



Polish aid

POLISH DEVELOPMENT AID

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FOCUSES ON:

- Human Capital
- Agriculture & Rural Development
- Entrepreneurship & the Private Sector

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Helping Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities in Palestine tend to be severely marginalized, in many meanings of the word. Public infrastructure doesn't facilitate their inclusion outside of home. The educational and work institutions do not take into account facilitating the disabled in accessing the services. But often, it is also the closest family, who don't know the techniques to help the disabled become valued members of the community. As a result, persons with physical or mental disability live secluded life that does not build on their other skills and abilities. Working with the disabled requires a holistic and coordinated approach that improves all aspects of their lives: from personal psychological counselling, to infrastructure upgrades, to improvement of institutions working with the disabled, and finally to capacity building of the disabled persons' families.

Polish Aid has worked with persons with disabilities in Palestine for several years through several well trained partners: YMCA Rehabilitation Program, Caritas Poland, Caritas Jerusalem and Al Basma Center. This year, through several interventions, the program targets all spheres that mean to enhance the quality of their lives.

Through Caritas Poland and Caritas Jerusalem, 30 people with disabilities have joined the job creation program – some are being trained and hired in companies, some have already prepared their business plans and soon will start their own businesses. A laundry operated by people with intellectual disabilities will open soon in Al Basma Centre in Beit Sahour, which will provide services to the local community.

The YMCA Rehabilitation Program will further target 25 persons living in isolation by improving their mobility and independence. Simple house modifications (ramp for wheelchairs, widening of the doors) or provision of medical aids (specialized wheel chairs) – in addition to the psychological counselling - will prepare them to leave the house and live a more independent life, which in turn will make them a part of their community.

To facilitate integration of the persons with disabilities into the wider community, Caritas Offices initiated a series of workshops for mothers of children with different kinds of disabilities (visually and hearing impaired, physically disabled) in Beit Jala, Hebron, Wadi Al Nees and Um Salamona. Mothers learn how to give proper daily care to their children in a way that stimulates their development and increases their opportunities. Soon, music lessons will start in selected schools and centres for children with disabilities. Throughout the school year, concerts and performances for local communities are planned – as a way of showing society the value of people with disabilities as equals, possessing different talents and abilities.



Training - for the hearing impaired and for music teachers in Bethlehem



Laundry machines operated by Al Basma Center



Involving private sector in lowering unemployment among youth



According to the report published by the IMF on 31 August 2017, the central challenge facing the Palestinians is to **revive economic growth and generate sufficient jobs** for a burgeoning population.

The projected doubling of Palestine's population to 10 million by 2050 poses a significant challenge. With almost 40 % of the population currently under the age of 15, the share of the population of working age will continue to rise to around two-thirds. Unemployment is stubbornly high at 29 % and nearly 40 % for young people. Insufficient job growth could compound the already high unemployment, increase poverty, and exacerbate social and economic strains.

While the overall reason for this situation can be attributed to the Israeli occupation and its administrative and security measures, there are accelerating factors for the high unemployment, specifically: inadequate competencies of human resources, and lack of knowledge of, and linkages and resources to access local employment opportunities.

That is why knowledge, skills and competencies have become crucial factors to increase people's employability and support economic growth. Given the additional restrictions and obstacles facing the Palestinian population such as geographical fragmentation, lack of borders control in regards to trade, or limited production potential caused by lack of access to land, many stakeholders advocate heavy investment in the IT / ICT sector, which offers substantial growth despite physical constraints.

Recognizing that, the Polish Aid program in Palestine recently included *Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development* among its key sectors.

This year Polish Aid is working with two organizations promoting economic growth and employability among youth and women, specifically in the IT sector.

The YWCA in Ramallah has developed a 2-year web-based specialization program on software development which focuses on developing junior programmers to be able to write pieces of code as part of web based applications. Over time, junior staff become senior developers who provide a range of services for local and international clients. To accommodate the program, the YWCA Ramallah established an IT lab. From now, 28 students will gain IT programming skills through the use of a blended learning approach.

The Youth Employment Services (YES) program designed by Taawon (Welfare Association) addresses the urgent need to bridge the gap between the educational system and the employment environment in Palestine in an effort to increase the employability of fresh graduates and increase their productivity. The program contributes to the development of the private sector and to a lower unemployment rate among college graduates in Palestine. The project has linked 13 qualified university graduates (including 5 females) with medium-term internships at the local IT companies. On the basis of previous pilot projects, foreseen retention rate of the interns remains around 70 percent.

In previous years, Polish Aid initiated links between the recent Palestinian graduates and Polish private companies through a series of training sessions on entrepreneurship attitude, project cycle management and social media marketing. Delivered by trainers representing a Polish company, the sessions brought together over 400 people striving to enter into a private sector - in Palestine or Poland. Implemented by Ramallah based Souktel International, the project „Promoting youth employment through linkages with Polish private sector” was the first of this kind. The main goal was to make the youth more employable with the technical assistance and mentorship of the Polish private companies. The training sessions held in Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron attracted mostly female participants.

Reaching to the most marginalized - children at the orphanages

Under the Human Capital developmental priority, Polish Aid aspires to reach groups at the highest risk of marginalization – including orphaned children.

With strong family ties and community structure, most children who had lost one or both parents have traditionally remained among the loved ones - grandparents or relatives. Increasingly, the socio-political situation enforces division between family members and often inhibits one-parent households from caring for the youngest. Orphanages throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem are experiencing an influx of children - babies, toddlers as well as teenagers - who have nobody to provide for them, financially or emotionally. Single parents often lack the financial means or time to take care of their children. More frequently, parents' social problems pushes children to neglect, abuse or abandonment.

Since 2010, Polish Aid has worked with four orphanages in East Jerusalem (Mount of Olives), Bethany and Bethlehem, assisting close to 200 children. Projects introduced recreational and developmental aspects such as providing the orphanages with indoor and outdoor playgrounds or playrooms that would stimulate healthy and educational growth and development. In one case - the project renovated the water collecting cistern, enabling the orphanage and the neighboring school to have continuous access to clean drinking water.

This year, two orphanages from Bethany will jointly participate in a book-reading project which entails reading a children's story and preparing an artistic illustration relevant to the plot. “*Tales from under the olive tree*” authored by Polish-Palestinian Aida Amer will bring Polish and Palestinian cultures closer in the minds and hearts of the youngest readers.

To learn more about each orphanage, please visit:

<http://www.jeelalamal.org/> or at FB @Jeel Al Amal School Bethany

<https://www.bethany-community.org/> or at FB @OrthoSchool BethGirls

http://elzbietankijerozolima.com/dom_pokoju.html or at FB @dombetlejem

<http://www.homeofpeace.cba.pl/en/home-page/>



Jeel Al Amal in Bethany provides a home to over 80 boys



Orthodox School for Girls in Bethany



Home of Peace run by Polish nuns in Bethlehem



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Polish Aid is a development program provided by Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Polish Aid in Palestine is disbursed mainly through the Representative Office in Ramallah. For more info about Polish Aid visit our website:

www.ramallah.msz.gov.pl/en

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Rosary Sisters Kindergarten - infrastructure modifications

Through CNEWA-Pontifical Mission, Polish Aid is assisting the Rosary Sisters Kindergarten in Bethlehem to better serve the youngest population of the city. The constantly rising demand for good quality pre-schools is forcing the Rosary Sisters to accept a higher number of children into its program. The Kindergarten was originally founded by Sister Mary Ghattas (recently beatified) as a house for abandoned children.

Currently, the kindergarten program serves 84 children which has created a need for additional classrooms and playgrounds. The project helped enclose open corridors and halls on the first floor which is needed to create a playground on the ground floor. Children attending the school - predominantly Muslim - come from the neighboring refugee camps and from the villages surrounding Bethlehem. After finishing the kindergarten they stay in the same compound for their primary education, until the 6th grade, following the Palestinian curriculum. The primary school hosts over 310 children.

The current Principal of the Kindergarten and the School has served for many years in the Gaza Strip, also during the two recent wars. Her desire to serve the youngest is visible in every action.

Rosary Sisters' Kindergarten is yet another early childhood development facility which received assistance from the Polish Aid under the Human Capital priority.

To learn more about the work of the Pontifical Mission, please visit their website: <http://www.cnewa.org/>



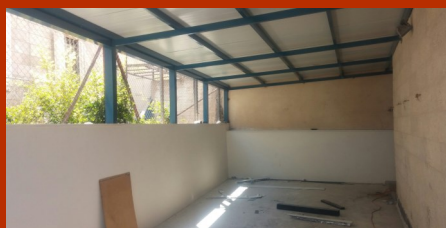
Construction works and covering of the halls



Installation of metal doors to create an additional classroom



Pontifical Mission and the Representative Office of Poland visit the school



Outdoor corridors and halls which will be covered through the project to enable creation of a playground

