

# RESTRICTING AID

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## The Challenges of Delivering Assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

A Research Report

June 2011



Women walking next to a military barrier in the West Bank. Photo by Y. Lein

## 1. Introduction

The occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is made up of two geographic areas: the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. In both areas, Israel maintains a complex system of restrictions on movement and access. In the West Bank, checkpoints, roadblocks, a permit system and the 'Wall' and its 'seam zone'<sup>1</sup> inhibit the movement of Palestinians. In the Gaza Strip, a permit system is augmented by control over a 'buffer zone' or perimeter area between Gaza and Israel and a sea blockade.

Movement and access restrictions increase poverty and fragment the Palestinian territory.<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian agencies should help mitigate the impacts on Palestinian communities, but these restrictions also affect the movement and access of international organizations operating in the oPt. The restrictions mean that aid workers and related goods cannot move freely between the communities they serve, impeding humanitarian and development work in the territory. The restrictions decrease the effectiveness and sustainability of aid

operations, deny the most vulnerable populations from needed assistance and significantly increase the costs of delivering assistance.

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), representing 84 international humanitarian and development agencies working in the oPt, conducted a survey of its members to assess and quantify the impact these restrictions have on the effectiveness of aid delivery to communities in the oPt. The overall objectives of the study were to gain a better understanding of both the scale and types of restrictions that AIDA members face with regards to access and movement, and to make initial findings on the impact of these restrictions on costs and on the ability of AIDA members to deliver aid and development programs in the territory.

## 2. Summary of Findings

Access and movement restrictions for international non-government organizations (INGOs) are significant, widespread, costly and difficult to overcome. As a result

of these restrictions, vulnerable communities are not being reached, the quality of programming is compromised and the long-term impact of humanitarian and development interventions are reduced.

### **A. AIDA member organisations face severe restrictions on the movement of staff.**

Restrictions include denial of access permits, denial of project permits and denial of work visas for those operating in Gaza or in Area C of the West Bank.

The complexities of obtaining the requisite documentation to freely move national and international staff between Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza severely hampers the ability of AIDA members to deliver projects, effectively manage and monitor projects, hire appropriate personnel, share best practices, train staff or coordinate with other organizations.

### **B. Restrictions cost agencies an estimated additional US\$4.5 million per year.**

AIDA members have had to try to overcome these obstacles with costly coping mechanisms. They have introduced parallel management structures in the West Bank and Gaza, which costs time and money. International staff are recruited for positions that require travel between the West Bank and Gaza even though these jobs could be filled by Palestinian national staff at less cost, if they had the ability to move freely. Extra staff positions have had to be created to compensate for the time required to apply for permits and visas needed to allow for movement of staff around the West Bank and Gaza.

This increases the cost of aid delivery, meaning fewer resources for the communities with whom we work.

### **C. Restrictions decrease the effectiveness and sustainability of aid operations**

AIDA members are unable to bring materials necessary for their programming into the communities that need it most. This impact is most severely felt in Gaza, but the same applies to areas of the West Bank and for moving goods into Jerusalem. The impact of the restrictions on the movement of goods and materials into Gaza is an overall reduced level of planned activities, a significant number of delayed or cancelled projects and projects that have been changed or redesigned because of the lack of materials of suitable quality.

In the context of the protracted occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the restrictions create an environment in which mainly short-term humanitarian projects or activities that do not require equipment or materials can be implemented, affecting the sustain-

ability of aid programs and the prospects of broader long-term development in the oPt. For example, severe restrictions on bringing building materials into Gaza has meant that instead of focusing on re-building homes and water and sewage networks destroyed during the latest military attacks on Gaza, many agencies and donors have shifted to providing psychosocial assistance to children and families instead. While both types of programming are important, the former has been impossible to implement.

### **D. Restrictions deny the most vulnerable populations from vital services.**

Current movement and access restrictions make it difficult or impossible for aid workers to reach some communities and individuals in need of assistance. Projects and activities are often delayed and services delivered late or incompletely. Those communities living in heavily restricted areas (who are more vulnerable because of their isolation) may not receive aid at all because of existing restrictions on humanitarian access or because donor policies do not target them due to the difficulties of project implementation.

To cope with these restrictions, both donors and aid agencies have designed access-responsive instead of needs-responsive programmes, meaning they target accessible geographic areas instead of the most vulnerable populations. For example, in Area C of the West Bank (rural areas under full Israel control), in particular the 'seam zone' border area and the Jordan Valley, AIDA members report a decrease in funding for activities because of the inability of staff and goods to access these areas, due to a combination of permits needed from the Israeli government and other access issues. Agencies have also suspended humanitarian programming like "cash-for-work" programmes and mobile health clinics because restrictive permit requirements make it nearly impossible or illegal to deliver essential services to communities in the 'seam zone'.

However, the most serious consequence of these access restrictions is the growing impoverishment of the communities themselves and, due to their increasing isolation, their inability to address their own needs independent of humanitarian assistance.

## **3. Legal Framework**

The current restrictions are affecting the rapid delivery of basic and essential services that these organizations have undertaken to provide due to the failure of Israel, as the Occupying Power, to respect its obligations under the Geneva Conventions in the context of long-term occupation.

The international community has established that, under Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Occupying Power has a positive duty to the fullest extent of the means available to it of ensuring the food and the medical supplies of the occupied population and it should bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles - such as means of shelter<sup>3</sup> - if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate. In the oPt, this obligation has not been met. Therefore, international agencies have responded to the humanitarian needs of the occupied population, without waiving the obligation of the Occupying Power.

In this case, as in all cases where an occupied territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power is bound to agree to relief schemes for the population and must facilitate them by all the means at its disposal<sup>4</sup>. The occupation authorities must therefore co-operate wholeheartedly in their rapid execution.

Israel's exercise of jurisdiction and effective control in the Palestinian territory also engages its obligations under international human rights law. These include for example, the right to adequate standard of living including the right to adequate housing, and numerous obligations for the protection of the rights of women, children, disabled, elderly and displaced persons. Therefore, the occupying power should not only facilitate humanitarian relief and development activities but enable activities undertaken by international organisations and their national partners.

The current policy of movement restrictions undermines the basic right to freedom of movement within the occupied territory that should generally be unimpaired and not be commonly suspended<sup>5</sup>. Movement restrictions should be non-discriminatory and only implemented if proved with concrete evidence to be solely based on military necessity<sup>6</sup> and/or are needed to maintain public order and safety<sup>7</sup>. Further, movement restrictions must be temporary<sup>8</sup> at all times.

## Recommendations

In light of the increasingly difficult humanitarian conditions in the oPt, particularly in those areas most affected by restrictions on movement and access, as well as the requirements of international law, AIDA makes the following recommendations:

- The civilian population must be allowed to enjoy basic rights guaranteed in international law, including the right to freedom of movement and choice of residence, as well as the right to an adequate standard of living, adequate housing, and access to education and healthcare.
- AIDA members' staff must have impartial, rapid and unimpeded access within and between all areas of operation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.
- The international community should urge the Government of Israel to ensure impartial, rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian and development agencies to all areas of operations in the oPt.

## 4. About AIDA

The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) is a membership body and coordination forum of international non-governmental and non-profit organizations that share a common interest in promoting appropriate development and humanitarian programs in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

AIDA seeks to support the Palestinian people's self-development by providing a mechanism for member organizations to work collaboratively. Its core functions are networking for the relief and development assistance community, facilitating information-sharing, and promoting advocacy, security, and training.

Membership in AIDA is open to:

- International non-governmental and non-profit organizations who are headquartered outside Israel and the oPt and who have a presence on the ground in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and/or East Jerusalem.
- Organizations, as above, who are involved in implementing long- or short-term development, emergency, or humanitarian relief programs with the overall aim of supporting Palestinian society.

## 5. Survey Methodology

This study was commissioned by AIDA and was carried out by an external consultant in January and February 2011, using two main tools:

1) The **AIDA Advocacy Telephone Survey** was conducted as a series of individual telephone interviews between the consultant and a representative from each AIDA member organization. In total, representatives of 62 organizations were interviewed out of a total of approximately 84 member organizations. Interviews were conducted between 20 January and 10 February 2011. For any given question, interviewees were allowed to decline to answer if they were not confident of the accuracy of their responses. The telephone survey questions included multiple choice, ratio scale and open-ended questions. The majority of questions were closed-ended, with follow-up open-ended contingency questions to give context, background and details. Responses to closed-ended questions were recorded as either yes or no, with no option to mark the question as not applicable.

2) The **AIDA Annual Survey** was carried out online using “Survey Monkey” at <http://www.surveymonkey.com>. The survey was designed and implemented initially in 2009 and the same questions were repeated for the 2010 survey, with the addition of two extra questions regarding the numbers of national and international staff employed by each organization. The link to the survey was distributed to all AIDA members by email, with several follow-up emails to encourage participation. Overall, out of 84 potential responders, 55 organizations completed the survey.

In addition to these two surveys, follow-up emails were distributed to AIDA contact members for administration purposes requesting details of employee numbers and movement patterns. Fifty-one AIDA organizations responded to these requests. Although not carried out as a part of this study, data from these emails were included in order to enable further analysis of the survey results, including segmentation and data filtering in order to isolate the impact of some variables.

### 5.1 Limitations

This study provides an initial investigation into the impact of movement and access restrictions on AIDA members, including an estimate of the overall cost. However, the full cost of these restrictions is hard to measure, as their impact is widespread and affects most aspects of day-to-day operations.

The list of potential extra costs that AIDA members were asked about in the telephone survey is therefore by no means an exhaustive list. Individual respondents noted some additional expenses that they had incurred as a result of movement and access restrictions that had not been included in the interview; for example the cost of Gaza staff travelling through the Rafah border crossing, and holding team meetings outside the country.

In addition, while a great number of individual expenses or salaries were reported as exact amounts due to respondents having time to prepare their answers, other costs were necessarily estimated. Where a significant degree of doubt was expressed over an estimated amount, that amount was not included in the final results. This has the effect of marginally reducing the sample size for some of the answers, but increasing the overall accuracy of the estimates.

There are also some gaps in information that would enhance the analysis of the problem. One main gap is detailed information on AIDA members' main sources of funding and whether or not this has an impact on access and movement. Recipients of U.S. aid, for example, currently have access to a centralized visa and permit application service that may reduce the overall impact of these restrictions on their costs and overall operations. However, without this information, it is not possible to cross-tabulate the results and isolate this variable to estimate its impact.

Similarly, the donor restrictions imposed on recipients of U.S. funding are much more severe with regard to sourcing of goods and materials in Gaza and the no-contact policy in place with the Hamas authority in Gaza. Without being able to identify recipients of U.S. funding, we cannot assess the impact of this factor.

Another significant gap in information is on implementation strategy. Around 37% of AIDA members say that they only implement through partner organizations. Another 59% implement through partner organizations some of the time, leaving just 4% of organizations that do not use partner organizations at all. However, many of the questions asked both in the telephone survey and the online survey were related to issues that affect implementation partners equally, if not more than, the international organizations that partner with them. In order to gain a full picture of the impact of access and movement restrictions on the delivery of aid in the oPt, it would therefore be necessary to do a similar survey with local and national partner organizations.

It is also clear from the results of the telephone survey that in terms of restrictions on access for international organizations, Gaza is the location where AIDA members encounter the largest number of issues, and the most severe ones. Within Gaza itself, the area that has the heaviest access restrictions is the Gaza Buffer Zone.



This study asked initial questions in order to try to gauge the scale of the problem in delivering assistance to vulnerable communities in the Gaza 'buffer zone'. However, many respondents did not have the detailed information required in order to answer the questions fully, in many cases this was due to the difficulty of communication between offices in Gaza and head offices in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The concern remains that the Gaza 'buffer zone' is an area facing particular difficulties in terms of the delivery of aid that needs more study.

## 6. Survey Results

### 6.1 Access Issues

#### 6.1.1 Israeli authorities

The most significant restriction on movement that causes the longest delays, the highest costs, and also has a significant impact on programming, is the system of permits and visas that are required for national and international staff to move between East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank, in order to carry out their duties. The procedures for obtaining these permits lack transparency, are bureaucratic, slow and inconsistent. The procedures regularly lead to delays or rejections, which are very difficult to challenge as the reasons behind the delay or rejection are rarely communicated. It is nearly impossible for national staff to move in and out of Gaza.

#### International staff

AIDA international staff members must apply for co-ordination into Gaza from the Israeli authorities. The process is not transparent or consistent and delays are frequent:

→ 73.5% of AIDA members have problems with getting Gaza coordination for international staff, with 24.5% saying that permits are often denied or put on hold.

→ In January 2011, 25 permits were granted; however at the end of the month, 36 permit applications were still waiting for a response. Frequently the purpose for the request has passed – the meeting or training has already taken place, so pending permit applications are effectively a denial.

AIDA international staff members also face refusals by the Israeli authorities to enter the country, and face ongoing difficulties in obtaining the necessary visas to enable them to do their work:

→ 21% of AIDA organizations have had international staff refused entry into Israel in the last three years, although all paperwork was in order. Nine people have been refused entry in the last year alone.

→ 27% of AIDA organizations have experienced problems in the last 12 months obtaining Israeli Ministry of Interior-issued work visas (B1 or B2)<sup>9</sup> for their staff or their dependents.

#### National staff

AIDA members face severe, regular and consistent problems in getting coordination for local staff based in Gaza to access Israel, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Even having received coordination, AIDA members reported that some staff are still turned back at the Erez Crossing itself:

→ 88% of AIDA members who need permits for Gaza staff to enter the West Bank or East Jerusalem say that they are often denied or put on hold. Frequently the purpose for the request has passed – the meeting or training has already taken place, so pending permit applications are effectively a denial.

AIDA members also face severe, regular and consistent problems in obtaining permission for national staff members to visit Gaza:

→ 92% of AIDA members who need permits for West Bank staff to enter Gaza say that they are often denied or put on hold.

→ 79% said the same for permits for local staff travelling from East Jerusalem and Israel into Gaza.

AIDA members also face regular and consistent difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits and coordination from the Israeli military for their West Bank staff to enter East Jerusalem:

→ 89% of AIDA members who need permits for West Bank staff to enter East Jerusalem say that they experience delays.

→ Over 30% of applications in January 2011 were rejected or had no response.

#### Movement of goods and services

The issues are not just restricted to staff however, as AIDA members also face difficulties in moving goods

around the oPt, especially with regards to getting materials in and out of Gaza.

➔ Of those who answered the question as applicable, 90% said that they faced difficulties moving goods and services into Gaza.

### 6.1.2 Gaza/PA authorities

Restrictions by the authorities in Gaza and the West Bank also impact AIDA members, although to a lesser extent than those imposed by Israeli authorities.

In Gaza, the main problems identified were registration issues, employee lists and Value Added Tax. Of those who responded that the question was applicable, 60.5% said that registration affected them, although only 18% said it affected them a lot; and employee lists affected 50%.

Organizational registration was also the greatest obstacle identified under the Palestinian Authority. Of those AIDA members who responded that the question was applicable, 49% said it was a problem.

### 6.1.3 Donor restrictions

AIDA members confirmed that donor regulations also impede access and the ability to operate freely and effectively.

Twenty AIDA members answered the open-ended question from the online survey about what overall issues they had related to donor policies. Of these, nearly 30% responded that donor legislation and restrictions were too strict.

Donor restrictions are most keenly felt in Gaza. Of those who answered that the question was applicable, 60% of AIDA members said that anti-terrorism requirements relating to partners affected them, and 47% said they were affected by the availability of goods due to point-to-point documentation requirements.

## 6.2 Impact of access restrictions on the cost of delivering aid

### 6.2.1 Significant increase to the cost of delivering programs

Restrictions have significantly increased the cost of aid provision by creating long, unpredictable delays in reaching communities and by increasing transport and storage costs (e.g. back-to-back shipping<sup>10</sup> and ware-

housing in Israel). These costs of the restrictions are particularly notable in the health sector, where movement restrictions have drastically cut access to the six specialist hospitals located in East Jerusalem. As a result, AIDA members have had to invest in costly satellite offices, mobile medical clinics or additional staff to reach patients.

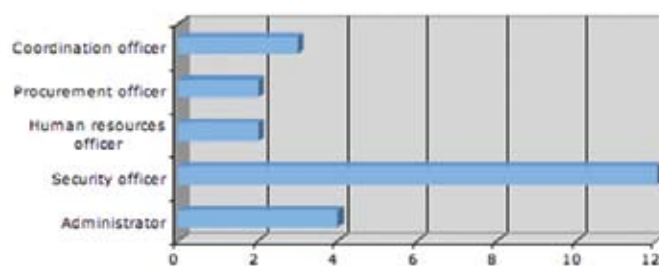
AIDA conservatively estimates an additional annual cost of US\$4.5 million as a result of movement restrictions to national and international staff.

This estimate only includes directly measurable costs such as extra staff and implementation costs for AIDA member organizations themselves. It does not include indirect costs through suppliers, the need for additional transportation or prolonged warehousing costs for goods and materials, or costs incurred by partner organizations. It also does not include the time spent on processing visa and permit applications.

### 6.2.2 Extra staff positions

Thirty-one percent of AIDA members say that they have added at least one extra position in order to cope with the extra workload of applying for permits and visas for their staff. The average cost of each extra position is US\$27,914 per year, and with an estimated total number of 30 new positions, this represents an extra cost to AIDA members of US\$620,000 per year.

What kind of extra positions have you created in order to deal with movement of goods and staff?



Additional staff positions like security officers and other administrative personnel, previously not necessary, have also been added in order to manage the related permit requests and the additional bureaucratic procedures related to moving people and goods around the oPt, and security issues related to managing checkpoints.

➔ 31% of AIDA members have added extra positions, at an average cost of US\$27,914 per organization.

**Estimated annual cost for all AIDA members:  
US\$620,000**

### **6.2.3 Staff time spent on coordinating permits and visas**

In terms of the time spent by each AIDA member organization on coordination and oversight of permits and visas for the movement of goods and staff, respondents estimated an average of 30% of one full-time staff member per organization, at an average monthly cost of US\$1,273, or an estimated annual cost for all AIDA members of US\$1,313,700.

### **6.2.4 Duplication of staff roles and internal structures**

As well as extra staff to handle permit and visa coordination, AIDA members say that they have duplicated internal structures in different locations in order to cope with movement restrictions. The significant majority of these structures are located in Gaza. In particular, administrative, finance, programming and key management positions within organizations have been duplicated due to the inability of existing staff to travel in order to oversee projects.

→ 34% of AIDA members have had to duplicate management, administrative or programming functions. 74% of these are in Gaza.

→ AIDA members report 60 duplicated staff positions at a total monthly cost of US\$104,822.

**Estimated annual cost for all AIDA members:  
US\$2,605,560**

### **6.2.5 Videoconferencing equipment**

The inability of staff members to travel between offices also has an impact on team meetings, coordination and training sessions. In order to facilitate communication and coordination between offices, 34% of AIDA members report that they have had to invest in expensive videoconferencing facilities.

→ AIDA members report spending US\$288,100 on videoconferencing equipment

**Estimated cost for all AIDA members: US\$397,852**

One cost not included in the study is that of team meetings when videoconferencing is not possible or desirable. Some organizations hold team meetings in a third country like Turkey or Jordan; others find it easier to hold them at international head office locations in

Europe. These all have cost implications that would be unnecessary were movement restrictions less severe.

### **6.2.6 Hiring additional international staff**

In addition to these extra costs, AIDA members say that they have hired extra international staff as a method of coping with access restrictions, as internationals have fewer restrictions on their travel. When asked to identify roles for expatriates within their organization that would otherwise be filled by national staff if they were able to travel freely, AIDA members reported that 31 positions had been created for internationals that, in another context would be covered by national staff. The estimated total for all AIDA members is therefore an extra 51 internationals. These staff member positions include senior management members, monitoring and evaluation officers and emergency response personnel.

→ 32% of AIDA members have added international positions as a result of movement restrictions, with an estimated total of 51 extra internationals.

**Estimated annual cost for all AIDA members:  
US\$900,000**

### **6.2.7 Additional costs of delays to Gaza coordination**

Thirty-four percent of AIDA members reported that they had incurred additional expenses as a result of delays to coordination of staff into Gaza in the last 12-18 months. The types of cost reported were additional hours spent in extended waits at checkpoints and crossings, unnecessary travel costs, extra accommodation costs, travel expenses and wasted consultancy fees and salaries.

The average reported cost for each of these organizations was US\$6,105. Based on this average, the estimated extra cost for all AIDA members due to these delays is US\$177,045 per year.

→ In the last 12-18 months AIDA members report an average of over US\$6,000 per organization in direct costs as a result of delays for Gaza permits.

**Estimated annual cost for all AIDA members:  
US\$344,000**

Administrative procedures also create long, unpredictable delays in reaching communities and increase transport and storage costs (e.g. back-to-back shipping and warehousing inside Israel). Costs are hard to

quantify, although the United Nations Relief and Works Agency reports that its costs for aid delivery have risen 20% as a result of access restrictions to Gaza.

### 6.3 Impact of access restrictions on programming

#### 6.3.1 Quality of programming

AIDA members report that the restrictions on movement and access have a significant effect on the quality of their programming. Members reported significant delays, the use of substandard or used materials for construction, the inability to monitor activities of the organizations themselves or of their partners, and the inability to carry out adequate financial monitoring. Several AIDA members report having to implement programming with used materials or those of inferior quality.

Overall, 71% of AIDA members also agree with the statement that access restrictions have had an impact on the quality of their programming.

Program management becomes very difficult as staff are unable to travel between Gaza, the West Bank or Jerusalem regularly for management, financial oversight, planning, or coordination meetings. This has cost implications, as it is more difficult and more costly to monitor activities and partners. It also has implications for quality and impact, as best practice cannot be shared between locations.

Movement and access restrictions also affect staff development activities of AIDA members when, for example, staff based in Gaza cannot attend meetings or workshops in the West Bank. This, in turn, affects the impact, efficiency and sustainability of aid projects.

AIDA members have also modified their hiring practices to cope with the existing restrictions on access to Jerusalem, dramatically reducing employment opportunities for West Bank professionals and also limiting choices for hiring agencies. The practical outcome is that staff are hired on the basis of their identity card rather than on the basis of their experience, qualification or skills.

➔ 42% of AIDA members have changed their hiring practices as a result of restrictions on West Bank staff entering East Jerusalem.

➔ Of these, 46% now favour applicants with Jerusalem IDs over those with West Bank or Gaza IDs.

As a result of these above factors, agencies report that they are shifting from needs-responsive to access-

responsive programming, which might be less effective or sustainable. Agencies were asked whether they have had to modify their optimal response strategies in different locations. Of those who answered the question as applicable:

➔ 88% of AIDA members said that they had modified their optimal response strategies in Gaza

➔ 79% said they had modified their strategies in Jerusalem

➔ 75% said they had modified their strategies in the Seam Zone

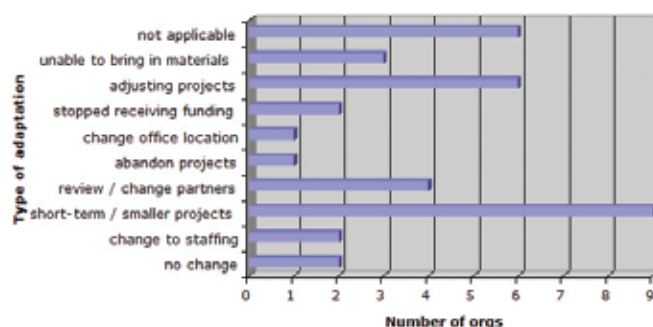
➔ 87.5% said they had modified their strategies in Area C

➔ 63% said they had modified their strategies in other areas of the West Bank.

#### 6.3.2 Sustainability of programming

AIDA members report that their ability to deliver sustainable development programs is reduced due to procurement restrictions, restrictions on the type and quantity of materials that can be moved into Gaza, and also by restrictions from Israeli civil and military authorities on improvements to infrastructure in locations such as Area C and the Jordan Valley. As their ability to deliver more sustainable development programming is reduced, AIDA members report a focus on shorter-term humanitarian projects.

How have you adapted to access restrictions in Gaza?



Of those AIDA members who responded that the question was applicable, 69% said that they were affected by the short funding cycles imposed by donors in Gaza. Due to donor regulations in Gaza, AIDA members also said that they had primarily adapted their response by running shorter, less sustainable programs.



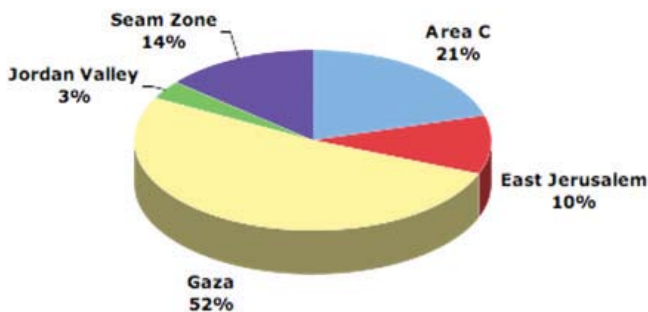
### 6.3.3 Reach of programming

Current restrictions on the access and movement of aid workers and goods significantly challenge the effective delivery of humanitarian relief to some of the communities that are the most in need of assistance, due to those very same access and movement restrictions. The result is that some of the most vulnerable communities are rarely being reached by humanitarian assistance, if at all.

- 67% of AIDA members say that access issues have affected their programming priorities, indicating that AIDA members may be forced to select beneficiaries on criteria other than needs or vulnerability.
- 40% of AIDA members have tried to implement programs that were either severely delayed or abandoned due to access restrictions.

When asked about specific locations, 52% of those programmes were located in Gaza. Fifteen organizations in total reported delayed or abandoned programs in Gaza; nine of these said the problems were due to difficulties in bringing in goods or staff.

Location of delayed and abandoned programs



The communities most in need are those in Gaza and Area C in the West Bank, particularly those in the 'seam zone' and the Jordan Valley. Three AIDA organisations reported that they had been denied access to Barta (which is in the 'seam zone') by the Israeli military, two were refused the required permits and a third AIDA member waited for six weeks for a permit to carry out a two-hour assessment in this location, eventually moving their focus to other areas when the permit was not forthcoming. Two other organisations reported that permission was not granted to extend a water network to certain communities in Area C.

AIDA members also reported difficulties in obtaining permits for West Bank staff to work on East Jerusalem infrastructure projects as well as difficulties of moving materials sourced in the West Bank into East Jerusalem.

In Gaza, one organization pulled out of water and sanitation projects in Gaza in 2008 due to the restrictions on movement of goods and staff. Another organization reported 8-12 month delays in moving water piping infrastructure into Gaza due to Israeli restrictions. Five other organizations reported delays on moving materials into Gaza of six months or more: including agricultural equipment, seedlings, tools, books, toys, mobile water pumps, medical equipment and food parcels.<sup>11</sup> Four more organizations reported severe delays to projects due to the inability to move staff in or out of Gaza for training, monitoring, management or coordination with other projects.

- 42% of AIDA members who answered the question as applicable have opted not to work in the Gaza 'buffer zone', due to access restrictions and security issues.

However for Area C and the 'seam zone', again of those who answered the question as applicable, 92.5% said that they were still working in these areas. Overall these figures indicate that with the exception of the Gaza 'buffer zone', AIDA members are still implementing projects in areas where access restrictions affect programming. However, these projects are often subject to lengthy delays and are sometimes abandoned. Some of the most vulnerable communities in some of the most restricted areas such as Area C, the 'seam zone' and the Gaza 'buffer zone' are not being reached.

## 6.4 Background data

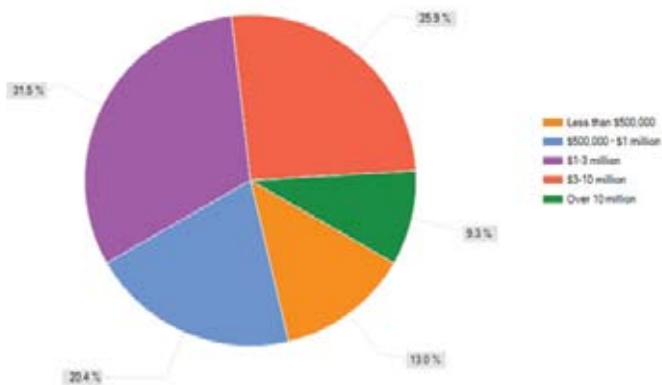
### 6.4.1 Size of organizations

Sixty-six percent of AIDA's 84 member organizations have annual budgets of over US\$1 million, a small reduction on 2009 (68.5%). In the last year there has been a shift from bigger organizations (over US\$3 million) to medium-sized and smaller organizations (US\$500,000-3 million).

### 6.4.2 Activities, projects and locations

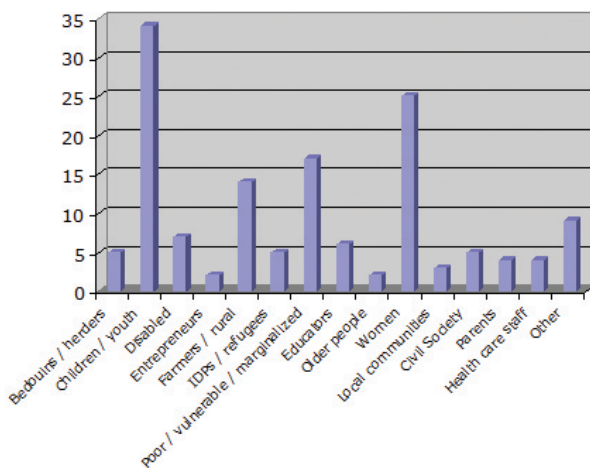
AIDA members were asked to select whether they describe themselves as rights-based, humanitarian, development or service delivery organizations. Most organizations selected a combination of more than one description, with the majority describing themselves as humanitarian/development organizations.

What roughly is your annual budget (USD)?



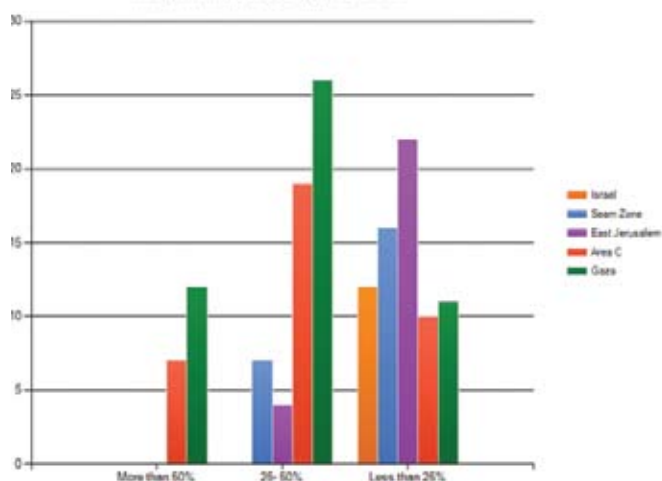
AIDA members were also asked to identify their three main target groups. These were then collated and categorised as follows:

What immediate target groups are you trying to reach?



In terms of location, the majority of projects are currently in Gaza and Area C. 74.5% of organizations have over 25% of their operations in Gaza.

What percentage of your projects are in:



The distribution of local staff also illustrates the geographical concentration of projects in Gaza and the West Bank, with 42% of local staff employed in Gaza, and 40% in the West Bank.

Overall, AIDA members currently employ an estimated 2,008 local staff members. This estimate is based on 1,191 local staff members reported by 51 online survey respondents, giving an average of 23.35 staff members per organization.

As well as local staff, AIDA members currently employ an estimated 329 international staff members. This estimate is based on 151 international staff members reported by 51 online survey respondents, giving an average of 3.82 internationals per organization.

## 6.5 Data filters and segmentation

Filtering of results “cuts through” data in order to try to isolate certain variables to analyze their impact. This is achieved by filtering out a sample group of respondents who all share one variable. This can be an attribute of the organization, or it can be an answer to a survey question that they have in common. Then by using the overall sample as a control group, we can compare the results to assess the impact of the variable in question.

Two filters were carried out on the data produced by this study. These are detailed below.

### 6.5.1 Organizations that carry out some direct implementation

The hypothesis behind this data filter was that organizations that do not implement directly but instead implement through partners would experience less impact from movement and access restrictions than those organizations that do implement directly.

In follow-up emails to the telephone survey, organizations were asked to state whether they implement directly, through local partner organizations, or a combination of both. From 41 respondents, two organizations stated that they only implement directly. Twenty-four organizations confirmed that they use a combination of implementation directly and through partners. We then took the survey responses from these 26 organizations and compared the results to those of the full sample.

The following table shows the comparison of results by question, and gives the increase or decrease in percentage points from the control group (overall sample) to the group of organizations who carry out some direct implementation.

Question	Full sample	Organizations with some direct implementation	+/-
1. Have you added extra staff to deal with permits and visas?	Yes: 31%	Yes: 33%	+2 pts
2. Estimated percentage of time spent on movement of goods and staff?	30% of one staff member	22% of one staff member	-8 pts
3. Have you increased number of international staff?	Yes: 32% Ave. no. internationals: 1.8	Yes: 37.5% Ave no. internationals: 1.7	+5.5pts
4. Have you had extra costs associated with delays to Gaza entry?	Yes: 34% Average: US\$6,105	Yes: 33% Average: US\$6,920	-1 pts
5. Have you changed hiring practices for local staff in East Jerusalem?	Yes: 42%	Yes: 42%	+0 pts
6. Have any staff been denied entry into the country?	Yes: 21%	Yes: 21%	+0 pts
7. Have you had issues obtaining B1 or B2 visas?	Yes: 27%	Yes: 29%	+2 pts
8. Have you had to duplicate parallel structures in different locations?	Yes: 34% Ave. no. duplicated roles: 3.33 Ave. cost: US\$7,487 per month	Yes: 42% Ave. no. duplicated roles: 3.25 Ave. cost: US\$6,894 per month	+12 pts
9. Have you invested in video-conferencing facilities?	Yes: 34% Ave. cost: US\$13,719	Yes: 37.5% Ave. cost: US\$14,622	+3.5 pts
10. Have you tried to implement programs that were delayed or abandoned?	Yes: 44%	Yes: 50%	+6 pts
11a. Have your programming priorities been affected by access issues?	Yes: 67%	Yes: 79%	+12 pts
11b. Has the quality of your programming been affected by access issues?	Yes: 72%	Yes: 75%	+3 pts

In most areas, the results either show no change or they are not conclusive. However, significant variations can be seen on questions 8 and 11a.

Question 8 deals with duplications of parallel structures in different locations. The result (an increase of 12 percentage points in positive responders) indicates that those organizations that implement some or all of their programming directly have a greater need to duplicate structures in different locations than those that implement some or all programs directly.

Question 11a asks whether access issues have affected programming priorities. The 12-point increase in positive responders indicates that those organizations that implement some or all of their programming directly experience greater restrictions over the projects they can implement.

The implication of these results are that working through partners can increase an organization’s ability to implement programs, but that this comes with an extra cost of

duplicating roles to administer partner relationships and monitor their activities.

Overall, 95% of AIDA members say that they use implementing partners for some or all of the programming. This statistic alone implies that the impact of access restrictions on partner organizations should be considered in any further study.

### 6.5.2 Organizations with annual budget over US\$1 million

The hypothesis behind this data filter was that access restrictions would have a bigger impact on bigger organizations – those that employ more staff and run more programs in more locations. To test this, a sample group of organizations with a confirmed budget of over US\$1 million was taken, and the results from this group compared against the whole sample.

The comparison can be seen in the table below.

Question	Full sample	Organizations with annual budget over US\$1 million	+/-
1. Have you added extra staff to deal with permits and visas?	Yes: 31% Ave. no. extra staff: 1.1	Yes: 42% Ave. no. extra staff: 0.9	+11 pts
2. Estimated percentage of time spent on movement of goods and staff?	30% of one staff member	40% of one staff member	+10 pts
3. Have you increased number of international staff?	Yes: 32% Ave. no. internationals: 1.8	Yes: 48% Ave. no. internationals: 2.0	+12 pts
4. Have you had extra costs associated with delays to Gaza entry?	Yes: 34% Average reported cost per org: US\$6,105	Yes: 45% Average reported cost per org: US\$7,784	+9 pts
5. Have you changed hiring practices for local staff in East Jerusalem?	Yes: 42%	Yes: 61%	+19 pts
6. Have any staff been denied entry into the country?	Yes: 21%	Yes: 26%	+5 pts
7. Have you had issues obtaining B1 or B2 visas?	Yes: 27%	Yes: 29%	+2 pts



8. Have you had to duplicate parallel structures in different locations?	Yes: 34% Ave. no. duplicated roles: 3.33 Ave. cost per month: US\$7,487	Yes: 48% Ave. no. duplicated roles: 3.25 Ave. cost per month: US\$9,235	+14 pts
9. Have you invested in video-conferencing facilities?	Yes: 34% Ave. cost: US\$13,719	Yes: 61% Ave. cost: US\$14,037	+27 pts
10. Have you tried to implement programs that were delayed or abandoned?	Yes: 44%	Yes: 48%	+4 pts
11a. Have your programming priorities been affected by access issues?	Yes: 67%	Yes: 83%	+16 pts
11b. Has the quality of your programming been affected by access issues?	Yes: 72%	Yes: 87%	+15 pts

The results above show that for almost every single question (except the case of problems obtaining B1 or B2 visas) the impact of access restrictions is significantly greater on organizations with budgets over US\$1 million per year than on those with budgets smaller than US\$1 million per year.

Specifically, organizations with budgets of over US\$1 million are more likely to report problems than smaller organizations.

It is notable that the average impact in terms of costs, staffing levels, etc. remains roughly the same for the sample group of larger organizations as compared to the whole population. In other words, the increased impact of access restrictions does not seem to be a proportional increase due to the larger size of the organizations in question. If the smaller organizations are cut from the data, the average costs per organization do not increase.

The implications of these results are therefore not related to costs but related to the overall impact on programs. Sixty-six percent of AIDA members have annual budgets over US\$1 million. The larger organizations are the ones running bigger programs with greater impact and wider reach. If the smaller organizations were more likely to report a negative effect of access restrictions on their operations, then it could be argued that the overall results of the study are overstating the problem, as these organizations account for a smaller proportion of

aid delivered. However, the reverse is true. The larger organizations, responsible for delivering the majority of programming, are more likely to report a negative effect. This means the total impact of access restrictions on the delivery of aid is likely to be even greater than the overall results would indicate.

<sup>1</sup> In 2002, the Government of Israel approved construction of a Wall. Approximately 61.4% of the 707-kilometre-long Wall was complete in mid-2010. When finished, the majority of the route, approximately 85%, will run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line, or 1949 armistice line with Israel. Tens of thousands of Palestinians are caught between the Wall and the Green Line in a 'seam zone' that has restricted access. In 2004, the International Court of Justice at The Hague issued an advisory opinion that "the construction of the wall, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law.", *The Impact of the Barrier on Health*, OCHA, July 2010.

<sup>2</sup> OCHA Special Focus, *West Bank Movement and Access Report*, June 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Article 69 of the First Additional Protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions further details the basic needs and objects essential for the survival of the civilian population in occupied territories, including clothing, bedding and means of shelter. Article 96 is a reference within the ICRC Customary Law Study (p.193 ICRC Customary Law Study, Vol.I, Cambridge (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Article 61 and 69.

<sup>5</sup> ICRC commentaries to Article 27 IVGC, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> Article 27 IVGC.

<sup>7</sup> Regulation 43 Hague Regulations of 1907.

<sup>8</sup> ICRC commentaries to Article 27 IVGC, p 202.

<sup>9</sup> International staff of international non-governmental organizations working in the oPt can apply to the Government of Israel for a B1 visa. A B1 visa is a work permit - usually multiple entry and issued for one year - that allows its holder to legally work in areas controlled by Israel, both in the occupied territory and in Israel. A B2 visa is a visitor visa which has stamped clearly on it "NOT PERMITTED TO WORK".

<sup>10</sup> Back-to-back shipping is a system whereby trucks offload their products or merchandise at a checkpoint and reload them onto another truck on the other side.

<sup>11</sup> In another recent informal UN survey, 76% of international NGOs stated that they had problems with coordinating the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip.