

Akelius makes largest Swedish donation to children in Gaza

Text: [Jenny Förander](#)

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The real estate billionaire from Stora Mellby, Roger Akelius, is now donating 800 million kronor to UNICEF's work for children in Gaza.

The donation is a doubling of the amount that the Swedish government is now giving and is the largest individual donation to UNICEF ever.

According to Akelius himself, the goal is to build 400 new schools in the bombed-out area.

– The children are very traumatized, says Roger Akelius to AT.



Image: Filip Landqvist

Akelius' record donation - sending twice as much money as the government does

The billionaire from Stora Mellby wants to build 400 schools: "The children are very traumatized."

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On Friday, the Swedish government announced that it is donating 400 million kronor to UNICEF's work in Gaza.

Real estate billionaire Roger Akelius, who grew up in Stora Mellby, then chose to double the government's bid and donated 800 million kronor via his aid organization Akelius Foundation.

Roger Akelius tells AT that the money he is donating is intended to be enough to build 400 new schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

– It varies from good tent schools to real buildings. Everyone knows what it looks like down there, Israel has destroyed so much, he says.

Orphanages wiped out

Akelius says that his organization previously donated money to SOS Children's Villages, which built orphanages in Gaza, orphanages that he describes have now been turned into stone chips.

– And the children are murdered, he says.

By building schools, Akelius wants to help give children in Gaza a break from the trauma that many of them live with, many whose families are no longer alive.

– Many children are very traumatized, he says.

The Akelius Foundation has a long-standing collaboration with UNICEF and has contributed to educational efforts in a wide range of countries.

Roger Akelius says that the organization has produced educational materials in mathematics and languages that UNICEF uses in schools for vulnerable children around the world.

– It is very much "hands on", you use your hands and feet instead of your head, he says.

The Akelius Foundation was also behind the previous largest Swedish donation to humanitarian aid. It was in connection with the outbreak of the Ukrainian war that the organization donated 700 million kronor to Ukraine.

Facts/Unicef about the situation for children in Gaza

Over 20,000 children have been killed. Almost a million children have been forced to flee, most of them several times. Hundreds of thousands of people live in tent camps without protection from rain or wind. 97 percent of schools have been damaged or destroyed and the 700,000 school-age children have not been to school for two and a half years.