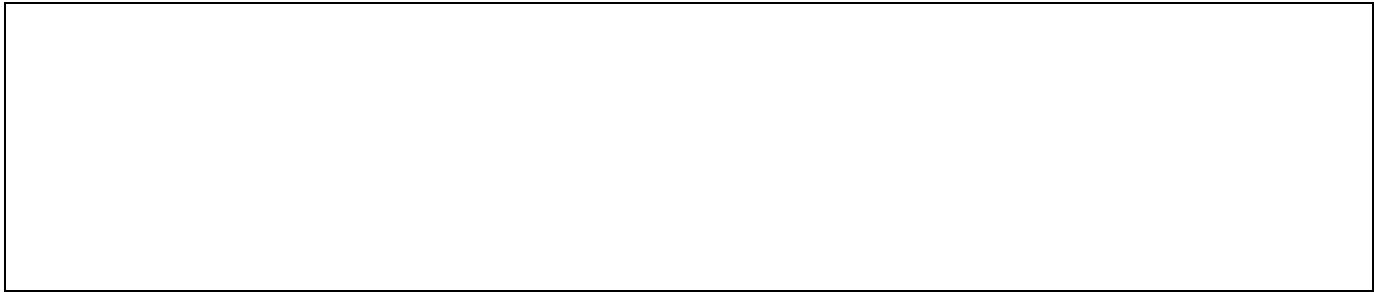


PA-UN TRUST FUND Project Proposal Template

Programme Cover Page

Participating UN Organisation(s): UNRWA	Strategic Area Group Education and Culture
Programme Manager(s): Name: Ugo Bott Telephone: 054 240 2663 E-mail: u.bott@unrwa.org	Strategic Area Group Focal Point Name: Marina Patrier Telephone: 054-313-1172 E-mail: m.patrier@unesco.org
Programme Title: <i>Improving Access to Education in Gaza</i>	Programme Number: 001
<p style="text-align: center;">Programme Description (limit 1,000 characters):</p> <p>This project is for the construction of 12 UNRWA schools as part of the UNRWA Recovery and Reconstruction Plan which aims to rebuild 22 old schools and to construct 78 new schools.</p> <p>Over 1.56 million people live in Gaza, of which 70% are refugees. More than 50% of Gaza’s population are under the age of 18, and as many as 44% are under the age of 15ⁱ. The ongoing conflict and the blockade on Gaza affect all aspects of life and continues to have serious implications for the education sector.</p> <p>Education is vital for children as it provides a routine activity in an unstable environment and builds their knowledge and capacity to become productive members of their society.</p> <p>Due to the lack of access to construction material and finance over a sustained period of time, it has not been possible to construct enough schools to address existing overcrowding and the natural increase in the student population. In the period between 2007-2010, when no construction was possible, the refugee student populationⁱⁱ grew from 195,000 to 213,000. Currently 1,410 UNRWA students receive education in shipping containers, and around 8,000 students rotate their learning periods between classrooms and the school courtyard.</p>	

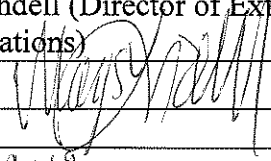


Programme Costs:		Programme Location:	
PA-UN TRUST FUND :	22,368,715 (IN USD)	Governorate(s):	Gaza
National. Contribution:		District(s):	
Agency Core:		Town(s)	
Other:			
TOTAL:	22,368,715		

Palestinian Line Ministry:
 Ministry of Education

Programme Duration:
 Total # of months: Nine Months
 Expected Start date: 1 February 2012
 Expected End date: 1 November 2012

Signatures of Implementing Agencies and Steering Committee Chair

I.	Name of Representative	Magnus Lindell (Director of External Relations and Communications)
	Signature	
	Name of Agency	UNRWA
	Date	14.2.2012
II.	Name of Representative	
	Signature	
	Name of Agency	
	Date	
III.	Name of Representative	
	Signature	
	Name of Agency	
	Date	
IV.	Name of Steering Committee Co-Chair	Maxwell Gaylard
	Signature	
	Date	
V.	Name of Steering Committee Co-Chair	Salaam Fayaad
	Signature	
	Date	

**Detailed Breakdown of Budget by Source of Funds and
Distribution of Programme Budget by Participating UN Organization**

Participating UN Organization	Portion from PA-UN TRUST FUND Budget (US \$)
UNRWA	22,368,715
Total PA-UN TRUST FUND Budget (US \$)	

Total budget (in US \$):	\$ _____
Sources:	
• Government	\$ _____
• PERRF	\$ _____
<u>UN Core/non-core sources</u>	
• UN Org (specify: UNRWA)	<u>\$22,368,715</u>
• UN Org (specify:)	\$ _____
• UN Org (specify:)	\$ _____
• UN Org(specify:)	\$ _____
• UN Org(specify:)	\$ _____

PA-UN TRUST FUND-Project Proposal Outline

Cover Page and Signature Page(s)

1. Executive Summary

The Gaza education sector remains under severe strain. UNRWA provides basic education services to ~213,000 grade 1-9 students in 238 schools through a staff of 7,700 teachers. Overstretched facilities significantly hamper UNRWA's ability to deliver education services of acceptable quality for all eligible refugee children. Due to the ongoing blockade, no new school facilities were constructed for four years despite the pressing needs. With 95% of schools operating on a double-shift basis, the creation of temporary container schools and classrooms, rotating classes between available classrooms and density as high as 45-50 students, children in Gaza are offered an overcrowded and truncated education experience. Due to Agency financial constraints, and the ongoing blockade, UNRWA/Gaza has been unable to fully and effectively implement all the measures needed to optimize the quality of education within UNRWA schools. This project will directly respond to the increasing demand for quality education and, in particular, address the problems associated with school overcrowding and insufficient student/teacher contact time, by enabling the Agency to construct and equip twelve new schools in the Gaza strip, at a total cost of US\$ 22,368,715 . The contribution will allow the construction of four schools in the Gaza City area, which will lead to an increase in the number of UNRWA students in this area by 8,400. In north Gaza, construction of eight schools will allow an UNRWA student increase by 16,800.

2. Situation analysis

Sustained closure and restrictions on imports, exports and movement have characterised the situation in Gaza since June 2007. The "easing of the blockade" announced by the Government of Israel in June 2010 has so far failed to deliver meaningful change to the levels of unemployment, poverty, food insecurity and to the overall vulnerability of a population caught in increasingly difficult circumstances.¹

More than 50% of Gaza residents are children under the age of 18 (~800,000), with as many as 44% of all Gazans under the age of 15.² As elsewhere in the world, the young generation in Gaza is being shaped by their immediate environment, including physical, socio-economic and psycho-social factors. Within this context, the role of education is critical in reinforcing positive values and behaviours and stemming the tide of growing intolerance and extremism.

¹ In a report published in March 2011, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory notes that "the easing of the blockade on the Gaza Strip since June 2010 did not result in a significant improvement in people's livelihoods." UN OCHA, "Easing the blockade: assessing the humanitarian impact on the population of the Gaza Strip. Special Focus March 2011", available on http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_special_easing_the_blockade_2011_03_english.pdf.

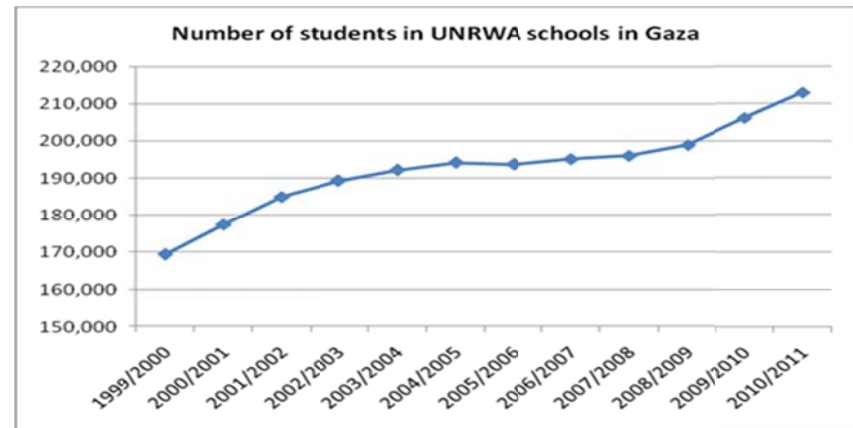
² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "On the eve of the international Population Day, 24/07/2010", available on http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/PeopleDay_2010E.pdf.

To achieve universal primary education is the second Millennium Development Goal. Universal access to basic education is of paramount importance in conflict afflicted areas, bringing a sense of normality back to children surrounded by violence and building the necessary resilience among the next generation to face future challenges.

In the Gaza Strip, two main service providers dominate the education sector: the Palestinian Authority (PA) and UNRWA. The PA serves a total student population of 233,013 in Gaza, through grades 1-12. PA schools in Gaza are currently under the organisational leadership of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Meanwhile, UNRWA serves a student population of 213,000 in 238 schools across the Gaza Strip, providing free basic education to registered refugee children through grades 1-9. The objectives of the UNRWA education programme are to: 1) Ensure universal access to and coverage of basic education; 2) Enhance educational quality and outcomes against set standards; and 3) Improve access to educational opportunities for learners with special educational needs (SEN).

The cumulative effects of occupation, blockade, poverty, chronic underfunding, as well as repeated instances of violence have had a major impact on UNRWA's ability to deliver basic education services. In the period June 2007-July 2010, UNRWA was unable to build any new education facilities in Gaza due to restrictions associated with the blockade. During this period, the number of UNRWA students increased from 195,000 to 213,000. Spread across 124 school buildings, each of the 238 schools currently operates with an average of 1,720 pupils. More than 95% of all UNRWA schools are forced to operate on a double shift basis. For the last four years, additional students have been squeezed into existing infrastructure or accommodated in makeshift add-ons such as steel shipping containers converted into classrooms. Still, the overall learning environment in UNRWA schools is characterised by overcrowding with class sizes as large as 45-50 pupils per classroom.

Due to lack of available facilities and funding, UNRWA Gaza is only able to offer its human rights-based education to approximately 80% of eligible refugee students. The ban on school construction in Gaza since the imposition of the blockade has left the Agency unable to facilitate the enrolment of 40,000 eligible refugee students who are currently outside its education system. An estimated 10,000 of these children are thought to receive no formal education at all, whilst 30,000 are registered at and attending PA and private schools. At the same time, demographic pressures on UNRWA education facilities continue to grow; in the 2010/11 school year the number of pupils in Grade 9 was 19,000 as compared to 29,000 in Grade 1. Natural demographic pressures have also been exacerbated by an increased rate of transfers of Palestine refugee students from Palestinian Authority to UNRWA schools.



3. Lessons Learned and Agency experience in oPt/in the sector

UNRWA, established by United Nations General Assembly in 1949, is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees and its contribution to the welfare and human development of four generations of Palestine refugees. Originally envisaged as a temporary organisation, the Agency has gradually adjusted its programmes to meet the changing needs of the refugees. Today, UNRWA is the main provider of basic services – education, health, relief and social services – to about 4.7 million registered Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The principal goal of UNRWA's operations is "To help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential in human development terms under the difficult circumstances in which they live". Under this principal goal, UNRWA has set main four strategic objectives to be achieved: (1) Human rights enjoyed to the fullest extent possible (2) Acquired appropriate knowledge and skills (3) A decent standard of living and (4) A long and healthy life.

The Palestine refugee community has traditionally placed great emphasis on education as the key to a better future. Despite often difficult circumstances, Palestinians are one of the most highly educated groups in the Middle East. This achievement has been made possible in large part by the contribution of UNRWA in educating successive generations of refugees.

UNRWA operates one of the largest school systems in the Middle East and has been the main provider of basic education to Palestine refugees for nearly six decades. The Agency provides access to free elementary and preparatory education for all Palestine refugee children in the area of operations. The Agency's educational system is characterized by low repetition rates, low drop-out rates, high levels of academic achievement and full gender equity. Vocational and technical training courses are given in UNRWA vocational training centres. The Agency also runs an extensive teacher-training programme, and offers university scholarships to qualified refugee youth. The Agency also offers special education services to help slow learners and children with learning difficulties participate in the mainstream education programme.

Basic elementary and preparatory schooling for nine years is available to all Palestine refugee pupils registered with the Agency. The Agency operates 238 schools in Gaza strip, which in the 2010/2011 scholastic year has an enrolment of 238,000 pupils with some 9,000 educational staff who run the schools and training centres.

In 2007, the PA Ministry of Education conducted independent testing of all students in Grades 4 to 9 to assess their basic numeracy and literacy skills. The results exposed the extent of decline in Palestinian educational standards as nearly 80% of the students tested in Gaza failed the mathematics exam and more than 40% of the students failed in Arabic. In response to such alarming results and in broad consultation with the community in Gaza, UNRWA embarked on a strategic assessment to establish appropriate interventions to stem and ultimately reverse the decline in educational standards.

To address central weaknesses, improve achievement levels and the learning environment, UNRWA introduced its Schools of Excellence Initiative in early 2007. At the core of the Initiative is a seven point action plan which includes complementary and mutually reinforcing measures focused on optimising the development of each child within UNRWA basic education. Actions include large scale school construction to improve universal access; implementation of effective performance management and quality assurance systems; improvement of curriculum implementation; a reduction of class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios; measures to improve staff motivation and effective staff professional development; enhanced school and programme governance including community and parent participation; focus on children with special needs; and improvement of student welfare and social and recreational opportunities.

4. The proposed project

This project will directly respond to the increasing demand for quality education and, in particular, address the problems associated with school overcrowding and insufficient student/teacher contact time, by enabling the Agency to construct and equip twelve new schools in the Gaza strip, at a total cost of US\$ 22,368,715 . The project would address an acute need for UNRWA educational infrastructure in targeted areas; where the construction of four schools in the Gaza City area and eight schools in north Gaza area will lead to an increase in the number of UNRWA students in these areas by 8,400 and 16,800 respectively. The schools would accommodate students who are eligible for UNRWA education, but who are now either outside the formal school system, attending Palestinian Authority schools, or expecting to enrol in coming school years. There are 21,000 eligible refugee children in Gaza City who are not attending UNRWA schools and 13,000 such refugee children in north Gaza. These areas also have the highest average number of pupils per school building, at 1,949 and 2,002 respectively. Moreover, the areas selected for school construction are characterised by poverty and socio-economic vulnerability. The children who will gain access to UNRWA education through the construction of these schools have in most instances experienced and continue to be exposed to repeated instances of violence and conflict.

The project will benefit ~25,000 students as well as their respective communities in areas directly affected by the intervention. An indirect result will be the provision of job opportunities in the education and construction sectors, providing employment and improved food security at a time of unprecedented levels of poverty and deprivation. As a single measure, the construction of 12 schools is expected to generate circa 400,000 man-days of employment. Moreover, within the private sector, such construction works will generate profits among contractors of approximately US\$1.1 million, directly impacting on the local economy.

The total period required for implementing the project is 9 months per school. Supplier performance is monitored and managed throughout the project implementation phase by UNRWA's Procurement and Logistics Department and the UNRWA Gaza Legal Office.

UNRWA will implement the construction works through its Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department. The Department prepares the site plans, design and tender documents related to the new schools. The design is based on a standard concept, incorporating building techniques and materials commonly used locally. Once completed, each school will include 32 classrooms (as an average), a library, science and computer laboratories, offices and amenities. Palestinian-owned companies registered with the Palestinian Contractors' Union will be invited to bid on the construction contracts.

Contracts are awarded on a competitive basis according to standard rules. Other equipment will be purchased through competitive tender locally or through the Agency's Procurement and Logistics Division at UNRWA HQ Amman. Monitoring will be undertaken throughout the project implementation phase communicated through regular internal reporting mechanism.

5. Results framework

Construction of 12 UNRWA schools would significantly enhance access to basic human-rights based education among Palestine refugee children in Gaza. Without this project, only a very limited number of children amongst those who are currently denied an UNRWA education would be absorbed into the system in the short term. Moreover, the Agency would be unable to accommodate an increased number of students as a reflection of population growth. The school construction will provide access to education for children who belong to marginalised communities (especially in north Gaza), grow up in conditions of socio-economic deprivation, and have experienced psycho-social stress and exposure to violence. For these children, learning basic skills and acquiring knowledge will be an asset for life as it builds future capacity and enable young men and women to become productive members of society.

The intended impact of the intervention is to: Reduce the number of eligible refugee students denied universal access to UNRWA education.

The intended outcome of the interventions is: Improved access to a United Nations human rights-based education for vulnerable refugee students who are growing up in a conflict situation through the provision of funds to construct educational facilities, enabling the enrolment in areas where there is no such infrastructure exists or where existing infrastructure is severely overstretched.

The project will fund the construction of 12 schools which will directly benefit ~25,000 students who reside in two of the most conflict-prone, socio-economically deprived and challenging circumstances of Gaza. In particular, the project would address an acute need for UNRWA educational infrastructure in targeted areas; where the construction of four schools in the Gaza City area and eight schools in north Gaza area will lead to an increase in the number of UNRWA students in these areas by 8,400 and 16,800 respectively.

Programme Title:	Improving Access to Education in Gaza						
Project Outcome	To ensure improved access to United Nations human rights-based education for vulnerable refugee students						
Project Outputs	UN Agency Specific Output (if relevant)	UN Agency	Partner	Indicators	Source of Data	Baseline Data	Indicator Target
Output 1:	To increase access to schools for vulnerable refugees	UNRWA	N.A	Number of new schools constructed	UNRWA Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department (ICID) monitoring reports	No new schools as of January 2012	12 new Schools by end of 2012
		UNRWA	N.A	Number of refugee students enrolled in the newly constructed schools	UNRWA's Education Development Center (EDC) database information	0	Around 25,000 pupils Girls: 13,000 Boys: 12,000
Output2:	To generate secondary benefits	UNRWA	N.A	Number of man days of employment created through schools construction	UNRWA Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department (ICID) monitoring reports	0	circa400,000 man-days of employment are generated

6. Management and coordination arrangements

The primary benefiting stakeholders of this intervention are UNRWA, the Palestinian Authority and direct refugee beneficiaries. UNRWA maintains direct education service delivery for refugee children grades 1-9 in Gaza. Accommodating up to 25,000 additional students, the contribution would increase UNRWA capacity to provide its regular educational services to eligible refugees. The Palestinian Authority maintains

direct education service delivery for non-refugee children (and refugee children denied access to UNRWA education or who opt for Palestinian Authority education by choice). Education remains a priority for the Palestinian Authority and it is envisaged that UNRWA education facilities will be handed over the relevant authority once a political solution has been reached and the Palestinian refugee problem resolved. Refugee beneficiaries will be able to express opinions on the above intervention through UNRWA community outreach sessions, meetings between individual school management, teachers, parents and students, and other channels of internal communication within UNRWA's organisational system.

The overall management of the project is the responsibility of the UNRWA's Project Manager (Reconstruction) in close coordination with the Field Education Programme, with support from Field Procurement Office, Field Logistics Office, Field Finance Office and the Field Projects Office. Construction works will be managed by UNRWA's Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department. Site engineers will be appointed to follow up on the implementation of the project on a daily basis.

7. Feasibility, risk management and sustainability of results

Actions points under UNRWA's Schools of Excellence Initiative contribute in different but essentially complementary ways towards the UNRWA response to the collapse in standards and the necessary steps to position the programme on a sustainable path of recovery towards improving academic achievement levels for Palestinian refugee students in the Gaza Strip. Emergency and project funding opportunities have been used as creatively and as extensively as possible to finance as many of these measures but the increased and increasing student population inevitably requires constructing new schools and employing additional teachers to meet growing needs.

UNRWA funds its regular programmes, including education, from its Regular Budget, which is based on voluntary contributions from its major donor countries, following the approval of the United Nations General Assembly. Projects, emergency activities and special initiatives are, nevertheless, funded through special contributions from the donors. While funding received through this project proposal will be used to cover oversight, construction, furniture and equipment costs -- staffing and other recurrent costs will be secured through the Agency's regular budget and/or through special donor funded initiatives.

UNRWA continues to work closely with all relevant parties to implement construction projects in Gaza within the framework of national planning arrangements. This is conducted bilaterally and through the relevant cluster network in the occupied Palestinian territory. UNRWA's exclusive interface with the Israeli Ministry of Defense on construction projects is the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (or COGAT).

To construct a school in Gaza, UNRWA requires approval of different components of the project from various interlocutors. These include approving the design of the school by UNRWA HQ, approval from COGAT to construct the school, land available on which to construct the school and a donor to fund the construction of the school.

UNRWA's planning assumptions build on ensured access for necessary goods through the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The Agency remains fully transparent and accountable and highlights the need for respect by all actors for international law and the neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of United Nations agencies.

Upon contract approval, UNRWA will agree a schedule of importation of construction materials with COGAT but there remains a risk due to crossing capacity at Kerem Shalom that the schedule may not be strictly implemented as this is the only crossing through which construction goods can currently pass. To date, adherence to the various construction schedules has been of the order of 59% due to the crossing capacity restrictions with unforeseen delays to the implementation schedule set out in the project document. With the closure of the Karni and Sofa crossings and increased reliance on a single crossing for the importation of all authorised goods into the Gaza Strip, this risk is likely to increase.

The Gaza Strip remains volatile from a security perspective with close proximity of hostile armed forces. Security incidents range from firing incidents close to the border (almost daily) to large scale incursions of conventional military forces supported by air, armour and artillery support (Operation Cast Lead – 2008/2009). A significant risk remains that a pattern of mortar or rocket fire from the Gaza Strip or concern about the smuggling of weapons through the tunnel infrastructure at Rafah may prompt either limited or large-scale incursions into the Gaza strip with a consequential impact on the operation of the crossing at Kerem Shalom.

8. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

The principal tool of monitoring will be reporting by UNRWA. The Agency's monitoring and evaluation capacity enables full understanding of goals, outputs and impact on the beneficiary community. Moreover, UNRWA maintains robust mechanisms and reporting channels to monitor construction projects. The budget for monitoring is built into the project costs. The UNRWA Education Programme represents a core service to the refugee beneficiary community. UNRWA Gaza maintains considerable capacity to provide detailed information on its projects, including through the Education Programme's comprehensive database.

Reporting on the project's activities will be carried out by UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Department and the UNRWA Field Education Department. Site reports on the construction progress will be prepared weekly to reflect on-site progress, problems encountered, and other technical or financial issues. The Projects Office of UNRWA Gaza Field will ensure the application of appropriate methods and provide regular follow up on financial and operational matters. Financial and narrative reporting will take place at the completion of the project.

The project timeline for this intervention is 9 months per school. Within this timeframe, UNRWA will report on the completion of each individual school. UNRWA will submit a final report upon the completion of all 12 schools. Further quality assurance will be provided by the donor's field visits, if security and access conditions allow. The construction projects will be monitored throughout the implementation period and impact will

be examined to ensure that results have been achieved according to UNRWA's plans. Indicators will include: number of schools completed; location of schools completed; number of refugee students enrolled in completed schools; and proportion of eligible refugee students enrolled.

The budget for monitoring is included in UNRWA's Project Support Costs (PSC). Monitoring undertaken by UNRWA in terms of construction progress reports will be absorbed by the relevant UNRWA departments. Under the current access regime between Israel and the Gaza Strip, UNRWA undertakes end-use monitoring of construction supplies (subject to change/ further adjustments to Israel's blockade). Site supervision carries a cost of about US\$45,000 per school. Such costs are included in the overall budget proposal of a total cost of US\$1.9 million per school.

9. Workplans and Budgets

Work Plan for: Construction and Equipping 12 new UNRWA schools at Gaza Strip

Period Covered by the Work Plan: March 2012 – December 2012 (assuming that fund will be available to UNRWA in February 2012)

Project Outcome : To ensure improved access to United Nations human rights-based education for vulnerable refugee students												
	Major Activities	Time Frame (by activity)								implementing Partner	PLANNED BUDGET (by output)	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8			
Output 1:												
To increase access to schools for vulnerable refugees	Tendering and awarding										N.A	
	Construction										N.A	US\$ 17,831,691
	Procuring required furniture, equipment and supplies										N.A	\$3,001,066
	Overhead, monitoring and reporting										N.A	\$1,535,958
Total UN organization 1*[UNRWA]											US\$ 22,368,715	
Total UN organization 2*												
Total Planned Budget												

* The Total Planned Budget by UN Organization should include both programme cost and indirect support cost

Budgets: The table should be accompanied by a budget narrative for each line item, providing a description of the item and the calculation of cost.

PROGRAMME BUDGET

PROGRAMME BUDGET		ESTIMATED UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES (US\$)	
CATEGORY	AMOUNT (US\$)	2012	2013
1. Supplies, commodities, equipment and transport	3,001,066	3,001,066	0
2. Personnel (staff, consultants and travel)	522,823	522,823	0
3. Training of counterparts	0	0	0
4. Contracts	17,308,868	17,308,868	0
5. Other direct costs	72,583	72,583	0
Total Programme Costs	20,905,340	20,905,340	0
Indirect Support Costs**	1,463,374	1,463,374	0
TOTAL	22,368,714	22,368,714	0

* Based on the UNDG Harmonized Financial Reporting to Donors for Joint Programmes approved in 2006. Definition of the categories can be found in the instruction which is available on www.undg.org.

ⁱ Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, On the eve the international population day, July 2010

ⁱⁱ Refugee students are served by UNRWA for grades 1-9 (5/6 – 11/12 years old)