

Enhancing Food Security Through the Improvement of High Quality Agriculture in Palestine

Tatjana Bassanese & Nasser Samarah (AAA, PARC, ACS)

The Arab Agronomist Association (AAA), together with the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) and the Associazione di Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (ACS), are collaborating in different programs supporting the Palestinian agricultural sector.

Through these programs, we intend to contribute in the development of high quality agriculture to provide high quality products to the internal and external markets, towards a paradigm of food security strongly linked with organic agriculture in a population severely hit by the political and military situation.

Support for women's associations

Through a project funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several training courses in organic agriculture have been realized, and loans for organic agriculture projects on twelve women's "Saving and Credit Cooperative Associations" have been distributed, with over 6,721 members all over Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

One of the most important goals of this project is to develop sustainable food security that focuses the intervention on the women's village associations' potential to guarantee a successful impact in the different dimensions of availability, access, stability, and utilization of food.

Support for Gaza families

Over the past years, due to the closure policy of Israel that makes the movement of people and goods entering or leaving the Gaza Strip difficult, there has been an increase in poverty and unemployment among citizens and farmers, which resulted in the impoverishment of the majority of the households.

The project called "from poor farmers to poor families." supported by the Padova Province and other associations, targets both poor families and small agricultural producers. It consists of a training and extension program on organic agriculture for small farmers and women cooperatives. The products (fresh vegetables, eggs, and locally transformed products) produced within the framework of this program are packed and distributed as a complete food basket for needy households living below the poverty line. It benefits 800 households with fresh food and 150 small farmers.

Support to the olive sector

It is well known that olive groves represent the actual agricultural wealth for most of rural communities in Palestine; the development of olive sector in these communities is the key for any attempt for improving the income resources, and consequently food security.

Through a program funded by the European Commission (EU) and a technical project funded by the Puglia Region, the three partners have recently started a large program to support the Palestinian olive sector by establishing comprehensive quality assurance and certification programs in order to improve marketing competence for Palestinian olive products. For international markets as well as at local markets, applying integrated procedure of high quality organic olive production, enhancing fair trade principles for production, and marketing of olive products, the program includes an estimated area of 10,000 dunums owned by 500 farmers.