

Action Fiche for occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip)**1. IDENTIFICATION**

Title/Number	Improvement of living conditions of vulnerable Palestine refugees in Jerash Camp		
Total cost	EU contribution: EUR 2,000,000		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Joint management with international organisations: European Commission, UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) –Implementing organisation: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)		
DAC-code	73010	Sector	Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation

2. RATIONALE**2.1. Sector context**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was established by General Assembly resolution 194 in 1949 to provide humanitarian assistance for some 950,000 Palestine refugees who were forced to flee their homes as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. UNRWA works in five fields of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A Palestine refugee as defined by UNRWA is anyone whose normal place of residence was in Mandate Palestine during the period from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost his/her home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The descendants of the original Palestine refugees are also eligible for registration with UNRWA, but only refugees living in its five fields of operation are eligible for the Agency's services.

Today, approximately 5 million Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA. Jordan hosts the highest number of refugees almost 2 million, refugees registered with the Agency in Jordan. These refugees live in 10 official camps, three unofficial camps or are spread throughout the country.

As of January 2012, there were 135,932 ex-Gazan refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan (1948 refugees, displaced from Gaza in 1967). Additionally, while there are no official estimates of the number of persons displaced from Gaza residing in Jordan, previous unconfirmed media reports have placed the number in Jordan at around 100,000 to 150,000. UNRWA registered ex-Gazan refugees are largely concentrated in Jerash and Marka camps.

Jerash Camp

The Jerash Camp, known locally as Gaza camp, was set up as an “emergency” camp in 1968 to accommodate 11,500 ex-Gazan refugees (Palestine refugees who fled to

Gaza in 1948 and were displaced from Gaza in 1967) and “displaced persons” from Gaza (Gaza residents who were displaced in 1967 for the first time) who fled from the Gaza Strip as a result of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Currently, there are 26,785 refugees in the camp that are registered with UNRWA. Of them, approximately 14,000 live within the official borders of camp.

The **population** of Jerash Camp is almost exclusively made up of ex-Gazan refugees and “displaced persons” from Gaza. They are entitled to hold temporary, two-year Jordanian passports, but they do not hold a national ID number – a survey conducted in 2007 found that 97.2% camp residents held temporary 2 year Jordanian passports. These passports serve only as travel documents, an identification document and a residency permit. Without a national ID number, there are a number of services and professions that ex-Gazan refugees are excluded from or have limited access to, including the Jordanian National Aid Fund (poverty support), university scholarships, the majority of positions in the public sector, and occupations such as dentistry and legal practice. In addition, they face restrictions on property ownership, political inclusion and driving public vehicles. Moreover, the limited validity of the passports also makes overseas employment difficult. Consequently, this group of refugees face a number of socio-economic challenges.

Poverty is a major problem in the camp. A substantially higher proportion of ex-Gazan households in the camp fall within the lowest income quintile compared to other Palestine refugee camps in Jordan. The residents consistently score lower on possession of assets (assets index), and present the lowest proportion of residents holding permanent jobs and the highest proportion of seasonal and irregular job holders and day labourers. Not surprisingly, a disproportionately high number of residents in Jerash Camp and its vicinity depend on UNRWA’s Social Safety Net (SSN) support which consists of quarterly food and cash assistance and is offered to families assessed to be living in abject poverty. According to UNRWA records, 11.5% of the refugees currently registered in Jerash Camp are categorised as SSN beneficiaries, whereas the overall percentage among UNRWA JFO beneficiaries in Jordan is 2.9%.

The ex-Gazan children in the camps pursue **education** by attending 4 UNRWA schools up to Grade 10 and then pursue their high school education at Government of Jordan schools.

In terms of **health** services, UNRWA provides primary healthcare to registered refugees. Refugees avail secondary and tertiary care from non-UNRWA hospitals. At Jordanian hospitals, UNRWA reimburses part of the cost to registered refugees, but only up to JOD 100 for the majority of refugees, and up to JOD 150 for Social Safety Net cases.

There is a lack of possibilities for **socio-economic participation** for the most vulnerable, particularly the disabled and women. The Community Based Rehabilitation Centre (CBRC) had limited facilities and resources, and community awareness on the needs and possibilities of the disabled was limited. Likewise the Women’s Programme Centre (WPC) in Jerash Camp was unable to function effectively due to limited resources and know-how to organise awareness sessions

for the community on human rights and self-reliance. The EU project¹ carried out from 2007-2011 started to address these challenges.

When it comes to accessing the labour market, there are a number of specific **employment** restrictions placed on ex-Gazan refugees in both the public and private sector. Property laws impose restraints on self-employment, and ex-Gazan refugees experience difficulties in obtaining business licenses for starting small businesses outside the camp boundaries.

UNRWA operation in Jerash Camp

UNRWA runs four (two each for boys and for girls) preparatory level (Grades 1 to 10) double-shift schools in Jerash Camp for 5,027 students (2011/12 academic year) in two school buildings.

The Jerash health centre, which was built in 1989 with assistance from the Danish Refugee Council and recently expanded with the assistance of the Government of USA, has been able to cope with the increasing demand of health services with additional equipment also provided by the EU project. The health centre provides preventive and curative health services to beneficiaries living in Jerash Camp and the surrounding area.

UNRWA's Relief and Social Services Programme provides direct financial and non-financial aid to refugees registered in the SSN. The Jordan Field Office also encourages self-reliance in the camp through poverty alleviation schemes, and community-based, locally-managed institutions and services concerned with women and the development, rehabilitation and integration of refugees with disabilities.

In addition to health, education and relief and social services, UNRWA is responsible for rubbish collection in the camp.

Housing conditions in the camp are substandard for the majority of the ex-Gazan refugee families. The majority of the shelters in Jerash Camp were built in 1967 and the poor economic conditions of most families restrict their ability to rehabilitate their homes and extend the shelters to accommodate family growth. Large families often reside in single or two-room shelters, with limited access to daylight or proper ventilation. The 2007 survey of Jerash Camp found 65% of the shelters to have roofs of zinc or asbestos sheeting. Almost 80% of the households also reported encountering severe problems in winter, including leaking roofs, water seepage through walls, and shelter flooding. The poor living conditions are even worse for vulnerable groups within the refugee community: youth, women, the physically and mentally disabled and the unemployed. Additionally, environmental conditions in the camp are sub-standard. The lack of proper (underground) sewage and the lack of proper automated waste removal result in poor sanitation conditions in the camp, contributing to the spread of preventable diseases.

UNRWA Jordan Field Office (JFO) has been implementing camp improvement programmes since its establishment and has demonstrated tangible results in

¹ UNRWA Jordan Field Office implemented an EU funded USD3.4 million Project: Assistance to Palestine Ex-Gaza Refugees in Jerash Camp benefiting 27,000 underprivileged refugees in the Camp from September 2007 to December 2011.

delivering these services. However, UNRWA's General Fund allocation is not adequate to meet a number of human development needs, including the shelter needs of Jerash Camp. Hence, UNRWA actively seeks project assistance to fulfil key shortcomings in its ability to meet the most essential needs of Palestine refugees in accordance with its mandate.

The proposed project will use the Shelter Database created under 2007-2011 project. The database was created on the basis of physical rehabilitation needs assessed by using comprehensive door to door mapping, rapid assessment of needs and detailed assessments and poverty assessment. The project will extensively use this database in planning, implementing and monitoring the project. The output targets set for this project are from the database of the 3039 shelters in Gaza camp.

Access to potable water has been a major problem to the refugees due to cost and irregular supply. Municipal water is heavily subsidised in Jordan but many ex-Gazan households can only afford it with great difficulty. Moreover, due to serious budget deficit the cost of piped water is likely to increase making it less affordable. Likewise, due to cost of electricity, most poor households rely on kerosene and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) to heat water thus adding heavy strain on their meagre income. For example, in the Jerash Camp, only nine households out of 633 have water heaters, none of which are from renewable, solar energy. Alternate and renewable sources of potable water and the use of renewable energy will enable the refugees to offset many of these costs.

2.2. Lessons learnt

The EU project assistance to Palestine ex-Gaza refugees in Jerash Camp, Jordan (2007-2011):

UNRWA Jordan Field Office implemented an EU funded USD 3.4 million project "Assistance to Palestine ex-Gaza refugees in Jerash Camp" benefiting 27,000 underprivileged refugees in the Camp from September 2007 to December 2011. The lessons learned from the 2007-2011 project, particularly the recommendations of the Jerash Refugee Camp Shelter Reconstruction Evaluation Final Report conducted with the EU in 2010, will be applied in the design, planning and implementation of the proposed project. For example:

- The recommended maximum number of shelters per site engineer will be followed.
- Provision is made for a part-time electrical engineer.
- Provision is made for increased community training on maintenance of shelters to avoid issues of damp etc., as well as on use of the new energy and water technology.

Although these measures increase unit costs, they will improve the quality and longevity of shelters provided to the most vulnerable.

2.3. Complementary actions

This action falls within the EU contribution to UNRWA's activities for Palestine refugees.

2.4. Donor co-ordination

As a result of increased awareness of the plights of refugees living in Jerash Camp and also due to successful UNRWA advocacy work, donors' awareness of the situation in the Camp is increasing. Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) is currently implementing a USD 7.1 million project to connect 2,500 shelters with a much better sewage system and a new water supply system. The Jordanian Government's Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA), an Italian NGO, two local NGOs (Community Development Office and Al-O'rua Al-Wothqa Committee), and local philanthropists are also currently implementing shelter improvement activities.

The Camp Service Committee of the Department of Palestine Affairs (DPA) is responsible for overall co-ordination of shelter related activities in the Camp. UNRWA will closely collaborate with the Camp Service Committee and engage, as appropriate, the Committee in resolving implementation level challenges and in facilitation of project work. One key co-ordination task is creating a linkage between the project supported shelters with the sewer system and piped drinking water scheme being constructed by SDC/DPA.

At the Amman Field Office level, UNWRA senior management will ensure appropriate and effective communication and co-ordination with the DPA.

The planning process will involve participation of representatives from the Camp Service Committee, non-government organisations, community based organisations, and community representatives.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to support the refugees; particularly those identified as abject poor, living in the Jerash Camp in achieving a decent standard of living (UNRWA Mid Term Strategy, Goal 3). The project will provide safe and improved living spaces, access to piped water connections and underground sewage facility, thus enabling the refugees to live a more dignified life and allowing them to break the cycle of poverty.

The **specific objectives** of the programme are:

- a. To improve the living conditions of 80 of the most vulnerable refugee families classified as "abject poor", including those on the Social Safety Net programme of UNRWA and people with disabilities, in Jerash Camp.
- b. To pilot a rain water harvesting system in order to reduce dependency on the municipal piped water system, which is irregular and likely to become more expensive due to reductions in subsidies.

The attainment of the second objective will help UNRWA and the international community to expand rain water harvesting in Jerash as an effective solution to enhance the refugee population's access to water for domestic use. In fact, it has

potential to become a pilot for environmental best practices across camps and at national level.

3.2. Expected results and main activities

The main result will be the improved living conditions of the most vulnerable refugee families through new and rehabilitated shelters and through reduced dependency on municipal piped water systems hence reducing the cost for access to water.

The two main activities foreseen under this programme are:

- a. Improved living conditions of 80 of the most vulnerable refugee families, including people with disabilities, in Jerash Camp by rehabilitating (fully or partially, as necessary), 19 shelters and by completely demolishing and replacing 61 dilapidated shelters.

A majority of the shelters will be built/rehabilitated using a semi-self-help approach to promote participation of and empowerment of refugees through capacity building to take greater control of their lives. UNRWA will build the main structure through the traditional method of hiring engineers to ensure their structural integrity and safety. Shelter owners will take responsibility for completing the finishing work where they have the capacity to do so. A detailed procedure will be developed drawing on UNRWA experience of Ein El Hilweh Camp, Saida Area, Lebanon and lessons learned drawn from the EU, KFW² and BMZ³ projects of Jordan Field Office. Social workers will play a significant role in all aspects of shelter work.

With an aim to promote local employment and sustainability, through creation of capacity from on-the job learning opportunities, the proposed project will engage local contractors as much as possible. Savings, if any, generated from this approach and other measures will be invested in increasing the number of shelters rehabilitated.

The project will follow a flexible approach to accommodate special circumstances that might prevent a refugee household from planning and implementing the self-help component because of the following factors, for example:

- i. The household is a female headed household with no other adult member who is able to take responsibility for the renovations.
 - ii. The household is headed by a person with a disability compromising their functional capacity and there is no other adult member in the household.
 - iii. The household has aged members with no young adult member to assist in the work.
- b. Successful piloting of rain water harvesting to reduce dependency on municipal piped water system, which is irregular and likely to become more expensive due to reduction of subsidies.

² Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, German government-owned development bank.

³ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung.

Studies have shown tremendous potential for rainwater harvesting in Jordan. The potential for water harvesting in Irbid Governorate has the highest estimated yield of water harvesting among the 12 governorates of Jordan. Moreover, rain water is used widely in Irbid City. Water collected from rain is chemically very high quality but biological standards of the water are below the WHO (World Health Organisation) recommendations; this requires regular cleaning of catchment area before the rainy season. The available data show that hydrological features of Jerash are favourable to rain water harvesting.

However, the average shelter plot size in Jerash Camp is 70 m² and roof surface will vary as per the type of the shelter. This is not a large area for collection of rain water in sufficient quantity. Moreover, the open spaces in the plots are not large enough to build individual collection tanks. Therefore, the project has made an interim planning assumption that a shared system reservoir would be a practical option in the Camp environment. This planning assumption will be updated once a feasibility study is completed in the camp.

UNRWA has a fully operational Area Office in Irbid and a team of staff in the Engineering and Construction Service Department who will also support the project. In addition, senior management level leadership and guidance, use of office facilities and equipment, and administrative support services will be provided as an in-kind contribution to the project.

All activities of the project will be implemented by following a participatory approach and with involvement of local stakeholders in the camp.

The project will hire staff on fixed-term contracts to avoid any increase in burden on the UNRWA General Funding situation. All contracts will be terminated by the end of the project period.

The design and improvement of shelters will be fully discussed with the shelter owners and agreed before commencing civil works to ensure beneficiary ownership. A written consent and acceptance of terms and conditions, which will include social commitments such as non-violence against women and children, commitment to children's education, practice of good hygiene, upkeep of the shelter, etc., will be obtained from household heads before project support is committed.

The project will assist, possibly in collaboration with community based organisations, the shelter owners in developing a simple plan for general maintenance and upkeep of the shelter before handing over the renovated/reconstructed shelters to the families.

The self-help component is designed to promote capacity of refugees to take greater control of their developmental needs in future.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Political stability and implications of conflict in the region:

The political environment in Jordan remains sensitive to the changes that have been sweeping through the Middle East and North Africa since January 2011. The Government has provided a supportive environment for peaceful demonstrations on

price increases, salary raises, and political reform. In addition, the Government has taken some measures to address the demand related to the salaries for public servants and efforts are being made to ensure participation of all groups in the forthcoming national election. These measures - including some constitutional amendments related to strengthening of electoral reform, constitutional court, civil liberties - improve the quality of governance as well as mitigate the risk of an 'Arab Spring' in Jordan. The risk is registered as medium to high, though a complete collapse is not expected.

Increase in project cost:

The global fuel price increase is taking a serious toll on the Government's coffers as 97% of the energy needs are met from imported energy sources. The government has already increased fuel prices once, and the recent decision to raise them a further 10% to reduce the budget deficit has been put on hold amidst nationwide protests. The cost of construction materials has gone up by 6% in 2012 and further increases in fuel prices are likely to push prices further up.

To mitigate the inflationary risk, the project will set aside 10% of budget in contingency for shelter construction and rehabilitation work.

Lack of co-operation/ownership:

UNRWA JFO has a long-standing professional relationship with the DPA. Participation of the Department through the Camp Service Committee in planning and monitoring the project activities as well as compliance to the construction norms and standards of Government of Jordan will promote the co-operation and collaboration with the government authority.

At the community level, the project will ensure that all key stakeholders, including women and youth, are well informed about the project objectives, outputs and processes as part of project inception activities. Moreover, the participatory and inclusive processes will remain core of the project approach to promote participation and ownership. The project will build on the successes and lessons learnt from camp improvement projects funded by EU and the German Ministry of Co-operation (BMZ).

3.4. Cross-cutting issues

Gender, youth, disability and protection are four key cross-cutting themes of UNRWA Medium Term Strategy 2010-2015. UNRWA has a gender and disability policy and protection strategy in place. In addition, UNRWA Planning Guidance on Cross-Cutting Themes will be applied to address key cross-cutting issues applicable to the project.

The Gender Co-ordinator, Youth Officer, Disability Officer and Protection Focal Point Officer will provide the required oversight and guidance on the work of the project team in facilitating and ensuring implementation of the four themes. Short duration services of technical experts will be acquired to strengthen the project response, especially with regards to the self-help component to make sure the shelter designs are as responsive, within the limitations posed by the space, to the needs of women and disabled people as possible.

The work plans and progress reports will include special mention of the planned, achieved and underachieved progress on cross-cutting issues. Two green technologies, namely solar heating system and rain water harvesting system, will contribute to environmental sustainability and financial security of refugee households.

3.5. Stakeholders

The direct beneficiary of the action is the Palestine refugee population in UNRWA's Jerash camp. Naturally, UNRWA, as well as all donors and host countries supporting UNRWA are also key stakeholders.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Method of implementation

The programme will be implemented through joint management by means of a contribution agreement with UNWRA, the UN Agency mandated to provide services to Palestine refugees, in accordance with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation. UNWRA complies with the criteria provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation and is covered by the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) concluded between the UN and the European Commission.

The change of management mode constitutes a substantial change except where the Commission "re-centralises" or reduces the level of tasks previously delegated to the beneficiary country, international organisation or delegate body under respectively, decentralised, joint or indirect centralised management.

4.2. Procurement and grant award procedures

For agreements with international organisations, all contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the standard documents laid down and published by UNRWA.

4.3. Indicative budget and calendar

The total EU financial contribution to the operation amounts to EUR 2 million.

The overall operation has an implementation period of 48 months, including 36 months for implementation and 12 months for a closure phase.

4.4. Performance monitoring

The Agency's overall management of the Monitoring and Evaluation tools within the Department of Internal Oversight Services have been deemed adequate to ensure coherent, accurate, and analytical reporting to UNRWA's management, donors and hosts, both on impact and results.

Over the past year, comments received from donors concerned the need to include more indicators on efficiency, effectiveness and processes. The Agency has revised its Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix in close co-ordination with major donors

including Australian Aid, the EU, the United Kingdom and the United States. Within the forum of UNRWA Advisory Commission (AdCom), members have welcomed UNRWA's effort to consolidate and improve the quality and consistency of monitoring and external reporting and encouraged further discussion on the Donor Harmonised Framework in 2012/2013 with the objective of a common understanding and acknowledgement of this monitoring process for the period 2012-2013. The Harmonised UNRWA-Donor Report (2012-13) will serve as the primary performance monitoring tool for the planned contribution agreement foreseen within the framework of this decision.

Overall monitoring of the project covering management, administration, finance and programme will be the responsibility of the project manager. In this task, s/he will be assisted by one planning and monitoring officer and one senior finance/admin/database assistant. A short-term technical expert, responsible for developing and providing guidance on implementation of self-help component of shelter construction, will also monitor and report on the component. Corrective measures to modify the design and implementation of interventions will be carried out on the basis of the findings.

4.5. Evaluation and audit

As the foreseen contribution agreement will be concluded with UNWRA under joint management, the financial transactions and financial statements shall be subject to the internal rules and external auditing procedures laid down in the Financial Regulations, Rules and Directives of the Organisation.

UNRWA's accounts shall be audited by the United Nations Board of Auditors, who shall certify the financial statements of UNRWA required to be submitted under Regulation 11.2 of UNRWA's Financial and Administrative Regulations and Rules. The United Nations Board of Auditors shall report to the General Assembly on the accounts and operations of the Agency as it deems appropriate.

UNRWA Jordan Field Office conducts internal audit in accordance with the procedures of UNRWA Department for Internal Oversight Services.

4.6. Communication and visibility

In accordance with the visibility provisions under the EU-UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) and with the EU-UN Joint Action Plan on Visibility signed in September 2006, the EU and the implementing organisations will work together to ensure appropriate visibility actions for the programme as a whole, as well as for specific interventions and activities under the programme.

Standards regarding visibility will be derived from the "Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions"⁴.

Adequate communication and visibility will be ensured by the EU Delegation's monitoring of the adherence to the 2013 EU-UNRWA Communications and

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm.

Visibility Plan. This plan is aimed at drawing attention to the ongoing partnership between the EU and UNRWA and the EU's support for Palestine refugees.