



*Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening
in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*

Mid Term Review

August 2011



MTR Team

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Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ABC Consulting | Associates in Building Capacity |
| AUD | Australian Dollar |
| AMENCA | Australia Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement |
| APIS | Agricultural Project Information System |
| ARIJ | Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| CBO | Community-Based Organization |
| CSI | Coping Strategies Index |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DRR | Disaster Risk Reduction |
| EOP | End of project |
| ESDC | Economic and Social Development Centre |
| HLSA | Household Livelihood Security Assessment |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| IPM | Integrated Pest Management |
| LIOPT | Livelihood Improvement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory |
| MoA | Ministry of Agriculture |
| MoI | Ministry of Interior |
| MoP | Ministry of Planning |
| MSC | Most Significant Change |
| MTR | Mid Term Review |
| NIS | New Israeli Shekel |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| oPt | occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank and Gaza) |
| PNA | Palestinian National Authority |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PDD | Program Design Document |
| PRDP | Palestinian Reform and Development Plan |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| PTT | Project Technical Team |
| PQAT | Program Quality Assessment Tool |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| CARE WB/G | CARE West Bank & Gaza |

Terminology

| | |
|---------|---|
| Closure | <i>Closure</i> refers to a policy by which the Government of Israel limits access of Palestinians to areas within the West Bank and Gaza as well as to Israel. The main methods for limiting access include roadblocks, checkpoints, prolonged curfews, and the construction of a Separation Wall and a |
|---------|---|

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | network of agricultural access gates bisecting the territory. <i>Closure</i> began in 1991 and has steadily increased over the last five years in scope, intensity, and duration. |
| Dunum | A <i>dunum</i> is one thousand square meters, approximately one-tenth of a hectare or one quarter of an acre. |
| Food security | <i>Food security</i> refers to the ability of a community, family or individual to be able to eat sufficiently, in terms of both quantity and quality, as prescribed by international standards of calorie, protein and vitamin intake. Food security describes availability, access, and sufficient use of food, all of which must be simultaneously achieved. |
| Intifada | <i>Intifada</i> is an Arabic word for uprising. The second and current Intifada is known as the Intifada Al-Aqsa, which arose from demonstrations by Palestinians against the September 2000 entry by Israeli forces into the Haram Sharief (Al-Aqsa) Mosque in Jerusalem. |
| Livelihood security | <i>Livelihood security</i> is the adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic household needs including food, water, health services, education, housing and participation in the community, and social integration. |
| Resilience | <i>Resilience</i> refers to the ability of a livelihood system to bounce back from stress or shocks; for example, some households have difficulty recovering once they have been exposed to a particular risk. <i>Community resilience</i> is the ability of households and institutions in the community to collectively recover from stress or shocks; this includes not only individual household livelihoods (which are often part of a larger system such as in a farming community), but the social networks, skills and capacities, and relationships that make up a community, including governance mechanisms. Not all households recover at the same rate or to the same level, but this presumes that if the majority of households fall below a certain level, stability and order in community relations and institutions are affected and the community itself may disintegrate (as might happen after a severe shock such as a prolonged drought or famine). |
| Vulnerability | <i>Vulnerability</i> is a continuous process of exposure to risk and responses to these risks. Simply put, vulnerability is the exposure and sensitivity to livelihood shocks. It is a forward-looking concept related to people's proneness to future acute loss in their ability to access food, income, or other basic necessities. The degree of vulnerability depends on the characteristics of the risk and a household's ability to respond to risk. The ability to respond to risk depends on a household's characteristics, notably their assets base and the livelihood strategies they pursue. |

Project Summary

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Project Name | TATWEER: Livelihood Security and Civil Society Strengthening in the occupied Palestinian Territory |
| Services Order | 37891/43 |
| Duration | 1 st May 2009 to 30 th April 2014 |
| Funding | AUD 5,924,108 |
| Strategic Objectives | Objective 1: Improve food security, livelihoods and natural resource management Objective 2: Increase the participation of women and youth in the development process Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of local civil society organisations Objective 4: Contribute to the efficient and effective management of the AMENCA II Program |
| Partners | Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC) Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) |

Executive Summary

The ongoing situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has had a severe impact on the livelihoods of Palestinians. For the past few years, poverty and unemployment rates have increased on an annual basis as the closure enforced by the Israeli government has increased; access to basic services have decreased; the political situation has continued to erode; and household and social assets have been depleted. As closure policies have tightened, agriculture has become an ever more critical source of food security, with nearly a fifth of Palestinians relying on subsistence farming to survive.

TATWEER is one of four projects funded under the Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement, Phase II (AMENCA II) and is implemented in Jenin and Tubas Governorates in the north of the West Bank. TATWEER aims to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience of vulnerable communities through access to locally available quality agricultural services, capacity building of community based organisations (CBOs) and NGO partners ARIJ and ESDC, improved household food security and improved access to markets through agreement with the New Farm Company.

The expected outcomes are:

1. Improved food security at the household level through increased food production for family consumption
2. Improved agricultural practices including more effective and ecologically appropriate farming methods and Natural Resource Management (NRM)
3. Enhance the potential for women to increase their livelihood and income
4. Improved access to locally available quality services and skills
5. Strengthen the capacity of the participating civil society organizations to better address, advocate and respond to their constituent / community priorities and needs
6. Strengthen the responsibilities, role and status of Palestinian women through NGOs and CBOs
7. Strengthen the governance and management of CBOs including resource mobilization
8. Strengthening collaboration amongst AMENCA II partners and others for learning and continuous improvement throughout implementation

The project is working with vulnerable communities in Jenin and Tubas Districts of the West Bank and has just begun its third year of implementation of a five year period. This Mid Term Review (MTR) aimed to assess the performance of the TATWEER project in line with the overarching AMENCA II objectives and outcome themes and make recommendations for the remaining period of the project. CARE also saw this as a valuable reflection and learning opportunity for CARE's programming in the West Bank as CARE WBG undertakes its longer term strategic planning process towards adopting a more strategic program approach.

Overall the MTR process considers the project to be clearly working to address underlying causes of vulnerability in this context, through improved access to farming inputs and water and improved farming practices and natural resource management. The project has assisted in the establishment, alongside partner NGOs, of four facilities;

- a seed multiplication bank to ensure locally available, quality seeds to farmers at a reasonable price, reaching 16 CBOs across the West Bank
- a seedling nursery, with plans to reach 4,000 farmers, reducing production costs, reducing the risk of seedling damage where farmers previously had to travel through checkpoints to purchase, reducing growing time and ensuring environmentally/locally appropriate seed varieties
- a sheep farm, which although a relatively new activity, is providing a model of good farming practice for communities and locally available sheep for farming communities
- queen bee production unit, aiming to provide quality and locally available queen bees, with potential for increasing livelihoods as well as increased marketing potential for women

In addition to;

- providing women with support to construct water harvesting systems, seedlings and tools for home gardens

- rehabilitation of greenhouses aimed at improving farmer practices to ensure environmentally appropriate practices and promote the sustainability of agricultural land and water resources
- facilitating market linkages and establishing a marketing network, and
- capacity building support to two NGO partners and 18 CBOs.

The success and relevance of the initiatives is clearly shown in the demand for services being provided by the project. The project has seen strong community engagement around the majority of initiatives, and ownership of facility management by the respective CBOs, as demonstrated through the initial investment/contributions made as well as the reinvestment of profits back into the facilities. The formation of a joint committee from the three CBOs in the north of the Jordan Valley, to manage the nursery, has proved to be a good strategy to enhance ownership, impact and sustainability.

Whilst a recently new initiative, the marketing component, with the support of New Farm, has the potential to close the loop for farmers, with providing access to markets and a reliable income source. At present farmers face issues with competition, unstable market access and variability, amongst many other contextual challenges, in getting products to market at a reasonable price. A marketing study has been undertaken, which the project needs to follow up to consider the linkages with New Farm and across the project to ensure that farmers are producing products appropriate for the identified markets and at the quality required. The project team will be informed by the findings in the market survey and build on them to provide more support to help women in overcoming a key challenge of marketing their products.

The facilities developed show strong potential for model creation, either for replication, expansion or as practical extension demonstrating good practice. The MTR recommends considering a Tiered approach to the facilities, with Tier I (seed bank, nursery) looking at business model development, financial sustainability, and opportunities for expansion, replication or increased linkages across the West Bank. Tier II (sheep farm, queen bee unit) focusing on pilot model development as demonstrating good practice to farmers, and providing training and awareness, whilst still providing farmers access to services.

Building on the positive partnerships developed under the previous Livelihood Improvement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (LIOPT) project, CARE works closely in collaboration with Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC) and Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) through the design and implementation. The NGOs have strong complimentary skills and experiences and there is further potential to draw on this, in developing linkages and collaboration across activities and in reflection, learning, monitoring and evaluation. The partner NGOs have strong ownership and commitment to the initiatives and plans moving forward, demonstrating sound potential for sustainability.

The MTR identified a number of key recommendations for the team to consider in strengthening the project within the remaining period and in relation to ongoing sustainability, including;

Further opportunities for alignment and linkages across the elements of the project, for example consideration of linking the marketing component to other initiatives, and linking the capacity building component more directly to other project initiatives.

Given the significant variety in type of CBOs the project is working with (cooperatives, charitable organisations), objectives, engagement levels and importantly capacity, the MTR has a number of recommendations moving forward with the capacity building component, including;

- a phased/progression approach, recognising that each organisation is at a different stage and therefore aiming at a different target/milestone in their development
- more applied/practical approach
- link/tailor the capacity building more direct to the other project initiatives

The targeted communities are small and in close proximity to each other however there are a large number of CBOs, even within the same communities, the project team has identified the benefit of a more collective approach, building on the lessons learned from the joint committee process, and potentially reducing the number of CBOs the project works directly with. These decisions

need to bear in mind any potential impact on community engagement and the impact it may have on, benefits and possibility for, collective versus individual marketing agreements.

Whilst there are efforts to target women and youth there is no systematic approach in place to ensuring the project is reaching vulnerable women and youth or leading to genuine engagement in decision making. In addition there needs to be a more conscious focus on gender considerations as a cross cutting issue across the initiatives (outside of the direct targeting of women or the CBO representation). Further analysis needs to take place around gender and vulnerability, to ensure the targeting approach is having a positive impact on women and importantly that other components of the project are gender sensitive.

A key benefit (and need) identified by community members was access to water, which is currently provided through the rainfed cisterns for irrigating home gardens. A key risk for communities is environmental conditions, including more consistent droughts, frost and wind damage. A Climate Change analysis was undertaken in late 2010 outlining recommendations for addressing climate risks, improving water management within facilities and expanding the water cistern provision to other components, for example the livestock activities. In addition it recommended a more comprehensive approach to Disaster Risk Reduction to compliment the current natural resource management activities. The MTR endorses these recommendations in particular and identifies the need for an action plan and budget to be developed to integrate these components into the project.

All partners identified further need for CARE to take more of an active role in strategic partnership and coordination across the project; partners see CARE's key role as building these links and cohesion between the different partners. The MTR outlines a number of recommendations for improving the linkages across NGOs for the benefit of the initiatives and ensuring the project is capturing the full potential of capacity and skills of all partners.

Whilst a number of the recommendations and findings outlined in the report are relevant to CARE's ongoing work in West Bank and Gaza, there are a couple of areas that are worth highlighting here in particular relevance to the work in moving towards a program approach;

- Whilst the Baseline and Coping Strategies Index (CSI) are strong pieces of work for the project to draw on TATWEER would benefit from the work that will be undertaken in the move to CARE's program approach, such as vulnerability analysis and analysis of the impact groups as distinct from target groups.
- The Monitoring & Evaluation and reporting framework has advanced and with further support will provide a strong basis for collecting outcome information for the project, through the work of a dedicated officer and senior level M&E support within CARE WB/G. This provides a good model to consider for other components of the project, in particular gender, in provision of dedicated project staff time and senior level support to advance. There are a number of resources and frameworks within CARE more broadly that the team could draw on further, including the Women's Empowerment Framework and gender analysis tools.
- There is potential for advancing a sensitive approach to advocacy around a number of underlying causes of vulnerability, including potentially access to markets and water. The team have identified an embedded understanding and support for advocacy positions within the project, although no explicit advocacy is being undertaken. As such the team has identified the potential to prioritise key advocacy issues and messages and look at an appropriate strategy within the context, potentially drawing on CARE WB/G, CARE Australia and/or CARE US in supporting this as well as potentially engagement with AMENCA partners.
- There is potential to draw on CARE International approaches to public/private relationships to further develop and support the marketing component of the project and relationship with companies such as New Farm and the national and international markets.

I. Introduction

Approximately 4 million Palestinians live in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) – 2.4 million in the West Bank and 1.5 million in Gaza. A recent report undertaken by the World Bank in collaboration with CARE identified that in 2007, nearly 60 percent of working-age Palestinians neither participated in any type of recorded economic activity, paid or unpaid, nor were searching for work¹. In the West Bank Palestinians face difficulties accessing crucial services, health services, education, markets, water, as a result of restrictions on movement, impacting on their livelihoods.

CARE has been working in West Bank and Gaza since 1948. Throughout the years, CARE's program has evolved from the direct provision of services into a program that meets the humanitarian needs of the civilian population and builds their capacity to sustain their livelihoods. CARE currently works with more than 1.5 million people, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable communities in Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas, Hebron, and Bethlehem districts in the West Bank; and the entire Gaza Strip. AMENCA II represents an important example of the move to longer term development commitment in the West Bank.

TATWEER is one of four projects funded under the Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement, Phase II (AMENCA II) and is implemented in Jenin and Tubas Governorates in the north of the West Bank. The project aims to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience of vulnerable communities through access to locally available quality agricultural services, capacity building of community based organisations (CBOs) and NGO partners ARIJ and ESDC, improved household food security and improved access to markets through agreement with the New Farm Company. The TATWEER project builds on the achievements and lessons from CARE's AMENCA I supported project – Livelihood Improvement in the occupied Palestinian Territory (LIOPT).

AMENCA II is part of Australia's development cooperation with the Palestinian Territory. The program is improving the livelihoods of Palestinians and strengthening the community organisations that provide them with basic services. It has a special focus on improving the lives of women. The three key target areas identified for AMENCA II activities are:

- Vulnerable groups (women and/or youth)
- Income generation and livelihood improvement
- Agricultural production and food security

II. Problem statement and intervention

a. Problem statement

The ongoing situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has had a severe impact on the livelihoods of Palestinians. For the past few years, poverty and unemployment rates have increased on an annual basis as the closure enforced by the Israeli government has increased; access to basic services have decreased; the political situation has continued to erode; and household and social assets have been depleted. According to the FAO/UNRWA, only around 36% of the Palestinian people are food secure². The rest are marginally secure (12%), vulnerable to food insecurity (14%) and food insecure (38%)². The Checkpoints and Barriers Report identifies that employment is becoming more difficult. For young women the *'likelihood of a woman aged between 15 and 24 participating in the labor market declined from 19 percent in 1996-2000, to 16 percent in 2001-2002, to 14 percent in 2003-2007'*³.

Agriculture is an important source of income and employment in the West Bank, with 15% of the formal and 39% of the informal workforce active in this sector⁴. As closure policies have tightened, agriculture has become an ever more critical source of food security, with nearly a fifth of Palestinians relying on subsistence farming to survive. Movement restrictions, through roadblocks, checkpoints, curfews and complex permit requirements have severely impeded the **ability to secure sustainable and adequate**

¹ Checkpoints and Barriers, World Bank, 2010

² FAO/WFP/UNRWA January 2007, Joint Rapid Food Security Survey in the Occupied Palestinian Territory May 2008

³ Checkpoints and Barriers, World Bank, 2010

⁴ Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem and Azahar, A Review of the Palestinian Agricultural Sector, 2007

income, and ability to access technical support to produce quality food, maintain their natural resources, and apply good/cost effective farming practices.

With wholesale markets forced to close or relocate, control over borders for exporting, and movement restrictions, **markets are largely inaccessible**. This is compounded by the high transportation costs which can be time consuming (and can result in production losses) and unreliable market prices that rise and fall dramatically. Due to political conflicts, the value of Palestinian agricultural commodities exported to Israel and other countries fell from USD 97.3 million in 2000 to USD 21.1 million in 2003⁵. TATWEER's baseline identified that 'around 51.6% of the households reported that they had to sell part of their assets to cover their households' needs'⁶. As farmers become increasingly indebted, they face obstacles in maintaining their farming operation while at the same time providing for the families.

The Checkpoints and Barriers report highlights **women's economic participation** is under reported, however clearly the restrictions on land access and movement impact women and their roles and engagement in income generation. The report also outlines that women are taking on additional roles due to reduced access to employment for men.

Water resources are a central challenge to life in Palestine, because of the arid and semi arid nature of the climate, as well as the political situation. Palestinians have access to around 18% of the water from the West Bank's western, eastern and north-eastern aquifers, the remaining 82% of available water is used and controlled by Israel. Palestinians are required to obtain Israeli permits to undertake most activities that would increase access to water, such as rehabilitating existing wells, building new ones or increasing the pumping capacity of existing ones. Communities in these locations are also highly vulnerable to changes in environmental conditions such as drought, frost and strong winds.

b. NGO's intervention in Response to the Problem Statement

CARE received funds from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) to implement a five year project Livelihood Security and Civil Society strengthening in the occupied Palestinian territory, TATWEER or 'Progress' from May 2009 to April 2014 in partnership with two local organisations, the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem (ARIJ) and the Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC). TATWEER aims to strengthen the livelihoods and improve the food security of 6,150 Palestinian farming households (an estimated 33,825 individuals) in 17 villages in Jenin and Tubas Governorates. Through supporting farmers in the West Bank to become more productive, more aware and respectful of the value of natural resources and adopt more sustainable agricultural practices, with the aim of farmers (including women) adopting practices that will help them maximize their production capacity, reduce the costs of production and effectively manage their natural resources, mainly land and water.

The specific goal of TATWEER is: *to contribute to reduced vulnerability among communities in the Jenin and Tubas governorates through improved and sustainable livelihood security and increased capacity of civil society organisations.*

In line with the AMENCA II objectives TATWEER has the following core objectives;

- Objective 1: Improve food security, livelihoods, and natural resource management
- Objective 2: Increase the participation of women and youth in the Palestinian development process
- Objective 3: Strengthen the role of community organisations in the development process
- Objective 4: Contribute to efficient and effective management of the AMENCA II Program

The expected outcomes are:

1. Improved food security at the household level through increased food production for family consumption
2. Improved agricultural practices including more effective and ecologically appropriate farming methods and Natural Resource Management (NRM)

⁵ PCBS (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics). 2005d. Various data 2001-2004. Ramallah, Palestine

⁶ Community & Household Baseline Survey Analytical Report, ARIJ, 2010

3. Enhance the potential for women to increase their livelihood and income
4. Improved access to locally available quality services and skills
5. Strengthen the capacity of the participating civil society organizations to better address, advocate and respond to their constituent / community priorities and needs
6. Strengthen the responsibilities, role and status of Palestinian women through NGOs and CBOs
7. Strengthen the governance and management of CBOs including resource mobilization
8. Strengthening collaboration amongst AMENCA II partners and others for learning and continuous improvement throughout implementation

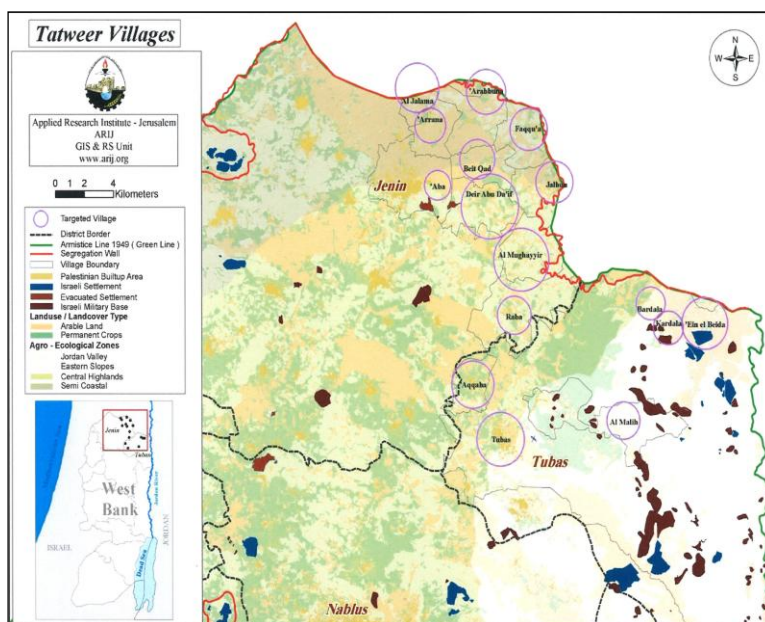
In addition to working alongside two local partner NGOs, one farmers association at the district level in Jenin and an additional 17 local CBOs, the project has recently signed an agreement with New Farm Company to support the marketing component of the project. The introduction of the marketing component was undertaken based on the LIOPT evaluation recommendations.

The project targets rainfed and irrigated farmers, women, and livestock breeders in the following communities;

Jenin District: Arabbuna, Faqu'a, Beit Qad, al Janubi, Deir Abu Da'if, Deir Ghazalleh, Jalbun, Arrana, Aba, Raba, Al Mughayyir and Al Jalama

Tubas District: Bardala, Ain-El-Beidah, Jordan Valley, Tubas and Aqqaba⁷

Communities were selected in part to continue and build on support provided under the LIOPT project. Selection of communities was also based on vulnerabilities due to geographic location, issues of proximity to the separation wall, restricted movements and checkpoints, and climate vulnerability to drought, frost and strong winds.



c. Project implementation

The specific activities and outputs managed under the project sit within, and contribute to, in some cases two or more of the AMENCA II outcome themes and TATWEER objectives and outcomes. See Annex 2 for the updated M&E framework and summary of progress to date against the targets.

The activities being managed within the objectives include;

- Expanding the seed multiplication bank established under AMENCA 1 (LIOPT)
- Establishing a vegetable seedling nursery in the North Jordan Valley
- Establishing a modern sheep farm
- Establishing a modern queen bee production unit
- Providing women with support to construct water harvesting systems, seedlings and tools for home gardens
- Rehabilitation of greenhouses
- Facilitating market linkages and setting up a marketing network

⁷ Refer to project website for further detail on the locations and geography - <http://proxy.arij.org/amencawebsite>

Capacity building support to NGOs and CBOs

There have been no major changes to the original planned objectives and outcomes, however did face delays in year one and therefore some activities were just getting established in year two. There have been also some key changes or additions at the activity level from the original design, in particular within the marketing component, including;

- The project initially planned to develop a vegetable packing house, however after further community consultation this was not identified as a priority for women. A number of recommendations were put forward to replace this. The planned market analysis survey once finalised aims to inform final decisions over priorities. At the time of the review the market survey was in draft form.
- The marketing component of the project provides a crucial role in closing the loop in increasing household income. The project has advanced this through signing an agreement with New Farm Company, who process and market locally made products, both locally and internationally. This activity is aimed at supporting women's access to markets and therefore linked into the home gardens and queen bee components, however there is potential for further linkages.

| Activity | Target | Reach to Date |
|--|----------------|---|
| Seed bank | 2,000 farmers | 787 received services and seeds 300 additional trained by leader farmers |
| Seedling nursery | 1,000 farmers | 105 farmers planted (benefiting more than 4,000 people) |
| Packing station | 350 farmers | N/A |
| Greenhouse rehabilitation | 850 farmers | 300 received inputs 200 trained |
| Sheep farm | 670 breeders | 20 farmers trained |
| Queen bee production unit | 780 beekeepers | 45 |
| Water harvesting systems and home garden support | 200 women | 50 |
| Marketing network | 450 women | tbc |
| Strengthened local CBOs | 16 CBOs | 18 CBOs |

In addition, the project in year two began to undertake further assessments of climate risks and vulnerabilities, with technical support from CARE Australia's Climate Change Advisor. The report and action plan are in draft form and once finalised and implemented will enhance in particular planned outcome two.

The AMENCA program partners have developed a joint consolidated program monitoring and evaluation framework. Subsequently the TATWEER team have revised the original project Logframe and integrated the key outcomes into an encompassing TATWEER Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This M&E framework (Annex 2) demonstrates the relationship of TATWEER targets to the overarching outcome themes and objectives of AMENCA II program framework.

The NGO implementing partners were selected in part as they had prior experience working with CARE under the LIOPT project and due to the complementary objectives, skills and experience they bring to supporting the aims of the project;

ARIJ: Aims to promote sustainable development and self-reliance in the oPt through increased control over Palestinian natural resources. ARIJ has long term experience in water and environment, waste management, information technology, land use and land cover analysis, GIS and remote sensing applications, biodiversity, climate change and combating desertification.

ESDC: Aims to contribute to building a strong Palestinian civil society and improving the livelihoods of Palestinian communities. ESDC's approach integrates technical expertise with capacity building and a specific focus on those most likely to be disenfranchised, such as women and the rural poor.

The project management structure, including Steering Committee of representatives across the NGOs, and technical committees, aims for genuine ownership and engagement and an inbuilt sustainability strategy. Project partners have been engaged in the project extensively from design which has resulted in strong ownership of activities.

III. Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

Given the project has just started its third year of implementation of a five year period, this MTR aims to review the performance of the TATWEER project, in line with the project design document, monitoring and evaluation framework, and AMENCA II objectives and outcome themes and provide recommendations for the remaining project period. CARE also saw the MTR as a valuable reflection and learning opportunity for CAREs work more broadly in the West Bank as CARE WB/G undertakes a long term strategic planning process.

This internal TATWEER MTR will feed into the overarching MTR for the AMENCA II program taking place in September. Likewise the recommendations of the TATWEER MTR will be informed by the overarching AMENCA II MTR recommendations. As such the project team will finalise revisions to the project where appropriate, as per the outcomes of both MTRs, in a planning meeting between CARE, partners and project stakeholders to take place in October/November 2011.

The specific objectives for the TATWEER MTR were to;

- 1) Assess the overall performance and achievements of the TATWEER project in line with the objectives, outcomes and goal of TATWEER and the AMENCA program
- 2) Assess the relevance and appropriateness of TATWEER objectives, activities, processes and systems
- 3) Assess the quality and accountability of partnerships (potentially using the Keystone methodology)
- 4) Review project burn rates, budget processes and financial management systems
- 5) Consider recommendations to better address women's empowerment through project activities, beneficiary selection and results.
- 6) Provide input into CARE WBG's current strategic planning process, with findings from the evaluation incorporated into WBG's internal analysis of overall program quality.

IV. Methodology used for the Mid-Term Review

The review began with a desk review of relevant project documentation and AMENCA II documentation and development of a framework of enquiry (see Annex 1) for the review, based on the MTR objectives and recommended structure of the MTR report/outcomes from AusAID.

A series of Focus Group Discussions and Semi-Structured Interviews were undertaken with project staff, partners, CBOs and direct and indirect beneficiaries in Tubas, Jordan Valley, Abba, Jalbourn and Arrabeh (in addition to Ramallah and Bethlehem for partner meetings). Field visits were carried out to each facility (Seed Bank, Nursery, Sheep Farm, Queen Bee Production), New Farm and farmer extension activities.

In addition a workshop was held with partners and staff, using CARE's Program Quality Assessment Tool (see Annex 6) as a basis to explore key cross cutting and quality programming areas, such as partnership and accountability, empowerment, monitoring & evaluation, reflective learning, sustainability and advocacy, as well as recommendations overall on the main strengths and areas for improvement.

The MTR faced the limitation, due to timing and availability of key people, of being unable to meet with key government representatives, and as such relied on the knowledge and experience of partners and staff on the relationships and perspectives around government engagement with the project. Use of a translator was required for some of the FGDs and interviews given the makeup of the parallel teams this was not required for all community consultations.

V. Findings

The following section on findings is presented under five sections; a summary overview of the findings presented against the DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance; process findings about the management and implementation of the program; outcome and results findings about the achievements and consequences (broken down by activity component); findings around risk management; and finally findings in relation to key cross cutting issues for the project.

a. OECD-DAC Criteria

Relevance

The AMENCA II Program Goal is *'To contribute to the reduction of the vulnerability of Palestinians (particularly women, children and youth) by improving livelihoods, access to basic services, and the capacities of Palestinian NGOs'*. The TATWEER project has at its core the objective of **reaching vulnerable** households in the West Bank through addressing vulnerabilities such as access issues and natural resource management. The 'Do No Harm' analysis undertaken by TATWEER at the design stage also outlined *'Social and cultural constraints that prevent including under-represented groups from participating in project activities'* as one of the main sources of potential conflict and harm. The Mid Term Review as such looked at the question of how the project is addressing the underlying causes and reaching the most vulnerable, including specifically vulnerable women.

The project is clearly working to address **underlying causes of vulnerability** in this context, through improved access to farming inputs, access to water and improved farming practices and natural resource management. The seed bank and nursery facilities (and the resulting improved access to seeds, reduced travel costs, reduced cost of inputs and increased production) are clearly a strength of the project, as demonstrated through the increasing demand that has been created and witnessed by the project for these services. A representative from ARIJ stated that the project *'addresses the key issues of accessibility, mobility and availability of resources for Palestinians'*.

Whilst the TATWEER project targets communities that are vulnerable due to location, access and mobility issues, it was identified that the project is not always directly targeting the most vulnerable groups within these communities for all activities (for example those with disabilities) due in large part to the agricultural focus, and for example the land access criteria, which for home gardens is minimum land access of ½ dunam of land, for other agricultural activities the minimum is 1 dunam. Noting the criteria differs for the activities, where the ½ dunam criteria is land close to the house for a home garden rather than farming land accessible away from the garden/home. Recognising however that farmers generally have between 5 and 25 dunams this criterion is still capturing small scale and therefore presumably more vulnerable farmers, particularly taking account of the reliance on agricultural production within these communities. Staff, partners and beneficiaries, reiterated that the project is supporting those who are already vulnerable, to be more resilient in the face of potential/future shocks. It's also important to note that sheep farming has been identified as a key area precisely as breeders are some of the most vulnerable in their communities.

Of note is that direct support in the first instance for some core activities is centred around CBOs and CBO members, however the baseline has identified that *'only around 13.5% of the farmers are currently members of one of the local CBOs'*⁸. This of course does not exclude direct benefit for non members however in some cases as outlined further below this may impact who accesses the services in the short term, and needs consideration as activities expand or are replicated.

The project team have been responding to specific requests for exceptions in hardship cases (for people who don't meet the selection criteria), and importantly have engaged CBOs/community members in developing criteria and ensuring communities clearly understand the criteria and are supportive. There was also anecdotal reporting during the MTR of farmer generosity/social solidarity in communities ensuring some sense of food security for the most vulnerable, however this is not a regular occurrence and of course does not provide ongoing assurance. As outlined below, something to explore further may be opportunities for communal activities where some individuals do not meet the selection criteria based on land access.

⁸ Community and Household Baseline Survey, pg18, ARIJ/CARE, 2010

The next step for the project is considering how far this reach can extend within the targeted communities and more broadly within the West Bank, which will also depend on decisions around prioritising, replicating or expanding on the existing facilities and activities. To some degree at present, the project is assuming there will be a broader effect, when existing facilities are fully established/self sustainable they will reach/be accessible to and benefit the broader community, including the most vulnerable people. Further that the benefits will be sustained, for example sustained income sources for farmers accessing the nursery and seed bank. There is much potential, for example the CBOs managing the nursery have indicated the potential to reach the whole of the Jordan Valley, however the assumption around broader reach/benefit will need to be monitored for some components as the project progresses.

The project aims to **engage youth and women** (in particular female headed households) in specific activities, however this needs further structure to be fully realised, as well as reflection on the level of vulnerability faced by the women selected. The project team has in the past year undertaken a Coping Strategies Index vulnerability assessment, which is also considered in informing selection of beneficiaries. The tool is also useful for ongoing monitoring of vulnerabilities to assess how the project is addressing these. At present however women's engagement is largely viewed in the context of engagement in the home garden, marketing components and CBO membership, whilst this will expand to sheep farming and beekeeping, clearly women are engaged outside of the project in all farming activities at the household level to some extent, for example taking on bookkeeping responsibilities, or working on the farms to support the husbands. The project would benefit from further analysis around this and the potential gender considerations of the current activities more broadly.

Moving forward for CARE WB/G the work currently being undertaken in moving to a program approach will support the team to better define/distinguish the impact groups and target groups and monitor the impact at different levels.

When asked what the key issues facing communities were, the response was consistently **water access and environmental constraints**. Water access was clearly identified as one of the key benefits of the project by communities, through provision of cisterns under the home garden component, or technical support with water management, and therefore reducing amounts used and cost of water access. The **climate change analysis** undertaken identifies further ways the project could support in water management and more broadly environmental management issues, however this report still needs to be finalised and cemented into planning. As outlined in the cross cutting section there is also further work that could be done in considering Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in a more comprehensive way within a package of Climate Change and Natural Resource Management considerations.

Given the scope of the project, across a number of activities and technical interventions, in moving forward decisions need to be made their potential for sustainability and where to prioritise financial investment for the remaining period of the project. The MTR believes that the relevance can clearly be linked to demand for the services. In consideration with return on investment, there is clear priority for development of the nursery, seed bank and marketing components for example. Activities such as the Sheep Farming, Queen Bee Unit and Greenhouse Rehabilitation have clear value and relevance, particularly in providing models for other farmers. However, they are less established at this stage and will benefit from further reflection on the intended impact, how they fit into the marketing strategy/component, and on selection criteria and targeting, which is being considered and developed in year three. As such the MTR recommends that these activities are approached as pilots or models for example building in further learning and reflection, analysis around assumptions of impact and targeting, and importantly building in an element of education/awareness to the broader community.

As outlined in section Vb the relevance of the capacity building component has been questioned by partners in so far as there is less demand and ownership, which partners believe is as a result of the disconnect between the capacity building and the technical aspects of the project/technical services provided.

Effectiveness

Activities under component one are moving ahead successfully, with clear demand and outcome success in relation to increasing farming production, increasing access to quality seeds and farming inputs, among other areas. The activities are

clearly addressing a need as evidenced by the community engagement and contribution and particularly in supporting to increase household food production and access to locally available quality skills and services. The priorities for the next two and a half years for TATWEER are around ensuring that this can lead to sustainable income growth (for those relevant activities), with emphasis on effectively establishing the marketing component.

There is less direct evidence to date, likely also given the stage of some of the activities, of the potential longer term effectiveness of the natural resource management component/greenhouse rehabilitation (ie in longer term adoption of the new approaches). Recognising that this is aiming for **longer term behaviour change**, there is anecdotal reporting of increased production and quality from adoption of organic practices by the direct target farmers and therefore recognition of benefits. There is also evidence that farmer-to-farmer exchange has increased as a direct result of support by the project, particularly through the establishment of the nursery as well as the seed bank. The project is establishing a participatory monitoring system to capture farmer inputs/outputs and income however the project would benefit from also monitoring the sustainability of the practices and ability to expand the knowledge beyond the initial target group.

In relation to objective three, those CBOs that are directly managing facilities, such as the nursery and sheep farm are demonstrating evidence of ownership and commitment. Capacity building focused around business management and financial planning will further support the sustainability of the initiatives. There is further work to do on engaging and prioritising support to the remaining CBOs to achieve the intended objectives, including reflection on the goals for and effectiveness of working with across 18 CBOs (three of which are combined into one Joint Management Committee), who have varying degrees of engagement and capacity.

Efficiency

The project clearly benefits from the skills and experiences of the partner organisations, who have been actively engaged in planning, implementation and monitoring. There is strong ownership of the project by partners and this is demonstrated in the commitment of the core team in the field. There are clear complimentary skills within the team, and as mentioned all partners identified further need opportunities for more **coordination and linkages** across the components and partners to draw this expertise across the project. This would involve more regular Steering Committee Meetings for example to support with strategic oversight and direction, in addition to engaging more experience from other members of partner NGO teams, including the skills and experience of the respective M&E officers.

The addition of the M&E officer position to the project structure has resulted in advancements in the development of a **monitoring and evaluation** and detailed reporting system for the project to track progress and monitor outcomes. The team are in the process of finalising some components of the M&E and reporting system, including finalising systems to capture detailed result information in areas such as production increases, cost savings, income raised, etc. The team has effectively been able to draw on support in this area from the program level M&E officer in the WB/G team.

Noting initial delays in implementation in year one the project has undertaken a significant number of activities in year two. Considering the number of technical interventions and activities, the financial investment in staffing and support appears very reasonable, given the achievements this past year in activity implementation and delivery. The MTR found that the project could benefit from further dedicated time and resources (less so at the technical level where the clear strengths are) to; integrating cross cutting considerations, DRR, gender; and to overall coordination, strategic planning and reflection opportunities. This could be undertaken in a number of ways, through increased engagement by additional partner staff, further senior level support within CARE (WB/G or Internationally), or may be a question of ensuring that the appropriate time is allocated to these areas in work planning.

Delays in implementation have been noted in some areas by partners (within the capacity building and marketing components particularly) as a result reportedly of timeframes required for approvals. Two key areas of investment need to be further explored: first, the investment in NGO capacity building, and where this would be better prioritised, and second, investment in capacity building for CBOs, to better integrate with technical interventions.

Due to exchange gains the project has an expected additional USD 1.3m over the life of the project, providing the AUD exchange rate remains consistent for the remaining two years of the project. Decisions clearly need to be made around the best investments moving forward in looking to further expand/replicate or strengthen existing activities through the remaining period of the project. The MTR outlines a number of recommendations, among them considering a tiered approach to the technical interventions, with Tier one being those initiatives with strong buy-in, greater impact as reported by farmers, and significant replication potential and Tier two as being more pilot innovations, and as such additional funding prioritised on this basis.

(Expected) Impact

While the project is yet to systematically collect outcome level information from observation during the review and the team's experience there are potentially many positive stories to share around the change in people's human conditions, social positions and in the operating environment in which they live.

Community members are reporting changes they are seeing in the **quality of products accessible locally**, lowering of production costs and access to appropriate inputs and technical expertise. The next step, for those relevant activities, is seeing impact at the income generation level, noting the contextual constraints, and which will in part be determined by the marketing approach. In addition to consideration of the self-sustainability of the facilities, this would benefit from further specialised technical support in business model development and financial management/sustainability.

Farmers are anecdotally reporting an increase in farmer solidarity through increased **farmer to farmer exchange**, through having local spaces to meet and share experiences. As well as through the **trust and ownership** built around the current facilities, particularly the nursery and seed bank, demonstrated through the commitment, funds reinvestment and idea sharing and adoption taking place. A further possibly unintended positive impact has been around the reported psychological impact for farmers, of knowing that what they invest they will get back, that they can trust the quality, amounts, pricing, and accessibility, as they are locally managed facilities.

There is also clearly positive impact for CBOs managing facilities, in their ability to **raise income and reinvest** in the facilities, and in their sense of ownership and ability to influence the direction and future planning for the initiatives. There is some sense however that the expected impact for the CBOs is less clear, or potentially less achievable, across the board as the project is working with a number of CBOs, with varying capacities, motivations and objectives. The intended impact would ideally be demonstrated through ability to manage ongoing activities, reinvestment in communities of their own accord, or less tangible but no less important in this context, community building and community empowerment. It is recognised that this requires a long term investment and may not be achievable for all CBOs, as some are at the inception stage, whilst others have a clear sense of purpose and direction already. As such the impact goals for different CBOs will and should vary and this should be taken into account when prioritising and tailoring the support they receive.

In relation to **impact for women** individual discussions with women during the MTR heard stories of women's positive experiences in being engaged in book keeping and decision making within the household on income and expenditure. There were also stories of unintended positive impacts such as the benefit women see with the home gardens in now having a space where women can meet together outside of the home.

The MTR has identified that further positive change could be seen through developing further linkages at a number of levels, including in governmental support to increase impact of CARE's work.

Sustainability

Sustainability considerations are built into the partnership model; partners having a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for activities and plans for future replication and expansion of the models established under the project, which clearly bodes well for ongoing sustainability. One of the other strengths of the project is in the community ownership and engagement. Already the project has seen CBOs reinvest of their own accord significant amounts back into facilities, for example the USD 30,000

contribution from the JGFA for the seedbank warehouse at the initial stages of project implementation. Further support in business management and financial management support would enable the facilities to plan for long term financial feasibility/sustainability. To date, the expansion and replication potential of some of the technical interventions has not been explored fully, including who would be involved taking these forward/replicating, and whether there is a role for government. This is also in part due to the stage the project is at, the coming years will address this further.

There is positive farmer to farmer exchange occurring, demonstrating interest and engagement. Farmers are reportedly seeing the benefit of organic farming practices in increased production, healthy products and costs savings. The project will need to continue to monitor this, and recommendations outlined below include integration of DRR into the NRM component to support with environmental constraints where possible that farmers are facing.

b. Process findings about the management and the implementation of the program

Overall the project faced some delays in year one relative to the initial year one plan and budget, with start up, licences, approvals, partner agreements, etc taking longer than initially anticipated. However the project has carried over activities into year two, and the implementation scheduling appears to be overall back on track. Spending for year two has slightly exceeded the planned budget, however has been absorbed within the exchange gains. Based on the findings and recommendations of both the TATWEER MTR and the overarching AMENCA II MTR, the project team will meet in October/November to undertake the detailed planning for the remaining period of the project.

Partnership and Coordination

Feedback received from the community has shown the project team have built a strong **positive relationship and trust** with the community, which has been demonstrated in community commitment to the activities, contributions made by CBOs to facilities and activities, and attendance and engagement in meetings.

The project team have **complementary technical skills and experience** which are greatly appreciated by the community and the overall quality of the services and delivery for the technical components is clear from discussions with community members. However as identified by partners the commitment and engagement does not fully extend to all areas of the capacity building component, for a number of reasons and including reasons outside ESDC's control. The lack of seemingly tangible results for CBOs (as perceived by CBOs) has led to less engagement within this component from some CBOs and to some degree is in part contributing to a perception that one project partner is valued more than the other, as a result of the ability to see direct tangible outcomes. The MTR process however highlights the mutual strengths of each organisation and the potential to further draw and engage both. For example ESDC has organisational objectives and mandates of working with vulnerable community members and working at the community level which is an area there is more potential to draw on within the project.

As identified by all partners, there is much more potential for further **coordination and linkages across partners and initiatives** within the project and drawing in the full expertise available, both at strategic level and at the practical. For example at the practical level developing linkages between the sheep farm and marketing components, linking the seed bank to the research arm of ARIJ in order to look into new crop varieties and to conduct research related to climate, geography, land quality, or linking input planning and capacity building. At the practical level this may involve initial discussions to better define roles and responsibilities across activities to support with linkages; at the strategic level, ensuring effectively facilitated regular steering and technical committee meetings are taking place and opportunities for reflection and learning developed. The project also has the potential to better draw on the mutual strengths of partners, for example partners are saying they have potential to share their learning with others, to network across borders (regionally, etc). There is opportunity for CARE and the project to support this further knowledge transfer, to also potentially support further research and advocacy around particular areas. These linkages could be with other research agencies and organisations working on agriculture and natural resource management. There is also value of forging greater links with MoA (knowledge transfer, replication potential, support to on-going activities).

Feedback from partners indicates they believe CARE has not invested enough in their role of supporting and facilitating strategic partnership and coordination. Partners see CARE's key role as building these links and cohesion between the different partners, through effectively facilitating regular dialogue and sharing opportunities.

Another key issue partners raised was around **responsiveness of payments** and approval of plans. Despite regular meetings on the issue by the finance teams and agreement on procedures documented in partner agreements this continues to be a concern. This needs to be reviewed further by CARE in light of procurement processes, whilst recognising that there are standard audit requirements that are required, such as timesheets and proof of payments, and clearly accountability and transparency procedures that CARE needs to adhere to. This issue also potentially links into the investment being made in NGO capacity building, to prioritise and ensure these investments are appropriate and advancing sustainability, for example support with systems and processes. Whilst TATWEER may not be able to address all of the concerns over financial accountability requirements there may be opportunity, as previously provided to ARIJ, to strengthen financial management procedures through hiring a consultant to support as part of the capacity building priorities for partners. A related issue raised was that of the compatibility of business management and financial processes with those of an INGO. This needs to be explored further potentially drawing on broader CARE International experience with private/public partnerships.

The MTR also raised a question of whether the relationship with CBOs (particularly those managing facilities) was viewed as a partnership, for the core CBOs managing facilities there is a much stronger sense of partnership, largely in part due to their being established with strong capacity. However for some of the remaining CBOs this relationship is more perceived and managed as beneficiaries. The MTR has identified the potential for further knowledge sharing amongst CBOs and practical assessment of the delivery of service to CBOs can happen through these clusters.

Recommendations

1. CARE to ensure **strategic alliance and improved coordination amongst partners** is taking place both at strategic and practical levels
2. **Build further linkages and learning between the different CBOs**
3. Look into opportunities for forging **alliances and partnerships at national and regional level**
4. Consider, where appropriate, dedicated **financial management support** as NGO capacity building priority

Monitoring and Evaluation

The design for TATWEER is based on solid **participatory analysis and lessons learned** from LIOPT. The project has also undertaken a baseline study which has produced accessible and relevant data to draw on and integrate into the M&E systems. The project team have in the past year developed a comprehensive consolidated monitoring and evaluation system and behind that a comprehensive reporting structure to capture the many components and perspectives of the project.

The MTR team recognise that the current M&E and reporting system has only relatively recently been in place and so there will be a process of piloting, reflecting on the approach and adapting accordingly. The key next step for the team is **enhancing the ability to capture outcome** and impact information. The Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology, has been built into the M&E system to support with capturing this, (amongst other tools), which also has the potential to capture unintended impacts, both positive and negative. However this is a new tool for the team and there would be benefit in receiving additional technical support. In particular for outcome themes 7 and 8 (capacity of civil society and strengthening role and status of women in civil society respectively) the M&E system needs to be able to capture more qualitative information to capture outcomes and success in these areas. See attached M&E framework in Annex 2 for some suggested indicators to support this.

During the program quality discussions it was identified that there is opportunity, given that partner NGOs have their own existing monitoring and evaluation expertise, to **engage partners further in the M&E analysis**, particularly at the outcome and impact

level. Including creating opportunities for reflection, analysis and capturing lessons learned, for example dedicated meetings in place to reflect on achievements, challenges, lessons learned and innovations. The quality discussions also identified the potential for a more **participatory approach to M&E**, for example strengthening validation mechanisms, reporting back to beneficiaries and gaining feedback, and potentially engaging community representatives in yearly reflection and planning meetings.

Recommendations

5. Benefit in bringing in **additional expertise in Most Significant Change** and ensure staff are well trained in the methodology
6. Improved coordination, alignment and engagement amongst **partners on outcome and impact analysis** through M&E and reporting systems
7. Opportunities identified for strengthening **participatory approach to monitoring** with communities and CBOs

c. Outcome and results findings about the project's achievements and consequences

The following outlines results findings and recommendations by activity components. Refer to attached updated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Annex 2) for a summary of outcome and results findings by AMENCA II outcome theme.

Seed Bank

ARIJ reported that the seed bank was 'like a dream of ours' and that there is now guaranteed availability of quality seeds for farmers at a low cost. The seed bank produced 150 tons in its first year of operation. Under TATWEER the seed bank has received additional technical support, training on crop rotation, seeds, a seed sorting machine and other equipment for the association and a tractor/cultivation machine. In addition the Jenin Governorate Farmers Association (JGFA), who manages the seed bank, and works with/reaches a further 16 CBOs, contributed approximately USD 30,000 to construct the warehouse.

The value of the seed bank is that it addresses the issue of access for many farmers, as well as quality of seed varieties. According to the seed bank members, this project has helped them to 'break the monopoly of Israeli companies' that exists on good quality seeds.

Other services provided JGFA include renting out the tractor at reduced rates, leader farmers who provide training to the broader community, and model plots as demonstration sites for farmers. The model plots are used to demonstrate which varieties gives better yield, under certain farming practice and taking into consideration the different climate conditions. This practical knowledge transfer is seen as the best way to convince farmers to adapt farming practices.

The seed bank also preserves the local seed varieties that are more suitable for the climate and farmer needs. One of the farmers stated that he had recorded an increase in the wheat yield using the seeds that he had purchased from the seed bank. Farmers also stated that the seed bank '*relieves the farmer from being at the mercy of the inputs trader, who usually charges a very high price for seeds*'. The seed bank charges approximately 20% less for better quality seeds. Farmers also talked about being able to meet, organize, learn from each other and to consider joint marketing options. In order to ensure that the farmers are using the seeds (not selling seeds to other farmers or input traders) they have organized themselves to monitor farmers through village committees.

'The value of the seed bank is that it addresses the issue of access for many farmers, as well as quality of seed varieties, both of which are restricted by the Israelis. According to the seed bank members, this project has helped them to 'break the monopoly of Israeli companies' that exists on good quality seeds.'

There is an interest from the **seed bank to replicate this model** and they are willing to share their experience with others in other locations. ARIJ in particular would like to see exchange across the north and south of the West Bank to also support with preserving the genetic varieties in the south. There was some discussion on engagement in launching a national seed bank in order to scale up this experience.

Over the last year, farmers have been able to take out required quantities, with the condition that this same quantity is returned following the harvest. There has been an important discussion about how JGFA can make an income of this (perhaps at a % increase in return of seeds from farmers, but this is being disputed from a religious perspective). The seed bank is also making profit by selling the hay, straw, part of the seeds produced and services. Also each year the seed bank use part of the harvested seeds to plant in their own fields for multiplication purposes to get more seeds to compensate for the losses as well as generating income.

Today, 80% of farmers do not default on 'payment' but there is risk for the association if it continues to pick up the 20% of default costs associated with delays in payment or non-payment. In order to scale up the seed bank needs a solid business model to ensure that in future they cover their operating costs from money generated through loans and services provided to farmers.

This year an additional 200 farmers made requests for seed supply, due to this **increase in demand**, the association has decided to ensure all farmers receive services, but not necessarily in the quantities they request. As a result farmers are also resorting back to inputs traders (at a higher cost) for the remaining needs.

The seed bank does provide seeds to women, but there is potentially a land and access issue to consider which needs further exploration, noting that the seed bank wants to integrate the packaging of products as an activity for women.

Recommendations

8. The issue of sharing benefit and sharing risk has to be explored by the Association
9. Support with development of a feasible business model to enable financial sustainability and potential future replication or expansion (including considerations of taking to scale through supporting the establishment of a national seed bank)

Nursery

The nursery addresses key access issues for farmers resulting in saving time and money on transportation and reducing risks of damage to produce during transportation. It was reported that previously they risked losing 50 to 80% of the quality of seeds waiting at checkpoints. Now communities are able to effectively plant directly from the nursery. Because seeds are grown in the same environment they are planted and appropriate to that environment there is better yield and faster growing, reported 20 to 25 days now for the seedlings for what other varieties from other locations might take 40 to 45 days. However another very important element that was communicated was trust; farmers know their yield is nearby, they can check them everyday if they want to and that they will get back the amount of seedlings they put in. The nursery has also provided the benefit of creating a space for farmer to farmer exchange and where traders meet with farmers.

The nursery is raising a profit (USD 14,000 in one season) which to date has been reinvested into the nursery. At present however it is not financially self sustainable in that they aren't making sufficient profit to cover salaries of the three staff employed. Through the management committee representing the three CBOs, they now have a joint account, which lends to a sense of joint ownership, and they have agreed collectively to use last year's profits to extend the land used for the nursery to 5 hectares. The Joint Management Committee have also set up a system where for each planting cycle the profit is split based on the number of propagating trays from members of respective CBOs (ie more plots per CBO, more profit goes to that CBO). Whilst the profits are being reinvested in the nursery at present further down the track it's not clear if there will be unintended impacts around the process of plot allocation and splitting the profits between the CBOs. This will need to be monitored.

There is strong ownership and sense of self reliance 'not waiting for someone to help us' and capacity to manage the nursery and again more demand than they can supply at present. The three CBOs jointly managing the facilities have invested 120,000 Shekels back into the nursery and have undertaken an assessment of the supply and demand, identifying that they need capacity for 4million seedlings to meet the full demand (with current capacity of 1million seedlings).

ARIJ would like to see the nursery develop into a company; whether this is the best approach needs to be discussed, however there is clearly need and opportunity for the project to support with business and feasibility planning.

Whilst there is clear benefit in saving costs and increased production for those farmers accessing nurseries and benefit for the CBOs, from the discussions with farmers anecdotally they are not necessarily seeing any significant increase in income for families as yet because of market access issues. What profit farmers do see goes directly back into the household. There are plans for engaging women in the nursery in the off season (April to August) with fruit trees and ornamental plants.

Raised 60,000 Shekels over past three seasons

10 Shekel saving per 1,000 seedlings for farmers compared to other nurseries

Reaching 4,000 farmers – 1m seedlings, with demand of 4million seedlings from community

Saving 20 days in growing time compared to other nurseries

The climate change analysis outlined specific recommendations for water harvesting and promotion of new varieties of seeds. This diversification aims to ensure environmentally appropriate seed types, however this would also potentially support to address in part some of the issues of market saturation and fluctuation. The draft market study identified that on the whole CBOs aren't currently producing a large number of the products that are profitable in the current market, however its not clear whether the nursery beneficiaries where included in this study as the market component is at present focused on income generation for the home garden activities.

Recommendations

10. Market analysis/marketing component to look at links to the nursery activities (including plans for off season)
11. Support with business and financial planning through capacity building component
12. Climate Change Adaptation plan and budget to be developed based on report (once finalised and disseminated)

Queen Bee Keeping Unit

The Queen Bee Keeping Unit was one of the last activities to be developed, officially starting in April 2011, with the aim of improved access and quality. The activity is showing signs of success in developing grafting techniques and of potential sustainability through not only providing queen bees to backyard farmers but also of a quality able to sell at a higher price to commercial honey farmers. The queen bees are given to women in a 'revolving fund' mechanism, with the intent of providing higher quality bees and therefore more honey production at a much reduced cost. The Queen Bee Unit is managed under ARIJ and as such has benefit of ARIJ's applied research skills and experience.

As dissemination to women's groups has just begun it's not clear whether this is demand based and what the criteria for selection will be. This will need further exploration to determine the longer term capacity of women's groups to maintain the bee keeping, particularly if this is to be new technique/practice introduced. As a new initiative the full potential is yet to be seen as such the MTR suggests considering this as a Tier Two innovation, looking at providing training and awareness to women's groups on raising practices. As the initiative progresses it would be beneficial to continually review and document the successes through an action/applied research approach, including consideration and assessment of the potential for marketing linkages.

Sheep Farm

The Sheep Farm was established with the objectives of improving breeder access to services, improving livestock breeds in Tubas and Jenin, and increase dairy produce. The 123+ breeders who are members of the Tubas Cooperative Society for Developing Livestock CBO will also be recipients of the service. The CBO has contributed 5 dunums of land, electricity and water supply, while the project invested in the infrastructure (Barn), the veterinary service and the equipment for dairy processing. The project also provided training on managing livestock, increasing their breeding through sheep farm management practices, feeding/nutrition, insemination etc. The project has also been encouraging the CBO to purchase livestock feed in bulk, and the milk that is currently being produced (not in large quantities) is sold in bulk to a supermarket. The return is reinvested in the CBO.

The value added of the project is in **making breeders more resilient**, and the project has helped them to be more collaborative, to see collective marketing as their aspiration. They are now more committed to collaboration amongst the breeders, as well as collective decision making.

This is another area of work where a faster pace of demand is created than the CBO can supply. There is potential to meet this demand by collaboration with 5 other farms that have been established under another PMZ funded project, which has replicated this model. No linkages have been established to date so it is not clear how the distribution is happening in order to ensure proper targeting and that the benefit is also shared by women. The CBO could meet growing supply if it expands the activity. So far, the activity is restricted to a barn on 5 dunums of land, which means that the barn cannot be expanded unless infrastructure is expanded. To date the CBO has used some of the income raised to expand the barn already to accommodate more sheep, however further expansion is needed to meet demand.

The division of the sheep in the farm according to their age and status is unique in this area and has a positive reflection on the environment and health of the sheep which leads to an increase in production and decrease in the disease

Breeders feel the technical support they receive is sufficient, but in order for it to become 'a **model sheep farm**', which they have identified as a goal, they still need to expand gradually, in terms of the number of livestock they produce. The CBO provides a unique model of its kind in Tubas and has received breeders from other locations in Jenin to share the experience. The value perhaps of the model then is not solely in its ability to increase numbers of sheep and rams available to breeders but more so in its being a demonstration model for breeders on sound livestock management, and how technical information and inputs can help them manage their independent sheep farms. The Tubas CBO running the sheep farm doesn't yet have a business plan which would support them to understand what 'expansion' would entail. Further the farm will need to ensure that breeders have appropriate space to rear animals in a healthy environment at reduced risk of disease.

The current diary milk supply is limited to the point where they are unable to make full use of the existing equipment provided by the project and therefore are not producing in large quantities. They are linked to the seed bank that provides them the fodder at lower prices.

There is limited networking with the department of veterinary services at the MoA. Arguably, the department of Veterinary services is said to be unequipped to 1) support this model farm or 2) replicate this experiment elsewhere. The CBO is also male dominated, and as a result, the service reaching women may be limited, further consideration of this will need to account for traditional roles in the community around livestock raising. Distributed of inputs from the sheep farm will begin later this year and the criteria will look at the most vulnerable breeders, including considering holding size as it relates to vulnerability. The project team are informed by research that identifies that breeders are some the most vulnerable people in these communities.

Recommendations

13. Selection criteria to ensure equitable distribution of rams/sheep and consider access for

women where appropriate

14. Review linkages with Department of Veterinary Services and links with New Farm
15. Support with development of a business plan to review the model, promotion of good practices and expansion capacity

Greenhouse

Whilst the activity is titled 'Greenhouse Rehabilitation' the intent of this component sits under *Outcome Theme 3: Improved agricultural practices including more effective and ecologically appropriate farming methods and natural resource management*. The activity is providing technical support on organic farming methods, environmentally appropriate seed types and techniques and equipment to better guard the greenhouses against pests and environmental strain and damage.

Farmers are reporting that the support to the Greenhouse rehabilitation is making a difference to the productivity and production of healthier products. Women the MTR team met with have observed change in practice around reduction in the use of chemicals and the increase in use of organic composting. However, and although not an objective of the activity, it's worth noting that whilst productivity is seen to be increasing farmers still face significant issues around market access, overproduction and competition. Some farmers reported they are running on debt and others that one of the benefits of greenhouses is in their ability to retain access and ownership of their land.

Farmer exchange is happening and anecdotally seems to be effective however it's not clear yet whether this is being captured and how far it extends, i.e. whether it extends beyond CBO members and/or farmers that have received the direct inputs. The M&E system plans to capture this through focus groups with indirect beneficiaries (using a control group). Particularly as this component represents a not insignificant financial investment for the project the question of reach and sustainability of the behaviour change is key.

Whilst men are largely the direct beneficiaries for this activity wives reported experiencing the full benefit of their husband's engagement on the project. They are also very knowledgeable of the services provided and state that '*what knowledge their husbands gain is transferred to them*'. They also spoke of an improved financial situation and stated that any one of the family members was involved in keeping the books and this was not restricted to the husband, so they know how much income is made. However discussion with wives of the greenhouse farmers again highlighted the problem of marketing their yield, and that they did not yet know about New Farm. Although New Farm had visited this CBO and provided an orientation of New Farm's work, this information has not trickled down to farmers. Interestingly the Baseline report identified that '*78.7% of the surveyed men reported that they would like to have their wives trained on new skills so they can help in generating income to further support their families*⁹. The women requested that, even though they are not direct recipients of the project interventions and services, the project should still include some agricultural extension for women, to increase their know-how on crop production and farming practices so that they can support their husbands in the fields.

The CBO has suggested that they could undertake further income generation through the purchase and renting out of a fertiliser sprayer to farmers at an affordable price. They have requested that CARE provide this and the team is considering the request. There are also plans to look at water harvesting techniques training for communities in future. Feedback received from one CBO representative included ensuring that sterilisation techniques are adapted/appropriate to the geographic location. Farmers also reported that they still face many environmental risks, including issues with insects as such there is still some concern raised by farmers around the types of fertilisers in use which needs to be looked into (potentially through further trainings). Once again there are a number of recommendations in the Climate Change analysis report that would support with water access and environmental constraints.

Recommendations

16. Consider further agricultural extension services to women and in existing activities of

⁹ Community and Household Baseline Survey, pg15, ARIJ/CARE, 2010

women's access to the greenhouses and support provided to farming and funds management

Home Gardens

The home garden activities started with a pilot of 50 women, with plans for expansion in the coming years. The activity provides seeds, technical support and water cisterns to enable the establishment, or regeneration of home gardens, with the aim of both initially supporting household food security, but in the longer term an additional income source for households, as the project supports to establish market linkages.

Compared to other initiatives in this first phase this activity is reaching a relatively small number of beneficiaries, however the project plans to expand this reach this year. The women the MTR met with reported an improvement in household food consumption both in quantity and in quality, and of their ability to share produce with neighbours, as a result of the initiative. As yet they are not in a position on the whole to sell the produce for income generation. Demonstrating the potential of the activity to improve household resilience to food insecurity, particularly in this ever changing context.

Interestingly many people spoke of the key benefit being the water/irrigation, and many community members are requesting cistern support although they don't meet the selection criteria for the home garden (and green house). The climate change report has also recommended expanding the cistern component to other activities such as the livestock component. The benefits of which are also cost savings for purchasing water.

Although largely community members seemed to think the selection criteria is fair there was anecdotal reporting from people requesting support who meet the selection criteria but aren't receiving support as yet. The MTR notes that there are plans to expand this activity and a waiting list has been developed and the process communicated to community members.

Some women reported that not all seeds provided were in season and this needs to be taken into consideration in future. There was also a suggestion made around the opportunity for community gardens where households don't meet the criteria of ½ dunam of land and for people who don't have flat land near the house appropriate for a home garden. Community gardens would mean the responsibility lies with the community and perhaps there may be a sense from some women that this would mean less individual pressure. There may however be movement restrictions that may inhibit some women from engaging in a community garden which would need to be explored further.

Recommendations

17. Explore feasibility of community level initiatives (in addition to household level)
18. Consider expanding cistern provision and technical support on water management

Strengthen capacity of civil society organisations

Of an original 35 applications 24 CBOs were initially selected for support under TATWEER. For a number of reasons this is now down to 18 (including Jenin Farmers Association) – see Annex 3 for details of these. ESDC indicated there are levels of CBO development that CBOs go through:

Formatting Level → Development level → Maturity level

Each CBO will be/is at a different stage in development, and this needs to be considered in assessing the approach and intended outcome of the capacity building component which sits under *Outcome Theme 7: 'better address, advocate and respond to their constituent/community priorities and needs'*. To be in a position to influence community decision making the CBO needs to be in the maturity stage, however this takes time and investment to reach. ESDC believe from the assessments that of the CBOs the project is working with 90% are still in formulation level. Further that CBOs in these locations face major challenges such as difficult climate (drought, etc), political issues and challenges associated with being located in poor communities. The project could potentially draw on experiences within CARE International in approaches to capacity building,

for example the ABCD strengths based approach used in parts of Africa, which sets realistic milestones for CBOs and enables a graduation system to the next level and as such a staged approach to development through the stages.

In addition what was highlighted and important to factor into the **capacity building approach** is the variety or types of CBOs, for example clubs, charitable organisations (registered with the Ministry of Interior) and cooperatives (registered with Ministry of Labour) and as such they have very different mandates, objectives and motivations. The benefit of being in a cooperative is seen to be that members themselves can directly benefit (including financially) from the membership, whereas charitable organisations are established to support the community and of course as such are not for profit. ESDC reported that TATWEER predominantly at present (in relation to the number of CBOs) works with charitable CBOs. As CBOs are at different stages, and have different mandates they would necessarily have different goals and therefore the capacity building approach needs to factor in the differing development goals the CBOs would have and the timeframes required to reach them.

The baseline identified that *‘the majority of the local people were not happy with the way that [existing] CBOs operate or were established. This is because the way that these CBOs have been established in which the local people never been consulted or involved in the process’*¹⁰. Which also speaks to the self agency of CBOs. There is a need across the project to develop a common understanding of CBO objectives and motivations to support the capacity building approach.

A question raised by the partners was around the appropriateness of Participatory Organisation Needs Assessment Tool (PONAT) as a standard CBO level assessment tool. The implication being that whilst this may be applicable for NGOs and fully established CBOs (particularly those that aim to develop into a business and/or cooperatives), it is less suitable for grassroots CBOs. The project team are planning a further questionnaire to gather information required to support the baseline/PONAT assessments.

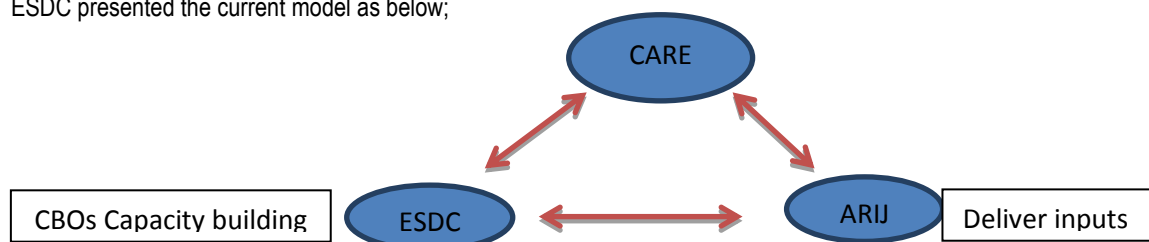
The team have also suggested there are a large **number of CBOs to work** with across the project and it is therefore unrealistic to expect to see results in capacity building for all CBOs to the same level, particularly when CBOs are all at varying stages of development and require varying levels of investment. One approach the team have undertaken is developing joint management committees made up of a number of CBOs, as in the case of the nursery, with the purpose of unifying efforts within communities. This is seen as beneficial particularly in these communities with small population numbers and a large number of CBOs who may be competing for funding and opportunities. This has proved to be a successful model in this case, however this may also be related to the type of facility it is structured around. Another approach trialled was merging CBOs however there have been some negative implications noted from merging. For example one case of merging a charitable CBO with a cooperative has had the effect of deterring some women from joining, partly due to the cost involved (200 – 300 JD to join some cooperatives), partly that families don't see the need (and can't afford) for two members of the family to be represented. The impact of merging on the dynamics of CBOs also needs to be considered, for example women in Al Jalameh CBOs were concerned that the CBO would lose its unique identity after merging with a men's CBO in their community. There have been cases of CBOs requesting to go back to the original structures.

If the objective of merging CBOs is also around working with less CBOs (and maximising efforts as there are many CBOs in the areas), the project should also consider alternative approaches, such as working with less CBOs, considering the linkages between CBOs and drawing on the Joint Management pilot. Any decision would need to take into account the benefits of working with CBOs, in their ability to support with reaching communities (selecting beneficiaries, etc), for components such as the home garden activities, and their potential to support with collective agreements for women. For example if the project wasn't working with some CBOs would some women who are receiving home garden support therefore need to develop individual agreements with New Farm to access the marketing component and what would the implications be.

¹⁰ Community and Household Baseline Survey, pg17, ARIJ/CARE, 2010

ESDC also highlighted the potential for the capacity building component to be more integrated and complimentary to the inputs provided in the project, to increase engagement, sustainability and relevance of the support. For example there is potential for ESDC to undertake need and feasibility assessments around the business' they are trying to create for the CBOs.

ESDC presented the current model as below;



ESDC are proposing that a more effective model would be to undertake the capacity building and technical components together in a complimentary package.

Particularly as some CBOs appear to be disengaged ESDC have raised the issue around need for inputs to CBOs who receive just capacity building support (although the community may receive home garden and/or greenhouse support with support from the CBO in selecting beneficiaries and developing selection criteria). There were a series of recommendations within a report by ABC Consulting, such as the need for organisational charts and clear line of communications for each CBO, clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, strategic planning, etc. However of particular note were the recommendations around **buy-in and ownership of CBOs** including that *'the intervention plan should achieve immediate success and demonstrate immediate impact on CBOs'* and finally that *'CBOs should be given a "carrot" (incentives) to participate in the project'*. It's not clear whether incentives are the whole answer to this issue, however there is need to ensure more linkages between the inputs provided to communities and CBOs and the capacity building provided, which would look to address the issue of relevance and therefore presumably the question of buy in. For example action/business planning with CBOs within the capacity building component needs to be linked to the community inputs provided. This is certainly the case for CBOs directly managing facilities, and for example CBOs who are supporting home gardens and greenhouse components would likely benefit from further linkages between the capacity building and marketing components.

There is recognition that the approach to capacity building needs to be reviewed. Recommendations received included that **practical knowledge transfer** rather than one off theoretical trainings would be more appropriate, for example the sheep farmers in Tubas have indicated that the capacity building support they receive is very theoretical and are proposing more practical support, for farmers to be able to see for themselves how simple change in practices can bring about better results. The project has identified budget for year three to undertake practical demonstration plots on farmer and breeder land to support this. The project overall needs to consider the financial investment in NGO and CBO capacity building, recommendations are provided above in the partnership section around investment in systems for NGOs, and as outlined in a number of areas prioritising capacity building component in line with the activity objectives for CBOs.

Recommendations

19. Review capacity building approach to consider/integrate the following;
 - a) More direct linkages to technical aspects of project delivery
 - b) Tailor capacity building plans to different types of CBOs and their capacity levels, maturity and importantly organisational aims
 - c) Reflect on experiences within CARE International in developing a staged/milestone approach to capacity building
 - d) Increase practical knowledge transfer, through adopting for example mentoring approaches in place of theoretical trainings
20. Further reflection and analysis to take place around the impact and purpose of plans for

further CBO merging

21. Further consideration of representation (particularly women and youth) across the membership base both in CBOs and CBO committee membership

Marketing

This component began in the second half of year two with an agreement signed with New Farm and more recently a market study undertaken. ARIJ highlighted the comprehensive program approach this represents through providing inputs, knowledge around good farming practices, and then access to markets. New Farm have to date undertaken awareness and trainings with CBOs and rented space in markets across Ramallah and Bethlehem to sell the items.

The market study, which is being completed at present, looks at the types of products for local market and variances that affect what prices people are willing to pay. Noting that in some areas of the West Bank there is significant demand for organic foods, which shows promise for the project market linkages given the emphasis of this in practices promoted. The study touches on elements of access, recognising the impact of lack of variety of production amongst farmers (and therefore also internal competition and over production) on local market access and prices. Interestingly the MTR found that many farmers choose the same varieties of vegetables (nearly all growing tomatoes and cucumbers) because of the low risk associated, which is something the team will need to consider in conjunction with the research results in relation to competition and saturation in the market. Of note the market study also indicates that packaging and labelling are not necessarily a major factor in people's market choices locally (this may differ in future when looking at an international market). However at this stage it doesn't necessarily explore food processing options/opportunities and the potential benefits (or not) in the local market which the team will need to review before making a final decisions on the direction for the marketing component. Other questions the team should consider before making these decisions include;

- Will all CBOs currently working with the project access/benefit from the marketing component? Would all CBOs be at the collective bargaining point with New Farm?
- At present there is a limited number of products that New Farm are marketing, noting there are plans to expand this, good to engage New Farm further with the market survey results and follow up.
- Exploration of the priorities and market potential around food processing.
- Instability in the local market – farmers mentioned sometimes the same product/amount could sell for 25 shekels at one point or 2 at other times - tomatoes earlier this year were selling for \$1 where they previously sold for 4 to \$5.
- The market study identified that 'CBOs don't produce enough food that can be sold at market' and that '60% of the CBOs do not produce any of the products mentioned in the survey' ie marketable products.
- Diversification of seeds - to support with; ability to sell locally (avoiding saturation); market fluctuation; and as part of NRM/CC strategy.
- Feasibility for farmers to switch products readily from what they are currently producing to meet the recommendations in the Market Survey
- Environmental/climate change considerations around the products that are being recommended
- Further awareness raising around New Farms pricing approach and the role for the project (perhaps ESDC) in supporting the development of agreements and monitoring/supporting communities to ensure they are producing consistently at a standard required for the relevant markets (particularly if they are locked into an agreement).
- And of course importing/exporting restrictions.

Recommendations

22. In consultation with partners and CBOs, marketing strategy to consider;
- a. production as well as products that are marketable
 - b. competition in the local market
 - c. environmental appropriateness of the products
 - d. future potential linkages to other components of the project
 - e. production standards of communities and standards set out by New Farm

- f. CARE/ESDC role in developing the agreements/MOUs between communities and New Farm
- g. increasing New Farm, CBO and community linkages to ensure that communities are aware of the opportunities

Moving forward

Moving forward the project has decisions to make around expanding existing facilities, replicating, or supporting current facilities to be sustainable (and therefore questions of broader access to these facilities), and/or whether there should be more focus/expansion of activities directly targeting vulnerable beneficiaries/households.

The MTR team recommend that the team considers a **Tiered approach to the technical interventions**. Tier I with strong buy-in, greater impact as reported by farmers, and significant replication potential (seed bank, nursery), with Tier II being more pilot/model innovations (greenhouse, bee unit, sheep farm) and adapting the approach to the implementation accordingly and where appropriate the resource allocation. Similarly the capacity building support should look at a layered approach to support and tailoring more the approach to the varying strengths, objectives and capacities of the CBOs.

There is clearly a benefit in the home gardens in providing a sustainable food source for vulnerable households, this benefit should not be underestimated in the impact it could have in the longer term on reducing vulnerability, however as noted there is less potential for reach of this component. These factors need to be assessed and weighed up in developing the plans for the upcoming years and taking account of whether the project is moving to achieve Objective 2. This is also where the importance of setting up effective monitoring systems is needed in reviewing the outcomes, as well as unintended impacts (positive and negative).

CARE WB/G also has the opportunity to sensitively consider the **potential for advocacy** to support with sustainability and increasing the impact of the initiatives. The team identified a number of potential areas of advocacy (community building, youth empowerment, women in decision making) however two key access issues appear to stand out for TATWEER; access to water and access to markets. At present the project team feel that though the project has no set advocacy strategy and little work is being done to influence policy as yet, there is an embedded understanding and support for advocacy positions and advocacy issues are clearly emerging and known by staff. As such there is evidence and potential to be drawing on this. In addition the project has good communication and working relationships with key stakeholders (i.e. governor hosting meetings with CBO beneficiaries) and experience amongst the partners to be working further in this area.

As outlined based on the recommendations from both the TATWEER and AMENCA II MTR the TATWEER partners will meet to plan out the remaining work to the end of project and make final decision making/budgeting/planning.

Recommendations

- 23. Project to consider a tiered approach to the technical initiatives – Tier I focusing on business model development and Tier II focusing on pilot models as demonstrations of good practice
- 24. Consideration of development of an appropriate advocacy strategy, including consideration of linkages between existing projects and partners

d. Risk management since the start of the project

Refer to Annex 4 for the updated risk matrix in addition to a review of risks faced to date. Whilst no critical events were brought to the MTR attention there continue to be potential risks that need to be monitored as outlined in the annex in the more detail, including (but not exclusive to);

- Upcoming key events such as the elections and the request for UN status
- Environmental risks such as drought, frost and strong winds

- Strategy and capacity for engaging MoA and government departments in considering ongoing sustainability

e. Cross cutting issues

Engagement of women and youth

In line with *Objective 2: Increase the participation of women and youth in the Palestinian development process* consideration has been made to target women in specific activities, ie the home garden activity. Beyond this the team has also made efforts to engage women and youth. However as identified there has not been holistic analysis undertaken to support the approach and there is not a consistent strategy in place. The project is also not making the distinction necessarily between the differing intent and objectives of targeting women/empowering women and consideration of gender as a cross cutting issue. This is a key gap for the project. There is also a question within this of whether the project is, or should be, targeting the most vulnerable women.

The project does have some analysis to draw on that needs to be further considered in relation to the project initiatives, for example the baseline revealed that;

'97% of the households are headed by men in which the age of the head of the households ranges from 23 to 90 years with an average age of 49. The age of the remaining female headed households (3%) ranges from 25 to 85 years with an average age of 52.3 years old. Of these female headed households 86% are widows, 7% are divorced and 7% are unmarried. The size of the household varies from 1 member to twenty, with an average of 6.8 members per household in which 49.3% are females and 50.7% are males. It was also found that 44.9% of households have one to six members'¹¹.

The project design document outlined that;

'Traditionally, Palestinians practice agriculture as a family business in which women and men work together in their fields. Women represent around 34.3% of the total workforce in this sector. According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 27.3% of Palestinian working women in the West Bank work in the agricultural sector¹²...Women may have access to resources such as land, labour or income but have very limited or no control over them'. According to the baseline 'Around 55.4% of the surveyed women reported that they always involved in making decisions, 9.0% sometimes and 35.6% never involved in the process'¹³.

Of note a sample of women interviewed during the MTR requested that, even though they are not direct recipients of the project, the project include **agricultural extension services for women**, increasing their knowhow on particular crop production and farming practices so that they can support their husbands in the fields. Whilst they may not be a representative sample, discussions with these women also suggested that at the household level these women are **engaged in decision making** about reinvesting money, have control of household expenditure and also in some cases directly support with bookkeeping.

Conversely however one woman also talked about the **risks associated with trying to pay off the loan** she took out in her name for ownership of their nursery (from a CBO which is not a partner of the project). The loan was needed in order to keep up with the requirements of the intervention that the project has been promoting and in which her husband is participating, however this year their tomato yield harvest did not bring in the expected returns. She has had to borrow from friends and neighbours to pay of this loan. The project needs to be conscious also of unintended impacts on women.

Whilst women are engaged in the CBOs, it's not clear whether this engagement will in future lead to real opportunities to be heard and ideas taken on board, and therefore to have any real impact on perceptions, status and roles. Clearly this would be a long term goal however still would benefit from further consideration at this stage, including around the roles women are currently undertaking in the CBOs and if the current approach taken is the best way to influence dynamics within CBOs.

¹¹ Community and Household Baseline Survey, pg6, ARIJ/CARE, 2010

¹² PCBS Labour Force Survey, December 31, 2008.

¹³ Community and Household Baseline Survey, pg15, ARIJ/CARE, 2010

As mentioned gender considerations on the whole seem somewhat limited to a focus on women's engagement in select activities and there is not yet a systematic approach to gender considerations across the project as a cross cutting issue. However the team are looking at exploring opportunities for engagement with other NGOs working in gender in the area. The team would also benefit from further reflection on the dynamics between individual agency, structure and relations as outlined in CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework (Annex 5) as well as further time dedicated to discuss gender dimensions as part of reflection and learning and to inform project planning. In addition CARE and partner NGOs should engage women's groups in a regular basis to make sure their issues, concerns and priorities are addressed. Similarly whilst there are examples of youth engagement, there does not appear to be a strategy in TATWEER for engaging youth.

Recommendations

25. Further gender analysis/consideration is needed, drawing potentially on expertise of partners and more broadly within CARE. This could be integrated with further vulnerability/targeting analysis (potentially including assessment of youth engagement) to further explore;
- a) unintended impacts on women from activities
 - b) gender dynamics and impact on activities
 - c) impact of the CBOs merging on women's participation
 - d) how gender considerations could be integrated into CBO support (roles of women for example)
 - e) potential restrictions on engagement for some women and implications for reach of project, movement, financial, etc
 - f) representation and engagement of a cross section of women
 - e) engaging women's groups in a regular basis to make sure their issues, concerns and priorities are addressed

Environment and Water Management

As outlined key issues identified by and facing communities are natural hazards, drought, frost and wind and of course access to water. The team are looking at pilot activities in the next period for example trialling weather reporting systems. The MTR endorses the recommendations presented in the Climate Change analysis report, including looking at a more holistic approach to Disaster Risk Reduction as a cross cutting issue, in addition to expanding the water management component of the project.

VI. Lessons learned

The summary recommendations below also capture key areas of reflection for the project to consider in planning for the remaining period of the project, however a couple of key lessons that CARE could consider in moving forward include;

Whilst staff turnover in NGOs since the design phase has potentially also contributed to NGOs feeling there hasn't been enough coordination amongst the partners of late. Regardless the feedback received is that partners feel that this needs to more of a priority, ensuring that Steering Committee Meetings take place, ensuring that partners are engaged through implementation in strategic decision making and drawing on the relative strengths and skills of partners across the project (rather than just those their NGO is directly responsible for) recognising that the project would greatly benefit from this further coordination and sharing experiences and expertise.

Moving forward CARE WB/G will need to reflect on the appropriateness of the PONAT tool for different contexts and whether it is a tool that is best applied for NGOs and CBOs at a certain point in their institutional development.

There is much potential for the project and project staff to be drawing on broader experiences within CARE International, for example; reflection on CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework as it applies to the project; exposure to the CARE gender analysis tools that exist; sharing approaches to Capacity Building; and, Private/Public relationships. It's recognised this can be

challenging given the imperative focus on implementation of activities, however the senior M&E support provided through CARE WB/G is potentially a good model to draw on, in addition ensuring space within staff's schedules for regular reflection around key issues would be very beneficial (likewise ensuring space within schedules for professional development would also benefit the project).

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

TATWEER in its first two years of implementation has set a strong basis to have an ongoing positive impact in people's lives in Jenin and Tubas. The project is addressing some clear access needs, including access to water and access to quality/available agricultural inputs as some of the causes of vulnerability in this context. The recommendations from the MTR, summarised below, primarily focus around three key areas; strengthening existing activities and CBOs to ensure ongoing viability/feasibility; increasing linkages across the project and drawing in the various skills and experiences; and strengthening the project's commitment to reaching vulnerable communities, particularly women and youth.

1. CARE to ensure strategic alliance and improved coordination amongst partners is taking place both at strategic and practical levels
2. Build further linkages and learning between the different CBOs
3. Look into opportunities for forging alliances and partnerships at national and regional level
4. Consider, where appropriate, dedicated financial management support as NGO capacity building priority
5. Benefit in bringing in additional expertise in Most Significant Change and ensure staff are well trained in the methodology
6. Improved coordination and engagement amongst partners on outcome and impact analysis through M&E and reporting systems
7. Opportunities identified for strengthening participatory approach to monitoring with communities and CBOs
8. The issue of sharing benefit and sharing risk has to be explored by the Association managing the seed bank
9. Support with development of a feasible business model for the seed bank to enable financial sustainability and potential future replication or expansion
10. Market analysis/marketing component to look at links to the nursery activities (including plans for off season)
11. Support with business and financial planning through capacity building component for the nursery
12. Climate Change Adaptation plan and budget to be developed based on report (once finalised and disseminated)
13. Selection criteria needs to ensure equitable distribution of rams/sheep and to consider access for women where appropriate
14. Review linkages with Department of Veterinary Services and links with New Farm
15. Support with development of a business plan to review the model, promotion of good practices and expansion capacity for the Sheep Farm
16. Consider further agricultural extension services to women and in existing activities of women's access to the greenhouses and support provided to farming and funds management
17. Explore feasibility of community level initiatives (in addition to household level)
18. Consider expanding cistern provision and technical support on water management
19. Review capacity building approach to consider areas outlined in report
20. Further reflection and analysis to take place around the impact and purpose of plans for further CBO merging
21. Further consideration of representation (particularly women and youth) and membership base both in CBOs and CBOs committee membership
22. In consultation with partners and CBOs, marketing strategy to consider a number of areas outlined in report
23. Project to consider a tiered approach to the technical initiatives – Tier I focusing on business model development and Tier II focusing on pilot models as demonstrations of good practice
24. Consideration of development of an appropriate advocacy strategy, including consideration of linkages between existing projects and partners

25. Further gender analysis/consideration is needed, drawing potentially on expertise of partners and more broadly within CARE

VIII. Annexes

- Annex 1: TATWEER MTR TOR and Framework
- Annex 2: Updated M&E Framework and MTR summary and observations of progress to date
- Annex 3: Current CBOs
- Annex 4: Updated Risk Management Framework and summary of risks to date
- Annex 5: CARE's Women's Empowerment Framework
- Annex 6: Program Quality Assessment Tool