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The School Bag Project to Debut at Palestine Design Week 2026

Modular emergency educational kit for children in conflict and disaster zones selected for EU-funded MISHKAL grant; prototype presented in Ramallah, 15–24 September, 2026

Ramallah / Florence —September 10th, 2026— The School Bag Project, a modular emergency educational kit designed for children of Gaza aged 5 to 15 whose schooling has been disrupted by conflict or disaster, will be presented at Palestine Design Week 2026, running 15–24 September in Ramallah under the theme "Without Permission." The prototype has been selected for the MISHKAL grant, an EU-funded programme managed by the Goethe-Institut and the British Council in Palestine.

The School Bag Project was envisioned in 2024 by Palestinian designer Walid Mawed and later became the pilot project of Anniya, an interdisciplinary, non-hierarchical collective bringing together professionals from the field of design, education and engineering. Its coordinating roles are held equally by Tania Biancalani (President), Walid Mawed (Vice President), and Oriana Ferraguzzi (Director of Pedagogic Research), who work together to deliver excellence in emergency design.

A backpack that becomes a desk

At the core of the project is a wheeled backpack that converts into a small study desk: its internal frame unfolds into a work surface. Built to carry up to 30 kg, the trolley structure also allows children — including adolescent girls who often carry water or supplies for their families — to transport goods when needed.

The kit further includes:

- A **Community Connection Mat**, a waterproof, insulating surface for group learning, play and storytelling;
- Culturally neutral educational tools, including a Tangram puzzle and Cuisenaire rods for hands-on mathematics and an in-house designed set of Story Cards;
- A **Protective Cape** that shields against cold, heat and rain.

A philosophy rooted in humanitarian design

The project starts from a specific premise: most of the design that sustains life in crisis is not created by trained designers, but improvised by the people living through it — displaced mothers, children and volunteers who adapt, repair and build with whatever is at hand. Anniya's approach is to support that resourcefulness rather than replace it, translating informal, everyday problem-solving into a durable and repairable object.

This positions the project within emergency design as a practice centred on dignity and agency, not pure aesthetics: solutions developed with communities, adaptable across cultures, and built so repair becomes continuity rather than dependency — because even in emergencies, what we create should embody the healing qualities of beauty and functionality, offering communities often left to face only horrors and disaster something more than survival.

From Gaza to a broader response

The idea of the project originated in response to the destruction of schools in Gaza and has since been developed with a worldwide broader set of contexts in mind, including flood and earthquakes affected areas, refugee camps, geographical isolated and remote areas with no immediate access to school buildings .

"The School Bag doesn't wait for a building to be rebuilt. It brings the classroom to the child, wherever they are," said Walid Mawed, founder of The School Bag Project and Vice President of Anniya.

Presentation at Palestine Design Week

At Palestine Design Week, Anniya will present the current prototype of the School Bag, the Community Mat and the Protective Cape, alongside the design and pedagogical research behind the kit. The presentation situates the project within the event's 2026 theme, "Without Permission," reflecting on design produced outside formal infrastructure and institutional access.

About Anniya

Anniya is a non-profit collective of designers, educators, engineers and researchers working on a fully voluntary basis. The School Bag Project is currently in development and prototyping, supported by donations through the WhyDonate platform. More information is available at anniya.org.

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Project links:

Website: <http://www.anniya.org>

Fundraising campaign: [WhyDonate — "The School Bag Project: Carrying Hope by the Anniya Collective"](#)

Palestine Design Week: <https://palestinedesignweek.com>

