

## REPORT EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN GAZA IN TIMES OF COVID-19



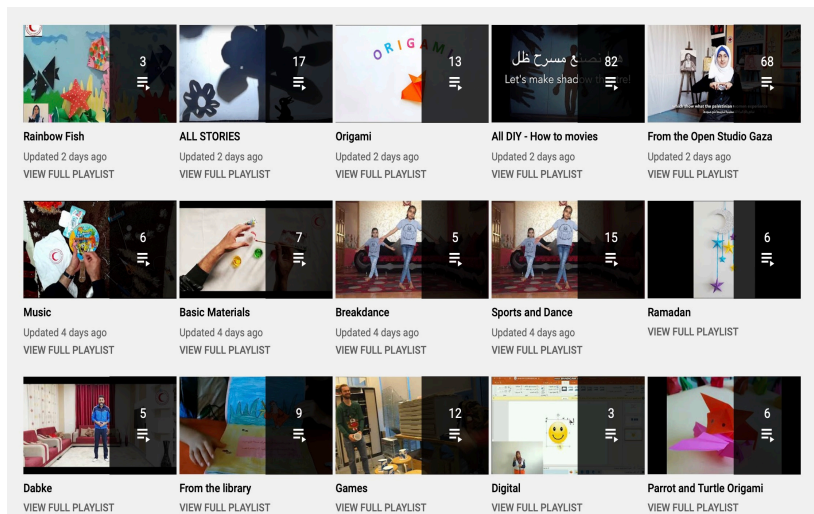
The fact that Gaza is practically cut off from the outside world could unfortunately not prevent the Corona virus from entering the area. Around mid-March, the first infections were reported, resulting in an immediate lockdown. Since that time, the schools, as well as the Open Studio have been closed, forcing the children to stay at home.

During the past two weeks, the situation seemed to be under control, but this week there were reports of new infections. Over the coming period, the situation will remain tense in Gaza. A larger outbreak in the area would result in a much larger drama than we Europeans could ever imagine.

Despite the strict measures, the fear, and the Ramadan period in-between, the work of our Open Studio team has not come to a standstill. After four years of training in making *how-to* videos by HOPE, the current crisis turned out to be the defining moment for putting this knowledge into practice. In this way, the Open Studio has become a front runner in the field of online teaching.

Since the beginning of the lockdown, the nine teachers in our team have made over 70 *how-to* videos! And the breakdancer Myuz has also started producing a series of *how-to breakdance* videos.

Through a private WhatsApp group, a public Facebook group, and [www.BeeHomeAcademy.com](http://www.BeeHomeAcademy.com) we have been able to reach out to many children, filling all homes with activities such as drawing, painting, writing poetry, crafting, exercising, dancing and making music.



The measures not only affected the Open Studio, but also our Saturday Academy. It appeared to us that nine of the most involved children would make an ideal pilot group for our Corona Artboxes. Each of their nine families received a large box not only containing materials for drawing, painting, and crafting, but also information about the virus, disinfectants, and books for all ages, so the family could get active together.

Since the boxes were distributed, the teachers have been visiting the families every two weeks to supply additional materials, and there have been weekly Zoom sessions with the children to exchange experiences and feedback.

Both the parents and children are extremely glad to have this creative input and coaching during these challenging times. In turn, we have been extremely, and pleasantly, surprised by the creativity and inventiveness of the families. With one Corona Artbox we are able to reach out to a lot of people, as these families are usually larger than those in Northern Europe, often consisting of multiple generations. From the drawings we have seen, it is obvious how much benefit all members of the family have from their Artbox. In addition, we have also been receiving a lot of information on how the lockdown is experience, what difficulties people run into, and where and how we can offer additional coaching.





For this summer, many things are still uncertain, especially since the new infections will most likely lead to the Summer Camps taking place online. In that case, HOPE is prepared, and all abovementioned emergency activities will be further developed and realized by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, supported by the Dutch Red Cross.

The Open Studio team will continue to make *how-to* videos, but these will now be transformed into more extensive video courses, tackling various disciplines and subject in series consisting of several videos. Under the heading “Online Summer Academy”, these courses will be presented on a new page on [www.BeeHomeAcademy.com](http://www.BeeHomeAcademy.com). This means that the courses will not only be available in Gaza, but can also be shared in different locations, such as the Zataari Syrian refugee camp in Jordan, the Palestinian Museum on the West Bank, refugee camps in Lebanon, and refugee centers in the Netherlands.

The Corona Artboxes project will also be further developed. Not only will more families be receiving them, but we will also pay special attention to families who have no access to the internet, of which there are unfortunately still many in Gaza.

Apart from crafting materials and books, we will also provide these families with a smartphone. All *how-to* videos will be uploaded to these phones so they can be watched without using the internet. Furthermore, the children will be able to use these smartphones for making their own photographs and videos. After two weeks, the phones will be picked up again and, after disinfection, passed on to another family. In this way, we aim to give children who are living in the most difficult of situations a chance to participate in the online activities as well.

Thank you for your attention!



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