

1 Background and rationale



Cultural activities in WBGS

Over sixty years of Israeli occupation and subsequent political developments have left an enormous impact on the socio-economic conditions of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). More recently, inter-Palestinian conflict and tension has added to the complexity of Palestinian-Israeli relations by creating additional obstacles to achieving lasting peace in the region. In the last ten years, three main events added to a further downward spiral of the socio-economic situation in the oPt: the second Intifada that began in 2000; the Hamas victory in the January 2006 national legislative elections, and the June 2007 Hamas take-over of the Gaza Strip. In the aftermath of the latter, the Palestinian Caretaker Government was established with Fatah as the ruling party and international cooperation with it opened new possibilities for interventions in the West Bank. However, under the current political realities, the Gaza Strip was left largely on the side with international support confined to humanitarian assistance, and even that faces heavy and insurmountable restrictions by the Israeli government. The combination of the above with an increasingly strict Israeli closure regime continued to strain the geographic, social, economic, and political contiguity and viability of the oPt, and the cohesiveness of its society.

Unemployment rates in the oPt have been persistently high, and increased sharply since the start of the second Intifada when Palestinian day-labour permits to Israel were terminated: unemployment in the West Bank stands at 17%, while unemployment in Gaza is 40%. Underemployment affects an even larger percentage of the population caused by those

turning to unpaid family labour or seasonal agriculture work. Labour force participation rates are low (42% in West Bank and 38% in Gaza Strip in 2008) and, as employment opportunities become scarcer, and the socio-economic conditions show no sign of improvement. Young people are the hardest hit by unemployment: 36% of 20-24 year olds (West Bank: 30%; Gaza Strip: 49%) and 39% of those aged 15-19 (West Bank: 34%; Gaza Strip: 52%) are jobless. Among youth, almost half (46%) of women aged 20-24 are unemployed. When considering educational attainment, women with 13 years of schooling and more have a jobless rate of 29%, whereas for men in this category unemployment is 14%. Additionally challenging the achievement of the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) that promotes gender equality and women empowerment is the low female participation rate in the labour market at 15% (West Bank: 18%; Gaza Strip: 10%), which is among the lowest in the world.

High unemployment rates, especially among the youth in the Northern and Southern West Bank and the Gaza Strip, negatively impact the poverty conditions in the oPt and the potential of achieving MDG 1 with a mission to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. The objective income poverty trends in the oPt are negative and sensitive to changing circumstances on the ground, the blockade and ongoing conflict has caused poverty rates in the Gaza Strip to jump from 52% in March 2006 to 70% in February 2008. Owing to relatively stable conditions in comparison to Gaza, in the West Bank, the share of poor households over the same period of time appears to have remained stable, moving from 49 to 51%.

In an uncertain environment characterized by high unemployment and poverty rates, and severe constraints in movement and access due to closures, a large number of Palestinians consider migrating abroad or between the two territories. A 2006 survey revealed that 40% of all Palestinians were living outside the oPt make-up 'the Diaspora'. After the Oslo Agreement, many Palestinians returned to invest in nation-building in the oPt; however, after the outbreak of the second Intifada, many of these expatriates stopped contributing. Further, a December 2007 survey indicated that 20% of households had at least one household member migrate abroad in the past year, mainly in search of employment, a

better life, and education. Fifteen% had at least one household member migrate within the oPt, principally in the direction of Ramallah, a booming metropolis in central West Bank. Over one-third (34%) of Palestinians desired to migrate if given the means.

The Palestinian Reform and Development Plan for 2008-2010 (PRDP) sets out clear priority areas that include Governance, Social Development (including a Youth Empowerment Programme and an Employment Generation Initiative), Economic and Private Sector Development, and Public Infrastructure Development, however, owing to PA running costs (mainly salary) and little development investments, there were meagre attempts at meeting the PRDP objectives.

Agriculture plays a key role in the Palestinian economy and food security situation, providing work for more than 39% of those working in informal sectors and supporting a significant proportion of Palestinian families who cultivate their lands for livelihood. In 2005, the agricultural sector provided job opportunities and employment to 136 383 workers and 14 000 private business establishments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs). However, Israeli closure policies, the construction of the Separation Wall, land confiscation, limited access to water resources, lack of access to services and limited access to the labour market are leaving many villages facing impoverishment and high levels of unemployment.

In the West Bank, the number of checkpoints counted in 2009 by the United Nations, totalled 642 with 573 permanent barriers and 69 “flying” checkpoints. This figure is a significant increase from the total of 376 checkpoints in 2005.

Some checkpoints are sometimes randomly removed but new ones are introduced in different parts of the WB and many checkpoints are along the major trade routes for Palestinians.

The UN Security Council has issued several non-binding resolutions addressing the issue of the settlements. UN Security Council resolution 446¹ states

that [the] practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity, and it calls on Israel as the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention. Also resolution 452² addresses the issue of the settlements in West Bank emphasizing the need for confronting the issue of existing settlements and the need to consider measures to safeguard the impartial protection of property sized.

The Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention held in Geneva on 5 December, 2001³ called upon “the Occupying Power” to fully and effectively respect the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to refrain from perpetrating any violation of the Convention.

Although Israel has formally pledged to stop settlement efforts in the West Bank as part of the peace building process, a monitoring of activities hasn’t been carried out and settlements have continued to grow. [Security Council SC/9457⁴, UN General Assembly A/HRC/RES/10/18⁵, The Humanitarian impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and other infrastructures – OCHA⁶]. Settlements construct elaborate security fencing and interrupt roads and streets to protect their residents; thereby Palestinians living near or around settlements must obtain special permits to reach their agricultural areas. Owing to the Separation Wall, producers are cut-off from the East Jerusalem market⁷⁸.

The building of the Separation Wall has restricted even more the flow of Palestinian workers into the Israeli labour market and reduced to a minimum the distribution of permits for Palestinians to work in Israel⁹. These factors (checkpoints, Separation Wall, limited permits, Settlements, etc) cost time and resources that impact revenues each year; thus limit the ability to which businesses can employ workers and negatively influence poverty rates and levels of food security. Main data for WBGs can be found in BOX I.

- 1 UN Security Council resolution 446 full text and reports
<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/85255e950050831085255e95004fa9c3/9785bb5ef44772dd85256436006c9c85?OpenDocument>
- 2 UN Security Council resolution 452 full text and reports
<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/db942872b9eae454852560f6005a76fb/0b7116abb4b7e3e9852560e5007688a0?OpenDocument>
- 3 Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, 2001
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/israel-palestine/2001/1205geneva.htm>
- 4 <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9457.doc.htm>
- 5 <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0080ef30efce525585256c38006eacae/af2d13b47209e41c8525758c004bead7?OpenDocument>
- 6 <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/>
- 7 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_092729.pdf
- 8 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_106367.pdf
- 9 <http://july.unricmagazine.org/publications/42-publications/327-qilo-annual-report-the-situation-of-workers-of-the-occupied-arab-territoriesq.html> TheHumanitarianImpactOfIsraeliInfrastructureTheWestBank_Intro.pdf

BOX 1 STATISTICS OF WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

Population and Demography (revised – 2007)

Projected Population (15/01/2007)	
Palestinian Territory	3,761,646
West Bank (all Governorates)	2,345,107
Gaza Strip	1,416,539
Jerusalem Governorate	363,649
Projected Population by Age (Mid 2007)	
0-17 years	52.2%
18-64 years	44.9%
65+ years	2.9%
Percentage of youth aged 15-29 (mid 2007)	27.0%
Population's Natural Increase Rate (2007)	
3.3% Gaza Strip	
2.6% West Bank	
Percentage of households with at least one person aged 15-29 (2006)	74.0%
Percentage of households headed by a youth aged 15-29 (2006)	
Both sexes	12.6%
Males	13.5%
Females	2.9%

Land Use and Agriculture

Palestinian Territory (PT) Area (Km ²)	6,020
Area of PT by type of use (different reference periods)	
• Agricultural Land (2007)	42.5%
• Forest and Wooded Land (2007)	1.6%
• Palestinian Built-up Land (2007)	6.6%
Area of built-up land in Israeli settlements of the total area of the West Bank (August 2007)	4.1%
Cultivated area (Km ² in 2007/2008)	1,853,951

Education (2005/2006)

Illiteracy rate for persons 15 years and over (1 st quarter 2006)	6.7%
Illiteracy rate for persons 15-29 years (1 st quarter 2006)	0.8%
Number of schools	2,277
Number of school teachers	40,957
Number of school students	1,067,489
Students per class	34.4
Drop-out rate (schools 2004/2005)	1.0%
Repetition rate (schools 2004/2005)	1.5%

Health (2003-2005)

No. of hospitals (2005)***	76
Doctors per 1000 population (2005) ***	1.6
Nurses per 1000 population (2005)	1.9

Living Standards and Humanitarian Aid (2007)

Percentage of Households below poverty line	51.5%
(Income poverty 57.3, consumption poverty 34.5) in 2007	
Number of Individuals below the poverty line	2,155,423 (2007)
Percentage of households that lost more than half of their income during Al-Aqsa Intifada	51.6%
Percentage of households that indicated their need for assistance	67.0%
Average monthly per capita expenditure in the Palestinian Territory	95.4 JD (134 US)

Labour Force (3rd quarter of 2009) – Males / Females

Labour Force participation rate	
Males	67.2%
Females	15.4%
Unemployment rate in PT	
Males	24.9%
Females	29.8%
Unemployment rate in West Bank	
Males	17.2%
Females	20.3%
Unemployment rate in Gaza Strip	
Males	40.0%
Females	54.7%
Average net daily wage of employees working in the PT (US\$)	
Males	22.2
Females	19.9
Percentage of working children (5-17 years) 2004	
Males	5.3%
Females	0.7%
Percentage of high school and university graduates, including vocational schools, aged 15 years and over (end 2005) – sex disaggregated data not available	14.5%
Percentage of high school and university graduates, including vocational schools, who participate in the labour force (end 2005) – sex disaggregated data not available	83.4%
Unemployment rate among high school and university graduates, including vocational schools (end 2005) – sex disaggregated data not available	25.4%

Economics

GDP (2005) in million of US\$ at constant prices (RWB and GS)***	4,456.4
GDP per capita (2005) in US\$ at constant prices (RWB and GS)***	1,268.2
Imports (2004**million US\$)*	2,373.2
Exports (2004**million US\$)*	312.7

Environment

Available quantities of water (2005** in mcm)	315.2
Households connected to the wastewater network (2006)	45.3%

RWB and GS = Remaining West Bank and Gaza Strip

* RWB and GS at constant prices: 1997 is the base year: revised version

** Primary data

*** Revised figures

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/>) – Revised by FAO when data was available from other UN sources

2 The challenges of youth employment in West Bank and Gaza Strip

The above mentioned situation and also the construction of the separation barrier, has prevented the free flow of Palestinian economic transaction and disrupted the predictability needed for orderly life. These constraints in WBGS have led to a number of key problems that affect the well-being of young boys and girls. These are:

- The lack of rural employment opportunities;
- High vulnerability for the youth facing increased frequency and intensity of the crises in the region; and
- The lack of appropriate agricultural training facilities for youth.

Food insecurity in households is increasing through reduced access to land, which places vulnerable children and youths at an even greater risk of food insecurity and lowers their access to nutritious food. It is therefore essential to increase investment in capacity building and agricultural knowledge so as to increase the income, supply of nutritious food and entrepreneurship skills of young people to counter shocks. One effective way of assisting vulnerable households is by empowering their youth. Youth can contribute significantly toward their own and their communities' economical and social development, if given the chance to be introduced to good agricultural and life practices and entrepreneurship skills through capacity building.

Objectives of a "youth lens" when applying a participatory policy framework in education and employment can be a sound education, labor market and social policies that target young people and pay more attention to gender inequalities in access to education and training.

Specific initiatives to increase and improve quantity and quality of jobs created for youth should be implemented. Moreover, a participatory policy framework should identify and implement with partners a series of collaborative youth employment initiatives.

The premises for an integrated participatory framework with a "youth lens" should be:

- Good governance in education and training for youth;
- Strategic vision for youth-oriented policy framework to promote active participation in economic life; and
- A participatory approach in implementation.

Youth employment policies should be integrated with other policies regarding youth such as educational, training and investment policies. Productively engaging youth is vital since young Palestinians comprise an estimated one million people – more than a quarter of the total WBGS population of 3.8 million.

Investing in Palestinian youth at this critical stage in order to facilitate the evolution of a Palestinian state is essential. Moreover, the development of a Palestinian youth workforce is one of the most important priorities and challenges in order to realize a good national development that will create a more peaceful Palestinian society that can encourage the promotion of a two-state solution.

Providing employment opportunities for vocationally trained youth will support younger Palestinians' civic contributions for promoting a Palestinian national development.

One of the main challenges for economic growth in Palestine is the settlement expansion, and movement and access restrictions related to Israeli security concerns, which have fragmented and disconnected the WBGS and the economy. Improving youths' skills and abilities in carrying out income generating activities in rural areas and to improve their capabilities to produce food is of vital importance in the implementation of sustainable agricultural and rural development programmes. Due to the unstable environment characterized by high unemployment and poverty rates, and severe constraints in movement and access due to closures, a substantial number of Palestinians consider migrating (either abroad or internally in the WBGS). Improving youth's skills has been recognized as a good response to the challenge of youth employment and a precondition for the eradication of poverty and for sustainable development. Failure to address these issues can have serious consequences not only for the individuals but also for the economy and the society.

3 The Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) experience in Gaza and West Bank



Teamwork in the JFFLS in Tulkarem

The JFFLS¹⁰ approach provides a unique learning methodology and curriculum, which combine both agricultural and life skills. It combines such curriculum with creative and expressive activities rooted in local culture. An innovative aspect of the JFFLS is the way youth are encouraged to develop as people; a school timetable includes cultural activities such as singing, dancing, and theatre. This allows the youth to develop confidence while keeping local cultural traditions alive.

The schools address a wide range of issues such as gender sensitivity, child protection, psycho-social support, nutrition, education and business skills. Experience has shown that the schools provide a safe social space for boys and girls, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

The JFFLS programme was piloted by FAO in Mozambique in 2003-2004 and since then has been implemented in various countries: Burundi, Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, Gaza & West Bank, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe¹¹.

The JFFLS in West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) was initiated in 2008; the main goal of the approach in the specific WBGS context was to build local capacities to meet the development needs and priorities of Palestinian youth while responding to the need for sustainable environmental, economic and

social development. This innovative approach directly contributes to MDG 1¹² (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), MDG 3 (promoting gender equality and empowering women) as well as MDG 8 (developing a global partnership for development - target 16, cooperation with developing countries to develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for the youth) and indirectly to MDG 4 and 2 (reducing child mortality and achieving universal education) by improving the overall stability of a new Palestinian generation.

The objectives set during the pilot phase (2008-2009) were the following:

1. To empower vulnerable youth in the WBGS' most affected communities by providing them with knowledge of and access to good and sustainable agricultural practices and life skills;
2. To empower economically JFFLS graduates in the delivery sites with entrepreneurship skills;
3. To support women's cooperatives in delivering in-school feeding during JFFLS sessions and train them on the principles of good nutrition, health, entrepreneurship skills and on the fundamentals of the JFFLS approach.

A total number of 540 vulnerable rural youth were selected from 16 schools (6 boys' schools, 7 girls' schools and 3 mixed) throughout the WBGS (BOX2: JFFLS Mapping in WBGS). From the local communities where the schools were selected, 16 women's cooperatives officially registered at the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) located close to the schools also directly benefited from the programme through income generating activities. They were in charge of providing and distributing the meals for the youth during the JFFLS lessons. The schools were selected following the below criteria:

- Schools in rural or peripheral areas;
- Schools with a large proportion of students living in female-headed households¹³; and
- Schools where most of the students come from poor farming families affected by the conflict who have lost their productive assets and subsequently the means to support their livelihoods.

10 Getting Started! Running a Junior Farmer Field and Life School <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1111e/a1111e00.htm>

11 Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools Inventory <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/ak595e/ak595e00.pdf>

12 <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

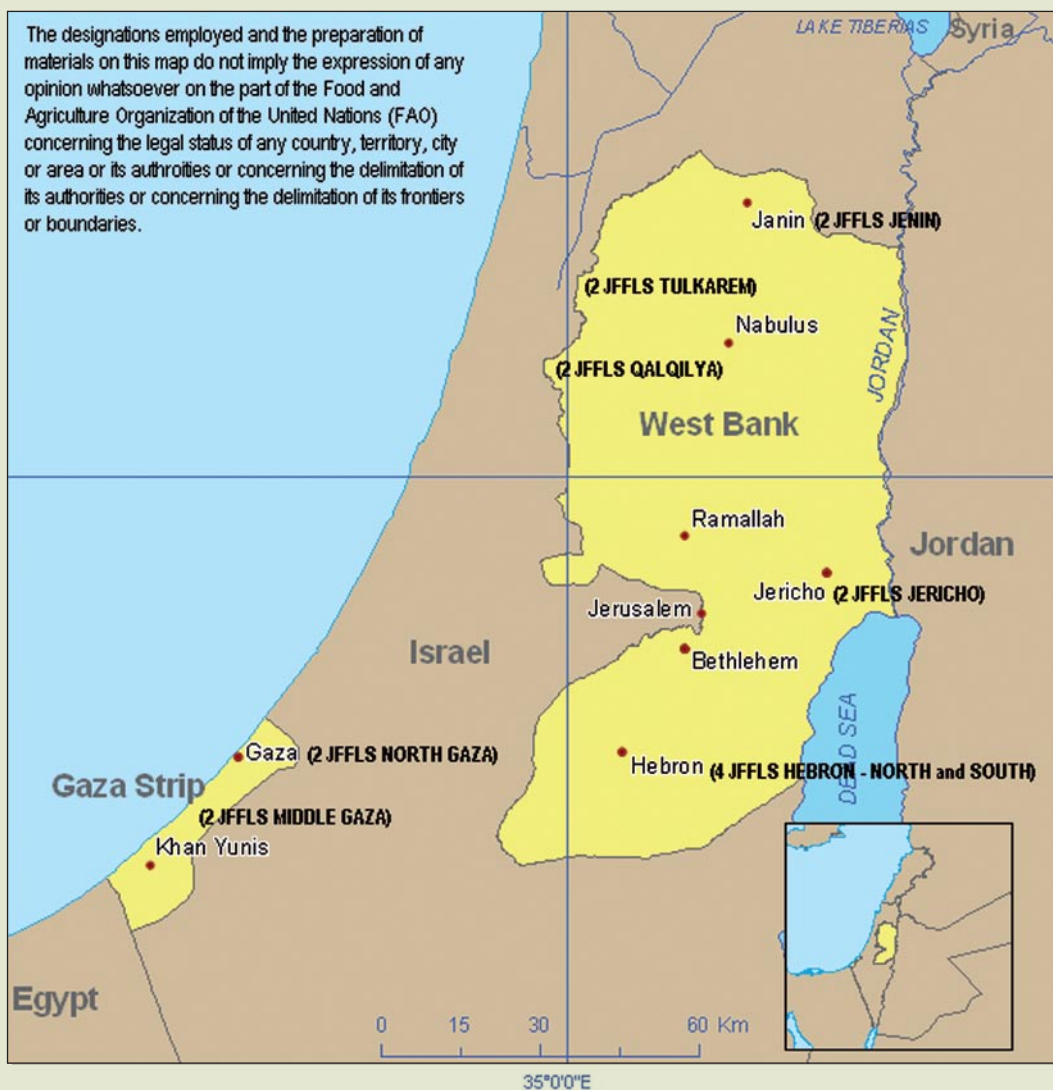
13 Researches from the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs showed that female-headed households represent 9.5% of all households in Palestine and that 73% of them, live in extreme poverty, struggling to meet the basic needs of nutrition, housing and clothing.

After setting the parameters for the schools, facilitators, beneficiaries and women's associations, the selection and assessment of the schools started in August 2008 during a JFFLS technical backstopping mission from FAO HQ. The schools assessment was carried out by teams at FAO Coordination Office in Jerusalem and the FAO sub office in Gaza City in September 2008, in close consultation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), MoWA, youth clubs and the communities themselves. The project was in line with the MoEHE Educational Development Strategy Plan and the PDRP. Meetings with the MoEHE led to the signing

of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in September 2008 by the MoEHE and FAO.

Selection of the future JFFLS facilitators was carried out soon thereafter. Two facilitators from each school were selected: one to work with children on **agro ecological knowledge and production skills** (i.e. extension worker or science teacher) and one to work on **life skills, children's potential, self-esteem and confidence, and gender equity issues**. Youths were selected in the schools in collaboration with school headmasters, facilitators selected, local leaders, women and men from the community and representatives of the nearby women's associations.

BOX 2 JFFLS MAPPING IN WBGs 2008-2009



Thirty youths were selected from each school among those in the West Bank and 45 youths were chosen from each school selected in the Gaza Strip. A gender balance was maintained in the selection (15 girls, 15 boys where possible), making a total of 540 beneficiaries – 260 of which are girls and 280 boys. Selected youths resided nearby the schools in order to avoid traveling long distances.

Two trainings of facilitators (one for the West Bank and one for the Gaza Strip) were organized in October 2008. Twenty-four JFFLS facilitators and 2 Representatives from the MoEHE were trained in Jenin for the project in the West Bank and eight JFFLS facilitators and 1 Representative from the MoEHE were trained in Gaza. All selected teachers had a high educational knowledge level and an open mind for learning new skills, which turned out to be very successful. A refresher 3 days training-workshop for all the facilitators was organized mid-way through the programme in February 2009 in order to capture the progress made up to then and share the obstacles faced.

A seven months curriculum was developed specific to the contexts for the WBGS. Since JFFLS is an extra curriculum programme, the lessons for the youth took place twice a week after school hours for 2 to 3 hours each time. A baseline questionnaire was also developed, which participants were asked to complete 2-3 weeks after the start of the JFFLS lessons, then a second time directly after the end of the project. The final project evaluation started at the end of the school year, with a mission from a youth development expert from FAO's Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESWD) with involvement of staff from the FAO Coordination Office in Jerusalem and the FAO sub-offices in both Ramallah and Gaza City.



Training of facilitators

All the JFFLS schools planted and harvested all the variety of crops supplied by FAO and most of the youths added additional crops supplied by their own households and teachers to experiment new cultivations.

The successfully grown products were distributed to participants or used inside the schools during Open Days, which is a celebration day before the school year opens in the WBGS. Some products were sold, in line with one of the project's objectives, which aimed to teach students commercial awareness. The customers were teachers and parents mainly, and the money raised was retained by the schools to be used in further development activities for the youths, and to continue growing activities. Study tours for the students have also been organized to local farmers' cooperatives and agricultural colleges.



How to make a multi-storey garden



JFFLS in Hebron

EXAMPLE OF JFFLS CURRICULUM DEVELOPED FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA

AGRICULTURE SKILLS

CORRESPONDING LIFE SKILLS

PLANNING AND PREPARING THEME

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing cropping calendar • Importance and characteristics of soil conditions • Conditions for suitable irrigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance in setting goals • Identification for steps to reach those goals • Conditions needed for reaching those goals |
|--|--|

CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT THEME

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of sowing • Seeds preparation • Irrigations methods and quality of water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for personal development • Need for individual space and advantages for being part of a group, self esteem and gender equality • Water, water in life, quality of drinking and water for sanitation • Balanced nutrition |
|--|---|

GROWING UP HEALTHY THEME

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an eco-system, how and why we should use the agro eco system analysis (AESA) • Integrated pest management (IPM) • How to protect the crops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene/sanitation • Prevention of diseases and threats • Importance of observation • Prevention instead of curing • Importance of keeping records |
|--|---|

PROTECTION THEME

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different pest diseases • Characteristics and how to manage them • Harvesting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection in life • Threats in life and how to protect yourself • Working as a group and cooperation |
|---|---|

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS THEME

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When to harvest • how to store (place and conditions) • what to do with the harvest (eating, selling and processing) • Selling the harvest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture as a business • Marketing (where and when to sell in order to obtain high profit – marketing strategies) • Business skills • Cost benefit analysis |
|---|---|

RESPONSIBILITY THEME

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of public and private property • Responsibilities in life • Lessons learnt |
|---|--|