



International  
Labour  
Organization



**2010-2011**

# Success stories in Arab States

**PARDEV**

October/2011

## SUCCESS STORIES IN ARAB STATES

### 1. Gaza: Developing green jobs in the construction sector

**(CPO: PSE102) SPF 2010-15 - Outcome 3: Sustainable enterprises create productive and decent jobs**

Palestinians in Gaza are struggling to cope with continued military incursions and closures, including the ban on the import of construction materials imposed in 2007, which has severely impacted the livelihoods, homes and infrastructure of thousands of people. During Israel's assault between December 2008 and January 2009 more than 15 per cent of available refugee housing in Gaza was destroyed or damaged, leaving thousands of families in damaged homes, under tents or in makeshift shelters. Some 12.000 refugees lost their homes, 2.300 refugee shelters were destroyed or damaged beyond repair, 1.700 sustained major damage, and a further 43.000 sustained minor damage. Unemployment in the Gaza Strip remains among the highest in the world, and an estimated 70 per cent of the population live on less than US\$1 a day.

In collaboration with UNRWA, the Cooperative Housing Fund (CHF) and local partners, the ILO is striving to create **urgently needed housing and job opportunities** for the people of Gaza that are grounded in sustainable and green construction methods to promote increased efficiency; the re-use and recycling of raw materials, energy and water; and the reduction of waste and pollution. **RBSA** resources were critical in ensuring an immediate response to the emergency needs of the people of Gaza and have been crucial to the ILO's ongoing efforts to work with local communities on a job-centred recovery and reconstruction process.



Local job-centred recovery and reconstruction through the construction of temporary shelters using compressed earth blocks

With **RBSA** funding it was possible to introduce an alternative technology for the construction and winterization of temporary shelters; using compressed earth blocks (CEBs) instead of cement and other standard materials. CEB shelters are built using traditional architectural techniques, such as arches and domes that eliminate the need for steel reinforcement bars or concrete materials. Over a period of eighteen months the project will eventually create 19,000 working days for Gazans engaged in the construction of 50 green shelters and provide training and awareness raising of the impact and methods of green construction to technical experts and the wider population. In collaboration with a local NGO, the Sharek Youth Forum, ILO has also established an entrepreneurship information centre to provide counselling, technical assistance, and financial support to young entrepreneurs and to promote self-employment opportunities.

**RBSA** funding supports the building of more CEB shelters apply green construction solutions, including renewable energies and energy and water efficiency. The overall objectives are: to construct a Green Technology Centre that acts as a hub for promoting green construction through awareness raising, capacity

building and training; to conduct more skills training and promote occupational safety and health; and to provide entrepreneurship support and retrofitting activities.

## 2. Jordan: Closing the gender pay gap

**(CPO: JOR152) SPF 2010-15 - Outcome 17: Discrimination in employment and occupation is eliminated**

Jordan has a long standing commitment to achieving pay equity for women and men at work. The Kingdom has ratified several international Conventions that assert the right to equal pay for work of equal value and Section 23, 2(a) of the Constitution specifies that all workers shall receive wages appropriate to the quantity and quality of the work undertaken. However, the application of measures to ensure pay equity remains a challenge.

The ILO has provided technical support for pro-pay equity provisions in the National Employment Strategy, and has worked with the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) to conduct a national pay equity study and to launch a campaign in support of working women. The ILO has also supported the establishment of a National Steering Committee for Pay Equity (NSPCE) which aims to promote women's participation in the labour market through the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).



NSPCE promotes women's participation in the labour market



The decision to establish the Committee follows the recommendations of a Policy Roundtable on Pay Equity held in Amman in March 2010. Co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour and the JNCW, the NSCPE was launched in July 2011. Its membership comprises of representatives from trade unions, professional associations, civil society, government bodies, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, and the private sector. It will draft a national strategy and an action plan for achieving equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value in Jordan.

Among the responsibilities of the NSCPE is the development of a National Strategy and Action Plan to Promote Pay Equity in Jordan. Technically supported by the ILO, the tripartite plus body has already started working through two technical subcommittees; the legal and policy subcommittee, and the research and statistics subcommittee. The legal and policy subcommittee has initiated a legal review under the leadership of its two co-chairs. The research and statistics subcommittee is currently in the process of identifying a sector for undertaking in-depth research on the gender pay gap in the sector.

The two subcommittees will work toward building a knowledge-base that enables decision-makers to formulate policies that promote pay equity; advocating for legislation that supports pay equity and addressing pay equity issues in specific sectors through the application of gender neutral job evaluations. Based on the findings from these two subcommittees an advocacy and media subcommittee will develop a campaign to bring broader based support for the initiative. In order to improve the understanding of the NSCPE members around the concept of equal value of jobs a capacity building workshop is taking place in early October.

**RBSA** resources have been key in advancing the Decent Work Agenda in Jordan, particularly in respect of supporting national commitments and priorities towards the application of Convention No. 100 and C. 111. Jordan's pay equity initiative is the first of its kind in Arab states, and may serve as a model for other countries in the region looking to close the gender pay gap such as Egypt and Lebanon.