



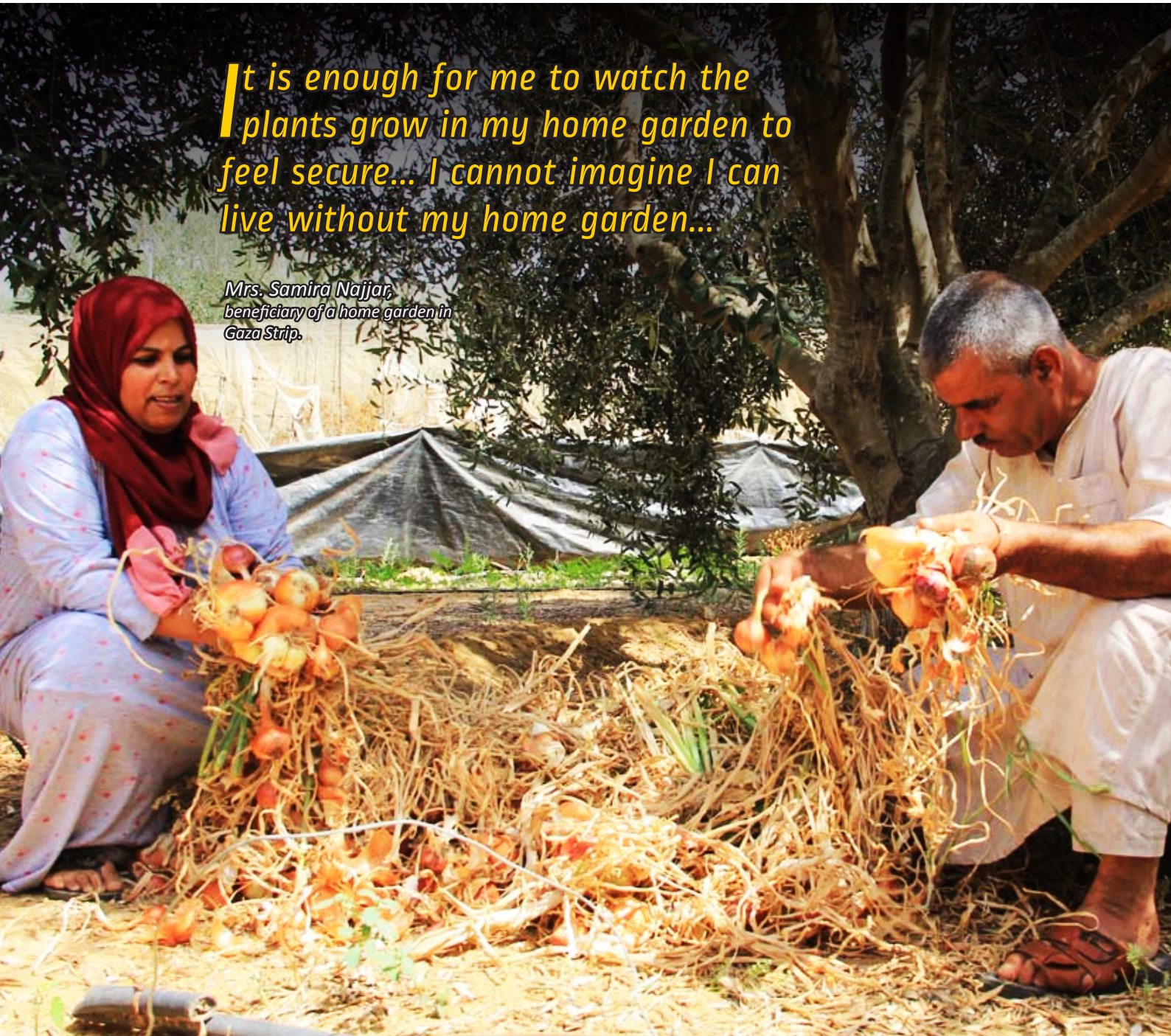
Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA



MA'AN Development Center

It is enough for me to watch the plants grow in my home garden to feel secure... I cannot imagine I can live without my home garden...

*Mrs. Samira Najjar,
beneficiary of a home garden in
Gaza Strip.*



Case Studies of Resilience and Livelihood Building Among Vulnerable Palestinian Farmers and Women

July 2014

*Union Aid Abroad -APHEDA and MA'AN Development Center
Australia-Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement Phase II, supported by DFAT
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Case Study 1:

Building on strengths: *Improving food security in the Gaza Strip*

By improving livelihoods and empowering households, the APHEDA-MA'AN project has contributed to increasing the resilience and well-being of targeted communities.

Context

Increasing food production is the key challenge for economic and agricultural development in the Gaza Strip. **Food insecurity** has increased throughout the occupied Palestinian Territories since 2011, with a situation quickly worsening in Gaza. Almost 60 per cent of households in the densely-populated Gaza Strip were food insecure in 2013, an increase of more than 10 per cent since 2011.¹ Nearly 90 per cent of households rely on coping strategies such as borrowing from friends or relatives, and cutting back on meals.² The unemployment rate has been steadily increasing; in the first three months of 2014 it peaked at 40.8 per cent, the highest it has been since 2008.³ More than 1.6m people live in Gaza, an area of only 365km², making it one of the most densely populated areas in the world, and the population is estimated to increase by another 500,000 people by 2020.⁴ 75 per cent of the population are dependent on UNRWA aid and more than 50 per cent of the population in Gaza are aged 17 or under.⁵ Above all, there is a **critical shortage of clean water** in Gaza, with 90 per cent of the available water in Gaza unfit for human consumption, leading families to spend up to a third of their income purchasing fresh water.⁶

- 1- "Food insecurity in Palestine remains high", UNRWA, PCBS, FAO and WFP Joint Press Release, <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/food-insecurity-palestine-remains-high>, 3 June 2014.
- 2- UNRWA & FAO-Socio-Economic & Food Security (SEFSec) Survey (Nov 2012), <http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/Socio-Economic%20%26%20Food%20Security%20Survey.pdf>, p6.
- 3- "Labour Force Survey Results First Quarter (January– March 2014)", Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=en&ItemID=1108&mid=3171&wversion=Staging>, 6 May 2014.
- 4- "Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?", United Nations, August 2012, p8.
- 5- "Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?", United Nations, August 2012, p8.
- 6- "A fresh solution to Gaza's water crisis", C. Weibel and S. Elmughanni, UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/wash/oPt_71763.html, 10 April 2014.

With an increasing population, there is no long-term solution to the issue of food security without a solution to the political conflict and the easing of restrictions of movement on people and goods in and out of Gaza. Given these constraints, the challenge for food security in Gaza is to increase and sustain the productivity of the agricultural sector in order to increase food production, and increase incomes so that people have the capacity to purchase food.

Improving the **sustainability of the agriculture sector** in Gaza is a more difficult but equally essential challenge. In the desperate race to increase production, farmers use large amounts of chemical fertilisers, including fertilisers banned for sale in Gaza because they have been proven to contaminate land and water and cause harmful health effects on humans and animals.⁷ Research suggests that farmers misuse pesticides, handle them without protective equipment and store and dispose of containers unsafely.⁸ Continued overuse of agricultural pesticides will cause long-term damage to farmlands and groundwater sources, and reduce the long-term capacity of the land to produce food.⁹

In the border village of Khuza'a in the southern Gaza Strip, these needs are amplified by the problem of **access to land**. Khuza'a is a small, impoverished village 25km south of Gaza City, with a population of around 11,100 people.¹⁰ Prior to the start of the project, households in Khuza'a reported the highest number of people purchasing food on credit (77.1%) of any village in the two target areas, as well as the highest dependency ratio, with each employed person supporting an average of 10.6 people. Many of the people in Khuza'a have little to no access to their agricultural land because it lies within 500m of the border with Israel in the Access Restricted Area. Just 57.1 per cent of households in Khuza'a said they used land near their household for agricultural production, compared to 87 per cent and 97.6 per cent respectively for the nearby villages of Fuhhari and Abasan.

- 7- "Smuggling of banned pesticides a problem in Gaza", A. Al-Ghoul, Al-Monitor, 2 May 2014.
- 8- "A national survey on the use of agricultural pesticides in Palestine", R. Al-Sa'ed, A. Ramlawi and A. Salah, International J. Environmental Studies, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 519-529, 2011, p. 524.
- 9- "Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?", United Nations, August 2012, p5.
- 10- "Localities in Khan Yunis Governorate by Type of Locality and Population Estimates, 2007-2016", PCBS, http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/khan.htm.

Intervention

Over the five years of the AMENCA project, the APHEDA and MA'AN partnership has developed a **three-pronged approach** to address the complex challenges facing agricultural development for rural livelihoods in Khuza'a and in Gaza. Firstly, APHEDA and MA'AN recognised the dire need to increase **food production for vulnerable households**, particularly those headed by women. The project took up the challenge of **increasing and sustaining household food production** by integrating activities to ensure that they are strong enough to make a tangible impact on the family's income. The project supports women to achieve economic and social empowerment through contributing to their families' livelihoods and participating in their local communities. Each year MA'AN staff review project progress and modify project implementation to improve the sustainability of the activities.

Secondly, the project supports **smallholder farmers** to improve their agricultural productivity through **high-volume food production in commercial-scale greenhouses**, in order to promote the economic development of the agricultural sector in Gaza. The rehabilitation of 404 commercial (1000m²) greenhouses, including 32 in the village of Khuza'a, has added an estimated 1,484 tons annually to the supply of fresh food in the Gaza Strip, with an estimated net value of AU\$1,815,175. After five years of the project, the impact of this investment in value chain actors in the private sector is making a strong contribution to the local economy in Khuza'a and across the Gaza Strip.

Finally, the project grapples with the problem of the long-term development and environmental sustainability of the agricultural sector in Gaza through **partnerships with local community-based organisations (CBOs)**. In Khuza'a, the Khuza'a Permaculture Centre and the Beit Al Mostaqbal Charity deliver training and run income-generating projects for their local communities, and encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable methods of agricultural production. Through all three dimensions of the project, APHEDA and MA'AN's approach has been to emphasise and build on the existing assets and knowledge in the agricultural sector in the Gaza

Strip. The provision of complementary assets, as well as training for farmers in inexpensive agricultural techniques and water conservation methods to improve their efficiency in using existing resources, is helping to strengthen the agricultural sector and improve the resilience of vulnerable households.

Results



Ms Najjar sorting onions with her husband

Samira Najjar, who received a 42m² greenhouse through the project, lives with her husband, three sons and four daughters in Khuza'a. A lack of economic opportunities in the village means that Ms Najjar's husband is often out of work or underemployed. Prior to the project, her family's income was around AU\$61/month and they could only afford to eat meat a few times a year. The family also struggled to cover the medical expenses of one of their daughters, who has hemiplegia and an intellectual disability. Ms Najjar owns agricultural land, but it is located in the Access Restricted Area near the border with Israel. She explains that fear and worry prevent her from working on this land: "I cannot take the risk. Who will take care of my family if I get injured? Who will care for my disabled daughter?"

Since receiving her greenhouse in 2010, Ms Najjar has harvested 800kg of tomatoes, 25kg of capsicum, 30kg of cucumbers, and 50kg of onions each year, with a total value of approximately AU\$470. The greenhouse has improved not only her income but also the dietary diversity of her household. Equally important, however,

is **the economic empowerment and sense of well-being that comes from contributing to her family's livelihood.** Ms Najjar explains that she fights the sense of helplessness that sneaks to her mind when she contemplates her daughter's situation by turning to work in her greenhouse.

“I cannot imagine I can live without my home garden,” she explains. *“It is enough for me to watch the plants grow in my home garden to relax and have a peace of mind.”*

Sonia Abdel Khaleq,

another female beneficiary from Khuza'a, lives with her husband, two daughters and three sons in one house with her husband's family. Ms Khaleq has a chronic medical condition and Ms Khaleq's husband often cannot find work, despite his trade as a blacksmith. Prior to the project Ms Khaleq's family found it a challenge to secure enough income for Ms Khaleq's medicine and family expenses (approximately AU\$41-\$61/month).



Last year, Ms Khaleq was one of 36 women to receive an integrated home garden unit, a 42m² greenhouse and a 21 m² hen unit. Composted manure from the poultry unit is used to fertilise plants in the greenhouse, increasing the productivity of the greenhouse and reducing the need for external inputs like commercial fertiliser. Efficient and inexpensive agricultural techniques such as these are vital for increasing food security in Gaza, where households have limited and unstable access to external inputs. Each unit is complemented with training and water management equipment such as a small irrigation network and water ponds, and is designed to be a catalyst to improve the household's livelihood and reduce its vulnerability to shocks.

Since receiving the home garden last year, Ms Khaleq has produced 240kg of tomatoes, 60kg of capsicum, and 30kg of onions (a combined value of around AU\$171), and enough chickens to feed her family and earn approximately AU\$678 from selling the surplus. Ms Khaleq has increased her household income to approximately AU\$92/month, and improved her family's dietary diversity.

“ I used to feel bitter when I saw vegetables in the market and realise that I cannot buy them for my children... [But] my children can now eat chicken just like the neighbours' children do, ”

she explains. **Through engagement in productive economic activity, Ms Khaleq has also become a more active participant in her local community.** Ms Khaleq has keenly participated in training courses on organic agriculture offered by the Khuza'a Permaculture Centre to improve her knowledge about taking care of her home garden. She now gives advice on vegetable cultivation and animal husbandry to other women in her neighbourhood, and is invited by community organisations to speak and share her experience with other women in the village.



Basem Qudieh re-laying water irrigation lines in his greenhouse

The project also supports experienced farmers to re-establish production in commercial-scale greenhouses in order to improve agricultural productivity and promote economic development. **Basem Qudieh** lives in Khuza'a village and is married with four sons and five daughters. He used to work in Israel until the movement of people out of Gaza was restricted. Since then, Mr Qudieh has used the production of his greenhouse to provide for his family and support his elderly father's medical bills, but his productivity was constrained by the need for unaffordable repairs to the greenhouse.

The project provided a new covering to seal the 1000m² greenhouse against the entry of pests, which reduced the need for chemical pesticides, and rehabilitated the irrigation network supplying the greenhouse to reduce water loss. Enhanced water management and improved disease control has increased the length of time Mr Qudieh can harvest tomatoes from his plants by several

months, resulting in increased production of 3,675kg (worth approximately AU\$1,838) last year. The rehabilitated greenhouse allows Mr Qudieh to improve his productivity by making the most of his existing resources. *“Before the project, my hard work would not impact production much,”* he says. *“Now my effort and time is rewarded with an increased yield and income”.*

The local community benefits directly from this increase in agricultural productivity in the private sector. There is high demand for Mr Qudieh's produce in the busy food markets in Khuza'a. *“People in the village know that my tomatoes are clean and free of pesticides,”* he says, *“they rush to buy them from me.”* Demand is strong enough that Mr Qudieh now supplies a number of grocers in nearby villages. With income earned from the greenhouse, Mr Qudieh can cover his daughter's university tuition fees and save a portion of his income to fund ongoing greenhouse maintenance.

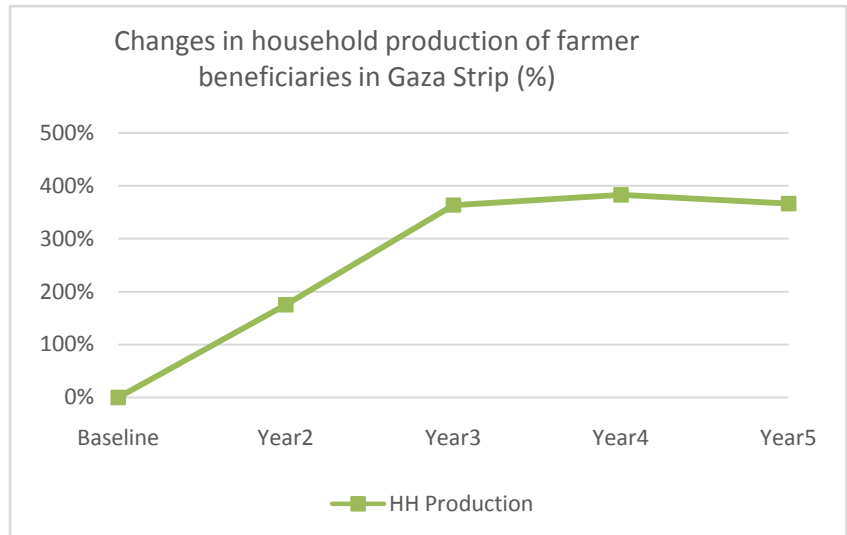


Local Economic Growth

After five years of AMENCA2, the impact of this investment in the development of the private sector is starting to be felt at the community level. Mohammed Abu Ali, a member of the Khuza'a Village Support Committee (VSC) says that the whole village is benefiting from the increases in production made by value chain actors like Mr Qudieh participating in the project. *"The most*

important change that hit the town of Khuza'a during the last five years is the increase in the contribution of the local community in food production from plants and animals," he said. Participating smallholder farmers increased their food production by almost 400 per cent from the baseline to Year 3, when production levels stabilised (see table). Rehabilitation adds an estimated 3,675kg to the production of each greenhouse, mostly in staple crops like tomatoes and cucumbers, representing an increase in food production of 163 per cent. The greenhouse rehabilitation alone is estimated to add an additional 1,484 tons to the food supply in the Gaza Strip.

To strengthen impact at the community level, the project has partnered with community-based organisations (CBOs) to provide training and workshops. These partnerships are designed to support the project's broader goal of improving the long-term viability of the agricultural sector in Gaza, and to help the community prepare for the withdrawal of external assistance by improving community confidence in local CBOs. The Executive Manager of Beit Al Mostaqbal Charitable Society in Khuza'a, Ms Sabah El Qarra, says *"The project [AMENCA] revived the Society and helped it to better connect to the local community, especially women."* The project supports the Al Mostaqbal Society and the Khuza'a Permaculture Centre to run workshops for smallholder farmers on agricultural marketing, soil care and pest control to support local agricultural development.



Conclusion

Within the development constraints of Gaza, the project is helping to support sustainable livelihoods by improving the productivity of smallholder and commercial farmers. The three-pronged approach – supporting households, communities and CBOs - has contributed to improving food security, reducing poverty and supporting local economic growth within Khuza'a and across the Gaza Strip. Sustainable increases in the production of staple crops for households in Khuza'a and other project sites across Gaza help to improve not only household incomes through the sale of surplus production, but also community and household diets through informal exchange and gift networks. The project also works to increase the uptake of sustainable, efficient and inexpensive agricultural techniques among farmers in order to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip. Strengthened community networks between farmers and local CBOs will help to ensure the sustainability of project achievements long after the project ends.

Case Study 2:

Investing in infrastructure for rural development in the West Bank

By improving livelihoods and empowered households, APHEDA-MA'AN project has contributed to increasing the resilience and well-being of targeted communities.

Context

The agriculture sector in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) is in rapid decline. Between 1995 and 2013, its contribution to Gross Domestic Product declined from 12 per cent¹¹ to 4.2 per cent,¹² and it now has the lowest productivity per worker of any sector in the economy. In 2013 alone there was a 9.3 per cent drop in the number of workers employed in this sector.¹³ Settlement expansion and the Barrier Wall have made access to agricultural land a key challenge for agricultural development in the West Bank. The Barrier Wall has had an adverse impact on the livelihoods of thousands of rural families, who now need special permits to access and farm their lands.¹⁴ Approximately 43 per cent of the West Bank is now allocated to the local and regional councils of settlements, and off-limits for Palestinian use.¹⁵ Continued restrictions on access to land, water and economic markets, along with the Palestinian Authority's prolonged fiscal crisis and the lack of investment in rural

infrastructure, are all contributing to the decline of the agricultural sector, once the backbone of the Palestinian economy.

This crisis in agricultural production, along with unstable economic development, is contributing to high rates of food insecurity in the oPt. Over one million Palestinians are unable to access an adequate amount of water per day, and healthcare, education and infrastructure continue to be insufficient for the Palestinian population.¹⁶ A recent study indicated that 57 per cent of households in oPt were food insecure, representing 1.57m Palestinians.¹⁷ The lack of food production is compounded by the extensive use of chemical fertilisers that are proven to be harmful to both the people who eat the food and the land on which the food is grown.¹⁸ The result is both a lack of quantity and quality of food available for household consumption. With these constraints, the challenge for development support in the agricultural sector is investment in rural infrastructure, and helping to create enabling environments for farmers to improve their productivity.

Intervention

Through five years of interventions, the APHEDA and MA'AN project has worked to reduce food insecurity by targeting both the household level and the community level. In the West Bank, the project works in the Al-Kafriyat municipality, a rural region of seven villages in the Governorate of Tulkarem. From a focus on assisting families at the household level in the seven villages of al-Kafriyat, the project has evolved over five years to include investment in rural agricultural infrastructure to help primary producers improve efficiency by increasing productivity, food availability and access to land and markets.

At the household level, the project has enabled families in the West Bank to improve their food security by building self-reliance and resilience. The project provides agricultural assets and

11- "Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/tdb60d3_en.pdf, 8 July 2013, p.4.

12- "Press Report: Economic Forecasting For 2014", Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_EcoForecast2014E.pdf, p 2.

13- "Press Report: Economic Forecasting For 2014", PCBS, p 2.

14- "The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier", <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/3822b5e39951876a85256b6e0058a478/ee597cde07fb400c85257ba30049e6a6?OpenDocument>, July 2013

15- "The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlements Policies", UN OCHA, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_settlements_FactSheet_January_2012_english.pdf, Jan 2012, p1.

16- "2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview", OCHA, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt_HNO_2014.pdf, 2014, p. 1.

17- "2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview", OCHA, 2014, p. 1.

18- "A national survey on the use of agricultural pesticides in Palestine", R. Al-Sa'ed, A. Ramlawi and A. Salah, International J. Environmental Studies, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 519-529, 2011, p. 524.

training and support to ensure that households can make sustainable improvements to their food security. Since the start of the project, 986 activities have been implemented targeting hundreds of households in the Governorate of Tulkarem. More than half of these activities are dedicated to improving women's participation in income production. The project's strategy supports primary producers, especially rural women, to grow food to increase and diversify their own household consumption as well as engage with the local economy by selling surplus produce.

Results



Infrastructure to build the Agricultural Sector in al-Kafriyat Municipality

Over five years, the project has rehabilitated 7.8km of agricultural roads in the al-Kafriyat region, providing access to 330 hectares. In the village of Kufr Abboush alone, 1.8km of agricultural road has been rehabilitated, providing access to approximately 100 hectares of land. Kufr Abboush is the biggest producer of olive oil in the Governorate of Tulkarem, producing about 120 tons of olive oil annually, more than half of it exported to the Gulf region. Prior to this investment in rural infrastructure, the majority of farmers ploughed their land only once annually and only 30 per cent of farmers tended their land regularly. Many sprayed chemicals to kill weeds instead of ploughing, and some farmers simply let local herders use the land as grazing area for their flocks in exchange for cheese, worth approximately AU\$62. Before the intervention of

the project, accessing the land could take up to one hour, either on foot or by donkey. **The lack of supportive infrastructure was inefficient, costly to farmers and reduced the capacity of the agricultural sector to expand.** To save on costs, farmers would accumulate produce such as olives over a long period to transport all at once, which would result in poor quality oil that would sell cheaply or be used to make soap, losing up to 42 per cent of its market value. In a focus group with farmers from Kufr Abboush, Mr Abdel Wahhab summed up the situation: "A land without a road is not a productive land".

Since the rehabilitation of the agricultural roads in Kufr Abboush, MA'AN estimates that the number of times farmers visit their land has increased twelve-fold, from twice a month to 25 times a month. Farmers report ploughing their land two-three times annually, compared to once or less before, and the number of farmers who report using herbicides instead of ploughing has dropped from 80 to 20 per cent. Mr Wahhab said: *"I would feel guilty if I did not access the land two-three times a week now; it's become a piece of my soul"*. **The roads are helping farmers increase the land's productivity, promoting long-term economic development in the agriculture sector in al-Kafriyat.** Farmers have already rehabilitated about 30,000m² of the land made accessible by the road, 80 per cent of which is grown with olives. Farmers are expecting to increase the yield per 1000m² of existing olive trees from 7.5 tanks of olive oil to more than ten tanks this year, a 29 per cent increase in just one year. The project's investment was approximately AU\$29 per 1000m², the increase of production per 1000m² is \$271; for every AU\$1 invested in agricultural roads, there is a AU\$9 increase in gross income. The price of land has increased from around AU\$1,500-\$2,250 per 1000m² before the rehabilitation to about AU\$7,500 per 1000m² now, reflecting the land's increased productivity. *"It was a miracle that came true,"* Salamn Bushnaq, the head of the project's Village Support Committee, explains.

While traditional, hardy olive trees remain a priority for farmers, the new infrastructure and increase in irrigation capacity has enabled farmers to diversify production to less resilient crops. Use of intercropping techniques is increasing the land's productivity, and the ease

of transporting water tanks means some farmers can now afford to irrigate their land 15 times a year. One of the farmers in the group, Mr Abdel Munim Khalaf, planted 20,000m² with field crops, yielding an estimated 560kg of vegetables in one year, generating an income of approximately AU\$997.

The MA'AN/APHEDA project was the first of its kind in the village, and farmers and other organisations are now working to complement the work done by the project. Using funds from the European Union, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees has begun the rehabilitation of another 3km of agricultural roads connecting to the road built by the project in Kufr Abboush, under the "Making Olive Oil Competitive through the Introduction of Local Value Chain Approach in the oPt" project. The new project, in which MA'AN is also a partner, aims to enhance the productivity and quality of olive oil in the agricultural sector. Farmers themselves have already strengthened the roads with 200m of stone terraces to minimise the damage caused by erosion.

Investing in productivity for smallholder farmers

The project also supports smallholder farmers to maximise their production while also ensuring long-term sustainability. **Yusuf Salhab** is a



Mr Salhab in his greenhouse, which is planted with tomatoes



64-year-old man who lives with his family in the village of Kufr Jammal in the al-Kafriyat area. Prior to receiving a 90m² greenhouse through the project, Mr Salhab's income came entirely from growing guava and lemon on his land (around 3000m²). Despite his skills as a farmer, market fluctuations reduced his ability to support his family, and a sudden drop in the local price of lemons to AU\$0.3 per kilo devastated his income. Mr Salhab's situation worsened when his son died suddenly, leaving him responsible for supporting five young grandchildren (four girls and one boy) with an inadequate and unstable income.

With the greenhouse, a simple and relatively low-cost asset, the project has assisted Mr Salhab to maximise his production and reduced his vulnerability to the volatilities of food prices. Last year, Mr Salhab produced 1,950kg of tomatoes and green beans, generating approximately AU\$1,800 in additional income for his family. The



Ms Toubeh in the greenhouse from the AMENCA project

average cost of one greenhouse is AU\$1873; in one year, the investment has already paid for itself once over in net income. Mr Salhab is proud of the quality of his production of his greenhouse that he believes is incomparable to that of the market. *“It tastes better because it is the fruit of my effort and hard work,”* he explains. The project has helped Mr Salhab to exploit market dynamics, instead of being hurt by them, and secure an economic livelihood for his family. Mr Salhab explains the impact of the greenhouse and the support from the AMENCA project: *“I have been a farmer for my entire life; I feel happy that I can put food on table for my young grandchildren by the sweat of my brow”.*

With guidance from the MA'AN Field Coordinator, Mr Salhab uses market analysis to plan ahead and obtain higher prices for produce. Mr. Salhab's crop of green beans last winter yielded 450kg, which sold for AU\$1.5 per kg, 33 per cent higher than the selling price in summer. Mr Salhab now has confidence in his ability to provide for his family: *“For the first time since my grandchildren have been orphaned, I feel that I need the support of no one but myself.”*

The project also supports women living in al-Kafriyat to achieve economic empowerment and increase their control over their own lives; about 52.8 per cent of interventions in the West Bank

are dedicated to women. **Wafa Toubeh** is in her thirties and lives in Kufr Jammal with her husband and four children. Despite being a college graduate, Ms Toubeh has been unable to find employment. This is a common scenario, especially in more rural parts of the West Bank; the AMENCA baseline survey indicated that only 12 per cent of women were able to contribute to the income of their families. Since receiving a 90m² greenhouse from the project last year, Ms Toubeh has produced 1,530kg of tomatoes, green beans, cucumber, and parsley, generating AU\$1,380 in additional income for her family. Ms Toubeh uses organic fertilisers and exchanges fresh produce with relatives and neighbours, who in turn provide her with cheese and dairy products. The family has also built a cistern to increase their capacity for rainwater irrigation and reduce their dependence on purchased water.

Ms Toubeh has invested the income generated from the greenhouse from the project in a chicken pen and another smaller greenhouse, where she grows fava beans, parsley, cabbage, and cauliflower. This increase in quantity and diversity improves her resilience against price fluctuations and the risk of failed crops. For Ms Toubeh, overcoming economic obstacles has led to an increased sense of self-reliance and empowerment:

“I feel that I am more responsible and engaged in supporting my family; I do not feel unemployed anymore,” she says.

“I feel more in control of my life.”



Conclusion

The APHEDA and MA'AN project is investing in long-term improvements in the viability of the agricultural sector in the oPt. Investment in community-level infrastructure such as agricultural roads, water cisterns and irrigation networks, helps primary producers increase the land's productivity, promoting long-term economic development, while assistance to households works to improve food security by building dietary diversity and self-reliance. The project's twin objectives of reducing vulnerability for poor households and increasing community resilience are delivering tangible impacts for local communities.



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