



CASE STUDY SERIES # 1

## Promoting employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable youths in West Bank and Gaza Strip

In partnership with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Youth Development Association and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)



## **Promoting employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable youths in West Bank and Gaza Strip**

In partnership with the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Youth Development Association and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

ISBN 978-92-5-106513-6 All rights reserved.

FAO encourages reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product. Non-commercial uses will be authorized free of charge upon request. Reproduction for resale or other commercial purposes, including educational purposes, may incur fees. Applications for permission to reproduce or disseminate FAO copyright materials and all other queries on rights and licences, should be addressed by e-mail to [copyright@fao.org](mailto:copyright@fao.org) or to the Chief, Publishing Policy and Support Branch, Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy.

Photos: @ FAO/F. Dalla Valle, FAO Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip

© FAO 2010

## Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Acronyms .....	5
Executive Summary.....	6
<b>1. Background and rationale .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BOX 1:</b> Statistics of West Bank and Gaza Strip .....	9
<b>2. The challenges of youth employment in West Bank and Gaza Strip .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) experience in Gaza and West Bank .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>BOX 2:</b> JFFLS mapping in WBGS 2008-2009.....	12
<b>4. The role of women and the role of the women's associations in WBGS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. Sustainability of the JFFLS in West Bank and Gaza through youth club associations .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6. Evaluation of the pilot phase 2008-2009 (main findings) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7. The JFFLS 2009-2010 school year .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>BOX 3:</b> JFFLS mapping in WBGS 2009-2010.....	20
<b>8. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>9. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Sources .....	23
Resources and further reading.....	23
Websites.....	24

## Acknowledgements

This case study was prepared by Ms Francesca Dalla Valle from FAO's Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) in close collaboration with FAO's Teams in the Coordination Office in Jerusalem and Sub-Offices in Ramallah and Gaza Strip.

The described activities in the Gaza Strip and West Bank are a joint effort between the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCES) as Operating Unit and the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) as Lead Technical Unit. To both Divisions goes the appreciation for supporting the projects activities in particular to Mr Daniele Donati, TCES, Ms Ariella Glinni, TCES, Ms Helena Eriksson, TCES, Mr Jules Seitz, TCES, Ms Carol Djeddah, ESWD, Mr Peter Wobst, ESWD and Ms Ilaria Sisto, ESWD.

Many people contributed to the planning and development of the activities described in this case study, in particular, Mr Luigi Damiani, Mr Azzam Saleh, Mr Erminio Sacco, Mr Suheil Neiroukh, Ms Intissar Eshtayah, Mr Carlos Diaz Mateu, Ms Sarah Leppert, Ms Rana Hannoun, Mr Mohammed ElShattali, Mr Mahmoud Abed, Mr Saad Younis, Mr Jaap Van De Pol and Mr Adham Elkhateeb.

The commitment of all the facilitators, headmasters and local women's associations involved in these described activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as the enthusiasm of all the youths involved in the JFFLS was overwhelming.

A special thought goes to all the logistic experts (Mr Ahmad Abu Laban, Mr Ali Abu El-Hawa, Mr Ayman Dayah, Mr Hani Abu Diab, Mr Mohammed Qabane, Mr Khamis Hawash and Mr Mazen Abu Zhaer) involved in all the travels both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for securing all the trips and allowing us all free to work without problems in spite of all the security constrains.

Special thanks are given to the Government of the Kingdom of Norway, the Qatar Charity, the Italian Cooperation, the Government of Belgium, the Spanish Cooperation and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for providing funds for various activities implemented in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

FAO is grateful to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture of the Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah and to the Youth Development Association for providing Institutional partnership and support to the activities and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for partnering with FAO in the implementation of the JFFLS in selected refugee camps in the Gaza Strip.

## Acronyms

AESA	Agro-Eco System Analysis
CBO	Community Based Organization
ESWD	FAO's Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GS	Gaza Strip
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sport
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
TCES	FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	Office of United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
WB	West Bank
YDA	Youth Development Association

## Executive Summary

Youth in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) face enormous challenges related to occupation, conflict, deep rural poverty, food insecurity and lack of extracurricular activities. Socio-economic conditions in the Palestinian territories continue to degrade as policies of the Occupation increase such as checkpoints, building of the Separation Wall, blockade on the Gaza Strip, and permit system to move in/out of the WBGS. The need to maintain traditional agricultural practices grows as the consequences of Occupation and conflict threaten farming livelihoods. As the Separation Wall and other security zones deny Palestinians the right to access agricultural areas, trade restrictions and dumping of Israeli goods in the markets limit the achievements of the agriculture sector. High unemployment and underemployment coupled with the high cost of non-food items continues to impact food security negatively, especially among poor rural households and female-headed households. Children are affected especially by food insecurity as rates of anaemia and other forms of malnutrition continue to rise in the WBGS.

To combat challenges facing youth, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched a Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) in 2008. The JFFLS programme, previously successful in several African countries, takes an innovative approach to empowering youth through self-esteem raising and life skills teaching. Using the agriculture growing calendar as a model for life, youth learn agricultural skills while developing corresponding life lessons like setting goals, importance of personal space for growth, and teamwork. The youth are encouraged to develop healthy and positive skills using cultural activities to keep local traditions alive. Providing a safe social space for boys and girls, the schools address gender sensitivity, child protection, psycho-social support, nutrition, education and business skills. By developing agricultural skills, youth learn the importance of sustainable farming practices and the environment.

Both girls and boys (totalling 260 and 280 respectively) participated in the project, and most came from difficult circumstances including deep rural poverty, experiences with conflict, and female-headed households. Teachers from local schools received training to become facilitators for the after-school JFFLS activities. Reaching further to the community level, FAO brought in women's cooperatives to prepare nutritious meals for the students. At the final phase of the seven-months cycle, products grown by the students were sold during Open Days to teachers and parents, in which the funds were saved for future activities. JFFLS students joined with local youth clubs to continue using and expanding their skills through partnerships with the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) and Youth Development Association (YDA).

FAO continues to cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) to promote the idea of JFFLS throughout the WBGS as the benefits of the programme on youth's self-esteem, entrepreneurial and agricultural skills, and overall potential to become healthy and positive young adults is evident from pre- and post-programme evaluations. According to the evaluation, JFFLS participants stated that they developed new skills, expressed interest in continuing the JFFLS programme and/or pursuing agricultural education, and performed well in their end-of-the-year exams. Participants showed a general improvement with a positive change in their attitudes including more confidence and hope for the future. Owing to the success of the pilot project, FAO is cooperating with eighteen schools in WBGS for the 2009-10 school year to continue extending the benefits of JFFLS to 620 new students. With hopes of expanding the programme to at least other rural and/or conflict-affected areas, the programme may lead potentially to a revision of the national curriculum with the inclusion of agricultural activities.