IFRC
Psychosocial Centre

Case study, Palestine

You have been deployed by your National Society to Ramallah in Palestine as a PSS delegate to support The Palestine Red Crescent Society in their community development efforts.

For decades Palestinians have been exposed to violence, oppression, wars, conflict, occupation, forced migration, displacement, and eviction of Palestinian civilians. As a consequence, four million Palestinians are now living as refugees in the West Bank/Gaza, and in neighboring countries.

There was and still is a general feeling of insecurity and helplessness as a result of the politically unstable environment. Severe damage to infrastructures, private property and educational and social systems has led to psychological distress, and many families experience grief from being separated from loved ones, loss of life or from having a family member wounded or disabled as a result of the conflict. Stress and risk factors, as well as protective factors, are inherited from one generation to another. The Palestinian Authority has made progress in building state institutions, yet its viability is challenged by serious financial constraints. A high percentage of Palestinians are considered poor. Children are the largest sector of the Palestinian population. Almost one third of the population is aged 15-29 years, and 40.4 percent are below the age of 15. This high percentage of children coupled with the poor economic situation, subject children to enter the informal labor market, withdraw from school and enter an environment of exploitation, violence and negligence.

Palestinian boys and young men are central actors of the Palestinian rebellion (al-Aqsa Intifada) and often participate in violent riots. PRCS' staff and volunteers characterize the violent behaviors as acts of frustration and desperation.

Progress with regard to the status of women has been slow. Reports show that gender-based violence is a serious problem in the region, with 37 per cent among married women. Only 0.7 per cent of women exposed to violence seek assistance from specialized institutions, reflecting high social stigma and capacity gaps in system response. 40 per cent of women are married before age 18, exposing them to teenage pregnancy and affecting their likelihood to complete higher education. While the total fertility rate continues to decline; at 4.2 children per woman, it is still one of the highest in the region, and the median annual population growth rate is close to 3 per cent.

You are being deployed to support design and development of a programme that can support some of the above described needs with special focus on the psychosocial needs.