

West Bank

Food Security Program



The West Bank region, with over 2.4 million people, is subject to chronic political and economic instability. Though the region has limited arable land, a significant percentage of the population makes a living from agricultural production. Farmers have limited agricultural training, inadequate access to markets and limited resources, especially water. Furthermore, prolonged civil conflict, aggravated by drought and political and economic turmoil, has given rise to food insecurity, economic hardship and extreme vulnerability within the general Palestinian population.

In September 2006 USAID awarded ACDI/VOCA a \$5 million cooperative agreement to implement the West Bank Food Security Program. The program is designed to reduce food insecurity and improve sustainable livelihoods for over 2,175 rural and smallholder farmer households by increasing their agricultural production and expanding cooperative agribusiness. By the end of the 2-year program, approximately 15,225 people are expected to benefit from ACDI/VOCA-led interventions in the region.

Program activities fall under two main components:

- » increased individual household food production and livelihood strengthening
- » increased smallholder income through enhanced cooperative capacity and commercial agriculture growth

ACDI/VOCA works with cooperatives, farmer groups, smallholder farmers, households and women to produce, increase the value of, and improve the marketability of crops and processed foods in local Palestinian and Israeli markets.

To increase household food production and strengthen livelihoods, the program targets marginalized and female-headed households for home-based production of vegetables and fruits to provide a source of food and supplemental income and to increase coping ability. The activity improves the use of farming technologies such as drip irrigation, cultivation practices and integrated pest management to enhance beneficiary skills and knowledge of fruit and vegetable cultivation. ACDI/VOCA helps households not only meet some of their own basic food needs but also generate additional income through the sale of surplus garden vegetables to address other needs. Household agricultural production is improved through the construction of water and greenhouse structures such as cisterns and gray wastewater treatment units and small greenhouses.



Project Profile

To enhance cooperative capacity and commercial agricultural growth, ACDI/VOCA increases the capacity of Palestinian agricultural cooperatives, farmer organizations and producers to produce high-quality products that are competitive in local Palestinian and Israeli markets. Beneficiaries' incomes are also augmented through the program's technical assistance activities that improve market linkages. Training is provided to ensure that beneficiaries are employing optimal commercial farming techniques to increase production.

ACDI/VOCA targets producers working in olive oil, small ruminant dairy and smallholder commercial vegetable produce sectors and focuses on home-based food processing among women's groups. Specific activities include

- » enhancing cooperative agribusiness growth
- » developing horticulture production and marketing for greenhouse vegetable farmers and cooperatives
- » improving olive production, harvesting, pressing and oil storage
- » strengthening small ruminant dairy sectors
- » increasing the number of household value-added products

Both the rural household support and cooperative capacity-building components provide support to communities at risk, allowing them to lessen food insecurity, economic loss and impoverishment by

- » increasing smallholder productivity, growth and competitiveness
- » strengthening household agriculture production
- » emphasizing market-driven smallholder production
- » improving access to local and Israeli markets
- » transporting food from production areas to places of need/demand

Updated: 3/08