



Summer Games in Gaza

Over 50 percent of the population in Gaza is under the age of 18. For these children and youth, life has been overwhelmingly characterised by conflict, poverty and despair. Throughout the regular school year, refugee children in UNRWA schools spend their days in overcrowded classrooms, where UNRWA is unable to offer any extracurricular activities due to the urgent demand for classroom space and teaching staff just to provide basic education to each of its students. Outside of school, years of destruction and deprivation have left few or no spaces in which the children can enjoy recreational or artistic activities, particularly during the long, hot, summer months.

Now in its fourth year, UNRWA's Summer Games programme provides the children of Gaza with a rare opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and enjoy a moment of normalcy amidst extraordinarily challenging circumstances. Having grown each year, Summer Games 2010 was the biggest yet, with UNRWA running 1,200 summer camps across the Gaza Strip in order to provide over 250,000 children with a rare moment of happiness.

Peace starts with . . . Summer Games 2010

Providing rare opportunities for the children of Gaza

During Summer Games 2010, UNRWA provided children with the opportunity to participate in:

- Swimming;
- Painting;
- Pottery;
- Theatre;
- Dance;
- Sports;
- Life skills sessions;
- Museum excursions; and
- Many other activities.

For most of the children, this was the one time in the year that they would be able to engage in such activities. They expressed themselves creatively, learned new skills, discussed topics such as human rights and the benefits of not smoking, and made new friends. UNRWA utilised all of its school buildings and created dedicated beach locations along Gaza's coastline to host the summer camps. We also took Summer Games to orphanages and hospitals to give the children there a moment of hope and joy.

At a glance

- 250,000 children
- 1,200 summer camps
- 2 world records



Breaking World Records

In 2009, UNRWA gathered nearly 6,000 children on the beaches of Gaza to break the Guinness World Record for the most kites flown simultaneously. Several weeks later, UNRWA received confirmation from Guinness World Records that the children of Gaza had broken the record previously set in Germany (967 kites), with 3,710 kites flown simultaneously.

In 2010, the children of Gaza were determined to do even better. After months of preparation and training, they broke not one, but two Guinness World Records. First, they broke their own record for the most kites flown simultaneously, with 6,198 kites flying above the coast of Gaza. Then, they headed to the former Gaza International Airport where 7,556 broke the Guinness World Record for most basketballs dribbled simultaneously.

UNRWA provides assistance, protection and advocacy for some 4.7 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, pending a solution to their plight. The Agency's services encompass education, health care, social safety-net, camp infrastructure and improvement, community support, microfinance and emergency response, including in times of armed conflict.

Through these services UNRWA strives to help Palestine refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.