PEF Newsletter

A WELCOME WORD BY THE PEF

Dear Readers,

It is my utmost pleasure to introduce to you our first edition of PEF newsletter. This newsletter will be issued quarterly through which we will:

- Familiarize you with PEF mandate and programs.
- Share with you our activities and achievements in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip.
- Bring you closer to the people we assist.
- Inform you about our plans, and demonstrate ways in which you and your institution can cooperate with PEF.

The Palestinian Employment Fund, as the national umbrella for employment and the executive arm of the employment policies of the Ministry of Labor, is tasked with increasing sustainable job opportunities in Palestine. Through our inclusive approach, we engage with government, representatives of workers' union, private sector employers, and civil society organizations, to jointly create employment for youth, university graduates, women, marginalized groups, and Persons with Disabilities.

This newsletter will illustrate our programs and introduce you to several beneficiaries from different projects in order to give you a little taste of our impact. I hope it will inspire you to get in touch with us, so we can jointly expand the employment opportunities to the people of Palestine.

Special thanks to all of PEF's donors and partners. Your support secured 6,422 jobs in 2021 for Palestinians in Gaza, Jerusalem, and the West Bank.

Sincerely yours,
Rami Mehdawi
Chief Executive Director, PEF

PEF Interventions

In all programs, PEF works in partnership with local authorities, public sector institutions, and the private sector to achieve development goals, even while implementing crisis-response initiatives.

Wage Employment and Upskilling Program

PEF assists unemployed graduates and semi-skilled workers to enter the labor market by:
1. Offering specialized professional training 2. Placing graduates in short-term paid internships
3. Pairing job seekers with employers 4. Offering on-the-job coaching for new hires
The program offers life and personal skills training to recent graduates to better equip them for entering the job market and job search. The program is active in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Self-employment, Microfinance and Business Development Training Program

PEF facilitates entry to the labor market to individuals and small businesses by:
1. Providing financial support through financing portfolios (soft loans or grants).
2. Offering business development services (training, legal, technical, financial, organizational advice) to entrepreneurs. The program is active in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Emergency Response and Infrastructure Program

PEF responds to emergency and crisis situations by offering projects which:
1. Enhance local and regional infrastructure.
2. Create temporary employment in areas highly affected by unemployment.
3. Increase readiness of Palestinian institutions to promote employment issues in public infrastructure projects.
This program has the biggest presence in Gaza Strip, to a lesser extent in the West Bank.

Policy Shaping Program

PEF offers a variety of tools such as research studies, position papers, roundtable sessions on issues relevant to employment and labor market to positively influence national policies and legislation. PEF's advice and advocacy are supported by evidence and data obtained from first-hand implementation of labor market instruments across Palestine.This program is present predominantly in the West Bank.

Highlights of PEF's Achievements in 2021

6,422 Job Opportunities (Direct or Indirect)

2,336 Direct **4,086** Indirect

597 MSMEs have received financing

381 Grants **216** Soft Loans

2,953.5 Training hours dedicated to future employees and entrepreneurs

1,333 Beneficiaries received training and skilling

In year 2022, PEF plans to create and support approximately 10,000 job opportunities. For more details, check out our 2021 Annual Report

Selected Projects

Start Up Palestine program is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and implemented jointly by the (PEF), the Ministry of Finance and Planning MoFP, and AICS.
The program is aimed to tackle the need of credit of vulnerable categories and financing micro and small entrepreneurship's initiatives through financial institutions, as well as expanding the operational capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) in order to stimulate employment opportunities.
Between the years 2017-2021, approximately 2000 MSMEs have received support in all governorates of the country with a total amount of 21.35 million USD. Over 400 MSMEs will receive technical and/or financial support worth the amount of 10 million EUR in 2022/2023.

Path to Economic Recovery: Facilitating Decent Jobs in the Gaza Strip

The project was implemented in Gaza Strip in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme/ Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) funded by the Norwegian government.
The project aims to enhance the capabilities of the services provided by the municipalities and public entities in light of the outbreak of COVID-19.

Within this project, 518 beneficiaries, including graduates, skilled workers, and unskilled workers from all specialties and geographical areas, were employed, out of which 40% were females and 5% People with Disabilities (PWDs). 165 fresh graduates from the ICT sector benefited from the cash for work opportunities and were integrated into the labor market and public services. The ICT graduates enhanced the technical environment in the hosting institutions, which will improve the services provided to the public to reach the best service provisions and results.

Success Stories

"Land Lovers" is a success story of seven people who took a soft loan to develop their agricultural businesses. With the support of the StartUp Project, they are running a successful business and providing employment opportunities to others. StartUp Palestine Project supports entrepreneurs from marginalized groups and areas.

Asmaa Hijazi is a 27 years old graduate in accounting who lives in Gaza.
“As an honor list graduate, I expected to find a job, but unfortunately, I could not. I struggled to find a job”. Asma said.
Asma participated in Tamhir Project, which aims to train and qualify unemployed youth who graduated from universities and TVET institutions.
She said, “Tamhir project changed my life. It was an opportunity I have been dreaming of for a long time”. At the end of the project, Asma obtained a permanent job at the company she interned at.

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