



Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Works

Annual 2014 RePort

"And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation". Co 1:7

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1. Executive Summary

A. Political Background

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region continues to witness a major wave of change depicting a new “Sykes-Picot” that will redefine and reshape the MENA region. Palestinian dream towards sovereignty and statehood remains to be undermined by Israeli State occupation with control over Palestinian people, land and resources. Israeli occupation practices persist through geographic and demographic changes in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), with focus upon Area C, which is 60% of the West Bank, furthering defragmentation of occupied territories rendering them non coherent and non-viable, imposing a de facto contextual reality. Israeli right winged leadership is proceeding towards annexation of the West Bank and conducting punitive measures against the Palestinian Authority (PA) whereby Israel has frozen Palestinian tax payments. The war on Gaza had its toll and its repercussions in the West Bank impacting unemployment and poverty rates.

B. Contextual analysis

The recent conflict in Gaza has put further stress on an already struggling economy with falling income per capita in 2013, contract further by end of 2014 according to the latest World Bank update on the state of the Palestinian economy. The report spelled out the repercussions of the political uncertainty and restrictions on movement and access. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) agency issued a gloomy outlook for the Palestinian economy arguing that tougher Israeli Policies and settlement expansion were pushing the occupied territories into poverty. UNCTAD reported the impact of the Israeli occupation since 1968 on the productive base of the Palestinian economy and especially its once-flourishing agriculture, “has been devastating”. The Economy has lost access to 40% of West Bank land, 82% of its ground water, and more than two thirds of its grazing land, UNCTAD report said.

The situation has been aggravated by a sharp drop in foreign aid, in addition to number of barriers to movement of Palestinian people and goods within and out of the West Bank. These physical obstacles aim to maintain segregation and separation policies over more than 2.8 Million Palestinians and form an integrated and coherent system that restricts movement of people to their basic services.

C. Poverty in the West Bank

UNCTAD reported that across Palestinian areas there was “continued severe poverty and chronic food insecurity” on the West Bank food insecurity which affected 66% of the population. The UNCTAD comment was underpinned by another statement from the U.N’s International Labor Organization (ILO) which puts the jobless rate at 26% of the work force. “Israeli restrictions on movement, faltering aid flows, a paralyzed private sector and a chronic fiscal crisis cloud the horizons, UNCTAD declared. Amid persistent high unemployment, it added, “one in Two Palestinians is classified as poor”.

Having cited the global, regional and national threats and challenges; and as gloomy **the picture is portrayed, yet, we see that it is in such conditions, we are urged to serve and make a difference in peoples' lives. We remain to be tools for hope, "And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation". Co 1:7**

D. Programmatic performance

The organization **programmatic performance** is guided by policy documents for all types of intervention. Policy implementation is translated into four phases representing actions with their timeline. The **first phase** represents the selection of target area and target group with a mapping of actors and area profiling, the **second phase** comprises of the fulfillment of legal documentation and bidding process which is culminated by contractual agreements, the **third phase** is designated to the execution with supervision and the **fourth phase** represents the handover procedures with internal assessment and reporting.

Throughout the project cycle, the Near East Council of Churches-International Christian Committee (NECC-ICC) is keen upon **relationships** with appropriate Ministries, local governance authorities, relevant cluster forums and beneficiaries to ensure effective cooperation in prioritized designated areas and avoid drain of resources and duplication.

Monitoring and Evaluation is being performed at various levels of the management and governance structures of the organization.

In its **Service provision**, NECC-ICC aims to enabling Palestinian communities, better manage and preserve available natural resources and protect the environment through the water and agriculture sectors. The **Capacity building** direction is integrated within the agriculture/food security program and **Advocacy** that focuses upon the right to water and illegal settlements in the oPt.

Objectives were realized with the full support and cooperation of local communities who were forthcoming throughout planning and implementation stages, demonstrating a high sense of responsibility and ownership.

Within the **water sector** we completed the **installation of 1500 meters in length of the transmission pipeline in Bani Zeid Al-Sharqiya municipality, connecting from Obwein water source to Mazare' Al Noubani and Arura villages.**

As to the **agriculture sector**, domestic farming remains to be crucial for rural communities who suffer from land grab and endure severe hardships from illegal settlements and the separation barrier. **We were able to provide 55 domestic farms as planned in the cluster of Qalqilya district with focus upon, Ras Atieh, Ras Tireh, Beit Amin and the cluster of Western villages (Salman, Jalo'od, Ashkar and AlMudawar).**

The project targeted most vulnerable group, with farming skills and whose sole source of income is welfare support from UNRWA, WFP and Government Social support, thus living

in extreme poverty. The target group became self-sufficient and productive with a monthly yield of at least USD 145 per household per month.

Capacity Building direction focused upon affected farmers in **Ras Atieh, Ras Tireh, Beit Amin and the cluster of Western villages (Salman, Jalo'od, Ashkar and AlMudawar) villages addressing farm management.** The training comprised of theoretical and practical stages. A "Model Farm" was introduced to beneficiaries where they conducted all the physical training and application of the theoretical material with required standards and specifications. **An additional component was introduced in 2014 related to food processing with focus upon cheese making and pickling.**

The human rights-based approach remains to be a strategic direction through **advocacy** emanating from our community development program with focus upon the issue of **"Water and illegal Settlements"**. The program became actively engaged in a highly complex issue but managed to emerge solid and steadfast amongst the challenges ahead. NECC-ICC was privileged in **hosting the annual meeting of the World Council of Churches- Ecumenical Water Network.** The network held their meetings for the first time in the Middle East region and in Palestine in particular. We were privileged being their host partner and we appreciate the rich experience and exposure we shared in Gaza and the West Bank. A word of appreciation is ad due to the Gaza area committee for their hospitality and facilitation of our visit in Gaza.

NECC-ICC in its previous strategic cycle 2012-2014 was successful in reviving the collection of outstanding receivables and established a solid base for the Loans portfolio. Accordingly, policies and procedures of the **Loan revolving program** were revisited with the aim to **empower applicants towards improving their socio-economic conditions.**

Despite the chronic status of the conflict and worsening living conditions yet, we were able to realize our community development objectives and maintain strategic directions towards ecumenical performance and witness in cooperation with local governance authorities and communities.

2. Organizational History and Structure

The Near East Council of Churches-International Christian Committee (NECC-ICC) is a Humanitarian Ecumenical Church Related Organization established in 1949, when four Americans residing in Jerusalem, wired the World Council of Churches requesting immediate support for the Palestinian refugees who sought refuge in the West Bank.

NECC-ICC has a rich experience in working with the poorest of the poor and the marginalized communities within the Palestinian society. It has evolved from a relief based organization to one with rural based grass roots development strategy that included mother and child centers, infrastructure development, land reclamation, access to education and water, social work and training in nutrition and gender awareness as well as vocational training. Through over sixty years of work and experience with the Palestinian people, NECC-ICC has positively affected over 520 rural villages.

Structurally, NECC-ICC operates as the area committee for the Department of Service to the Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), which is a service department of the umbrella organization Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). MECC is an international organization, which acts as an ecumenical forum of service for all Christians of all denominations in the Middle East.

3. Mission and Vision Statements

The Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Works is the only Ecumenical Service arm of the Churches in Jerusalem and the West Bank, reflects the Christian core values in its Witness and Diakonia to foster and advance socio-economic conditions of Palestinians through the active contribution to improve living conditions and realize basic human rights.

The organization sees its vision towards a Palestinian society which guarantees pluralism and equal opportunities for all its citizens based on the ideals of justice, equality of rights, opportunities and freedom.

4. Identity, Culture and Values

Identity

The fact that NECC-ICC is an ecumenical body, representative of the local Church, with its executive membership comprising of local Church leaders, we are called as Christians to serve in humbleness and self-sacrifice, putting our own pride and agendas aside to meet the needs of the marginalized and oppressed in society.

Culture

There has been a continuous Christian presence in Palestine for the last 2000 years, testifying to the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, events which all took place in this very land. The NECC-ICC responded to the first Nakba and has been sincere in its Diakonia towards serving the Palestinians on the baselines of our Christian beliefs and understanding.

Values

Diakonia and unity (ecumenism) are naturally intertwined, strengthen and encourage one another. **This is most evident when churches come together across denominations to provide relief and assistance to those in need.** At the same time, assuming a position of servant hood while lifting up and encouraging fellow Christians is a spirited expression of both ecumenism and Diakonia derived from our Christian beliefs that proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as hope for the suffering and to teach love and justice according to God's will.

Values upon which our Diakonia is based.

- **Human beings are created in the image of God** underlines the equal values of ALL irrespective of race, color, sex or creed.
- Expressing **Christian witness in an ecumenical spirit.**
- **Community's involvement** in defining their needs, aspirations and priorities to bring about change in their lives.
- **Enhancing ownership** through the active involvement and engagement in the early stages of planning and implementation which ensures sustainability.
- **Learning culture** is practiced, experienced and shared with local communities and governance to empower them and promote self-reliance.
- **Transparency, credibility and accountability** are emphasized locally and internationally.
- Ensuring **gender** integration and balance within actions.
- Encourage **voluntary** spirit and practice.

5. DSPR West Bank Area Committee

The four Church families have equal share distribution for the nomination of their respective delegates to each Area Committee. The committee comprises of 12 members who serve for a term of 4 years. The constitution throughout its representation embodies a diversity of professionals and volunteers in various fields. Youth and gender issues were considered in this composition.

Area Committee Board Members

Mr. Ibrahim Maliha (Chairperson)	Dr. Mary Komsieh (Vice Chair)
Mr. Ghassan Mustaklem (Treasurer)	Mrs. Tala Duwani (Secretary)
Mrs. Sandra Khoury (Member)	Mr .George Sahhar (Member)
Mr. Samer Shehadeh (Member)	Ms. Naela Rabah (Member)
Mr. Maurice Younan (Member)	Ms. Elham Salameh (Member)
Mr. Sobhi Makhoul (Member)	Father Antonios AlOurshalimi (Member)

Core Staff & consultants

Mr. Ramzi Zananiri (Executive Director)	Eng. Luna Siniora (Projects Manager)
Mr. Hanna Khoury (Finance Officer)	Ms. Hiyam Salameh (Loan Officer)
Mrs. Susan Dahdal (Secretary)	Ms. May Nazzal (Trainer)
Mr. AbdelRahim Saidi (Field Coordinator)	Mr. Abdallah Awad (Trainer)
Dr. Amer AbuFarha (Veterinarian).	

6. NECC-ICC Overall Goal

NECC-ICC is implementing the third cycle of its strategic directions building upon previous experiences and contextual needs and priorities. Guided by the organization mandate and values, we remain committed to reflect change. Capitalizing upon more than 60 years of experience, NECC-ICC was able to identify the appropriate strategic goals for its future performance in the various localities and sectors.

NECC-ICC has carefully defined its **Overall Goal** that is an extension of its long standing mandate which is in line with the intended results of **Community Development Programs**. **This Overall Goal is as follows:**

To improve and protect vital economic and social infrastructure by enhancing basic services, socio- economic conditions and support economic growth for Palestinians living in refugee camps and elsewhere.

In the absence of a political scope coupled with growing frustration, agony and hopelessness, emphasis was given to the set goal through community development program that was successful in identifying the appropriate forms of intervention that contribute partially in easing up the ongoing chronic crisis in sectors of water, food security, with capacity building and advocacy solidifying sectors' direction. The loan revolving program remains vital for economic empowerment and making a difference in peoples' lives.

7. Community Development Program

7.1 Food Security

● Introduction

According to FAO's most recent estimates, 12% of the global population were unable to meet their dietary energy requirements in 2011-2013. Therefore, around one in eight people in the world are likely to have suffered from chronic hunger, regularly not getting enough food for an active and healthy life.

Even though the developing regions have registered significant progress towards the millennium development goal 1, the vast majority of hungry people live in developing regions, where the prevalence of undernourishment is estimated at 14.3%.

The estimated number of undernourished people has continued to decrease. Yet, the rate of progress appears insufficient to reach international goals for hunger reduction in developing regions unless additional efforts are exerted to reduce hunger at two levels; to meet immediate needs and long-term sustainability to increase food availability and enhance agriculture productivity.

Almost half of the world's population live in rural areas, with more than 80% of these rural people deriving their livelihoods from agriculture. Agriculture is essential for the economy particularly in developing countries; the agriculture sector contributes as much as 30% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the World Bank, 1% growth in

GDP from agriculture increases the expenditures of the three poorest declines by at least 2.5 times as much as 1% growth from the rest of the economy.

In the oPt, with destruction of property and restricted access to natural resources and services, limited employment opportunities and decreasing incomes coupled with high food prices, an estimated 1.3 million Palestinians are food insecure as per FAO component of the consolidated appeals 2013.

We at NECC-ICC are keen to reflect our values of Christian Witness and Diakonia through active contribution to improve living conditions of Palestinians in addition to fostering their basic human rights.

Throughout our food security program, we thrive to protect, respect and achieve one of the most important human rights, the right to food through contributing to the improvement of rural livelihoods of vulnerable Palestinian communities by ensuring availability and access to basic foods.

● Problem Statement

In the oPt, though food is generally available and supplied in sufficient quantity and variety, 4 out of 10 Palestinians are food insecure due to physical and economic reasons; occupation's policies and practices, in addition to the inability to purchase food available in the markets.

The occupation's policies and practices, mainly the restrictions on movement of people and goods and the damages to personal property have severely affected people's physical access to food and farmers' physical access to the inputs to produce food. This in turn has contributed to higher prices of basic food and commodities in addition to reducing the purchasing power of many vulnerable families. Moreover, confiscation of land, expansion of illegal settlements in addition to the construction of the separation wall has continued to prevent Palestinians' access to basic services which in turn increased vulnerability.



Fence behind kids playing in their courtyard

- Today there are 15 illegal settlements in Qalqilia district, inhabited by 45,366 settlers who have **land grabbed 21,280 dunums**. (1 Dunum equals 1000 square meters).
- **Land confiscated** as a result of the separation barrier, inclusive of the security buffer zone represents **6,240 Dunums**.
- **Isolated land** behind the wall inaccessible to farmers planted with olive trees and citrus trees is **39,080 dunums**.

- As a result of the wall, **19 out of 35 artesian wells were confiscated** by Israeli occupation.

Accordingly, **Qalqilya district have lost 50% of its prime agriculture land space area**, isolated communities from their natural environment and segregated Palestinian communities from each other, denying farmers access to their land.

Furthermore, and according to the World Bank, Israel abstracts about 80% of the 'estimated potential' of the Mountain Aquifer and continuously over-abstracts beyond sustainable yields, in some years by more than 50%, causing irreversible long term damage to the sustainability of this shared water resource.

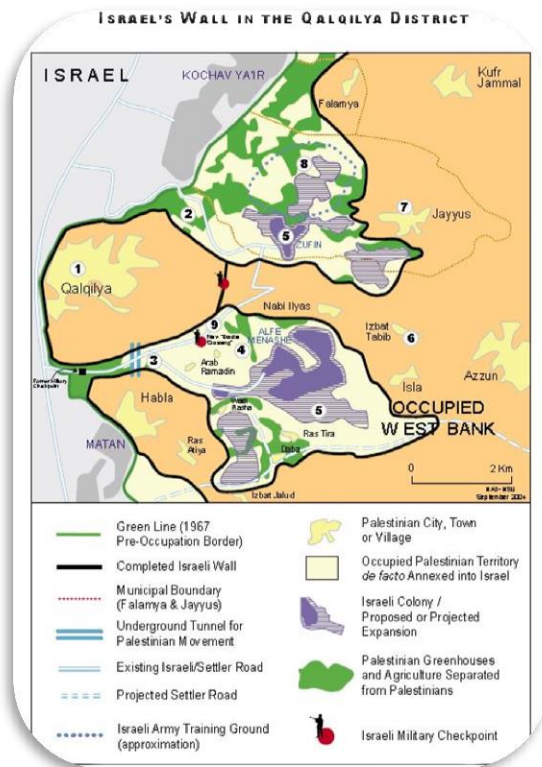
Consequently, Qalqilia farmers lost their sole source of income in agriculture, unemployment rate highest in the West Bank 26% (PCBS), below poverty line at 23% (PCBS) and food insecure at 36% (PCBS).

From a booming district it has been transformed into a ghetto where the city and villages have all been encircled with the separation barrier, security buffer zones, military checkpoints and bypass roads for safe passage of settlers.

By example and as seen in the map, Qalqilya city, home of almost 50% of the population of the district is surrounded by Walls and settlements. The only way into the city is through one checkpoint whereby if this checkpoint is closed for any reason the complete city is isolated.

According to the poverty rates among individuals according to household monthly consumption in the West Bank published by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS-2011), 42.7% of the Palestinians in the West Bank live below the poverty line with about 38% live in deep poverty. Furthermore, the households living above the poverty line are not necessarily safeguarded against poverty in the near future, as about one-third of those cases are borderline cases which may exhaust their coping mechanisms and become vulnerable to fall below poverty line.

Food-insecure households' characteristics indicate that larger households are more vulnerable (according to OCHA, the average household size among food-insecure people in the West Bank is 6.3 and 7 in Gaza), have a higher adult to child dependence ratio in addition to a higher number of female adult members.



Palestinian households managed to cope in difficult times. These coping mechanisms are considered negative as they depend on the cut expenditures on health, food (consumption of poor quality and nutrient-deficient food), sold assets and asked for assistance from relatives and friends. However, with rising poverty and unemployment, the coping mechanisms are exhausted and severely strained and vulnerability increased, thus, the food security situation has considerably deteriorated and an additional 17% of the population are under threat of becoming food insecure (*OCHA consolidated appeal 2013*).

While the overall food security situation has slightly improved, food insecurity levels in Area C remain higher than in Areas A and B although the bulk of the agricultural land as well as main aquifers are located in Area C.

The crisis experienced through the gender lens indicates that men and boys are much more likely to face death, injuries and detention. Men who have traditionally held most of the jobs in the formal sector, and thus have been the main income-earners, have by and large been terminated or suspended due to controls of movements of workers and goods. This is especially the case for younger men, as they face the most severe restrictions in obtaining travel permits.

The negative impact of the crisis as experienced by girls and women have mostly been indirect, such as increased levels of domestic violence, femicide (honor killings), reduced access to reproductive health services, and increased time and risk in accessing water and food, as well as increased responsibilities taking care of the sick as a result of limited access to medical services. Girls, particularly in large rural families, are dropping out of school in order to help carry some of these extra responsibilities.

Socio-Economic Fact Sheet published by OCHA shows that female-headed households represent 7.8% of all Palestinian households, but it is one of the highest recipients of food aid and other humanitarian assistance. This is because poverty amongst these households is higher than those headed by male. In a female-headed household, there is usually only one parent, and the job of caring for children is often done at the expense of engaging in income-generating activities.

● Problem Justification

Under the circumstances of occupation practices and deteriorating economic conditions, it is crucial to address the livelihoods crisis through a strategic approach that will protect livelihoods and mitigate poverty.

Although donors have provided emergency humanitarian assistance including cash and food to those who had lost their main source of livelihood, this has not been enough to prevent the numbers of the food insecure from increasing.

In order to prevent further deterioration, improving food security situation becomes essential and one of the key humanitarian concerns in the oPt. However, due to decline in funding, the targets have not been entirely met; only 30% of the targeted households benefited from production units and home gardens (*OCHA consolidated appeal 2013*).

Yet, domestic agricultural production is important and should not be neglected as in value or weight terms most of the food (vegetable and meat production) consumed by Palestinians living in the West Bank is domestically produced.

As the economic access to food in terms of the ability to purchase food rather than lack of food is the main constraint to securing a healthy nutritious diet, we at NECC-ICC are **keen to ensure physical and economic access to sufficient supplies of safe and nutritious food by promoting productive and income generating agriculture activities in rural areas.**

Agricultural activities are characterized mainly as family-based production activities to subsist household needs. More than half of both plant and livestock production are mainly for domestic consumption, 23% to sell the surplus after meeting the domestic consumption and 20% for direct sale (CEPR Memo 2012).

These activities improve rural livelihoods and contribute to household food security by ensuring availability and access to basic foods and prevent rural households from falling into deep poverty. We target food-insecure households who have some agricultural skills and resources so as to help them escape the poverty trap through livelihood project which aims at enhancing their food security situation.

Targeted households are engaged in domestic farming in a sustainable way with their capacities, agricultural knowledge and know-how enhanced towards increasing their food security.

● Target Area

Qalqilia district was selected for this year's intervention as per the strategic plan. Despite its small area, Qalqilia is considered as one of the most important amongst other districts in agriculture; its land is fertile, the area is enriched with water sources in addition to the climate variability which results in a variety of crops.

The agricultural land in the district forms 6.2% of the total agricultural land of the West Bank. Furthermore, the total return of the agriculture sector in the district is about 22% of the total return (PCBS 2010-2011).

In 2012, one third of settlers' attacks in the governorate, targeted the selected communities, through burning of seasonal yield of wheat and barley, burning of citrus and olive trees, demolishing animal barns and killing of livestock.



The district comprises of 34 communities in urban and rural areas. Of the 34 worst affected, as assessed by directorate of agriculture are 15 communities of which we have visited 12 and prioritized 3 locations, taking into consideration the severity of their conditions, the viability of the project in the selected target area and their available resources. We were able to make a difference in the designated cluster comprising of **Ras Atieh, Ras Tireh, Beit Amin and the cluster of Western villages (Salman, Jalo'od, Ashkar and AlMudawar)**.

Target area was identified with area profiles for the 3 localities made available and engaged with the implementation of the action plan based upon the needs assessment conducted, visits to the localities and meeting with the villages' governance representatives were conducted. Governance representatives were very supportive, cooperative and welcoming to the project and mechanisms.

Qalqilya is so blessed with its environmental characteristics represented by climate, soil, water and farmers' capacities which is targeted by Israeli expansionist policy makers. It is one of the prime agriculture hubs in the West Bank and a prime front line district with rich resources that is swallowed into Israel proper in various forms, and reality is about to change into a detrimental way.

● **Project Description**

We at NECC-ICC continue focusing on combining humanitarian relief with community development through domestic farming in the agriculture sector. This approach has been adopted to enhance household food security through 55 domestic farms within the designated cluster comprising of **Ras Atieh, Ras Tireh, Beit Amin and the cluster of Western villages (Salman, Jalo'od, Ashkar and AlMudawar)** which is considered as one of the easiest ways of ensuring access to a healthy diet. With safe and easy access to land and water, these home gardens can be well-developed not only for households' sufficiency of daily food needs but as a source of income in the long run as well.

The project comprises of two components; **Plant production and livestock. The plant production element** consists of **planting of 5 productive trees; avocado, lemon, orange, guava and nectarine** of 4-5 years of age for each home garden with adequate space area. All trees were carefully selected to enhance household's food security situation with significant focus on expensive nutritionally rich types that poor households can't purchase. Furthermore, the climate in the area in terms of temperature and rainfall, availability of water in addition to the planting season were considered when the plants were selected.

The second component of the home garden, **livestock and poultry which consists of 2 pregnant sheep, 12 laying hens with their cages in addition to fodder for both hens and sheep sufficient for a period of 100 days; 300 kg of feed per home garden for sheep, in a total of 16.5 tons, in addition to 100 kg of feed per home garden for hens, in a total of 5.5 tons. The total amount of fodder supplied to the beneficiaries of the project is 440 bags weighing 22. tons in total.**

This year, each of the cages supplied to the home gardens consist of 4 slots, with each slot accommodating up to 3 hens, in addition to troughs for feed and water. According to specifications each hen was around 100 days old upon delivery with required identification papers and records from the hatchery with an average weight of 1.15 kg. A total of 660 laying hens were delivered with a daily average productivity of 10-11 eggs per home garden.

For the sheep, 2 heads of pregnant sheep were delivered for each home garden in the three locations to enhance food security in addition to the economic situation of households; a total of 110 heads of pregnant sheep were selected by the veterinarian on the basis of quality from a known source of supply, the age of the sheep varied between 15-30 months with an average pregnancy of 3 months and tagged with special ear tags of unified color and serial numbers.

Upon selection, the herd was isolated in the supplier's barn for a period of one week and monitored throughout this period by the veterinarian. Blood tests were performed at random and analyzed by the laboratories of the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, needed vaccinations were performed in addition to the ultrasound for pregnancy before delivery.

After numbering the selected sheep, a distribution mechanism sheet was designed to include easy-to-follow technical/tender criteria. This sheet was of dual purpose; to complete individual profile of selected sheep and for fair distribution of pairs of sheep to the beneficiaries. This late purpose was applicable after sorting sheep depending on sheep individual variations according to registered profile's data. The ranking system of coupling sheep heads delimits errors of biased in nomination of sheep pairs onto beneficiaries.

Tenders were performed for the supply of each item in addition to the veterinarian and trainer in compliance with technical and legal specifications and standards. Moreover, all inputs were delivered to the gardens in accordance to a set timeframe on the basis of accomplishments of agreed upon phase distribution.

The local contribution took the form of preparing the land for planting the trees in addition to preparation of animal sheds for the second component of the home garden that is sheep, fodder and laying hens with their cages in accordance to specifications.

After delivery of all components of the home garden for each beneficiary in both locations, two visits per home garden were conducted by both the trainer and the veterinarian with the project coordinator in a set timeframe in order to check on the components of the garden, provide counseling services in plant production and livestock and technical guidance to beneficiaries, in addition to any veterinary treatment required. Also, 4 visits were conducted by the project coordinator for counseling services for the home-garden in general.

This year, the project coordinator developed **Internal-Farm Records** which were distributed to each home-garden and orientation for data filling was done by the coordinator to each beneficiary for the management of the garden.

The **internal records** are important for the management of the garden and are to be filled by the beneficiary himself. They comprise of the following; reproduction record, offspring record, mobilization record, health status record, fodder purchase record, feedlot record, milk production record and milk sales record.

● Capacity Building

We believe that strengthening the households' abilities to manage their home garden successfully is a must to ensure best achievement of goals in addition to sustainability of project.

Three training sessions were held; one in each location in both **theoretical and practical** dimensions; 12 training hours were distributed throughout 2 days for the theoretical training on livestock and 1 day for the practical one with an average of 4 hours a day.

The training material was reviewed, updated and prepared in a power point presentation format in addition to handouts prepared for the beneficiaries highlighting the main points of the training, the village council contributed by providing the adequate space for the training to be held at. Besides, an ideal animal shed in each location was selected for the practical training with full acknowledged facilitation from the owner.

The beneficiaries' high interest was reflected with full participation; 55 direct beneficiaries attended the 3 days (each in his/her area) in addition to their active participation throughout the sessions as reflected in the trainer's report. Moreover, some of them with previous experience shared their knowledge which in turn enriched the training and motivated others for networking amongst each other.

The training addressed different topics that are very important for the management of the home garden. The approved modules covered the following:

- Types of sheep and sheds with specifications.
- Livestock management and the importance of using records.
- Breeding and fertility; sexual and physical maturity.
- Pregnancy, delivery, pre and post-delivery.
- Vaccinations and diseases.



- New born and feeding at different stages.
- Lighting programs for laying-hens.

The trainer conducted an assessment comparing pre and post experiences and knowledge reflected satisfaction of about 90% of the participants with the topics shared, providing them with new information, and the means of presentation that was clear and easy. About 90% of them noted that the timing and duration of training sessions were very good. Consequently, it is clear that the training was successful.

Food processing

This year we had introduced the longed for approach of food processing for housewives of beneficiaries, whereby we have invested appropriate time towards identifying the mostly needed topics that would be put in place from the inputs invested in households. So it would be completing the circle towards maximizing the impact of domestic farming. Accordingly, emphasis was put upon pasteurized white cheese, ricotta cheese, pickling and dried fruits.

The material in the form of a manual was finalized, printed and distributed to participants for future reference. The training took place in one of the households where the housewife (Mrs. Rihab Mara'beh), volunteered and offered her kitchen to be the training location. This beautiful gesture was appreciated by participants, trainer and us.

A one day theoretical and practical training throughout the duration of 5 hours was performed; the first twenty minutes of the training was designated towards the processing of pasteurized white cheese from 20 liters of milk. Throughout process, each step was extensively explained to ensure comprehension for the benefits of pasteurized cheese compared to the traditional cheese produced in that region.



White Cheese



Ricotta Cheese

The second part of the training focused upon pickling highlighting key problems and wrong practices encountered by women and best practices of pickling and dried fruits production. The third part reflected upon the processing of Ricotta cheese and its uses.



There was some resistance in the beginning especially by experienced cheese makers who objected to the heating of milk complaining that the process won't work. But at the end of the process the results were outstanding with full satisfaction of all participants. Those experienced ladies were helping some women who arrived late so as not to miss anything.

NECC-ICC made sure that all needed raw material, kits, utensils and equipment were made available for the trainer and participants. In addition to the distribution of needed kits and utensils for their future use at home.

● Target Group

In full coordination with the village councils, an announcement was affixed in several locations within each community, covering the village councils' premises, schools, mosques, grocery stores and main places in the village, in addition to the word of mouth which is very practical in small villages. The announcement was made for 7 days and entailed the project criterion for applicants:

- Household's with no/low-income.
- # of individuals per household not less than 4.
- Adequate space of home garden.
- Willingness to contribute to the project.
- Commitment to the project's requirements of training.

Consequently, each village council designated an employee for filling applications at its premises; the registration period lasted for 7 working days in each location with **a total of 153 applications filled within the cluster.**

In line with the plan of action the technical team conducted the **socio-economic survey** within the cluster by visiting each household and filling a **questionnaire** with all information regarding the social and economic situation of the household. The technical team **initially filtered questionnaires** according to an updated grading matrix on the baseline of the set criterion for eligibility and selected 55 households for this year's intervention.

The selected names were invited to a **collective meeting** each in his/her location with our technical team for orientation about the project as well as fulfillment of all legal prerequisite

documentation. Therefore, **55 beneficiaries** signed contractual agreements and started preparing the designated space area for the receipt of inputs.

The socio-economic survey conducted, revealed the following outcomes:

- About 50 % of the households have 4-6 individuals whereas the other 50% are with an average of 9 individuals per household.
- More than 77% of households have children at school whereby 23% of households have youth at universities.
- About 44% of the breadwinners are farmers/employees whereas about 56% are unemployed.
- About 33% of the targeted households' monthly income is less than USD 260.
- About 35% of the beneficiaries have had their agricultural land confiscated and/or isolated.
- About 30% of the benefitting households depend on aid from UNRWA or Social Welfare.

● Impact

Home gardens offer great potential for improving targeted households' food security through **direct access to a diversity of rich nutritional food** that couldn't be purchased before and **alleviating nutrient deficiencies**.

Furthermore, it will enhance their economic situation by increasing the purchasing power from savings on food expenditures and income from sales of garden products.

The expected results of the project are as follows:

- The average total **egg production** during the production season that lasts for one year is expected to reach 3600 eggs per home garden at an average price of **USD 580**. Considering the average number of individuals per household, each one has got an egg a day all through the year.
- The average number of **new born sheep** within one year is at least 3 sheep which increases the number of heads of sheep per household up to 5 that is worth about **USD 2,000**.
- Dairy production of **210 lt. of milk** per household during production season that is worth **USD 420**.
- The average **production of trees** is estimated to reach 15 kg (3 kg per tree, with 5 trees per household) at an average price of **USD 12** a year.

Thus, the first year's yield value per household is **USD 3,012** with expenses reaching **USD 1,300**. Net return per household is at least **USD 1,712** yearly representing about **USD 143** per household a month.



● Sustainability

To ensure sustainability of the project, the following actions were taken:

- Since it is a home garden, within the vicinity of the house, this encourages all family members to engage in the caretaking of the garden.
- Capacities of beneficiaries have been enhanced through theoretical and practical training conducted by specialized technical team, enhancing their knowhow and knowledge for effective and efficient management of their home gardens.
- The two sheep provided were pregnant for at least 90 days opting to accelerate return. Additionally, provision of high quality of feed for a period of 100 days ensured access to feed at no cost until delivery of newborns .
- A promissory note of one year has been signed by the beneficiaries against sheep; this note guarantees no sale of heads of sheep provided for a period of one year ensuring delivery and bonding with families.
- All livestock provided to beneficiaries were registered by the Ministry of Agriculture/veterinary department for continuous follow up and vaccination schemes.
- After delivery of all inputs to the domestic farms and throughout the period of 3 months, the trainer, the project coordinator in addition to the veterinarian extended their services to the beneficiaries through regular site visits to all home gardens for follow up and consultation.



Veterinarian

● Challenges

From our learning experience and the support of an excellent technical team, each year we improve in our specifications and bidding process with the aim to receive highest quality of components at the cheapest possible rate. This was realized but was time consuming especially in the case of livestock, since our technical team had to reflect several visits to the suppliers in order to select sheep that matches with our requirements. At the end of the day we were able to have the best sheep at a highly competitive price benefitting our beneficiaries.

● Most Significant Change

There are so many successes scored and if we are to reflect them it would require too many pages. One of the stories that impressed us most relates to one of the beneficiaries (**Tarek Garabeh**) whose sheep delivered a lamb prematurely, became sick and about to die. Tarek accommodated the lamb at home, provided it with medication, warmth and care. The lamb could not perform normal suckling and Tarek had to feed it with milk replacement through a bottle for a period of two weeks when it got well and rejoined its mother.

The stories are too many, but we chose some of them as shared by the technical team:

Salman AbdelKarim Yousef Salman:

Salman is a 50 year old man who is the sole provider of a big family comprising of 12 members; Salman, his wife, his old single sister, 7 girls out of which 2 are twins, his divorced daughter in addition to an 8 year old boy.

Salman lives in one of the small villages within the Qalqilia district with a population of about 900 inhabitants. He said that he likes most, "sitting under the tree enjoying nature while his sheep are herding around him."



The 12 members family lives in a house that is about 120 m² in space, comprising of 3 rooms, a small kitchen that has one of its corner used as a corner bathroom. The house is in a very bad condition as it is very old, and Salman doesn't have enough money to make rehabilitation works for it.



The kitchen



Bathroom

Like many others in the same area, Salman suffered from occupation practices and measures. In 2000, Salman was injured and lost sight in one of his eyes. Furthermore, the separation wall devoured his 3 dunums. In 2007, family and friends supported Salman by providing him with a small chicken farm that he used for 5 years only, since then, he hasn't used it as he got a demolition notice from the Israeli occupation claiming that it's located within the "security" buffer zone of the separation wall.

Salman says that the health insurance for his family that is covered by the Ministry of Social affairs gives him great support in this regard as he not only has his eye injury, but assists him in treating one of his twin daughters who endured burn injuries in several parts of her body.

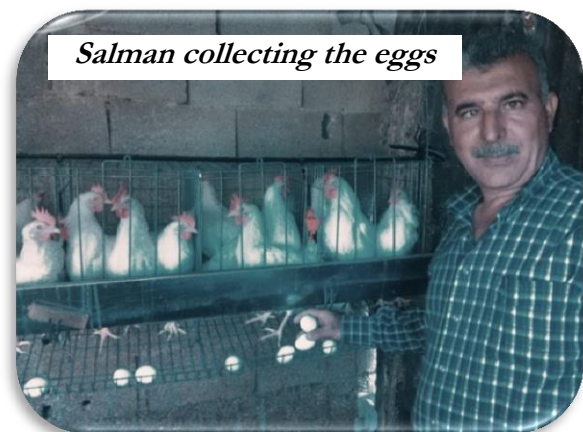


Demolition notice

Salman is a very passive person, doesn't have any problems with others, to the contrary, he always tries to be a positive catalyst when dealing with relationships, very friendly and has many friends from his village and the surroundings as people trust him and he tries to help others to the maximum of his ability.

When asked about his interest or hobbies, Salman replied: *"A person who thinks of hobbies or interests has to be relaxed, clear minded and has the basics of life requirements, I can't even think of hobbies as my mind is always engaged with finding a way to provide my family with their basic needs."*

Salman knew about the project from the announcements which were hanged up in the village. And like all other beneficiaries, since then, he became involved with the project, starting from the day when he rushed to the village council to register his name, and then attending the theoretical and practical 12 hours training, preparing his shed, until receiving the components of the domestic farm throughout a period of about six months.

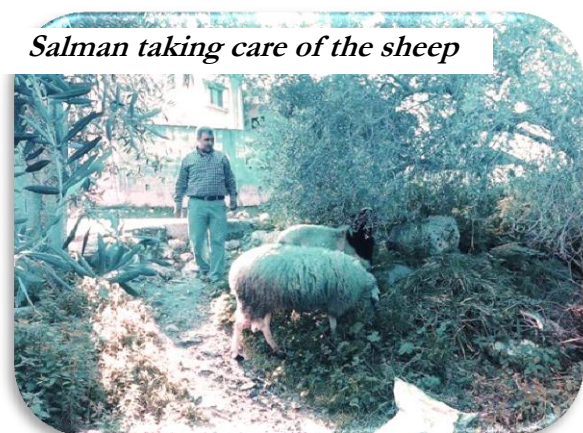


Salman collecting the eggs

Salman believes that the components of the domestic farm will help him improve his family's situation, as his laying hens have already started laying 12 eggs a day, which is sufficient for his big family. Moreover, his two heads of sheep will deliver soon, so he looks forward to start benefiting from their milk in addition to making cheese. Salman nowadays depends for living on support from family members, he is unemployed, but sometimes he helps relatives in cultivating their land and gets some vegetables in return. Thus, in the near future, he will be having an income generating project of his own, by selling one of the newborns to by fodder for the mothers of the sheep and having them pregnant again.

The project provided Salman with 2 heads of pregnant sheep, 12 laying hens with their cages in addition to the fodder needed for both for a period of about 3 months. In addition to enhancing his capacities for best and most efficient benefit from the components.

Salman said that *"he learnt a lot form this project, not only how to become organized and economic, but how to plan for the future as well. Furthermore, not to think of quick solutions for our problems, to the contrary, try to think of sustainable one."*



Salman taking care of the sheep

Mahmoud Jamil Mas'oud Shawahneh:

Mahmoud is a 48 year old man who lives in Ras Tireh village with his family and works as an "Imam" at the mosque. His family comprises of 8 members; himself, his wife, 3 daughters and 3 sons. Two of his daughters and one of his sons study at universities while the rest still go to school. Mahmoud said that he believes that education is the most important thing especially for girls, for that reason he is struggling for his kids to get their university degree.



Mahmoud lives in Ras Tireh village which is a very small village with population of 400 inhabitants representing 50 families. He said " *my home village has a very special location with nice weather, but what I like most is the love and harmony the people share which is reflected in family visits, solving people's problems and evening gatherings especially in summer.*"

The family lives in a house that is about 100 m² in space consisting of 3 small rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. The house's condition is very bad; the roof is not insulated so they suffer water leakage and the inner walls are only plastered but not painted. The family suffers bad economic situation due to the fact that the dad's salary represented in about USD 650 a month is the only income which doesn't cover the family's expenses especially with 3 tuition fees.

Mahmoud had his share of suffering from the Israeli occupation as well. He lost 9 dunums of land reclaimed and planted with almonds and olive trees in addition to field crops and a 5m³ capacity pool used for irrigation that used to provide for him with his expenses, which were confiscated and the separation wall was constructed on.

Furthermore, when the separation wall was under construction, Ras Tireh was isolated, so two of his daughters who were studying at the university suffered enough crossing a gate on daily basis in addition to bearing the soldiers' annoying behaviors.

After the confiscation of his land, Mahmoud went with his case to court, the thing that provoked the Israeli occupation resulting in attacks by the soldiers to his house several times, beating him and destroying the house.

Moreover, he used to have a chicken farm as a small business, but the Israeli occupation practiced several measures to break him financially, affecting loss of more than USD 40.000, practicing the following measures:

- Not allowing the veterinarian to visit the farm and closure of the area.
- Storming the farm several times, shooting sound bombs and killing the chickens.

- Prohibiting selling and buying chickens from the farm, especially in 2009 when the soldiers held 5000 chickens at the gate on a hot day in summer which resulted in the death of all of them.

This didn't change Mahmoud's character, he still has very strong relations with people and he always helps people in studying and gives them advice in agriculture issues as he has a diploma degree in addition to his knowledge in agriculture.

When asked about his interest or hobbies, Mahmoud replied: *"I like reading, studying and sports, but unfortunately, and due to my bad economic situation, I could not accomplish my BA degree and settled for the diploma."*

Mahmoud knew about the project from the announcements which were hang up in the village council. And like all other beneficiaries, since then, he became involved with the project, starting from the day when he rushed to the village council to register his name, and then attending the theoretical and practical 12 hours training, preparing his shed, until receiving the components of the domestic farm throughout a period of about six months.

Mahmoud believes that the components of the domestic farm will help him improve his family's situation, as his hens have already started laying eggs; he is meeting the family's need of eggs and selling the extra for earning money. Moreover, he is herding his two heads of sheep in nature in order to save the amount of fodder that he got from the project for a longer period of time. He said: *"I believe that hens and sheep are complementary for the family's diet and will provide us with an essential part of our basic needs of milk and cheese."*

Mahmoud's ambition for the future is enlarging this small income generating project by buying more hens and sheep in the future.

The project provided Mahmoud with 2 heads of pregnant sheep, 12 laying hens with their cages in addition to the fodder needed for both for a period of about 3 months. In addition to enhancing his capacities for best and most efficient benefit from the components.

Mahmoud said that he *"learnt from this project how to become organized in addition to the best practices in dealing with livestock for the best benefit. Moreover, the kids are becoming responsible and getting involved in taking care of the livestock."*

7.2 Water

● Introduction

Water is one of nature's most important gifts to mankind. It is essential to life and a key component in determining the quality of our lives. Although water covers more than 70% of the earth, only 1% of it is available as a source of drinking.

More than 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related causes with nearly all deaths, 99%, occurring in the developing world. Moreover, more than one in six people worldwide-894 million people lack access to improved water sources.

Worldwide, water is scarce and this problem is growing; people either lack enough water (quantity) or lack access to safe water (quality). **Having access to safe and sufficient drinking water and sanitation is central to living a life in dignity.** Yet, billions of people still do not enjoy this fundamental right.

Human rights demand a holistic understanding of access to water and sanitation, the right to water and sanitation requires that these are available, accessible, safe, acceptable and affordable for all. However, physical access to water is limited in many regions in the world in addition to unequal distribution of resources in many others.

In the oPt, the Palestinians suffer physical and economic water scarcity; access to water is limited as the oPt is a water-scarce region in addition to Israel's discriminatory water policy which maintains unequal allocation of water between Israelis and Palestinians.

Water is the Palestinians' most precious resource. However, Israel controls 85% of the water resources in the West Bank; hence the Palestinians are forced to rely on the Israeli occupation for access to their own water which in turn undermines any possibility for sustainable development and violates their right to water. While the Palestinian water use doesn't even meet the minimum daily standard of 100 lt./c/d as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Israelis use the greater amount of the region's total water.

Moreover, the most reliable resources were confiscated by Israel for their own use, the Israelis use the Palestinian water and what is left is then sold back to the Palestinians at a higher cost. Yet, the Palestinians have a right to access their own water resources and it's their right for an equitable distribution of water resources.

We at NECC-ICC are keen to reflect Christian Witness and Diakonia through active contribution to improve living conditions of Palestinians in addition to fostering their basic human rights.

Throughout our water program, we thrive to protect, respect and achieve one of the most important human rights, the right to water through supporting Palestinian communities to better manage and preserve natural resources by enhancing ownership and access to water resources.

● **Problem Statement**

Water is a major issue in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Although in the Oslo II Agreement of 1995 Israel recognized Palestinian water rights, the water issue was left to the final status negotiations which were to begin in 1996 but have not yet started.

Accordingly, a Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) was set up, Israel maintained control of the total flow and volume of water to the oPt while PWA took the role of allocating the limited supply made available by Israel with no ability to manage water resources.

Israel has taken sole control of the water resources in the area; it effectively controls 100% of the Jordan River basin, more than 80% of underground water resources from the Western

(mountain) aquifer and uses 85% of groundwater resources available in the West Bank. Consequently, the State of Israel and Israeli settlers get continuous water supply all year round while Palestinians face continuous scarcity and access to water.

- **Irregular water supply** across the West Bank particularly during summer months; when supplies of water are low, the Israeli water company (Mekorot) closes the valves which supply Palestinian towns and villages so as not to affect Israeli consumption. That could be seen with the settlers having their swimming pools topped up and lawns watered while the Palestinians not having enough water even for drinking.
- **Water distribution network losses of 30-50%** as a result of deteriorating networks and leaky pipes that are in bad need of repair in addition to about one third of the West Bank households with **no piped water** at all.
- Many Palestinians **have to buy their water**, either from Mekorot which makes them pay a price about 4 times higher than that charged to Israeli settlers in the West Bank, or from private suppliers selling expensive and unregulated trucked water.
- **Ban on Palestinians developing water resources in the West Bank;** Palestinians are forbidden from drilling new wells or rehabilitating old ones and even transmission pipelines connecting wells without permits from the Israeli authorities. Such permits are difficult or even impossible to obtain.
- **The average water supply to 57% of the Palestinian communities is about 63 lt./c/d, in 7% of the communities, the per capita is less than or equal to 30 lt. in addition to 36% with supply that ranges between 30-50 lt./c/d.**
- **Ongoing pollution of the ground water of the Mountain Aquifer;** about one-third of the settlements' wastewater, 5.5 MCM/year as well as 10 MCM from Jerusalem Municipality undergo no treatment and flow directly as raw sewage into the environment in addition to more than 90% of Palestinian wastewater (50MCM/year).

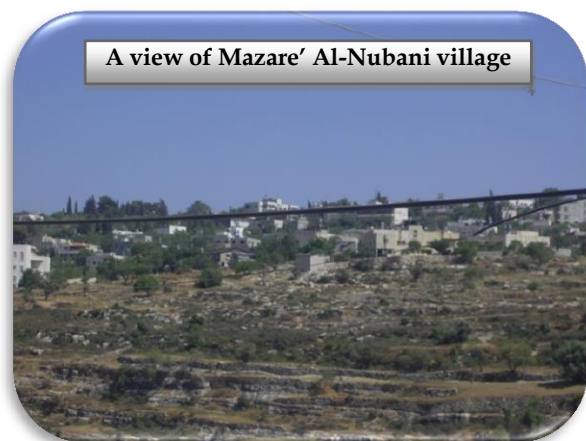
Thus, the water problem remains to be continuous and efforts should focus on improving the situation by providing sustainable solutions.

● Target Areas

Mazare' Al-Nubani and Arura villages are located 25 km to the north of Ramallah city within the Ramallah District. Both communities are located at the end of the transmission line; these villages were badly affected by the reduction of water quantities and the villages are served with water every 20 days.

This year's intervention represents a completion of the works that started in the last quarter of 2013 and was concluded in the first quarter of 2014.

Mazare' Al-Nubani and Arura are two villages with a population of about 6000 persons and are located 25Km to the north of Ramallah city, Ramallah district. The two villages are combined in one municipality under the name of Eastern Bani Zeid



A view of Mazare' Al-Nubani village

municipality. Jerusalem Water Undertaking is the service provider; water is served through a main transmission pipeline that starts from Ein Samya with 3 production wells, providing about 20 communities along its path and ends at these two villages with a total length of about 25Km.

● Problem Justification

The existing main pipeline serving the two communities is 3" in diameter pipe, which is not suitable to convey the required amount of water due to its small diameter and due to the deteriorated supply network of the two villages which is a main cause of leakage which aggravates the problem.

The average consumption is about 40 lt/c/d and 57 lt/c/d in Mazare' Al-Nubani and Arura communities respectively. The communities are not served constantly but once every 12 days.

Especially in summer time, the two communities resort to tanked water from a nearest point of about 12 Km in each direction at a low rate of 150NIS/10m³ as the water tank is provided to the villages through WBWD. The problem is that as the consumption is at its peak during this period, people have to wait for 7-10 days to get turn by tankers. Furthermore, people with good economic condition buy tanked water from tankers from outside the village at a rate of 250 NIS/m³, the ones with bad economic situation (50%) resort to get water from the polluted spring in the village.

● Project Description

Construction of 1500m transmission pipeline of 6" diameter between the village of Obwein and the two villages of Mazare' Al-Nubani and Arura. In addition to rehabilitation of 1300m of 2" diameter deteriorated supply network pipelines in Mazare' Al-Nubani.

We have approached the Ministry of Finance for an exemption of VAT representing 16% and as an INGO we were authorized for the exemption enabling us proceed with the project without any projected deficits.



● Impact

A reliable, suitable and dependable source of water for Mazare' Al-Nubani and Arura villages provided through securing additional constant quantities of water from the current source reaching an average consumption of about 90 lt/c/d and 84 lt/c/d for Mazare' Al- Nubani and Arura villages respectively.



● Sustainability

Provision of the transmission pipe secures safe supply of potable water for at least 15 years with regular maintenance undertaken by the JWU.

● Challenges

We faced many challenges until we reached to this year's initiative, these challenges were mainly as a result of the **different reference bodies for water in the area**; the West Bank Water Department (WBWD), Palestinian Water Authority/Project Management Unit (PWA/PMU), The Jerusalem Water Undertaking (JWU) in addition to the projects department in the Ministry of Local Governance.

Furthermore, **these bodies lack effective coordination amongst each other and their financial resources are limited** which reflects negatively on the national prioritization of needs.

Moreover, **the limitations imposed by the Israeli occupation** on some of the initiatives in the water sector have added to the pressures that we faced throughout planning and implementation of this year's project.

As a result, prioritizing the needs by itself was very difficult and more efforts had to be conducted in order to assess, prioritize the needs and then select the project with a contingency plan prepared for any surprises or unforeseen issues that may pop up.

7.3 Advocacy

● Introduction

"Lack of access to adequate, safe and clean water has been a longstanding problem for the Palestinian population of the oPt. Though exacerbated in recent years by the impact of drought-induced water scarcity, the problem arises principally because of Israeli water policies and practices which discriminate against the Palestinian population of the oPt.

This discrimination has resulted in widespread violations of the right to an adequate standard of living, which includes the human rights to water, to adequate food and housing, and the right to work and health of the Palestinian population." *Amnesty International, Troubled Waters - Palestinian's denied fair access to water (2009)*

According to **international human rights law**, access to water and sanitation is a human right. This right is enshrined in a number of international treaties which are legally **binding on states that have 'ratified' them**. These include:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Israel has ratified the above mentioned treaties and is obliged to implement them in all territories under its jurisdiction, including the occupied Palestinian territory.

Israeli Obligations: Israel ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) where the right to water is enshrined. In September 2010, the UN Human Rights Council affirmed for the first time that the human right to water and sanitation is legally binding. **Israel however is one of three countries that have not recognized both of these rights.**

The International humanitarian law, The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) states that an occupying power is responsible for maintaining public health and hygiene services in an occupied territory which necessitates the provision of clean water and adequate sanitation. The Fourth Geneva Convention also prohibits indiscriminate military attacks on civilian property and infrastructure including drinking water installations and sanitation infrastructure.

Furthermore an occupying power must protect the resources of an occupied territory and not use them for the benefit of its own population.

Israel's Obligations: Israel is the Occupying Power in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Under international humanitarian law, an occupying power is responsible for the welfare of the civilian population and must ensure that civilians are provided with or allowed to secure the basics for survival including food, water, medical supplies and shelter. Palestinians are guaranteed access to drinking water, water for personal hygiene and sanitation under the Geneva Conventions.

● **Problem Statement**

"Where the basic service has not been achieved, hygiene cannot be assured and consumption requirements may be at risk. Therefore, providing a basic level of access is the highest priority for the water and health sectors". *World Health Organizations," Domestic water Quantity, service level and health" page three.*

In accordance to the International Law and the International Humanitarian law, Human beings should have **safe, sufficient, affordable and accessible water.**

- **Sufficient water:** An adequate and continuous water supply must be available for personal and domestic uses. The World Health Organization recommends on average 100-150 l/c/d to ensure all basic health needs are met. Once personal and domestic

needs have been met, adequate quantities of water should be available to secure livelihoods and ensure food security. **Palestinians not only are under occupation but their own resources are controlled by the Occupier. Average consumption of Palestinians reaches an average of 67 l/c/d.**

- **Safe water and sanitation:** Water must be free from hazardous substances that endanger human health, and possess an acceptable color, odor and taste. Water sources should be protected to ensure safe water for present and future generations. Sanitation should be hygienic and not pose a threat to the environment and able to effectively prevent human, animal and insect contact with excreta and transmission of disease. Toilets must ensure privacy, dignity and safety for the user with excreta and waste water removed or disposed of safely. **Since the beginning of the illegal settlement enterprise, Israel has not constructed advanced regional wastewater treatment plants in the illegal West Bank settlements as it has done inside Israel. Only 81 of the 151+ settlements are connected to wastewater treatment facilities, and even these are outdated, frequently malfunction and shut down, and are not able to treat the necessary amount of sewage. Of the 17.5 million cubic meters of wastewater created annually by the settlements, 5.5 mcm flow as raw sewage into West Bank streams and riverbeds. The Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection has failed to take serious enforcement actions against settlements(B'tselem29/06/2009).**
- **Physically accessible water and sanitation:** Water and sanitation facilities must be within safe physical reach, in or near the household, school, work place or health facility and minimize threats to physical security, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children. The World Health Organization recommends that water services should not be located more than 1,000 meters away from the home in order to ensure easy access to minimum quantities of water. **Considering the fragmentation and isolation of communities from each other access to water sources have become a nightmare and hazardous with the existing military checkpoints.**
- **Affordable water and sanitation:** Water and sanitation infrastructure, services and ongoing operation and maintenance must be affordable. The cost should not reduce individual or household capacity to acquire other essential goods and services, such as food, housing, health care and education. **The purchase of water from safe and unsafe locations have become hazardous with the military obstacles of checkpoints, and most of filling points are distant from inhabited areas rendering transportation costs unaffordable.**

● **Justification of Approach**

NECC-ICC will continue to face up to the ongoing suffering of people affected by occupation practices not only through a specific response to aid **but also intervention that denounces unjust practices that are often root causes to human sufferings.** Accordingly, advocacy has become an **integral strategic component** in the organization directions towards tackling head on injustices. NECC-ICC is always keen in reflecting **positive change** in the lives of people we serve and is constantly challenged with problems that we felt could not be addressed through service provision and capacity building. This relates to the address of basic human rights of Palestinians with **focus upon Water.**

Nature of approach comprised of an International and National dimension.

1. *The National approach aimed to mobilize affected community towards building up and making their own case and pursue it with the appropriate authorities towards change of policy and practice.*

We have evoked a serious issue which demonstrated the lack of compliance to public good and national rights with water being a strategic source and should be treated as such, with no overriding power politics.

Eventually we are going to address the issue at the national WASH cluster to ensure appropriate regulations be formulated to protect the National water strategic sources and distribution. This remains in the pipeline through our active participation

2. *As to the international approach our aim is geared towards global Church structures to demand and pressure Israel to change policy and practices in order to comply with international law and respect Palestinian human rights through a solidified position to affect change.*

The NECC-ICC has become a member of the International Reference Group IRG to the WCC/Ecumenical Water Network (EWN). Our representation is the only one in the region and we look forward to capitalize upon that membership to reflect high exposure of the water issue in the region and in the oPt in particular, with focus upon Israeli occupation and right to water for Palestinians.

This has culminated by hosting the global representation and gathering of WCC-EWN to meet in Palestine with an exposure visit to Gaza. Following are some consolidated reflections as shared by colleagues from the Ecumenical Water Network.

(1) Crossing the border:

“The procedure of crossing the border to Gaza was our first experience. We felt so small, powerless and irrelevant vis à vis the almightiness of the Israeli authorities, the big wall construction and the long way in the caged gangway through no-man’s-land. And really there was literally nobody. As it is hard to cross from West Bank to Gaza you only encounter UN- staff, police forces or elderly”.

This wall is not only touching our heart, it is indeed one of the major problems to the water situation in Gaza. As **Dr. Monther Shoblak** from the **Gaza Water and Wastewater Authority** made clear, Israeli Authorities are controlling all incoming goods. It is difficult for them to import spare parts that are urgently needed for maintenance and for the construction of new infrastructure. It is also difficult to import chemicals that are needed for water treatment. But also the control of traffic of people is a major problem. You cannot send out persons for training as water engineers and it is difficult to get support of certain professionals with



technical capacities from outside. Balloon with high resolution cameras observe the workshops and monitor that each part is really used for the planned purpose. It felt very bad, when we heard that they had only 5 mobile pumps to pump out the flooded houses in December 2013 and they are still waiting for an additional 5 pumps to be allowed into Gaza.

(2) Poverty:

The first impression when you get from Israel to Gaza and what hits you immediately, is the poverty compared to the near world you have seen outside the strip. Suddenly the car traffic is very thin, donkeys and horses are on the street. The houses are incomplete, and at the same time look somehow old, the fields are dry and people work with simple equipment. The population of Gaza is poor, 41 % are unemployed, 39 % are living under the poverty line said Shoblak and 57 % are food insecure. What hit us most, is that 80% are food aid dependent. Gaza population is more than 1.8 Million inhabitants, half of them are children, living over a space area of 378 km², reflecting one of the highest population density of the world.

Almost all people have access to water networks. The water of the municipality is salty and highly contaminated, accordingly, people have to buy desalinated and treated water. This is being sold by private filling points, transported to their homes through water tankers. We have also visited a desalination plant for sea water. The quantity of desalinated water is not enough for Gaza's population. The drinking water can be bought for USD 13 / cubic meter. This is a lot for families depending upon social support schemes. They receive USD 200 per family for 3 months.

Poverty is also the main problem for the Water and Wastewater Authority. Already no money is there for the maintenance of the old infrastructure. Gaza also depends highly on diesel for electricity production, for running the desalination plants and the pumps. Shoblak explained that you would need 400 megawatts for water and sanitation, but the maximal capacity (which they never reach) is only 205 megawatts.

(3) Health:

We visited a health center run by the Near East Council of Churches. Young veiled women and their children were sitting waiting for their primary health care treatment. Water is one of the major threats to their health. It is not only a question of money, it is also a question of education, said the young program officer Wafa'a. At the center, women receive different trainings and awareness raising sessions with nutrition is at its core. Water needs to be boiled for at least 5 Minutes, to prevent water borne diseases as diarrhea, skin diseases and parasitic infections.

But the Gaza population is exposed to more contamination. Bathing in the sea, at the wonderful beaches, is dangerous. The sewage is going raw into the sea, right at the beach. It stinks awfully. But it also pollutes the sea. 60 % of the beaches are unsuitable for swimming. But going to the beaches is for the population the only leisure they have and can afford. So they do it anyway. Those being more aware, like Ibrahim, our accompanier, who take a boat

and swim 1 kilometer outside in the sea. (This is as far as you are allowed to go for swimming without getting shot).

(4) Governance and development

The right to water and sanitation of the people is not realized. But whose obligation is it?

Reflecting the limited range of options that Palestinians have, one is far from saying that they control their water management. The aquifer is the only source of water. And this source is overused dramatically. It is irreversibly damaged. The demand is as high as 208 million m³ compared to the 61 million m³ that would be a safe yield. The two rivers which should refill the aquifer are, as we have seen ourselves, are dry wadis.

After what we have heard one can assume that the government of Palestine is complying with its obligation of the progressive realization of the human right to water and sanitation. But it is a fight against windmills.

We saw that the development of the country and the people cannot be achieved by their proper good will and by self-help strategies. It needs the political attention of the world and a just and equitable share of resources. But it also needs freedom of movement in terms of trading with goods and movement of people. This needs urgent international attention and much more proactive engagement by the United Nations. The case of Gaza shows clearly that the right to water also includes the obligations of surrounding states. Israel needs to comply with the due diligence criteria, the rest of the world cannot stay quiet without being held partially accountable.

The world Council of Churches adopted the following statement issued by the Ecumenical Water Network in Jerusalem on the 18th of June 2014;

Water Crisis in Palestine

This statement contains the reflections of the Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) of the World Council of Churches on the occasion of the visit of its International Reference Group to Israel and Palestine in June 2014. In accompanying churches in this area on the pilgrimage towards water justice, EWN studied the critical issues of water and sanitation in Palestine and journeyed here to better understand these issues. During its visit, EWN consulted with local Christian church leaders, non-governmental organizations, and government representatives in Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank to discuss these issues.

***"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."
Amos 5:24***

A faith perspective on water justice

It is extraordinarily apparent in the Middle East that water is truly the source and essence of life. We are all people of the water, utterly dependent upon this gift of creation to drink, grow our crops, water our livestock, power our factories and homes, enable our enterprises, support diverse ecosystems upon which we depend, and provide

habitat for fish and other creatures. As the **Statement on Water for Life of the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches** proclaims, all human beings are called by God to act responsibly and justly in their use of water, protecting, conserving, and equitably sharing this gift of God.

The reality of water in Israel and Palestine

We have met in the great city of Jerusalem, an amazing and vibrant place that is one of the most holy places in the world for Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Jerusalem is a most significant destination for the pilgrimages by people of all three faiths of the book, and a place where they live side by side. And yet, in this holy place, we have confronted a most unholy reality: the terrible suffering of the Palestinian people from lack of clean water and adequate sanitation. And what is lacking in Palestine is not water; what is lacking is justice. The Palestinian people thirst for water justice.

The people of Palestine suffer incredibly because water in Palestine is not protected from contamination, judiciously conserved or equitably shared. In the West Bank, many Palestinians have neither sufficient safe water for drinking and other domestic uses, nor enough water for agricultural uses. The most vulnerable communities have available as little as 20 liters of water per day, just one-fifth of the minimum required to meet their daily needs. And they pay an outrageous amount, up to two-thirds of their income, for the small amount of water they are able to buy.

In Gaza, the situation is even direr: 95% of groundwater is rendered unusable by the intrusion of sea water due to diversion of recharge waters and excessive pumping. Within two years, the entire aquifer will be contaminated and in six years, the aquifer will be beyond repair. The desalinization facilities in Gaza do not produce sufficient safe water for domestic purposes and the primitive water distribution system leads to microbial contamination of 80% of drinking water. In many respects, the Palestinian people are denied their internationally recognized human right to sufficient safe, accessible, and affordable water and adequate appropriate sanitation.

The arid climate in Palestine, climate change and extended periods of drought all aggravate Palestinian water scarcity, but the Palestinian people do not lack water not because there is an absolute dearth of water in the region, but because of the inequitable allocation of water between Palestine and Israel and because of the actions of the Israeli authorities. They are forbidden from using additional water from the well to raise crops and animals in the West Bank despite substantial population growth and their dependence upon agriculture to live. Palestinians in the West Bank are prevented from building essential new water supply and wastewater treatment projects. Springs traditionally used by West Bank Palestinians have been appropriated for Israeli settlers' use. Existing Palestinian water springs; wells, cisterns, pipes, and waste water facilities have been destroyed or rendered inaccessible by the Segregation wall, bypass roads, checkpoints, and military zones. Many water facilities have been intentionally

demolished by the Israeli government and, in the case of the West Bank, by settlers from the illegal Israeli settlements in the area. Israel has appropriated all of the waters of the Jordan River and the rivers that flow into Gaza. Without adequate wastewater treatment facilities sewage is discharged directly into the ocean, contaminating the beaches and waters where people swim. And the Israeli blockade of Gaza impoverishes Gaza residents and interferes with international humanitarian efforts to construct emergency water and sanitation projects.

Given limited water resources and growing population, every drop of water in Palestine is precious and must be carefully used, cleansed, and reused. This requires changing traditional ways and learning and using new technologies. The Palestinian people are willing to make this transition, but they need both freedom and helping hands. They need Israel to relinquish control over Palestinian water resources and allow the Palestinians freedom to decide the course of development in their land. They also need continuing international support to gain the technological knowledge and financial resources necessary to build water supply, treatment, and distribution facilities and construct wastewater treatment plants. Additionally, the Palestinian people need Israel to lift the blockade of Gaza and to desist from violent destruction of water supply and wastewater treatment facilities.

These critical needs must be met now. Israel and Palestine should seek a separate agreement on water resources and provision of water and sanitation; negotiation of such an agreement should not await recommencement of final status negotiations. The suffering of the Palestinian people must be relieved, not at some indefinite future point in time, but now. A just and equitable agreement sharing water resources, providing sufficient water and adequate sanitation to the Palestinian people, would foster trust and dramatically increase the likelihood that Israel and Palestine could resolve the other difficult issues that currently separate them.

A call for political and interfaith dialogue and action

We call upon the leaders of Israel and Palestine, with the support of the international community, to address immediately the urgent needs and long-term problems of the Palestinian people with respect to water and sanitation. To this end, we urge the leaders of all three Abrahamic faiths throughout Israel and Palestine to gather, talk, and commit to action to bring water justice to this region. For they and their followers, all people of the one powerful and merciful God, are best situated to convince those who wield the lesser powers of commerce and government that God demands all his children do justice and seek peace. Without justice, including equitable sharing of water and responsible action to protect and conserve water, there can be no enduring peace here or anywhere else on Earth. Recalling the words of the prophet Amos, we must “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Advocacy with Global partner-United Church of Canada(UCC)

The United Church of Canada (UCC) is a partner of the Near East Council of Churches since decades ministering for the Palestinian refugees and most vulnerable communities in various fields. Throughout this partnership UCC not only enabled us minister to physical needs, but contributed to making the lives of refugees and most vulnerable communities more bearable, by nurturing a limited measure of hope and sustaining our faith in fellow brothers and sisters.

The climax of this partnership and relationship is reflected through the formation of a 9 person Partner Advisor Council drawn from each of the designated global regions of the United Church of Canada. This is a unique experience practiced by the United Church of Canada where global partners are part and parcel of the structure and share their contextual realities with the Church constituency. Active participation in all meetings of the UCC structures is made possible and contribute to the decision making process. The UCC not only hears global partners but are interactive and active their constituencies accordingly.

We have a platform to share our positions in a democratic and fair opportunity where different viewpoints as controversial they may be, yet they are heard equally and the Church constituency is the decision making body and sets Church directions and policies.

The UCC affirms that we are not alone but rather accompanied and walk together in fulfilling God's mission. Palestinian Kairos document is solid proof to that whereby it has been circulated to presbyteries and contributed to learning more about Christian presence in the Middle East.

● Future Direction

Being members of the World Council of Churches and the Act Alliance families, NECC-ICC actively engaged in the regional engagement and exposure of our contextual challenges, where we remain keen in linking global strategies and directions with our contextual realities and influence approaches towards human rights and humanitarian laws towards ending occupation and realizing the right of return, sovereignty and a viable state .

7.4 Loan Revolving Fund

Despite the fact that economic conditions were very difficult in 2014, yet our loaners were highly committed to repay their debts with reasonable delays. We were able to issue 6 business, 3 housing and 2 education loans. Overall recovery of the loan portfolio since its initiation in the early 80's is 85% and 98 % since 2012, which is due to the revised policy document released in 2012. **The loan portfolio aims to support people and reflect positive change in their lives where:**

Andria is a 31 year old bachelor who lives in Ramallah with his aged mother and younger brother and is the only breadwinner in the family. He has his own barbershop.

The family lives in a very old house which when visited by the loan officer, observed serious works that are needed to render the house habitable. Andria approached NECC-ICC for a house renovation loan to a house with broken steps, rusty skeleton, veranda covered with torn nylon, the bathroom and kitchen have fallen apart, rusty doors, leaking ceiling and damp walls.

The loan went through a process where the guidelines were shared with applicants. The application was assessed, approved by the loan committee and granted. A few months later, the loan officer conducted a monitoring visit and was pleased to observe the drastic change made to the house; ceiling fixed, bathroom and kitchen renovated, whitewashed the entire house, all looked impressive.



Andria said; *“before we spent a lot of money on medication, and were ashamed when people visited us, but today we enjoy a healthy living environment, although small but it is home. This was made possible by the support of NECC-ICC”.*

Andria added *“My dream came true, I am very happy and proud, I have a social life, family and friends who visit with us, I got engaged and currently I am planning for my wedding this summer.”*

Elham is 44 years old, mother of four children who lives in Beit Hanina/Jerusalem. She thrives so hard to make both ends meet and she worked shoulder to shoulder with her husband to realize decent and minimal standards of living for their children.

Elham worked as a special education teacher assistant, with a Diploma degree from Bethlehem University. She was ambitious and hoped that she would further her career and education. Ministry of education required a BA degree as a pre-requisite for any career advancement. The opportunity offered itself as she read about the announcement from Kasem College offering “Special education teacher can enroll at the collage for the B.ED.”

Her fears from losing her job were high without a career advancement, accordingly she decided to enroll and achieve the B.Ed. Since both parents were working hard with limited and carefully calculated finances, she faced the challenge of not being able to finance her education, until she heard at one of the Church announcements about the loan revolving fund NECC-ICC offers. Immediately Elham approached us for an educational loan, which when approved and granted enabled her to realize her dream in achieving the degree.

One morning Elham came to the ICC office and said; " *I am very grateful for the help and opportunity your organization gave me to furthering my education to B.ED certificate, I made a copy of it and came to share it with you, enrolling at the collage gave me the privilege of holding the position of a special educational teacher that changed my life, I am very happy with my new position at school feeling very proud and important, all parents and colleagues come to me for advice and counseling and I am not afraid of losing my job any more... thanks to NECC-ICC. "*



Kayane is 30 years old young lady who lives in the old city of Jerusalem. She is a documentary photographer by profession. Any professional photographer must have a complete kit of lenses collection to enhance quality of pictures.

Kayane needed to add to her tool kit a Canon EF 85mm F 1.2 L USM lenses. She approached the NECC-ICC office for a business loan application to buy the lenses needed to complete her collection.

Kayane's application went through the process of the loan application and granting like other loans, which enabled her to enhance her economic opportunities. Kayane expressed it by saying: " *buying the lenses improved market demand for qualitative pictures, I have more clients, my work is improving, with more customers. Financially I am more secured and able to advance my business*". Kayane added, " *A famous professional photographer is my aim in life and special thanks to NECC-ICC who enabled me to take the first step towards achieving my aim.*"





*God's blessings and sincere thanks to:
All international partners for their faith
and trust in us,*

*All local partners for their continued
support,*

All beneficiaries for their cooperation

&

*All those who were directly or indirectly
engaged*

*In making the dreams of many people
come true!*

