

Palestine Refugees Today

Due to the protracted conflict, the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) faces **restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement** of goods, services and people; **impediments to construction** and infrastructure development in the West Bank; the **expansion of Israeli settlements** and associated violence; the **construction of the Separation Barrier** and resulting **loss of Palestinian land**, destruction of key agricultural assets, and the separation of farmers from land and resources; **access restrictions** to land for farming and herding; and the direct **destruction of houses, crops, water and sanitation systems**, by Israeli military and settlers.

While West Bank **refugees** face the same protection concerns and violations as non-refugees, they generally **do not have the same asset base** and community support structures as non-refugees. Due to their refugee status, they **do not have equal access** to Palestinian Authority, UN, and NGO provided services and assistance. As a result refugees in the West Bank are **increasingly vulnerable** and **unable to cope** with the protracted conflict to same extent as non-refugees.



JCP laborers working in the field as part of "Greening Palestine" initiative © UNRWA 2011

UNRWA's Job Creation Programme

UNRWA's Job creation programme (JCP) provides temporary job opportunities to most vulnerable Palestine refugees living in the West Bank with the aim of alleviating the impact of **high poverty and unemployment** levels. The programme, initiated in 2000 is part of **UNRWA's integrated approach to emergency programming**.

The provision of cash for work allows families to **earn and allocate scarce resources** to priorities other than food, whilst the use of temporary employment as a tool to distribute cash contributes towards **maintaining the dignity** of the most vulnerable. The accumulation of work experience and the development of expertise and skills, particularly for youth, ultimately contribute to **economic recovery** in the West Bank.

The injection of cash into the economy introduces second round benefits for local retailers and service providers, whilst the development and rehabilitation of infrastructure helps **improve living conditions** for communities. The programme also **contributes to the protection** of communities under **threat of displacement** through income and work realized.

Selection of Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of the Job Creation Programme are **selected and prioritized through UNRWA's Da'am targeting system**, which uses a **proxy-means test formula** to assess the **level of food vulnerability/insecurity** of Palestine refugees living inside and outside refugee camps in the West Bank. Da'am database provides a profile of each family based on data collected from applications filled by the family with the help of Da'am field workers. JCP also targets vulnerable **refugees living in communities that are facing particular protection**

JCP in Numbers April-December 2011

Number of Job Opportunities	55,495
Number of Beneficiaries	22,495
Total Number of Dependents (x=5)	112,475
Amount of Subsidy / Month	\$ 420
Total Budget (Subsidies & Materials)	\$ 30,000,000

JCP Partners

JCP works with partners in all 19 refugee camps in the West Bank, 34 UNRWA installations, and in over 340 municipalities and villages. JCP partners with municipalities, heads of village councils, *mukhtars*, local community organizations, NGOs and government ministries to create employment opportunities, draw-up action plans, and leverage CaWP labour, tools and materials to promote local infrastructure and community development projects.

Protection-tailored Projects

Across the West Bank, **Palestinians continue to face serious threats to life, liberty and security due to various forms of violence related to the conflict and the occupation.** In addition, **forced displacement remains a phenomenon of increasing severity** due to **on going confiscation and annexation of Palestinian land, increased settlement construction, home demolitions, forced evictions in Area C and East Jerusalem, obstructed access to land, markets and essential service, military violence and harassment, and lack of effective law enforcement for settler attacks.**

Through JCP, UNRWA has recently developed protection tailored projects aimed not only at **addressing the economic consequences of Occupation policies** but also at **directly addressing specific protection concerns** in an effort to strengthen communities' capacity to sustain traditional livelihoods, resist pressures leading to forced displacement and prevent further violations from occurring. Concerned communities are living in areas near settlements, the Barrier (including Seam Zones), Area C (especially the Jordan Valley and South Hebron Hills) and East Jerusalem.

Special Initiatives

Women: Through its 'Araqa: Women's Embroidery and Handicrafts' initiative, JCP provides tools, materials, and training to JCP beneficiaries in women's centres throughout the West Bank to improve design, quality control and marketing for their *tatreez* (traditional embroidery) and handicraft products with the aim of turning their work into a sustainable source of income generation that also supports the maintenance of Palestinian traditional livelihood activities, heritage and culture.

Environment: In 2011, the Programme launched a new environmental initiative, Al-Sawsan, with the aim of highlighting the Programme's growing involvement in environmental projects. The initiative encompasses a wide range of activities including "Greening Palestine" project, "Raptor Pest Control in the Jordan Valley" project, "Silaj for Naturally Enriched Animal Feed" project, and other environment friendly activities. For this aim, JCP provides labourers, tools and materials to implement initiatives conducted in partnership with other players such as the Wildlife Society and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Joint projects with other UNRWA departments: JCP implements joint projects with UNRWA's departments for environmental health, shelter, and camp improvement. The projects focus on essential infrastructure maintenance and construction works at refugee camps in the West Bank. Accordingly, JCP provides its partners with the necessary labourers, tools and materials to carry out the planned tasks.

Beit Iksa: Helping Communities at Risk of Forced Displacement

Beit Iksa is located 6 km to the north west of Jerusalem. The village of approximately 2000 inhabitants is only accessible through the Beit Iksa checkpoint located at the northern side of the village. Of the original 14,200 dunums (almost entirely in area C) 40% were confiscated for settlement construction (Ramot, Har Samuel, and Giv'on Hahadasha), the remaining 8,500 dunums include agricultural, grazing and built-up areas, 66% of which are located behind the projected barrier.

In July 2011, as part of its objective to address protection concerns in vulnerable communities, the Job Creation Programme provided Beit-Iksa's village council with labourers, tools and materials to help construct 4 greenhouses over 2 dunums of village lands, in addition to a 350 m³ cistern that would harvest rain water and irrigate the plants.

"The project will help employ 15-20 farmers in our village, which suffers from high unemployment rates reaching up to 50%. In addition, it will allow us to make use of lands at risk of confiscation for further settlement expansion", says Mr. Omar Hamdan, head of Beit Iksa Village Council.

Funding JCP

The multi-donor project, with a budget of approximately US\$ 30 million for the period December-April 2011, is made possible through the generous contributions of governments including Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands and the United States, and the European Commission's humanitarian aid department (ECHO).



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