

# Rapid Assessment of Higher Education Institutions in Gaza

## Data Analysis Report



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

*In collaboration with Enabling Education  
Network CIC (EENET)*

## Foreword

The scale of destruction and devastation after 50 days of conflict in July-August 2014 is unprecedented in Gaza, including in the education sector. According to the MIRA<sup>1</sup> findings, 26 schools have been completely destroyed and 122 damaged during the conflict, 75 of which are UNRWA schools. It is worth noting that already prior to the last conflict the education system in Gaza was suffering from a shortage of at least 200 schools, which led to a big number of classes running in double shifts, impacting on the quality of education. Early childhood development has also been highly affected. Among a total of 407 kindergartens in Gaza, 133 were damaged and 11 totally destroyed<sup>2</sup>. The Higher Education sector also suffered severe human and infrastructure damages. After 50 days of conflict, the right to quality education for all Palestinian children and youth has been further compromised.

This assessment has been conducted in close coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and initially in the framework of the Humanitarian Education Cluster. The overall objective was to support the MoEHE and Higher Education Institutions in the identification of critical needs and in the development of a response plan for the higher education sector. The results could also be used to inform future contingency plans (for instance through crisis-Disaster Risk Reduction programmes) to protect education from attacks and mitigate the impact of crisis. Through this report, we would also like to advocate for the higher education sector, outlining concrete and critical recommendations, not only to ensure the right to education but to also contribute to the development of Gaza through the involvement of and the support to youth. Another area of focus of the assessment is closely related to UNESCO's support to inclusive education systems, with preliminary findings on the situation of students suffering from impairment or disability as a result of the conflict. This assessment will also fit into the Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) for Palestine coordinated among the UN, the EU, the World Bank and the PA, and for which the UN is the responsible entity for the social sector, including education.

UNESCO would like to thank all the colleagues and partners who participated in and supported the preparation of this assessment. In particular, our thanks goes to MoEHE, the focal points at the HEIs in Gaza, the Education Cluster, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Education team of the UNESCO Ramallah Office that conducted the field work, as well EENET who compiled and analysed the results of this assessment. Our deepest gratitude and thoughts are going to the people of Gaza and to all the colleagues, students, teachers and education personnel that, in a very difficult moment in their lives, took the time to collect and share information, and accepted to tell us their stories.

Lodovico Folin-Calabi, Head of the UNESCO Ramallah Office, a.i.

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-Cluster/Agency Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) coordinated by OCHA.

<sup>2</sup> Assessment concluded by Save the Children in coordination with the Humanitarian Education Cluster and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

### **General**

EOD	Explosive ordnance disposal
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
HEI	Higher education institution
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNOCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

### **Higher education institutions (abbreviations used in data figures)**

ACC	Al Aqsa Community College
AU	Al Aqsa University
AUG	Al Azhar University
AUC	Al-Awda University College
QOU	Alquds Open University
ACSD	Alzaytona College for Sciences And Development
AFP	Applied Future Polytechnic
ACAS	Arab College of Applied Sciences
CDDH	College of Dar Al Dawa & Humanities
CIS	College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University-Gaza
GCTS	Gaza College for Tourism Studies
GTC	Gaza Training Center - UNRWA
GU	Gaza University
ICC	Islamic Call College
IUG	Islamic University
KYTC	Khan Younis Training Center - UNRWA
MPAPS	Management & Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies
NCST	Nama'a College for Science & Technology
PCN	Palestine College for Nursing
PPU	Palestine Polytechnic University
PTC	Palestinian Technical College
UOU	Ummah Open University
UCAD	University College of Ability Development
UCAS	University College of Applied Sciences
CST	University College of Sciences and Technology
UP	University of Palestine

# 1. Introduction

This report assesses the material, human and educational damage sustained by 26 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Gaza during 50 days of conflict between 7<sup>th</sup> July and 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The severe escalation in hostilities at that time involved intense Israeli aerial and naval bombardment and Palestinian rocket fire. The crisis was unprecedented, causing large-scale destruction and displacement.

As of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014, a total of 2,205 Palestinians (1,483 civilians) and 71 Israelis (4 civilians) were killed and an estimated 14,000 housing units were destroyed. Around 500,000 Palestinians were displaced at the height of the conflict (with over 100,000 still displaced) and 108,000 remain homeless.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and other education centres,<sup>4</sup> higher education institutions were directly targeted during the hostilities, sustaining significant injury and loss of life among staff and student populations, as well as damage to buildings and equipment.

## 1.1. Study methodology

This report has been compiled using primary data collected by UNESCO from HEIs in Gaza. A total of 26 rapid assessment questionnaires were administered, along with interviews with 38 staff members (36 male, 2 female), focus group discussions with 12 staff members (11 male, 1 female), and three semi structured interviews with the Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education and university leaders.

Orientation sessions were provided by the UNESCO assessment team to 26 HEIs on the process and methodology of the assessment, including presentation of the data questionnaire. The data collection phase subsequently began with field visits to all 26 HEIs by 2 data collectors (Assessment Co-ordinator and Social Worker). Each data collector visited 13 HEIs, completing questionnaires using Excel data sheets. Qualitative data was also collected through interviews and case studies. Rapid assessments and data from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and UNESCO have also been incorporated where relevant.

## 1.2. Summary of key findings

- There was a failure to protect education from attack during the 50 day crisis.
- Staff and students suffered heavy casualties during the conflict, sustaining loss of life and serious injuries. A number of injuries have led to disabilities including mobility, hearing and visual impairments which will impact on individuals and their families throughout their lives.
- Nine academic and administrative staff from the HEIs were killed and 21 injured.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: UNOCHA [www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361](http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361) Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Initial estimates by UNDP put total material damage across the whole education sector at USD\$16,397,254. This breaks down as follows: kindergartens \$633,600; schools \$7,384,478; education centres \$1,016,703; higher education institutes \$7,362,473. Data supplied by UNDP 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

- A total of 421 HEI students were killed during the conflict and 1,128 were injured.
- Student deaths during the conflict constitute *more than a quarter* – or 27.4% - of *total civilian deaths* incurred in Palestine.<sup>5</sup> Even considering the exceptionally high ratio of people aged 15 to 29 to the total over-15 population (53%),<sup>6</sup> this is a shocking statistic.
- Education and business-related subject specialisms were particularly hard hit by student death and injury.
- Fourteen HEIs were damaged during hostilities, some directly targeted, others suffering collateral damage. Many of these institutions are experiencing severe disruption to academic and administrative operations as a result.
- The total estimated cost of repairs to and replacement of HEI buildings, facilities and equipment is US\$ 16,088,597.<sup>7</sup>
- Damage to infrastructure as well as equipment, facilities and learning materials inevitably reduce access to education and have potentially long-term impacts on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The majority of HEIs are not currently implementing inclusive approaches in building design or appropriate pedagogical or practical support to students with disabilities.
- Emergency planning in HEIs is weak and there is currently no co-ordination between HEIs.
- Psychosocial support for staff and students is inadequate.
- A total of 393 staff lost their homes in the crisis. Students from 23 out of 26 HEIs had their homes destroyed, putting further pressure on already severe housing shortages in Gaza. A total of 7,169 students – or 7.5% of the student population at all HEIs – were affected.
- HEIs were disrupted for a minimum of 20 days over the semester, and a maximum of 62 days. In total, 1,016 individual HEI days were lost over the summer semester, indicating the extent of the interruption to academic study caused by the crisis.
- Staff identified the following priorities: buildings, financing for student fees/grants, emergency response and protection, improvements to quality of teaching and learning, enhanced psychosocial support.

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<sup>5</sup> Calculation based on UNOCHA figures (1483 civilian deaths) as at 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Source: UNOCHA [www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361](http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361) Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

<sup>6</sup> UNOCHA ONS statistics quoted in [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20415675](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20415675) Accessed 20th November 2014.

<sup>7</sup> This estimate is for HEIs only and is based upon UNDP figures for infrastructure repair and reconstruction combined with data collected by UNESCO for this assessment which calculated the costs of damaged equipment and facilities (see Section 4 for details).



## 2. General information about the HEIs

In Gaza's HEIs, a total of 421 students were killed during the conflict and 1,128 were injured. Nine academic and administrative staff were killed and 21 injured.

The HEIs covered in this assessment are as follows:

<b>Public institutions<sup>8</sup></b>
Al Azhar University
College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University-Gaza
Islamic University
College of Dar Al Dawa & Humanities
Alquds Open University
University College of Applied Sciences
<b>Government institutions</b>
Palestinian Technical College
Palestine College for Nursing
University College of Sciences and Technology
Al Aqsa Community College
Palestine College of Islamic Call
Al Aqsa University
<b>Private institutions</b>
Arab College of Applied Sciences
Gaza University
Applied Future Polytechnic
University of Palestine
Gaza College for Tourism Studies
University College of Ability Development
Alzaytona College for Sciences And Development
Ummah Open University
Al-Awda University College
Palestine Polytechnic University
Management & Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies
Nama'a College for Science & Technology
<b>UNRWA institutions</b>
Gaza Training Center
Khan Younis Training Centre

Sixteen of these institutions are based in Gaza City, 7 are located in the south of the Gaza Strip, 2 in the Middle Area, and 1 institution is located in the North of the Gaza Strip.

<sup>8</sup> Most public institutions are non-profit, owned by NGOs and charitable associations, receiving partial government funding and thus dependent on fundraising.

The total number of staff at all HEIs is 4,838, of whom 4,016 are male while 822 are female. A total of 94,634 students are enrolled in these institutions, 54.4% of whom are female (51,482) and 45.6% male (43,152).

Fig. 1: Female students outnumber males in Gaza HEIs

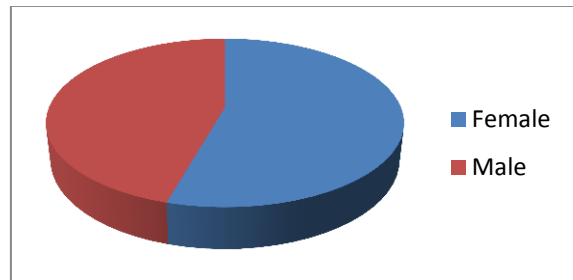


Fig. 2: Number of male and female students per institution (institutions with less than 1,500 students)

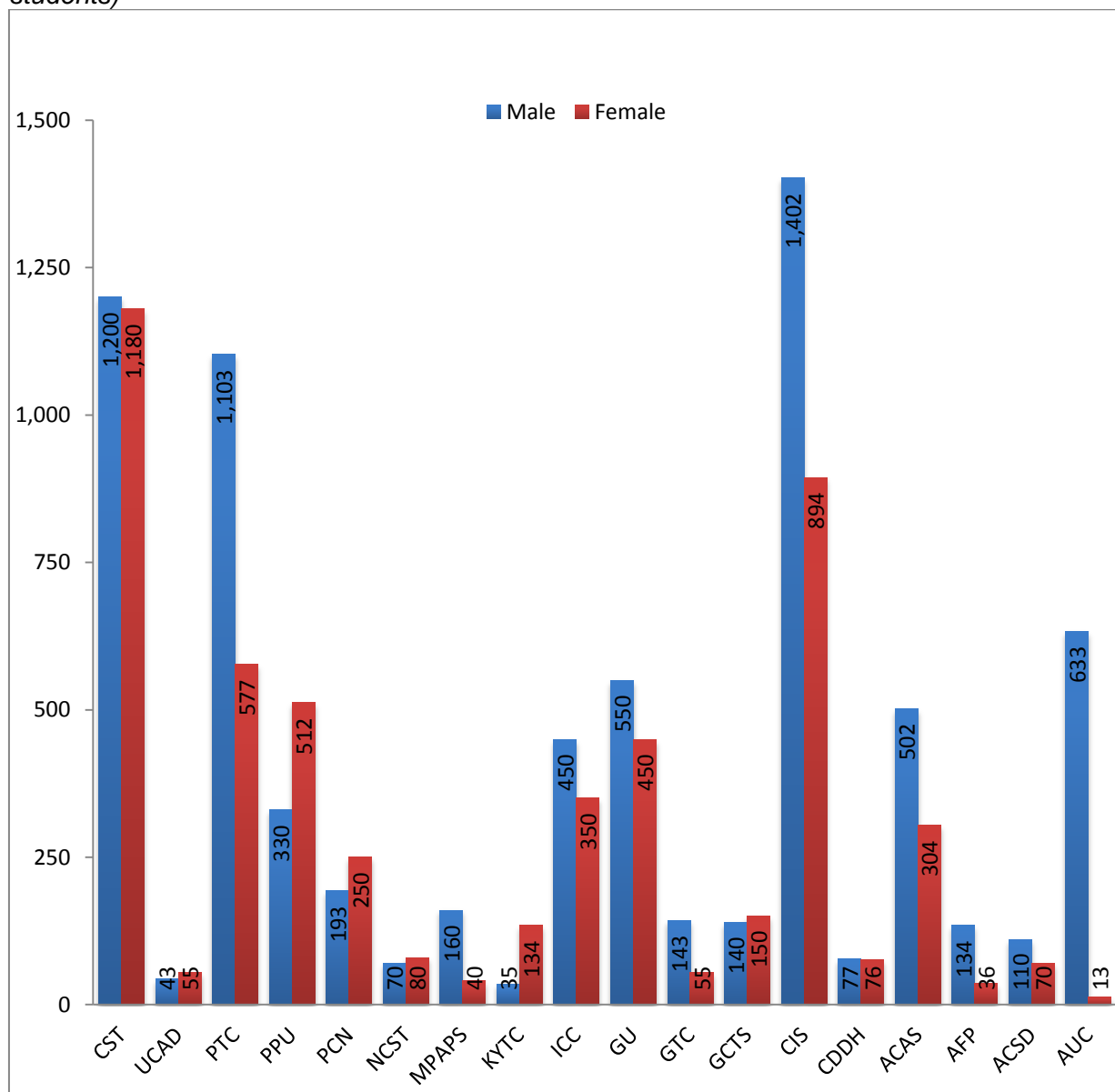
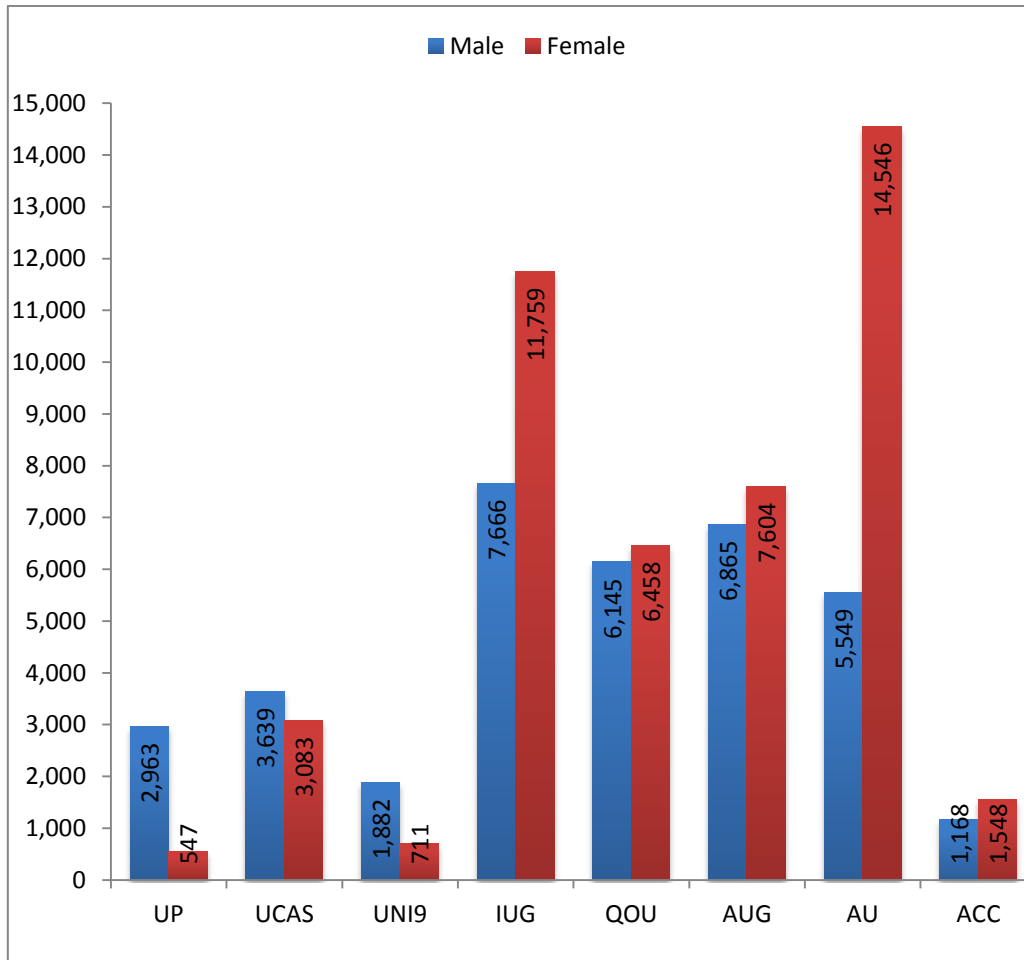


Fig. 3: Number of male and female students per institution (institutions with more than 1,500 students)



#### ***New student enrolments 2011–2014***

Registration of new students at HEIs dropped by 3,973 students for the new academic year 2014-2015 suggesting that the crisis had an impact on student willingness and ability to enrol. The slight rise in 2012-2013 was due to higher numbers of students graduating from high school and wishing to enter HEIs. Registrations of new students for the 4-year period 2011-2014 fluctuated between around 26,000 and 30,000.

*Fig. 4: New student enrolments 2011-2014*

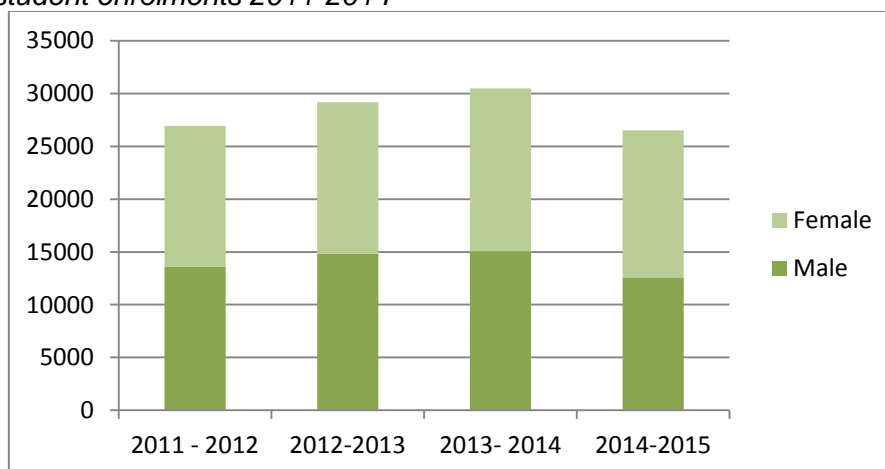


Fig. 5: Male and female enrolment per institution 2011-2014 (institutions with annual enrolment less than 600)

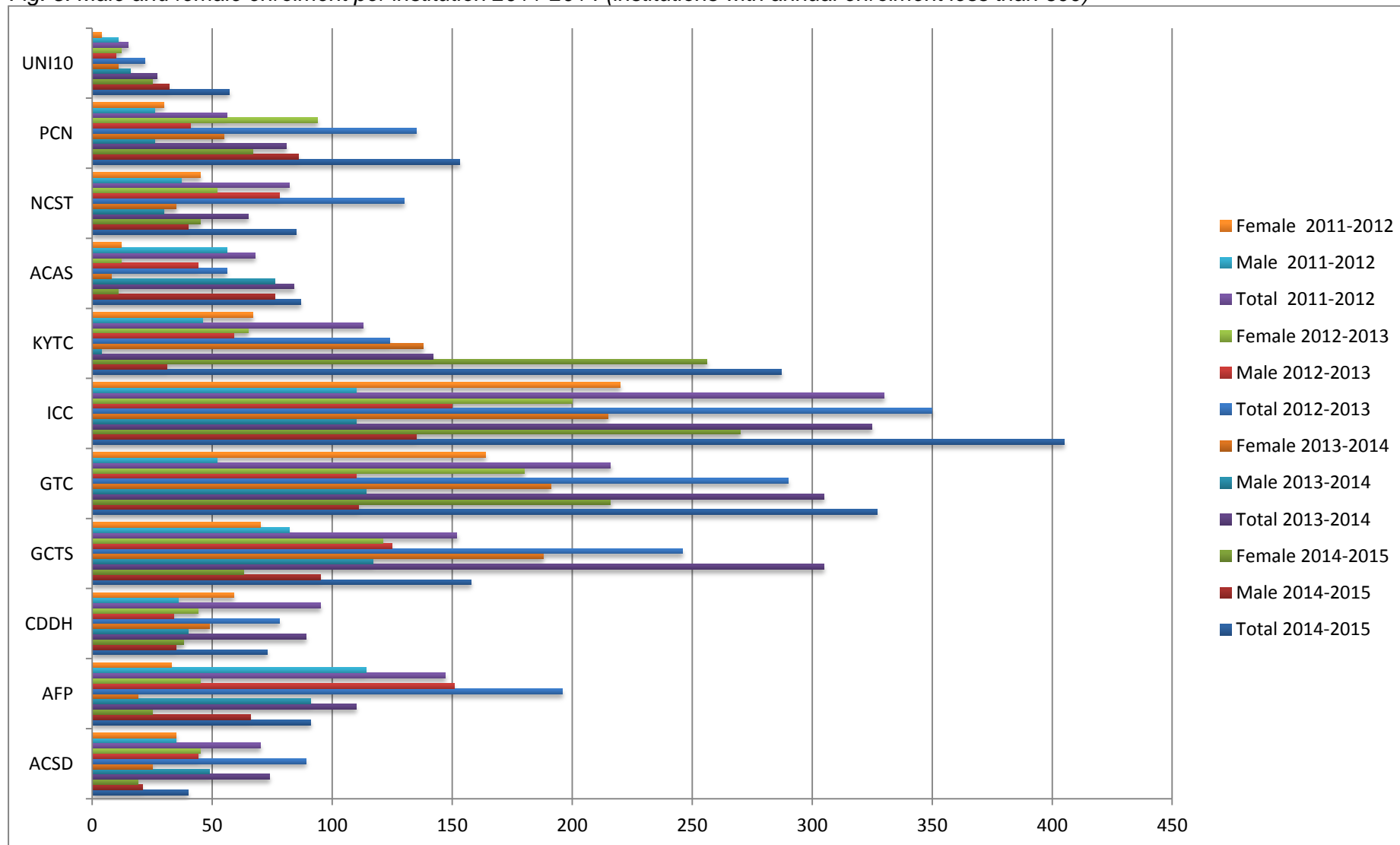


Fig. 6: Male and female enrolment per institution 2011-2014 (institutions with annual enrolment more than 600 but less than 1,600)

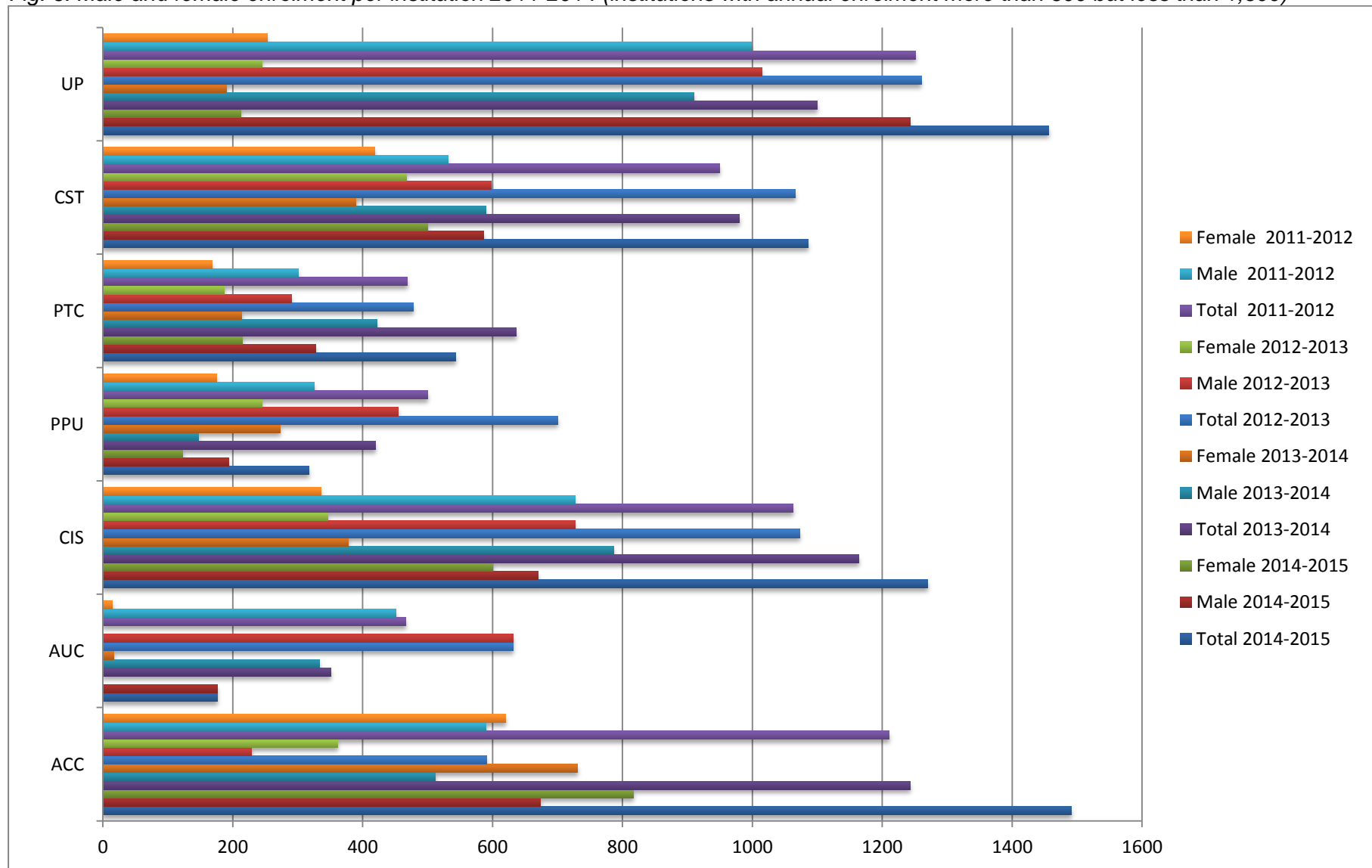
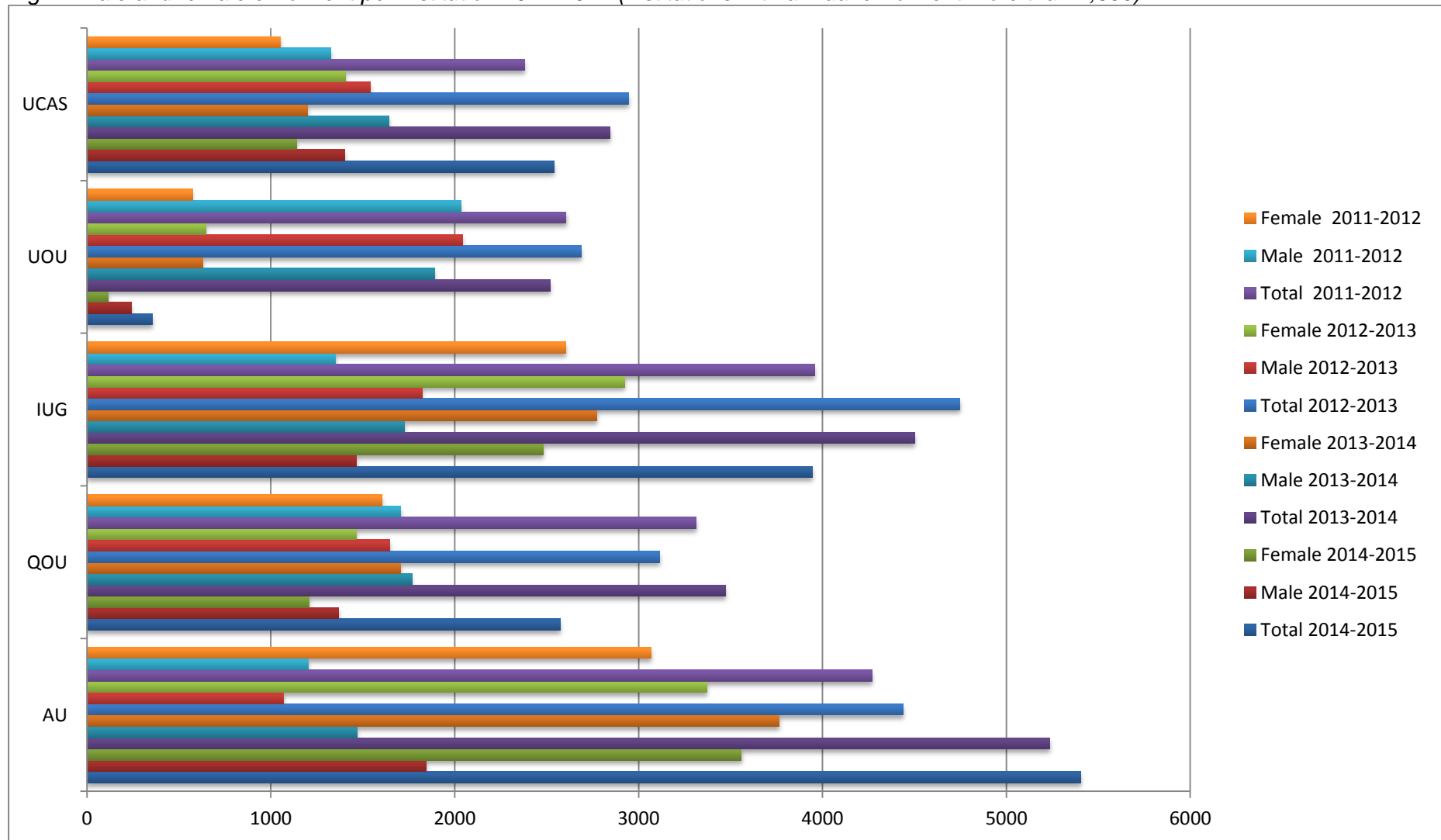


Fig. 7: Male and female enrolment per institution 2011-2014 (institutions with annual enrolment more than 1,600)



### 3. Educational and human damage: Staff and student death and injury

Staff and students at higher education institutions in Gaza suffered heavy casualties during the conflict, sustaining loss of life and serious injuries. A number of injuries have led to disabilities including mobility, hearing and visual impairments which will impact on individuals and their families throughout their lives. It seems that attacks on HEIs not only damaged vital infrastructure but destroyed human capital, affecting specific subject specialisms (in particular, education and business subjects) and wiping out a generation of young scholars. The loss of vital academic staff is also likely to impact seriously on the quality of education available in these institutions. For example, one staff member who was killed is singled out as a loss to Nursing. He was 48 years old, married with one child and had obtained an illustrious set of qualifications, including: PhD in Mental Health and Counselling, PhD in Mental Health Nursing, PhD in Health and Nursing Education, Master of Psychology-Mental Health, Master of Disability Studies. He was killed on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

The failure to treat learning environments as safe spaces and protect universities from attack is a serious violation of the right to education and is prohibited under international law. The resulting staff and student attrition, alongside loss of life, injury and damage to infrastructure, seriously undermines the quality of education which should be supporting young people to achieve their full potential as well as helping to mitigate psychosocial impacts of armed conflict by providing stability, normality, structure and optimism about the future.

#### 3.1. Students

##### 3.1.1. Deaths

###### ***Numbers killed***

During the 50-day conflict, students were killed at 20 out of 26 HEIs, or at 76.9% of institutions. In total, 407 students were killed. Male students suffered disproportionately, with 91% of students killed being male (369 students). A total of 38 female students were killed, 15 of whom were studying at Islamic University, 10 at Alquds Open University. The heaviest male fatalities were at Islamic University where there were 95 deaths; followed by Al Aqsa (49 deaths) and Alquds Open University (44 deaths).

Student deaths during the conflict constitute more than a quarter – or 27.4% – of total civilian deaths incurred in Gaza.<sup>9</sup> Even considering the exceptionally high ratio of people aged 15 to 29 to the total over 15 population (53%)<sup>10</sup>, this is a shocking statistic.

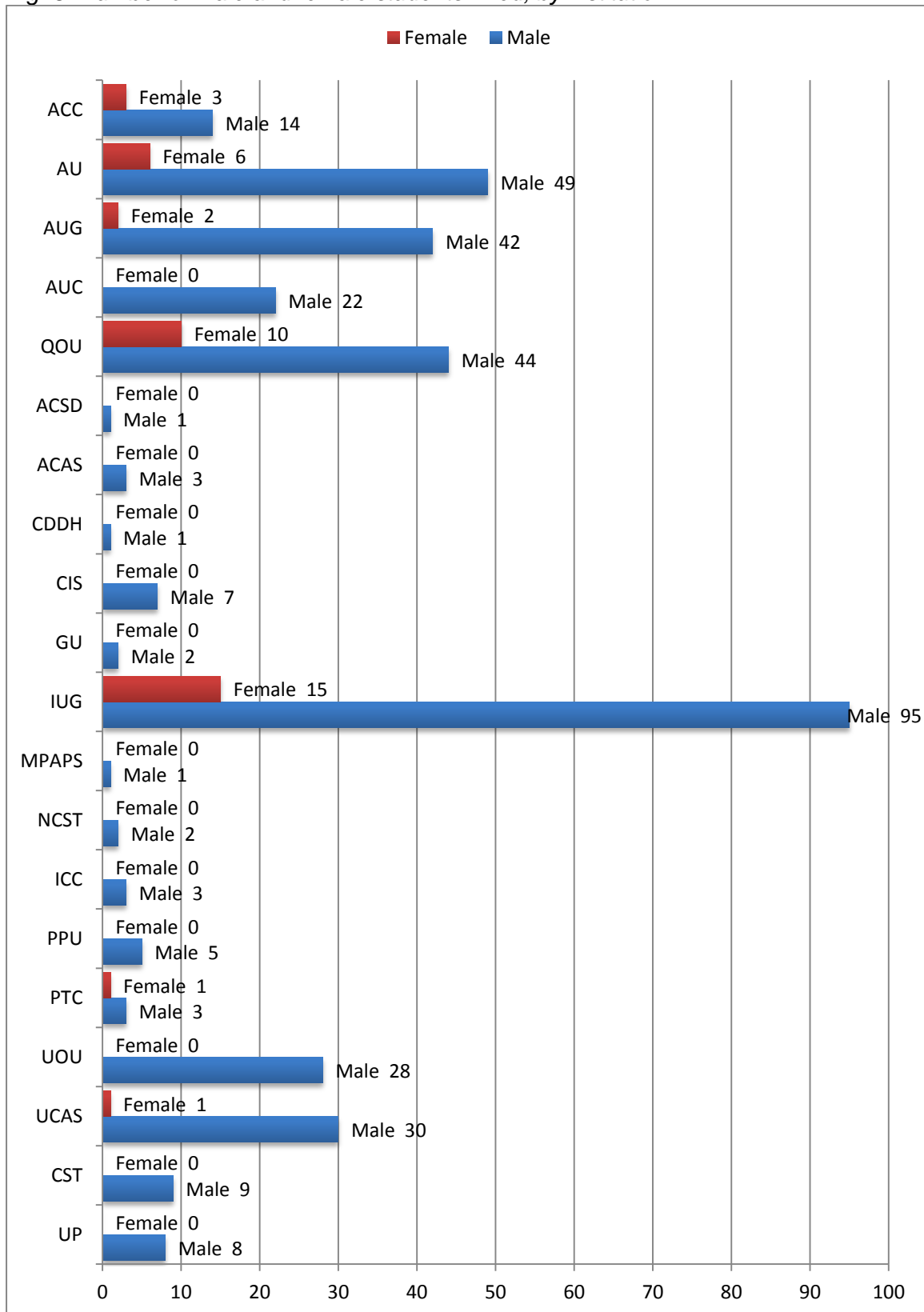
The majority of students killed in the conflict were hit by shelling (372 deaths).

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<sup>9</sup> Calculation based on UNOCHA figures (1483 civilian deaths) as at 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Source: UNOCHA [www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361](http://www.ochaopt.org/content.aspx?id=1010361) Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

<sup>10</sup> UNOCHA ONS statistics quoted in [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20415675](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20415675) Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

Fig. 8: Number of male and female students killed, by institution

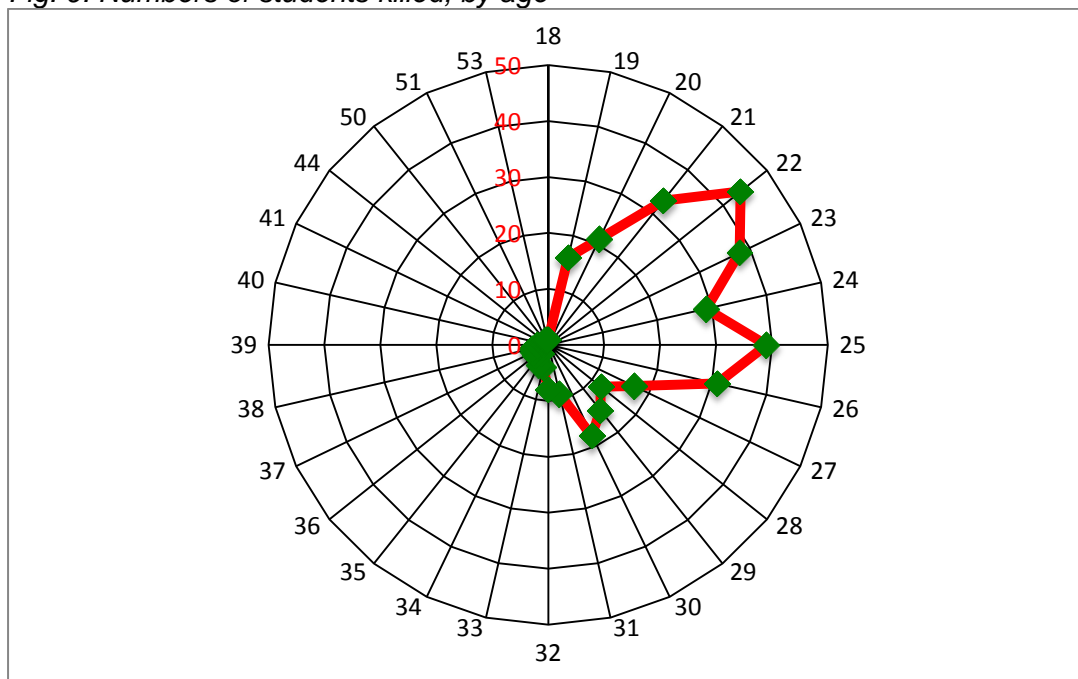




### Age and level of study

Those students who were killed were aged between 18 and 53. Most were in their early to mid-20s, with particularly high numbers aged 22 (44 students), 23 (38 students) and 25 (39 students).

Fig. 9: Numbers of students killed, by age



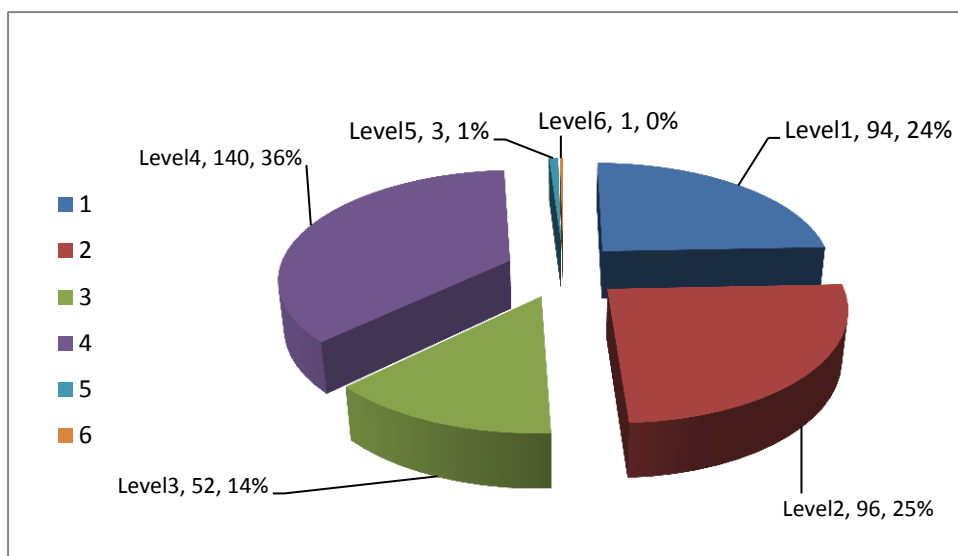
Students studying across all levels of the higher education system were killed. While data is not available from every HEI, levels 1, 2 and 4 appear to have been worst affected.

Table 1: Educational level of students killed

Educational level	Total no. students killed
1	94
2	96
3	52
4	140
5	3
6	1

The Fig.10 shows the numbers of students at each level who were killed: 36% of these students had reached the fourth level in HEIs and were thus due to complete their bachelor's degrees and graduate within one or two semesters before joining the labour market.

Fig. 10: Educational level of student's killed



### **Civil status**

Data on civil status was not provided for every student who was killed, but the data that is available suggests that 167 were single, 241 married and 3 widowed. The data also indicated that 69 children of those students killed and included in this study thus lost a parent to the conflict.

### **Place of residence**

Where data is available, this shows that most of the students killed had their residence in South Gaza.

Table 2: Place of residence of students killed

Place of residence	Total
Gaza	110
Middle Area	66
North Gaza	65
South Gaza	149

### **Subject specialisms**

Accurate data was not provided about the subject specialism of every student who was killed. However, with the available data a clear picture emerges of those subjects which were hardest hit. Education suffered the heaviest impact, representing the loss of a generation of new teachers, education managers and administrators in the Gaza Strip. This was closely followed by large losses among students studying business-related subjects which will have a potential impact on an already frail economy.

Table 3: Subject specialisms of students killed

Subject specialism	No. injured students
Education	98
Business (inc. accounting, commerce, management, admin, secretarial)	76
Islamic Studies	46
Police / Security Science	31
Computing / IT	27
Arts and Humanities	20
Media, Press, PR	20
Engineering	15
Sciences (inc. Electronics)	14
Health / Medical	14
Law	10
Languages (Arabic, English)	9
Social and Family Development	5
Political Science	2
Agriculture and Environment	2
Psychological Counselling	2
Social Service	2
NGO management	2
Mathematics	1
Architecture	1
Development Planning	1
Librarianship	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>

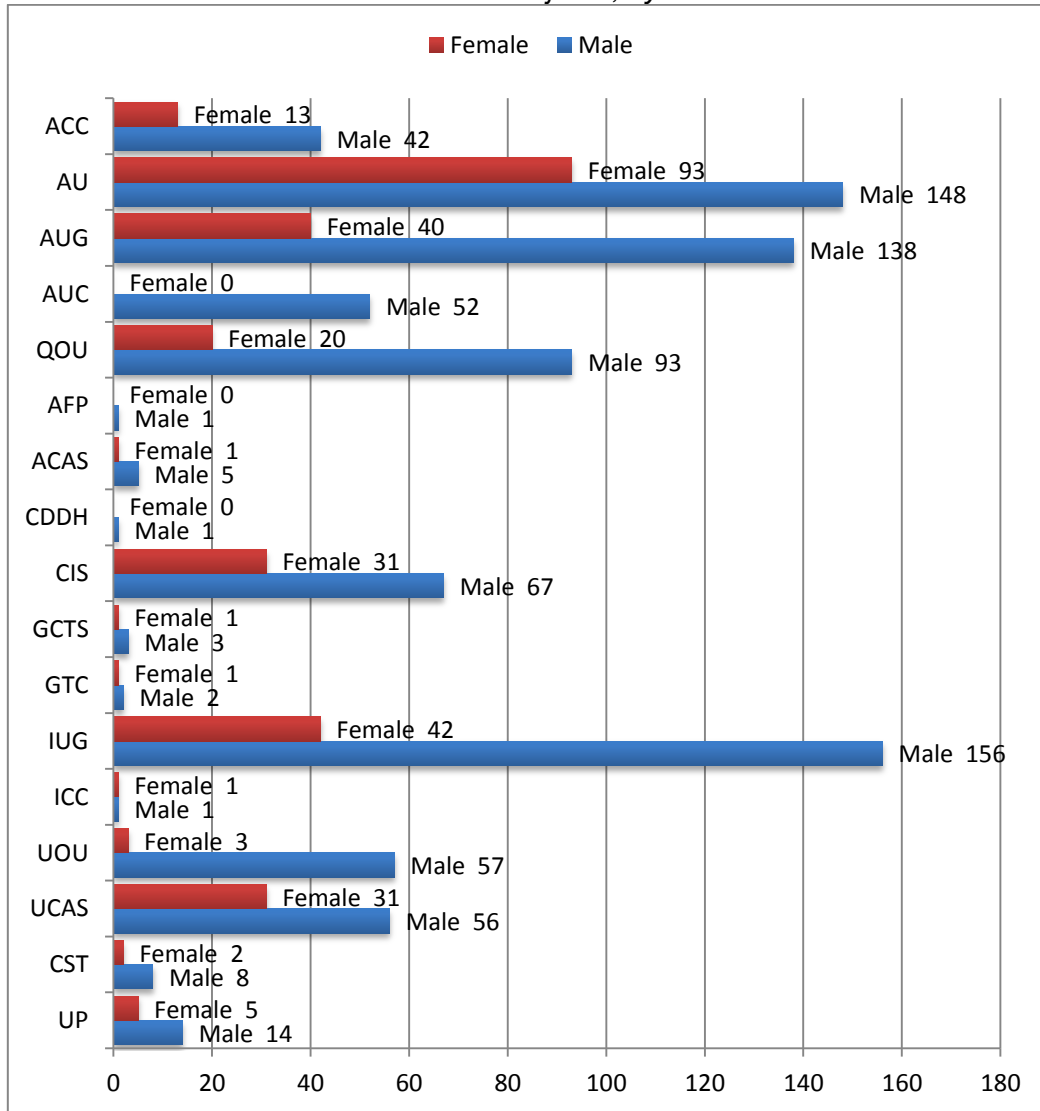
### 3.1.2. Injuries

#### **Numbers**

Students at 17 out of 26 HEIs sustained injuries during attacks. A total of 1,128 students were injured; 844 male, 284 female. Those who were injured were aged between 13 and 65 years old, with most wounded students in their 20s.

Although data is only available for around of half of the HEIs, indications are that 83 students who were injured are now living with disabilities as a result. Thus 421 of the injuries reported have not resulted in disability. The highest injury rate was at Al Aqsa University (241 injuries).

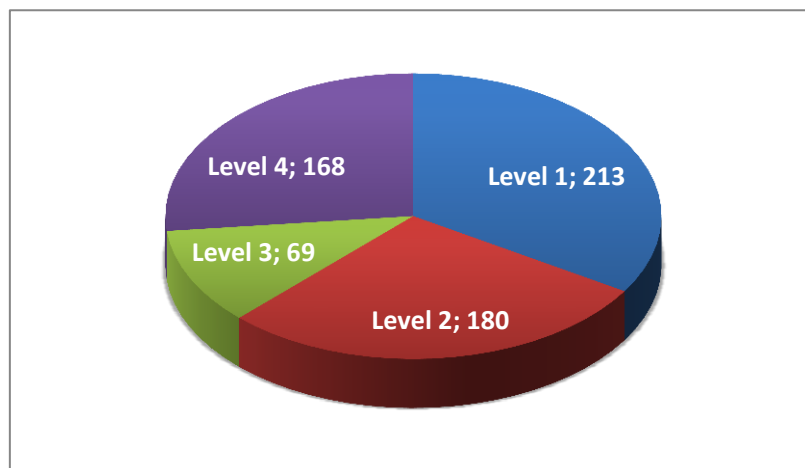
Fig. 11: Number of male and female students injured, by institution



**Level of study**

Entry level students were worst affected by injury. The following figure shows the numbers of students at each level who were injured (for those HEIs that provided data).

Fig. 12: Numbers of students injured, by level of study



### **Subject specialism**

Students of business-related subjects sustained the most injuries, followed closely by education students. This is similar to the scenario for students killed, further compounding the impact on those subject areas with implications for the sectors beyond the campus gates. Note that there are gaps in the data, notably from Al Azhar University, meaning that there is likely to be an underestimation of subjects specialisms affected.<sup>11</sup>

*Table 4: Numbers of injured students, by subject specialism*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. injured students</b>
Business (inc. accounting, commerce, management, admin, secretarial)	139
Education	130
Police / Security Science	70
Media, Press, PR	67
Health / Medical	62
Computing / IT / Programming / Networks	34
Languages - Arabic / English / French	27
Islamic Studies	22
Law	22
Psychological Counselling	13
Engineering	6
Child protection	5
Geography / Geographic Information Systems	5
Sciences	5
Arts	4
NGO management	4
Literature - English / French	3
Agriculture	3
Architecture	3
Development Planning	2
General	2
Librarianship	2
Mathematics	2
Physical Education	2
History	1
Interior Design	1

<sup>11</sup> Data was available for 636 students out of a possible 1,128.

### **Types of injury**

Most student injuries (626) were described as 'other,' while 85 caused mobility problems and 8 resulted in limb loss or amputation. Fifteen individuals experienced hearing impairment as a result of injury, 6 have visual impairments and 1 was described as having a somatosensory impairment. The majority of injured students suffered shrapnel wounds, fractures, burns and other wounds. These have been summarised below.

*Table 5: Summary of types of injuries sustained by students*

<b>'Other' injuries</b>	<b>Total</b>
Shrapnel wounds, including fractures	286
Shrapnel wounds, other wounds & fractures, including burns	235
Wounds (generic)	27
Fractures (including with 'wounds')	19
Injuries to hands, arms, legs &/or feet	16
Back & shoulder injuries	8
Head injuries	6
Facial injuries	5
Minor injuries (generic)	4
Body (undefined) injuries	3
Chest & abdominal injuries	4
Limb amputations	2
Bruising	2
Eye injuries	2
Paresis	2
Serious injuries (generic)	2
Thoracic gas inhalation	1
Liver injury	1
Loss of sensation in the neck	1

Most injured students for whom data was available were single (343 students), while 117 were married and one student was widowed. (Data on civil status is available for less than half of the students injured.) Where data is available, it is possible to say that 201 children now have parents who were students injured in the crisis.

---

## Case study 1

Hussein is a 22-year-old refugee who lives in Jabalia Camp in North Gaza. He is an Emergency Medical Technician in his second year of a diploma in Applied Future Polytechnic. He had a Nursing Diploma from Al Azhar Intermediate Studies College. He volunteered to help the injured in Al Shifa' Hospital to help meet the extra demand for medical staff during the crisis. While evacuating and providing aid to the injured in Al Shejaeyya neighbourhood, his ambulance was directly targeted. The driver died and Hussain sustained severe injuries that smashed his legs, leaving him with shrapnel in his body and a hearing impairment.

"After the strikes had stopped, I shouted, calling my colleagues' names, but nobody answered. I was the only survivor. I saw my legs bleeding, so I used pieces of my vest to stop it and went away from the place to avoid fire in the ambulance fuel tank."

Hussein is suffering from severe backache and problems in his legs, meaning he has constant need of a wheelchair. His home was also partially destroyed and he lives in a rented ground garage paying NIS 500 per month.

He has missed some lectures as he was not able to return to study at the beginning of the academic year and is now taking compensatory classes. He is supposed to graduate this year but he can't even afford the high transportation costs as he is forced to use expensive taxis to accommodate his wheelchair.

He insisted on going back to college because he does not want to waste his right to education while so many civil, medical and social rights are violated.

"I was very sad and replete with grief to see dead bodies and body parts in plastic bags."  
Hussein said.

He feels now the suffering of people with disabilities as he cannot reach the toilets and classroom easily, and having no elevators or ramps in some places makes it harder to access. He feels satisfied that he can access the library and the administration office in the ground floor. In six months, Hussein hopes to recover and be able to walk again to practise his work as an emergency medical technician.

Source: UNESCO Palestine, November 2014 (edited)

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Image 1 Hussein Haj Hassan, North Gaza, October 23, 2014 © UNESCO

### **Psychological trauma**

No psychological problems which need psychological consultation or admission to a mental health facility were recorded in the injured student data. This contradicts what was stated elsewhere (see below), suggesting that strengthened psychosocial support is required in HEIs.

Twelve HEIs provide psychosocial support on site for staff and students, 10 of these HEIs have psychological and social support plans in place. The support plans offer various interventions, outlined below. Not all interventions provide targeted psychosocial support.

*Table 6: Summary of psychosocial support provided by HEIs*

<b>HEI</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
<b>Arab College of Applied Sciences</b>	Psychological relief, in addition to open days for students and staff outdoor of college.
<b>University of Palestine</b>	Recreational and entertainment activities to students.
<b>University College of Ability Development</b>	In case of need we can communicate with PRC psychological and social support unit for assistance.
<b>Gaza Training Center – UNRWA</b>	At the first week of study the psychosocial unit conducted recreational activities, unloading emotional sessions -administration of psychological distress sessions and promote social networking among students, also use sport for crisis management.
<b>Khan Younis Training Center - UNRWA</b>	At the first week of study the psychosocial unit conducted recreational activities, unloading emotional sessions -administration of psychological distress sessions and promote social networking among students, also use sport for crisis management.
<b>Islamic University</b>	Psychological support for conflict-affected the student
<b>College of Dar Al Dawa &amp; Humanities</b>	Conduct meetings with students in the beginning of new year
<b>Al Aqsa Community College</b>	Department of Psychological Guidance, Cooperation of cases , Psychological counselling
<b>Palestine College of Islamic Call</b>	Recreational activities, Open day, Cultural lectures
<b>University College of Applied Sciences</b>	Staff and student have workshop on stress release

Community-based interventions were not provided in 8 HEIs. In the remaining 18 HEIs, community-based interventions were almost exclusively focused on fee exemptions or postponements for students who had been killed, injured or whose homes had been demolished.

The University of Palestine conducted home visits to injured students and provided materials to displaced students. Seven HEIs mentioned to have no psychosocial issues among the student cohort following the conflict. However, 21 HEIs identified post-traumatic / conflict problems for their students, although some complained that they did not have psychologists or other professionals to do specialist assessments.

Problems identified include heightened violence among male students, frustration, lack of motivation, depression, lack of concentration, withdrawal, denial of



psychological problems, 'intense crying', grief, sadness, nervousness, aggression, and truancy.

The Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education pointed out in an interview that students have not returned to study due to the psychological trauma of loss and grief.<sup>12</sup> Staff do not have the skills to counsel these students to encourage their return. Even in Gaza University, where Social Work and Psychological Counselling is taught, there is no psychosocial counselling available for students or staff.

It can be inferred that HEIs need more support to identify and manage psychosocial trauma among students and staff.

***Staff and student sense of safety***

At most HEIs (21 out of 26) staff and students feel safe because the conflict has finished, job security has been restored, sites have been cleared, the political situation has stabilised and at one university pride was expressed in the 'safe and strong' building that could be easily evacuated.

However, at 5 HEIs staff and students still do not feel safe. This is due to the geographical location of HEIs near to borders or proximity of buildings to 'security centres'. Fears were also expressed about the resumption of war 'at any time' and the lack of safe or secure spaces within the HEI.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi, Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education, MoEHE, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

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## Case study 2



Image 2 Hussam El- Sododi, East Gaza, September 23, 2014 © UNESCO

Hussam, a 27-year-old student at the Faculty of Law in Al Azhar University, lives in East Gaza with his mother and his nine siblings. His house, which had been made accessible, was partially damaged in the conflict. It is located just 800 metres from the buffer zone.

After his electric scooter was destroyed he has to commute to university on public transport. This can be physically painful.

"I tried my best to repair my scooter but in vain," Hussam said.

Hussam is now determined to get a new scooter so that he can fulfil his dream of being a lawyer. He hopes also that eventually he will be able to walk with a stick alone. He has the willingness to do it.

Source: UNESCO Palestine, November 2014 (edited)

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### **Place of residence**

Data on place of residence was not provided for all injured students. However, the data that is available is summarised below. Those worst affected were in Gaza City, closely followed by South Gaza.

Table 7: Place of residence of injured students

Place of residence	Total
Gaza City	304
Middle Area	201
North Gaza	269
South Gaza	289

### **Impact on students' homes**

Students at 23 out of 26 HEIs had their homes destroyed, putting further pressure on already severe housing shortages in Gaza following Israel's ground offensive in 2008-09.<sup>13</sup> A total of 7,169 students – or 7.5% of the student population at all HEIs – were affected: 3,970 male, 3,199 female. Only students at Khan Younis UNRWA training centre students, Al Aqsa Community College and Al Aqsa University were unaffected in this way.

The worst affected students were at Al Azhar University, where 3,932 students, or 66% of all students at the institution, lost their homes. This is likely to cause severe disruption to studies and the quality of learning at the institution.

Only 3 of the HEIs for which data is available had no displaced students. In total, 3,155 students were displaced. More male than female students were displaced (1,655 male, 1,500 female). The 899 displaced students at Al Azhar University were worst affected. Many of these students are now living in shelters or with extended family. As a result of conflict, students from a total of 5 institutions have left the HEI or migrated. In all, 28 students have left or migrated, 20 males, 8 females.

As this data might suggest, students were not affected alone, but also experienced the death and injury of family members. At 15 out of 26 HEIs, family members of students were killed and/or injured. At just 9 of the HEIs, no students experienced killed/injured family members. Data was missing for 2 HEIs (Alquds Open University and Al Aqsa).

For those HEIs with data, Table 8 indicates the colleges affected by deaths/injuries of family members. Students at Al Azhar University were particularly hard hit. In total across Gaza, 1,460 family members of students included in this study were killed or injured, 836 male, 624 female. Data was not provided for 10 HEIs.

*Table 8: Numbers of killed or injured family members of HEI students*

<b>Killed / injured family members</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Al Azhar University	1270	705	565
College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University- Gaza	97	64	33
Management & Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies	20	20	0
Palestine Polytechnic University	18	10	8
College of Dar Al Dawa & Humanities	13	7	6
Palestine College of Islamic Call	12	6	6
Arab College of Applied Sciences	9	9	0
Gaza University	6	2	4
Palestine Technical College	4	3	1
Gaza Training Center – UNRWA	3	2	1
Applied Future Polytechnic	2	2	0
Gaza College for Tourism Studies	2	2	0
University College of Sciences and Technology	2	2	0
Nama'a College for Science & Technology	2	2	0

<sup>13</sup> See [www.ochaopt.org/](http://www.ochaopt.org/)

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### Case study 3



Image 3 Islam Olwan, East Gaza City, October 15, 2014, ©UNESCO

Islam is a 21-year-old student at the Faculty of Commerce in the University of Palestine. She had a shoulder injury and is undergoing physiotherapy, as well as trying to get through the psychological consequences of that injury.

Her home, located in Al-Tofah neighbourhood East Gaza City, was totally destroyed including the room where she used to sleep, study and spend her time with her four sisters. Three years ago, she lost her mother and this year she lost her disabled 11-year-old sister who died under the rubble.

"We could not get out of the rubble. We were under the sand and stones for 30 minutes not realizing that my sister was dead until we were pulled out by the civil defence crews," she said.

When the academic year started again in September, Islam couldn't return. Still recovering from her injury and living in a tent, she has no room, books, clothes or stationary. She cannot concentrate after her traumatic experience and is constantly disturbed by her memories. She keeps crying.

"I am physically recovering and I feel that I am getting better, but I do not know from where I can start my education life again. I had 94 general score at the university exams last year, however I cannot summon my strength to contact my university friends or to go to classes."

Islam went to the university once, but as soon as she entered the gates, she started to weep because she was surprised to see that normal life had resumed.

The university offered the students two weeks of psychological support and recreational activities but she missed out because she was not ready to return to study. Islam thought she would miss the semester completely, but the university contacted her and promised to waive half of this semester's fees and give her compensatory classes.



Image 4 Islam Olwan standing near her destroyed house in East Gaza City, October 15, 2014, ©UNESCO

Source: UNESCO Palestine, November 2014 (edited)

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## 3.2. Staff

### 3.2.1. Deaths

A total of 9 staff members were killed at 4 HEIs, all as a result of shelling; 7 male staff were killed, 2 female. Islamic University suffered the largest number of staff deaths.

Table 9: Number of staff killed, by HEI

HEI	Total	Male	Female
Islamic University	5	5	0
College of Islamic Call	1	0	1
University College of Applied Sciences	2	1	1
Management & Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies	1	1	0

The staff who were killed were aged between 25 and 70. Three were academic and 6 were administrative staff.

All of the killed staff were married except one who was single (data was not provided for one staff member). Staff members who were killed were parents to 21 children in total.

Staff places of residence were as follows: North Gaza (2), Gaza (3), South Gaza – Khanyounis (2), Middle area (2).

### 3.2.2. Injuries

#### **Numbers**

A total of 21 staff were injured, all as a result of conflict; 17 male, 4 female. They were aged between 30 and 50 years old. One of these staff members later died of his injuries, reducing the number of injured to 20, but raising the number of those killed to 9.

Staff working at the following HEIs were injured:

1. Arab College of Applied Sciences
2. Al Azhar University
3. Gaza University
4. Palestine Technical College
5. Alquds Open University
6. Palestine Polytechnic University
7. University College of Applied Sciences
8. Nama'a College for Science and Technology.

University College of Applied Sciences was worst affected with 13 staff injured in total (two thirds of the total injured at HEIs in Gaza).

According to data available, the majority of the staff returned to work after injury. Two of the injured staff were not able to return to work post-injury. Both are male staff members and they both used to work at University College of Applied Sciences. One was unable to return due to mobility impairment, while the other staff member was unable to return due to limb loss and visual impairment.

### **Staff roles**

Seven of the injured staff were academic (subjects: English Language, Chemistry, Social Work, Development Planning, Nursing), while 12 were administrative staff (admin, guard, designer, computer technician). No data was given on the job role of one injured staff member.

### **Types of injury**

One injury was described as leading to mobility problems; one as limb loss / amputation and 17 were listed as 'others.' One staff member was visually impaired as a result of injury and one is now living with a hearing impairment.

Under 'others, the following injuries were specified:

- 1 broken hand
- 1 wounds in his body
- 1 shrapnel in his foot
- 1 injury to jaw and teeth, difficulty talking
- 12 wounds
- 1 foot injury.

### **Psychological trauma**

In an interview, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education noted that trauma and psychosocial distress is impacting on academic and administrative staff: their willingness to work, their mental well-being, and the quality of their teaching.<sup>14</sup>

One staff member who has a shrapnel wound to his foot and suffered a hearing impairment was described in the questionnaire as under high levels of stress having 'totally' lost his home. Another injured staff member lost three children and refuses to talk about his suffering or accept any consolation from others.

### **Civil status**

All injured staff were recorded as married (except for 3 for whom there was no data). Injured staff had a total of 46 children among them.

Staff members' places of residence were listed as follows (data missing for one staff member):

*Table 10: Injured staff members' places of residence*

<b>Location</b>	<b>No.</b>
Gaza	8
Gaza - Shejaya	1
Middle Area	2
North Gaza	3
South Gaza- Khan Yuonis	3
South Gaza- Rafah	2

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi.

A total of 393 staff lost their homes in the crisis; 368 male and 25 female. Staff at 21 HEIs were affected. Staff at Nama'a College for Science and Technology were particularly badly affected, with 134 staff members losing their homes (see summary in Table 11).

Table 11: Number of HEI staff whose homes were destroyed

HEI	No. of staff who homes were destroyed:		
	Total	Males	Females
Arab College of Applied Sciences	2	2	0
Al Azhar University	70	70	0
Gaza University	1	1	0
College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University- Gaza	13	13	0
University College of Ability Development	1	1	0
Gaza Training Center - UNRWA	32	27	5
Khan Younis Training Center – UNRWA	7	6	1
Palestine College for Nursing	3	2	1
University College of Sciences and Technology	43	39	4
Islamic University	31	31	0
Alquds Open University	42	40	2
Alzaytona College for Sciences And Development	1	1	0
Al Aqsa Community College	3	3	0
Al-Awda University College	2	2	0
Palestine Polytechnic University	1	0	1
Al Aqsa University	3	3	0
University College of Applied Sciences	1	1	0
Management & Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies	3	3	0
Nama'a College for Science & Technology	134	123	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>25</b>

Staff at 15 out of the 26 HEIs were displaced; 105 staff in total were displaced. The majority were men (94), while 11 women were displaced. Staff worst affected were at Islamic University where 31 male staff were displaced.

A total of 14 staff left their posts or migrated since the conflict. Staff at Al Azhar University (10 male), College of Dar Al Dawa and Humanities (1 male), Al Aqsa University (3 male) have left their posts. Staff have not been replaced at Al Azhar due to insufficient funding, with teaching loads redistributed among existing staff. Staff have been replaced at the other two HEIs.

Staff, like students, were also affected by the death and injury of family members. Staff at 13, or half of the HEIs had family members who were killed or injured; 52 staff were affected (45 male, 7 female).

According to the data made available, Islamic University staff were worst affected, with injury and losses affecting 35 male staff members. Please note, however, that there were gaps in the data and not all HEIs supplied numbers.

*Table 12: Number of staff with injured or killed family members, by institution*

HEI	No. of staff with injured/killed family members:		
	Total	Males	Females
Arab College of Applied Sciences	1	1	0
Gaza University	1	1	0
Applied Future Polytechnic	1	1	0
Palestine Technical College	1	1	0
University College of Ability Development	2	1	1
Gaza Training Center – UNRWA	2	0	2
University College of Sciences and Technology	2	0	2
Islamic University	35	35	0
Palestine College of Islamic Call	1	0	0
Palestine Polytechnic University	1	0	1
Al Aqsa University	3	3	0
University College of Applied Sciences	2	2	0
Nama'a College for Science & Technology	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>

In an interview, one university leader pointed out that staff members' experiences of loss, grief, trauma and the economic challenges to their livelihoods created by the conflict have all impacted on their ability to return to work and function effectively.



## **4. Material damage to buildings, facilities and equipment**

Estimates compiled from data gathered for this report indicate that the large-scale damage and destruction to buildings, facilities and equipment during the crisis in Gaza totals more than US\$16 million. There is plentiful evidence of the shelling of academic and administrative buildings; the collapse of classrooms, conference halls and scientific laboratories; wrecked computers and video conference facilities; hallways littered with rubble; campuses strewn with broken glass, twisted metal and the detritus of war – which disrupt, deter and halt the provision of the right to education for all.

Damage to infrastructure as well as equipment – such as textbooks, scientific apparatus, specialist devices, photocopiers, printers and other learning materials – inevitably reduces access to education and has potentially long-term impacts on the quality of teaching and learning. Combined with the challenges around HEI financing caused by the suspension of student fees, discussed below, an infrastructure already impaired by underinvestment, previous hostilities and existing blockades on construction materials, tertiary education in Gaza is threatened with dwindling student numbers and poor quality teaching and learning as a direct result of material damage sustained during the crisis. Sadly, there will likely be consequences for the provision of already stretched basic public services across Gaza, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and economic hardship.

### **4.1. Exposure to and types of damage to buildings**

Fourteen HEIs were damaged during hostilities; some directly targeted, others suffering collateral damage. Many of these institutions are experiencing severe disruption to academic and administrative operations as a result. Twelve HEIs were not exposed to any damage.

According to an interview conducted during this assessment, direct targeting of HEIs became routine during the conflict. This included targeting of classrooms, computer servers, conference facilities, and so on. Collateral damage also significantly affected a number of institutions. These findings were corroborated by assessments from UNDP and UNMAS which are detailed below.

Nine HEIs were exposed to partial or complete damage of buildings, 11 HEI buildings were cracked, and 14 HEIs had cracks in the windows and glass as a result of the hostilities. Three campuses belonging to Al Azhar University were exposed to damage due to the hostilities. In particular, Al Azhar University's Agricultural College was devastated by direct impact damage from multiple airstrikes and armoured bulldozers. Large quantities of building rubble mean that not all areas of the campus are accessible. University College of Sciences and Technology reported that laboratory devices in the western side of one of its buildings were damaged indirectly due to the proximity of an adjacent military centre. University College of Applied Science reported the burning of two floors in its administration building.



Image 5 Al Azhar Agricultural College Greenhouses © Alazhar University

UNDP has estimated the financial cost of the damage to buildings in the higher education sector at a total of US\$7,362,473. This was supported by UNESCO's findings from the rapid assessment questionnaire for this report. UNDP calculations were based on the cost of repair and rebuilding using universal design principles, ensuring that HEIs take an inclusive approach to 'build back better.' Funds for repairs and rebuilding of HEIs now urgently need to be sourced from external donors to prevent significant ongoing disruption to academic programmes.



Image 6 Al Azhar University, Beit Hanoun, collapsed building © Alazhar University

The damage to Al Azhar University at Beit Hanoun, Islamic University's administration building and University College of Applied Science is described as total. All of these HEIs were public institutions. Costings for individual HEIs are itemised in Table 13.

A summary assessment of damage to HEIs carried out by UNMAS is provided in Table 14. In addition, UNESCO's rapid assessment shows that unprotected hazards remain at 7 HEIs. These hazards include rubble, collapsed roofs and walls, large holes left in walls, cracks in windows and broken glass. The stark and shocking

details show how HEIs were attacked by drone strikes, high explosive anti-tank weapons, and direct and indirect air strikes. This deliberately placed students and lecturers on the front line of the conflict and left many sites littered with explosive remnants of war. Given the level of damage at some sites, students and staff could face ongoing and serious risks to their safety.



Image 7 Islamic University ©IUG

Table 13: Summary of financial impact of damage to higher education sector

Serial	Name	Total	Severe	Major	Minor	Cost
<b>1</b>	<b>Al Azhar University</b>					
1.1	Al Azhar University/ Bite Hanoun (2 floors)	√				900,000
1.2	Al Azhar University/ Bite Hanoun (Removing the rubble & boundary wall)			√		45,800
1.3	Al Azhar University/Gaza		√			266,458
1.4	Al Azhar University/Gaza			√		20,790
1.5	Al Azhar University/Gaza			√		81,700
1.6	Al Azhar University/Al Moqraqa		√			164,742
<b>2</b>	<b>Islamic University</b>					
2.1	Islamic University /Gaza (Other buildings)		√			224,520
2.2	Islamic University /Gaza (Administration building)	√				2,125,000
2.3	Islamic University /Faculty of medicine				√	7,050
2.4	Islamic University /Khanyounis			√		45,520
<b>3</b>	<b>College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University-Gaza</b>					
3.1	Faculty of Intermediate Studies - Azhar Univ.				√	26,310
3.2	Faculty of Intermediate Studies - Azhar Univ.				√	28,890
<b>4</b>	<b>Palestinian Technology College</b>				√	3,335
<b>5</b>	<b>The Arab College of Applied Sciences</b>			√		28,050
<b>6</b>	<b>Palestine College for Nursing</b>				√	2,100
<b>7</b>	<b>University College of Applied Sciences</b>	√				3,152,000
<b>8</b>	<b>Alquds Open University</b>			√		24,402
<b>9</b>	<b>University of Palestine</b>				√	75,640
<b>10</b>	<b>University College of Applied Sciences and Technology</b>				√	18,898
<b>11</b>	<b>Gaza University</b>			√		121,268
Total of higher education facilities		3	3	6	7	19
<b>Total</b>						<b>\$ 7,362,473.00</b>

Source: UNDP

Table 14: Summary of damage to HEIs

HEI	Collateral damage	Direct fire	Direct impact damage	Site cleared	Summary
Arab College of Applied Sciences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact from 105/120mm Tank HEAT, entry/exit holes in building walls, blast damage to windows and doors. EOD Police removed items of ERW and fragments.
Palestine College of Nursing	Yes Minor	No	No	Yes	Minor blast damage to Windows and cracks in walls, from targeted adjacent buildings
University College of Science and Technology	Yes Minor	No	No	Yes	Minor blast damage to Windows, from targeted adjacent buildings.
Al Aqsa Community College	No	No	No	Yes	No damage reported or seen.
University of Palestine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact damage to 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors eastern side of building from probable 120mm Tank HEAT. Blast and fragmentation damage to windows, doors and walls. EOD Police removed items of ERW and fragments. The facility is now under repair.
Islamic University	Yes	Yes	Yes		Direct impact damage sustained when the Facility was targeted by an Airstrike, major structural damage to facility. Blast and fragmentation damage to windows, ceilings, internal/external walls and doors. Other facility buildings sustained blast and fragmentation damage to windows and ceilings. EOD Police attended the scene and removed ERW fragments on the 26th August 2014. Maintenance staff are currently carrying out repairs to the University.
Gaza University	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Indirect Blast/Fragmentation damage to windows, doors, suspended ceilings and perimeter walls when adjacent buildings were targeted by Airstrikes. Maintenance staff currently carrying out repairs.
University College of Applied Science	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact damage sustained when the Facility was targeted by multiple 105mm/120mm Tank HEAT, major structural damage to facility. Blast/fragmentation and fire damage to windows, ceilings, internal/external walls and doors. Other facility buildings sustained blast and fragmentation damage to windows and ceilings. Maintenance staff are currently carrying out repairs to the University.
Palestine Technical College	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact damage to outside covered eating area adjacent to the college canteen from probable Drone strike. ERW fragments were removed by EOD police. All damage has been repaired by maintenance crews.

HEI		Collateral damage	Direct fire	Direct impact damage	Site cleared	Summary
Al Azhar University	Main Building	Yes	No	No	Yes	Considerable blast damage to windows following an airstrike on adjacent building.
	New Campus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact damage from 120mm Tank HEAT Projectiles to the East facing walls. Indirect blast damage also seen from multiple airstrikes to an adjacent military training area.
	Agricultural College	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Direct impact damage from multiple airstrikes and armoured bulldozers at the facility, not all areas are accessible due to large quantities of building rubble.
Alquds Open University		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Direct impact, entry/exit holes from 5x120mm Tank HEAT and 1x80 series A/C bomb in garden area (which failed to Detonate). Blast and Fragmentation damage to windows, doors and walls. An adjacent building to the North was targeted by an Airstrike. A/C bomb and ERW fragments were removed by EOD police. Maintenance crews are carrying out repairs to the facility.

Source: UNMAS

## 4.2. Dateline of exposure to damage

Specific dates were not provided in the questionnaires for every instance of exposure to damage at HEIs. However, sufficiently accurate data was available to demonstrate that most HEIs were targeted most often in July 2014. Eight suffered damage on a single occasion. Arab College of Applied Sciences, Gaza University and Palestinian Technical College were exposed to damage on two occasions. Palestine College of Islamic Call and Islamic University were both exposed to damage three times. College of Intermediate Studies, Al Azhar University, was exposed to damage on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 and then repeatedly exposed during the last ten days of the crisis.

## 4.3. Damage to facilities

In addition to damage to buildings, there was extensive damage to facilities totalling an estimated US\$5,666,724.<sup>15</sup> Offices, teaching and meeting spaces, and computer labs were hardest hit, and there was damage to a notable number of laboratories and libraries, key centres of learning in any HEI. Fortunately, HEIs use computer servers inside and outside the country, ensuring that data was protected.<sup>16</sup>



Image 8 Gaza University – Computer Lab ©UNESCO

The conference room before the war



The conference room after the war



Image 9 University of Palestine, conference hall © University of Palestine

<sup>15</sup> This, and subsequent estimates, are based on figures provided by HEIs for UNESCO HEI Rapid Assessment Questionnaires.

<sup>16</sup> Focus group discussion with UNESCO and HEI representatives, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

Table 15: Summary of facilities affected<sup>17</sup>

Facilities damaged	Total number of facilities	Total cost of repair (USD)
Offices	278	433,914
Classrooms	227	580,183
Computer lab	32	59,4251
Meeting halls	24	2,391,129
Video conference hall	14	1,152,051
Workshops	9	174,000
Scientific and physics lab	8	9,600
Chemistry lab	6	7,800
Storage room	6	15,100
Faculty library	6	33,050
Main library	5	186,677
Biology lab	4	5,200
Microbiology lab	4	5,600
Art workshops	4	41,000
Theatre (drama) halls	2	36,069
Anatomy lab	1	1,100
<b>TOTAL COST US\$</b>		<b>5,666,724</b>

Source: UNESCO HEI rapid assessment questionnaires

Damage was caused to a number of additional facilities inside the buildings, such as gymnasias, doors, connecting walkways and emergency power supplies (USP KVA's are routinely used in HEIs due to power shortages) with the total cost of repair estimated at US\$41,050. Facilities within buildings were also damaged, including medicine labs, sunshades, chairs, LCD projectors, with a total cost of repairs estimated at US\$795,090.

Equipment including phones, computers, printers and photocopiers were damaged, along with books. A summary of these is given below. The total financial cost is estimated at US\$807,560.

Table 16: Summary of damage to phones, computers, printers, photocopiers and books

Items damaged	Total number of Items	Total cost of repair (USD)	HEIs with highest number of damaged items	HEIs with highest cost
Computers	834	650,400	UCAS (250) IUG (200)	UCAS (225,000 USD) IUG (180,000 USD)
Photocopiers	41	70,200	IUG (15) Al Azhar (13)	Gaza University (24,000 USD) Alquds Open University (15,000 USD)
Printers	70	25,500	UCAS (20) Gaza University (18)	Gaza University (7,200 USD) Al Azhar University (4,500 USD)
Telephone Exchange / Phones	149	54,460	UCAS (100) IUG (45)	Al Azhar University (50,200 USD) UCAS (3,000 USD)
Books	250	5,000	Al Azhar (250)	Al Azhar (5,000 USD)
Braille audio books	1	2,000	Al Azhar University (1)	Al Azhar University (2,000 USD)

Source: UNESCO HEI rapid assessment questionnaires

Under 'other' damage, equipment ranging from LCD projectors and phone lines to sewers, cars and buses, is itemised at a total cost of US\$1,415,700.

<sup>17</sup> Detailed attributions and cost estimates of damage are available in the data presented at Appendix



#### 4.4. Damage to water and sanitation facilities

Water and sanitation facilities were damaged at 6 HEIs during the conflict. This included a total of 89 facilities for male staff and students and 34 female facilities. In addition, 2 accessible water and sanitation facilities were damaged (one male, one female). No costings were provided for the repair of these facilities.

#### 4.5. Summary of material damage

The total estimated cost of repairs to and replacement of buildings, facilities and equipment is US\$16,088,597.<sup>18</sup>

Table 17: Summary of estimated repair costs

Item	Estimated cost of repair (US\$)
Buildings	7,362,473
Facilities	5,666,724
Additional facilities	41,050
Facilities in buildings	795,090
Equipment	807,560
Other damage	1,415,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,088,597</b>

Source: UNESCO HEI rapid assessment questionnaires

All HEIs are now considered barrier-free in respect of rubble, unexploded ordnances, etc. apart from Al Azhar University which remains to be cleared at the time of writing (November 2014).

#### 4.6. Accessibility of existing buildings

HEIs have varying degrees of accessibility for students with (physical) disabilities. Some buildings are completely inaccessible or almost completely (i.e. have only one ramp), either because they were not designed as educational institutions (and may be rented), or they 'do not have any disabled students', or because a university doesn't 'take an interest' in making buildings accessible. This applies to:

1. Gaza University
2. Applied Future Polytechnic
3. Gaza College for Tourism Studies
4. Palestine Technical College (has 1 ramp)
5. Gaza Training Centre UNRWA (has 4 accessible toilets)
6. Khan Younis Training Centre UNRWA (has 3 accessible toilets)
7. Palestine College for Nursing
8. College of Science and Technology
9. College of Dar al Dawa and Humanities
10. Al Aqsa Community College
11. Umma Open University
12. Palestine Polytechnic University
13. Management and Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies
14. Nama'a College.

<sup>18</sup> Again, this estimate is based on UNDP figures combined with UNESCO findings from HEI rapid assessment questionnaires.

Some HEIs have some accessible facilities, as summarised in Table 18. These may only be a few toilets on the ground floor or a ramp to enter the building, but no further accessible facilities are available. In many cases, students with disabilities only have access to the ground floor.

Data suggests that Al Aqsa University, Alquds Open University, Islamic University and University College of Applied Science, for example, have considered accessibility in their building design and made the facilities inclusive.

It is notable that 10 out of 26 universities rent their buildings. Of these, only half (5) were built to be academic institutions. This may go some way to explaining why buildings are inaccessible. However, it is also notable that some purpose-built universities are still inaccessible. Principles of universal design have not been applied.

The available data does not suggest that the crisis has had an effect on accessibility (positive or negative). Accessible facilities are listed as the same before and after the conflict.

The inaccessibility of buildings will present challenges to students who have suffered injuries in the recent crisis. Applied Future Polytechnic recognised this in their response to the rapid assessment questionnaire and set improvements in accessibility as a priority. Palestine has a National Disability Strategy (draft, December 2012) based upon the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>19</sup> which recognises and affirms the need for public institutions to be fully inclusive and accessible. As mentioned above, UNDP calculations for the cost of repairs and rebuilding at HEIs are based upon the principles of universal design which is likely to mean enhanced accessibility of HEI buildings in future, funding permitting.

### ***Other support for inclusion***

More broadly, while HEIs are committed to inclusive education they struggle to implement this and provide appropriate support and assistive devices to students with disabilities. This is especially the case for hearing and visually impaired students. The Islamic University has accessible facilities but uses a referral scheme for students requiring psychosocial support.

Where students have acquired disabilities as a result of the recent conflict, HEIs offer compensatory classes and fee exemptions. In cases where the disability prevents a student from continuing with their study (described as ‘contradicting’ the progress of the programme, i.e. creates ‘too many’ challenges for the learner) they meet with an educational counsellor who advises the student to change programme. This, however, does not constitute an inclusive approach, not least because the student rather than the system is expected to adapt. There is clearly a need for awareness raising and training among academic and administrative staff around inclusion and ongoing support and supervision for implementation.

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<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs (August 2012) *National Strategic Plan for the Disability Sector in the State of Palestine* Prepared by Centre for Development Studies at Birzeit University and funded by Diakona/NAD: Jerusalem. See also: [www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/disability%202/2%20disability%20rights\(2\).pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/disability%202/2%20disability%20rights(2).pdf) Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

Table 18: Summary of accessible facilities at Gaza HEIs

Accessible facilities							General reflections on inaccessibility of buildings and facilities
<b>Arab College of Applied Sciences</b>	Lecture halls on the ground floor	2 chairs customized for people with disabilities at each hall in ground floor	2 ramps	Cafeteria			The upper floors, library and toilets are inaccessible
<b>Al Azhar University</b>	Ramps	Elevators	Toilets				Most of the facilities are not available such as (library, sport hall, administrative building)
<b>Gaza University</b>	Ramps	Elevator					The building not designed to be education institution.
<b>University of Palestine</b>	6 ramps	4 elevators					Disabled student can move around in the university to attend lectures, but there are not available facilities such as toilets and library.
<b>College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University-Gaza</b>	6 ramps	3 elevators	Ground floor halls				Some buildings and facilities are inaccessible such as (computer lab, Library, sport hall and administrative building).
<b>Palestine Technical College</b>	1 ramp						The building is inaccessible at all (for example: the students hold their disabled colleagues to reach the upper floors to attend lectures.
<b>University College of Ability Development</b>	2 ramps	2 elevators	3 toilets	Cafeteria	Sport halls	Lectures halls	The colleges buildings prepared to be accessible for all peoples with disabilities since the college is specialised college for preparing the students to be a special needs specialist in the future
<b>University College of Sciences and Technology</b>	2 ramps						The building is inaccessible at all, and in the same time it built and designed to be educational institution.

Accessible facilities							General reflections on inaccessibility of buildings and facilities
<b>Islamic University</b>	22 ramps	20 elevators	Disabled Unit	Lecture halls on the ground floor			There is no toilet for disabled students and staff
<b>College of Dar Al Dawa &amp; Humanities</b>	4 toilets	1 ramp	Lecture halls on the ground floor				The building is not accessible and if there are disabled students or staff they just have access to the ground floors.
<b>Alquds Open University</b>	12 ramps	6 elevators	4 toilets	Lecture halls on the ground floor			There are five branches for Al-Quds Open University at the Gaza Strip, some of these new branches and adapted for people with disabilities and some old and adapted for people with disabilities
<b>Alzaytona College for Sciences And Development</b>	2 ramps	Lecture halls on the ground floor					Computer Lab. has been moved to the lower rooms. The upper floors, library and toilets are inaccessible
<b>Palestine College of Islamic Call</b>	0 ramps	Lecture halls on the ground floor					The upper floors, and toilets are inaccessible
<b>Ummah Open University</b>	1 ramp						Less attention by the university
<b>Al Aqsa University</b>	29 ramps	8 elevators					Some of their building were built to be suitable for disabled students and staff
<b>University College of Applied Sciences</b>	3 ramps (2 partially damaged)	2 toilets	2 elevators	1 assistive technology unit			More toilet are needed for disabled students and staff
<b>Nama'a College for Science &amp; Technology</b>	1 ramp	1 elevator					The building is not accessible and if there are disabled students or staff they just have access to the ground floors.

## **5. Disruptions to studies**

### **5.1. Summer semester**

Out of the surveyed HEIs, 21 had a summer semester in 2014; 5 did not. A total of 26,404 students enrolled for summer semester: 13,005 male, 13,399 female. Around 2,675 students will graduate on completion of the summer semester; 1,468 male, 1,207 female.

HEIs were disrupted for a minimum of 20 days over the semester, and a maximum of 62 days. In total, 1,016 individual HEI days were lost over the summer semester, indicating the extent of the interruption to academic study caused by the crisis. A median 46 days were lost at each HEI.

Power cuts and unreliable transport due to fuel shortages continue to disrupt students' studies – they are unable to reach classes on time or complete their studies at home.<sup>20</sup>

### **5.2. Impact of student injury on studies**

Of those students who were injured, 635 returned to study post-injury, 251 did not. Data was not provided for all injured students. HEIs' provisions ensured that all students were able to complete their studies over the summer.

This semester, however, 149 students were unable to return to studies (126 male, 23 female). Students were worst affected at Alquds Open University (42), Al Azhar University (34), Al-Awda University College (28), Islamic University (24). This is consistent with the high numbers of casualties and infrastructure damage at these institutions.

### **5.3. Mitigating actions taken by HEIs for teaching, exams, curricula etc.**

While there was no official emergency plan in place for HEIs, academic staff reportedly worked to reduce the curriculum while ensuring that requisite skills were taught. Measures were also reported to have been taken to ensure the number of taught academic hours were retained to maintain quality.<sup>21</sup>

In order to compensate the disrupted days:

- 14 HEIs offered extended semester and compensatory classes
- 4 HEIs offered extended semester
- 2 HEIs offered compensatory classes.

HEIs indicated during the data collection process that they made a range of decisions to accommodate students and facilitate learning and examinations.

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi.

<sup>21</sup> Focus group discussion.

Arab College of Applied Sciences cancelled all mid-summer term exams and allocated 100% of marks to the final examination. The following universities also made exams 'direct and easy' and allocated 100% of marks to the final examinations: Al Azhar University, Palestine College of Nursing, College of Dar Al Dawa and Humanities, Alzaytona College for Sciences and Development, Al Aqsa Community College and Nama'a College for Science and Technology. This approach may have consequences for the quality of graduates.

Gaza University and University of Palestine reduced the curriculum. Others, such as Applied Future Polytechnic provided compensatory lectures. Applied Future Polytechnic, among others (4), permitted students to withdraw temporarily and return at an appropriate time, while retaining their fees. Al Awda University gave students 30% for attendance and activities and made total marks for the final exams 70%. Al Aqsa minimised scientific curricula.

## 6. Priorities identified

HEIs expressed different priorities in the narrative feedback gathered during this rapid assessment, though much of the focus was on repair and rehabilitation of buildings, the building of new laboratories, libraries, lecture halls and safety measures such as fire exits and shelters. A summary of needs identified is show below.

Table 19: Summary of needs expressed by HEIs

HEI	Priorities identified
<b>Arab College of Applied Sciences</b>	Repair the college buildings
<b>Al Azhar University</b>	Urgent maintenance of the buildings and facilities for the university.
<b>Gaza University</b>	No answer
<b>Applied Future Polytechnic</b>	After Gaza crisis, there is a student with disabilities, so the needs of this student are accessible facilities.
<b>University of Palestine</b>	Student activities hall.
<b>College of Intermediate Studies- al Azhar University-Gaza</b>	Renting an additional building for the students instead of the old bombed building - Providing the means for safety during an emergency (a shelter or exit stairs).
<b>Gaza College for Tourism Studies</b>	Students and staff ask about elevator at the building due to the building consisting of four floors.
<b>Palestine Technical College</b>	Sport hall is one of students' needs.
<b>University College of Ability Development</b>	No needs, all facilities are available.
<b>Gaza Training Center - UNRWA</b>	The training center belongs to UNRWA. All needs are available (training services and transportation back & forth) are free, also feeding program to student) Gaza blockade stops our plans regarding students with disabilities, they have some needs such as workshops, elevators, labs and ramps.
<b>Khan Younis Training Center - UNRWA</b>	The training center belongs to UNRWA. All needs are available (training services and transportation( back & forth) are free, also feeding program to student) Gaza

HEI	Priorities identified
	blockade stops our plans regarding students with disabilities, they have some needs such as workshops, elevators, labs and ramps. A part of training center now used as shelter for displaced people. It sometimes hinders the implementation of activities, we do all the best to submit all services to displaced people and completion of the study of normal form.
<b>Palestine College for Nursing</b>	Providing safety services (Fire Extinguisher, exit stair).
<b>University College of Sciences and Technology</b>	Repairing windows, so it is important for the onset of winter.
<b>Islamic University</b>	Reconstruct the damaged buildings
<b>College of Dar Al Dawa &amp; Humanities</b>	Rehabilitating Utilities dedicated for students , Establish clinic
<b>Alquds Open University</b>	A special laboratory at the Faculty of Media , 5 Laboratory audios , 5 Laboratory communication , 5 Science Laboratory . Building for all three branches include classrooms and offices for teachers , Restoration of the Gaza branch , Conference hall , central football stadium in Rafah, Service-facilities, playgrounds and sports activities Cafeteria
<b>Alzaytona College for Sciences And Development</b>	Expand the college building and educational facilities
<b>Al Aqsa Community College</b>	It's an old building ( 25 years old ) the engineers syndicate classified it as unsuitable building, so our priority is to reconstruct our institution building, We need facilities
<b>Palestine College of Islamic Call</b>	Lecture halls, Water tank , Cold drinking water , Maintenance for broken windows , Books printing , sunshade, Transportation facilities
<b>Ummah Open University</b>	Laboratories (the press and media, Criminal Research), Improvement of the books quality, Public facilities, Classrooms and Video conferencing room, Equipment of Internet network
<b>Al-Awda University College</b>	No answer
<b>Palestine Polytechnic University</b>	Labs, New building
<b>Al Aqsa University</b>	New buildings, teaching halls , facilities such as (library, laboratory, cafeteria, green spaces, and video conference room, conference hall) Electronic services for students (Computers) Medical Clinic Indicative Programme academic. activate Sporting activities .
<b>University College of Applied Sciences</b>	Urgent intervention on Fixing the holes in the ceiling, walls and corridors
<b>Management &amp; Politics Academy for Postgraduate Studies</b>	Hall lecture, Established new building instead of rented, Ramps for disability
<b>Nama'a College for Science &amp; Technology</b>	Medical lab, Computer Lab, Scientific lab

## **6.1. Buildings**

During the focus group discussion, staff pointed out that even prior to the conflict, blockades on the importation of construction materials into Gaza and financial constraints prevented universities from expanding their premises and meeting the needs of students. This situation considerably worsened as a result of the infrastructural damage done, which in some institutions was severe, as noted above. Financial shortfalls will affect the ability of HEIs to rebuild and restore buildings and facilities. Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) and international financial and legal support will be required.

## **6.2. Fees**

Student non-fee payment has also been identified as a major issue for HEIs. Those students who have been injured, displaced, freshmen and those whose homes have been destroyed have been exempted from fees. Families of students who have been killed have also not been asked for fees owed.

One academic suggested that 'after [the] Gaza crisis 40% of students are unable to pay a minimal scholastic fee'. The Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education in Gaza also noted during an interview that many students were not returning to enrol because they were unable to pay fees.<sup>22</sup> This point was reiterated by a university leader who noted that families had to prioritise their expenditure after losing homes and assets: higher education is often not seen as a priority.

This is expected to have a knock-on effect on staff salaries, particularly in non-government funded institutions. HEIs anticipate financial shortfalls due to non-payment of fees by students, resulting in non-payment of staff.<sup>23</sup>

Provision of grants to students for their fees was reiterated as an urgent priority by all academics interviewed.

## **6.3. Student numbers**

One interviewee noted that student registrations were down due to border crossing closures; in particular, foreign students who previously made up 20% of the cohort now only make up 15%. HEIs may need to offer incentives to students to encourage enrolments under the current circumstances.

## **6.4. Staff shortages**

Staff shortages were already of concern following increases in attrition due to migration over the last decade. There are shortages in a range of [unspecified] academic fields which are expected to worsen.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi, Assistant Deputy Minister for Higher Education, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi.



## 6.5. Quality of teaching and learning

University plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been suspended in '60%'<sup>24</sup> of cases, with institutions forced to attend to more fundamental issues such as enrolment of students to ensure the survival of HEIs.

Concern was expressed that student achievements have deteriorated in recent years due to conflict and were inevitably affected by the 2014 conflict. Blockades on travel and trade have affected importation of teaching and learning materials, for subjects including chemistry and engineering. This is impacting on quality of programmes and skills development.<sup>25</sup> It is anticipated that this is likely to have a knock-on effect on the provision and quality of public services.<sup>26</sup>

Financial constraints mean that plans to send staff overseas for continuing professional development opportunities or on exchange programmes with other institutions, have been stopped, again impacting on the quality of teaching and learning as well as staff motivation.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, due to the closure of border crossings, students were prevented from travelling to the US as part of a partnership between Indiana University and Gaza University which provided scholarships. The aim was to learn how to write reports and research papers on museums and tourism in Gaza, women's issues and human rights.<sup>28</sup> Various partnerships such as this with overseas institutions involving students were affected by the conflict.

## 6.6. Emergency response and protection of HEIs

In the absence of any body currently established to co-ordinate HEI emergency response, an entity or cluster of HEIs for emergency and contingency response, information sharing and collaboration was identified as an important priority.

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Higher Education noted that an important priority is to work with international institutions to strengthen the protection of education institutions and the right to education under international law.<sup>29</sup>

## 6.7. Psychosocial support

A interviewee at one university suggested a unified psychosocial support centre with experienced counsellors and social workers working in units in each university is needed to provide services to the students and staff. Community-based support is also needed. "After Gaza crisis, we realized the importance of having such service especially that there are many traumatized students and staff", HEI representatives said. It is thought that students are not returning to learning because they are traumatised.

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<sup>24</sup> Focus group discussion.

<sup>25</sup> Dr Fahoum Shalabi interview.

<sup>26</sup> Focus group discussion with HEI Staff, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Dr Fahoum Shalabi and focus group discussion with staff.

<sup>28</sup> Focus group discussion with HEI Staff.

<sup>29</sup> Dr Fahoum Shalabi Interview. See UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergencies A/RES/64/290.

## **7. Recommended advocacy messages**

### **7.1. Protection and emergency response**

There is a need to work with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, international institutions, the education cluster and HEI representatives to strengthen the protection of HEIs in Gaza and the right to education under international law.

This could include:

- Rigorously monitoring attacks on HEIs and using that information to devise effective, co-ordinated responses.
- Strengthening accountability measures.
- Establishing preventive measures such as early warning systems and rapid response systems for attacks.
- Encouraging HEIs to develop best practices in protecting education from attack.
- Ensuring educators and their families who are displaced are offered protection and encouraged to return.<sup>30</sup>

Prioritise emergency response planning with HEIs, supported by an appointed committee / cluster. This must include training in emergency and evacuation planning as well as first aid training, alongside academic contingency planning.

Prioritise improvements in psychosocial support at all HEIs. This should include provision for staff as well as students, offering professional counselling and ongoing support.

### **7.2. Financing**

There is an urgent need to mobilise financing from MoEHE and external donors to fund the reconstruction of the HEI sector and to stabilise financing to fund student grants and reduce impact of non-fee payment on staff salaries.

This report has provided a cost estimate for infrastructure repair and rebuilding. However, it has not calculated existing financing gaps within HEIs or estimated costs of improving protection and emergency planning, psychosocial support, inclusive education, and the quality of teaching and learning, all of which are important priorities. Ideally, estimates should be prepared to support donor advocacy and combined with the evidence base provided in this report.

### **7.3. Inclusion, including accessibility of infrastructure and facilities**

Government recognition of the need for public institutions to be fully inclusive and accessible was reflected in discussions of HEI staff and responses to questionnaires. However, the majority of HEIs are not currently implementing inclusive approaches in building design or appropriate pedagogical or practical support to students with disabilities. As a first step, academic and administrative staff need training and awareness-raising on inclusion and inclusive education, alongside ongoing supervision and support with implementation.

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<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive set of international and national recommendations to protect HEIs, see Global Coalition for Protection of Education from Attack (GCPEA). UNESCO is a member of the steering committee. [www.protectingeducation.org/goals-and-recommendations](http://www.protectingeducation.org/goals-and-recommendations) Accessed 20th November 2014.