



Resilient Communities: Supporting Vulnerable and Affected
Palestinian Communities to Transition to More Resilient,
Sustainable, and Equitable Economic Growth in the Gaza Strip and
the Jordan Valley



Ein al-Beida The Northern Jordan Valley

Agricultural Development Association
(PARC)

In Partnership with
OXFAM- Palestine

Funded By:
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
(BMZ)

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PARC

The Agricultural Development Association (PARC) was founded in 1983 as a Palestinian volunteer initiative; it is a non-governmental organization aiming at achieving agricultural and environmental development. Along with agricultural and environmental enhancement, PARC works towards strengthening women's position in society. PARC extremely believes in the values of social justice, freedom, and the importance of agriculture, it provides advice and support to individuals and institutions as well. Reinforcing farmers and marginalized groups –especially in rural Palestinian areas– is PARC's priority that constructs its mission.

As PARC holds the values of transparency, justice, rights, volunteerism, and social responsibility; PARC works seriously to make them applicable. To achieve its commitment, PARC works to engage all Palestinian classes equally, improving the efficiency of workers as well as experts to generate democracy and freedom in the Palestinian community.



OXFAM International

OXFAM is a global organization that strongly believes in the world containing adequate resources equally, and so poverty is not inevitable. At the very beginning, OXFAM was born as a simple charity in 1942. Nowadays, OXFAM has increasingly developed becoming one of the largest independent international organizations –for development and growth– across the world. Considering the ‘universality’ of human rights, OXFAM includes nineteen organizations operating in over ninety countries around the world. Fighting injustice, inequality, and poverty is OXFAM’s moral commitment.

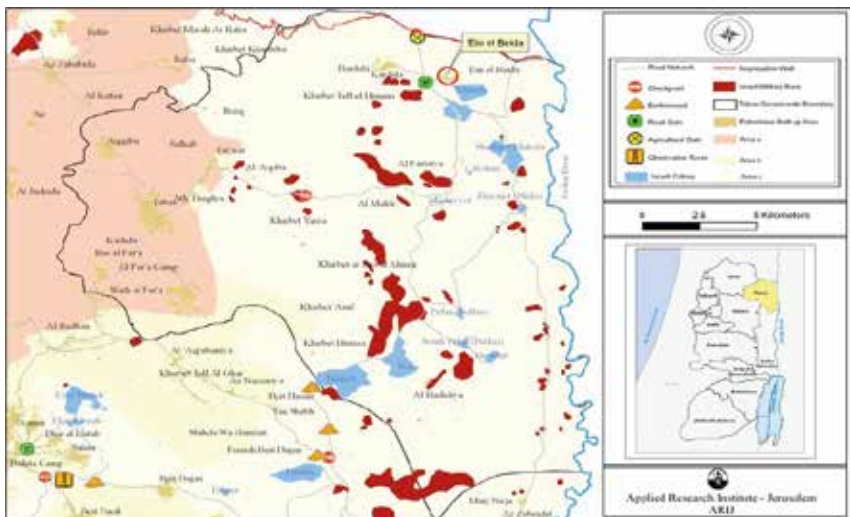
Project Summary

As environmental risks threaten vulnerable communities, this project aims at strengthening societies affected by the risks of climate change, the COVID -19 pandemic, and water scarcity in the northern Jordan Valley and Gaza Strip. Overall, the project encompasses a range of activities in each region –Individually. Considering ‘cooperativeness’ as a high value, a variety of joint activities such as specialized training, awareness-raising, and support for entrepreneurs will be carried out. The project will involve the villages of Bardala and Ein al-Beida, trying to improve living and social conditions and thus reinforcing the capabilities of women, workers, and farmers.

Consistent with PARC’s belief in community involvement, the project will engage community committees as they represent the core of Palestinian society. The Project centralizes the ‘human being’ in the process of development, therefore, utilizing all capabilities to achieve resilience, sustainability, and social equality. PARC’s membership in “The Working Group for Organized Local Response” prompts the project by involving international partners. The “Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development” (BMZ) participates in risk reduction by funding both the group and project, acting as a socially responsible partner, and focusing on marginalized groups.

The Village of Ein al-Beida

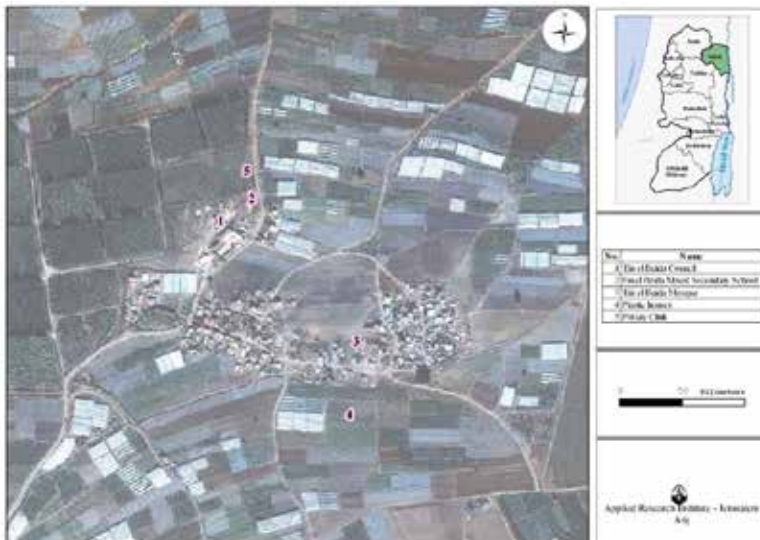
Ein al-Beida is a Palestinian village in the Tubas Governorate, in the northeast of the West Bank. The eastern side of the town is located next to the Jordan River. While the plain of Beisan is situated on the northern side of Ein al-Beida, Bardala and Kardala villages lie in the west. On the north side of Ein al-Beida, the Israeli settlement “Shadmot Mehola” occupies the green areas in the region. The village of Ein al-Beida has an area of 15,000 acres, which represents approximately 3% of the land areas in the Tubas governorate. Notably, the agricultural land area occupies 8500 acres of the village.



Map 1: Ein al-Beida Location

Agricultural Sector in Ein al-Beida

Agricultural activities are the most known and useful work in Ein al-Beida. Hence, 79% of the people in Ein al-Beida are mainly engaged in agricultural works; the cultivated land covers an area of 6087 acres. Despite this agricultural richness, the green areas in Bardala are threatened by destruction, water scarcity, and land pollution.



The Agricultural Lands in the Village of Ein al-Beida

The Impact of the Israeli Occupation

The Oslo Accords, which is an agreement between the Israeli Occupation and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1995, divided the lands of Ein al-Beida into “B” and “C” areas. To prevent the development in the village, the occupation built the apartheid wall (8 kilometers) surrounding the village. As a result, Ein al-Beida is enclosed from three sides. The colonial actions have impeded progress by restricting villagers –especially farmers– from reaching the green lands. Health centers and schools were also affected by the restrictions. Thus, students, teachers, and villagers were challenged.

Project Activities

1. Raise awareness by making villagers conscious of COVID-19, climate change, natural disasters, and water sources in the target regions. Indeed, these issues increasingly affect both green lands and society.
2. Organize training sessions by providing specialized training for people in the target areas. The learning plans will engage people locally, helping them to deal technically with disasters affecting their regions.
3. Support social entrepreneurs in the target regions, by investing their experience and power to implement the activities in their own village. People with leadership skills will be given a chance to develop cognitively and economically.



Method

A methodology was followed precisely to ensure the efficiency of the study so that the project could be carried out as planned. In general, the method included four main levels:

- The Selection Process: The village of Bardala was selected on the basis of criteria that determines which region will necessarily benefit from the program. This level included serious data collection for all the vulnerable areas.
- Central Training Sessions: At this level, meetings were held locally with experts and social specialists to specify the major threats. The dangers were divided into five main categories:
 - 1- Agricultural threats
 - 2- Social threats
 - 3- Environmental threats
 - 4- Infrastructural threats
 - 5- Health threats
- Plan Preparation: This stage mainly involved data analysis, identification of resources, and selection of major threats.
- Recommendations: This level dealt with different sectors. The need to enact laws and social regulations that could reduce environmental, health, and social hazards were pointed out.

Results

Since seven sectors were analyzed in detail in the study, the results include not only agricultural areas but also social and infrastructural aspects. Indeed, the comprehensive study must contain various aspects, since these areas usually overlap. However, in order to specify the project, the most dangerous threats were screened and selected.

Risks and Priorities

- 1- Establish canals to drain rainwater along with building awnings for schools.
- 2- Establish a public park for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.
- 3- Create alternative solar energy.
- 4- Reforestation of public spaces and planting stone trees.

| | Results | | | |
|------------|--|--|---|---|
| Likelihood | Lowest Danger | | Highest Danger | |
| High | Weak agricultural production Low participation of women Climate change Reduction of green lands | Abandon agricultural jobs Neglect lands and farming Poor education | Health problems in the area Crop damage Restrictions in daily life for residents | Poor Infrastructure Build awnings for schools Establishing canals for rainwater |
| | Lack of control over resources Increase of energy usage in modern farming | Low productivity as a result of lacking power sources Depending on rain-fed agriculture | Rising temperatures threats and climate change dangers | The need for alternative energy sources to overcome the threats |
| low | Lack of control over the natural resources Lack of social planning for children's future | The Israeli occupation's violence against villagers Marginalizing children in society and their basic needs Neglecting extracurricular activities | Lack of parks and public spaces for children Child labor Early smoking for children Military remnants that harm students | There are no parks or public spaces for children and citizens |
| | Climate change Environmental Pollution Spread of diseases and insects | The danger of stray animals in the area Low productivity as a result of high temperatures Working at the Israeli colonies Reforestation despite high temperatures | Children and disabled difficulties Agricultural waste Insects and stray animals' danger Disease spared | The need for reforestation in public spaces |

Natural and human threats, such as climate change and pollution, affect the region and cause suffering throughout the year, as the table illustrates

| Natural Hazards | Expected Time Frame (Month) | Domestic Sources |
|--|--|--|
| <p>The impact of frost on agricultural life</p> <p>The effect of wind on crops</p> <p>Heavy rain's influence on people, agriculture, and livestock</p> <p>Lack of access to agricultural lands</p> <p>Lack of support for farmers</p> | <p>Late December – Late February</p> <p>Throughout the year (Repeatedly)</p> | |
| <p>Spread of insects and crop disease</p> <p>Spread of reptiles and rodents</p> <p>Animal disease</p> <p>The danger of stray animals</p> <p>Environmental pollution</p> <p>Military activities' effect on agricultural and civil life</p> <p>Water absorption canals that affect civilians</p> <p>Israeli occupation and settlers' attacks against farmers</p> | <p>February-March-April</p> <p>Throughout the year (Repeatedly)</p> | <p>Elected local councils</p> <p>Voluntary Committees</p> <p>Community-based initiatives</p> <p>Local Institutions</p> <p>Women's engagement in economic social activities</p> |
| <p>Smuggling settlements' products</p> <p>Settlements' products are flooding the market</p> <p>Rising temperatures threats</p> <p>Low wages for women workers</p> <p>Poor marketing for the agricultural and rural products</p> | <p>May - June -July</p> <p>During summer</p> | |
| <p>Poor electricity network</p> <p>Lack of parks and public spaces for children</p> <p>Military remnants that harm civilians</p> <p>Dry weather and water scarcity</p> <p>Water scarcity affected crop farming</p> <p>Lack of voluntary work</p> | <p>August - September -October</p> <p>Throughout the year (Repeatedly)</p> | |
| <p>Agricultural waste</p> <p>Reptiles' harm to farmers</p> <p>Israeli occupation policies that affect civilians</p> | <p>November-December</p> <p>Throughout the year (Repeatedly)</p> | |

Community-Based Initiative

PARC works consistently to develop the community initiative. In fact, community engagement has lacked efficiency and experience. If the social initiative represents a means to strengthen vulnerable communities; then it must be reformed.

While PARC introduces the project of “Strengthening Vulnerable Communities”, reinforcing community initiative is PARC’s priority. As a result, this social body will have the capability to deal with agricultural, environmental, and social threats in the village of Ein al-Beida.

PARC has included the study in a community plan, involving local and social committees. In this collaborative plan, the Agricultural Relief staff works with social initiatives to reduce the dangers in Gaza Strip and Jordan Valley. Furthermore, the plan mainly studies eight sectors of society. through consultation and coordination, the community initiative chose the most important hazards to handle, which represent the higher priority.

PARC has consulted with local committees in the village of Bardala and informed them that the project will be funded with 17.5 thousand euros. Subsequently, four activities were selected, and the committees voted for one activity.

According to the local community, “Establishing canals to drain rainwater along with building awnings for schools.” occupied the highest priority. The village of Ein al-Beida is a plain area –flat land– and so the town suffers from floods in winter. Rainwater harm farmers and students as well, restricting their movement and activities. The selected activity will improve the standard of living in the village, people’s movement will be easier and farmers could maintain their lands.



Figure 1 Community Plan



Figure 2 The Village of Ein al-Beida

