

NETPAL

Trauma-focused treatment for war-affected children and families from Gaza

Trauma management and prevention for Palestinian children and young people - with local support and long-term impact

Phase I: Development of a locally adapted trauma-focused therapy module, training of Palestinian therapists in screening and therapy implementation as well as evaluation of the interviews and training of further therapists in the course of the project.

The training of the therapists in the implementation of all project steps (Mental Health 'Needs Assessment', trauma-focused psychotherapy (KIDNET²), preparation of testimonies, training as multipliers) is carried out by experts in the field of trauma rehabilitation. They provide long-term supervision of all program steps.

Locally anchored, context-experienced specialists are deployed, who work within the framework of the program.

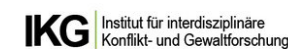


Background and mission

Children and adolescents in Gaza have been exposed to continuous traumatic stress for years as a result of war, displacement and famine¹. This results directly in high rates of clinically relevant mental disorders, especially trauma-related disorders, with considerable impairment of everyday functioning and quality of life. Indirectly, this traumatic stress leads to, among other things, trans-generational traumatization, the loss of education and employability and the disintegration of social coexistence.

Although evaluated and demonstrably effective measures for treatment and prevention are available - for example to alleviate psychological suffering, restore functional abilities and reduce the transgenerational consequences of trauma - there is a lack of widespread implementation on the ground.

In addition, the destruction of the infrastructure caused by the war makes it largely impossible to provide functioning healthcare, which further limits the already severely restricted aid services. **NETPAL** establishes a community-based screen-and-treat care line with three- stage triage and (KID)NET treatment - implemented in the long term as a **train-the-trainer model** by locally trained specialists and with scientific support.



Regionally active NGOs support health care (also in emergencies).

Phase 2: Conducting the interviews/screenings, identifying the respective need for help, evaluating the results, classification into a three-stage treatment offer according to triage (see "Differentiated support offer").

Phase 3: In accordance with the triaged treatment offer, the prioritized implementation of narrative exposure therapy (NET/KIDNET²) by local therapists under supervision takes place in the case of high stress intensity (red group)..

Phase 4: The Mental Health Needs Assessment as well as the therapy, supervision and training measures are scientifically monitored in order to systematically test their effectiveness and feasibility. Continuous data collection also enables quality control and management. The results serve as a basis for the planned expansion of psychotherapeutic care structures for minors traumatized by war in Gaza and - in the event of displacement or flight - in exile.

Location: The counseling services provided by local therapists are primarily carried out on site in local community centers. If necessary, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists are also available for acute emergencies.

Outlook: NETPAL I minors in Gaza (I), Egypt (II) and the West Bank (III).

Goals and target group

The aim of the project is to develop and scientifically test a programme to record the intensity of psychological stress in war-traumatized minors. Building on this, specific, trauma-focused treatment capacities are to be established locally for children and young people who are particularly severely affected. The model project NETPAL I directly in **Gaza** and NETPAL II in **Cairo** will be scientifically evaluated in terms of feasibility and efficiency. The target groups are minors affected by war and their immediate caregivers in Gaza as well as minors displaced by war in exile in Egypt. The long-term goal is to transfer the program to the local healthcare system.

Differentiated support services

Based on scientific findings and many years of experience in the treatment of trauma-related disorders, the project is based on three pillars:

- (1) Identification of psychological stress
- (2) Graduated trauma treatment measures according to evidence-based methodology
- (3) Training of additional therapists through local multipliers

The method of identification is a health interview in which the support needs of war-affected minors are determined via interviews (with questions on mental health and stress experienced).

The health interview is followed by a three-stage counselling or treatment program depending on the required support needs. The result

of the health interview is categorized according to a traffic light system:

Green – no, or low stress:

watchful waiting with a focus on social and behavioral functioning; information about possible support services

Yellow – medium stress:

Biography work (NAT) to reduce stress, activation of resources

Rot – high stress:

High probability of (chronicized) trauma sequelae, which cause considerable suffering and functional impairment; prioritized, the measures offered here are

- Qualified clinical diagnostic interview to confirm a diagnosis
- Guideline-based treatment (KIDNET²/ NET) by local therapists under supervision
- In case of danger to self and others: stabilization according to established emergency algorithm

¹ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025). Gaza genocide: A collective crime. Retrieved December 6, 2025, from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiapt/a-80-492-advance-unedited-version.pdf>

² Schauer, M., Neuner, F., & Elbert, T. (2025). Narrative exposure therapy (NET) for survivors of traumatic stress. Hogrefe Publishing.

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