H2H Fund Activation:
Escalation of conflict in the occupied Palestine territories, 2021

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Humanitarian Action Support
About the author

Ina Bluemel is a humanitarian aid worker with 18 years of experience in a broad spectrum of emergency preparedness, response and recovery subjects. Having spent most of her career in humanitarian deployments Ina has also contributed to and led a number of evaluations and reviews, ranging from subnational humanitarian responses to disease outbreaks, multi-year national projects and global strategies and programmes. Her educational path includes a master’s degree in international health, a bachelor degree in nursing and studies of international politics and social science.

Thanks to all members who participated in the study

The H2H team thanks all the contributors: Katja Gröschen from ACAPS. Jude Sweeney from the protection cluster lead. Anna Taylor and Nisreen Khalaf from International Health Partners. Shahar Mahyub, Nadine Mohammad Rajab, Fatma Shaat, Fadi Fadi Abo Hassanien, Samy Barhoum, and Mohammad Ahmad Ghattas from Humanitarian Academy for Development. Helen Kearney and Alice Darcq from H2H Network
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This case study explores how the H2H Network Fund activation for the May 2021 escalation of the conflict in the occupied Palestine territories (oPt) was able to rapidly fill gaps in the humanitarian response. As part of a series of case studies, the study also contributes to a lesson learned process. The series aims to strengthen the H2H Network’s activities and ensure their continued relevance and appropriateness. The study was conducted in January 2022 for the H2H Network by an independent consultant. A variety of sources including 10 key informant interviews, 9 project reports, the grant panel activation meeting recording (see box below, “The H2H Network Fund activation: How it works”), and 16 additional documents informed the study.
In October 2020, an Israeli court ruling stated that several Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah—a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem—were to be evicted by May 2021, with their land handed over to Jewish families. This contributed to growing tension in the ongoing protracted conflict between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Over the following months, violent episodes increased between protesters, Israeli settlers and the police in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, culminating in open conflict on 10 May 2021. Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups from within Gaza launched hundreds of rockets into Israeli territory to which Israel responded with air strikes and artillery bombardments against targets in Gaza. On 21 May, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire (Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker).

The impact of the Israeli attacks on Gaza resulted in extensive civilian deaths and injuries, as well as large-scale destruction and damage to civilian infrastructure, although reportedly targeting members of armed groups and the military. Governmental buildings, residential homes and apartment buildings, international humanitarian organizations, medical facilities, media offices and roads connecting civilians to essential services such as hospitals were damaged or destroyed. Hamas-led attacks on Israel killed and injured civilians, causing significant damage to public facilities, houses and factories (OHCHR 27/05/2021).

The escalation of hostilities severely impacted the population in Gaza, exacerbating the impact of the ongoing Israeli blockade (almost 14 years), internal Palestinian political divisions, and regular escalations (UN OCHA Flash Appeal 27/05/2021). Access constraints such as movement and administrative restrictions, damage to infrastructure and roads, and explosive remnants of war contamination hampered needs assessments and the delivery of aid. The movement of people, goods, and humanitarian supplies remained extremely limited (ACAPS Briefing Note 08/06/2021). While the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza held, protests and tensions continued in East Jerusalem, mostly against forced eviction in Sheikh Jarrah and other Palestinian neighbourhoods. Search and arrest operations and night raids have significantly increased in East Jerusalem, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron, and Bethlehem. Intercommunal violence has also increased, including settler attacks against Palestinians and their property (ibid).
2. Fund activation details

The request for scoping for a potential H2H Fund activation in response to the escalation of the conflict in oPt came from a H2H Network member (ACAPS) on 19 May 2021. Consultations with network members and the donor (UK FCDO) shortly afterwards, an initial assessment was conducted, the service package formulated and the call for proposals was circulated to network members on 2 June 2021. The H2H Network Fund service package was intended to provide short-term support to the oPt in the recovery period.

During the assessment phase, eight network partners communicated their interest in responding to the crisis, four of which submitted project proposals when the call was published. The highly sensitive context in the protracted oPt crisis required rigorous donor compliance processes, and special attention was dedicated to the counter terrorism. All relevant delivery partners had to be aware of and compliant with the FCDO’s counter terrorism policy and an appropriate assessment of risks and mitigation action was undertaken. This added pressure to a tight 7-day turnaround timeframe from the call for proposals to their submission on 9 June, 2021. Three projects passed the grant panel review but administrative processes related to donor compliance requirements slowed down the release of funds to the Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD), delaying their project start to September 2021. ACAPS and International Health Partners (IHP) began their work on 17 June 2021. All steps of the activation process from the alert to the grant panel decision and successive start of the eligibility period from 17 June to 17 September 2021, took a total of 22 working days.
The H2H Network Fund activation - How it works:

The fund is activated following a request by a donor, a network member, or a responder within the context of a specific emergency. A monthly network crisis call gives members the opportunity to flag crises and request needs assessments. The core team conducts a scoping and needs assessment and decides on whether to activate the fund or not. If the decision is positive, a call for proposals is issued. Proposals are then reviewed and scored by the grant panel, composed of independent consultants or staff from operational agencies with in-depth knowledge of the response, and a donor representative. A service package is created to meet needs in a specific context and strengthen the humanitarian response.
3. Services package design

The original service package included all three organizations and aimed at supporting multilateral processes with technical services, tools and products including needs assessment, support for the provision of quality medical supplies and capacity building activities for local responders. The core team was supported by a consultant who designed the call for proposals, led the assessment and established a list of contacts to support dissemination of the service package. Grantees were given a tight 3-month timeline, due to the scheduled end of the H2H funding agreement between the H2H Network and UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. With a second extension of the H2H Network Fund (the first one occurred earlier in 2021), grantees had the opportunity to extend their projects, at no cost, for another month. The delayed start of the HAD project affected the smooth roll-out of the service package, including external communications and outreach to operational agencies, as well as collaboration between grantees.

Network partners applying for the H2H fund must meet specific eligibility requirements. This includes having passed a due diligence process prior to the application for funding and ensuring security, safety, and in-field hosting -- which are all ultimately the responsibility of the network member. Additional project proposal selection criteria entail a short list of key measures including the organization’s own needs analysis of the situation and feasibility and potential for impact of their proposed technical service. A key commitment is the willingness to collaborate and coordinate efforts with established coordination platforms and other H2H Network members and to contribute towards building awareness of the H2H Network in the process.
Main findings

The lessons identified below are derived from a comprehensive document and collaboration call review, key informant interviews with grant recipients, their operational partners, and from discussions with members of the H2H Network core team. Learning points are summarized and systematically grouped by core themes. They include the administration of the fund, how the projects were implemented in practice and what effect they had on the humanitarian response.

The design, delivery, usage, and contribution to the overall humanitarian response of all three projects are described at the end of this report.
1. Speed and timeliness

- IHP and ACAPS were able to commence project implementation immediately. Compliance formalities with the H2H Fund donor needed clarification before HAD could commence, delaying the start of their project by 2.5 months. Making use of the option of a one month no-cost-extension brought the project to a close by the end of 2021.

- While this impacted on the timely delivery of HAD’s services, according to key informants interviewed for this case study it did not lessen their impact.

- The project timeframe fell into the 4th quarter of the year, which is typically the busiest time of the year for project proposal and report writers in any organization.

- All key informants agreed that the short implementation period of 3-4 months posed considerable challenges including:
  - Investing sufficient time and focus on the service package delivery while implementing their own individual project objectives
  - Building a network of operational agencies, responders and informants
  - Ensuring operational partners, all of which were affected by the escalation of the conflict, are available and invested in receiving technical support.
  - Measuring the impact of their project in the overall response to the conflict.

“ACAPS products were very appropriate, very accessible, and timely. If I remember correctly I believe a report was published almost immediately after the escalation of violence in May. Far more timely than much of the other reports published (outside of the media)

Jude Sweeney, Former Co-lead for the Global Protection Clusters Analysis Working Group in Palestine
All three network members were granted no cost extensions to their projects indicating that the 3-month timeframe chosen for this activation did not suffice to implement the projects as planned. There is learning in this for all stakeholders:

- Across the three funded projects, proposals show a tendency to over-estimate what can be delivered in a tight timeframe within a given budget, even against some of the risks (access, availability etc.) that have been assessed as part of their project proposal. However, by making use of the no-cost extension all grantees reached or even overachieved their defined outputs.

- The grant panel, albeit selected for their in-depth knowledge of the context, did not identify the risks associated with activities that depend on key conditions such as access permits, building key informant networks and availability of senior staff for training in the immediate aftermath of the escalation. Grant panel members failed to note or make feedback potential concerns to grantees.

- There is an opportunity here to strengthen the feedback component of the grant panel to assist partners with guidance on realistic objectives.

- The donor-imposed timeframe is not reflective of the assessments conducted, the common knowledge of the dependency of project implementations in oPt on the goodwill of the Israeli administration, nor does it reflect learning from the previous H2H fund activation in Tigray where similarly all grantees were severely challenged by the rigidity of the timeframe imposed by the fund activation.

- Understanding that the tight time frame was dictated by grant-specific administrative uncertainties, the learning however remains valid that a 3-month timeframe in a protracted crises with severe access issues needs to be studied and justified (e.g. by a distinct service package of projects with proven ability to deliver against understood risks).
- IHP noted that there was scope to work more closely with the two other grantees as part of the service package. However, the tight timeframe and the fact that the grantees started their projects at different times prevented IHP and HAD from exploring the potential for collaboration on issues around safe storage, transportation guidelines and more.

- One grantee perceived the application process as surprisingly heavy and complex for the relatively small grant received. More guidance through the documents would have been welcome, or indeed a simpler guiding question-based application format.

Findings indicate that there is room for adaptation in the assessment and onboarding processes that might speed up the activation of the H2H Fund in the future while opening up to opportunities for even earlier collaboration between potential grantees. However the process was swift and partners were able to deliver their services the moment the funding was granted.
2. Coordination and collaboration

- The service package as a key added-value, setting the H2H Fund apart from other pooled fund concepts, is dependent on the quantity and variety of proposals received. When only a few partners come forward and their project objectives differ widely it becomes difficult to envision the overall benefit of the collaboration to be more than its parts. However, this is only true at first glance and in the short-term. All grantees have highlighted how beneficial the establishment of communications has been both in direct relation to the response and as a way of laying the foundation for potential future collaborations. Some of the wider H2H Network member collaborations in this response predate the escalation to the conflict in oPt and are testament to the benefits of the H2H way of working.

- The formation of a needs-based relevant and appropriate service package crucially depends on an intense (depth versus timeliness) scoping and assessment process. The development of the concept of the service package has gone through several stages where the actual formulation of the package shifted from assessment stage to grant panel decision-making and currently takes place “somewhere in between”. From the outset, the process has been influenced by changes in the capacity of the small H2H Network core team, affected by regular staff turnover and interim leadership with different priorities and approaches.

- To strengthen the benefit of the service package beyond what H2H fund grantees have noted in this case study, it is suggested that greater emphasis be placed -- and resources invested -- in the scoping and assessment phase of the H2H Network grant activation. This will allow the selection of project proposals that match the needs assessed and ideally complement each other to ensure the service package delivers more than its parts.

"We really welcome the move away from very prescriptive calls for proposals to more opportunity for members across the various specialisms to share their ideas so the best can be selected. It felt valuable in this response to have a mix of partners – providing new and exciting opportunities for cross-specialisation, collaboration and innovation."

Anna Taylor International Health Partners
– One H2H Network grantee noted that a wider scope within the call for proposals and an early introduction to potential other members would leave more space for the early exploration of opportunities and establishment of collaboration.

– Core team-facilitated exchanges (calls, webinars, workshops etc.) have contributed to a baseline familiarity with fellow network members.

– The delayed start of the HAD project impacted the smooth implementation of facilitated collaboration between grantees. Collaboration that could have taken place was either greatly delayed or missed.

– Feedback indicates that it would be advantageous to introduce grantees at the earliest possible opportunity to facilitate collaboration.

– An earlier introduction would also aid the consolidation of the service package concept, as well as collaborations envisaged during the assessment and proposal writing phases – although this admittedly would require a clear will, effort and mutual trust to collaborate. Nevertheless, this approach has great potential, maximizing the added-value of the network.

– ACAPS built positive connections with international and local actors in Palestine, ensuring that different perspectives were integrated into their analysis. Building this network of key informants did prove time-consuming, even though it was aided by ACAPS partners in-country and in collaboration with IHP and HAD.

Findings indicate that there are several opportunities to strengthen the process for the timely delivery of the service package. This could include improvements to the assessment and application phase, bringing H2H Network members closer to discuss collaboration at an earlier stage in the process.
3. Adaptation and Innovation

- Through its continued thematic scoping during the early stages of project implementation ACAPS had to deviate from its initial project design in two instances:

- As part of their analysis of political economy, ACAPS had originally proposed to develop an analysis of dynamics likely to lead to future escalation and risk. However, during the research phase and following discussions with stakeholders on which type of analysis would be useful, the focus of this analysis shifted towards analysing issues related to political economy more directly connected with the impact of the escalation of hostilities in May.

- The three-month project timeframe did not allow for the full roll-out of a social impact methodology, so a less rigorous methodology was used. This adaptation led to the production of a report which retained the focus on social impacts of the escalation in May.

- Islamic Relief Palestine’s (HAD’s implementing partners in Gaza) monitoring report highlights challenges with the remote learning modality related to technical issues such as weak internet connections and sound systems, unfamiliarity and miscommunication around the online approach. However, 78% of the participants showed satisfaction with their online training experience.

- IHP’s implementing partner Anera was able to continuously monitor the need for specific medicine through weekly updates from health facilities both in Gaza and the West Bank and therefore adapt the needs list to which IHP responded according to the changing health needs over time.

All grantees demonstrated their capacity to continuously monitor and learn whether their services still matched the evolving needs of their target groups. They all made adjustments when needed. Through the close collaboration with the H2H Network core team, bilaterally and in the collaboration calls, there is room to communicate required adaptations and adjustments.
4. Relevance and appropriateness

- All operational key informants praised the relevance and appropriateness of the services provided. All would have liked to benefit from more, for a longer period.

- As in other short-term H2H Network fund activations the tight timeframe compromised the development and roll-out of a robust MEAL system. While it is straightforward to count the numbers of treatments shipped and proposals developed during the mentoring phase of a training programme, it is less straightforward to measure the impact of data and reports provided to the wider humanitarian community.

- With the breadth of services available among H2H Network partners there is no “one size fits all” approach to evidence and learning. However, the H2H Network MEAL Advisory group could support the development of a straightforward approach to support H2H fund grantees with impact monitoring, building on the “MEAL for H2H actors model and guide” developed in 2021 (working document).

“We were able to look at digital data, the number of downloads and forward messaging and social media usage all of which showed above average interest. How the reports are being used and what impact they have is difficult to say. In the scope of the project there was no time to go into this level of analysis.”

Katja Grösschen, Senior Analyst, ACAPS

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1 Each of the project descriptions below provides a short insight to the overall humanitarian response contribution, including additional information on relevance and appropriateness which is not repeated here.

2 Reference to Tigray 1 & 2 case study learning here, links to be copied
- The tight 3-month timeframe was the rationale for IHP to apply for a relatively small grant to stay true to what was feasible in the timeframe given. In the meantime, IHP sought additional funding to support the rehabilitation of health services in oPt over a 2-year period. H2H Network’s funding in the early phase has therefore helped to free up funding for International Health Partners’ longer-term response to the crisis.

“
A lot more work could have been achieved over a longer implementation period.
Anne Taylor, IHP
“

- Key informant feedback indicates that the short time frame coupled with the limited amount of money accessible through the H2H grant, might deter network members from submitting project proposals, limiting the options for the formation of comprehensive, relevant, and appropriate service packages. It must be noted that the grant recipients of this H2H Network fund activation, as previously, are primarily established organizations. Such organizations have the organizational and administrative capacity to undergo the due diligence required to become a grant recipient, the human resources required to submit a project and implement it at short notice. In the interest of the H2H Network’s strategic objective, this potential barrier to access the H2H Fund needs to be reviewed/addressed.

Unless a monitoring framework is in place to measure the relevance and appropriateness of the services delivered, the answer to whether services met the needs of the targeted population will depend on qualitative evidence. The three distinctly different projects rolled out in this H2H Network Fund activation had widely differing ability to measure their impact (monitoring downloads, counting the delivery of medical supplies, asking participant’s feedback in surveys...). This makes it more difficult to measure the impact of the service package as a whole. Further development of the H2H Network’s approach to MEAL is needed.
5. Additional outcomes

The H2H Fund aims to enable network members to rapidly initiate activities when an emergency strikes. Typically, H2H Network members then seek additional funding for the continuation of their activities. An important aspect of the H2H Network Fund is therefore its ability to function as catalyst for the medium and longer-term engagement of H2H Network members in the given context.

IHP was able to secure additional funding for their oPt response over the next two years. Anna Taylor from IHP confirmed that “H2H’s funding in the early phase has freed up funding for International Health Partners’ longer term response to the crisis. Having secured funding for longer term work is key as the extensive damage to health facilities and WASH facilities the issues will not all be addressed over a three month timeframe”.

Based on the success of the H2H Fund project in oPt and continued needs in this kind of programming, HAD is also exploring follow-on projects and replication/adaptation of their H2H Network-funded project, which built on a project initially developed under the H2H Network’s Covid-19 activation.
This case study shows that H2H Fund grantees were able to implement relevant and appropriate projects in the immediate aftermath of the acute escalation of the conflict in oPt. The services provided were individually strengthened by coordination and collaboration between the H2H Fund grantees themselves, the wider H2H network and other actors across the humanitarian coordination system. When needed, H2H grantees adapted their projects to better meet the needs identified during the implementation period. It can therefore be concluded that this H2H Network Fund activation enabled funded members to contribute to a more effective and accountable humanitarian action in response to the escalation of the conflict in oPt.

The delivery of services was challenged on several levels and at various stages of the H2H Fund activation process. The scoping and assessment phase, as the crucial foundation on which to build the service package, failed to sufficiently highlight the numerous risks that would impact a timely roll-out of activities, as did the individual organizational assessments conducted as part of the project proposals. The complex and demanding compliance procedures that needed to be built into the process lengthened the application phase. The specific situation between HAD and the H2H Fund’s donor significantly unbalanced the timeline in which the project was to be implemented as part of the service package. The rigid 3-month timeline, determined by the approaching end of the funding agreement between the H2H network and UK FCDO, also impacted project implementation in several important ways. As in the previous fund activation for Tigray, uncertainty around the continuation of the fund went against the assessed need for longer project implementation periods. The one month no cost extensions for each grantee countered this negative impact at the project level, though not necessarily supporting the collective impact of the service package.
The understaffed H2H Network core team structure, coupled with the effect of regular staff turnover, is a further impediment to the smooth implementation of the H2H Network Fund, although each staff member went above and beyond their roles to maximize the outcome of the H2H Fund activation. It is suggested that additional human resources, especially allocated towards the scoping and assessment phase, and to enhance facilitated collaboration between grantees at an earlier stage in the H2H Fund activation process will potentially address some of the challenges faced and opportunities missed in this H2H Fund activation.

A final observation is around the absence of smaller, newer and less well-established H2H network members in this (and previous) H2H Fund activations. This limits the opportunity to utilize the diversity of services available among the membership for the benefit of even stronger service packages. It also highlights the need – and opportunity – to address potential barriers in accessing the H2H Fund.
Annexe 1
Projects deep dive
1. IHP - Emergency response: Addressing critical shortages of essential medicines in oPt

**Project design**

IHP proposed to equip humanitarian health actors in Gaza and the West Bank with free medicines and medical supplies, enabling doctors and medical staff at local health facilities to provide patients with the best possible care. The project design involved IHP’s long standing operational partner Anera, which has extensive links with medical facilities and have proven capacity to ensure all donated medicines are accounted for at all times - which is vital to maintaining the integrity of the medical supply chain. Anera agreed to conduct weekly reviews of stock levels of essential medicines across oPt ensuring the distribution of medical supplies is highly responsive to local needs. Fellow H2H member Aviation sans Frontières committed to provide support around air transportation in the early response.

IHP has an existing longer-term health system strengthening programme in oPt through which the organization intended to distribute 116,891 treatments in response to the crisis. The H2H Fund, through their swift processes, is intended to enable IHP to scale up their activities immediately to meet the intensified level of need through the provision of 50,000 treatments. These aim to address the specific set of health needs that have arisen because of the current crisis and to directly help an estimated 16,600 people.

Additional funding was pledged for to enable IHP to engage in the rehabilitation and rebuilding phases.
IHP, through its implementing partner Anera and with the support of Aviation sans Frontières, was able to source, deliver and distribute 50,288 treatments to health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank. The treatments were sufficient to treat 16,700 patients. The initial shipments arrived at their destination in June and July 2021 respectively. For the first time in their long-standing engagement in oPt, IHP experienced considerable time lags between applying for and receiving permits from the Israeli government, which delayed further shipments to October, November, and December 2021 respectively. In addition to access constraints, the global SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and Brexit (IHP are UK-based) caused several logistical obstacles, all of which IHP was able to address or circumvent to adhere to set timelines.

Initial shipments in June and July included predominantly psychiatric treatment to cater for the spike in mental health issues observed by clinicians at health facilities and communicated through the health cluster, of which Anera is an active member. Later shipments included medical supplies for maternal and child health, nutrition services and services for people with Non-Communicable Diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, epilepsy, and asthma, all of which support medical treatments that had become difficult to access after the conflict. People directly affected by Covid-19 benefitted from access to medicine and medical supplies for the management of symptoms, co-infections, and related complications.

Intensified movement restrictions have made it harder for medicines related to the above health priorities to arrive or for patients to leave to seek treatment. Checkpoints and roadblocks impede Palestinian access to available aid and disrupt humanitarian organizations’ movements and ability to deliver assistance.

“The need for acute treatment of mental health conditions were huge and we were lucky to deliver the treatment swiftly. When we sent medicine to Gaza there is a major elevation on the hospitals and facilities this means not only treatment for the patient but also freeing up finances of hospitals to spend on other items.”

Nisreen Khalaf, Director of Medical Donations Program, ANERA
IHP - Emergency response: Addressing critical shortages of essential medicines in oPt

Response contribution

Shortly after the conflict, the health cluster identified mental health and psychosocial support, emergency care and ensuring continued access to essential health services including Covid-19 response, primary health care, maternal and child health and non-communicable disease (NCD) management as health priorities in Palestine. IHP contributed to addressing these priorities with shipping a total of 118,148 treatments to health facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, sufficient for the treatment of 39,382 patients. The H2H Network-funded project contributed 42.5 percent to this overall achievement.

In its final narrative report IHP reports on two vital immediate outcomes of the H2H-funded project: the boost in morale of clinicians, being able to prescribe drugs that are otherwise often out of stock or costly for the patient, and the grown confidence in low-income patients seeking health care that includes drug supplies that are available and free of charge.
ACAPS proposed to analyse the potential changes in trends and dynamics in this new peak of a protracted and complex context in the occupied Palestine territories. The analysis aimed to include new developments against the backdrop of the political economy and global dynamics of the context, delivered through a remote analysis concept that ACAPS would implement from outside oPt. The project design focussed on 3 thematic areas relevant in Gaza and the West Bank:

- An analysis of humanitarian needs resulting from the most recent fighting,
- An analysis of social impacts, and their potential effects on humanitarian response and
- An analysis of the political economy (including livelihoods) and global dynamics, and their potential impact on humanitarian response/how they can support or disrupt humanitarian response.

All three analyses were to include identifying dynamics that are likely to contribute to future escalations and their potential impact. However, their main objective was to contribute to strengthened, evidence-based humanitarian decision-making processes related to the situation. The target audience therefore included the donor community, the UN system, and operational actors with the aim to support decision-making and complement assessment efforts to foster joint reflection and enable deeper understanding of triggers for potential changes.
ACAPS was able to increase its initial project outputs from three to four reports including on:

- Humanitarian needs after the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip
- Political economy of Gaza, with focus on economic vulnerability
- Social impacts of the humanitarian situation, and the
- Impact of demolition policies in the West Bank

In addition, ACAPS produced maps and illustrations which were used to supplement the analysis reports. The fourth report resulted from initial research findings, indicating that the impact of demolition policies in the West Bank were among the main drivers of the escalation of hostilities in May 2021. It also allowed ACAPS to direct a stronger focus on the West Bank in an information environment that mostly focused on the impact of the hostilities on Gaza.

Collaboration facilitated by the H2H Network core team, between ACAPS, IHP and HAD, helped ACAPS to establish connections with local implementing partners, through whom they received additional information to enrich their analysis. In mid-September, REACH/ Impact Initiative’s (another H2H Network member) Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) for Palestine was published, which allowed ACAPS to include analysis of this data in its reports.
ACAPS’ MEAL activities include analytics which show that on the social media platform where ACAPS disseminated the analysis products and engaged with users (Twitter, LinkedIn), the Palestine publications received above-average engagement rates. The report on political economy received particularly high engagement rates. Analytics of the email campaign in which the reports were distributed shows the reports were forwarded to a wide audience which includes key humanitarian stakeholders such as UNRWA, the World Bank, Concern Worldwide, Action Against Hunger, ECHO, and DFAT.

ACAPS’ analytical products contributed to a better understanding of the crisis in Palestine and provided the grounds for evidence-based humanitarian decision-making among the wider humanitarian community. The reports were published at a time when global attention to Palestine had subsided, and therefore contributed to a higher visibility of the continued humanitarian needs several months after the ceasefire.
HAD proposed a project aiming to support 15 local non-governmental organizations located in all areas of Gaza. The project design focused on the provisions of proposal and training for report writing, with a strong component of mentoring, and coaching to prepare proposals and working towards Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) compliance (the CHS Alliance is another H2H Network member). These skills would enable the 15 actors to bid for and acquire funds from international donors to respond to the recent crisis within their respective fields and for the effective delivery of critical services to people in need in oPt. The project concept is based on the rationale that local organisations are an integral part of the local communities, more likely to reach communities than international NGOs, especially during crises and with the access constraints pertinent in Gaza.

HAD has worked on capacity building in Gaza since 2015, however more work remained to be done, including on CHS compliance. A recent needs assessment among partner organizations identified limitations in skills in preparing technical and financial proposals and technical and financial reporting for international donors. The HAD project design included a collaboration with fellow network member the CHS Alliance who run a 3-year project across 3 countries, of which oPt is one, called “Closing the Accountability Gap”.

The implementation of the project was to be ensured by the employees of Islamic Relief Palestine in close collaboration with HAD staff abroad with overall implementation managed by HAD.
Prior to the H2H Network-funded project, HAD conducted a capacity building needs assessment among Islamic Relief Palestine’s implementing partners. Assessment data available allowed for the immediate uptake of activities, once the H2H Network grant was issued in September. Two trainings were delivered by Arabic speaking trainers, mentors and coaches and Islamic Relief Worldwide professionals from HAD’s Associate Scheme. The goal was to enable local NGOs to increase their chances of winning projects and securing funds directly. Facilitators followed a thorough process to ensure quality throughout and increase the chances of the desired impact. This included conducting pre-test, gathering expectations, adjusting training material to meet the level, need and expectations of participants, collecting daily feedback and refining training material and activities for following day, and finally conducting post-test and final evaluations for future learning.

Following the training period HAD conducted a needs and gap analysis to inform an intense mentoring phase that allowed tailored mentoring areas per organisations.

CHS utilized the opportunity to conduct an introductory training on strengthening project quality and accountability through the application of core humanitarian standards with the same organizations.
15 representatives of local NGOs from within Gaza participated in the trainings, all of which have been long term partners of Islamic Relief Palestine since 2015. The level of experience among the participants were high, as pre-test and daily evaluations showed, and the training sessions were respectively adapted to refine skills and fill gaps in knowledge and experience. The intense monitoring and coaching that followed the training was unfamiliar to the participants, all of whom have experienced multiple capacity building experiences in the past. As the HAD and IRP facilitators were exceptionally flexible with regards to working hours and subjects to be discussed this was a very welcome aspect of the project implementation.

The introduction to CHS was much appreciated by the participants who wanted a deeper understanding of the subject to ensure their organizations’ compliance and thereby increase their opportunities of securing projects and funds from international donors.

Within the project implementation period, 5 partner organizations have developed new proposals based on the acquired knowledge and skills from the training received. These have been accomplished during the coaching period. IRP’s project evaluation process revealed that 77% of participants confirmed the obvious improvement of their knowledge related to the training topics and 90% of respondents believe that their chance of securing funding has increased because of the skills and knowledge developed. Three partner organizations commenced the establishment of proposal writing and reporting units within their organizational structure based on the knowledge acquired during the training.

“I benefitted most from the report writing, this adapted and improved my reporting since and has strengthened our donor relationship. I also benefitted from the proposal writing training. A concept note was developed and is submitted, portraying the real need of the people we want to serve.”

Fatma Shaat, Wefaq Society for Child & Women, Rafah, Gaza
At H2H Network, we work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

We assess humanitarian crises to define the type of response needed. We then coordinate specific network members to quickly provide relevant services. The network's services are easily accessible to all responders.

We have responded to crises including the humanitarian emergencies in Occupied Palestinian Territories, Tigray and Nagorno-Karabakh, Covid-19, Cyclone Idai, Ebola in DRC and internal displacement in Burkina Faso.

H2H Network members are expert and independent.

Together we help the humanitarian sector evolve and cope with the changing scale and nature of humanitarian crises. We address sector-wide issues including the collection, management and analysis of data, community engagement, security management, logistics, accountability, standards and localization.

Reach out to H2H Network for direct contacts and to request other services from network members at h2hnetwork.org or email info@h2hnetwork.org.