

4 The role of women and the role of the women's associations in WBGs



Women's associations food production activities

The level of participation of women in the economic activity of any country is an indicator of potential economic growth performance. The contribution of women to economy is an important factor in the increase of productive capacity

and the achievement of economic balance with regard to production and consumption. In addition, the participation of women and their contribution to the economic growth of their country empower them to become active participants in social, political and cultural life. However, the participation of Palestinian women in the economical development and growth in the Palestinian territories is much less than expected. Women in Palestine constitute about 60% of the total population and therefore a significant proportion of production capacity in local economies is non-performing. The contribution of women in Palestinian agriculture is significant, yet rarely recognized. Moreover, women are most vulnerable to poverty and discrimination due to their reduced level of income, social exclusion, their lack of professional skills and their limited access to and/or control over productive assets. This impact is most pronounced on female-headed households, who tend to suffer from poverty and food insecurity at a disproportionate level.



Aquaculture activities in Jericho's women cooperative



Kayrat Blady Marketing Exhibition in Gaza Strip

Women also take charge of many agricultural activities and carry out activities such as planting and preparing the land, and harvesting equally with men. Another female task tied closely to biodiversity is the collection of medicinal plants, which may be used for curing illnesses, in addition to other kinds of plants that have economic or industrial values while also serving as fodder and fuel or even as manure and pesticide. Therefore, they have extensive knowledge because the community's well-being depends on it, and the preservation of this knowledge is crucial for maintaining biodiversity. This acquired traditional ecological knowledge, which stems from generations living in close contact with nature, is mainly associated with women as they can easily transfer this knowledge to their children.

In respect of the JFFLS in WBGS, women's associations have been selected from the nearby JFFLS schools and were put in charge of the preparation and distribution of the meals to the students while attending the lessons. As mentioned before, the coordinators of the selected women's associations have been trained in the principles of good nutrition, health, entrepreneurship skills and on the fundamentals of the JFFLS approach.

FAO implements a number of other projects promoting gender equality among Palestinians by increasing the agricultural opportunities available to women, at the same time enabling the beneficiaries to secure income and improve food security for themselves and their families. Women's groups from these interventions attended trainings in food processing and preserving. As part of these on-going gender related activities, women's associations' marketing exhibitions called "Khayrat Blady" are regularly organized once a year both in Gaza and West Bank.

These exhibitions bring together all the associations involved in projects promoting backyard farming and cottage industry and also the women's associations involved in the feeding component of the JFFLS. The exhibitions not only provide a concrete marketing opportunity for them but also a chance to exchange ideas and skills among themselves and with the youth. Associations display and sell their goods including breads, vegetables, cakes, cheeses, embroidery work, handicrafts and jewellery, while the exhibitions are usually accompanied by music and traditional dances from local youth clubs.



Family garden in West Bank

5 Sustainability of the JFFLS in West Bank and Gaza through youth club associations



Bee hiving lesson in Hebron's youth club

A youth club is a place where young people can meet and enjoy different activities. Many are set up to provide young people¹⁴ within an area designed to keep them off the streets, and help them occupy and stimulate their interests on different subject matters.

In Palestine there are two types of youth associations:

- *Governmental Youth Associations:* the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) is in charge of these governmental youth associations.
- *Non Governmental Youth Associations:* non-profit groups or associations organized outside of institutionalized political structures that realize particular social objectives and are not subject to government supervision, although subject to Government approval.

As the project was reaching the end of the school year in June 2009, the JFFLS groups formed were linked with existing Youth Clubs to ensure the continuation and sustainability of their existence. FAO approached the MoYS in order to partner with them for this specific activity and signed a MoU in July 2009. The MoYS' guiding principles are to consider youth as partners, rather than recipients of assistance, and

therefore aim at increasing youth's roles and responsibilities, with a strategy that emphasizes the importance of youth by sharing their problems, needs, aspirations and vision in the national policy making process. Strategic programs of MoYS include:

- Empowering Youth Clubs and other youth organizations;
- Career development (develop youth' competencies – with special focus on new graduates, helping them find jobs and compete in the local market);
- Developing adolescents' roles through sponsoring adolescent and youth groups;
- Encouraging and promoting youth participation in contributing to the change and development of their communities.

The visions of FAO and MoYS complement each other in the JFFLS as this approach contributes to improving youths' skills and abilities in carrying out income generating activities in rural areas and enhancing their capabilities to produce food which is of vital importance in the implementation of sustainable agricultural and rural development programmes.

MoYS is developing youth centers and youth NGOs to reach its strategic objectives and organizes summer camps to empower youth in life skills and management skills through the summer camps activities. FAO and MoYS share the same commitment to empower the youth in the most vulnerable communities and FAO uses its expertise by promoting agricultural and livestock activities (horticulture, small livestock, and beekeeping) in the selected Youth Clubs.

In the areas where the JFFLS were implemented and youth clubs from the MoYS were not of easy reach for the students, FAO, entered in partnership with the Youth Development Association (YDA) through a MoU. The YDA also aims at raising youth' roles and responsibilities and its strategy also gives emphasis on the importance of youth by sharing their problems, needs, aspirations and visions in the process of rehabilitation and building of a prosperous society.

¹⁴ The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years [Definition made during preparations for the International Youth Year (1985), and endorsed by the General Assembly (see A/36/215 and resolution 36/28, 1981).

Strategic programmes of YDA are:

- Youth Capacity Building Programmes;
- Unemployed Youth Rehabilitation and Employment Programmes;
- Voluntary Work Promotion Programmes;
- International Youth Exchange Programmes;
- Childhood Programmes;
- Advocacy and Lobbying Programmes.

FAO and YDA are committed to the same principle of empowering the youth in the most vulnerable rural communities and linked the below JFFLS schools to their youth clubs.

A successful example of this innovative mechanism of grouping the youth in the youth clubs or youth components of farmers' cooperatives comes from the West Bank in the Hebron district. The JFFLS graduates from Hebron were grouped in the youth wing of the Al-Shiva Hive Cooperative Society; the students were trained in beekeeping, bee hiving and honey processing twice a week in the afternoons after school hours. They were given a full membership with the Al-Shiva Hive Cooperative Society and are already getting their share of the profits.



Horticulture lesson in green houses in Bani Neam's youth club

JFFLS INTEGRATED IN YOUTH CLUBS BY THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORT

Location	School	Youth Club	Activity
Jericho	Zart Almaden (boys school)	Aqbet Jaber Youth Club	Marketing skills
Qalqela/Kofr Laqef	Kofr Laqef (mixed school)	Kofr Laqef Centre	Cultivation of thyme and processing
North Hebron (Bani Neam)	Alkandy (boys school)	Bani Neam Women Centre	Greenhouses cultivation of vegetables and beekeeping
South Hebron/Almajed	Almajed (boys school)	Almajed women association	Beekeeping
Hebron/Krasa	Krasa (girls school)	Al-Shiva Hive cooperative society	Beekeeping

JFFLS INTEGRATED IN YOUTH CLUBS BY THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Location	School	Youth Club	Activity
Jenin/Selat alhartheh	Abdallah Azam (boys school)	Selat Alhartha Club	Sheep and cultivation two Dunum Thyme
Tulkarem /Sayda	Sayda (girls school)	Sayda Youth Club	Sheep and cultivation two Dunum Thyme
Tulkarem/Der Alghsoon	Der Alghsoon (boys school)	Der Alghsoon Youth Club	Sheep and cultivation two Dunum Thyme

6 Evaluation of the pilot phase 2008-2009 (main findings)



Focus group discussion with youths in the Gaza Strip

The project evaluation took place between May and June 2009 both in West Bank and Gaza. A snapshot impact assessment was carried out with the JFFLS headmasters, facilitators, women's associations and students in order to capture all the lessons learned after this initial phase. The rapid appraisal method was done using key informant interviews, focus group discussion, direct observation and questionnaire survey.

I. Major elements and degrees of relevance (both WBSG)¹⁵

- *very good* convergence of JFFLS activities with programme's key result-areas;
- *very good* degree of general satisfaction of beneficiaries and stakeholders;
- *very good* convergence with country's strategic objectives.

II. Major elements and degrees of immediate changes/element of impact (both WBSG)

- *very good* general improvement and change in the attitudes of JFFLS participants;
- *very good* evidence of improvement in knowledge and skills;
- *very good* demand for JFFLS up-scaling;
- *very good* community interest and participation.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) carried out during the evaluation confirmed the following:

- JFFLS students learned about different types of crops;
- Students monitored attentively the crop growing process;
- Students knew how to set up a multi-storey kitchen garden¹⁶ (MSKG) and are aware of the benefits (source of production of vegetables and possible income);
- They can identify pests and insects and also know how to protect the crops from them;
- Many of the youth enrolled in the JFFLS at the end of the cycle, expressed their wish to enroll in further education and study agriculture (enhancement of education/training);
- As reported by the schools' headmasters and teachers, the youth enrolled in the JFFLS after the 8 months cycle did sit the exams and exit them with better results of others not enrolled;
- Overall, students are more confident and have hope for the future;
- Evaluations done by the MoEHE on the extra curriculum programmes in Palestine showed that in the school year 2008-2009, the JFFLS was one of the most successful ones;
- The partnership with MoEHE can potentially lead in the near future to a revision of the national curriculum and the inclusion of agricultural activities in it;
- The link of the JFFLS to the youth clubs of MoYS and YDA is key for the continuation and sustainability of the activities.

¹⁵ Poor/Fair/Good/Very Good

¹⁶ In all the schools both in Gaza and West Bank the technique of producing vegetables by using a sack garden was also introduced, this technique has the advantage of allowing to crop without land, also has an easy management of water resources and was easy for the students to replicate at home.

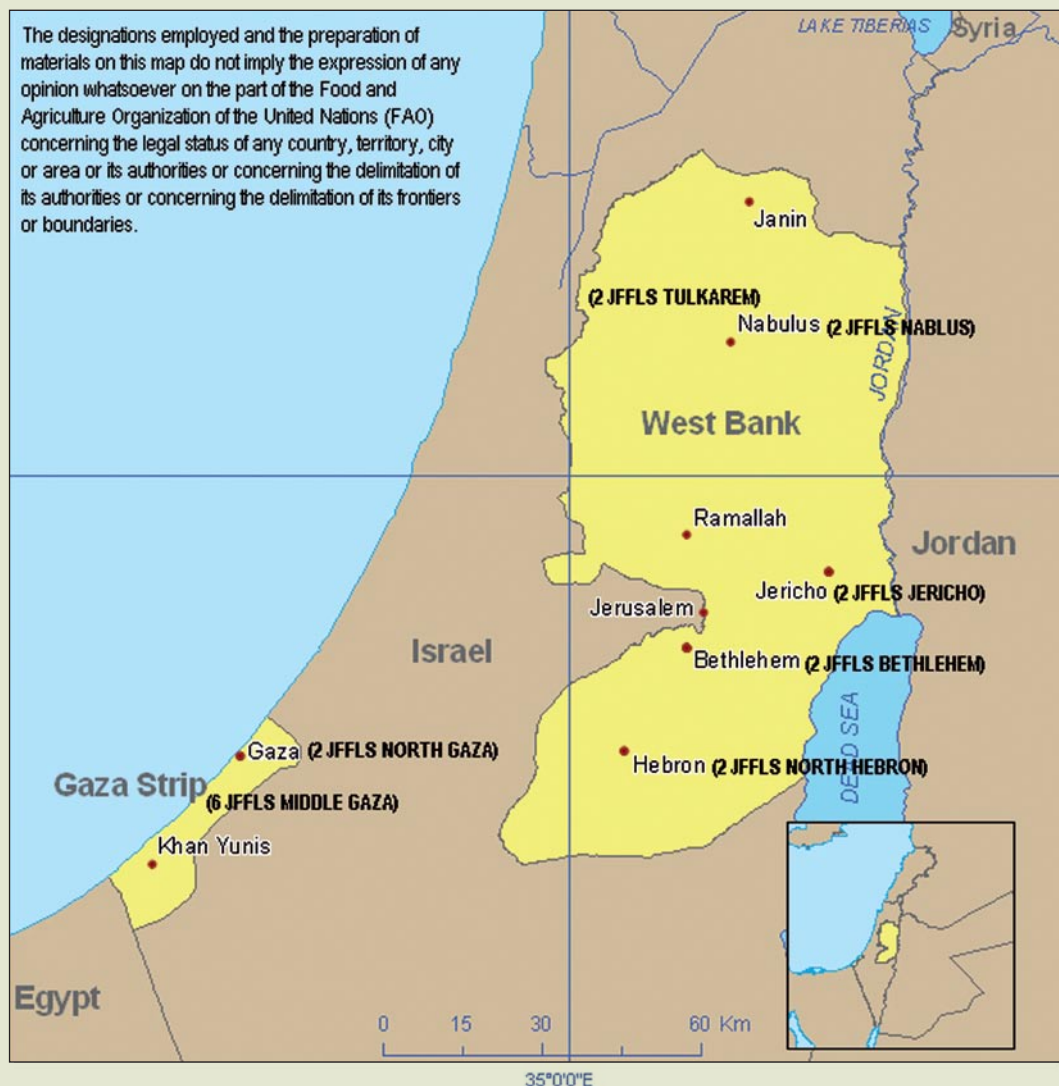
7 The JFFLS 2009-2010 school year

In phase II, 620 vulnerable rural youth will directly benefit from a total of 18 selected schools (gender equity will be ensured as in the past while selecting the schools and the beneficiaries) throughout the WB (Bethlehem, Tulkarem, North Hebron and Nablus) and GS (Box 3 JFFLS mapping in WBS 2009-2010).

The schools selection will follow the usual criteria with one additional inclusion, as requested by the MoEHE, that the selected schools will also be near

the vocational training centres run by the MoEHE itself and this will enhance further the vocational training education of the enrolled youths. A new collaboration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has started specifically for the JFFLS and 4 UNRWA schools were selected in the Middle Gaza Area in order to broaden the approach also to refugee camps' youths.

BOX 3 JFFLS MAPPING IN WBS 2009-2010



8 Conclusions



Working in groups in the JFFLS in West Bank

The JFFLS approach in WBGs developed two innovative mechanisms that are key for its sustainability. One was the delivery of food to the JFFLS students by local women's associations; this

resulted in having a wider impact at community level and also initiated income generating activities using small grants. The other main innovation was the systematic enrolment at the end of the 7 months JFFLS cycle of all the youth beneficiaries in local youth associations.

The strong partnerships with MoEHE, MoYS and YDA are crucial for FAO's role in strengthening the capacities of the Ministries and civil society and fundamental for the main goal of the JFFLS approach which is its adequate institutionalization. The inclusion of agricultural lessons in the MoEHE national curriculum is still under discussion but very much welcomed by the Ministry, while the inclusion of agricultural lessons in the MoYS's youth clubs has been piloted through FAO's intervention in the region and in consequence of the enrolment of the JFFLS youths in their clubs.

UNRWA's partnership in the Gaza Strip has also allowed FAO to widen the selection of beneficiaries to particularly vulnerable youths living in the refugee camps.



Coordinators, facilitators and youths sharing meals in JFFLS in West Bank

9 Recommendations



Games activities in the JFFLS West Bank

- Link the JFFLS students with youth clubs or women's association by supporting them with small agriculture projects to increase the sustainability of the project and give chances for other members to benefit from the skills which the students gained from the project.
 - Include the agricultural lessons from the JFFLS in the MoEHE national curriculum and agricultural activities in the MoYS's youth clubs.
 - Publish a guidebook used as a reference for the schools using the evaluation questionnaire (at the beginning and end of the programme) and facilitator's monthly report to identify strengths and weaknesses in the ongoing 2009-2010 project.
 - Increase the number of JFFLS schools in other localities to benefit from the curriculum and promote relationships between the schools and communities.
- Continue promoting the success of JFFLS for Palestinian youth within the PA-line ministries, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, CBOs, and schools.



JFFLS graduation day in Gaza Strip

Sources

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- Lesson learnt and evaluation report from pilot phase of OSRO/GAZ/802/NOR (Unpublished, Francesca Dalla Valle, 2009)
- FAO West Bank and Gaza Strip newsletters
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/FAO_WBGS_Newsletter_May_2009.pdf
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/tc/tce/pdf/FAO_WBGS_Newsletter_Feb2009.pdf
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Resources and further reading

Getting Started! Running a Junior Farmer Field and Life School

The manual provides details for staff of ministries and non-governmental organizations on how to set-up, operate and sustain a field school; the manual is based on the experience of people working with rural vulnerable youth. It is generic and can be used in different regions of the world. (Various authors, FAO 2007)

(English) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1111e/a1111e00.htm>

(French) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/a1111f/a1111f00.htm>

Sharing Junior Farmer Field and Life School experiences, challenges and innovations

The report documents some of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools experiences and allows to reflect on approaches used in the various countries. (Patricia Colbert, Una C. Murray, Francesca Dalla Valle, Paolo Israel, FAO 2008)

(English) <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0379e/i0379e00.htm>

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools Inventory

The inventory provides an overview of the implementation of the JFFLS from 2004 to 2009 country by country. (Francesca Dalla Valle, FAO 2009)
(English) <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/ak595e/ak595e00.pdf>

Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook – JFFLS in Module 7

Module 7 is specific on gender in agriculture innovation and education.
(Various authors, for Module 7 – Innovative Activity Profile 3 – Francesca Dalla Valle, Carol Djeddah, Patricia Colbert, World Bank, IFAD and FAO 2009) (English – full publication)
<http://worldbank.org/genderinag>

Food security assessment West Bank and Gaza Strip

The report was requested by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to assist the PA and relevant stakeholders to better design, target and implement future development programmes and relief interventions for improving food security and nutrition as well as to provide inputs for the development of a national food security strategy (FAO, WFP, UNRWA 2003) (English)
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/J1575E/J1575E00.HTM>

Joint rapid food security survey in the OPT

FAO, WFP and UNRWA commissioned the services of Al-Sahel Company for Institutional Development and Communications (Al-Sahel) to conduct a household-level survey and a qualitative socio-economic assessment of the population in order to gauge the main food security indicators (FAO/WFP/UNRWA, 2008)
(English) http://www.foodsec.org/docs/pal_rapid_assessment_report_may08.pdf

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

ISCED97 is comprised of standard concepts, definitions and classifications that provide a framework for the compilation and presentation of international education statistics and indicators (UNESCO, 1997)
(English) http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/isced/ISCED_A.pdf
(Arabic) http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/isced/ISCED_arb.pdf

Palestinian economic prospects: aid, access and reform (World Bank, 2008)

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCReportSept.08final.pdf>

Socio-economic report 2009 for the occupied Palestinian territories (UNSCO)

<http://www.unsco.org/Documents/Special/UNSCO-socioeconomicReport-November%202009.pdf>

Websites

Agricultural Projects Information System (APIS) http://www.apis.ps/index.php?menu_name=home

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) <http://www.fao.org/>

FAO Best practices http://www.fao.org/bestpractices/content/11/11_04_en.htm

FAO and Emergencies <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/en/>

FAO-ILO <http://www.fao-ilo.org/>

FAO's Gender, Equity and Rural Employment <http://www.fao.org/economic/esw/esw-home/en/>

Palestinian Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education <http://www.mohe.gov.ps/>

Palestinian Authority Ministry of Youth and Sport <http://www.mys.gov.ps/>

Palestinian Authority Ministry of Agriculture <http://www.moa.gov.ps/en/index.html>

Youth Development Association http://www.youthda.ps/english/about_us.html

Sharek Youth Forum Palestine <http://www.sharek.ps/>

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) <http://www.un.org/unrwa/>

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**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy
Phone: + 39 0657051
www.fao.org

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