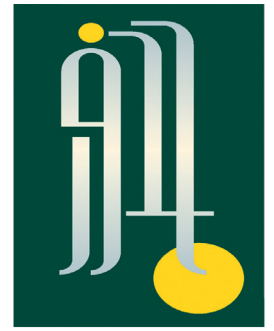




PCAHA

Palestinian Coalition For Adolescence Health



JUZOOR






Policy Paper

Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on dietary
and lifestyle behaviors among adolescents
in Palestine



Under the auspices of the Palestinian Coalition for Adolescence Health, this policy paper was conducted by Juzoor for Health and Social Development to study the negative effects of COVID-19 and the lockdown on the dietary and lifestyle habits of Palestinian adolescents. This paper also provides recommendations.

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THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT & COVID-19

The longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict and life under occupation are major health determinants in Palestine. The barriers by the occupation are the largest determinant of life of Palestinians and magnify all other barriers. Conditions under occupation, the compromised economy with high unemployment and now the challenges of dealing with COVID-19 exacerbate the difficult living situation and expose Palestinians to further vulnerabilities and stress reflected in various forms. Vulnerable households with already stretched responsibilities are likely to be the hardest hit.

The Gazans suffer most as a result of the ongoing imposed blockade on people's lives and the three wars Israel has waged on the Gaza Strip (GS) since 2007. The Israeli imposed prolonged siege similar to an imposed quarantine has led to grave living conditions, undermining the rights of around two million Palestinians who have been experiencing increased food insecurity and psychological trauma. Families have been internally displaced, forced to live in crowded shelters lacking the most basic needs and unable to meet their basic needs and privacy. They face threats of various communicable diseases, live in general insecurity and fear for life.

Amongst various burdens created by the realities of occupation and the lack of political and economic stability affecting all is the increasing double burden of malnutrition: the persistence of under-nutrition, combined with a rapid rise in overweight and obesity¹. The National Nutrition Surveillance report 2014 showed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Palestinian school children was **18.6%** and **7.24%** respectively².

A 2009 study on overweight and obesity among **1,484** children enrolled in UNRWA and government schools in the West Bank (WB), indicated that the prevalence of stunting was **7%** and underweight **3%**. Over **12%** of students were overweight and **6%** obese. Children start school with moderate stunting and underweight, but by the 9th grade, overweight and risk of overweight start to be observed, especially among girls³. The current lockdown may be causing irregular eating habits, excessive snacking and lack of physical activity, all associated with high calorie intake and increased risk of obesity. Furthermore, poverty exacerbated by loss of jobs and income under lockdown forces families to rely more on intake of Carbohydrates also associated with increased obesity.

1 Between 2010 and 2014, there was a 60% increase in the prevalence of overweight among children under 5. In Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014. Ramallah: Palestine, 2015.
Based on the UNICEF micronutrient survey 2013, 16-27% of children under 5 years had mild anemia, and 16-27% had moderate anemia. In I. Elmadfa I ARA, Ben-Abdullah K, Meyer AL, Ramlawi A, Bahar L, Rizkallah N, Skaik A, Zakout Z, El-Aissawi F: Palestinian Micronutrient Survey (PMS) 2013. Ramallah: United Nations Children's Fund office in the State of Palestine and Palestinian Ministry of Health, 2014.

2 Ministry of Health Nutrition Department: National Nutrition Surveillance System 2014 Report. Ramallah, 2014

3 In Massad S, Holleran S, Gebre-Medhin M, Dary O, Obeidi M, Bordelois P, Deckelbaum RJ, Khammash U: Double burden of undernutrition and obesity in Palestinian schoolchildren: a cross-sectional study. The Lancet 2012, 380:S5-S6.

The increasing problem with childhood undernutrition and obesity⁴ requires particular attention. If unattended to, it becomes problematic as children and adolescents who are overweight and obese are likely to be obese in adulthood and more likely to acquire Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) at a younger age.⁵ NCDs in Palestine have already been on the rise.⁶ In the absence of National Strategy in Palestine targeting childhood obesity and with limited national programs to address childhood obesity, like healthy school canteens and public health measures to restrict the adverse marketing of breastmilk substitutes, it becomes a priority issue of concern. Inspired by the growing epidemic of NCDs in Palestine, and the increasing rates of obesity⁷ among the population, including children, several related conferences were held in the past decade. The sixth conference was dedicated to “Childhood Obesity: A Time for Action”, with focus on childhood obesity.

Under this pandemic emergency situation, it is likely that nutrition and obesity are not priority policy issues. However, the urgency to tackle children and adolescents dietary and eating habits becomes paramount with added challenges of COVID-19 and its likely negative effects on the dietary and lifestyle habits of Palestinian children, adolescents and adults. Obesity as a main risk factor for NCDs impairs the health and quality of life of people and will add considerably to Palestinian national health-care budget.

Palestine, Lockdown and dietary intake and habits

With the detection of the first cases of COVID-19 infection, the Government of Palestine (GoP) declared on March 5th, 2020, a State of Emergency across the country. The GoP’s strategic approach has been designed to protect citizens (particularly the most vulnerable) from infection while also mitigating the stress on an already strained health care system through immediate COVID-19 related intervention. On May 26th, there has been **608** reported cases of COVID-19 in Palestine: **368** cases in the WB, **55** in the GS and **179** in Ej. **475** cases have recovered and **5** cases have been declared dead inclusive of Ej.⁸

The COVID-19 preventive and disease containment measures have resulted in extensive disruptions to daily lives. All vital governmental and non-governmental (NGO) services have been disrupted with some overstretched in their efforts to meet the expanding demands for services created by the pandemic. The crisis and the declared Emergency State have had their toll on an already weak Palestinian economy impacting all population strata’s. The pandemic with lockdown measures will also have a significant impact on an already vulnerable population’s short and long-term functioning and wellbeing. With the ongoing pandemic, a profound effect on all aspects of society including, mental and physical health along with major change to people’s daily living routines, including dietary, physical activity, and sleep habits among families, is to be expected and mitigated.

4 In a 2016, which assessed the double burden of undernutrition and obesity among Palestinian school children, it was revealed that among a sample of 1484, 3%, 12% and 6% were underweight, overweight and obese, respectively In Massad, S., et al., Double Burden of Undernutrition and Obesity in Palestinian Schoolchildren: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Food Nutr Bull*, 2016. 37(2): p. 144-52.

5 Mikki N, A.-R.H., Awartani F, Holmboe-Ottesen G, Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of stunting, underweight, and overweight among Palestinian school adolescents (13-15 years) in two major governorates in the WB. *BMC public Health*, 2009. 9: p. 485-496.

6 In 2016, NCDs, including diabetes, were responsible for 57% of mortality in Palestine. Between 2010 and 2014, there was a 60% increase in the prevalence of overweight among children under 5 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014. Ramallah: Palestine, 2015).

7 Juzoor for Health and Social Development, in collaboration with Augusta Victoria Hospital & the Institute of Human Nutrition, Columbia University, has been organizing biennial Nutrition Conferences. These conferences aim to bring together policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and national and international experts in order to contribute to the development, implementation, and monitoring of effective evidence-based strategies, policies, and programs related to nutrition in Palestine. These conferences are supported by key partners: Ministry of Health (MoH), MoH Nutrition Department, Ministry of Education, Nutrition National Committee, UNRWA, World Health Organization, and UNICEF.

8 www.corona.ps/details May 26, 2020

The siege of the GS has increased the incidence of food insecurity and is detrimental to dietary diversity. Analysis focusing on food deprivation in the context of impact of conflict and occupation on food security with exposure to a range of political, economic, and agricultural hardship and food insecurity experiences reflect that economic stress and unstable economic conditions have a negative effect on food consumption, increasing food insecurity at the household level.⁹

Families who are already experiencing significant tension and stress related to everyday survival under occupation can place a lower priority on physical-psychological health when faced with more immediate material and physical needs. The burdens of stress and traumatic events are often underestimated and compromised when all the population is stressed not only from a current pandemic but also from a belligerent occupation. Extended lockdown with unemployment and further loss of jobs will lead to severe repercussions on food access and utilization.

In addition, home confinement with fear, anxiety, and stress is recognized to have a direct impact on one's lifestyle, including dietary habits, eating, and physical activity and sleep patterns. In general, confinement leads to an increase in sedentary behaviors that lead to low levels of energy with excessive amount of inactivity associated with increased risk of obesity. Densely populated areas including refugee camps and cities are most at risk as village and small town dwellers may have more space to move in.

Adolescents in lockdown

It is no surprise that the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown could potentially be affecting the dietary and lifestyle habits of Palestinian children, adolescents and adults. This is extremely alarming as Palestine is already increasingly affected by the double burden of malnutrition: the persistence of under-nutrition, combined with a rapid rise in overweight and obesity.

Teenagers are generally used to connecting with peers on social media and that would be relatively the same under lockdown. The real difference however for them under lockdown is being forced to stay at home with their families for long periods of time, feeling "trapped" in the same space with heightened anxieties and emotions.¹⁰

During a pandemic with lockdown, adolescents may face increased loneliness, stress, and anxiety. Behavior may change including: changes in sleep, appetite, mood (feeling overwhelmed, upset, frustrated or angry), difficulty focusing, lack of motivation, feeling hopeless, or loss of pleasure.

Apart from worries about the virus itself, COVID-19 has intensified fears, anxiety and tensions in families in general who have found themselves obliged to be in lockdown in densely populated homes with children who are out of school, fathers and or mothers or both who have lost their jobs and bombarded with local and global media on the toll of the virus.

On a positive side, the lockdown has afforded families with more time to spend together, prepare food and eat together. Yet there is a mental toll of quarantine and lockdown. People who are quarantined are very likely to develop a wide range of symptoms of psychological stress and disorder, including low mood, insomnia, stress, anxiety, anger, irritability, emotional exhaustion, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms.

9 Food Insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Reflections in Light of the COVID-19 Lockdown Sharesby Tracy Kuo Lin, Rawan Kafri, Weeam Hammoudeh and Tiziana Leone.

10 <https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/quaranteen-adolescence-in-lockdown/>

In cases where parents are quarantined with children, the mental health toll becomes even steeper. Reasons for stress in lockdown includes: fear of risk of infection, fear of becoming sick or of losing loved ones, as well as the prospect of financial hardship. All these, and many more, are present in this current pandemic.¹¹

COVID-19 is stressful throughout the pandemic and may result in longer term problems beyond the symptoms of the infection, recovery or fatality to financial burdens and longer term effects on the individual, the family and the society at large. Adolescents are touched especially as related to its impact on lifestyles and social behavior. This warrants understanding of the need to also insure protective mental health measures.¹²

With pandemics and lockdowns, it is generally known that at-risk groups for long-term mental health issues will be: healthcare workers, young people under **30** and children, the elderly and those with disability and in poverty. Insights on the long-term damage of crises and widespread disasters have been accepted in the field of trauma psychology for decades. This current COVID-19 large scale pandemic and the lockdown measures require dealing with intense stressors which require mitigation of its toxic effects.¹³

Exploring the impact of lockdown on dietary and eating habits enables the highlighting of associations between changed conditions and individual level behavior amidst such a crisis/pandemic. It helps stakeholders understand how individual behavior changes under lockdown conditions and how such crises, may directly impact behavior and health status of populations at large. It will inform public health policies, and, in particular, will contribute to policy planning for future pandemic crises in regards to nutrition and lifestyle behaviors.

This policy statement relates to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation in Palestine with focus on dietary and eating habits of adolescents. It hopes to promote interventions to support engagement in healthy-eating and lifestyle of adolescents, while under the current lockdown conditions and in the future.

Adolescents and dietary habits under lockdown

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to errors in judgment that lead to risk-taking, are hypersensitive to immediate rewards and less equipped to regulate their impulses. Their risk-taking could also be linked to ways in which younger individuals evaluate new information and adjust beliefs while being particularly inclined to demonstrating irrational optimism. In a pandemic, adolescents may more likely discount news about the severity of the novel coronavirus. Instead, focus on the fact that they are unlikely to die from COVID-19. Communicating the threat of disease may have limited impact on adolescents but they are more apt to respond to social pressure and communication of information about social norms (i.e., informal standards of behavior). If their peers are engaged in social distancing, they are likely to follow suit.¹⁴

Social and physical distancing and self-quarantining come with challenges to all but especially to children, adolescents and teens. Suddenly, their routines have completely changed. No going to school, no seeing of friends, forced to spend long hours with the family at home when they want more control over their lives. They are missing a lot.¹⁵

11 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/this-is-the-psychological-side-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-that-were-ignoring/>

12 <https://www.wftv.com/living/family/how-does-covid-19-anxiety-impact-children/BJPFJVK4FHARLAIGZMEEPG3JI/>. By: Dwight Bain-Updated: April 6, 2020

13 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/this-is-the-psychological-side-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-that-were-ignoring/>. Lockdown is the world's biggest psychological experiment - and we will pay the price

14 [https://www.vcstar.com/story/opinion/columnists/2020/04/09/teenagers-may-downfall-preventing-spread-covid-19/5124412002/Commentary: Teenagers may be downfall of preventing COVID-19 spread. Jessica Londeree Saleska, April 9, 2020](https://www.vcstar.com/story/opinion/columnists/2020/04/09/teenagers-may-downfall-preventing-spread-covid-19/5124412002/Commentary:Teenagers%20may%20be%20downfall%20of%20preventing%20COVID-19%20spread.%20Jessica%20Londeree%20Saleska,%20April%209,%202020)

15 <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/quaranteened-helping-teenagers-cope-lockdown>

Furthermore not all respond to lockdown stress in the same way and some may be more affected right now than others. Main behavior changes include unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.¹⁶

Under the current restrictive measures, Palestinians, including children and adolescents have been forced to stay at home and are at risk of weight gain due to overeating, consuming unhealthy foods, and physical inactivity because of movement restrictions as well as minimal stimulation. There are also worries that families in general are risk of malnutrition due to the lack of access to proper and nutritional food because of continued unemployment, recent loss of jobs or salary cuts amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This further exacerbates the situation of an estimated **13%** of the population in the WB and **39%** in the GS who were food insecure in 2018¹⁷ which translates to **1.6 million Palestinians** in need of food assistance. Number of families in need of food assistance is on the rise with over 120,000 families currently in need.

A study on youth and obesity concluded that it's important to recognize adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown as critical in avoiding depreciation of weight control efforts among youths afflicted with excess adiposity. Depending on duration, these untoward lockdown effects may have a lasting impact on a child's or adolescent's adult adiposity level. There were no changes in reported vegetable intake; fruit intake increased during the lockdown. By contrast, potato chip, red meat, and sugary drink intakes increased significantly. Time spent in sports activities decreased and sleep time increased and so did screen time.¹⁸

In the GS the situation may be worse.¹⁹ According to UNRWA more than half of the Gaza Population cannot cover their basic food needs and more than a million inhabitants are dependent on quarterly UNRWA food handouts.²⁰ About 80 percent of the population of the GS is dependent on humanitarian assistance provided by various international organizations.²¹ The siege and food insecurity and the pandemic with lockdown increase the incidence of food insecurity and are detrimental to dietary diversity. This is exacerbated in vulnerable area households with significantly lower dietary diversity. Households may be reducing dietary diversity in order to maximize caloric intake when experiencing food insecurity in conflict settings. Deprived households often have multiple vulnerabilities that interact with each other and increase the negative impacts on food security.²²

Juzoor for Health and Social Development conducted a study²³ to track lifestyle habits and behaviors of Palestinian adolescents (ages 10-19 years old) in the WB during lockdown to help address important issues about the overall impact of social distancing measures on their health. The survey included a range of lifestyle behaviors including physical activity, diet and nutrition, sleep and screen time. It addressed two aims 1) Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on changes in nutrition and dietary habits among Palestinian adolescents and (2) Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on changes in physical activity, sleep patterns.

16 <https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/quaranteen-adolescence-in-lockdown/Adolescence in lockdown>

17 World Food Programme: WFP State of Palestine Country Brief . 2018.

18 Effects of COVID-19 Lockdown on Lifestyle Behaviors in Children with Obesity Living in Verona, Italy: A Longitudinal Study. Angelo Pietrobelli et al. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.22861>. Study aimed to test the hypothesis that youths with obesity, when removed from structured school activities and confined to their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, will display unfavorable trends in lifestyle behaviors. Sample included 41 children and adolescents with obesity participating in a longitudinal observational study in Verona, Italy. Lifestyle information including diet, activity, and sleep behaviors were collected at baseline and three weeks into the lockdown with mandatory home confinement where changes in outcomes over the two study time points were evaluated.

19 The daily life and living in the GS does not meet minimum required standards for decent living .Electricity shortage lasting 12-18 hours a day weakens the ability of the different sectors to provide basic services and impedes livelihood. Water is considered not fit for human consumption with less than 3% of available water drinkable
According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, unemployment rate in Palestine averaged 23.78 percent from 1995 until 2019. It has increased from 29% in July 2018 to 32.5% in July 2019. Unemployment rate in the GS is three times higher than in the WB. It reached 52% in 2018, 8% higher than 2017 and 20% higher than 2007. It has reached 69% among youth ages 15-29.

Results indicated unfavorable changes in risk factors for weight gain including eating, nutritional, physical activity, sleep and screen time behaviors among adolescents during the COVID-19 lockdown, raising concerns for the health and well-being of Palestinian adolescents amidst the current lockdown and other potential closures and crises in the future. The study concluded with the critical need to implement preventative measures for obesity and overweight during lockdown periods and national-closures and for policy makers to consider the lifestyle effects of the lockdown on youths at risk and with obesity when making decisions regarding the current lockdown and related future crises.

Needed Action²⁴

There is broad consensus among academics and health professionals about the care required during and post crises and major incidents. The physical and mental impact due to lifestyle changes under a pandemic and Lockdown may have far reaching effects burdening services in the future including those resulting from changes in eating habits. Stakeholders should- to the extent possible now under impediments of COVID -19 and later on with ease of restrictions -work in close contact with national health policy-makers to do the following while ensuring to uphold young people's human rights and needs:

In terms of services:

- ▶ Make available mental health resources online to guide adolescents and their families through the stress and tension they are experiencing during the lockdown and the aftermath of the pandemic.
- ▶ Train institutions and NGOs with expertise in training on various related mental and psychological issues under crisis to offer training for those in need.
- ▶ Monitor food supplies in terms of labelling nutritional facts.
- ▶ Implement telemedicine nutritional programs for children, adolescents and youth during lockdowns and closures.

In terms of research:

- ▶ Conduct research and related surveys. Use results to inform policy makers, service provision and raising awareness.
- ▶ Develop manuals and guidebooks to help parents, caregivers and teachers to manage tensions, fears and emotions due to the lockdown and through the gradual move to eased restrictions and to normal life.

In terms of communication and awareness raising:

- ▶ Educate people about the expected psychological impact and reactions to crises and raise awareness on obesity and nutritional diversity targeting the population of all age groups
- ▶ Raise awareness to inform stakeholders on the impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on changes in nutrition and lifestyle-related behaviors among Palestinian adolescents.
- ▶ Inform stakeholders of vulnerable populations who are at risk of obesity or malnutrition, and provide them with assistance.
- ▶ Share and discuss emerging research, best practices, community-based efforts and effective national, regional, and global policy strategies to prevent childhood overweight and obesity.

20 www.UNRWA.org – newsroom. May 13, 2019

21 aawsat.com. 80% of Gaza Strip Population Depends on Aid .Wednesday, 13 June, 2018

22 Food Insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Reflections in Light of the COVID-19 Lockdown. By Sharesby Tracy, Kuo Lin, Rawan Kafri, Weeam Hammoudeh and Tiziana Leone.

- ▶ Engage adolescents in action during and post lockdown²⁵: partnering, safely and effectively, with young people, recognizing young people's actions and potential to mitigate against the pandemic and to raise awareness of its impacts especially with young people
- ▶ Develop and use social media messages (e.g. videos, pamphlets, success stories) to promote physical activity in children's, adolescents and youth's daily routines during lockdowns and closures including promoting:
 - Outdoor activities while observing distancing regulations
 - At least 60 minutes daily of activity of moderate intensity
 - Virtual exercises on the internet
 - Taking breaks from sitting

In terms of networking and policy formulation:

- ▶ Bring to the table stakeholders: government, civil society, municipalities, universities, non-governmental organizations, youth organizations and others to address obesity among school children/adolescents.
- ▶ Initiate the implementation of policies, by stimulating a policy dialogue involving several stakeholders including on labelling with nutritional facts and others.
- ▶ Bring together diverse stakeholders to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships and cross-sector collaborations, and to address socio-ecological factors.
- ▶ Foster networking and exchange of know-how amongst institutions and professionals, national and international.
- ▶ Make the response to obesity an urgent public health priority with coordinated public and private sector response.
- ▶ Pave the way to developing a National Strategy and action plan in Palestine targeting childhood obesity.
- ▶ Elevate evidence and practice-based strategies that focus on reducing inequities in high-risk, low income communities.
- ▶ Provide a platform to discuss the double burden of nutrition and identify important challenges to be considered when planning a national strategy to prevent childhood obesity in Palestine.
- ▶ Mobilize resources to implement drafted policies to combat obesity. Enhance the coordination and cooperation of various actors and to assess how to scale up nutrition programs and jointly tackle childhood obesity.

23 Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on nutrition and lifestyle behaviors among adolescents in a Palestinian population. Included a random sample of 600 adolescents -300 boys and 300 girls- aged 10-19 years in the WB including East Jerusalem between April 24 and April 27, 2020. 71, 5% lived in cities and were students (96.2%), with approximately 80.0% in primary or middle school. Participants were interviewed over the telephone by trained researchers using a structured questionnaire. One adolescent participant was randomly selected from each household using the Kish Table. The sample was chosen from all WB governorates. 65.7% were chosen using randomly generated phone numbers and 34.3% using the snowball technique. Verbal informed consent was obtained from parents/legal guardians and study was approved by the Helsinki Ethics Committee of the Palestinian Health Research Council in the GS.

24 Several action points appear in Juzoor's study mentioned above titled Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on nutrition and lifestyle behaviors among adolescents in a Palestinian population

25 UN IANYS STATEMENT ON COVID-19 & YOUTH

In terms of fund raising and support:

- ▶ Make funding available for protective measures on COVID-19 now and in the future for post crisis measures.
- ▶ Aside from coordinating efforts amongst international funders for current situation under the Pandemic, coordinate for post Pandemic efforts to ensure maximum coverage of required interventions including dealing with impact of lifestyle changes.

In terms of advocacy:

- ▶ Call upon Israel to respect its obligations as an occupying power of most parts of the state of Palestine including E1 and Area C and thus its responsibilities towards the occupied people and to refrain from carrying oppressive measures which further increase people's anxiety and fears. Additionally, un-impede and facilitate work of humanitarian actors by easing/lifting restrictions on movement for material and service provision guaranteeing appropriate public health and safety measures and arrangements.


STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS


For Long Term


- ▶ Despite the overwhelming needs and budget limitations, continue to seek inclusion of related psychological support in ministry budgets.
- ▶ Consistently monitor obesity and nutritional trends under COVID-19 and beyond with support from various stakeholders.
- ▶ Develop a strategic plan to implement nutrition and physical activity interventions and programs in Palestinian schools during the school year and the summer break.
- ▶ Knowledgeable educators to promote the movement behavior guidelines, and embrace opportunities to incorporate healthy movement messages, practices, and policies into daily home-school routines and lessons.
- ▶ Promote physical activity and healthy diets in schools and communities, creating more opportunities for families to interact in promoting healthy lifestyles for their children.
- ▶ Promote active lifestyles; promote intake of fruits and vegetables, restrict intake of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods (e.g. packaged snacks), restrict the intake of sugars-sweetened soft drinks and promote specific meal times during the day.


- ▶ Raise awareness to limit television viewing among children and adolescents in schools and families, by providing other active lifestyles and limiting exposure of young children to heavy marketing practices of energy-dense, micro-nutrient-poor foods.
- ▶ Address economic a food security impact of the crisis to reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.
- ▶ Build on the proactive engagement of young people in combating the spread of the virus and its impact, in raising awareness by disseminating information about the virus, reaching out to their peers and using various platforms to spread fact-based information and supporting others.
- ▶ Recognize the multiple impacts the COVID-19 on young people and their human rights including: right to health, safety, employment, healthy environment, education, food security and good nutrition, participation and inclusion and the right to peace and security.²⁶
- ▶ Learn from current experience to inform a process of review of policies and services as needed under crisis in the future.
- ▶ Conduct research and related surveys on COVID-19 and obesity .Use results to inform policy makers, service provision and raising awareness.
- ▶ Continue fundraising for services highlighting importance with implications of the current crisis on the need of support to services now and in the future in the course of returning to normalcy.
- ▶ Review Palestinian nutrition and NCDs programs in terms of impact, challenges and lessons learned.
- ▶ Expose Palestinian institutions and professionals to the latest evidence regarding science-based nutrition and NCD programs and research findings.
- ▶ Advocate to end occupation and for meeting Palestinian human rights, including access to food.


26 Ibid

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