The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees

1992 Annual Report
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Regions of PARC’s Activities

- Jenin
- Tulkarm
- Nablus Salfeet
- Ramallah
- Jerusalem
- Bethlehem
- Hebron
- Gaza
- Khan Yunis
- Rafah

Mediterranean Sea

DEAD SEA
Nine years have past since the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) first started operating as a small group of volunteer extension workers in the Jordan Valley. Today PARC has become one of the most important agricultural institutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). As such, PARC has to live up to its duty as one of the most responsible agricultural institutions in the OPTs. However, PARC does not wish to become a future Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) or a state decision-making body for the agricultural sector. PARC recognises that its raison d'être lies in being able to function effectively as a grassroots non-governmental development organisation.

In 1992, PARC benefited greatly from an evaluation carried out with one of its partner organisations. The evaluation helped PARC define its relationship more clearly with its grassroots and put in place a new structure which will help organise work, and make future work more productive. One of the outcomes has been the adoption of a policy where specialised PARC activities, such as credit, work with women and training, will be undertaken by specialised units which will exist independently of PARC. PARC believes that in the long-term this will result in a more effective service. PARC also hopes that its experience in carrying-out an evaluation of its work will encourage other Palestinian institutions to do the same.

Over the last year PARC has also developed new initiatives. PARCs work has developed an international character with links to development associations in Jordan, Yemen, Ethiopia and Syria. PARC aims to work with these organisations in providing technical support and in helping them develop services similar to those of PARC. PARC has also developed its project work with a new emphasis on beekeeping, herb production and training. A new approach to project work has also been developed. PARC is currently working with the people of Falamiya village to create a model village based on an integrated development approach. PARC has also been successful with its in-
come generating projects which now cover a major part of its running costs. These developments allow PARC to look forward to the future with optimism.
An Introduction to the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC)

In 1992, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) continued to work towards the objective of improving the lives and livelihoods of people involved in agriculture in the Occupied Territories (OPTs). While PARC tries to ensure the full participation of all those involved in agriculture in its work, it recognizes that its primary duty is to provide for the poorer sections of the rural community. PARC’s services therefore aim to reach the neediest over the widest possible area of the OPTs - from Rafah in the Gaza Strip in the south to Jenin in the West Bank in the north.

PARC established several new projects and programmes in 1992. A training course was initiated for agronomists who have recently graduated and who have had little or no practical experience. The one year course has so far proved successful and PARC is expanding its training programme throughout the OPTs.

Agricultural extension remains the key activity in PARC’s work. Extension visits were made to small farmers in villages and hamlets, and followed-up with the provision of services for livestock and crop production. PARC also conducts research from a number of experi-
mental stations. The results of this research is published and distributed in pamphlet form to farmers. Training courses and workshops were held on a regular basis to disseminate new methods and technology. The success of PARC’s research is evident in the widespread adoption of shash - a gauze-like material used instead of covers in intensive irrigated agriculture. Shash allows for pest control and represents a viable alternative to certain types of insecticides, thus reducing costs and the possibility of damage to the environment.

PARC is aware of the role played by women in agriculture. Most of the heavy and burdensome tasks in agriculture are carried out by women, but women’s work goes largely unrecognized and unpaid. Through PARC’s Household Economy Programme, PARC works closely with rural women groups and cooperatives. In addition to workshops on food processing and food product marketing, PARC has also held seminars and lectures on topics of general interest to women. Women in rural areas want to hear more on issues such as early marriages, birth control and women’s legal rights. Seminars of this type have proved very popular.

The severe winter of 1992 had a drastic impact on the agricultural sector. PARC implemented a number of emergency programmes for farmers who suffered losses as a result of snow, frost and torrential rains. PARC has also had an involvement with the Palestinian delegation in the Middle East peace talks. PARC has provided agricultural information to the delegation when this was required.
Agricultural extension is PARC's main activity. It is through the provision of extension services that PARC believes that many of its objectives can be met. Extension services were provided in three areas: crop production, animal production and household economy. Over the past year the calibre of these services have improved significantly.

* PARC has a larger number of full-time and volunteer agronomists - seventy as compared to fifty in 1991;

* during 1992, PARC paid particular attention to upgrading the skills of its agronomists;

* efforts were made to improve extension methods, particularly in regard to demonstration and experimental work;

* activities were more clearly targeted, recognition was given to the fact that different farmer groups have different needs;

* PARC undertook consultation with some agronomists working with the Agricultural Department. PARC's extension services benefited greatly from their experience; PARC now has a very effective training programme for agronomists;

* PARC developed its own audio-visual techniques for extension. Greater use was made of slides, posters, newsletters, videos, and the Maraya newspaper.
A. Crop Production

In 1992, the Crop Production Unit (CPU) was successful in developing new techniques for improving the quality of its extension service through the increased use of educational and audio-visual materials. The CPU continued to provide extension advise related to the cultivation of cereals, vegetables and fruits. The following is a summary of the CPU’s main activities during the year in applied research, experimentation and appropriate technology transfer.

1. A research and experimentation committee was established comprised of five agronomists, who undertook research and experimental work concerned with plant production and protection. Its main areas of investigation involved work with olive tree, grape vine, apple and strawberry husbandry.

2. Progress was made in the development of shash. Farmers continued to show enthusiasm in purchasing the protective material to protect and improve their crops. After a six-year experimentation period in the Jericho and Gaza areas, the use of shash was extended to the upland areas of the West Bank. Results indicated that the quality of tomatoes and squash grown under shash was generally better than where crops had been grown using conventional methods. It was observed that more information was required by farmers on the use of shash.

3. The CPU produced a number of pamphlets, and updated existing ones, on a number of issues concerning farmers. Pamphlets are published on a seasonal basis and cover technical and practical issues related to cultivation methods. Pamphlets were produced
on olive trees and oil processing, the cultivation and protection of grape vines and cereals.

4. The CPU conducted regular extension visits to individual farmers along with organizing special field trips to farmers and holding lectures and seminars in the different regions of the OPTs (see Table. 1.).

5. The CPU assisted the Household Economy Unit (HEU) in promoting self-sufficiency through lectures on kitchen garden crops as a means for promoting household self-sufficiency.

6. The CPU provided technical supervision for PARC's main projects, amongst them, the Million Trees Project, which involves the planting of fruit trees, and the Bee-keeping Project.

7. The CPU provided technical support for reports on land and land loss resulting from Israeli practices in the OPTs. Particular attention was paid to pollution from sewage water and drainage from Israeli factories. Recommendations were made on how to reduce such losses.

Table 1. below summarizes the activities of the CPU during the year.
Table 1. Summary of Activities carried out by the CPU (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of Visits</th>
<th>No. of Demonstrations</th>
<th>No. of Lectures</th>
<th>No. of Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bethlehem</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hebron</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jericho</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ramallah</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tulkarem</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jenin</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nablus &amp; Salfit</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gaza</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,365</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,319</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Animal Production

The Animal Production Unit (APU) focused its activity on small livestock producers, believing that a decentralized strategy based on small-scale production which aims to augment rural incomes will secure the greatest benefits for rural and urban communities alike. The APU believes that such a strategy is dependent on providing adequate
forms of back-up and support in the form of extension and disease control.

Two types of activity were carried out: (a) extension, and: (b) veterinary support. Extension work has evolved significantly since the establishment of the Unit and has focused on livestock rearing, disease control and animal nutrition. In support of this work PARC purchased two new ultra-sound machines. The Unit hopes to continue to develop its work over the coming year. Efforts will be made to recruit more agricultural engineers and veterinarians. The tables below summarize the Unit's various activities in the different regions.

Table. 2. Number of Cases Treated by APU Veterinarians in each Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Cases Visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bethlehem</td>
<td>1,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hebron</td>
<td>1,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jericho</td>
<td>1,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ramallah</td>
<td>928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tulkarem</td>
<td>1,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jenin</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nablus &amp; Salfit</td>
<td>3,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jerusalem</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gaza</td>
<td>1,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,726</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebron</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramallah</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulkarem</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenin</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nablus &amp; Salfit</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Household Economy

Women are responsible for carrying out the most burdensome of tasks in agriculture which often involves heavy and repetitive manual labor. The contribution of women to agricultural work usually goes unseen and unrecognized. PARC recognizes that the type of productive role played by women in agriculture often determines their role and status. PARC also recognizes that rural women face very serious problems in having their needs and aspirations taken seriously.

The Household Economy Programme (HEP) was established by PARC to try and address some of these issues directly. Its aim is to empower women, through the organization of collective small-scale production and food-processing activities, to give women some form of control and decision-making authority in their lives.
In addition, there have been other important benefits, programme activities have provided a meeting point for women, allowing discussion on social issues and liaison with other organizations, for example, the Palestinian Advisory Center (PAC) and the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC). In total, PARC has worked with twenty-four non-governmental organizations as part of its HEP activities. A range of educational activities have also taken place dealing with subjects as diverse as nutrition, hygiene, early childhood, livestock rearing, income generation, strategic planning, marketing, and management.

The table below summarizes the work of the Household Economy Unit (HEU) during the year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total No. of Activities</th>
<th>Demonstrations</th>
<th>Animal &amp; Plant Lectures</th>
<th>Other Lectures</th>
<th>On-Site Lectures</th>
<th>Cooperatives</th>
<th>Activities &amp; Celebrations</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bethlehem</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hebron</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jericho</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ramallah</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tulkarem</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jenin</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nablus &amp; Salfit</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jerusalem</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gaza</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2,445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is only in recent years that PARC began to initiate projects. A number of PARC's projects are service-related and these aim at solving problems met by small farmers. Others are related to PARC and function as income-generating projects supporting PARC in covering its running costs. As might be expected, the weather and the political situation (closed military areas, curfews etc), delayed the implementation of a number of projects. Yet, by the end of the year, all projects planned had been fully implemented, even if some had gone a few months beyond schedule. Project implementation was greatly aided by the establishment of a Planning Unit (PU), which now has responsibility for overseeing PARC's project work.

PARC's projects may be divided into: (1) service projects, and; (2) production projects. An example of a service project carried out during the year was the establishment of a number of PARC training courses for the disabled women, and for agronomists. The courses were heavily oversubscribed. At the end of each course an evaluation was carried out and the course was redesigned to take the results of the evaluation into account. Examples of production projects carried out during the year included revolving loans for income generation and an expansion of the seedlings project. PARC's revolving loan scheme for income generation is now administered by a Credit Unit (CU). The seedlings project was expanded to include fruit-bearing trees.

PARC's main project activities during 1992 are examined below.
A. Nurseries

1. West Bank

PARC's main vegetable nursery in Jericho has been reconstituted as a shareholding company. PARC now owns a third of the shares in the nursery, the United Agricultural Company (UAC) another third, the remaining third is owned by forty farmers from Jericho. The change in status of the nursery has also resulted in a new administration and new administrative procedures. Farmers who were beneficiaries have been incorporated into the administrative structure. The nursery has been expanded with the addition of two more dunums to a total area of four dunums. In one season it produces about 1.5 million vegetable seedlings. There is still room for expansion and it is envisaged that the nursery will eventually be producing about 2.5 million seedlings. The additional income gained will be used for improving and expanding the nursery.

2. Gaza

PARC's nursery in Gaza was established in 1991. It operates from an area of two dunums and makes use of some of the best nursery technology. In 1992, the nursery produced 1.9 million seedlings. This represented a six per cent increase in output over the previous year. In addition, a greater number of commercial sales were made. In total the nursery sold 1.6 million seedlings. This represented a thirty per cent increase over the previous year.
B. Poultry Cooperatives

PARC has helped establish a number of poultry cooperatives. The majority are located in refugee camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

There are six poultry cooperatives in the West Bank. These are located in villages and refugee camps and include Bethlehem, Jalazun, Fawar, Bin el-Sultan, Salfit, Sabestiyeh, Anin and Al-Jalamch. PARC views each co-operative as a regional poultry producing center for each district. Production amounted to 8,500 birds in 1992. In total, 1,700 families have benefited from this project.

There are four poultry farms in Gaza that benefit around 1,800 families, all of which are located in refugee camps. In total there are 10,000 egg-laying chickens. The project aims to provide a readily accessible source of protein for camp residents during extended curfews and closures. Eggs are produced at a cost price at least thirty percent less than the prevailing retail price. The cooperatives were essential during the Gulf War when the Gaza Strip was declared a military zone and placed under extended curfew and residents were unable to leave the Gaza Strip for jobs in Israel. During this period the major beneficiaries were children.

C. Land Reclamation and Agricultural Roads

Land reclamation aims to reclaim agricultural land and bring new areas into cultivation. Agricultural roads aim to link these areas and other marginal agricultural areas to markets. Much of the land recla-
mation work takes place in mountainous rocky areas where land has never been planted before and is now under continuous threat from confiscation. The soil is plowed thoroughly in order to renew exhausted top soil. This is particularly the case where new tree planting is envisaged. Land previously cultivated for extended periods under rainfed crops is particularly prone to soil nutrient depletion.

These activities have required PARC to purchase bulldozers to carry out the work. PARC now owns three bulldozers. These operate in the Ramallah and Bethlehem areas and in Falamyeh (near Tulkarem). In 1992, PARC succeeded in reclaiming 400 dunums of agricultural land over a five month period. In addition, nine new agricultural roads were opened (with an average length of 26.5 kilometers) in eight villages. In carrying out such work, PARC has focused on districts where private companies operating bulldozers will not send their equipment. PARC has also subsidized land reclamation and road building activity. In 1992, PARC contributed U.S. $10,000 to cover the salary and transportation costs of drivers, the supervisor and two trainees. It is estimated that PARC can provide its services at a cost price thirty five per cent less than the going commercial rate.

Plans for next year include the purchase of two bulldozers, as well as a driller. In the future, PARC hopes that it will be able to supply a bulldozer to each district and that the service will be able to cover its own running costs.
D. Training Projects for Women and Disabled Women

This is a project jointly undertaken with the Swedish Organization for Individual Relief (SOIR). It aims to provide training for women and the handicapped in setting-up small-scale agricultural income-generating projects. Loans are provided in order to establish income-generating projects once the trainees have successfully completed the course. The project was established in 1991 in Jericho-Ein Sultan and is based at the premises of a former United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school. Although there were some administrative and technical problems at the beginning, the project has developed and been commended by a number of institutions. Efforts are currently being made to expand the project to include a larger number of disabled people. If the project proves successful, it will be implemented in other parts of the country.

E. Plastic Greenhouses

PARC has four greenhouses (approximately one dunum each in size) two in the Gaza Strip, and two in the West Bank. The greenhouses are operated by unemployed agronomists. PARC requires the agronomists to cover operating costs, but allows them to keep any profits. The greenhouses have proved to be an effective way for generating incomes. PARC hopes to expand the project with more greenhouses.
F. The Beekeeping Training Course

The beekeeping training course, which also involved the purchase of twenty-five beehives, is funded by the French Consulate. The training course, based around demonstration and research, aims to train PARC agronomists and farmers in beekeeping. The project is currently being expanded to include one hundred bee hives. Three training courses have already been undertaken which involve some thirty farmers. The productivity of PARC beehives is considered one of the highest in the OPTs. Average West Bank PARC production is about 45 kg for each bee hive. In Gaza, productivity is less. A French expert has been working with PARC to establish new disease resistant strains of bees for the area. Further work is required to raise the productivity of farmer-operated hives where productivity is, on average, 10 kg per unit. PARC is currently in the process of creating a center for Beekeeping at an UNRWA school in Ein El-Sultan Refugee camp in Jericho.

G. The Fodder Production Project

The project aims to encourage fodder and forage production in the West Bank where livestock feed is currently imported at very high costs from Israel. Improved strains of fodder seeds are sold at subsidized prices and farmers are encouraged to adopt their use through demonstrations. The project currently benefits seventy-one villages in the West Bank and involves seventeen agricultural committees, and a total of 446 farmers. Each agricultural committee has between ten and seventeen participating farmers. A total of thirty-three tons of wheat,
barley, vicea, ervil, chickpeas and fava beans were distributed during 1992.

H. PARC’s Tree Development Programme

The project aims to encourage the cultivation of fruit-bearing trees, such as almonds, apples, late plums, American nuts, peaches and pears, in addition to olive and evergreen trees, to prevent soil erosion and land confiscation by the Israelis. The project was implemented mainly in the northern areas of the West Bank and involved the distribution of 189,000 olive, apple and almond seedlings to 119 villages. The project involved 738 farmers and three agricultural committees.

I. Food Ration Distribution

PARC conducted a number of relief activities, most notably with UNRWA. As part of UNRWA’s ‘Food for Work’ programme, PARC, in association with UNRWA, distributed twenty-seven tons of flour to fifteen villages. Villagers were encouraged to undertake community services such as cleaning roads and cemeteries, land reclamation and helping with the harvest. Villagers received bags of flour in exchange for their labour. PARC oversaw this project that was done by the local farmers, in cooperation with UNRWA. Ninety tons of food was also distributed in the Gaza Strip. During the Al-Adha feast, seventy-five tons of food, along with clothes, received from Israel were distributed by PARC. It is estimated that U.S. $70,000 of assistance in the form of food products was distributed during the year. Most of the assistance was distributed to the Gaza Strip.
J. Training Course for Agronomists

This programme was established in 1991 in association with the Arab Agricultural Engineers Association (AAE) and Ma’an Development Center (MDC). The aim of the project was to provide training for unemployed agronomists in order to improve their career opportunities. Instructors for the course were brought in from many different organizations and included eleven agronomists from the West Bank and twelve from the Gaza strip. The course included lectures and practical fieldwork. The MDC coordinated the lectures in which several experts participated. PARC is currently preparing to start new courses in Nablus, the southern and middle areas, and the Gaza Strip.

PARC considers training to be a key priority for the agricultural sector. PARC was one of the first associations to start training courses and has sought the cooperation of several other institutions to assist it in this endeavor. PARC has recently established an agriculture vocational training center.

K. The Agricultural Database Project

The Agricultural Database Project (ADP) was a joint venture with the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), due to the lack of individual farmers’ information and lack of planning and work. The Database produced four publications outlining the findings of surveys and studies conducted during the project period. Three more publications are to be released during 1993. It is believed that the project was a success and efforts are being made to include other local organizations in the work of the Database. Funding for the project was for three years.
Eight employees and ten agronomists from the project have been successfully integrated into other areas of PARC’s work.

**L. Experimental Stations and Applied Research**

PARC has three experimental stations which are located in the West Bank highlands, the Jordan Valley and the Gaza Strip. Experiments conducted at these three locations aim to test improved varieties of plants and seed suited to the region’s climate and terrain. In the Jordan Valley, experimental work in 1992 focused on potato fertilization, the cultivation of different strains of beans, cucumbers, papaya and loofa. Work in the highlands has focused on fruit trees, medicinal herbs, olive trees, tayoun and fodder production. In the Gaza Strip, research investigation has concerned soil-crop relations, green pepper, chinese cabbage (newly introduced into the area), new kinds of tomatoes and zucchini, as well as further experimentation on the use of shash. The results from experimentation are disseminated to the agricultural community through the monthly agricultural newspaper - Maraya, pamphlets, seminars and demonstrations. It is estimated that approximately 500 farmers benefit from the services provided by the experimental stations each year.

**M. The Credit Unit**

PARCs activities in loan-giving began two years ago on the basis of experience gained from an evaluation of the household economy programme. PARCs experience with the household economy programme indicated that loans rather than grants took away the stigma of
'free money' and led to more serious participation in the programme. PARC first gave loans to ten people, amounting to no more than $2,000, for dairy cows and spraying machinery. The scheme was then upgraded and expanded to provide loans to fifty people. The scheme proved successful, although no interest was charged, repayment rates amounted to 92 per cent of the total money loaned.

Experience showed that it was important to separate credit provision from extension. In June 1992, PARC decided to establish its own credit unit. The work of the Unit has so far focused on providing loans for women. PARC found that repayment rates were generally better amongst women than men. The results from field surveys of the Agricultural Database Project (ADP) were also helpful to the CU. PARC was able to target loans to villages where various items of capital machinery and livestock were scarce. A committee in each village choose the applicants and processed the applications. PARC provided training in setting-up credit schemes.
Table 5. The Credit Programme for 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>Sprayers</th>
<th>Plastic Greenhouses</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulkarem</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salfit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramallah</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebron</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CU has now moved to the third stage of its work and is providing three hundred families with loans for agricultural machinery, greenhouses and livestock. Future activities will aim to expand the scheme throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. A new focus will be involvement by women in food-processing and supporting work activities carried out by women. Loans will be raised to a maximum of $5,000. The importance of the CU is that it provides small loans, whereas the majority of credit institutions in the OPTs focus on giving large loans.
Evidence continues to mount that there is a dire need for a Palestinian marketing organization to help Palestinian farmers market their produce. The Palestinian farmer faces insurmountable obstacles when it comes to agricultural marketing. One of the major obstacles has been the restrictions imposed by Israel on the transportation and export of Palestinian agricultural commodities. In the local market, the farmer has faced unfair competition from Israeli agricultural producers who have marketed their produce at cheaper prices due to Israeli government subsidy. Palestinian farmers have also fallen foul of problems resulting from the lack of coordination and planning between producers and the market. Many farmers have had to pay exorbitant prices to middlemen in order to sell their produce.

Various activities undertaken by PARC, both directly and indirectly, are related to market development. In May 1992, PARC established the Agricultural Services Center (ASC). The ASC is a retailing organization which aims to develop new markets for agricultural produce. It has so far helped women (in the household economy programme) and other producer cooperatives to sell their produce. ASC has achieved success in three main areas:
A. Importing Agricultural Inputs

Agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are usually purchased from Israel. Palestinian farmers have had to deal with Israeli middlemen who sometimes overcharge when selling to Palestinians. Lack of market choice has also limited the range and quality of what Palestinians can purchase. The ASC has recently undertaken a trial import of seeds from Holland. This project proved challenging given the range of Israeli import restrictions on seed for commercial purposes. However, the ASC was successful in bringing in seeds that better suit the terrain and environment of the OPTs. The ASC hopes to expand its services in this area to provide quality agricultural inputs at reasonable prices.

B. Exporting Agricultural Produce

The ASC has also been successful in finding markets for local Palestinian almonds. Palestinian almonds are of extremely good quality. Until recently, the market potential for almonds had been neglected due to competition from other imported brands, namely American almonds, which flooded the local markets. The ASC has marketed almonds to England, Scotland and Belgium where it is processed into almond butter. Sales so far have been extremely good. The ASC has also found markets for olive oil, sesame paste and for grape in the form of wine, juice and raisins. ASC is currently preparing to market handicrafts from women’s cooperatives.
C. Local Marketing

The ASC has not overlooked the possibility of the local market absorbing large quantities of processed food items. The products of women cooperatives such as labeneh, honey, jams, pickles and olives are now being marketed locally. The demand has been sufficiently high for ASC to consider supplying the cooperatives with the raw materials for the production of these products.
PARC has also established several production projects of its own in order to cover part of PARC’s running costs. The most important are the following:

A. The Pickle Factory

The factory was established in 1990 and began commercial production in mid-1991. In its first year of operation, the factory produced 165 tons of different types of pickles of which 80 tons were exported to the USA and Canada. In 1992, PARC increased the factories working capital; this resulted in an increase in output to 450 tons. The factory is considered to be one of the most successful enterprises of its kind in the OPTs. It is the only fully operational pickling factory in the OPTs and employs about thirty workers. The factory aims to absorb excess agricultural produce in the OPTs through commercial food processing for export. Food processing enables PARC to sidestep many of the restrictions imposed by the military authorities on the export of fresh Palestinian produce.
B. The Banana Plantation Project

This project is located in Jericho which has a suitable climate for the production of bananas. Forty dunums were planted in 1992. Bananas are easily marketed and can be exported to Jordan. However, the unseasonal weather of 1991 and 1992 had an adverse effect on production, although PARC anticipates a good harvest in 1993. PARC hopes to expand the area under the project. In addition, to being an income-generating project, it offers employment for twenty workers on a semi-regular basis. Experiments are being conducted by PARC on banana cultivation and the results of these experiments are being disseminated among banana farmers in the region.

PARC hopes to expand existing projects and implement new income generating projects. It hopes these projects will be able to cover a major part of its running costs by 1997.
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to help PARC undertake planning, monitoring and evaluation PARC established a Consultancy Unit (CONU) comprising four experts from the disciplines of agriculture, economics, sociology and management. The objectives of the consultancy group are to advise PARC on: (1) the formulation of policy; (2) planning, evaluation and monitoring; (3) staff evaluation; (4) administering training courses; (4) making recommendations concerning in-country and overseas training, scholarships and grants; (5) undertaking studies and research.

Activities during 1992 included the following:

1. In March 1992, the CONU evaluated the revolving loan project for cows administered by the CU. It noted that despite problems it was worth PARC continuing with the project.

2. CONU undertook an evaluation of the agricultural situation of Falamyah village and recommended an integrated approach to the village's development. Particular focus was placed to the role of women in the village. The findings of the evaluation were distributed to academic and socially concerned organizations in the OPTs.

3. CONU undertook a major component of a research project dealing with the introduction of biogas in the OPTs. It also took part
in the ASQUA Conference in Amman, held between 7-9 November 1992, which dealt with people and the environment.

4. CONU undertook a study on the social and economic aspects of Zababdeh village and found a number of structural distortions resulting from Israel's occupation. It was concluded that Zababdeh can no longer be considered a self-sufficient economic unit since income for the village is derived largely through remittances from village emigrants and wage labour in Israel.

5. CONU prepared a number of study-days for training demonstrators in the field of household economics at the Alcazar Hotel, Jerusalem, between 5-6 August, 1992. CONU also conducted extensive field study in order to evaluate PARC's activities through the household economy project. The study looked at seven Palestinian villages in three different regions of the country. Three villages fell within the household economy project and the other four did not.

6. CONU participated in a number of conferences including the Cooperation Day Conference at the YMCA; conferences associated with the Palestinian Peace Delegation to the Multilateral Talks and a conference on economic issues at the Arab Thought Forum (ATF).
June 1992 saw the establishment of PARC's Agricultural Information Center (AIC). AIC aims to achieve two objectives: (1) the production of visual materials for use in extension work, and: (2) a news service dealing with rural issues often neglected or marginalised by the mainstream press. In both cases the AIC aims to build information on the agricultural sector which aims to develop farmer knowledge as well as a broader understanding of priorities in the rural community of the OPTs.

In a relatively short period AIC has established itself as reliable source of information on rural affairs. It has been able to organize tours for journalists to many parts of the OPTs as well as provide accurate and up-to-date information. AIC issues a 12 page monthly newspaper - Maraya which is distributed in rural areas throughout the OPTs. The circulation of Maraya increased quite rapidly during the year, from 1,000 copies in August to 3,500 copies in December 1992. The publication contains agricultural extension material, features on the various problems facing the countryside, as well as an opinion section written by farmers and local experts. Maraya's ability to cover original news stories, often not covered by the local press, is due to AIC having established a chain of reporters throughout the OPTs who are able to provide first-hand information on events and developments related to Palestinian agriculture. AIC also produces PARC News, a
monthly, English language publication targeted at institutions abroad. PARC News deals with developmental work, in agriculture, and more generally within Palestinian society as a whole.

Amongst its activities, AIC organized a training course for eight trainees, on video filming. A section is currently being established on filming and documentation to provide supporting material which can be used in training courses. In association with AIC, a German film producer recently produced a short video on PARC’s activities.
Public relations activities aim to contribute to a general understanding of PARC’s work, both at home and abroad. Many aspects of PARC’s public relations work has led to collaborative projects between PARC and a range of local and foreign institutions and European governments.

**A. Coordination**

PARC actively coordinates with many local organizations in order to better serve the community at large.

Through its household economy work PARC has sought and gained the cooperation of local associations such as the Family Protection and Planning Society (FPPS), the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRCs), the Palestinian Counselling Center (PCS) and the Red Crescent Society (RCS) in Jenin and Gaza. These organizations have all supported PARC in developing a comprehensive household economy programme. PARC has also coordinated its training activities closely with local institutions such as the Ma’an Development Center (MDC), the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) at Birzeit University, Bethlehem University, the Swedish Organization for Individual Relief (SOIR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). PARC also cooperates with other local organiza-
tions such as the Arab Thought Forum (ATF) and Friends of the Trees (FOT).

PARC also works with international NGOs, International solidarity groups, PVOs and the international community. PARC has a good working relationship with the consulates of France, Spain, Belgium and Britain in East Jerusalem as well as education bodies such as Amideast and the British Council. It works with locally based NGOs, PVOs and UN bodies in the OPTs, such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Save the Children Fund (SCF) in Gaza, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Pontifical Mission (PM), UNICEF, and UNRWA.

B. Affiliation

Individual members of PARC are affiliated with the Arab Agronomist Association (AAA) and the Union of Agronomists (UOA). PARC is associated with the Farmers World Network (FWN) and agricultural institutions worldwide, such as Veterinaire sans Frontieres (VSF) which works with PARC on artificial insemination and brucellosis; and tries to form new ties with agricultural institutions in France and Switzerland who are working with PARC on its organic fungicide - tayoun, beekeeping and palm tree propagation. PARC also has training links with Wageningen University, IAC in Holland, as well as Reading University in Britain and INRA in France.

Locally, PARC is a member of the Palestinian Agricultural Co-ordinating Committee (PACC) which represents the main Palestinian co-ordinating body of agronomists, farmers and others interested in developing the agricultural sector. Ismail Daiq, in his capacity as General-Director of PARC, is a member in the board of trustees of the Palestinian Trade Promotion Organization (PTPO).

C. Representing PARC Abroad

A number of PARC staff have had the opportunity to represent PARC abroad this year. In early 1992, the General Director of PARC, launched a tree planting campaign in Holland and Belgium with the assistance of Oxfam Wereldwinkels. As well as conducting press conferences, he also had the opportunity to visit the European Commission (EC), Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Fos), the Nether-
lands Organization for Development Cooperation (Novib), the Dutch
Palestine Committee (DPC) and other organizations with which PARC
works.

A second visit was made to Holland by the General Director as
part of a delegation from the PACC. The visit was organized by the
Dutch Foreign Ministry and involved meetings with officials of the
Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry for Development and Coop-
eration. As a member of the PACC delegation, PARC’s General Di-
rector, also attended a conference held in Brussels entitled “Develop-
ment for Peace”. The conference was organized by the Network of
European NGOs in the Occupied Territories (NENGOOT) and the
European NGO Co-ordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine
(ECCP). PARC also held a two-day workshop in Brussels with Euro-
pean NGO partners to discuss issues related to ‘collective support.’

A PARC’s Public Relations officer attended the International
NGO Coordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine (ICCP)
conference held in Geneva, in August, and in October, at the invitation
of Spanish NGOs, undertook a study tour of Spain.
The Financial System

As PARC has grown, it has had to adopt and develop a sound financial and accounting system to keep pace with the development of the organization. It was therefore felt appropriate to provide a brief description of PARC’s financial system.

PARC finances are divided into three main budget lines. Accounting is done separately for each budget line.

1. Administration - Expenditures on administration and staff salaries (covered in part by Oxfam, Christian Aid and the European Community (EC)).

2. Project Budget - Expenditures for projects activities financed from individual grants. Each project has its own budget line.

3. PARC Income Generation - Expenditures and revenues on activities which generate an income to cover PARC running costs. Income generating projects and revenues from services cover almost 25 per cent of PARC’s administrative costs.

Funds are further subdivided and allocated according to a budget approved by the PARC Board for each region. PARC’s Gaza Strip branch manages its own finances and uses the same financial system. PARC employs a General-Accountant for all financial transactions, and an Auditor for all projects. PARC is in the process of negotiating the services of a certified public accountant, now that it is a registered organization.
Over the past nine years PARC has developed and expanded its activities at a quite spectacular rate. During this period PARC had to be flexible and adaptable; responsive to change as well as making change. PARC is aware that this accumulated experience is an important ingredient in understanding the changes required of PARC for the future. Therefore, PARC devoted 1992 to conducting a comprehensive evaluation of itself: its structure, its organization and activities and how it might best serve its target group - the Palestinian rural community.

A. The PARC Evaluation

Evaluation calls for objectivity. Thus PARC called upon Novib, one of its major partners, in order to recruit an evaluation team for this task. The evaluation team comprised of two Dutch experts and a local expert with a knowledge of Palestinian agriculture and PARC. The evaluation was carried out as a joint exercise between PARC and the evaluation team. Another Dutch expert helped PARC in the planning process for the future plan. The evaluation mission worked with PARC during September 1992.

The evaluation team received input from the following:

* PARC's central administration.
* divisions and regional extension units.
* field visits and inputs from beneficiaries and volunteers.
* individual discussion with key workers.

A comprehensive report was drawn-up by the mission describing and analyzing PARC's structure, its activities and its relationship with
its target group. It concluded with a number of constructive recommendations which can be summarized as follows:

1. PARC is advised to clarify its vision, priorities and objectives;
2. PARC should more precisely identify who it wishes to target in order to be better able to achieve its priorities and objectives;
3. develop a total planning approach to its work;
4. undertake organizational restructuring which would ensure efficiency, planning and monitoring. This recommendation had two components: (1) separating PARC’s grassroots work from its institutional-professional structure, and; (2) separating the structure and finances of PARC’s income generating activities from PARC as an institution.

PARC has begun to follow up the recommendations of the evaluation mission report. PARC’s executive committee decided to nominate fifteen staff members and give them responsibility for discussing PARC’s current structure and the structure as proposed by the evaluation mission team. The staff team, drawn from various districts and different units of PARC, then had responsibility for submitting, for the approval of PARC’s Board, a draft proposal for restructuring. During this process the executive committee called upon a number of local experts in the field of management for consultation. A final draft was eventually approved by the board and job descriptions were set accordingly. The implementation of the new structure will commence at the start of 1993.
The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees Organizational Structure

Board of Trustees

General Director

Deputy G. D.

Consultancy Unit: Planning, Monitoring, Evaluating & Training

Public Relation Unit

Information and Communication Unit

Assistant to G. D.

Farmers Union

Executive Manager / Gaza

Manager of Human Resources & Finance

Executive Manager / West Bank

Farmers Union

Project Division

Extension Division

Finances Division

Secretariat Division

Human Resources Division

Women's Division

Projects Division

Extension Division
B. Coordinated Financing

It has been evident for some time that PARC - as one of the main providers for extension, research and other services in agriculture - should be able to plan and implement an integrated core programme effectively and strategically. Collective and coordinated financing is essential if PARC is to achieve the long-term stability and organizational base required for effective planning and implementation. PARC has therefore started discussions with its partner organizations in order to encourage them to participate in collective financing for PARC’s core programme.

A two-day meeting was held in Brussels at the beginning of October 1992. The meeting which involved PARC and various partner agencies discussed the idea of collective financing. The meeting concluded by drawing-up a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PARC and the participating partner agencies. The MOU was seen as a first step towards achieving collective and coordinated financing for PARC’s core programme based on an integrated workplan including a reviewed budget. Collective financing as established in the MOU provides the opportunity for other agencies to contribute to a core funded programme. PARC welcomes any moves in this direction. Collective financing also allows PARC to plan and implement its programmes independently. PARC continues to look forward to cooperation with all partners, whether it be for a core programme within the framework of collective financing or for specific programmes and projects outside this framework.

PARC welcomes support from partner agencies in making recommendations concerning monitoring, evaluation and organisational change. PARC believes that such recommendations will enable it to produce a better quality service; a service better able to meet the political challenges ahead whilst allowing PARC to fulfill the goals that it works for as an NGO.