

## Report back to The Funding Network

The 500 Futures project that we presented, and for which we obtained funding, had as its aim the delivery of a psychosocial programme for 500 children in Gaza. The overall project goal was to raise £17,000, of which the attendees and members of The Funding Network generously raised just over £6,000.

A key challenge of work in Gaza is the risk presented by the too regular regular military invasions. When we presented our pitch, a new invasion of Gaza had just commenced 4 days prior. This resulted in over 2000 deaths, more than a quarter of them children, and countless additional injuries, disablements and orphaning wrought on Gaza's children. In addition, it lay waste much of the infrastructure of Gaza, including power and water. This was quite aside from increasing and exacerbating the issue that we were looking to address, namely the traumatising of Gaza's children.

As you would imagine, this had a very direct impact on our project. Primarily, that we had to refocus our immediate efforts to emergency needs as relevant for a military invasion, and prioritise our interventions there. A longer term psychosocial programme would remain important, but with bombardment raining in from land, sea and air, we had more urgent needs to address.

We engaged in shorter term emergency interventions. Within Hope and Play's means, we focussed on a group of 1500 children in the North of Gaza who were in the direct line of the land invasion, had them relocated to the centre of Gaza where there was less fighting, and provided them with emergency psychosocial support, as well as more material needs such as food and clothing. Our focus here was not as long term as the 500 Futures project, as the need was far more immediate and pressing than that with bombardment still ongoing.

That said, we did not use any of the 500 Futures funds donated through TFN for this emergency intervention. The TFN funding was committed to the longer term programme, and remains allocated for it. However, given the circumstances, the emergency work had to take priority, and also depleted our other independently raised funds which we had intended to allocate for this programme. We subsequently renewed fundraising efforts to replenish the separately raised funds.

Simultaneously, in light of the fact that there were now significantly more impacted children (373,000 by UNICEF estimates), we also determined to start a parallel track of identifying if we could find a large donor to allow a much bigger project along the same lines to be undertaken.

Thanks to a number of fundraising efforts up and down the country, as of about a week ago, we are now over the threshold for the Futures 500 programme. We have commenced the work of identifying a database programme to see how the Futures 500 programme can be a seed for larger future programmes, either by ourselves, or shared with any other organisations who are doing similar work. The aim is that in doing this, the work that is done in the Futures 500 project will be long-term not only for the children who undergo the psychosocial programme and the graduates who we get trained, but will also be a resource available for far more children.

The invasion of Gaza effectively had the impact of putting our schedule a few months back, while at the same time making this work even more necessary.

My apologies for not filling this out in your template, but it was hard to fit what has happened on the ground with it. I hope this gives you the information you need. Needless to say, feel free to ask me any more, and we will also update you on progress, in the hope that we don't have another imminent invasion.

Kindest regards,  
Iyas

Iyas AlQasem (Trustee at [Hope and Play](#)).  
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