



# Barriers to Education Fact Sheet April 2005

## Education Indicators

- Over one third of the Palestinian population are students in full-time school or university education
- There is a 98.2% literacy rate among 15-24 year olds and 91.1% total adult literacy rate
- There are 11 Palestinian universities, 5 university colleges and 25 community colleges
- 52% of the student body at Birzeit University are female students
- The Palestinian Ministry of Education was established in 1994 and the first ever Palestinian national curriculum introduced into schools in September 2000 (replacing the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula in Palestinian schools for the previous 33 years of the Israeli occupation)
- Birzeit University has been closed down by Israeli order 15 times in its history, the longest period for over 4 years between 1988-1992, when Palestinian education was effectively made 'illegal' by the Israeli occupation
- In a survey of Palestinian youths between ages of 10-24, 60% of the participants stated that their first concern is their education<sup>1</sup>

## Since September 2000

- 676 children, 199 university students and 39 teachers have been killed<sup>2</sup>
- 2,500 children have been arrested (10% of the total 25,000 Palestinians arrested)<sup>3</sup>
- 269 schools have been damaged as a result of shelling and other attacks by the Israeli Army<sup>4</sup>
- In the Gaza Strip over 73 educational institutions have been destroyed, including a teacher training college which was completely demolished in March 2004<sup>5</sup>
- Bethlehem University and the Open University were shelled in 2001 with estimated losses of \$500,000
- In the last year, 14 children under 12 years old were injured or killed inside their classrooms in the Gaza Strip<sup>6</sup>
- On 5 October 2004, 13-year-old Iman Sameer Al-Hams was shot and killed by 20 live bullets on her way to school in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip; she was wearing her school uniform and carrying a school bag

## Barriers to Education

- There are more than 700 Israeli checkpoints and other military obstacles across the West Bank<sup>7</sup>
- 80% of the population report difficulties in going about their daily routine, including getting to school or university<sup>8</sup>
- Birzeit University was sealed off by an Israeli Army roadblock for two-and-a-half years (2001-2003)
- 1,289 schools have been closed during sieges and curfews and 48 turned into Israeli military bases<sup>9</sup>
- Students from Gaza are barred from reaching the 8 Palestinian universities in the West Bank: in 2000 there were some 350 Gazan students at Birzeit University, today there are only 35
- New students coming to Birzeit University from the northern West Bank town of Jenin declined 100% by 2004
- In 2003, Hebron University and Palestine Polytechnic University were closed down by Israeli military order for 6 months and 3 months respectively, denying over 6000 students their right to education

## The Wall's Impact on Education

- 245km of the projected 730km of wall has been constructed, almost all of it on Palestinian lands, dividing, isolating and encircling Palestinian areas. Some 22 localities have already been cut off from their schools<sup>10</sup>
- The main campus of Al Quds University, located in a suburb of East Jerusalem, is now surrounded by an 8 meter high concrete wall, cutting it off from 36% of its students who live on the Jerusalem side of the wall
- To date, the illegal wall has hindered over 15,740 students from reaching their classrooms<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Youth Survey 2003, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF and UNFPA

<sup>2</sup> 676 children killed (Defence for Children International/Palestine Section, 11/4/05), other figs Ministry of Education

<sup>3</sup> Defence for Children International/Palestine Section <http://www.dci-pal.org>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), "Assessment 15", 2005

<sup>5</sup> Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Press Release, "Israeli Forces Destroy University Building in Gaza", 16/3/04

<sup>6</sup> Right to Education Campaign website, Incursions and Attacks, <http://right2edu.birzeit.edu/news/catindex32>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Information Fact Sheet", January 2005

<sup>8</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Survey on the Perceptions of Socio-economic Conditions", May 2004

<sup>9</sup> MOEHE, figures since Sept 2000; as of April 2005, 9 schools remain closed, of which 3 are Israeli military bases

<sup>10</sup> International Court of Justice, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in Occupied Palestinian Territory"

<sup>11</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Statistical Monitoring of the Socio-economic Conditions", Second Quarter 2004