



ANNUAL REPORT

2021

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About Us

Agricultural Development Association (PARC) was established as a volunteering initiative in the late 1970s by a group of agronomists and pioneer farmers, to fill the service and development gap created by the Israeli occupation. The Civil Administration at that time denied Palestinians' access to specialized guidance programs, research stations, and modern agricultural technology. In order, to marginalize the Palestinian agricultural sector and break the link between Palestinian farmers and their land aiming at confiscating it for settlement purposes. In 1983, PARC became a pioneering institution, which took upon itself the work of contributing to the protection of Palestinian lands from confiscation, providing marginalized Palestinian farmers a specialized technical guidance program, and the means to cultivate their lands. PARC also offers specialized training to farmers and agronomists, to support pioneering ideas in agriculture, and to consolidate the foundations of equality and justice in rural areas.



Vision

A leading Palestinian organization, committed to agricultural development, sovereignty over resources, and building resilient, sustainable and food-secure rural communities.



Mission

We are a Palestinian institution that works to develop the agricultural sector, and to empower and organize rural areas and enhance its resilience through a highly capable staff, affiliated volunteers, organized community protection committees, and grassroots institutions within the framework of true partnership and best practices, in a manner that contributes to building a free and democratic Palestinian society.



Location

West Bank, Al-Quds - Shuffat

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Members of the Board of Directors:

Name	Position
Hussam Abu Fares	Chairman of the Borad
Mohammad AL-Naqa	Vice Chairman
Abd Al-Rahman Emara	Treasurer
Hatem Al-Shante	Vice Treasurer
Abd Al-Razeq Salama	Secretary
Lutfi Abu Hashish	Member
Salam Al- Zagha	Member
Asma Atawneh	Member
Ahlam Al- Khdeir	Member
Amneh Lafi	Member
Manal Al-Shamali	Member
Gassan Ganem	Member
Ibrahim Yassin	Member

Members of the Oversight Committee:

Name	Position
Sami Dawoud	Member
Saher Sarsour	Member
Ameera Abu Shousha	Member
Maha Al- Masri	Member



Message of the Board of Directors

In the year 2021, the Corona virus pandemic which ravaged the world at the beginning of the previous year, continued to cast a grim shadow over all life activities in the country, despite the easing of restriction measures by the government since the beginning of the year. The economic crises caused by this global pandemic still hindered various pillars of the Palestinian economy, with the agricultural sector being one of the most affected.

During the last two years, the suffering of the Palestinian agricultural sector has doubled due to the pandemic. This sector faced new challenges: the rise sharp in agricultural inputs prices from seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, fodder and medicines as well as continuing problems of marketing and exports and flooding of Palestinian markets with Israeli products. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics the agricultural activity had fallen by (3%) in 2021.

This decline in the agricultural sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is one of the most important challenges facing Palestinian society due to its negative effects on food security. Returning to the Central Bureau of Statistics information, the agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP in the mid-seventies was about (36%), then decreased to (25%) in the 80s, and in 1994, it declined to (13.4%), and to (9.2) in 2013, This percentage continued to decline until it reached the level it is in today.

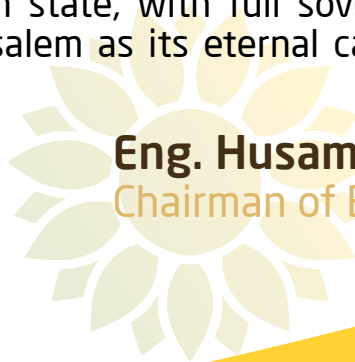
This reversal is interlinked with Israeli occupation violations and settlers' attacks. In the mid-seventies, the settlement movement has just started, with it - land confiscation, control of water sources drastically increased. These violations reduced the area of agricultural land, reducing the quantities of water available for agriculture, and the settlers' exploitation of these lands and waters at the expense of their legitimate owners, and their rights. Other factors contributing to this decline cannot be overlooked, such as farmers' emigration from their lands to participate in the Israeli labor market, or emigrating out of the country in search of better livelihoods.

This year has seen a serious escalation in settlement projects and settlers' attacks on Palestinian farmers and their property. This intensified PARC's efforts in the face of the occupation's plans in cooperation with its international and local partners, in order to achieve its main objective of enhancing farmers resilience and sovereignty over their land, and food security for them and for the entire Palestinian community. However, these efforts will not be complete without official support, and without having a comprehensive and clear agricultural plan with sufficient budgets.

This goal can only be achieved in a healthy public environment, and the conditions for achieving it cannot be separated from good governance, and respect for human rights, the separation of powers, the fight against corruption and nepotism, the renewal of legitimacy in governance, and the development of clear strategic plans to resist the occupation, and think of new ways to achieve this.

There was hope for the Palestinian people to solve internal crises, with the internal division being at the forefront, when President Mahmoud Abbas issued a presidential decree on 15/1/2021 setting the dates to hold national elections, as it has been fifteen years after the last presidential and legislative elections were held, but the elections were postponed again, which increased the state of tension in the Palestinian street, and the continuation of the executive authority's domination over the other two authorities, the legislative and the judiciary.

In the end, the Board of Directors appreciates the efforts of PARC's employees, the volunteers, and the complementary nature of its relationship with the executive management, it affirms that it continues to perform its mission towards this pioneering institution to achieve its development goals in the service of our Palestinian people, and to strengthen its steadfastness on its land until the establishment of Palestinian state, with full sovereignty over the Palestinian national territory, with Jerusalem as its eternal capital.



Eng. Husam Abu Fares
Chairman of Board Directors



Message of the General Manager

PARC entered this year being aware of to the magnitude of the challenges ahead. The Corona Virus pandemic posed additional challenge to the responsibilities that PARC has chosen to assume to strengthen the Palestinian rural communities fortified by its agricultural sector and strengthened by sovereignty.

This year, the Palestinian agricultural sector faced new challenges. In addition to the escalation of settlement and the confiscation of more land, the continued control over water resources, the obstruction of land reclamation and farming, and the increasing attacks by settlers on Palestinian farmers and their properties. The suffering of Palestinian farmers increased with the increase in agricultural inputs prices, prices of seeds, fodder, pesticides and medicines, and the lack of protection and support. This resulted in a decline in the contribution of this sector to GDP, and weakening its resilience and achieving the goal of food security.

In order to strengthen the resilience of Palestinian farmers, especially in the areas most targeted by the occupation. PARC increased the pace of its work in those areas; by expanding land reclamation cycle and rehabilitation, fencing it, building agricultural roads, providing farmers with seeds, and supplying irrigation systems. In addition to work on private lands, PARC took new step through agreements between farmers and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to reclaim waqf lands and cultivated for the benefit of number of farmers.

Also PARC is very committed to the development of cooperatives in general and agricultural ones in particular, and to complement the conference organized by PARC in 2020 in cooperation with the Cooperative Work Authority, and the presence of representatives of cooperatives, and relevant institutions, which was titled: (Cooperatives; Opportunities and Challenges). This year, PARC organized a conference (Cooperative Work: Prospects and Challenges... Cooperatives as Economic and Social Institutions), as part of PARC's efforts to assist cooperative societies develop their performance, build their capacities, and provide them with sustainability, especially women's and mixed agricultural cooperatives.

In terms of readiness and adaptability to the effects of climate change and environmental sanitation, PARC worked to install solar energy systems, production of biogas and methane gas, provide the necessary gas for farmers' from animal waste, and the installation of refrigeration units to store surplus agricultural products to yield a better profit, establishment of compost plants, and other activities.

PARC also promoted women's contribution to agricultural development, through the implementation of scientific observations, exchange visits for cooperatives, mentoring visits to women, organizing training courses for beekeeping, food manufacturing, marketing, psychological support and climate change, training on gender and human rights, specialized training for associations, courses on increasing women's capacities in cooperative work, e-marketing, small business management, food manufacturing for pickles, sweets and dairy products, in addition to implementing two analytical studies on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of associations, by analyzing various external and internal factors.

These proud achievements of PARC would not have been possible, especially this year, without the belief from the distinguished Board of Directors, employees and volunteers in the mission and objectives of PARC in developing the agricultural sector and strengthening the resilience of farmers and reaching poor and marginalized groups, and the determination of all to implement its current strategic plan with determination and entering the year 2022, more capable, agile and willing to achieve its mission and goals.

Munjed Abu Jaish
PARC's General Director

A field of sunflowers is shown with a semi-transparent green overlay. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their dark brown centers and bright yellow petals. The background is a clear blue sky.

1 Chapter one :

Human rights violations
in Palestine





First: The violations of human rights by the occupation and its impact on economic and social rights.

The Israeli occupation authorities escalated their systematic violations of the Palestinian people's rights in 2021. The Corona (Covid 19) pandemic, which plagued the entire world, has not discouraged those authorities from continuing murders, arrests, land confiscations, settlement expansion, uprooting trees, and destruction of civilian property as Residential homes and facilities used for agricultural and livestock purposes. The Palestinian economy in general, and the agricultural sector in particular, has experienced profound crises as a direct result of those crimes.

The following are the most prominent violations this year:



Settlement Crimes, Land Confiscation and Trees uprooting:

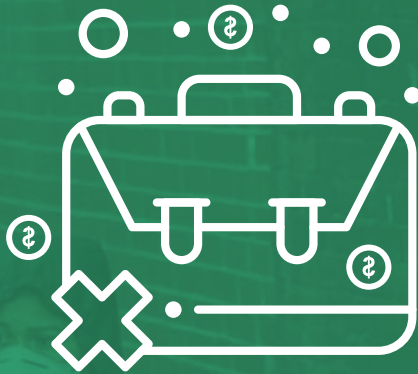
Israeli settlements number in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reached (199) settlements and (220) outposts, and about (913,000) settlers, of whom (350,000) are in the occupied city of Jerusalem. During this year, the occupation authorities issued (65) settlement scheme targeting more than (40) colonies to build about (11,000) settlement units over (12,000) dunums, including industrial areas and bypass roads. In a related context, about 19,000 trees of various varieties were uprooted and burned by the occupation authorities and settlers.

In the face of the policy of occupation and settlers to confiscate land for settlement expansion projects, to steal land from legitimate owners, and to enhance the resilience of Palestinian citizens on their land, PARC contributed during the year to reclaiming and rehabilitating (841) dunums of agricultural land that were subject to confiscation. Also, building retaining walls with an area of (25,186) square meters, building metal fences around (815) dunums, constructing and rehabilitating agricultural roads with a length of 17.9 km, distributing (13,260) productive tree seeds, and planting tens of dunams with fodder seeds. As well as digging and rehabilitating (20) wells, distribution of water tanks and the provision of individual and collective irrigation systems.



Targeting farmers and fishermen in the Gaza Strip:

The Israeli occupation forces continued their violations against the fishermen working at sea. During this year, 315 attacks against fishermen were registered; (5) fishermen were injured, (12) fishermen were arrested while carrying out their work, (6) fishing boats were confiscated, and three other boats and fishing equipment were damaged. These forces also continued to target the agricultural land in areas with restricted access and incursions into the border areas, bulldozing and destroying agricultural lands, and shooting towards farmers, sheep herders and bird hunters. During this year, (46) incursions into agricultural lands adjacent to the border strip of the Gaza Strip were documented.



Unemployment and Poverty Rates:

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that the total number of workers in Palestine increased from (886) thousand workers in 2020 to (925) thousand workers in 2021, where the unemployment rate reached (27.8%). Data during the first three quarters of 2021 indicate that unemployment rates vary substantially by geographical region, as they reached about 17% in the West Bank and about 51% in the Gaza Strip, and unemployment rates were concentrated among university graduates and exceed 35%. The Palestinian labor market needs to focus on technical and vocational education to meet the needs of the Palestinian labor market. As for gender, the unemployment rate for males in Palestine was (22%) compared to (47%) for females. The PCBS stated that the number of workers in the Israeli settlements increased from (19) thousand workers in the second quarter of the year to (22) thousand workers in the third quarter. The total number of workers in the Green Line and settlements reached about 145 thousand. It is also indicated that large numbers of graduates had to work within the Green Line because they were unable to obtain jobs within their university majors.



The impact of COVID -19 pandemic on the agricultural sector and PARC's interventions

The Palestinian agricultural sector, has been exposed to a severe crisis, after the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. Despite the easing of the government's restrictions, the effects of the pandemic continued through 2021.

The Palestinian agricultural sector suffers from dual challenges; the first is related to the practices of the occupation authorities and settlers, as reflected in the confiscation of land, building the apartheid wall, building bypass roads, controlling Palestinian water and borders, impeding the import of medicines and fertilizers, exporting agricultural crops, dumping Palestinian markets with Israeli goods, and settlers' attacks on farmers, shepherds and land. The second is related to the lack of response required by the Palestinian National Authority to provide support for this important and vital sector. Estimates of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that the agricultural sector's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product in the mid-seventies was about 36%, then decreased to 25% in the eighties. In 1994, it declined to (13.4%), and to (9.2) in 2013 and continued to decline to (3%) in recent years.

During the (Corona) pandemic, the suffering of the agricultural sector intensified, and the sector faced new challenges, including: an increase in agricultural inputs from the prices of seeds, seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, fodder and medicines, in addition to the persistence of marketing and export problems and the dumping of Palestinian markets with Israeli products. During its review of economic activities during the year, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics stated that the record of construction activity recorded the highest growth value by (8%), the industrial activity grew by (7%), then the services activity by (4%), while the agricultural activity witnessed a decline by (3%). The following chapter will present the main achievements under PARC's four strategic programs.



2

Chapter two: The Executive Report





A close-up photograph of a person's hand cupped under a steady shower of rain. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural setting. The raindrops are captured in motion, creating a sense of freshness and abundance. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the fingers slightly curled to catch the water.

First Program:
Natural Resources

Goal:

contribute to sustainable management of natural resources towards achieving food security and sovereignty

The first result:

increased agricultural area in terms of size, productivity and accessibility.

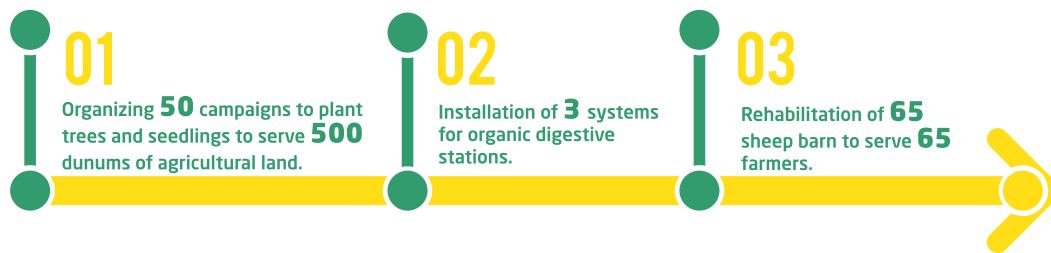
Main achievements:

- Construction and rehabilitation of (17.9) km of agricultural roads to serve (5,026.6) dunums of agricultural land. It included basecourse for (15.5 km) roads, the construction of (2,241) m² of retaining walls, the construction of two ferries to safely drain rainwater under the roads, and the employment of (58) workers for (726) working days.
- Reclamation of (141) dunums of agricultural land, which included building (4,666) m² of retaining walls, isolating and plowing (68) dunums, planting (7,299) seedlings, and (68) dunums with municipal seeds, fencing (128) dunums, distributing compost for (113.82) dunums, extension of internal networks to serve (100) dunams, and employing (80) workers for (474) working days.
- Rehabilitation of (700) dunums, which included building (19,279) m² of retaining walls, fencing (279.5) dunums, planting (3,151) seedlings and employing (259) workers for (5,002) working days.
- Planting seedlings to reclaim an area of 150 dunums, in which (3,000) fruit tree seedlings and (2,790) forest tree seedlings were planted, in addition to cultivating highly durable varieties of high-value crops, vegetables, seedless grapes, guava and dates, and employing (20) workers for (144) working days.
- Cultivation of fodder seeds, where fodder seeds were planted on an area of (2,348.82) dunums.
- Development of agricultural infrastructure: distribution of production inputs to (336) beneficiaries, including agricultural and food products, seeds and seedlings.
- Livestock activities: Rehabilitation of (40) barns.
- Installation of greenhouses: the construction of (15) greenhouses on an area of one dunum for each house, with the distribution of agricultural inputs, and the installation of (520) agricultural tunnels.

The second result:

advanced agricultural production (plant and animal) able to compete and access the domestic and foreign markets.

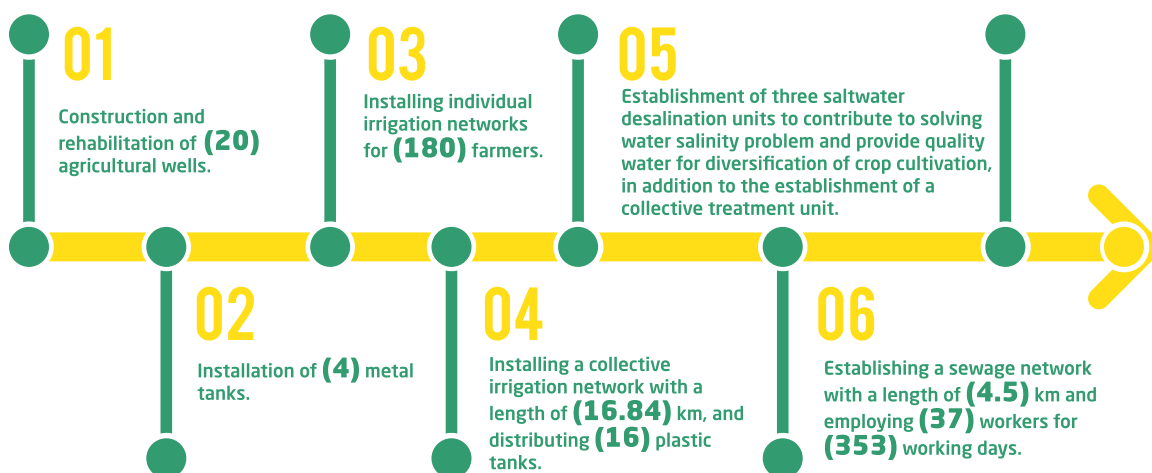
Main achievements:

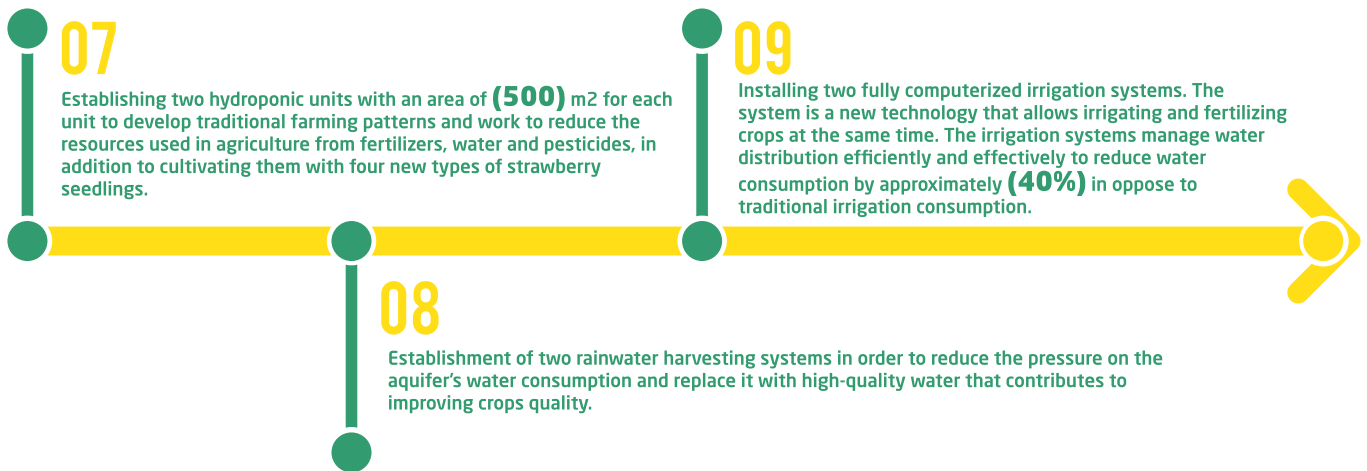


The third result:

efficient management of water resources for agriculture while maintaining their growth and development.

Main achievements:

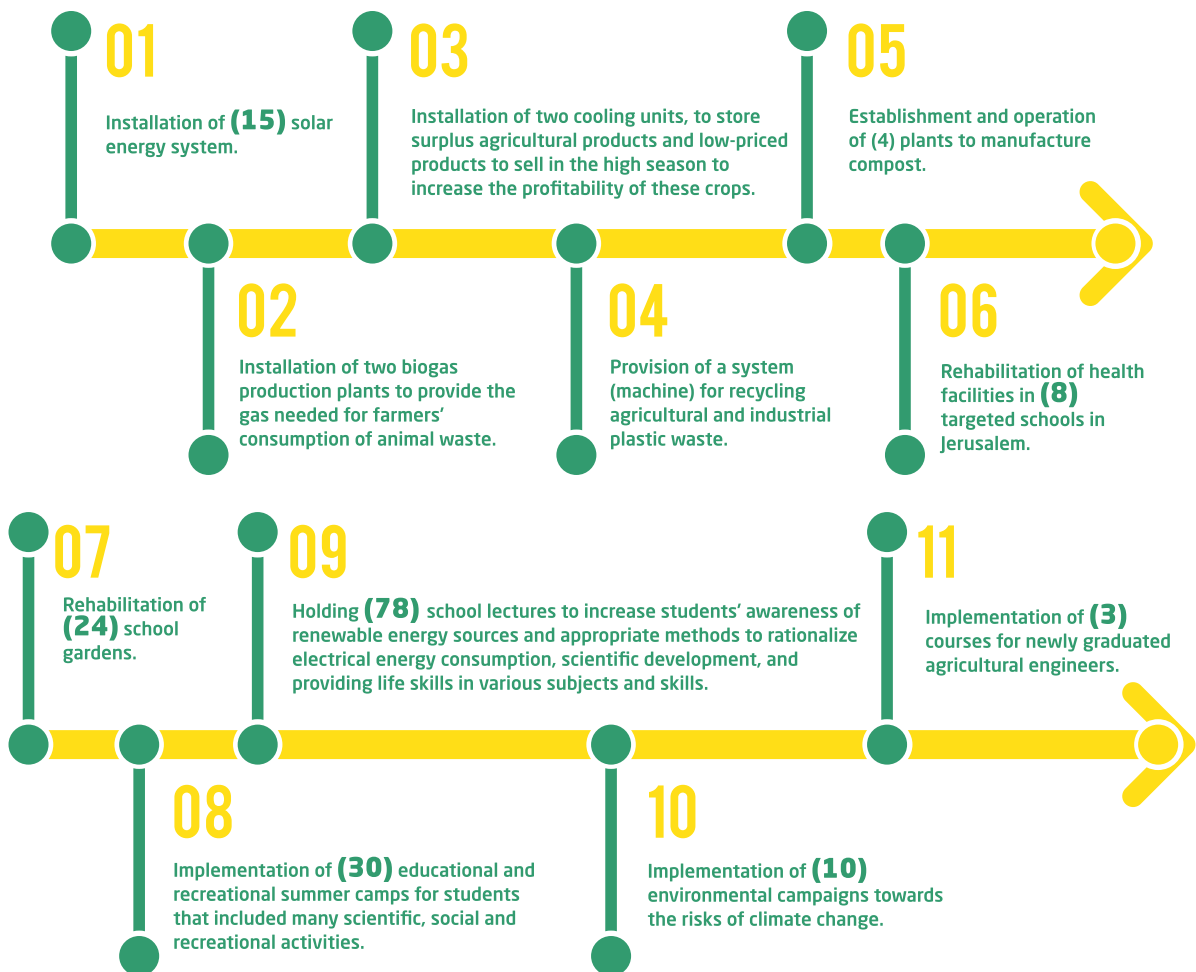


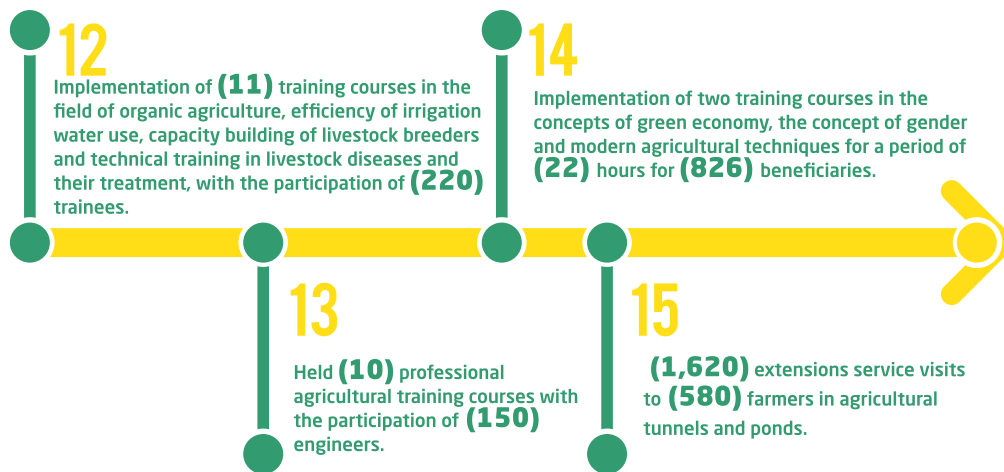


The fourth result:

preparedness and adaptability to the impacts of climate change and environmental sanitation.

Main achievements:









**Second program:
Social and Economic
Empowerment.**

Goal:

improved standard of living (creating employment opportunities and reduce poverty)

First result:

more organized target groups.

Main achievements:



Second result:

increased investment in the agricultural sector and enhanced complementarity between the agricultural sector and other sectors of the economy.

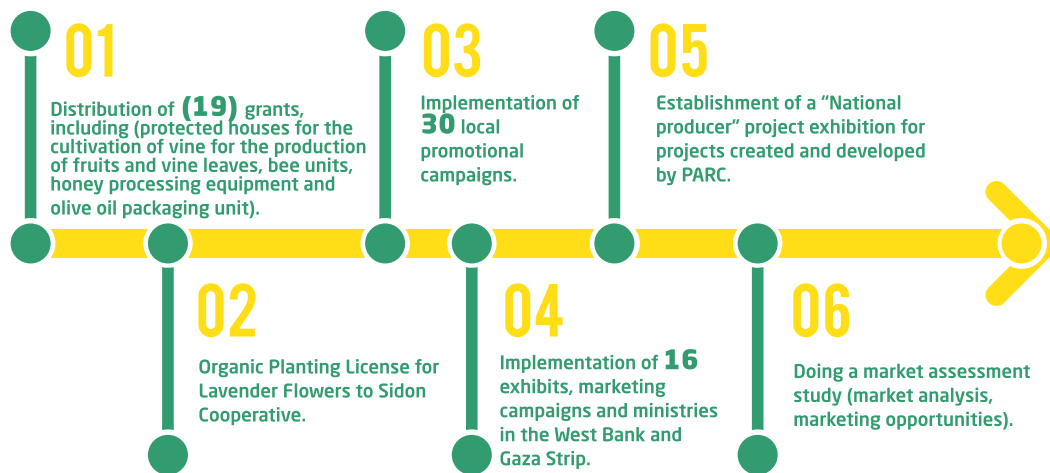
Main achievements:



Third result:

improved access to domestic and foreign markets.

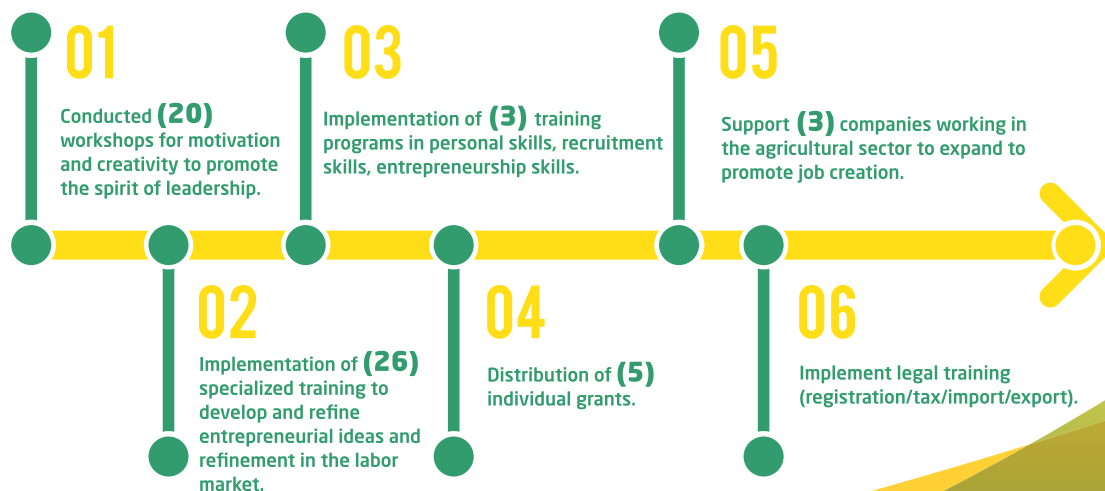
Main achievements:

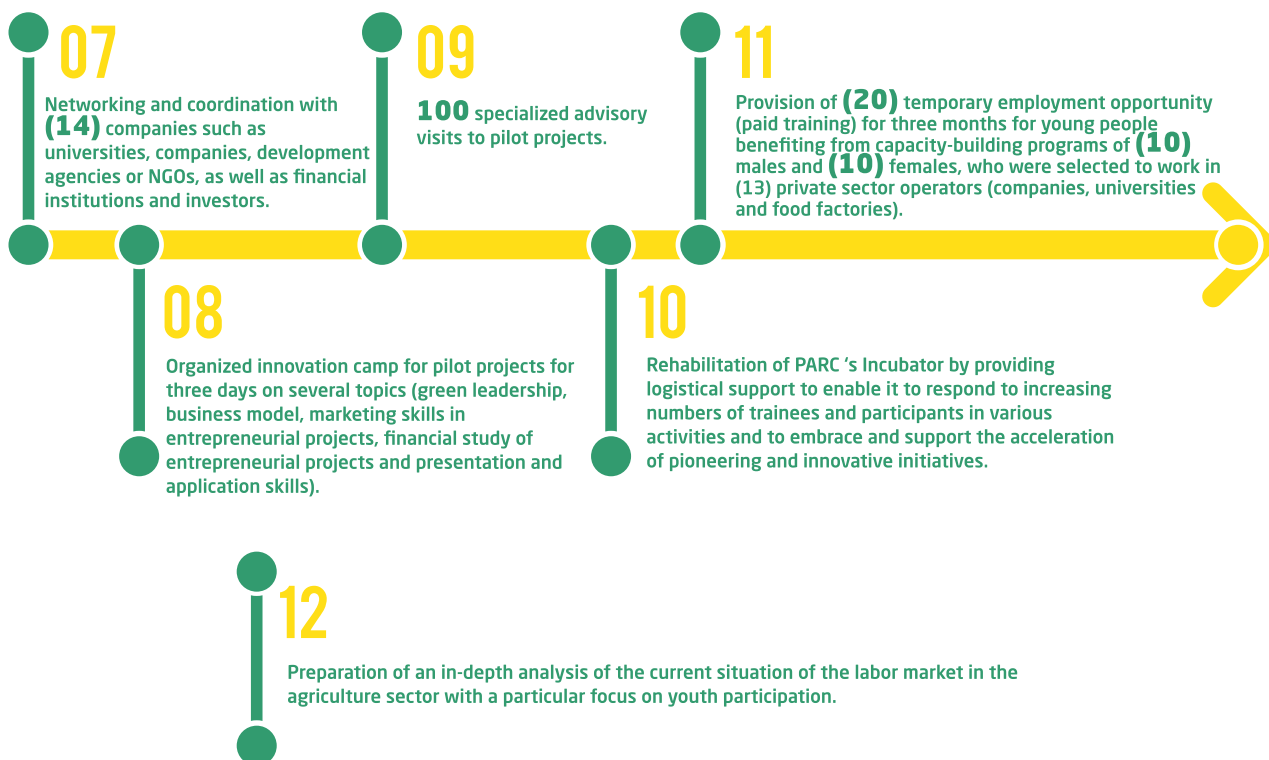


Fourth result:

a stimulating environment for innovation and entrepreneurship incubator for small and medium enterprises.

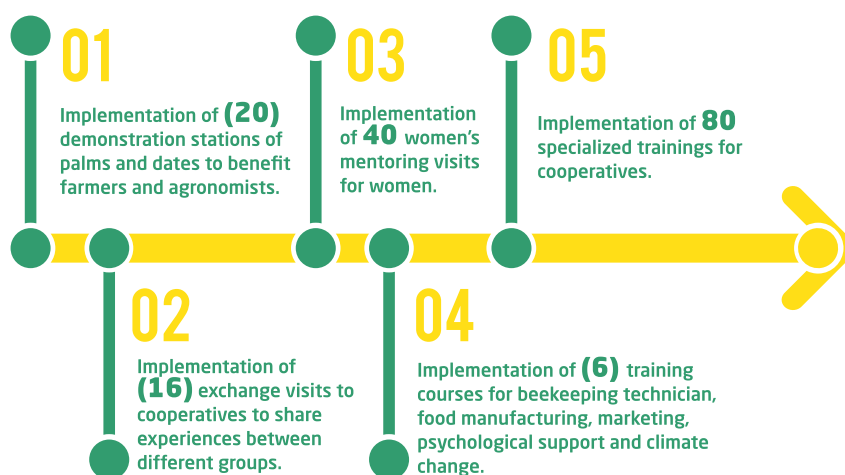
Main achievements:

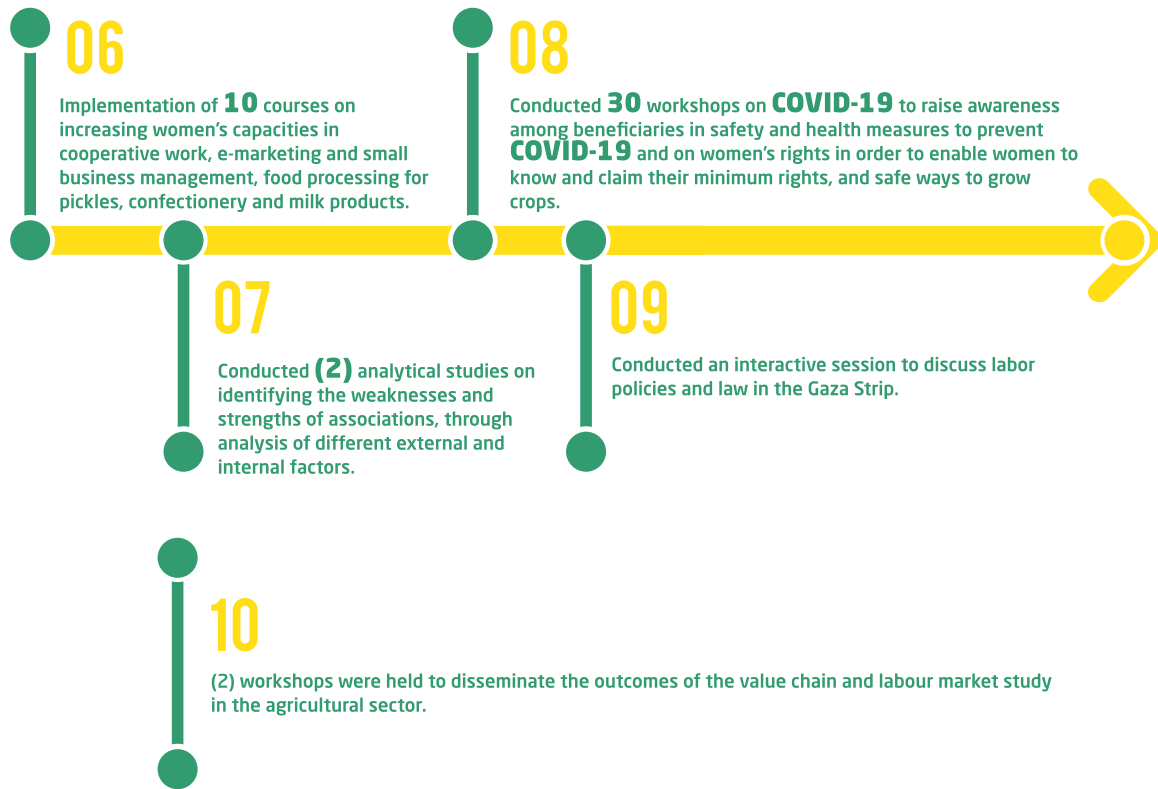




Fifth result:

increased contribution of women to the agricultural development







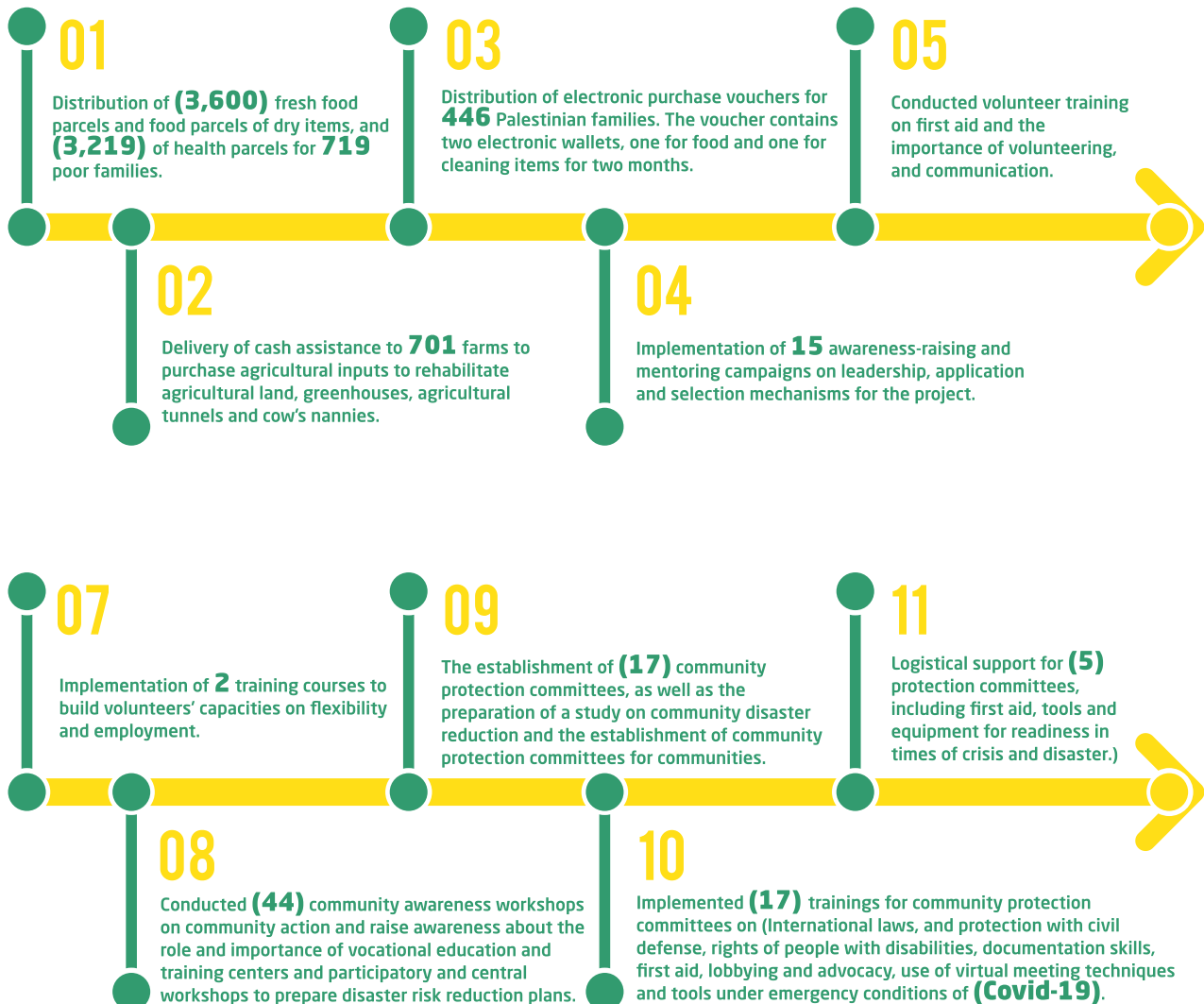
A rural landscape featuring a dirt road in the foreground, a field of banana plants and other crops in the middle ground, and a densely forested hill in the background under a blue sky with white clouds. The text "Third Program: Resilience" is overlaid on the image.

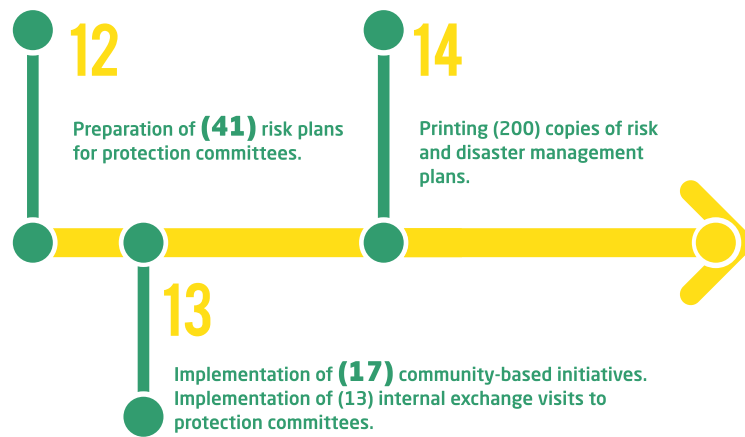
**Third Program:
Resilience**

Result:

promoted resilience of communities in rural and threatened areas.

Main achievements:







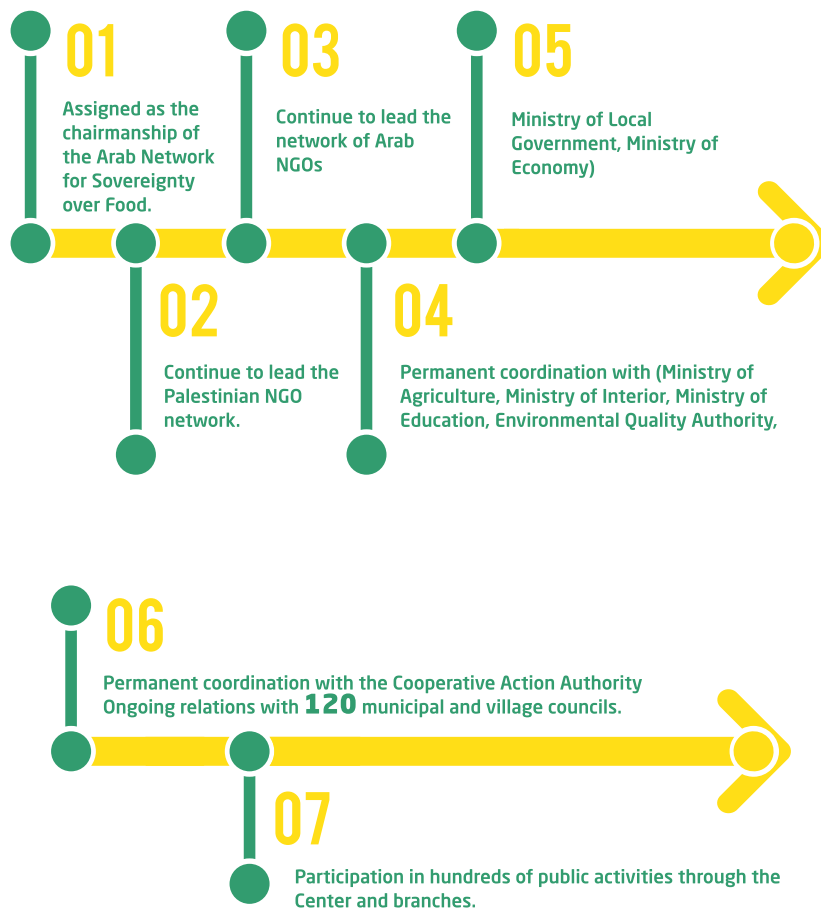
Fourth Program:
Lobbying and
Advocacy

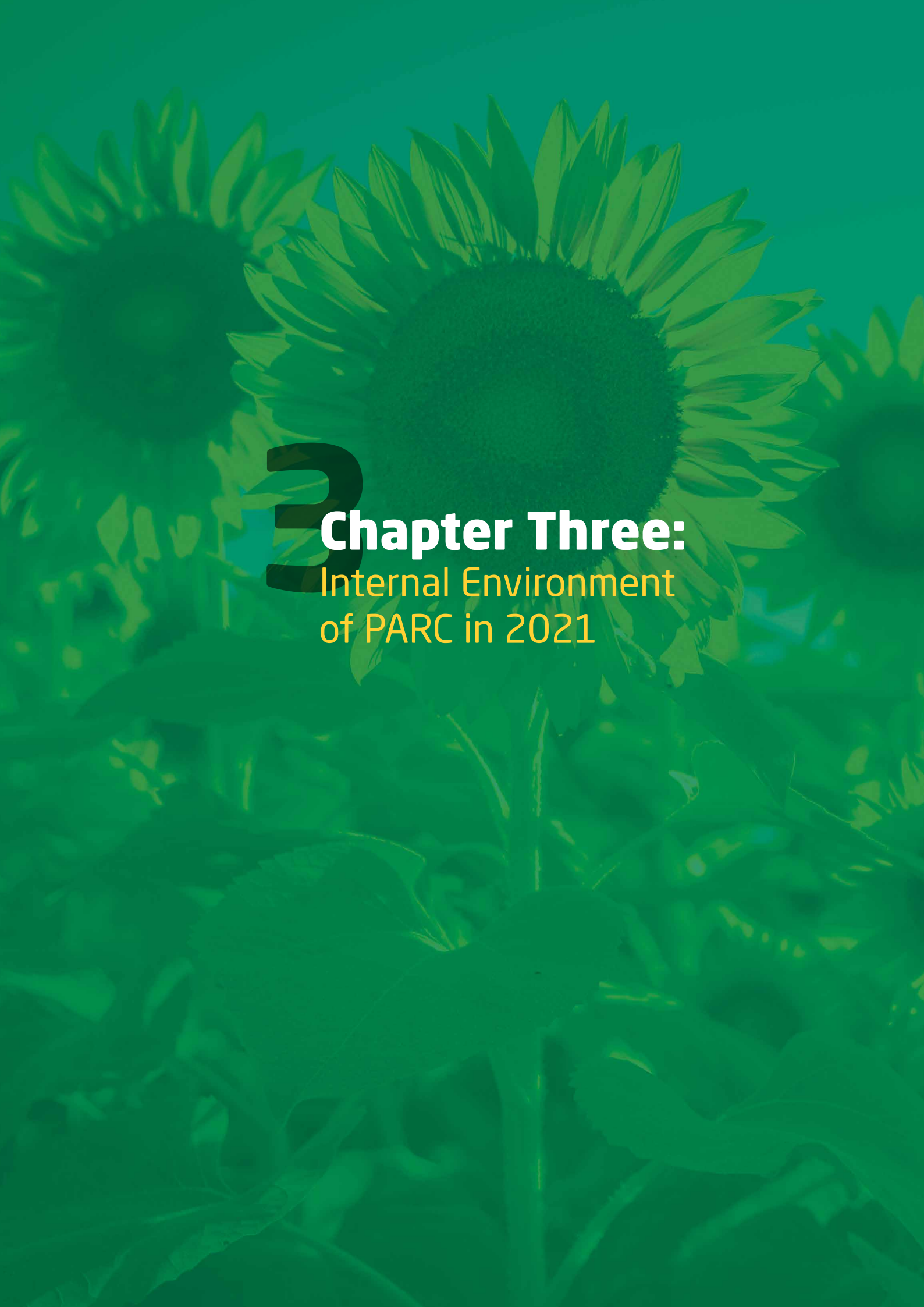
Goal:

Strengthen the role of PARC in leading lobbying and advocacy.

Result: a prominent and pioneering of PARC and agricultural development and in the mobilization and effective influence.

Main achievement:





3 Chapter Three: Internal Environment of PARC in 2021

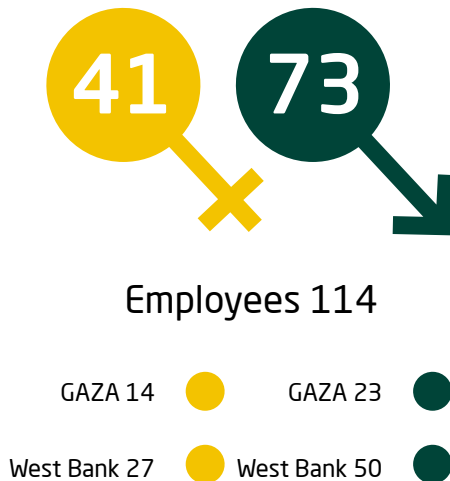


PARC believes in the need for sustained work to reach advanced levels of development and construction, and since the human element is the building block of the construction process. PARC has attached the utmost importance to the development and stimulation of the human cadre within the institution, in spite of the difficult circumstances experienced by Palestinian society in general and civil society institutions, including PARC in particular under the first two pandemics, namely, racist occupation policies, which are becoming increasingly vicious from day to day against our people and institutions. Also, the second is linked to the spread of the coronavirus and the accompanying economic recession in Palestine and all the world's countries in the last three years. However, PARC has persistently continued to develop its human cadre and interest in it over the past years, including 2021, in line with the policy of Adaptive Management, which has been pursued in recent years in order to continue implementing its programs and providing services to the Palestinian people in the darkest conditions. This policy has been reflected in the leadership role played by PARC's Staff under the pandemic, which has been demonstrated by their continued implementation of development relief programs in a highly efficient manner.



Electronic System

PARC continued to develop the electronic Human Resources system in terms of activating more than one part of the system. Making it easier and faster for all staff to use it to obtain the required information. As well as to study the presentations of the possibility of linking the program, project and financial system with human resources to facilitate the process of communication between the departments to shorten time and effort and to obtain the best results and accurate information, as well as to develop a set of reports important in measuring the basic outputs of the approved system.



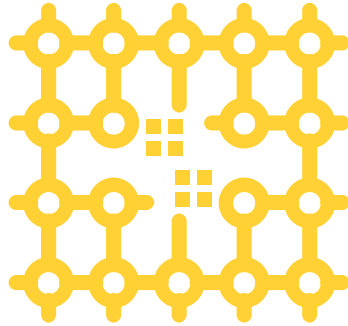
Recruitment:

The number of PARC's employees reached (114) employees by the end of the year. Females represents (36%) of the organization's staff, as PARC has made vigorous efforts to achieve gender balance despite some impediments in the recruitment process due to strong competition for qualified staff and the lack of qualified female agronomists at the career level. PARC also increased the number and quality of the staff. For instance, the Development and resource mobilization unit was established, as well as the development and renewal of the oversight, evaluation and learning unit.



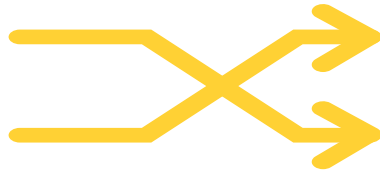
Savings Fund:

PARC Contribution Provident Fund has been activated by 10% as a motivation to the results of the 2020 assessment. The number of staff in 2021 has increased by 29% compared to previous years.



Information Technology Section:

1. The Center's Intranet protection systems have been standardized to be a qualitative shift that helps increase information security in the enterprise.
2. Developing the server for human and financial resources, thus increasing its speed and performance and the possibility of taking backups permanently.
3. The Barcode fixed assets system for PARC was established, whereby each asset in the Foundation took a computerized electronic code at all branches of the Foundation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to facilitate the annual inventory and electronic archiving.
4. Work has been done to equip the appropriate technological environment to raise the speed of the internet to up to 450 Mbps.
5. The backup system for employees' data and backups of servers and information has been changed to become safer and more sophisticated and to retain more than one copy.
6. PARC's website was developed to be more sophisticated, up-to-date with technological advances and keep abreast of social media sites by communicating with the development company to track the process as required.
7. Training centers have been developed and equipped with new devices to enhance the internal technological environment.



Other matters:

1. Safety and prevention measures were tightened after the coronavirus pandemic at all the institution's offices and staff work as work at centers and branches was reduced and results were positive.
2. Rehabilitation of offices and PARC branches in all governorates, especially the construction and equipping of a new floor in Gaza.
3. Rehabilitation of the Zubabidah Center in the laboratory, display screens and modern devices.

A photograph of a field of sunflowers, with a semi-transparent green overlay covering the entire image. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their dark brown centers and bright yellow petals. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

4 Chapter Four:

Success stories.



Individual Success Stories

Thermal mattresses:

A pioneering experience in combating septic germination problems:

Agronomist Asma Mustafa worked for the Junaidi Nurseries in Nablus governorate, after graduating from the Technical University of Palestine (Khodhari) in Tulkarm City and earning a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering and sustainable agriculture in 2013. While working in the cultivation of seedlings and



monitoring their stages of development, she noticed that the lack of sufficient moisture and heat in nurseries hindered the natural growth processes of seedlings, and started seeking solutions to the problem.

Asma, who has gained practical experience, has begun to look for new ways and methods of cultivating and caring for seedlings. During her research, she read about the cultivation of seedlings according to the thermal mattress system. Asma said that she has built an agricultural greenhouse on a 100 square meter area and provided it with a thermal mattress. The thermal mattress is a piece of clear, reinforced plastic that is (12) meters long and 1 meter wide, with precise heating pipes at the bottom, and it places boxes for planting on the thermal mattress, thus controlling the temperatures and humidity required for the growth of the seedlings.

After carrying out her first successful practical experience, Asma requested a grant from PARC. Which PARC provided to her and Asma was able to successful plant seedling on the thermal mattress, and scale up and expand her initiative.

The first experiment focused on the cultivation of oxal olive seedlings, and after their success, the agronomist started cultivating ornamental plants in the West Bank. In addition to the cultivation of grape seedlings, fig, berries and other required seedlings, where they operate on the pre-booking system. So far Asma was asked to provide 27 thousand seedlings to various plant nurseries.

Asma Mustafa was expecting to provide only two job opportunities. However, the number of workers working with her today is seven people working according to the hour system.

Regarding the financial return for the last season, Asma stated that the sales reached (63) thousand shekels. As for the social impact, she said that the project provided a job opportunity for her retired father, and for a number of other family members and relatives, in addition to providing her with a source of income.

PARC restores life for Umm al-Mahd by building “Arafat’s Well”

PARC was able to restore the agricultural production cycle in the Umm al-Mahd area of Absan al-Jadeed, Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, after working to reconstruct the only well in the “Well Arafat” area, which covers about (400) dunums of water 24 hours a day. PARC sought to increase the area of water access to about 700 dunums by extending more of the tanker’s water lines. The Umm al-Mahd region provides about 60-70% of the food basket of green paper crops for



the southern region where the crops are many “parsley, arugula, spinach, jarrah, chard, and many more”.

Farmer Farid Abu Assi (48), one of the beneficiaries of the well said: “We suffered a lot during, and following the recent Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, the occupation targeted the well directly, destroy the entire agricultural season where the well is the life of this land. We are planting 45 drought-prone agricultural dunums, and we suffered a huge loss of an agricultural season in May. Today, after the repairing of the well, the entire area has changed and the land has been restored after being planted with various vegetables as Zucchini, eggplant and leafy vegetables, and a number of manpower have been employed to make the agricultural season successes”.

Farmer Rami Samur (30 years old) said that after PARC intervention there were no longer any problems for farmers in the area in terms of water availability, pointing out that the production started again, and that he brought three workers to help him in his land of about 25 donums that is being grown with leafy vegetables.

It is worth noting that PARC implemented the project following an appeal made by farmers in order to save their agricultural lands, especially since the well is the primary source of irrigation for these lands

Live testimonies

From training to the labor market in the private agricultural sector

The agricultural engineer Osama Farouk Daraghmeh from the town of Tubas, one of the beneficiaries of the professional training for the vegetable value chain of the category of agronomist, said: After my graduation in 2015, I tried to apply for more than one job, but I did not get a chance. But after getting professional training that focuses on personal and technical competencies, many things have changed in my working life. Training and working for



3 months at an agricultural appliance store helped me greatly to contact hundreds of agricultural engineers and farmers and learn about many production inputs, that enabled us to have confidence in self and expand technical knowledge. And all of that was positively reflected by my ability to compete for a job with ARIJ, the first of which was 3 months trial period, and because of my evaluation during the trial period, which was distinctive as a result of the experiences and skills that I learned from the training course, an annual contract was signed with the organization for a monthly wage of \$850 and all Indications are that I will continue my work with ARIJ, if projects are available.

From Professional training to self employment

Agronomist Harith Muhammad Nairat from the town of Methloun in Jenin governorate, a beneficiary of the vegetable value chain training, the category of agronomist, says: Education in universities is very focused on theoretical education and the opportunity to take advantage of the professional program of vegetable value chain is important. Training on personal and technical competencies with a focus on the practical and the subsequent opportunity to operate at El-Sabaa International for a period of 3 months had a great impact on refining my skills and experience in the agricultural sector. During the training, I was very encouraged to set up my own project. Indeed, I submitted a project for the cultivation of Zucchini and later the project was approved with some adjustment for the cultivation of hanging peas at the current stage and for pepper cultivation in the next stage. Harith stressed that “without the skills and experiences he obtained, he would never have been able to think about starting his own project, but today I owned my own project, which will bring me an annual net profit of approximately 25 thousand shekels, and this amount is better than the job because I am in my own farm and free from organizational monitoring, and I look forward to develop my project in the future”. Agronomist Nairat focused on the importance of continuing to offer professional courses to compensate for the lack of practical application in universities.





Training contributes to reducing production input costs

Agronomist Basem Abu Aita from the Gaza Strip, who participated with the farmers in the cow value chain training, said: The training had a great impact on reducing production inputs. "I own a farm of 12 cows, and through the training, the positive impact was in reducing production input costs. Where I mastered producing silage, to apply it directly to my farm, which contributed to reducing nutrition costs to about 18% other than improved productivity, early detection of diseases, marketing skills and many other things. Since I need about 60 tons of feed annually for the farm, with an approximate value of 100,000 shekels, the value of saving in feed is about 15,000 shekels, in addition to saving about another 10,000 shekels as an indirect effect. Therefore, the value of the savings estimated annually at approximately 25,000 shekels, which is estimated with approximately \$7,500 annually, which is equivalent to one year's salary for an employee in the Gaza Strip.

Training and its impact on Gaza Strip

During the job placement period, the director of Feed Company Abu Daqqa hosted 2 agronomist (Ahmed Abu Saadeh and Diao Al-Bashiti) specializing in animal production, who benefited from professional training for agronomists on the value chain of dairy cows.

Mahmoud said "at the beginning of the job placement period, I met with the agronomist to show them the mechanism and nature of work in the factory, and through discussion with them, I felt that they had good technical and professional information about feed and fodder mixtures and how to form mixtures using mathematical methods and specialized programs that they work on. And my feeling was confirmed during the 4-month operating period, as I relied heavily on them to solve some of the technical problems we face during the feed manufacture, and even more so. They have come to provide advice and guidance to breeders in persuading them to change the traditional feeding methods, which encouraged me to continue employing them in the factory after the end of the operating period because of the benefits has accrued to the factory through increased profits and good relations that were woven with the breeders.

The background of the page is a photograph of a field of sunflowers, overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing their dark brown centers and bright yellow petals. The green overlay is uniform in color and opacity, creating a cohesive visual theme.

5 Chapter Five: Partner Institutions





Al Reef Agricultural Investment and Marketing Company

Overview of Al-Reef Company

Al Reef Agricultural Investment and Marketing Company was established in 1993 to provide promotional, marketing and packaging services for Palestinian agricultural products, develop their quality, and open local and external marketing prospects. The company exports its products to many partners in Europe, America, Japan, Australia and the local market . Al Reef Company produces promotes and markets all types of olive oil (virgin, premium virgin, organic virgin, organic premium virgin) organic and inorganic Mjoul dates, almonds, maftoul, thyme, freekeh, olive oil soap and other agricultural products.

Al-Reef has embraced the principle and philosophy of fair trade so that farmers and women receive fair prices for their products; Prices that guarantee them a decent life, as a fair-trade company. Their goal is to also to guide, support and organize the efforts of agricultural cooperatives and small farmers including women. Al Reef always ensure that the production and trade conditions of our products are socially and economically fair and environmentally responsible.

The company's internal and external sales

The company's total sales for this year amounted to (6112,100) shekels, divided into export sales by (92.5%) and domestic market sales by (7.5%) of the agricultural products handled by the company, such as olive oil, dates, almonds, maftoul, thyme, packaging operations and cold storage. Marketing services are provided for more than (400) agricultural families who are members of Palestinian cooperative societies, as well as offering job opportunities for more than (600) breadwinners.



Figure 1: Percentages of exported sales and locally consumed



Reef Finance Services

Reef is a private, non-profit company, established in 2007, providing quality financing services since 2008 and it operates through eight branches spread over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Since its establishment, Reef aimed to improve the standard of living of the less fortunate by providing them with distinctive financial resources to start income-generating productive projects, or to develop existing projects aimed at creating job opportunities and providing fixed monthly income. Where Reef provides flexible financing products to cover all economic sectors, with a constant focus on the agricultural sector. Therefore, the proportion of agricultural projects to the total loans granted since the establishment was reached 51%, followed by production projects by 27%, then housing improvement by 17%, while personal loans did not exceed 5%.

In 2021, more than \$7 million was disbursed to 923 borrowers, including 650 new borrowers. It is worth noting that Reef constantly maintains that its products suit the women's need, and works hard to empower them. The percentage of women from the active portfolio is about 30%, and males are 63%, and 7% for collective funding that serve associations, cooperatives and companies.