



Operation Smile

OPERATION SMILE PALESTINE

📍 PALESTINE | 2026



OUR FORMULA FOR TRANSFORMATION

At Operation Smile, we believe safe, essential surgery is a human right. For over 40 years, we've transformed lives, strengthened health systems and built sustainable solutions.



We partner with local volunteers, medical leaders, health ministries, universities and non-governmental organizations to bring essential surgical care closer to patients' homes, starting with cleft surgery and comprehensive care. Together, we transform health systems by training and equipping local professionals, strengthening infrastructure and building capacity for sustainable care.



Operation 100 is our bold strategy to bring essential surgical care closer to patients' homes by investing in frontline health workers and strengthening district hospitals.



By focusing on district hospitals, we're bringing care closer to patients, creating access to surgical care, building local capacity and fostering stronger health systems and communities.



Education is a force multiplier. We equip frontline health workers with the skills and resources to deliver sustainable, high-quality care independently for their communities.



Operation 100 is just the start.

We're breaking down barriers to surgical care and advancing health equity, so no one is left behind.



BRINGING CARE CLOSER TO HOME

To ensure that every child has access to care close to home, we equip local healthcare providers with the skills and resources to deliver high-quality care. Through our hubs, we provide direct patient care while strengthening local expertise and healthcare systems, building the capacity needed to sustain care for generations to come.

Our hub is **Al-Ahli Hospital** in Hebron, a well-equipped teaching hospital and one of the largest and most advanced hospitals in the West Bank. Since Operation Smile Palestine was established in 2021, all surgical programs have been conducted at Al-Ahli Hospital, supported by a fully credentialed multidisciplinary volunteer team. In Fiscal Year 2027, Al-Ahli Hospital will become an Operation 100 site.

In Nablus, **Rafedia Hospital** houses the main burn unit in the West Bank, built by Operation Smile in 1997 and staffed by six of our volunteers.

Also in Nablus, **Women's Union Hospital** will open as a new Operation Smile Center serving patients across the northern region.



Hospitals across the West Bank refer new patients with cleft conditions to Operation Smile Palestine.



THE NEED



Cleft conditions

Around 200 children are born each year with a cleft condition in Palestine.

Lack of infrastructure

In the Gaza Strip, sustained attacks and a lack of medical supplies, food, water and fuel have virtually depleted an already under-resourced health system. Essential health services, from maternal and newborn care to treatment for chronic conditions, remain severely disrupted.

Limited access to care

The health system in Palestine is highly fragmented, with Israel's separation barrier and checkpoints hindering health care provision for many Palestinian communities. In some areas of the West Bank, restrictions on Palestinian development prevent the establishment of permanent health facilities. The Israeli permits regime applies to most Palestinians in the Palestinian territory, affecting access to health care for patients.

A survey conducted by Operation Smile's revealed that 87% of patients arriving at our programs in Palestine could not have undergone surgery without our support.

Limitations in daily life

Children and adults with cleft conditions face challenges throughout their lifetime. 31% of patients arriving at Operation Smile programs said that their school performance is impacted by their condition and 36% said that their condition limited their marriage prospects.



OUR IMPACT IN PALESTINE

Since 2021, Operation Smile has been working in Palestine to provide care for children born with cleft conditions. Since then, we have delivered surgery to more than **270 patients** with cleft conditions and **20 patients** with burns, alongside more than **5,000 medical consultations**.

But there is more to do.

In July 2026-June 2027, Operation Smile will invest \$387,585 in surgical care, comprehensive cleft care, medical education and health system strengthening, helping more children access life-changing care closer to home while building the skilled local teams needed to deliver it for generations to come.



Program Pillar	Budget
Direct Patient Care	\$150,001
Education & Training	\$68,322
Health Infrastructure & Equipment	\$2,400
Local Program Operations	\$161,466
Student Programs	\$5,396
Total July 2026 - June 2027	\$387,585

Outputs: July 2026 - June 2027	
Cleft Surgical Patients	140
Burn Surgical Patients	75
Oral Health Patients	406
Nutrition Patients	374
Speech Patients	354
Patients Recruited	180
Total Training Spots	898

*Estimated costs in USD based on current knowledge and subject to change in response to an evolving healthcare landscape

*Table reflects country-level budget. Operation Smile's global office makes additional centralized investments to support country-level programming



JULY 2026 – JUNE 2027 PROGRAMS



Surgical Care

New this year, a Center at Women's Union Hospital in Nablus will bring specialized cleft care closer to children and families across the northern West Bank, helping more patients receive timely treatment and ongoing follow-up care without the burden of long-distance travel. By establishing a permanent local cleft surgery program, the Center will strengthen regional capacity, improve continuity of care, and ensure families have reliable access to the services they need throughout their treatment journey.

The expansion of the Burn Unit at Rafedia Hospital will establish regular access to specialized burn surgery and multidisciplinary burn care in the West Bank. Through weekly surgical services and ongoing follow-up care, patients will be better positioned to recover from burn injuries, reduce complications, and achieve improved long-term outcomes. Together, these investments will expand access to specialized surgical care, strengthen local healthcare capacity, and improve the quality of care available to some of the region's most vulnerable patients.



Comprehensive Care

Comprehensive cleft care supports patients throughout their treatment journey, well beyond the operating room. Specialized feeding and nutrition support will provide caregivers with practical guidance on infant feeding, nutrition, and breastfeeding when possible, helping children with cleft conditions gain the weight they need for healthy development, safe surgery, and recovery.

Specialized dental care will continue for children with cleft conditions through assessments, preventive care, fluoride treatments (FMO), and other treatment services, helping protect oral health, reduce preventable complications, and support successful treatment outcomes. Expanded speech and language therapy services will help children strengthen their communication skills, enabling them to engage more confidently with peers, succeed in school, and participate more fully in everyday life.





JULY 2026 – JUNE 2027

PROGRAMS

(CONTINUED)



Medical Education

Operation Smile Palestine will strengthen local capacity to deliver safe care by investing in the people who provide it. American Heart Association courses in Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support will be provided to volunteers and partner hospital staff, strengthening emergency response skills and patient safety.

Education will also be embedded within surgical programs: in addition to providing surgery, programs in Hebron and Nablus will create opportunities for continuous learning and mentorship from experienced educators in cleft surgery and burn care. Volunteers will also participate in regional and international surgical programs, conferences and workshops to expand their clinical skills and build professional networks that support continued learning and high-quality care.



Patient Management and Student Programs

Operation Smile Palestine will strengthen the systems that connect patients to life-changing care. Through its network of hospitals, community outreach efforts, and referral partnerships, Operation Smile will identify patients earlier, connect families to needed services, and support continuity of care throughout the treatment journey. These efforts will help ensure that children with cleft conditions and other surgical needs can access timely, high-quality care and the follow-up services needed to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Student engagement will expand through educational activities, volunteer opportunities, and community outreach for medical, dental, nursing, and allied health students, helping cultivate the next generation of compassionate healthcare leaders. Students will also participate in the Middle East and North Africa Student Conference and the International Student Leadership Conference, building leadership skills, expanding their professional networks, and preparing them to make a lasting impact in their communities.



Infrastructure and Equipment

Investments in facilities and equipment will expand access to specialized care for patients while strengthening the long-term capacity of local hospitals to deliver high-quality services. At Women's Union Hospital, a new Center will bring together surgery, dental care, and speech therapy under one roof, enabling patients with cleft conditions to access comprehensive treatment closer to home. At Rafedia Hospital, expansion of the Burn Unit will significantly increase access to specialized burn care in the West Bank. With dedicated space for surgery, wound care, outpatient services, intensive care, and isolation, patients will be able to receive the coordinated treatment and ongoing follow-up needed to support recovery, reduce complications, and improve long-term outcomes. Al-Ahli Hospital will receive medical equipment and resources that strengthen its ability to provide specialized, sustainable care, helping ensure that more patients can access high-quality treatment within their own communities. Together, these investments will create a stronger network of care capable of serving more patients, improving continuity of treatment, and expanding access to specialized services for years to come.



FIVE-YEAR VISION



By 2030, Operation Smile Palestine will expand access to care by strengthening the systems, facilities and partnerships that enable patients to receive the services they need. Medical education will strengthen capacity among healthcare professionals through structured training, mentorship and knowledge-sharing.



Investment in hospital infrastructure will enable hospitals to provide high-quality, sustainable health services. This will include enhancing clinical spaces, upgrading essential resources and supporting the development of hospital capabilities to meet patients' growing needs.



Comprehensive care will continue to develop a patient-centered approach that addresses the full spectrum of needs for children with cleft conditions, expanding access to oral health, speech and language therapy and nutrition while strengthening coordination among health providers.



Operation Smile Palestine will also strengthen partnerships, raise awareness and improve access to cleft care through policy engagement, community outreach and collaboration with hospitals and universities. Referral pathways will be further developed to connect more children with timely care.



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