Rise Alliance for Children
Noor Al Amal School Partnership
Academic & Social-Emotional Support for Gazan Refugee Children

Supporting a Gazan refugee-led school with play-based, trauma-informed, language-rich learning and embedded teacher coaching and modeling.

Mid-term Report

Submitted to Fidinim International Charity Foundation on September 15, 2026

Context

Rise's Palestine initiative in Cairo was established to restore safety, routine, play, communication, and belonging for children displaced from Gaza. The February 2026 proposal sought Fidinam International Charity Foundation's support specifically to deepen Rise's partnership with Noor Al Amal School, a Gazan refugee-led school launched in September 2025 and led by Dr. Suhair and displaced educators.

The proposed 12-month engagement centered on teacher training, coaching and modeling, classroom learning materials, and trauma-informed, language-rich learning for the school's students.

1. Was the grant for general operations, a specific project, or expansion of an existing project?

The grant supported expansion of Rise's existing Palestine initiative in Cairo. Fidinam's support was requested for a 12-month partnership with Noor Al Amal School, building on Rise's existing community-based learning work and extending Rise's play-based, trauma-informed, language-rich approach into a Gazan refugee-led school setting.

The proposal identified 175 students in grades 1-4 as the intended school population. During implementation, approximately 200 children participated in the school-based activities.

2. Were the funds utilized as described in your proposal? If not, what are the changes and why?

Implementation remained closely aligned with the purposes described in the proposal and project budget: direct educational activities for children, classroom materials and supplies, school-based planning and teacher development, coaching support, and Rise program oversight, methodology, observation, and evaluation.

One important implementation adaptation was the way teacher development occurred. Rather than relying only on stand-alone training sessions, Rise integrated coaching and modeling into the school-based activities themselves. Noor Al Amal teachers were present and engaged while Rise staff facilitated play-based, movement, communication, and social-emotional activities with children. This created repeated opportunities for teachers to observe techniques in practice, participate alongside Rise staff, ask questions, and strengthen their own ability to use trauma-informed and language-rich strategies with students.

3. Briefly describe the implementation, what worked well, any unexpected outcomes, challenges, modifications.

During the academic year, Rise worked with approximately 200 children at Noor Al Amal School through interactive activities that combined learning through play, movement, group games, communication, cooperation, and age-appropriate self-expression. The approach was designed not only to deliver activities to children, but also to strengthen the classroom environment in which children were learning after prolonged disruption and displacement.

Coaching and modeling were embedded within the school work. Teachers were present and actively engaged in Rise-led activities, allowing Rise staff to demonstrate practical ways to structure play, support participation, build language, respond to different attention and regulation needs, and create a predictable and emotionally supportive environment. This in-the-moment modeling created an ongoing professional learning opportunity for teachers while maintaining direct support for children.

What worked particularly well was the flexibility of play and movement. The team observed increased participation in group activities, greater peer interaction, stronger communication and cooperation, more opportunities for self-expression, and a stronger sense of comfort and safety during participation. The embedded coaching format also connected teacher learning directly to the needs and responses of the children in front of them.

Summer Youth Club - Continuity During the School Break

When school was out for the summer, the broader Rise Palestine program continued to provide structured support through a dedicated youth club at the Rise office/community center. In support of this initiative, Rise received ongoing technical support from the Ackerman Institute through bi-monthly consultation calls with the Cairo team. These sessions supported the development of the summer youth clubs, strengthened approaches to measuring impact, and helped the team reflect on participant needs so programming could remain responsive and adaptive throughout implementation.

Two groups served boys and girls ages 11 to 15, with at least 10 participants in each group. The youth club provided a safe, non-judgmental space for adolescents to explore emotions, stress, relationships, personal strengths, and hopes for the future.

The summer format used group discussion, trust-building and teamwork activities, emotional-expression exercises, Tree/River of Life and Friendship Web activities, and individual and group reflection. Including this work in the report shows how Rise maintained continuity for older children during the school break while adapting the content to adolescents' developmental and psychosocial needs:

- Children varied significantly in developmental level, concentration, participation, and emotional readiness, reflecting the effects of displacement and instability.

- Large groups made individualized attention difficult, so flexible group-based activities were important for keeping children meaningfully engaged.
- For adolescents, sensitive topics required time and trust before participants were comfortable speaking openly.
- Changing family circumstances continued to affect attendance and continuity, requiring the program to remain adaptable.

4. What are the learnings from this project? Will it be repeated, is it ongoing, does it need to be modified?

A central learning is that teacher development can be especially effective when it is embedded in real classroom practice. At Noor Al Amal, teachers did not need to leave their students or wait for a separate workshop to see Rise methodology in action. By participating in activities alongside Rise staff, they could observe how strategies affected children's attention, communication, regulation, cooperation, and confidence, and then begin applying those approaches themselves.

The work also reinforced the need for age-specific programming and continuity across the school year. Younger children benefited from play, movement, predictable routines, and supported interaction, while adolescents needed more direct opportunities to discuss stress, identity, relationships, emotional regulation, and the future. Rise intends to continue the school partnership, deepen coaching and follow-up with teachers, strengthen continuity of participation, and improve systematic outcome measurement.

5. How is the community where the work is done involved in the ideation, implementation, and evaluation of the work?

The project is strongly locally led. Noor Al Amal was created by Dr. Suhair, an experienced educator displaced from Gaza, together with an Egyptian school director who opened the building to Palestinian students. The school is led by displaced Gazan educators who understand the academic, social, and emotional realities facing the children and families they serve.

Teachers are active participants in implementation rather than passive recipients of training. Their presence and engagement during Rise-led activities allows the program to respond to classroom realities in real time and creates a continuous feedback loop between Rise staff and the school team.

Children's participation, responses, and needs also shape how activities are paced and adapted. In the summer youth club, adolescents participate actively through discussion, reflection, and activities centered on their experiences, relationships, strengths, stressors, and future aspirations.

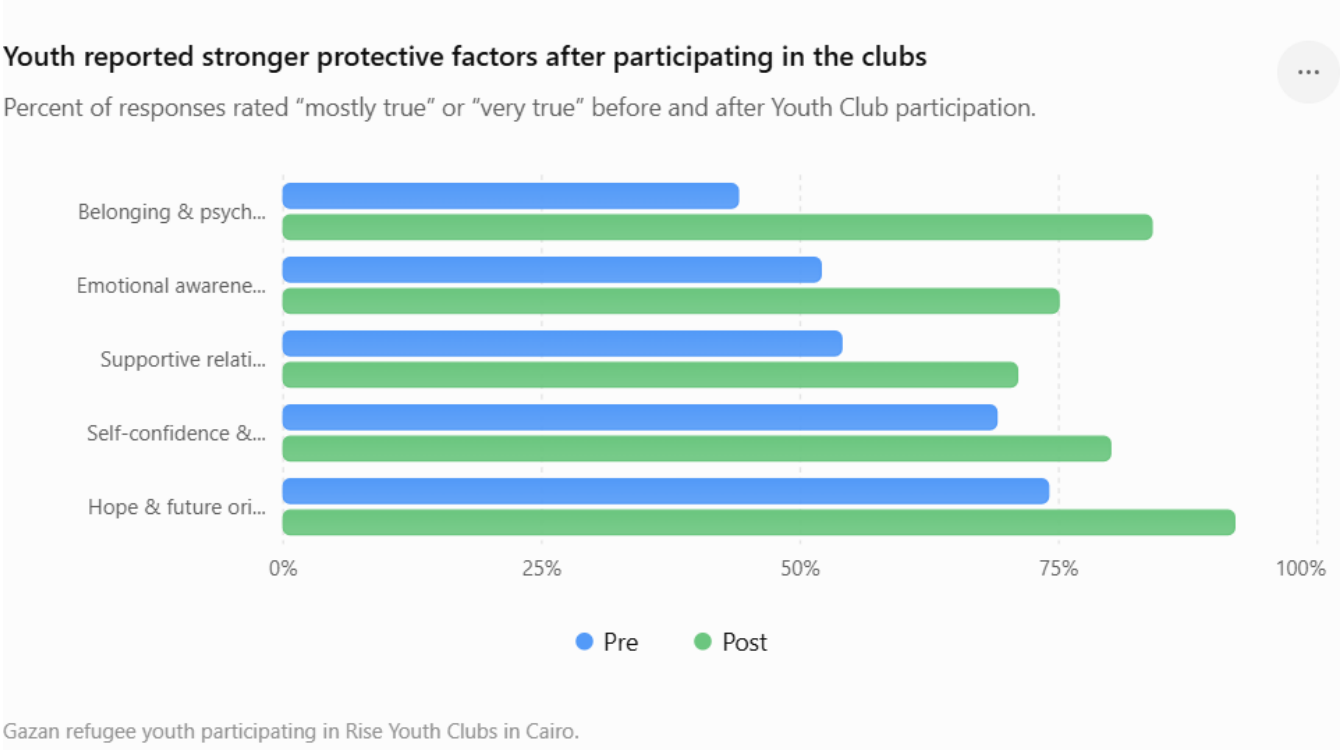
6. What evaluation method are you using to measure outcome and impact?

Rise uses a combination of structured assessment, observation, and implementation learning. In the school-based work, staff monitor participation and engagement, peer interaction, communication and cooperation, self-expression, comfort and safety, and how children respond to play-, movement-, and language-based activities. Teacher participation in coached and modeled activities also gives Rise staff an opportunity to observe how strategies are understood and incorporated within the classroom environment.

For the summer youth club, Rise used pre- and post-program assessments focused on emotional expression, communication, self-awareness, sense of safety and trust, peer relationships, ability to manage emotions and stress, and outlook and hopes for the future.

Results are as follows (responses from specific questions within each category; please note category summaries are reflected in the following growth):

- ✓ Youth Club participants showed substantial gains in psychosocial wellbeing and protective factors. Among youth with matched pre- and post-test data, 94% improved on their overall assessment, and the proportion of positive responses across the 15 indicators increased from 59% to 80%.
- ✓ The strongest changes were in areas particularly relevant to youth affected by displacement: feeling safe, being able to express their ideas, and knowing a trusted adult they could turn to for help.
- ✓ The proportion of youth who felt safe increased from 24% to 94%, those comfortable sharing their ideas increased from 24% to 88%, and those reporting access to a trusted adult increased from 24% to 71%.



Gazan refugee youth participating in Rise Youth Clubs in Cairo.

For Gazan youth rebuilding stability in Cairo, these results suggest that the Youth Clubs are creating more than a place to participate in activities. They created a space where young people are feeling safer, finding their voice, building supportive relationships, and strengthening their confidence in navigating challenges and imagining a positive future.

We also noted that because of the specific conditions in which Gazan refugee children are coming into Al-Noor, having experienced several years out of school and severe learning loss, we adapted the measurement tool specifically for Al-Noot students to capture an older age range. Data will be made available to Fidinim in the end of year report, which we plan to submit in January 2027.

7. Have you noticed any change over time in the communities or regions you are working in?

The continued demand for the Cairo program shows that displacement-related educational and psychosocial needs remain significant. At the same time, the response has become more locally

organized and differentiated. Noor Al Amal itself is an example of displaced educators building a school solution for their own community, while Rise's role has evolved toward strengthening that locally led effort through child programming, materials, coaching, modeling, and technical support.

Within the school partnership, approximately 200 children participated during the reporting period compared with 175 students identified in the original proposal. Rise staff also observed stronger

participation, peer interaction, communication, cooperation, and self-expression over the course of activities. Continued instability, however, still affects concentration, emotional well-being, and consistent attendance, so the need for flexible and sustained support remains high.

8. Going forward how can we best support your work?

A 2027 grant would allow Rise to sustain the Noor Al Amal partnership long enough for children and teachers to benefit from consistency rather than short-term intervention. Support is particularly valuable for classroom materials and supplies, ongoing teacher coaching and modeling, coach transportation, program oversight, and stronger monitoring and evaluation.

Additional support would also help Rise deepen the capacity of Gazan educators themselves so that trauma-informed, language-rich, play-based practices become increasingly embedded in the school's daily routines. Doing so can also help Rise maintain appropriate continuity activities during school breaks, including age-specific programming for adolescents when needs and resources allow.

9. Please let us know of any major change in your organization, your philosophy, your strategy that might impact how grants are used.

There has been no major change in Rise's philosophy or strategy that alters the purpose of this grant. Rise continues to prioritize locally led, child-centered, play-based, trauma-informed programming that strengthens both children and the adults who support them.

The Noor Al Amal partnership is consistent with that strategy: rather than building a parallel system, Rise is supporting a school created and led by displaced educators and is increasingly emphasizing capacity-building through coaching, modeling, materials, and practical technical support alongside direct child programming.

Closing Note

Rise is grateful for Fidinam International Charity Foundation's partnership in helping displaced Gazan children regain the safety, connection, communication, and learning opportunities that war and displacement have disrupted. The Noor Al Amal partnership demonstrates the value of pairing direct support for children with practical coaching and modeling for the educators who remain with them every day.
On behalf of all of the Palestinian families we serve and have the honor of working with, thank you so much / shukran kteer!