are provided to the refugees inside the camp. However, the municipality, depending on availability of funds, facilitates the housing projects outside the camp and provides the necessary infrastructure to these newly developed areas. However, at the municipality level, authorities often lack the means to elaborate coherent urban planning, which is out of their control.

**Political parties:** The two main political parties Fateh and Hamas are providing assistance to their supporters. This assistance is based on the political affiliation of the family and comes mainly in the form of cash assistance.

**Local NGO and charities:** provide intervention focused on relief and emergency assistance, most prominently after Israeli bombardment of residential homes. Some of these NGOs worked on psychosocial support for children, women, and youth when funds were available.

**International NGOs:** are working in Gaza to assist the Palestinians in many fields regardless of refugee status. Mostly they are working, in partnership with local NGOs, on relief and emergency assistance; however some of these NGOs have a developmental vision. According to the youth from the camp a few of these NGOs are working on housing or infrastructure sectors such as CHF, World Bank, Mercy Corps, The Qatar Foundation, Islamic Development Bank, NRC, Islamic Relief, CARE, AFCS, Red Cross, Save the Children, CRS, Al-Rahmah association and many others.

**Other UN agencies:** many UN agencies are working in Gaza such as UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, UNIFAM, UN HABITAT, UNIFPA, OCHA, UNICEF, etc. These agencies are working on different issues such as education, health, children, women, agriculture, housing, etc. Their services and interventions are provided to Palestinians living in Gaza regardless their refugee status.

**Lending institutions:** A Minority of the camp's residents are benefiting from lending institutions for home improvement. There are many lending institutions working in Gaza such as the UNRWA microfinance program, FATEN, CHF, Palestinian Housing Council, and local Banks. These institutions are providing part of the construction cost with certain criteria and conditions to the people who is willing to renovate, rebuilt add floors, or built new house.

*Note: Not all of the above organizations have long term programs targeting refugees in Jabalia, but work on short term disaster recovery and humanitarian relief.*

## 2.6 BENEFICIARIES

Most of the beneficiaries for the above-mentioned interventions and services are either poor families or families directly affected by Israeli airstrikes. Poor families (hardship cases with no breadwinner) are benefiting from UNRWA, the government, NGOs, political parties and other service providers. According to the focus groups discussions with youth and women, the criteria required by the service providers is based on income, number of family members, and condition of housing. For example, a family with no income and more than ten members, with a badly damaged home is eligible for assistance. The majority of interviewed young people in Jabalia camp agreed that these criteria are applied seriously by UNRWA and governmental institutions.



## 2.7 SERVICES PROVIDERS COORDINATION

Since 2008, NRC's Shelter Cluster has been the main platform for coordination among the national and international institutions. Most of the activities done by the previously mentioned organizations are coordinated through the monthly meeting of the shelter cluster. NRC has taken the lead on updating shelter fact sheets, maintained a shelter website, and led the coordination of Shelter Sector inputs for the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). UNRWA is the responsible for refugees and also shares its data with shelter cluster members.

Due to the ongoing Israeli blockade of Gaza and the closure of borders with Egypt, crucial building materials remain banned from the strip, leading to challenges in both reconstruction after previous military interventions and construction in response to population growth. NRC, as Shelter Sector lead, has therefore prioritized shelter coordination and facilitated a joint approach among involved stakeholders resulting in the development of "The Reconstruction Guidelines", the "Gaza Emergency Contingency Plan", and the setting up and running of the "Unified Shelter Sector Database USSD." More information can be obtained from <http://www.sheltergaza.org>

## 2.8 PROVIDING SERVICES: CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

The ongoing Israeli occupation and its policies are the main obstacle to solving the overcrowding inside the camp. The Israeli blockade of Gaza has prevented building materials from entering Gaza since 2007 with the exception of limited UNRWA projects. Both the blockade and internal political rifts deepen the misery of Palestinians in Gaza.

**Population growth:** Each year leading up to 2020, the population inside the camp is expected to increase annually by 3.9%<sup>11</sup>.

**Overcrowding at home level** is the main problem faced by camp residents and service providers, regardless of all attempts to mitigate the problem.

Overcrowding at home level is the main problem facing the people and service providers. Regardless all the attempts to solve the problem, still the overcrowding at homes still the main challenge for the service provider.

Overcrowding inside the camp attracts many people living outside the camp to open shops or start businesses inside the camp. This phenomenon had positive economic impact but has contributed to the increase in the overcrowding problem.

**Overcrowding at the school level** remains one of the biggest challenges for the education sector in Gaza. All UNRWA schools in Jabalia camp are running two shifts with at least 35 students per class room. In collaboration with UNRWA Gaza, NRC started an educational project in Gaza in August 2010. The project focuses on creating positive learning environments for students as well as building teachers' capacities.

"Despite the fact that 40% of the refugee population in the Gaza Strip are living outside the borders of the camps, but that did not relieve the stress of overcrowding inside the camp" (Mr. Usama Saadawi, director general of the Palestinian Housing Council).

11- PCBS (2014) Population projections found at <http://pcbs.gov.ps>

**Infrastructure challenges:** The basic infrastructure for electricity, water and sanitation, and municipal and social services, is struggling to keep pace with the needs of the growing population. By 2020, electricity provision will need to double to meet demand. Damage to the coastal aquifer is expected to be irreversible without immediate remedial action.

The quality of services in Jabalia is described by more than 52% of the sample as bad or very bad. UNRWA has initiated a camp improvement program which would adopt an integrated, comprehensive, participatory and community-driven improvement of the built environment of Palestine refugee camps, utilizing urban planning tools. This is considered as a big challenge since it requires funding mechanisms and cooperation from all relevant stakeholders.

Public participation is also one of challenges to improving overcrowding. There has been limited public participation sought by the largest stakeholders, mainly UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority. Refugees inside Jabalia camp are represented by their Popular Committee. Since the internal political divide in 2007, there are both Fateh and Hamas popular committees inside the camp. Both committees claim that they are representing the refugees. There is also very limited participation of women and youth in the discussion of common and public issues. Empowering youth and women in order to increase their participation is also a major necessity for decision makers and service providers.

UNRWA is currently implementing a project "Camp Improvement Program" which started at Deir al-Balah refugee camp, the project aims to create integrated solutions for overcrowding with the participation of the population through the development of housing and public services. The plan could include construction of housing projects outside the boundaries of the camp. (Mr. Mohammed al-Riyati, vice chief of UNRWA infrastructure and camp development program).

Women in the camp did not given the chance to participate in discussion about the overcrowding problem. No one listens to us. The participation of young people to identify needs is very weak. No one support our participation in these issues". ( Noor a girl, 19 years old from Jabalia refugee camp).



### **3- Needs Identification of Community Stakeholders**





## 3 - Needs Identification of Community Stakeholders

### 3.1 YOUTH

The following needs were identified by youth living in Jabalia camp:<sup>12</sup>

- \* Right of return to their homes as the most serious and direct solution for all current problems faced by youth in the camp.
- \* Support for political stability through reconciliation among Palestinian factions, reform, and creation of an environment conducive to development. This will ensure more democracy and freedom for youth.
- \* Lift the blockade on Gaza and open the entry points between Gaza and Egypt. This would enable youth to travel freely for education and employment opportunities outside Gaza Strip.
- \* Economic empowerment, income generation, and job creation for youth. Build youth capacities, through providing training and vocational training to help those finding jobs.
- \* Youth participation in community based initiatives; Increase youth access and representation in key legislative, government, and non-governmental institutions.
- \* Family planning and support for reproductive and women's health
- \* Establish new housing projects outside the camp for young families through horizontal and vertical expansion.
- \* Expand the existing houses vertically by adding new rooms and bathrooms.
- \* Improve housing conditions for poor and overcrowded families. This includes replacing the asbestos ceiling by concrete, and renovation of the bathrooms and kitchen.
- \* Provide jobs outside Gaza for youth if they do not found suitable jobs in Gaza.

"The current miserable situation should not continue forever. Local and international organizations should help us to alleviate the overcrowding inside the camp. Solutions are well-known but we need implementation" (Ahmed from Jabalia camp, 22 years old).

"We feel nobody is listening to us, we are not living, we are barely surviving" (Ibrahim from Jabalia camp, 24 years old).

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<sup>12</sup>- Focus group discussion with 15 young men and women from Jabalia camp held in 15 March 2014.

### 3.2 COMMUNITY LEADERS

The following needs were identified by the community leaders represented by members of refugees' popular committee based in Jabalia camp:<sup>13</sup>

- \* Right of return as the top priority
- \* Providing job opportunities for young people
- \* Housing projects for the refugees
- \* Improvement of current housing conditions
- \* Construction of additional floors for overcrowded houses
- \* Improving utilities (kitchen, bathrooms) within single housing units
- \* Improving services and utilities inside the camp
- \* Supporting small-scale income generating projects for unemployed youth, such as: tricycle, poultry farming, taxis, clothing shops, sewing-machines, computer shops, water purification stations, hair salons, and electricity shops

### 3.3 WOMEN

The following needs were identified by women living in Jabalia camp:<sup>14</sup>

- \* Right of return
- \* Support small-scale projects for income-generating for women who are the breadwinners for their family
- \* Job creation for women university graduates. Many graduates among women are waiting for jobs which are very limited and it is hard to access job opportunities.
- \* Family planning programs especially for large families. Many women do not have awareness around family planning methods.
- \* Psychosocial support for women, especially those who are living in extended families and overcrowded houses
- \* Awareness and complaint mechanism for gender based violence
- \* Awareness, advocacy, and education on the negative impacts of early marriage

13- Focus group discussion with 20 men and refugee popular committee members from Jabalia camp held in 9 March 2014.

14- Focus group discussion with women from Jabalia camp held in 15 March 2014.



### 3.4 CHILDREN

The following needs were identified by children living in Jabalia camp:<sup>15</sup>

- \* Provide jobs for their unemployed parents and brothers.
- \* Provide the basic needs for poor families (such as food and clothes)
- \* Provide public spaces and recreational areas for children
- \* Provide land with suitable prices for families to build concrete homes
- \* Minimize the number of students per classroom to be 30 instead of 45 students
- \* Develop health services to minimize the diseases from which they and their families are suffering
- \* More focus on assistance for orphans and people with special needs

*"All what we need is a safe space to play. Our neighbors usually complain from the inconvenience caused by us when playing football at the narrow streets" (Mohammed from Jabalia camp, 12 years old)*

### 3.5 SERVICE PROVIDERS

Interviews with many officials working for refugees were held during March 2014. These interviews revealed with the needs of refugees based on their experience and knowledge during several years of working for refugees.

#### **PALESTINIAN HOUSING COUNCIL<sup>16</sup>**

The Palestinian Housing Council (PHC) is a local NGO working in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem that aims at improving the Palestinian housing sector. During implementation of many housing projects and conducting several needs assessments in the camps, PHC concluded the following needs based on their experience:

- \* Right of return
- \* Accurate diagnosis of the housing conditions in the camp
- \* Implementation of programs targeting the residential, social, educational and health aspects of refugee life
- \* Activate community participation in identifying needs in these various aspects, especially participation of young people
- \* Facilitate the work of the housing cooperative associations
- \* Encourage the renting of housing and providing of facilities for tenants
- \* Providing land grants for housing installments
- \* Improving housing and environmental services in the camp
- \* Finding jobs for unemployed refugees in the camp

<sup>15</sup>- Focus group discussion with children from Jabalia camp held in 6 March 2014.

<sup>16</sup>- Interview with Mr. Osama Sadawi, the director general of the Palestinian Housing Council in Gaza.

### **WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER<sup>17</sup>**

The Women's Health Center is operated by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. It provides health programs for women through advocacy, awareness, and relief. The needs for women in the camp according to the Women's Health Center are:

- \* The right of return
- \* Activation of family planning programs and countering the phenomenon of early marriage in the camp
- \* Restoration and improvement of housing units inside the camp
- \* Vertical expansion inside the camp
- \* Horizontal expansion by exploring areas east and west of the camp

### **AL-ASRYIA CENTER FOR CHILDREN<sup>18</sup>**

Al-Asryia is a center for children and youth based inside Jabalia working with several hundred residents of the camp. The needs of youth and children according to Al-Asryia's program manager are:

- \* The right of return.
- \* Improving mental and reproductive health
- \* Training and development of productive capacities of women in the camp to focus on their economic empowerment
- \* Increasing funding for awareness programs about overcrowding and its effects in the camp
- \* Increasing the number of cultural centers and specialized social centers inside the camp
- \* Restoration and improvement of housing units inside the camp

### **UNRWA<sup>19</sup>**

Based on an interview with the Deputy Chief of the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement program at UNRWA, the camp's needs are:

- \* Interventions aimed at improving the lives of people without changing the status of the camp's refugees
- \* Master plan for the refugee camp as an important step in UNRWA's camp improvement program
- \* Coordination and collaboration with different parties, and providing incentives to encourage beneficiaries
- \* Only 30% of the camp residents can stay in the camp while the rest of residents can settle outside the camp
- \* Help poor families to find suitable accommodation outside the camp

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17- Interview with Ms. Mariam Shaqura, Director of Jabalia Women Health Center.

18- Interview with Mr. Sami Attallah, Program manager at AlAsryia Center at Jabalia Camp, UHWC.

19- Interview with Mr. Mohammed Reyati d/chief infrastructure and camp Improvement Program, UNRWA-Gaza.

#### 4- Deficiencies in Services Related to Overcrowding





## 4- Deficiencies in Services Related to Overcrowding

Gap identification involves determining and documenting the difference between needs, according to the interviewed residents, and what is currently being provided by service providers. The gaps were highlighted by studying the services provided to refugees and the needs in different sectors, mainly employment, housing, infrastructure, education, health, public places, sports, public participation, and youth participation.

### 4.1 POLITICAL STABILITY AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES' RIGHT OF RETURN

Most of the interviews with residents of the camp stressed on their right to return as a need. They revealed that most institutions and services providers focused on relief and emergency assistance with very limited activities implemented to support and advocate their right to return.

"My family has eight members and we are living in a dilapidated house, consisting of one main room, a kitchen and a bathroom. My Father is sick and suffers from Asthma and cannot work. Our living conditions are very hard. The family lives only on UNRWA food assistance, as we are registered as a Special Hardship Case. I go every day walking for more than two kilometers to the university as our family cannot afford transportation." (Hind from Jabalia Camp, 25 years old)

### 4.3 HOUSING CONDITIONS

Despite all the interventions for housing, education, and health, the situation inside the camp is "still unacceptable," according to one member of the camp's Popular Committee. Though many housing projects, either governmental or private, accommodate more than 60,000 inhabitants from Jabalia refugee camp, the overcrowding problem still persists inside the camp.

Gaps have been identified by the refugees such as lack of privacy in houses and safety for children and old people does not exist. Violence among the neighbors of crowded houses and among the family members themselves is also mentioned by many interviewed residents.

"My overcrowded home affected my studies; the house was intolerable as a result of the large number of children. Non-stop violence among the family members characterizes the families living in the overcrowded houses" (Mohammed from Jabalia camp, 25 years old).

"There are limited activities related to the right of return except the annual remembrance of Al- Nakba every May 15 by local institutions, Palestinian political parties, and radio and TV channels. Our voices are not heard by the international community and rest of the world" (Jamal from Jabalia camp, 55 years old).

### 4.2 EMPLOYMENT

All recent data still indicates high rates of poverty and unemployment in Palestinian society in general and among youth in particular. Data from UNRWA shows that 48% of Jabalia's workforce is unemployed, with the highest unemployment rate among young people (UNRWA, 2014).

Most of the camp's houses are poorly built and suffer from bad ventilation, bad utilities, and weak foundation. Most of these houses are small in its area and use asbestos for roofing. Doors and windows are made from simple materials that are not able to protect the family during winter and summer time.

"I live with my parents, four brothers, and five sisters in a two-bedroom house: one is for parents, and the other is shared by boys and girls. There are always problems that arise as a result of sharing a small space; it's uncomfortable for all of us, especially for sisters, to share one small room and sleep on the floor. The problem I face is the long wait to use the toilet as there is only one for all of us; the problem is always worse each morning" (Hassan from Jabalia camp, 26 years old).

#### 4.4 Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, ravaged by years of occupation and the current blockade, is in urgent need of repair. However, restrictions make it almost impossible to import the necessary building materials. During the last decades, UNRWA has developed the infrastructure of roads, sewage system and water networks in the camp. However, roads are very narrow and need maintenance. Poor sewage systems, dilapidated roads, and shoddy drainage cause flooding to occur all too often<sup>20</sup> Raw sewage mixed with flood waters puts the public health at risk.

"The floods added to family's numerous difficulties, within hours of the rain beginning the house flooded with water. We could not believe it. The water covered the beds and mattresses and more was coming in through the ceiling. It was midnight and I and my eldest sons hurried to evacuate the kids who were sleeping. The rooms were filled with water, which made it hard to rescue the kids"(Hadeel from Jabalia Camp, 30 years old)



Khaled Al Helou for AFSC

<sup>20</sup> Heavy storm in December 2013 hit the houses of Jabalia Camp, Jabaliya refugee camp, the camp had "become a massive lake with two-meter-high waters engulfing homes and stranding thousands. Each winter many families have to evacuate their homes because they feel themselves at flood risk.

The fuel and electricity shortages – which cause daily power cuts of 12-16 hours, came because of the destruction of Gaza's only power plant by Israeli air forces in 2007. The Israeli siege imposed since 2007 has prevented the construction materials needed for maintenance of infrastructure networks. In addition, Egyptian authorities destroyed most of the smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt, which further worsened the fuel shortage.

#### 4.5 OPEN SPACES AND GREEN AREAS

Jabalia residents suffer from absence of open spaces and green areas. Youth and children without proper play areas put themselves at risk. According to the Palestinian laws<sup>21</sup> for urban planning there should be 25% of the total urban areas should be allocated for roads, green areas, open spaces, and public facilities. This law is not implemented in the camps due to refugee camps' lack of planning authority.

#### 4.6 SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL AREAS

Despite all the attempts to support sports activities in the camp, no single sport area exists in the camp except the UNRWA sport center which was established in the 1950s. Recreational areas do not exist inside the camp or even around the camp, youth and children aged (6 to 25 years) are make up approximately 40% of the camp's population.

#### 4.7 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Though UNRWA is constructing additional schools and classrooms inside and outside the camp, the overcrowding of classrooms is still considered high compared to the other schools outside the camp. In addition, there is no place inside the camp that supports education and students.

My 11 children are very smart, but we are living in three rooms, and their grades at school are deteriorating. It is not our fault that we are poor and we are neither able to expand the house nor to move to a larger house. Through its relief and social services program, UNRWA staff visited us to learn about our living conditions and we hope they will help us in renovating our home or at least renting a suitable housing unit to us" (Siham from Jabalia camp, 40 years old

I used to make a lot of problems with my family, as there was not a good study environment at home." My father used to kick me out the house. Like every young man, I dream of having my own room in which I can study and lead a comfortable life. As a result of the house situation and family status, I dropped out of school with only a sixth grade certificate with a poor grade" (Bilal from Jabalia camp, 21 years old

21 - The Central Committee for planning in Gaza is implementing the law No. 28 for the year 1936 that had a chapter for green areas which identified by 25% of the municipal and governmental land and 3% from the private lands.

## 4.8 HEALTH FACILITIES

Despite the development of health services and expansion of the health clinic, camp residents identified a gap between what UNRWA is supplying and the realistic needs for a growing population experiencing diseases related to overcrowding. The rate of 120 patients per doctor is extremely high. The clinic's 16 doctors receive 2,000 patients a day and serve all 150,000 refugees in the north of Gaza.

## 4.9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents of the camp cited that they have yet to experience public participation in issues related to overcrowding. According to the discussions, neither the Palestinian Authority nor UNRWA had included the public in any of their development activities.

NGOs such as Life and Hope Society, Alasreia Center, Palestinian Medical Relief Society are working inside the camp on strengthening youth and women's participation in their activities, though they have limited capacities and funds for empowering public participation.

## 4.10 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

There is growing anger and frustration among Jabalia's youth when discussing the issue of their participation. In addition to the fact that the young people of the camp are suffering from overcrowding and unemployment, they are not allowed to participate in decisions related to solving their daily problems. All interviewed youth confirmed that they have the power to initiate change. They are aware of previous experiences from the Arab counties where youth are the main actors initiated the change. Very limited activities lead by local NGOs on advocacy of youth issues have been implemented. Therefore there is a gap between what is provided to increase youth participation and what is identified by youth as an urgent need.

"The Hamas government in Gaza decided to replace the only garden inside the camp to construct a hospital for an Islamic association that is affiliated with Hamas Government. All the neighborhoods' families were against this decision and confronted this issue. The authorities did not listen to us; moreover, the authorities arrested some of protestors and asked them not to talk about this issue in public. They uprooted the trees and implemented the project" (Ismail, 21 years old from Block 6 of Jabalia camp).



## 5- Priorities





## 5- Priorities

Based on needs identification of stakeholders and camp residents, there are ten priorities: right of return, job creation, housing development inside the camp, establishment of new housing projects outside the camp, development of infrastructure, improving health and education facilities, increasing public and youth participation, and establishment of new sporting/recreational facilities.

### 5.1 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES' RIGHT OF RETURN

According to Geneva Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 194, the return of displaced Palestinians to their cities and villages is a right and a guarantee. UNSCR 194 also calls for facilitation of the repatriation, resettlement, and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation. All members of the camp identified the right of return as their most fundamental need.

*"The main concern for refugees across generations and over time is the right of return and compensation according to UN Security Council Resolution 194" (Jamal Abu Habel, Head of the Popular Committee for the Jabalia refugee camp).*

### 5.2 JOB CREATION

There is serious need for job creation for unemployed men and women. Job creation is seen as not only as a source of income, but a means to restore dignity, self respect, and self-reliance to the camp's refugees.



عائدون

"I am unemployed construction worker since 2008. I worked for three months with the UNRWA Job Creation Program in 2011. During these three months, my family and I felt dignity and self-respect. After these months I returned to laziness, lethargy, and waiting for the next cycle"(Abed Allah from Jabalia camp, 30 years old).

### 5.3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INSIDE JABALIA CAMP

According to the focus groups with the camp's residents, developing the housing conditions is a priority which includes renovation, rehabilitation and extension of the existing houses inside the camp. This includes rehabilitation of bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms.

Ibrahim is a taxi driver, earning only 30 shekels per day to support his eight children along with his widowed mother. Since the Israeli blockade in 2007, unemployment in the Gaza Strip has skyrocketed. With limited income and overcrowded house, I work 12 hours per day and unable to add one room for my young sons 18, 16 and 14 years old who are studying and sleeping in the corridor of the home.

### 5.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW HOUSING PROJECTS OUTSIDE JABALIA CAMP

This priority is being addressed by young men and women who believe in living in a better environment close to their camp and their families. Young men and women argue that these housing projects will be better than living in overcrowded houses inside the camp and should not prejudice their rights as refugees.

### 5.5 DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Development of roads, water networks, sewage system and drainage system is a priority for all interviewed groups. In December 2013, several areas of the camp suffered from flooding during the heavy storm. Rainwater mixed with sewage entered the houses up to two meters height. This crisis is repeated each year to varying degrees as a result of limited capacity in infrastructure and utilities. Gaza has suffered from serious fuel and power shortages, therefore solving the problem of electricity is also one of the top priorities.

"We should not wait until the next disaster happens to our children; something should be done to develop sewage and drainage systems, otherwise our suffering will continue" (Ahmed 25 years old from Jabalia camp).

"I got married in 2004 and got one room at my overcrowded family's house, which consists of three rooms. My wife and I shared the kitchen and the bathroom with my nine brothers and sisters. My wife and I do not know the meaning of privacy in all aspects of our daily life. In 2006 we moved to live in apartment at Sheikh Zayed City. Our life changed completely and we have enough time for our newly born son who will grow as a refugee but far away from the overcrowding" (Sa`ed 27 years old from Jabalia Camp ).

"Under international law, refugees have the right to an adequate standard of living, without prejudice to other rights they hold as refugees. This includes their right to live in good environments and sound infrastructure. This should be clear to our new generations living at the camp" (Jamal Abu Habel, member of the Jabalia Popular Committee)

The availability of sufficient and safe potable water is another priority, since salinity is a serious problem in Jabalia and infectious illnesses are exacerbated by poor and insufficient water supply.

## 5.6 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Students from UNRWA schools are focused on improving the educational facilities, mainly by reducing the number of students per classroom as a priority for developing the education system.

"I spent 6 years at UNRWA schools in Jabalia and the smallest classroom in terms of number of students I ever saw was 40 students. This year my classroom has 47 students. Can you imagine how the situation is inside the classroom? My grades were deteriorating every year because of overcrowding inside the classroom. (Huda, 12 years a student at UNRWA school).

## 5.7 HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

As stated before, it is a priority to improve the health services and facilities and to increase the number of doctors.

## 5.8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Participation of all groups in the camp should be garnered by the service providers and stakeholders working inside the camp. Public participation can ensure the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the provided services, as well as their relevance. The residents of the camp wish to participate in the improvement of their situation.

## 5.9 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The youth aspect of overcrowding has been ignored for several decades. Especially now, youth can play a significant role in innovating solutions for overcrowding.

## 5.10 ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC PARKS AND SPORTS/RECREATIONAL AREAS

As stated above, this would reduce the risks children and youth face when playing in the streets or volatile border areas and give parents space away from their kids who are trapped in the house.



## 6- Recommended Interventions





مركز خدمات العملاء  
للاستشارة والتدريب  
على استخدام البرنامج  
الرقمي  
0109495123

مركز خدمات العملاء  
للاستشارة والتدريب  
على استخدام البرنامج  
الرقمي  
0109495123

Photo by Khalid El-Helou  
Special for AFSC

## 6- Recommended Interventions

- 1- Human rights of refugees and right of return: it is important to enhance national and international dialogue on this issue and support refugees to advocate their right of return through coordination between Popular Committees and international organizations
- 2- Youth engagement: Build capacities of youth to address their issues on the local level as well as refugees advocating their rights internationally, enhance communication with different actors and representative of refugees
- 3- Public participation: create more spaces for people to express their needs and act on them

#	Priority	Recommended Interventions
1	Right of return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy and lobbying at national and international levels should be done to support the refugees on their right of return</li> <li>• Encourage the Palestinian Authority to sign international conventions related to human rights</li> <li>• Use social media to support the right to return through popular campaigns among youth.</li> </ul>
2	Job creation for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support small-scale initiatives and income generation projects for the residents of the camp, mainly university graduates and skilled labor</li> <li>• Encourage youth to start creative and innovative initiatives</li> <li>• Women's empowerment through job creation</li> </ul>
3	Housing development inside the camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiatives to improve housing conditions through rehabilitation and renovation, especially for poor and overcrowded families</li> <li>• Expansion of bed rooms either horizontally or vertically to minimize the number of persons per room</li> <li>• Renovate and rehabilitate the bathrooms and kitchen to allow privacy</li> </ul>
4	Establishment of new housing projects outside the camp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing projects for low income families outside the camp to fulfill the needs for 1350 new housing units per year</li> <li>• These housing units would ensure the dignity and better living conditions for the refugees</li> </ul>
5	Development of infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road, water, drainage and wastewater system needs to be maintained and developed to meet the growth of population</li> <li>• Master plan for infrastructure would be effective tool for future development</li> </ul>

6	Improve education facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To overcome the overcrowding problems at schools there is a need to construct more classrooms in order to reduce the total number of students per classroom. Total number of class rooms should not exceed 30 students per classrooms. Therefore there is a need to construct an additional 150 classrooms by the year 2016, approximately 25 classrooms per year.</li> <li>• Vocational education and training for both men and women could help families increase their income and thus reduce overcrowding. These vocational training centers need to be establishing for refugees based on market surveys</li> </ul>
7	Improve health services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of patients per doctor to 50%. This could be achieved either by increasing the number of doctors and/or constructing additional health clinics to serve refugees from inside and outside the camp to serve refugees from inside and outside the camp.</li> </ul>
8	Public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase participation of men and women in all development plans.</li> <li>• Advocacy activities by different groups of the residents supported by human right and development organizations aiming at increasing the public participation at all levels</li> <li>• Awareness campaigns for the importance of public participation</li> <li>• Facilitation of communication and cooperation between different stakeholders to draw attention to and integrate social needs into planning</li> </ul>
9	Youth empowerment and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing youth participation is the engine for change. This could be achieved by involvement of youth in identifying the needs of the camp, objectives, development plans, and implementation. Youth have the capacity to be involved in all steps of proposed activities that contribute to solving the overcrowding problem.</li> <li>• Capacity building of youth is the main approach for development. Therefore a coordination between the different stakeholders should seek to increase the capacity of youth by providing training, vocational training.</li> <li>• Advocacy and lobbying by youth could play an important role in youth empowerment that would increase youth participation in discussions</li> </ul>
10	Establish of public parks and recreational areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public parks and recreational areas should be developed inside and outside the camp. This could reduce the risks of children playing in streets.</li> </ul>

**ANNEX 1**

List of Interviewed Persons:

#	Name	Position	Institute	Date of the interview
1	Mr. Jamal Abu Habel	The head	Jabalia Popular Committee for Refugees	10/3/2014
2	Mr. Mohammed Reyati	Deputy chief infrastructure and camp improvement program	UNRWA	12/3/2014
3	Mr. Ziad Shaqra	Deputy chief in Gaza	UN Habitat	25/3/2014
4	Mr. Sami Attallah	Director of the center	Al-Asryia Center for children and youth	31/3/2014
5	Mr. Osama Sadawi	Director General	Palestinian Housing Council	1/4/2014
6	Ms. Mariam Shaqura	Director of the center	Women health Center – Red Crescent society	1/4/2014
7	Ms. Ana Povreznic	Gaza office director	NRC	13/4/2014

**ANNEX 2**

List of participants at Focus groups:

#	Group	Date	Place	Names of participants	
1	Children Group (10-15 years)	6/3/2014	Life and Hope Association, Jabalia camp	1-Mohammed Matar 2-Safa Abu-Medalalah 3-Belal Maqademah 4-Ismail Farani 5-Rahma Abu-Medalalah	6-Abdullah Hamoda 7-Omer Rehan 8-Yusif Daaur 9-Iman Madhoun 10-Odai Attar
2	Men and community leaders group (30-40 years)	9/3/2014	Jabalia Popular Committee for refugees	1-Iyad Ashqer 2-Mohammed Thaher 3-Samed Yehia 4-Alaa Bhour 5-Ahmed Abu-Jedian	6-Nedal Abu-Nahel 7-Talal Abu-Sharekh 8-Ziad Shamali 9-Nemer Elkas 10-Ibrahim Abu-Nser
3	Youth Group (18-30 years)	10/3/2014	Life and Hope Association, Jabalia camp	1-Hind Rehan 2-Feda Break 3-Iman Trabeen 4-Mai Mousa 5-Abeer Alaaraj	6-Emad Abu-Ghaben 7-Ahmed Najar 8-Mohammed Ali 9-Sa`ed Hmaid 10-Ramez Qawas
4	Women Group (15-25 years)	15/3/2014	Women Health Center, Jabalia camp	1-Ragda Badran 2-Hanadi Abu-khzema 3-Safa Muqayed 4-Jamela Odeh 5-Palestine Saedi	6-Hadeel Ashqer 7-Wafa Kahlout 8-Lubna Hamdona 9-Aya Rwayshed 10-Noor Alian
5	Youth Group (18-30 years)	8/4/2014	AlAsryia Cultural Center	1-Hasan Abu-Aitah 2-Aml Al-Khateeb 3-Belal Baroud 4-Noor Qomoah 5-Kefah Abu-Saleh	6-Mohammed Zaid

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