

## **Fact sheet on** **Employment and job creation programs in Gaza Strip** **Palestinian NGO's Network**

### **Introduction**

The employment sector in most countries is a lever for local economy and a contributor to the livelihoods of many groups of society. It also contributes to stimulate sustainable economic growth by providing the necessary jobs for unemployed and graduates of technical schools and universities, in addition to its effects on the psychological and social state of youth and their families.

The economic situation in Palestine is witnessing a state of stagnation due to the Israeli occupation policies and the inability of local authorities to find solutions to reduce the high unemployment rates. Adding that the bad economic conditions led to further deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian citizen. The continued political division and the failure to implement the reconciliation and the Palestinian Authority "punitive measures" led to the further deterioration of the living and economic conditions in the Gaza Strip, furthermore, the retraction of international aid, electricity crisis, blockade, poverty, food insecurity and the financial crisis of UNRWA.

In the absence of public policies for the employment projects, exclusion of civil society organizations and some important productive sectors from the planning and implementation, we raise a question whether these temporary employment projects been effectively contributed to reduce unemployment and poverty and stimulate the local economy?

Since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), several temporary employment projects have been implemented aiming at improving the income level of beneficiaries in the short term. It had no impact in the medium and long term or on the local economy. These programs were sponsored by the government through various ministries and institutions or by some international and local organizations.

### **The economic situation, unemployment and the Israeli blockade and their effects on society**

In the Gaza Strip, the combination of Israeli military aggression and the widespread and systematic destruction of economic and social structures, the blockade and restrictions on movement of people and goods caused reduction of productive activities and led to the collapse of the Palestinian labor market, and an increase in the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip to 52% in 2018 compared to 44% in 2017<sup>1</sup>. The poverty rate reached 53%<sup>2</sup>.

According to official statistics for 2018, the number of unemployed persons reached 426 thousand, with an unemployment rate of 18% in the West Bank and 52% in the Gaza Strip, and the age group (19-29 years) topped 69% in the sector<sup>3</sup>.

The following table shows the unemployment rates during the years 2015-2018<sup>4</sup>

Year	Unemployment rate	Among males	Among females	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Youth unemployment rate in The Gaza Strip (15-24)
2015	25.9%	22.5%	39.2%	17.3%	41.0%	61%
2016	26.9%	22.2%	44.7%	18.2%	41.7%	61.4%
2017	28.4%	23.2%	48.2%	18.7%	44.4%	65.2%
2018	30.8%	25.0%	51.2%	17.6%	52.0%	71.8%

<sup>1</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of statistics 2019. Performance of the Palestinian Economy 2018. Ramallah - Palestine.

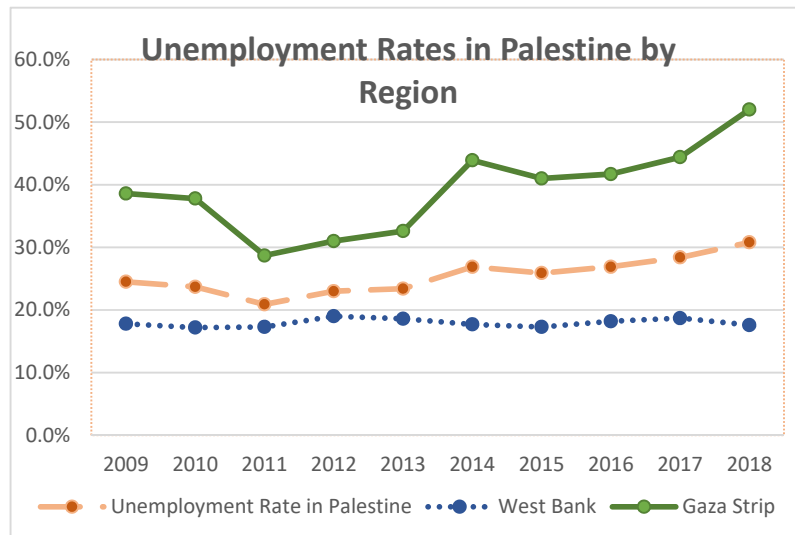
<sup>2</sup> PCBS: [www.pcbs.gov.ps/Press\\_Ar\\_International-Youth-Day-2019-ar.docx](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Press_Ar_International-Youth-Day-2019-ar.docx)

<sup>3</sup> PCBS: <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/postar.aspx?lang=ar&ItemID=3452>

<sup>4</sup> Data Source: Palestinian Labor Force Survey - PCBS Annual Reports. [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/pcbs\\_2012/Publications.aspx](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/pcbs_2012/Publications.aspx)

Recent reports from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on unemployment indicates that the youth age group (19-29 years) is the most affected by unemployment, with an unemployment rate of 44% (27% in the West Bank and 69% in Gaza Strip). Young graduates with an intermediate diploma and higher qualification are among the most unemployed, with an unemployment

rate of 58% (40% in the West Bank and 78% in Gaza Strip). Young graduates with an intermediate and higher diploma in educational sciences and teachers recorded the highest unemployment rates of about 76% of the graduates participating in the labor force, followed by specializations of journalism and media about 69%, while law specialists recorded the lowest rate of unemployment about 29% of Law graduates participating in the labor force.



The statistics also shows widespread unemployment among young women 19-24 in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, the unemployment rate for females in this age group reached 85.5% in 2016. In 2018, the annual report of the Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicated that the percentage increased to 92.2%, a very large percentage compared to the population pyramid in Palestine, where women represent 49.2% in the Palestinian society (103.2 men vs. 100 women). In the West Bank, despite the low unemployment rate compared to the Gaza Strip, the unemployment rate in the age group (19-24) in females is the double compared to males, reaching 25.7% among males compared to 55.3% among females in 2018<sup>5</sup>. Unemployment rates for persons with disabilities rises to 41.1% (37.6% men and 57.5% women)<sup>6</sup>.

The steady increase in unemployment and poverty rates, especially in the youth sector in Palestine, requires careful and insights analysis in order to find a sound diagnosis of operational mechanisms and national policies to avoid the dangerous repercussions on the youth psychological, social and economic aspects.

The weakness of the private sector due to the Israeli destruction of the infrastructure of the industrial and agricultural sectors, the blockade, the prevention of production inputs, power cuts and the ban on exports have all led to the absence of a significant role that the private sector can play in reducing unemployment and providing job opportunities for graduates. The private sector is considered an important sector of the economy, but the practices of the Israeli occupation, the political division and the high intensity of competition led to the deterioration of the private sector situation and to the closure of many private companies and other vital sectors that contributes to job creation. For example, the construction sector<sup>7</sup> contributed by 7.4% to job creation in 2009, increased by 3% in 2018, reaching

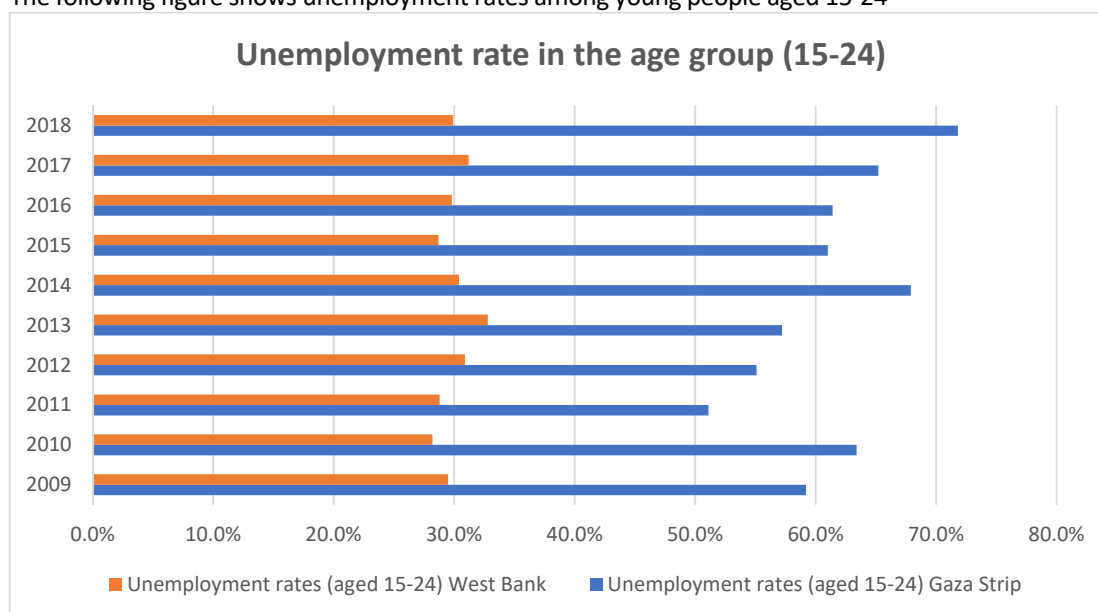
<sup>5</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of statistics 2019. Palestinian Labor Force Survey: Annual Report: 2018.

<sup>6</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019. Gender Reality in Palestine within the Sustainable Development Goals. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2453.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The construction activity is an essential dimension to study the structure and development of the Palestinian economy. It is an essential element in the formation of the fixed capital which is included in the calculation of GDP. Therefore, the construction movement in the Palestinian territories during 2010 should be studied in more detail.

10.4% in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (9.3% in the West Bank and 1.1% in the Gaza Strip). In the Gaza Strip, the construction sector particularly contributed to the creation of 19,800 jobs in 2012, while it provided only 8,900 jobs in 2018, due to the shrinking of private sector jobs and the reduction of donor funding in general in Palestine.

The following figure shows unemployment rates among young people aged 15-24



The following table shows the numbers of workers in different sectors in the Gaza Strip:

Economic activity	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Agriculture	12,000	14,900	23,400	21,400	22,800	21,700	18,200	15,700	14,900	14,500
Industry	11,000	10,400	14,800	15,900	14,200	12,200	16,100	18,100	17,100	15,200
Construction	1,700	5,700	14,500	19,800	18,600	4,900	11,900	18,000	16,200	8,900
Wholesale and Retail Trade	33,000	31,800	42,200	41,700	47,300	43,800	50,200	53,200	52,000	49,000
Transportation and Storage	9,200	11,400	17,600	19,800	20,000	13,600	17,400	16,800	20,200	18,800
Information and Communications	1,700	1,700	1,100	1,800	2,200	2,600	3,100	3,300	3,300	2,900
Services and Other Branches	120,200	117,400	130,000	135,900	143,600	150,200	158,200	160,800	155,000	144,500

#### **Definition of temporary employment:**

Temporary employment is internationally defined as a short-term employment situation. Temporary workers may have the opportunity to obtain a permanent employment status after the period ends. Temporary workers may also be referred as seasonal or temporary employees. The duration of employment may depend on the type of project, the nature and availability of funding, or other circumstances that may be linked to the donor conditions.

In Palestine, temporary employment is not clear due to the absence of laws governing it. Thus, it turns to a just social assistance tool, such as for poor families, provided through the Ministry of Social Development. Temporary employment frameworks and definitions have varied according to the nature of funding and donors and their priorities. Since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), there have been many employment projects that have been implemented with different types of methods (cash for work, food for work, cash for internship, etc.). All these classifications fall under the Cash Transfer Programming projects, some of which may be conditionally restricted, including cash-

for-work projects (a type of conditional cash transfer); and vouchers (cash, restricted cash, commodities).

Cash-for-work: Pay (cash or voucher) is defined as remuneration for work, usually within public or community programs.

### **Employment programs in Palestine**

Temporary employment projects in Palestine face criticism from most sectors of society, as the periods of which graduates and the unemployed receive wages are short, and only enabled them sustained their livelihoods for short time. Furthermore, these cash projects comes mostly in humanitarian assistance without a sustainable development or enabling dimensions for the targeted groups according to a national plan, and sometimes its impact may be negative in light of the complex economic and social situation under the Israeli occupation and the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian citizens and the siege on the Gaza Strip.

Although these various programs have continued for more than two decades, they did not contribute really to curbing the spread of unemployment, despite the fact mentioned above, they provided their beneficiaries with income for a limited period according to the nature of these programs, where the wage is often equal to or less than the minimum monthly wage according to the Palestinian Labor Law of 1,450 NIS<sup>8</sup>, or approximately USD 400.

These projects need to be developed to benefit the refining of qualifications of the beneficiaries and integrating them into the labor market. The problem lies in the dependency that some people rely on temporary employment projects.

Dr. Maher Tabbaa: Director of Public Relations and Media, Gaza Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Despite the warning of some civil society organizations about the failure of these projects to achieve any development and the lack of human dignity, according to a previous report by the Palestinian Center

Most employment projects are humanitarian relief of no more than six months. These projects have had no developmental impact on people or the national economy.

Amjad Shawa, PNGO Network

for Human Rights that "Although many efforts and initiatives have been taken, it has not reached the required level to tackle the unemployment crisis in the Palestinian territories. And despite the official and unofficial efforts mentioned above, the reality on the ground reflects the deteriorated situation of workers, so far, there are no fundamental solutions on the way. The one-time NIS 600 assistance is not a solution to the unemployment problem, nor are the emergency employment projects for a month or two not seen as solutions to the unemployment problem, but rather painkillers."<sup>9</sup>

In September 2018, the Palestinian NGO's Network (PNGO) in Gaza organized a workshop in which it called for a concerted effort to place the temporary employment programs within an enabling frameworks for youth, to provide them with real opportunities to build their capacities and enhance their competitiveness for employment opportunities. It also stressed the need for effective vocational and technical training plans and harmonization of higher education outputs with labor market inputs, and enactment of legislation to protect the unemployed while emphasizing the need to formulate a national contingency plan to reduce unemployment.

### **Role of employment projects in the Palestinian economy**

Most recent studies point to the importance of the private sector in providing temporary and permanent employment opportunities. Globally, small businesses provide 65% of new jobs in a

<sup>8</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. (11) of 2012 Concerning the Adoption of the Minimum Wage in All Areas of the Palestinian National Authority. <http://muqtafi.birzeit.edu/en/pg/getleg.asp?id=16472>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.pchrgaza.org/files/REPORTS/arabic/workers.htm>

supportive environment for growth provided by local authorities. Most employment projects in Palestine started in all fields with the aim of generating income without investigating the positive and negative aspects of the nature and duration of these employment opportunities, and without verifying their impact on the local economy.

Many international researches have confirmed that employment is one of the most important factors in reducing poverty, contributing to increased productivity, enhancing living standards and, consequently, enhancing social cohesion considering that these jobs achieve quality and job security.

Small-scale projects are an important tool to alleviate unemployment. This plays an important role in employment, raises GDP, and reduces fiscal deficits in public budgets by increasing tax revenues. This will lead to increase government spending on many projects in many areas. The excellence in small enterprises is a tributary for development and progress, where creativity and innovation are generated in many of these enterprises, and many of them grew and developed using advanced technologies and subsequently rising the national economy<sup>10</sup>.

Temporary employment projects funded by donors and local authorities provide some hundreds of temporary jobs, which can reach a few thousand a year for limited periods, in return, tens of thousands are graduated annually from universities and intermediate colleges in all fields. Unfortunately, these graduates do not find incubators or training to prepare them for the labor market. The following table shows the number of graduates 2008-2017:

School year	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017
University graduates	27,129	28,753	30,236	32,551	34,515	36,830	39,672	40,734	43,978
College graduates	3,077	2,949	2,725	2,940	3,330	3,213	3,872	3,712	3,390
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,206</b>	<b>31,702</b>	<b>32,961</b>	<b>35,491</b>	<b>37,845</b>	<b>40,043</b>	<b>43,544</b>	<b>44,446</b>	<b>47,368</b>

### A brief on temporary employment in Palestine

The Israeli aggression continued during the second intifada and the destruction reached unprecedented levels and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza continued to experience a wide range of human rights violations. Many have become homeless and tens of thousands have lost their livelihoods because Israel has bulldozed large areas of agricultural land, factories, workshops and private property. Palestinians were also denied access to the Israeli labor market, which employed more than 120,000 Palestinian workers from Gaza Strip during the first half of 2000.

Temporary employment programs have been deployed in Palestine through a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions such as the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Islamic Relief Foundation (Islamic Relief), the Job Creation Program under the Palestinian National Authority-President Office, the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection of Workers (PFESP) and other international donors and organizations, and recently the Gaza Emergency Program “**Gaza Emergency Cash for Work and Self-Employment Support**” project worth 17 million USD for three years to provide about 5,000 temporary jobs, which is implemented by the Palestinian NGO Development Center (NDC) in coordination and cooperation with the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Ministry of Social Development and the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection.

<sup>10</sup> Small enterprises and their importance in alleviating unemployment.  
<https://www.palestineconomy.ps/ar/Article/c0f7fey12646398Yc0f7fe>

### Some models for employment programs:

- 1- **Job Creation Program:** Since 2001, the program has implemented a series of employment programs aimed at generating income for beneficiaries and is still running with the development of programs and objectives by adding the necessary training and guidance for beneficiaries and specifically graduates to enable them to access the external labor market, whether in the public or private sectors. The program recently focused on supporting small-scale projects aimed at combating poverty and unemployment. Since 2001, the program has implemented projects worth USD 64 million in various fields, focusing on agriculture, water and infrastructure sectors.
- 2- **The Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection** is a governmental institution with legal personality and independent financial responsibility to support economic development through activating and stimulating labor market policies. Through its various programs and tools, the Fund aims to generate permanent employment opportunities and develop social capital to combat poverty and unemployment on a strategic basis. The Fund seeks to provide financial and technical resources that contribute to the development of human resources and the development of the business sector in various fields, through financing and support for production, services and economic projects. The Fund also cooperates and network with local and international institutions and the private sector in order to provide employment opportunities and contribute to the new graduates' skills refinement according to the needs of the local labor market. Over the past three years, the Fund has contributed approximately to provide about 5080 jobs through direct employment projects aimed at rehabilitation, empowering and integrating young people, providing technical services and revolving funding for small and micro enterprises like self-employment projects targeting various economic sectors. More than 1,350 small-scale projects were also lent and financed through the PALESTINE STARTUP project, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation valued at USD 16,990,950.
- 3- **UNRWA's job creation program** aims to alleviate the effects of poverty under occupation by providing short-term employment for refugees. The program was able to support the private sector by offering additional human resources, giving priority to youth, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The work periods varied from three months for unskilled workers to one year for professionals. The database of applicants contains over 180,000 records. The lack of funding has significantly affected UNRWA's job creation program; since in 2018 the Agency was able to create short-term employment opportunities for 10,139 beneficiaries in Gaza Strip, compared to 19,695 in 2017.
- 4- **Gaza Emergency Fund-for-Work and Self-Employment Support** project funded by the World Bank <sup>11</sup> and implemented by the NGO Development Center (NDC) in the amount of USD 17 million. The project objective is to provide target youth in Gaza with short-term income support and increased access to internet-enabled self-employment opportunities. The project over three years will create 4,400 temporary jobs by working with local civil society organizations for the Cash for Work component while the Internet-enabled self-employment (e-work) component is expected to benefit 750 youth.
- 5- **Cash for Work, UNDP** has undertaken several employment projects, including a USD 5 million Rapid Employment Generation project in the Gaza Strip in 2016 in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and the Economic Stimulus and Support for Vulnerable Families in Gaza through Cash for Work project in Gaza with the amount of 7 USD million funded by the Government of Qatar through the Qatar Reconstruction Committee. According to the program,

<sup>11</sup> During the period 2013-2018, the World Bank approved the financing of five jobs and cash-for-work projects worth USD 45 million in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



the project focuses on youth and vulnerable groups and targets 3,516 people, including persons with disabilities and women.

- 6- **Envision Gaza 2020 (Catholic Relief Services):**<sup>12</sup> Envision Gaza 2020 is a USD 50 million five-year program USAID-funded, implemented by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in collaboration with five NGO partners in the Gaza Strip. The program aimed to increase and improve the capacity of 19,240 vulnerable families through food assistance and temporary employment opportunities for women and youth, through paid training programs and supports entrepreneurship through training and small grants. The program includes four different services:
- A. Temporary paid employment opportunities for 3 months for skilled and unskilled heads of households.
  - B. Temporary paid employment and training opportunities for 6 months for graduates of universities and vocational and industrial training institutes, graduates of the last five years.
  - C. Training opportunities for entrepreneurs and grants for establishing of small income-generating projects for youth and women who hold a preparatory school degree as a minimum.
  - D. Small grants to repair, renovate or expand small projects affected by the 2014 crisis.

During 2018, USAID decided to suspend aid to the Palestinian people, including the Envision Gaza 2020 program. At the end of September 2018 CRS began to layoff its staff.

- 7- **Islamic Relief:** Through its offices in Palestine, Islamic Relief has implemented several employment projects, the most recent was the Gaza Livelihood Support and Cash for Work project for the graduates and unemployed, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The project aims to improve the food security situation of marginalized and crisis-affected families by supporting their livelihoods through providing 647 temporary employment opportunities for university and college graduates for periods ranging from 4 to 8 months.

Despite the fact that tens of thousands of graduates and unemployed lined up to register for the various employment programs, and the media fuss associated with launching these projects without diminishing their relative importance, and the amount of funds spent in these programs, the Palestinian citizen or beneficiary from the project did not feel the developmental impact at the personal level. This is reflected in the continuing economic and social problems and the persistence of high rates of poverty and unemployment, which led to the dependence on international aid, where about 80% of the Gaza Strip population still depend on international aid in one way or another.

Employment projects needs complementary development and humanitarian aspects as they must contain the development dimension in the first place to achieve the goals of sustainability, empowerment and self-reliance, and effective follow-up and control mechanisms to investigate the feasibility of these programs and to correct deviations and problems as soon discovered and to hold officials accountable.

Undoubtedly, most of these projects were mostly linked in one way or another to the political dimension without linking or studying the other economic and social dimensions.

Through international experience and recent studies, it was found that the employment projects associated with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were more feasible and cost effective at the personal and national level. In the case of Palestine of which we live under occupation, siege and division, these employment projects must emphasize on respect of human rights and humanitarian standards in humanitarian action, with equality and non-discrimination among recipients of services or jobs seekers.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.eg2020.ps/ar/home#/crs-home>

## International experiences and alternatives to temporary employment

At the international level, many countries have experienced and succeeded through in-depth studies of the causes of unemployment and an understanding of the determinants of both the internal and external environment and economic indicators. These countries have worked through flexible policies to encourage international investment in them as well as to promote and protect small enterprises. For example, the Malaysian state has managed over the years to reduce the unemployment rate from 52% in the 1980s to 3.3% in early 2019. Malaysia has reached this success by following many policies and procedures that reduce the phenomenon of unemployment in Malaysian society<sup>13</sup>. The authorities have adopted social policies aimed at reducing unemployment by combating the problem of poverty, following the anti-poverty strategy where we do not hide the close relationship between poverty and unemployment. The authorities have adopted social policies aimed at reducing unemployment by combating the problem of poverty, applying the anti-poverty strategy where we it is obvious the close relationship between poverty and unemployment; the World Bank reports confirm that poverty is not always a problem of

Malaysia has allocated USD 83 million fund for training as part of an economic development program aimed at developing workers' skills and reducing unemployment.

### Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM): "Less poverty and more food"

A non-governmental program implemented by a group of Malaysian NGOs that contributed to increasing the incomes of poor families with conditional interest-free loans related to agriculture or a micro-enterprise. NGOs provided loans either from external grants or through interest-free loans provided by the government .. a genius program contributed to increasing the farmland in addition to increasing the number of small and micro projects.

Source: Malaysia: The Gift of Self-Reliance. <https://amkamel.com/malaysia-part-2/>

unemployment. The labor may be poor if wages are low and the purchasing power is low. In 20 years, Malaysia has been transformed from an agricultural country dependent on the production and export of raw materials, especially tin and rubber, into an advanced industrial state, where the industry and services sectors contribute about 90 percent of GDP. These successes would not have been achieved without laying the foundations that would address all threats to their security and economic and social stability where the most important is to tackle the problems of unemployment and poverty together.

The Malaysian experience in development is one of the unique experiences thanks to the interest of Malaysian governments since independence in 1957 which took care of citizens and develop their capacities and intellectual potential, and for their concern for human capital and dependence on a diversified economy.

In Singapore, self-reliance was the key to a successful transition from a swamp of unemployment and poverty to an economic giant despite the lack of economic resources. "Singapore has been the world's biggest economic success story, and its economic rise has become an international model for a country that lacks land and natural resources, but through open policies, free-market capitalism, education and rigorous and sound policies, Singapore overcome geographic disadvantages and become a leader in world trade, with its small size of 719 km<sup>2</sup><sup>14</sup>. During the period 2000 to 2010, GDP doubled from USD 163 billion to 304 billion, and the inflation and

Singapore has taken numerous measures to encourage innovation and encourage entrepreneurs to train their workforce and attract foreign talent in order to increase productivity.

<sup>13</sup> Malaysia Economic Experience, Wikipedia

[https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A9](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%A9)

<sup>14</sup> Ashraf Abraham. <https://www.sasapost.com/singapores-economy/>



unemployment averaged less than 2% and 3% each year respectively. Singapore has been able to implement a range of sound macroeconomic policies, which aim to maintain an environment conducive to long-term investment in the economy, a fiscal policy that has been primarily directed at promoting long-term economic growth, and as a result of good fiscal position and consistent budget surpluses over the years, a high level of foreign reserves has been achieved, ranking the strongest long-term sovereign credit rating in Asia <sup>15</sup>

International experiences were not limited to Malaysia and Singapore. Other countries, such as Bangladesh and the Philippines, have had economic experiences and overcome the reality of poverty and unemployment by setting up banks for the poor and focusing on micro-loan income-generating projects.

### **Challenges**

- The absence of a central database to clearly identify the unemployed, their specializations and their experiences.
- Insufficient coordination among actors including training providers, Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) schools, universities, the Ministries of Labor and Education, and the donors that fund the skills related interventions.<sup>16</sup>
- Increase the number of graduates in the absence of clear strategies to link employment programs and graduates with the labor market
- Limited data sharing mechanisms and lessons learned among actors.
- Absence of precise labor market studies to identify sectors according to their priority to support employment opportunities
- Weak monitoring mechanisms for lending-based employment projects and the absence of a protective environment for lenders.
- The short period of employment so as not to leave a developmental impact on beneficiaries
- Neglect of private sector from funding

### **Recommendations**

#### **Special recommendations for donors, international organizations and the international community:**

- Emphasize respect the principles of human rights, work to lift the siege and the ban imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities on the movement of individuals and goods, and work to allow the entry of raw materials for small and medium enterprises, and allow the export of local products abroad.
- Emphasizing the importance of investing in development programs aimed at empowering the Palestinian society economically and socially to strengthen it and empower it in order to reach self-reliance in all sectors and not only funding emergency projects.
- Direct donors and institutions working on sustainable employment programs to address the gaps identified based on the local needs.
- Coordination among donors to support the development of Palestinian Authority institutions and NGOs so that they can continue to provide services to those in need in an enabled developmental framework.
- Promote information sharing and transparency of funded projects in order to enable information access for all without exception.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> World Bank: [http://www.f4j.ps/cached\\_uploads/download/2018/02/05/public-west-bank-and-gaza-f4j-1517842856.pdf](http://www.f4j.ps/cached_uploads/download/2018/02/05/public-west-bank-and-gaza-f4j-1517842856.pdf)

## **Special recommendations for local authorities and civil society organizations**

- Develop an integrated national plan that includes the PNA, civil society and the private sector in order to create jobs with a developmental and productive dimension and to improve coherence between the public employment policies and the employment sectors, in addition to necessary formulate a national emergency plan to reduce unemployment in the Gaza Strip.
- Address the gap between university and vocational education specializations and labor market needs including the enhancement of IT competencies, quality management and on-the-job education, including aged workers and focusing on securing sustainable rather than temporary employment opportunities.
- Work on the preparation of employment programs that suits the renewable phases and the results of independent studies and in line with the sustainable development goals to promote steady economic growth and provide decent work for all.
- Encouraging young people and graduates towards vocational and technical training and foreign languages according to the labor market needs, orient vocational training to the education system, higher education, and professions, creating specializations compatible with labor market requirements and promote education to enhance on-demand training curricula.
- Conducting analytical studies of the proposed projects and the employment needs of enterprises and institutions before starting any of these projects, to ensure the project's contribution to the development goals and strengthen the local economy and reduce unemployment.
- Enacting social protection and unemployment insurance laws and expand coverage for all workers.
- Increase coordination between institutions working in the areas of employment to achieve sustainable development and job security, as well as setup regulations to include social security and health coverage and to adhere to the minimum wage.
- Support the private sector as it represents the first incubator to accommodate new graduates.
- Design the temporary employment programs within enabling frameworks for young people to provide them with real opportunities to build their capacity and enhance their competitiveness.
- Create a central database to follow up and monitor the employment programs and their beneficiaries and facilitate registration and follow-up.
- Develop standard criteria for benefiting from funded projects in order to ensure transparency in the selection of beneficiaries by different age groups, sex and region.
- Fair distribution of employment programs to the different productive sectors with focus on supporting agriculture, livelihoods and small income-generating projects.
- Give SMEs serious and effective attention, by formulating of appropriate policies and laws to protect and encourage them as one of the available paths to get out of the unemployment.
- Integrate and strengthen social safety nets.
- Invest in labor market information systems and conduct market studies to identify the most needy sectors for employment.
- Provide training to workforce not only technically but also administratively and financially.