

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



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Programme of Assistance  
to the Palestinian People

## Bedouin Communities Development Programme

They live on the hillsides and the valleys of the West Bank, maintaining a lifestyle that has been the mainstay of their communities for generations. Bedouins are an intrinsic and distinct part of the social fabrics of the region.

Although a majority of Bedouins are originally from the *Negev*, they now dwell in a strip known as the "Bedouin Belt," which includes south Hebron and the eastern slopes (east of Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Ramallah) and they traditionally spend the winter in the Jericho or Ghor areas. All these areas are arid to varying degrees; hence, land use is limited to animal herding. The erratic rainfall and high evaporation in these areas leads to insecurity in the conditions of pastures and a constant threat of draught.



Poverty is on the rise in the OPT, with women and children in rural communities often bearing the brunt

Given their nomadic lifestyle, the Bedouin community rely on their ability to move to better pastures. They live in small and scattered communities in cement houses, cottages or tarpaulin tents. The traditional Bedouin tents are rarely used now, as they are expensive and not widely available. Bedouins in the "Bedouin Belt" earn their living by rearing animals and selling the related produce.

### Economic situation

Bedouins face many constraints, including limited movement, diminished holding capacity and productivity, high production costs (particularly barley)

### MATTERS OF FACT

- There are 6 main Bedouin tribes in the West Bank: Sariaa, Jahaleen, Kaabneh, Al Rashaydeh, Al Azazmi, and Al Ramadeen
- It is estimated that there are between 25,000-30,000 Bedouins, with 150,000-200,000 sheep and goats.
- Nomadic Bedouins who maintain a semi-permanent residence comprise 5.2% of the families (4.9% of the population), with 3-5 months grazing and travel period. Sheep and goat production is the only source of income for 20% of families within this group and for the remainder it is either the major source (20%) or a secondary source (60%).
- Goat and sheep's milk is marketed as a processed milk product. 45.4% of the milk production is sold as *Jameed* (dried yogurt), 25.8% as butter, 10.4% as ghee, 1.7% as labneh and 0.5% as cheese.
- Only one third of the Bedouin communities (approximately 55% of all families) are connected to a permanent electrical source. The remainder rely on small and expensive generators.
- Per-capita water consumption is 15 litres per-day. This is compared to 35 litres per-day in other rural villages and 65-70 litres in urban areas.

and lower productivity due to hygiene problems, in addition to lower market prices for their produce. This has led to substantial reductions in family incomes.

### The need for an alternative credit source

For a variety of reasons, Bedouins are unable to secure loans in the modern money lending systems. They do not believe in depositing and saving their money in banks and prefer to invest in their animal herds, which are not classified as assets by commercial banks and thus, cannot be counted against loans. Moreover, if Bedouins were able to obtain loans, they would generally not take advantage of the service for religious reasons. Incurring interest on money borrowed is perceived as *reba*, which is prohibited in Islam.

### Water and Electricity

Mainly due to political controversy over water rights and the use of water by Israel as a tool for repression, Bedouins have scant access to water resources and very few have access to electricity.

### Health

Bedouin communities generally suffer from appalling hygiene conditions, which have resulted in severe health problems.

## UNDP/PAPP's Intervention

### Emergency Support to Bedouins in Eastern Slopes Project – November 2006

The Ghore area, Western Jordan Valley including Jericho, hosts at least 5,000 Bedouins who live nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles and depend on around 55,000 heads of sheep and goats, much above the national average and even higher than the Bedouin average ownership of small ruminants.

The emergency support to the Bedouins in the Eastern Slopes project, worth US\$250,000, was designed to provide emergency relief to the Bedouins living in the Jericho Ghore areas with the following objectives:

- Improve access to water and storage capacity through the provision of water tanks and the extension of one water reservoir.
- Provide a source of electricity
- Facilitate school attendance by the provision of a minibus to transport school children.



The project will benefit at least 5,000 people living in the region's Bedouin community. The provision of water tanks will ease access and availability of water for household and animal use. In addition, both water and electricity will have a significant impact on the quality of Bedouin related products such as white cheese and will enable them to get a better price in exchange of improved quality.

### Development Programme for the Bedouin Communities in the West Bank – December 2004

The principle objective of the project was to improve the livelihood of Bedouins through economic and technical assistance by formulating a concrete and sound sustainable development programme. The project, worth US\$1.5 million, was designed in a partnership between the UNDP, the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture and with generous funding from the Government of Italy, through the Italian Cooperation.

In addition to increasing general awareness, the project comprises two main components:

#### 1. Strengthen the Bedouins' bargaining power by establishing the Palestinian Bedouin Corporation for Investment and Development (PBC)

Privately owned and managed by Bedouin communities, the PBC represents a development model that could be adopted not only in the oPt, but also in neighbouring countries where development efforts fall short due to unsustainable subsidy approaches.

#### 2. Improve animal health, productivity and husbandry through a series of activities

**Two mobile veterinary clinics** have been purchased, equipped with a veterinary doctor, laboratory and medication. The mobile clinics are equipped to provide services including ultrasounds, artificial insemination and vaccinations.

Some 20-30 **pilot farms** will be established in the scattered Bedouin communities to demonstrate the positive implications of renovating and upgrading farm infrastructure.

Another selected group of **demonstration farms** will show the advantages of improved herd management practices and animal hygiene. The introduction of **improved animal breeds** (*Awassi* sheep and *Shami* goats) in a third group of farms will also impact on the productivity of the farms. Improved farming techniques will have a positive effect on productivity and economic returns.



Finally, a **socio-economic and agricultural database** with spatial dimension will be created to better identify Bedouin needs, monitor the project outcomes, build capacity and support future development initiatives.

