

Sustainable Economic Development, Employment and Labour Market

Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II Programme

Background and Objective

Agriculture is an important pillar of the Palestinian economy and rural Palestinians highly depend on additional income from agricultural activities to secure their livelihoods.

Farmers' resilience is threatened by climate change, political developments and since 2020 by a global pandemic leading to rural-urban migration and food insecurity.

The "Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II" Programme aims to improve the economic prospects of the rural population. Therefore, a multi-level approach is applied that includes measures to:

1. Enhance the capacities of the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture to deliver improved (digital) advisory services to the rural population.
2. Increase the availability of agricultural water for Palestinian farmers.
3. Leverage the conditions for income generation and employability in Palestine's agricultural sector (e.g., market access).
4. Improve women's access to self-capitalized Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA).

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| Project name | Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II |
| Commissioned by | The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| Project region | West Bank |
| Partners | Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) |
| Duration | June 2021 – May 2024 |

The "Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II" Programme is implemented by GIZ in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and its regional entities. The programme is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and coordinates closely with other donors that are active in the sector to achieve maximum sustainable effects for Palestinians.

"Sustainable agricultural development, strengthening food security and improving farmers' resilience and steadfastness on their lands are among the most important national development priorities."

Ibtisam I.O. Abuhaija, Ministry of Agriculture



Agricultural engineers taking part in a practical "on the job training" at different local farms and agricultural cooperatives after graduating from University, 2020



Access to enough clean water is indispensable for agricultural activities such as livestock farming, cash crop production or subsistence agriculture. Qalqilia 2018

Achievements

- **Improved livelihoods for 3.300 beneficiaries within the agricultural population**, 39% of which are women.
- **Implementation of 13 medium-scale agricultural infrastructure projects**, including efficient irrigation and water harvesting systems as well as distribution of **1.823 greenhouse covers**. 1.460 farmers in water scarce areas have benefited (directly or indirectly) from increased water availability, better productivity, and improved resilience against changing rainfall and weather patterns.
- **Improved conditions for employment for 47 young graduates** through on-the-job and field training as well as business advisory measures. This measure contributed to the household income and provided job opportunities for fresh graduates.
- **Intensive training course on climate change adaptation measures for 50 agricultural advisors** of the Ministry of Agriculture, its subordinate authorities as well as large agricultural Non-Governmental Organisations. The course consisted of six modules and included practical tools that enabled the advisors to transfer their newly acquired knowledge to the farming population.
- **The average income of five targeted women groups has increased by 37%**. The groups doubled their production capacities and each group introduced at least one new product to the market.

- **134 livestock breeders benefited from a pilot project** to improve farm management and decrease lamb mortality, crucially increasing the household income and stabilizing their livelihoods.
- **Approx. 342.000 Euro (1,360,000 ILS) have been saved by nineteen Village Saving and Loan Associations**. So far 180 loans were distributed to cover health or education costs as well as to start small agribusinesses.

Covid-19 Response

- **3.200 rural households directly benefited from COVID-19 response measures in 2020**, including the distribution of hygiene kits, food baskets, awareness building as well as measures to cover basic needs. Furthermore, storage capacities and food preservation skills are being improved to decrease the negative impacts of the crisis.



Director of Farkha Women Cooperative for Food Processing distributing hygiene kits to the cooperative members in June 2020, Farkha Village.

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