



CARE's Emergency Flood Response Ensures Gaza Families Have Safe Water

Jabalia Camp, Gaza, Dec. 14 – CARE Int'l announced today the completion of emergency flood response activities in the Jabalia refugee camp. In response to the October 28 flooding in northern and southern Gaza, CARE replaced the electrical panels of a sewage and storm water pumping station and distributed hygiene kits to 180 affected households in the Jabalia refugee camp.

Replacing the electrical panel, and raising it above any potential water level, means that Jabalia refugee camp residents will not be at risk of sewage flooding and contaminating the water supply during any future heavy rains. The hygiene kits are a very important way for people in a fundamentally unsanitary situation to protect their health, particularly when they have lost all their household and personal items. CARE also responded swiftly to the emergency by immediately including 118 families whose homes were damaged or destroyed in a program that provides an adequate supply of fresh vegetables on a weekly basis.

The October downpours created flooding in northern and southern Gaza, and left streets knee-deep in water and many houses damaged, forcing many Palestinian families to evacuate their homes. The most affected areas were in the Jabalia, Khan Younis, and Al Shaty' refugee camps.

The infrastructure in Gaza is not equipped to handle such significant amounts of rain, especially since routine maintenance and repairs have been limited or held up by the Israeli blockade since the beginning of 2008. Based on its initial rapid assessment, CARE learned that more than 180 homes concentrated in the middle of the Jabalia refugee camp were significantly damaged. Several civil organizations and NGOs, such as UNRWA, Civil Defense, Welfare Association, Save the Children UK, and CARE provided immediate response in immediately stepped in with shelter, basic food commodities and children's hygiene kits.

Upon further assessment, CARE determined that the flood destroyed the electrical panel for the main sewage and storm water pumping stations in the Jabalia camp. To avoid future damage from further flooding and the run-down infrastructure, CARE replaced the electrical panel and raised it three meters. This will protect the power supply to the diesel generator and safeguard operational access to the pump. Importantly, the now consistently operating pump will avoid contamination of water supplies that could lead to serious public health issues.

"I am so proud of the CARE staff and how everything came together," said CARE West Bank Gaza Country Director Martha Myers. "Their strong knowledge of the community, relationships with key partners and actors, and their calm, business-like approach to responding to this emergency meant that we could instantly provide people with help they really needed, when they needed it."

ABOUT CARE: CARE is one of the world's largest independent aid organizations providing emergency relief and development projects in nearly 70 countries around the world.

CARE in West Bank and Gaza has worked with Palestinian communities since 1948. For the last 14 years, CARE has been implementing programs in Palestinian communities in agriculture and natural resources, economic development, education, emergency relief, health, water and sanitation and civil society strengthening. For additional information about CARE's activities in West Bank and Gaza, please visit www.carewbq.org and <http://carewbq.blogspot.com/>.

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