

The Popular Education Program Bridges



Igniting a Brighter Tomorrow's Education as Gaza's Beacon of Hope and Resilience

According to the Ministry of Education's report, the on-going aggression in Gaza has resulted in 38% of schools being destroyed. Over 11,402 students have been killed, and more than 42,945 have been injured (Ministry of High Education Report, 2024).

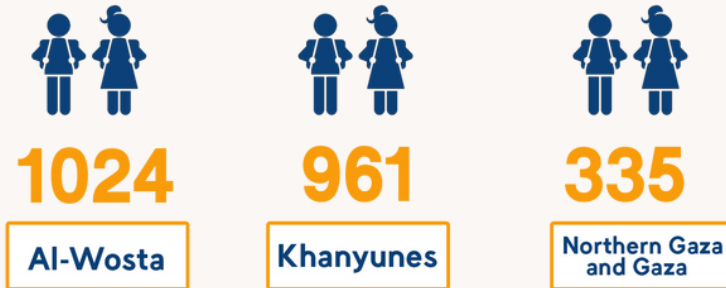
As we dive headfirst into this catastrophe, Sharek does so with a heavy heart, striving to restore back hope into each and every one of our children. Through the introduction of the Popular Educational Program, Bridges, we aim to re-insert education in Gaza through an interactive, holistic and trauma-informed approach.

With the steadfast partnership of UNFPA, Education Above All, and our local partners, we believe that education is a right for all. At the center of this heart-wrenching situation, there is a hope that we seek to ignite.



Empowering Gazan Youth: Around 50 Daily Classes Rebuilt for more than 2300 Children Amongst the Rubble

The Popular Education Programme operates in three governorates within the Gaza Strip, offering education to 2,320 students ages 8-16 years old.



The youth of Gaza lead initiatives to support popular education in the alleys and among the devastation: 49 educational classes are taken to build back the future of children. The sectioning out of these classes is with the intention of offering specialized care.



A Structured Educational Environment

To promote comprehensive development, each subject in the program is carefully chosen to serve a meaningful purpose, fostering empowerment beyond the classroom. The school structure is intentional and seeks to re-implement discipline; as morning line up weaves into their day a sense of structure and expectation. Classes are held 3 to 4 times a week, with 4 to 5 classes daily, lasting 90 to 180 minutes in total. The subjects that are offered are Arabic, English, Math, Health Education & Physical Exercise.



Heroes Amid Hardship: Gaza's Youth Volunteers

Our projects are built on the strength, devotion and commitment of our youth volunteers, who courageously provide support despite being faced with an environment that aims to undermine their willingness and hope. These 172 volunteers exemplify the empowerment philosophy that Bridges promotes and are a monument for determination and morality. They operate in various regions and assume a variety of duties, including planning, teaching, and providing emotional and practical support, all with an incredible level of dedication. Supplies offered to volunteers' include classroom materials, tents and food supply. However, although we aim to supply resources to the best of our ability, volunteers' are trained to use what they have on hand to deliver education and recreational activities. One of volunteers' initiatives is the introduction of a puppet show, using recycled materials such as cans.



Even when faced with impossible circumstance, we view the support of our volunteers as top priority, as they are the leaders of this program. We do this by continuously seeking new ways to propel and empower them and holding their enquiries, intuition, innovation and suggestions in high regard.



Education as Resilience: Approaches to Healing amongst an ongoing trauma

To ensure that the educational support provided meets the needs of students, our volunteers undergo specialized training that includes:

Trauma-Informed Educational Approaches: Given the impact of war, it is expected that students' psychological trauma may interfere with their learning process and lead to mental health challenges such as ADHD. With feedback from our trainers, we adapt our educational training to the needs of the students' ensuring that the main goal be their intellectual engagement rather than their academic achievement.

Interactive Educational Approaches: Volunteers are training to incorporate 'play' into their teaching methods as a means to make learning more engaging, adaptable and motivating.

Adolescent Health: This includes comprehensive health and protection from gender based violence including sexual exploitation and abuse.



Protectors of Peace: Taking Precaution

Being faced with relentless danger is unavoidable. It is with this understanding that we try and take every possible measurement in ensuring safety for our children and volunteers. So far, this precaution is implemented by two core strategies: prioritizing setting up learning spaces closer to the homes and areas of the youth and educator's residence and carefully locating facilities outside of identified "Red zones" which are viewed as danger zones. Additionally, we use the Security Pocket Guide for Safety as a reference and training manual for crisis response management with our volunteers.



We thank all our donors, partners in international and local organizations, and the private sector, as well as our network of volunteers, for their unwavering support and commitment.

