

## SUCCESSFUL STORIES IN GAZA 2015

### Farmers in the southern Gaza Strip return to cultivation in agricultural greenhouses destroyed during the aggression

Farmers in the southern Gaza Strip were able to return to cultivating crops in agricultural greenhouses destroyed during the recent aggression following restoration of the greenhouses by PARC. Farmer Adel Alsamiri (aged 50), a resident of the Qarara area, heads a family of 11 members. He has returned to cultivating tomato plants in an agricultural greenhouse that had been completely destroyed. This is his only source of income. PARC restored his greenhouse as part of the project "Partnership in community-led action for resilience and livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (PCARL), implemented in partnership with Save the Children and funded by German Cooperation (BMZ).



Farmer Alsamiri said: "I have a greenhouse with land of one dunum, which is my only source of income; I live off the vegetables despite the problems we face from the salinity of the water and Israeli attacks. The aggression destroyed all our efforts of previous years, but we keep returning to agriculture to survive as it is our only livelihood; we only know how to work in agriculture." Alsamiri works with his wife, Um Nasser, in greenhouse cultivation.



Farmer Yunus Fayyad, (aged 65), heads a family of 15 members. His house was completely destroyed during the aggression, as was his only source of income, the greenhouses. He said: "Since the aggression ended, I tried to restore the greenhouse using the simplest materials available because I want to continue supporting my family. The quality of the vegetables was poor, but with the intervention by PARC and the restoration of the greenhouses, my situation has improved."

Women adopt creative ways of achieving sources of income through small productive projects in Gaza and the West Bank.

### The First story:

Palestinian women are an essential element in economic development, especially in the Gaza Strip where there are many economic challenges. Many women in the Gaza Strip have succeeded in creating small, income-generating projects and maintain these in spite of all difficulties they face.

Fatima Erhim, aged 42 and from Al-Zaytoun neighborhood in Gaza, has special needs but she has overcome her disability to support her family of seven with a project producing cheese called the "Mar'aina Cheese" or Our Pastures Cheese project.

Fatima said: "My husband is unemployed; we are a rural household that relies on livestock to meet our basic needs. I started the project four years ago. Now we own a cow but initially we only used the milk for domestic needs. Then I thought of selling cheese to neighbors, who encouraged me to

develop the idea into an income-generating project.”

Fatima is now able to meet the needs of the entire family through the project. She owns two cows and relies on them totally to provide an income of approximately NIS 500 per month for her family.

Fatima said: “What saddens me the most is that I lost one of the cows during the last aggression, reducing my production. However, I have obtained equipment and machinery that help me to manufacture cheese in a better and faster way with less effort than before. This has enabled me to continue with my project and to work harder to develop it further.”

Fatima hopes to expand the project further in the future despite the difficulties and challenges facing the project due to the situation in Gaza.



### **The Second Story**

Kholoud Abdel Qader of Beit Ummar village, one of the beneficiaries of the small grants scheme, received a grant of almost 1000 euros to open a small clothing store in a room in her house. She supports her family of six: three males and three females. Her husband is physically disabled and one of her sons suffers from heart disease; the two require permanent health treatment.

The beneficiary family is a very low-income one that relies on aid. As soon as Kholoud received the money to start her project, she saw it as her only chance to create a stable source of income. She spread the news of the new project to as many village residents as possible and wrote a sign outside her home advertising the small shop in her house; she hung some of the clothes on the windows of the house. Once customers started to come, Fatima grew her project and brought new clothes to meet her customers’ needs. To exploit every possible opportunity for success and to win new customers, she used a hand sewing machine that she already owned to do alterations to any clothing purchased from her. This encouraged customers to buy.

Her total financial capital for the project has now doubled despite the financial burden of treating two patients, but Fatima now has a stable income of approximately NIS 700 per month.