

Provide new opportunities for olive farmers in the occupied Palestinian territory

Making a living > Funding target £180,000

YEAR 1 OF A 3 YEAR PROJECT

In the occupied Palestinian territory nearly half the agricultural land is given over to olive groves¹. However, economic pressures and the effects of the Israeli occupation mean olive production is suffering and incomes are plummeting. Thousands of trees have been destroyed, and Palestinian farmers are often denied access to their land, water and markets. You can help farmers develop new techniques and olive products, gain Fairtrade status that will help them earn more, and access lucrative new markets.

The Project

Oxfam has been working with small-scale olive growers, local communities and a range of partners² in the occupied Palestinian territory since 2006. This project builds on our experience in this region and looks to provide opportunities for more olive farmers in the West Bank areas of Jenin, Tubas and Nablus. It will provide coaching and mentoring in olive growing and water management, and in processing and

pressing, to help farmers to produce higher yielding, better quality crops.

The project will also support women-only groups to set up co-operatives to produce new olive-based products, such as olive paste; achieve Fairtrade certification; and bolster existing initiatives by the Palestinian National Authority to develop the demand for Palestinian olive products across the world.

Project aims

- ▶ Increase incomes of poor female farmers, by improving the quality and quantity of olive production and processing.
- ▶ Promote the sustainable growth of the olive oil sector, by encouraging diversification into new olive products, improving access to markets, and gaining Fairtrade certification.
- ▶ Empower more women to become agricultural and business leaders in their communities.
- ▶ Increase demand for Palestinian olive products in high-value domestic and international markets.



Women from the Sir co-operative in Qalqilya, harvest olives. Some 100,000 people rely on olives, but with poor access to processing facilities and markets, their income is minimal. Credit: David Levene/Oxfam.

¹'The Road to Olive Farming', Oxfam 2010.

²Fair Trade Development Centre (FTDC) – providing training and Fairtrade certification; Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC) – delivering technical and business support; and Business Women Forum (BWF) – supporting women's economic leadership.

The Background

Recent economic decline and rising unemployment mean that almost 20 per cent of Palestinians now rely on subsistence farming³. However the Israeli occupation is increasingly stifling agricultural development.

Around 100,000 people make a living from olives. But tens of thousands of trees have been burnt down by Israeli settlers. Construction of the Wall has separated many Palestinian farmers from their land or water sources, and a million olive trees may soon be inaccessible. Forty per cent of the West Bank is off limits to Palestinians, and restrictions on people's movement reduce trade and market access. Women provide the bulk of the agricultural labour, but they are often overlooked in decision making because the trade is dominated by men.

Olive oil production provides an opportunity to improve living standards. Palestinian olives are among the world's best; but, the focus on local markets means that oil is rarely high quality. This project will improve oil quality to export standard; help women to form enterprises to produce new products; and establish links between new co-operatives and domestic and international markets.



The olive oil at a press in Bani Zeid is tested for quality. Thanks to improved agricultural knowledge and collective pressing, the Bani Zeid co-operative has already exported more than 50 tonnes of quality organic and Fairtrade extra virgin olive oil.

³ 'The Road to Olive Farming', Oxfam 2010.

The Plan

Activities:

Improve olive production and processing:

- › Train 125 members of three existing women's co-operatives and 200 members of seven informal producer groups on pest control, water management and soil fertility.
- › Train nine co-operative members as trainers in soil fertility, pest control, water management and pruning.
- › Establish six demonstration sites where farmers can learn and test improved cultivation and water management techniques.
- › Provide cultivation tools, such as shears and rakes, and modern pressing and storage equipment.
- › Train the co-operatives and producer groups in chemical analysis and collective olive pressing.
- › Link olive oil producers with international distributors through Palestinian olive oil companies.

Support product diversification:

- › Support three new women's enterprises to diversify into speciality olive-based products and train 15 members on enterprise start-up.

- › Train 60 women in olive paste production and marketing, and conduct monthly quality control checks.
- › Set up three olive paste processing units, to be run by the enterprises, and supply each with manufacturing, packaging and labelling equipment.
- › Train 12 co-operative and producer group members, who run olive presses, in food safety, hygiene and quality management.

Improve access to high-value markets:

- › Raise awareness of Palestinian olive oil within untapped, high-value domestic markets, through media coverage and trade festivals.
- › Support the women's enterprises to gain international Fairtrade certification.
- › Train 12 members of a national tasting jury to international standards.

Set up and equip an olive processing unit £16,900

The Impact

As a result of this project, we expect:

- › Over three years, incomes for at least three out of four women's enterprise members will have increased by 25 per cent, and enterprises will market three tonnes of olive paste abroad. Currently no paste is exported.
- › Half of targeted farmers will use improved growing techniques, enabling them to produce three tonnes of extra virgin olive oil for domestic and international markets, by the end of the first year.
- › At least one business link is established with EU and Gulf traders to export premium extra virgin olive oil, by the end of year one.
- › The confidence and status of women will grow, as they make economic gains and become business leaders in their communities.

Train 325 farmers in better pest control, water management, and soil fertility £9,920

Who will benefit?

- › In year one, this project will directly benefit 400 small-scale Palestinian olive farming households – some 2,000 people – through improved production, processing and access to markets.
- › Indirectly, over three years the project will potentially benefit 50,000 olive farming families through the dissemination of knowledge, increased demand for olive products, and improved market opportunities.

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress will be regularly monitored against the initial plan. Key measurements will include: changes in household income, knowledge and practice of farming techniques, changes in yield, membership of regional federations and co-operatives, sales agreements, and product quality.

Sustainability

The already extensive involvement of Oxfam partners in olive production combined with private sector involvement will help ensure continued commercial operations. Small-scale farmers will be able to access affordable, effective training, and marketing support from the pool of experts created. The establishment of women's enterprises will see their influence increase within their communities, and trade organisations will better represent olive growers in pressing for greater government support.

Intesar's story



Intesar Zaaror, an olive farmer in Qalqilya, the West Bank.

Intesar is an inspiration. The mother of seven runs the Sir co-operative, 25 women olive oil farmers finding success by working together. The women used to work alone, waiting until they had picked enough olives to send to the press. But as they waited the olives deteriorated, and so did their value.

In 2010, Oxfam encouraged them to pool their resources and now they collect enough olives to press fresh each day and make quality Fairtrade oil. Intesar believes the programme has not only increased their incomes, but raised the status of women in the community.

"We are business women but we still focus on our family, so people see we can do both. We are using the extra income to send our children to university and improve their opportunities. The co-operative benefits us all. We all know each other and help each other, not just at harvest time but in our daily lives."

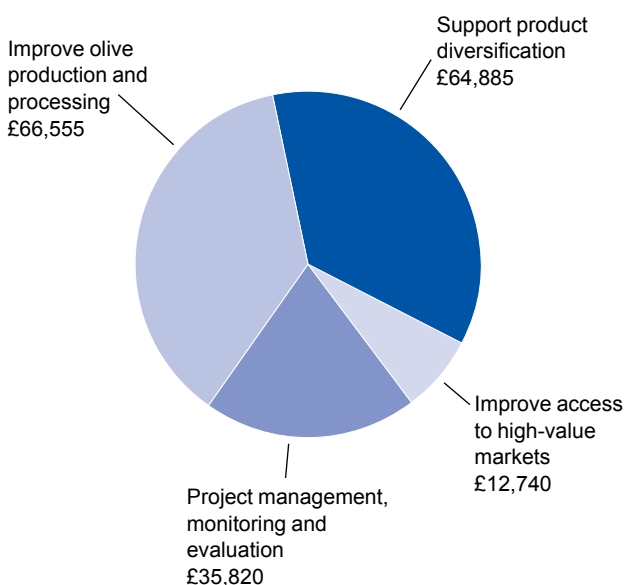
Credit: David Levene/Oxfam.

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The Budget

Total £180,000



occupied Palestinian territory: country profile



Population: 4.2 million
Development: 144 (of 187) on the HDI¹
GDP per capita: \$1,367 (UK GDP per capita: \$35,155)²
Population who are food insecure: 33%³
Female labour force participation: 16.5% (UK: 55.3%)²

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2011, unless otherwise stated.

¹ The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: life expectancy and health, access to knowledge and standard of living.

² UN occupied Palestinian territory Data report 2009.

³ Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey, WFP/FAO 2010.

Countries needing your support:

Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territory, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe.



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