

ANNEX

ACTION FICHE N° 5

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title	EU scholarships for Palestine refugees in Lebanon		
Total cost	€3 million		
Aid method / Management mode	Project approach – <i>joint</i> management		
DAC-code	11420	Sector	Higher education

2. RATIONALE

2.1. Sector context

In 2006, 404,170 Palestine refugees are registered by UNRWA offices in Lebanon. According to NGO estimates, a maximum of 250.000 Palestine refugees are effectively living in Lebanon. Palestine refugees are denied civil rights, including the right to work and the right to private property. More than half of them live in 12 camps in very poor living conditions. They do not have access to the Lebanese school system as well as health care and social services (basic services in these areas are provided by UNWRA). The Lebanese Government has shown since end 2005 a new interest in improving living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. The European Commission has welcomed the "Camp improvement initiative" launched by Prime Minister Siniora in May 2006. In her letter dated 3rd July 2006, Mrs Benita Ferrero Waldner has confirmed EC's continuous efforts to support Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

The proposed project will make available scholarships for young Palestinians, thereby improving their employment prospects. Currently, the vast majority of Palestine Refugees in Lebanon is unable to afford the high tuition fees of the private educational Lebanese system (40 private universities with an average annual fee of \$5000 per year). Access to the only Lebanese public university is limited for Palestine refugees. UNRWA provides free primary education, vocational training, and also provides free secondary education.

Whereas it is unlikely that the Lebanese authorities will ease the restrictions on the access of Palestine Refugees to the Lebanese labour market in the near future, students benefiting from the scholarship project will have a better chance of finding meaningful employment after achieving a university degree.

2.2. Lessons learnt

The present project will build on the results of the UNRWA managed project: "**EU scholarship fund for Palestine refugees in Lebanon**" funded in 2005 for **€1.1 million** (MEDA regional, out of the €4 million envelope decided in 2004 for

"Improving employment opportunities for young Palestine refugees"). . In August 2005, almost 200 applications were received for the academic year 2005-2006, out of which 54 were selected with the budget available. This project had an **excellent EU visibility** and proved to be very effective in responding to the needs of the Palestinian students. UNRWA requested in 2006 additional support from this purpose from Commission.

2.3. Complementary actions

Since 2002, the EU has provided support to Palestine refugees in Lebanon through thematic budget lines (co-financing, rehabilitation, food security, ECHO) and very recently through MEDA (€19 million). The sectors covered are water, sanitation, economic development, vocational training, education, health, psychosocial, shelter rehabilitation, food aid and youth activities. The main beneficiaries are European and Palestinian NGOs as well as UNRWA for specific projects. In addition the Commission is one of the main contributors UNRWA's general fund. For 2007 an amount of €66 million is foreseen for this purpose.

In the sector of education, the EC has developed an integrated approach with a view to improving employment prospects of the Palestinian youth.

The following projects are currently ongoing and are complementary to the proposed project:

- "Improve education of young Palestine refugees in Lebanon for better employment opportunities", €15 million, MEDA sub-regional, contract with UNRWA targeting pre-school, primary and secondary education;
- "Vocational training project", €4 million, MEDA sub-regional: support to Vocational Training Providers in the Palestinian camps including UNRWA Sibline Training Centre and the provision of university scholarships (€1.1 million, 54 scholars, 2005-2009);
- "Assistance to local initiatives targeting children and young Palestine refugees in all camps in Lebanon", €748,222, Co-financing NGO budget line, Save The Children Sweden with 5 Palestinian NGO's.

2.4. Donor coordination

UNRWA organises annual donor coordination meetings, including field visits, with representatives of the donor countries. In Lebanon, an informal coordination mechanism has been put in place since May 2006 with a view of exchanging information on different projects and on partners (NGO's and UNRWA). It is foreseen to reinforce this **local coordination** in 2007, especially the dialogue with UNRWA.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective is to improve employment opportunities for young Palestinian refugees. The specific objective is to provide to Palestinian students access to higher education in Lebanon.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The project will increase the access of young Palestinian refugees to higher education in Lebanon.

The following activities will be carried out:

- Open scholarship applications to the EU scholarship fund to Palestine refugees that have graduated in Lebanon (UNRWA or Lebanese system). With the budget available, approximately 150 scholars could be supported for completing a tertiary degree. Approximately fifty scholars will be selected each year over three years for the total duration of their studies;
- Ensure ongoing evaluation and monitoring mechanisms of the scholarship scheme;
- Reinforce counselling and placement services of UNRWA.

3.3. Stakeholders

The direct beneficiaries of this programme are the refugee Palestinian students that are granted a scholarship. Indirectly, their families and the community at large will benefit from the expected increased employment rate among the direct beneficiaries.

3.4. Risks and assumptions

The project has been designed taking into account that the following risks could hamper the successful implementation of the project:

- A serious deterioration of the political environment could eventually affect UNRWA's operations in a significant manner;
- UNRWA should allocate the necessary resources to the project.

3.5. Crosscutting Issues

In relation to **gender equality**, particular attention will be paid to the principle of equality of treatment of both men and women students.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Implementation method

The programme will be implemented by joint management method through the signature of an agreement with an international organisation. The contracting authority is the European Commission. UNRWA is the implementing agency of the project, with which the EC will sign a contribution agreement in accordance with the financial and framework agreement concluded between the European Commission and the United Nations (agreement signed 29 April 2003).

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the International Organisation concerned.

4.3. Budget and calendar

The total financial contribution of the EC to the project amounts to €3 million. The implementation of the programme will be 48 months from the date of the signature of the contribution agreement between UNRWA and the EC.

4.4. Performance monitoring

Achievements will be monitored regularly by UNRWA and the results will be reported every year to the EC. The key indicators will be the yearly results of the scholars and the number of students passing a University degree.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

The project will have an evaluation that will be directly managed by the EC in agreement with UNRWA. All auditing issues related to this project are governed by the Verification Clause annexed to and forming an integral part of the FAFA.

4.6. Communication and visibility

The European Commission will ensure that adequate communication and visibility is given by UNRWA to the EC funding (press conference, brochures/flyers, media reports, etc.).