

## Helping Children in Gaza Cope

### IN BRIEF

In Gaza, ANERA helps children deal with conflict in a non-violent manner through an innovative and unique project funded by private donations.

Palestinian refugee children in the West Bank and Gaza experience the same challenges as children everywhere: overcoming social problems, learning difficulties and education deficiencies, coping with the pressures of growing up, and learning to fit in socially.

However, Palestinian children must face these challenges in communities that are coping with increasing poverty and on-going political uncertainty, isolation and violence. These problems are particularly acute in Gaza.



inside a psychosocial tent



psychosocial program children at the sea

“ We want to help people who lost their houses and children during the war. Through our daily presence, we reach them while they are living in tents and help them cope with the suffering after the destruction of their homes. ”

– Maher Ghazi, a psychosocial program trainer

“ I think we are restoring hope to many people. Men are here to ensure the support to their wives and children and to learn how to deal with their families in the aftermath of a horrible time of stress and fear.”

– Psychologist Fadel Abu Hein

### TENTS OF HOPE

In the immediate aftermath of the 22 days of fighting in Gaza, ANERA with its partner Community Training Centre and Crisis Management (CTCCM) conducted a study on the psychological and emotional problems that emerged among children and their parents. The study revealed, among other things, that high percentages of children are showing symptoms of heavy psychological and emotional wounds.

To address some of these problems, ANERA and CTCCM identified three badly damaged areas of Gaza and set up psychosocial tents, where children and parents can get help.

Experienced trauma counselors with special training are working with children, conducting group sessions to encourage more interaction with peers and sharing of feelings about what they have witnessed. Children release their anxieties and traumas through guided activities such as drawing, telling stories, dancing and performing skits. For more severely traumatized children, one-on-one counseling are offered.

Parents also participate in group counseling sessions to develop strategies for providing better support to their children and for coping with the traumas they themselves have suffered.

### FACTS & FIGURES

#### An ANERA study of Gaza children revealed:

- 97% were afraid of darkness and clinging to their parents
- 76% exhibited behavioral problems
- 70% were depressed and frustrated
- 71% were having trouble sleeping

#### ANERA's psychosocial tents in Gaza:

- are in 3 war-ravaged areas
- reach 6,500 children, aged 8-14
- reach 1,500 parents