

We are devastated by the human tragedy taking place in Gaza.

Over the past 30 years, the HOPE Foundation has been helping traumatized and handicapped children to build a meaningful life for themselves, by means of playful lessons in the fields of art and culture. Together with the Khan Younis Open Studio team and the PRCS University College of Ability Development, we offered Summer Camps; we helped create the online BeeHome platform where children can learn through engaging in art, film and games; we created The Academy, an initiative run by local artists; we supported the talented breakdance artist MYUZ in creating the first Breakdance Academy in Gaza; we helped create the Social Media Club (in collaboration with [Media Life](#)); and at the Beehome Academy ([www.beehomeacademy.com](http://www.beehomeacademy.com)) we shared what we learn, for everyone to enjoy and benefit from.

For 30 years, we were able to work in Gaza under the flag of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, for which we are deeply grateful. We envisioned a future where children would be able to cope with the effects of war. Within our programs, talented and motivated children learned new artistic techniques, developed their vision, worked together and exchanged ideas. This gave the youth of Gaza a voice, an opportunity to reach out to rest of the world, and has opened a window of hope towards – perhaps – a slightly better future. Over the years, we have seen thousands and thousands of wonderful young Palestinians who together have created the most amazing collection of artworks and performances. They enjoyed exciting and enlightening experiences to distract them from their daily worries, and to recover from trauma.

But now, all this is no longer possible. Over the past days, we have been witnessing a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions in Gaza. At first, we were able to maintain contact through mobile phones and online media. We witnessed the growing fears of innocent children, their parents' fear of running out of water and electricity, and the inability of all to flee or seek shelter while a constant stream of Israeli bombs keeps impacting civilians, schools and hospitals – day and night.

We experienced firsthand how the fear of death kept rising by the hour. But now, their mobile phones have turned silent.

We are anxiously following the events, and fear for the lives of the people of Gaza.

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Although we do feel powerless, we will continue doing the few things we are still able to do. On behalf of the HOPE Foundation, founder Ingrid Rollema is acting as spokesperson for the children of Gaza in the Dutch media. And the artist Suzanne Groothuis, who has been working in Gaza for seven years, is busy organizing events that will showcase eleven works of art, and their accompanying stories, by children from Gaza. These fundraising events will benefit the Cultural Emergency Fund of the HOPE Foundation event and will also include artistic workshops, film screenings, and spoken word performances. All money raised will go directly to local, Palestinian artists who will continue to work on their projects with children as soon as this is possible again.

We are grateful for your support!

[www.HOPE-foundation.nl](http://www.HOPE-foundation.nl)