

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia
ABN 86 619 970 188

ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE COALITION



BRINGING YOU A MESSAGE FROM THE FIELD

PEACEMAIL

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Gaza continues to face uncertainty. The siege imposed on the Gaza Strip 14 years ago continues to limit access to resources and negatively affects the health of the population. Due to the blockade and the impact of the recent bombings, there continues to be widespread poverty and unemployment in Gaza.

Act for Peace's partner, the Near East Council of Churches (NECC) run three primary healthcare clinics, which provide vital services to vulnerable and economically disadvantaged people, including pre and post-natal care for mothers and their children. NECC also provides vocational training to help increase employment opportunities for at-risk young people.

Thanks to your ongoing support the NECC can work during these challenging times to support the people of the Gaza Strip. Giving support when it is needed most and providing lifelong skills.

Act for Peace gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**YOUR SUPPORT
IS MAKING A
DIFFERENCE:**

\$29

can cover the cost of mental health support for one child. This includes one-on-one counselling, group therapy sessions and a place where kids can play and feel safe.

**PLEASE
PRAY:**

- For the people of Gaza, particularly during an extremely traumatic year.
- For the NECC staff who support their communities with psychosocial support services.
- For a stable future for the people of Gaza, for peace.



Dear Friends,

My name is Sharon, and for the last six years I have worked for Act for Peace supporting our partner in the Gaza Strip. I am constantly amazed and impressed with the work of our partner in Gaza, the Near East Council of Churches (NECC), and the great work that they do including providing healthcare to parents and young children, and vocational training to at-risk youth. I have visited their program often and really admire their work.

The humanitarian context in Gaza remains challenging and is harshly impacted by the consequences of the occupation, siege and recurrent wars. Most recently the horrific 11-day bombing which had devastating effects on a place already under immense stress. This coinciding with the global pandemic made the aftermath extremely complex and difficult.

NECC run three primary healthcare clinics and they have used these established services to offer psychosocial support. This includes critical mental health support for mothers, children and students.

“These children are suffering from trauma resulting in nightmares, low concentration and insomnia. Children have become afraid... they have become more scared, and they cannot sleep alone anymore. They ask many questions to their parents because they witnessed and watched the escalation on the TV” – Lubna, health coordinator NECC.

This service provides much-needed psychosocial counselling sessions, stress management, stress relief and resilience building. It's also an opportunity to process the recent trauma that has occurred and help to support the community to return to normal life.

Five months later and the people of Gaza continue to face the trauma brought on by the recent conflict. The cycle of violence in Gaza has meant that people are always aware that any safety they experience is short-lived and that there will be another wave of hostilities. This leads to feelings of dread and expectation, as well as fear and uncertainty. The psychosocial impact of long-term, continuous stress is immense, with one out of four people requiring psychosocial support. There is a growing need, as more and more people begin to come to terms with what has happened, with increasing cases of emotional and psychological trauma.

We know that incredible resilience exists in Gaza but providing these safe places to acknowledge the tremendous hardships faced by Gazans is critical to recovery. NECC continue their work with great professionalism, kindness, patience and dedication. Thanks to your support these services can continue.

Thank you.

Sharon



A group of young women come together through psychosocial support group activities.