



**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT:**

**“Sustainable, equitable and fair. Consume local, Consume Palestine”**

**SUBMITTED TO**



Assemblea de  
Cooperació  
per la Pau



**RIYADA CONSULTING AND TRAINING**

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## Executive Summary

The Sustainable, Equitable, and Fair: Local Consume, Consume Palestine project is a 592,000 EUR initiative funded by the Generalitat Valenciana and implemented by the Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP), La Tenda de Tot el Món and the Agricultural Development Association (PARC). The project aims to contribute to the improvement of Palestinian rural populations' living conditions by socio-economically empowering Palestinian rural women in four target locations (Faqu'a, Al Jalama, Meithalun, and Jaba', all located in the Jenin Governorate of the West Bank) and by strengthening the value chain of Palestinian projects in line with sustainability criteria and responsible consumption.

The main goal of the evaluation was to provide an external assessment of the process developed by ACPP together with the Tenda de Tot el Món and PARC, in the framework of the international cooperation for development in Palestine. In addition, it offers an assessment of the work done to promote socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian rural woman and to strengthen the value chain of Palestinian products through sustainability and responsible consumption criteria.

In order to ensure a holistic analysis, *Riyada Consulting and Training* evaluation team conducted participatory qualitative and quantitative analysis processes which held several key informant interviews, and focus groups discussions with multiple stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and conducted an economic analysis of each of the four coops, as well as implemented beneficiary quantitative survey, which provided comparative data to the baseline survey conducted at the start of the project. Throughout the implementation of this multi-layered research approach, the evaluation team also remained particularly mindful of the gender aspects of the project and the sensitivities that exist within Palestinian society regarding the inclusion of women within the economic sector. Therefore, a gender approach was taken in the formation and development of the research tools, and respected throughout the field work, as well as informed the lens through which the findings were analyzed.

Finally, it is important to note the significant impact of COVID19 on the project and evaluation process itself. As during the evaluation period there were a number of locked down restrictions in place, the interviews and focus group discussion took place virtually. This was for the protection and health of both the evaluation team and the participants in the analysis process.

### Lessons Learned

- **Importance of the project design and early buy-in:** ACCP and PARC applied learning from previous similar GVA projects to the design of GVA17, which contributed to the success of the design and method of implementation of the project. Specifically, the attention and effort given **to conducting a baseline study**, helped to ensure that the initiatives selected for this project were aligned with the needs of their community, presented a diversity in terms of being producers and consumers, as well as had a strong potential of being economically viable. Additionally, the attention to how the concepts **of Fair Trade and Cooperatives** were shared with the beneficiaries was highly aligned with the expertise among the Spanish partners, making the 'made in Palestine' component of the project stronger, and increased the overall buy-in of the beneficiaries and their

communities in the initiative. The buy-in was also enhanced by the diversity of project activities, studies and plans, inputs for cooperatives, capacity building, exhibitions, exchange visits, round table discussions, certification, as well as the SEAL design, promotion, and conference. It was also clear **that donor financing should not 100% cover the cost of the project**, but by creating a pathway for the beneficiaries themselves to make a cash contribution, at a reasonable rate for the economic context, enhances their ownership to their projects as well as its sustainability.

- **The Positives and Negatives of the COVID19 pandemic:** The COVID19 pandemic created a very difficult challenge for the GVA17 project, which undoubtedly impacted the level of success of the income generation activities and limited the potential for the coops economic development. It also challenged the management and administration of the coops, as well as limited their ability to engage fully in financial reporting in a timely manner. That said, the restrictions and intensity of the pandemic experience did have an unexpected impact on the level of ownership and commitment to the project's initiatives. Where it might have been expected that these challenges would decrease interest among the coop members, it actually had a rather unifying impact for not only the beneficiaries but also their communities and local representatives.
- **Importance of engagement with Relevant Stakeholders:** The evaluation findings have shown a consistency between the designed activities, proposed results, objectives, and the implemented actions. The project is in alignment with the national and regional strategies and the inclusion of Human Rights and Gender Approaches. The project concretely built on the baseline study performed at an early stage of the project. High consideration to 2030 agenda, the intervention's relevance to the carefully chosen framework.
- **The Palestine Seal and Awareness raising about 'made in Palestine' products:** The Palestine SEAL was an innovative approach to make Palestinian products visible and distinguish all the products made in Palestine, it is clear that the seal should be incorporated into the packaging of the various products towards local and international markets. It was also clear that the Seal was made more effective in coordination with awareness raising efforts about the situation in Palestine, so as this process moves forward, there should be a continued awareness raising component to the effort.
- **The importance of providing opportunity to exchange ideas and learning:** The knowledge exchange activities (The mission to Spain) between the representatives of the Palestinian entrepreneurship groups and similar groups in the Valencian Community, both producer cooperatives and consumer cooperatives **are a very good approach to establish** direct contact with interested companies and participate in a fair trade. Furthermore, the conducted round tables with the participation of private sector key representatives are a brainstorming technique to raise aware of the socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian women and pave the way to mitigate the challenges for achieving gender equality.
- **Socio-Economic Empowerment and Change Take Time:** Understanding the complexity of women's socio-economic empowerment, it is essential time is given for such changes to take place. The fact that this project focuses on some most vulnerable individuals, within the most vulnerable communities, located within an occupied and conflict affected West Bank means that time is needed to achieve tangible changes on the ground. Therefore, continuing to apply a mixed approach that focuses on both capacity build and income generation is essential to the process.

- **Enhance Coordination and Communication:** To enhance communication and coordination between the PARC team, ACPP and the Tenda de Tot el Món, however, the establishment of the **Local Management Committee of the project including PARC project coordinator and the ACPP** project technician, representatives of the community-based organizations and the Local Councils has led to effective participation of women, guarantee the formalization of the participation of representatives of the Local Council and local community organizations; strengthen relations with the community; ensured transparency in the selection of beneficiary rights holders when necessary; guarantee the sustainability of the project.

### Recommendations

- **Simplification of the Approval Process:** There is a need to simplify/quick the process of getting approval / modification from donors, applies also on procurement and financial procedures; this approach will save time and enable the productive cooperatives not to miss the season considering the seasonality of the crops.
- **Increase the sales and volumes of Palestinian Products in the Marketplace:** In order to increase the efficiency, it would be necessary to increase the sales and volumes of Palestinian products available within the marketplace. To this end, it was suggested to improve these four variables, including: increase supply capacity (quantity of product available), periodicity of imports (to be carried out in coordination with CTM), reduction of the minimum required by CTM-AI Reef for the use of “ Private label ” with the “Consume Palestina” brand, and reduction of some volume prices.
- **Economic Opportunities to Women with consideration to their families:** Considering the overall poor economic situation facing all Palestinians as this time, and the family and community structures within the society, it may be useful therefore to consider how the family unit could be supported, inclusive of male members of the family, could help create a more stable model of economic empowerment. This model has been tested recently in Gaza where the focus shifted from solely one of women’s economic empowerment to one of family economic empowerment, therefore it is suggested to explore some of the success of these models and consider testing such an approach within a future initiative.
- **Promote the Fair Trade concept and local products in Palestine:** It is essential that continued efforts are made to raise the awareness of the concept of Fair trade and the importance of supporting local products. This effort could also be helped by partnering with other existing initiatives within Palestine in coordination with relevant stakeholders and organizations working with the same aim.
- **Capacity Building of the Coops through networking with successful past projects:** In order to continue building the capacities for the targeted groups and enable them to acquire knowledge in different areas such as: Digital marketing, agri-food marketing, business planning, creative thinking, products storage and packaging, book-keeping, products quality assurance...etc; it may be useful to connect the existing targeted coops with successful models from the past, this way the multiplier effect of the project and sustainability can be strengthen from within the project itself.
- **Specs identification of the Procured items:** Extra effort could be paid to agree with the targeted beneficiaries on what is exactly needed for full utilization and successful

implementation of the activity. As was seen in this project, can be seen in the confusion that arose regarding the requested computer system that the coop needed for irrigation of the strawberries for Al Jalamah Cooperative. Due to the fact that the strawberry crop is very sensitive to heat and needs special techniques for irrigation, the coop felt that they needed this specific technology, but were given something different instead.

- **Build Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity and Increase Accuracy:** As the GVA17 project, and other similar initiatives are complex in terms of the context, as well as their gendered socio-economic objectives, it is essential that the project team is well equipped to implement multiple monitoring/evaluation techniques. Therefore, it is essential that an investment is made in first digitizing the monitoring process to reduce information loss, and second that capacity building sessions are conducted with the PARC field team to increase their ability to capture the nuances of such a project.
- **Establish a clear Monitoring & Evaluation Plan to complement the Project Plan:** By continuing to develop and enhance monitoring and evaluation approaches and establishing a more detailed and practical plan, as well as provide opportunities for capacity building, there can be an improved level of efficiency and accuracy in the analysis of the project.
- **Engage in Nexus related information sharing and learning:** As there is a shift occurring within the Palestinian context related to the promotion of nexus implementation, it would be helpful for ACPP and PARC to consider what other actors in the field are working on complementary economic, gender and human rights programming. Connecting with others would not only provide more contextual information about the external drivers that may impact the project, but could also help better integrate this theory of change and promotion of cooperatives and Fair Trade into the matrix of interventions being used in Palestine.
- **Revisit Previous GVA project participants for planning support and long-term impact analysis:** One of the assets of the GVA programme is that there have been several iterations of the same project approach over several years. Therefore, there is an untapped wealth of information for the project team to draw from in terms of the true long-term impact of these initiatives.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Context:

Palestinian communities generally face several problems (lack of material resources, capital, food insecurity, etc.), which are even harsher for women and girls. In West Bank and in the involved communities, **traditional and patriarchal rules** mark the distribution of roles between women and men. Such a distribution of social responsibilities is made evident mainly through the clear separation between the private and domestic sphere (women-led) and the public sphere (men-led). Therefore, in Palestinian rural societies, only few women have experience in fields such as business management, accounting and marketing. In this sense, gender inequality is very evident.

The Palestinian tradition to collectively organize itself through **cooperatives** embeds in this context. However, and due to gender roles distribution (among other factors), women's participation in these kinds of groups is recent and insufficient. Furthermore, in any way their involvement ensures equality, as, usually, in mixed cooperatives their role in decision-making is still quite limited. Nevertheless, despite the existing limits, cooperatives and entrepreneurs' groups constitute organized ensembles that offer opportunities not only for women, but also for the society as whole. At the same time they are an integral and essential part of the social network in the communities in which they are located.

In this sense, these economic initiatives work as a channel for their associates to access fresh products and gain a relatively regular income. This generates a high dependency in the beneficiaries of the groups and their families. A dependency that is even greater if we take into account the existing high indexes of food insecurity, and the low indexes of local food production. **Local Palestinian products** have a serious problem in competing with those from other countries, especially the ones from Israel and the ones produced in illegal settlements throughout the West Bank, which are heavily subsidized and, therefore, much more competitive. In addition, there is a widespread belief that Palestinian products' quality is lower than the Israeli, Jordanian, European or Egyptian one. Hence, local Palestinian production faces a clear situation of competitive disadvantage.

It is important to also note that this project was not only impacted and shaped by the local Palestinian context, but also had to contend with the dramatic changes that have occurred within the global context as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, regarding the pandemic's economic impact, as well as the impact on women's access to economic empowerment opportunities is significant to the workings of this project. Therefore it is essential to acknowledge the existence of a pre- and post pandemic context.

Recognizing that there were several existing challenges for women within the **work plan prior to the pandemic**, it is unsurprising that their vulnerability and limited access to economic opportunities only increased during this global crisis. Specifically, women's economic security is increasingly fragile world-wide. As a result, women's labor force participation rates remain lower than that of men, and women engage in unpaid labor in both the domestic and public sphere to a

higher degree than men, both trends help to articulate why the additional economic pressure related to the global pandemic has generated large-scale economic insecurity among women. In Palestine, women's labor force participation did not exceed (18%) in the past few years and it is considered among the lowest in the region and worldwide.

**Women in the time of COVID - 19:** Early reports and evaluations of the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic indicate that women have been impacted negatively as a result of the outbreak. The UN reports that the data shows a deeply concerning trend; the outbreak has contributed to a spike in domestic violence rates. This is a result of the added money stress, isolation and restrictions of movement that have collectively fostered an environment of fear, stress, and violence, with little room for escape. Another impact of the virus that targets women specifically is the rates at which women are involved in front-line healthcare, where women make up 70% of the workforce. This causes women to have much higher exposure rates to those who are infected, and where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is in short supply, these women are at higher risk of infection of themselves and their families. In Palestine, assessments conducted during the months of March – May 2020 show that 90% of women owned businesses indicated that the pandemic had negative effects on their businesses, around 30% indicated that they were forced to shut down their projects and another 22% indicated that they are only able to operate their businesses for another 1-3 months<sup>1</sup>.

**COVID-19 Impact on Cooperatives in Palestine:** Due to the severity of the situation, an emergency state was declared in Palestine on the 5th of March 2020. This was followed by a curfew (lockdown) announced on the eve of the 22nd of March, 2020 for two weeks by the Palestinian government. However, due to the severity of the situation, a presidential decree was announced on the 3rd of April, 2020 to extend the state of emergency and the lockdown for another one month to control the spread of the coronavirus. Despite the state of emergency and the curfew, the number of cases is increasing at a high rate, especially recently with the arrival of Palestinian labors who work inside Israel. Moreover, the lockdown has effectively paralyzed all aspects of life, and it is adversely affecting vulnerable communities who rely on daily activities to make a living in Palestine. On 25th of May, the Palestinian government announced the end of the lockdown and imposed eased measures, while maintaining the state of emergency.

The cooperative sector faced several obstacles before the Corona pandemic, which were classified into: obstacles related to the legal and institutional environment supportive and possible for the cooperative movement, and obstacles related to the governance and management of existing cooperatives, and others related to awareness and cooperative spirit. The Corona pandemic has negatively affected agricultural cooperatives in terms of their ability to market, produce, and manufacture goods. The ability of cooperative societies to market their products locally was affected by the deterioration of the economic situation and the decline in the purchasing power of citizens, as the unemployment rate increased, in the second quarter of 2020, to about 25% (by 14% in the West Bank and 45% in the Gaza Strip), and poverty rates increased

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<sup>1</sup> Assessments of UN Women and Care International. March – May 2020.



to 30% (14% in the West Bank and 53% in the Gaza Strip).<sup>2</sup> The costs of external and internal transport have increased as a result of restrictions imposed under the emergency procedures on movement and movement of crossings, which led to an increase in the cost of production for agricultural cooperatives. Furthermore, agricultural cooperatives have been affected by their inability to deliver products in a timely manner due to difficult transportation.

Projects and training that depend on external funding for agricultural cooperative societies, especially those that depend on providing equipment coming from abroad, have been disrupted, which has affected production lines.<sup>3</sup> The long closures and the inability of the associations to market their products resulted in the destruction of many of the stored foodstuffs with limited time validity, which caused heavy losses to the associations. The ability of management committees to manage administrative cooperatives matters has retreated, including holding their meetings and meetings of public bodies, following up on organizational matters with the Cooperative Work Authority, approving budgets, and following up on partner institutions, especially financing.<sup>4</sup> Capacity-building activities, training and awareness-raising workshops were stopped, in addition to delaying the completion of transactions with ministries and bodies related to the work of associations, including following up on customs, taxes and land registration.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of these conditions, the cooperative societies incurred large losses due to the decrease in revenues in return for the stability of operating costs, as they were obliged to pay the salaries of workers in the cooperatives, regardless of the number of days and hours of work, as well as pay all expenses for rent, communications, and energy.<sup>6</sup> The ability of cooperatives to provide services to their members or expand their membership has decreased, and procedures for registering and operating new cooperatives have been delayed, forcing part of the members to withdraw from cooperatives due to the need for the value of their financial contributions.

Cooperative societies in the Palestinian cooperative sector face many challenges related to the work of associations and their sustainability in providing their services to members, especially in the current difficult conditions in the Palestinian territories in light of the current financial crisis and the consequences of the Corona pandemic.<sup>7</sup> The cooperative sector is like other economic sectors that depend primarily on the contributions of members, far from foreign aid. The

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<sup>2</sup> Gisha. (2020, October 3). *Gaza unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2020: 49.1%*. Reliefweb. [https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-unemployment-rate-second-quarter-2020-491#:~:text=According%20to%20figures%20\(Arabic\)%20by,%2C%20now%20standing%20at%2049.1%25](https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-unemployment-rate-second-quarter-2020-491#:~:text=According%20to%20figures%20(Arabic)%20by,%2C%20now%20standing%20at%2049.1%25).

<sup>3</sup> IFAD. (n.d.). *COVID-19*. IFAD. <https://www.ifad.org/en/covid19>

<sup>4</sup> PARC Technical Final Report-no definitive, which was shared with the consultant team

<sup>5</sup> Cooperatives Europe. (n.d.). *The COVID-19 crisis and its economic and social impact on cooperatives across Europe*. Cooperatives Europe. [https://coopseurope.coop/sites/default/files/Covid19%20Report\\_CoopsEurope-compressed.pdf](https://coopseurope.coop/sites/default/files/Covid19%20Report_CoopsEurope-compressed.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton, A. (2020, October 7). *Resilient to Crises: How the Adaptive Nature of Cooperatives has Aided in Overcoming COVID-19- Related Challenges*. Market Links. <https://www.marketlinks.org/blogs/resilient-crises-how-adaptive-nature-cooperatives-has-aided-overcoming-covid-19-related>

<sup>7</sup> UNCT. (2020). *UNCT COVID-19 Development System Response Plan United Nations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*. Reliefweb. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSE\\_Socioeconomic-Response-Pan\\_2020%20%281%29.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSE_Socioeconomic-Response-Pan_2020%20%281%29.pdf)

Cooperative Work Authority indicated that most of the operating cooperatives have been damaged, whether from financial aspects, administrative and organizational aspects, aspects of providing cooperative services to members, or aspects of expansion and development.

In general, a set of impacts on cooperatives in different sectors (agricultural, housing, crafts, services, and consumer) were monitored as follows:<sup>8</sup>

- The members' inability to pay the financial dues of the cooperative, whether it is the price of the services provided, or the payment of loans or contributions and capital contributions of the cooperative.
- The inability of management committees to manage administrative cooperatives matters, including holding meetings of management committees, meetings of public bodies, following up on organizational matters with the cooperative work authority, approving budgets, and following up on partner institutions, especially financing. Likewise, the implementation of some capacity-building activities, training, and awareness-raising workshops has been delayed, and some transactions with some ministries and agencies have been delayed, including following up on customs, taxes, land registration and licenses for some establishments.
- Weak marketing channels for the products of some cooperatives, such as marketing honey, and stopping export activities, especially for olive oil products, medicinal herbs, some vegetables, and women cooperative products such as maftoul, pickles and dairy products.
- The production of craft cooperatives and food processing cooperatives declined due to restrictions on movement and transportation of products during closure.
- The decline in sales of most cooperatives, especially agricultural and consumer goods, as a result of poor household purchasing power, in particular regarding a change in consumers behavior in terms of purchase of canned food and tendency to purchase processed foods.
- Operating costs remained stable despite the decrease in revenues, as salaries of workers and workers in cooperatives were paid regardless of the number of days and hours of work, as well as all expenses related to rent, communications and energy, noting that the revenues of most cooperatives declined, whether they were consumer, agricultural, artisanal or Serviceable.
- Some development projects in cooperatives stopped due to lack of access to devices and equipment necessary for operation, failure to hold training and supervision workshops needed to operate some production lines, stopping the rehabilitation activities of olive presses, and stopping the processing of some buildings.
- Some production projects have completely stopped in some craft cooperatives, especially those involved in food processing, as the production of tomato paste has completely stopped, work has stopped in a cafeteria or wedding hall for some cooperatives, and compost manufacturing has stopped in other cooperatives.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- The process of supplying production inputs to many agricultural, crafts, service and consumer cooperatives was delayed, as was the arrival of some equipment and supplies.
- Weak financial liquidity for cooperatives.
- Some services related to the employment of women, such as guaranteeing school canteens, have been damaged, which led to the damage of goods as a result of the closure, and the closure of some restaurants run by cooperatives.
- Limiting the ability of cooperatives to expand membership or provide services to new members, and procedures for registering and operating new cooperatives were also delayed. In addition, some members tend to withdraw from cooperatives due to the need for the value of their financial contributions.
- The inability of many savings and credit cooperatives to provide loans to members due to poor liquidity.
- Damage to transport cooperatives (ex: Beit Iksa and Qatana) as a result of the suspension of transport buses and their commitment to pay operating costs.<sup>9</sup>

## **2.2 Brief description of the project:**

“**Sustainable, equitable and fair. Consume local, consume Palestine**” is a project developed in Palestine by **Assemblea de Cooperació per la Pau-País Valencià** together with the fair trade NGO **La Tenda de Tot el Món** and the **Agricultural Development Association (PARC)**. The project is supported by the **Generalitat Valenciana’s General Directorate for Cooperation and Solidarity**, belonging to the Participation, Transparency, Cooperation and Democratic Quality Regional Ministry. The project aims to empower, both socially and economically, Palestinian women working in cooperatives, as well as to boost their communities from an economic and social point of view, fighting for the eradication of gender inequality and the local Palestinian products promotion. Additionally, providing a linkage between Palestinian producers to Spanish Fair Trade Market, as well as the promotion of solidarity with Palestinian women among Spanish women.

This initiative was designed to be implemented in the West Bank (Occupied Palestinian Territories), specifically in the Al Jalama, Faqqu’a, Meithalun and Jaba’ communities in located within the Jenin Governorate. The entrepreneurial groups, with delegates that participated in the experiences’ exchange in Valencia included the following groups.

**Al Jalama Women Club**: currently, they carry out various activities such as the manufacturing of natural products, among which the growing of strawberries and the production of jam, which prior to this project was produced with the support of the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem/Society (ARIJ).

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<sup>9</sup> UNCT. (2020). *UNCT COVID-19 Development System Response Plan United Nations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*. Reliefweb. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSE\\_Socioeconomic-Response-Pan\\_2020%20%281%29.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSE_Socioeconomic-Response-Pan_2020%20%281%29.pdf)

**Faqqu'a Consumer Association**: they carry out all kinds of activity, among which the distribution and sale of local products in the community.

**Meithalun Farmer Cooperative**: at present, they produce various local products such as the *Freekeh* (product made from toasted green durum wheat), *Za'atar* (typical Palestinian spices mixture of spices) or gherkins, among others.

**Jaba' Credit and Savings Association**: beside the functions of a credit cooperative, as we understand it in Europe, during the identification process they expressed their aspirations to become a consumer group.

The main goals of the project included the following:

1. **To strengthen the capacities and social and economic empowerment** of various associations of Palestinian women entrepreneurs, through the design of entrepreneurial strategies for the improvement of business management with an inclusive approach and according to sustainability and gender equality criteria.
2. The promotion of the cooperatives' products by **selling** them both locally and internationally, and the **promotion of the dignity** of Palestinian products through the Palestinian Seal.
3. The joint work to **eradicate gender inequality** in the Palestinian community and its involvement in actions promoting so.

All this, with the ultimate goal of **improving, as much as possible, the situation of Palestinian rural women through their socio-economic empowerment and strengthening the value chain of Palestinian products through sustainability and responsible consumption criteria.**

### **2.3 End of Project Reported Impact:**

At the close of this initiative, it was found that the project was able to achieve impact on several different levels. When considering how it impacted the targeted population, an impact was witnessed in terms of providing a source of income, basic needs, skills and know-how, as well as enhanced women's rights and representation and engagement. Beneficiary women now work in their own cooperatives and are running their private businesses with stable income, which enhances their economic situation and increases their family incomes. The group projects implemented in the 4 locations provide and respond to real needs for main goods and services by the residents of these locations. Additionally, target coops were empowered socially and economically. Beneficiary women are now skilled in management, marketing, packaging and labelling, financial management, SMEs and they can employ those skills and apply them in their daily work activities.

- Women Rights: Beneficiary women are well aware about their rights and how to defend their rights based on the law.

- Representation and engagement in decision making. The conference allowed PARC's beneficiaries to share their experience and spread the acquired knowledge and expertise to the attendees (women groups, decision makers, etc), and gave them the opportunity to benefit from all the attendees from different institutions and backgrounds, especially in the cooperatives field.

Institutions: The ministries, local councils and cooperatives participated with PARC's team in all activities supervision and implementation (PSI, CWA, local councils). This approach gives an opportunity to include professional and experienced members from all related stakeholders, who can give effective suggestions and rich insights stemming from their different backgrounds working in the sector. Additionally, this approach created confidence and strengthened trust between the beneficiary's groups and governmental and local institutions. Additionally a case study was made of the Maithaloun, where a farmer coop created in early 1960 was not functioning for decades. Women benefited from the project, revived the coop and took the lead 50% as a result of an election, now 50% of the Coop members are women, as well as contributed to the establishment of the coop unit with PARC.

Recipient Organizations: Through this project's initiative, PARC and ACPP had the opportunity to target women in remote marginalized rural areas, and enrich their experience and expertise in women socio-economic empowerment and equality in an innovative way. PARC as a key player in rural development, including women socio economic empowerment, has developed in-depth understanding of the nature and level of interventions, which occurred through the different nature and type of projects that were supported. Each project presented a special learning case study. In addition, PARC had a MoU with the Cooperative Work Association (CWA) that includes approval by the CWA of cooperatives which PARC planned to work with in this project. This to ensure non-duplication of interventions and ensuring the target groups are committed to their responsibilities towards the CWA including their procedures and regulations. The procedure takes time which also enables PARC and CWA to check the level of commitment of these cooperatives over this period. Furthermore, PARC established in September of 2019, with the support of ACPP, a special unit to take care of their work with the coops, further enhancing their capacity to monitor and support these initiatives. For the GVA17, one of the results of this coordinated effort was a position policy paper, developed from the seminar held with the coops. The specific issue related to coops and their approach to work, regarding the establishment of an environmental and participatory approach, as well as a plan for key stakeholders (CWA, NGOs, coops and mainly women coops ...etc).

It is important to mention the impact on the project's targeted groups, in terms of registrations. As registered cooperatives are recognized by the CWA and the Ministry of Labor, which means that all procedures followed by the cooperatives' members are within an official and legal frame, that protect their rights and ensure practicing good procedures. Also, the registered cooperatives are governed by applying the cooperation 8 principles ensuring transparency, democracy, open membership, and exchanging of experiences, environmental protection, in addition to benefit from CWA funds/ services.

Technical Impact: Technical impact was measured through different interventions applied throughout the life of the project. Particular areas of technical impact can be seen in the group technical training sessions, which were provided throughout the project from the pre-harvest period until Post-harvest practices. These included strawberry cultivation, grapes and medicinal herbs cultivation, for the producing groups. In addition to financial management and accounting training for both the consuming and the producing groups. Such training sessions were critical for the achievement of the expected results and change. One of the main resources small farmers lack is the knowledge through the provided training, they have capacitated themselves with knowledge and skills in the previously mentioned fields which is impossible to accomplish without the acquired knowledge. Knowing the right practices at the right time, mitigation and protection measures and other important areas in safer production, is what farmers need in order to succeed in having products with high quality. This knowledge was indicated and observed to be very new to the trainees.

Furthermore, training sessions related to the fields of climate change, good governance, labor rights and decent work, business management and SMEs sessions, raised the members awareness and knowledge on the different rights, procedures, and skills, to develop their businesses and ensure gaining their rights were provided. As well as exchange visits between the group's with other successful models in the different governorates. These visits gave the members the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences in different fields and types of productions. Safer product certification was attained and within the different follow-up and extension visits carried out by the PSI and PARC team, for Al-Jalama and Meithalun Groups, technical guidelines and advice were provided for the members, in regard to using pesticides in a proper way.

Economic Impact: Market studies and business plans were developed for the 4 groups targeted by the project. As an action plan was developed for each group, to implement the business plan designed. However, some of the actions included as recommendations in the business plans, were already applied, such as implementing the marketing, packaging, labelling, and quality training sessions. Experts from Valencia designed videos for the 4 groups that included "digital marketing, agricultural marketing, and entrepreneurship planning" topics. These videos included guidelines that the members can follow in order to develop their skills within these mentioned fields.

Regarding the consuming cooperatives, as they are considered the most successful models among other cooperation sectors, in terms of having a successful economic impact, as within the project, the cooperatives, (Jaba' and Faqu'a) are marketing the rural products with competitive prices. "brief analysis for the economic status for each of these consuming groups is added as an SOV". Regarding AL-Jalameh. According to the report submitted by the group, and verified by PARC staff the total production for the first cultivation, was 7500 kg (3.25 ton per dunum) and the total sales for the group were 36,000 ILS with a net profit of 16400 ILS, it is worth mentioning that the production rate is almost half of the normal expected production where all farmers that cultivated strawberry have been affected by the hot wave conditions considering that Strawberry is a very sensitive product. As they are a charity, they do not distribute any money to their

members, rather they use their profit to settle their financial deficit, and the benefit to the members comes from job creation and paid employment.

Additionally, during COVID-19 pandemic, women were not able to market strawberries due to the restrictions on movement and the lockdown policies. However, the distribution of strawberries was only restricted to the Al-Jalama community. One of the challenges/risks that existed for this coop included the fact they are renting the land they use for their crop and their contract is renewed on a yearly basis. Unfortunately, after 2020 this renewal was rejected rejected the idea to renew the contract due to the following reasons:

- The land owner gave a short notice for the group to evacuate the land due to *Tabo* (land ownership deed) and heritage arrangements since the land was owned by his family (family ownership) and because of *Tabo* the family had to distribute the properties.
- The land owner gave the cooperative the notice on the time that they have to start preparing the land for the next season (August).

The cooperative needed to find an alternative for the land which is something that takes time and for sure they will not get the benefit of this season (2020-2021). This issue was solved when the cooperative leased new land ( 2.50 dunums for JD 700 yearly ) and planted it with cucumber and pumpkin. For the strawberry crop, they approached a pioneer farmer, Wasef Abu Farha, to take care of the whole cycle of strawberry production for NIS 20,000 in 3 years as financial return to the cooperative.

To get the benefit from the strawberry inputs (elevated structure, computerized irrigation system and other inputs) the cooperative contracted with a pioneer farmer who has long experience in the market and in cultivating strawberry and has fixed contracts with traders and has a solid access to the market in WB. The economic impact was measured throughout the lifecycle of the project.

During COVID-19 pandemic, this concern has become crucial for the small-scale producers, as many of them were not able to sell their products due to the movement restrictions and other obstacles observed. And to support these farmers, PARC initiated a campaign to support these small-scale producers "We Are with You". As grapes and other products were purchased from these farmers, and distributed on the vulnerable families affected by the COVID-19 crisis. It is important to keep in mind when considering the production of grapes is a national concern at the moment with marketing opportunities locally and externally. Seeds and seedless grape in Palestine is considered as the third economic subsector (after olive and date) where 75,000 Dunums planted in the southern governorates - Hebron and Bethlehem, out of this 38,000 Dunums are in production with average annual production 55,000 Tons -2019 by 6500 families (Grape Council). Grapes are classified as tables and for processing grapes (roughly equal areas) which is mainly carried by women. Space for improvement in the field of quality, scale of production and marketing linkages are still challenging issues, ending with high competition with the Israeli grapes whether in quality or in pricing.

Social Impact: The project included many activities that aimed at strengthening the social role for women, whether within their families, or within their communities. These activities included a radio spot that presented the topic of having women playing key roles as decision makers, in order to raise awareness on this matter, noting that women playing roles as decision makers in Palestine do not exceed the 5%. During COVID-19 pandemic, the 4 groups distributed food baskets for the vulnerable families, which has strengthened the relationship between the groups with their communities. As for Jaba', they have provided equipment (medical equipment) for a medical centre in Jaba' to provide the support.

Exchange visits locally and externally (Spain) opened a horizon for them in the field of communication, self confidence and reflection of their capacity. Additionally, in general, women in rural areas face a lot of barriers when it comes to social networking, due to the different norms and cultures, which at certain points have women facing exclusion in different aspects of life. Moreover, the women brought with them a sample of their goods to Spain, which allowed for marketing and building awareness about their economic projects in the fair trade exhibitions they attended during their trip. As a result of the awareness raising activities within this project, these women are now more confident in their abilities to build networks and connections with different individuals, organizations.

Political Impact: The local committees constitute members from CBOs and local governments which ensure effective outreach to targeted groups, optimize sharing of knowledge and learning process for those community actors, and increase engagement and participation in decision making between community actors and community members. This ensures high transparency and accountability during project implementation, and promotes best practices in the beneficiary selection process among CBOs, community members, and local governments. The targeted population (the right holders) experience democracy and real participation in decision making. This strengthens the sense of ownership and citizenship so beneficiaries and targeted populations are committed to achieving the results and sustainability of the actions. Networks and relationships established as a result of this, also optimize the expected results. Moreover, trust and transparency are strengthened as a result of this and encourage population real engagement towards achieving the expected results.

The Impact of discontinuation of governmental salaries put pressure on women in particular, especially if the woman is committed to loans to banks and she has checks and bills to be paid , since 6 months the government paid half of the salary this means that there will be nothing left for the employee from her salary, which will psychologically affect her in terms of her inability to manage Life and societal matters on the one hand, and responding to the requirements of the family and the home on the other hand, as a result of this, she may move away from the social life during this period because she is unable to keep up with her daily life, in addition to being subjected to internal pressures that sometimes resort her to selling jewelry to provide for the needs and requirements of her family, especially if she is heading the family. Furthermore, through the implementation of the conference , a policy paper was prepared, and will be shared with the CWA and the ministry of Labor, in addition to other institutions. This shall help positively in affecting the cooperatives law.



**Ecological Impact:** The ecological impact for the project is measured through the “Safer Product Certificate”, that was implemented by the PSI “Palestinian Standard Institute”. As during the follow-up and extension visits carried out by the PSI and PARC team, both Meithalun and Al-Jalama groups were able to gain the proper skills and knowledge about the different types of pesticides and the actions that must be followed in order to grow a healthy and safe product. All to ensure production with high quality, and safe impact. However, within the “Safer Product Certificate Activity”, 7 products passed the test, as the results were provided to the PARC team during the first week of January, 2021. Where all of them had certificates issued by the institution. Moreover, the projects implemented, used modern technology techniques and equipment such as computerized systems for irrigation and fertilization, in Maithalune they used earthen water ponds to collect rainwater using modern machines and materials. It is important to note that both ACP and PARC are striving to assess the ecological impact as holistically as possible and with each project seek to deepen their approach in this regard.

**Gender and Human Rights Impact:** The GVA 17 project had some positive impact on gender, however the traditional roles and beliefs that existed at the start of the project largely remained intact. The strength of the relationship between women and men within local councils remained an essential component throughout the implementation of the projects as two of the groups were not registered, they needed the support of local leaders in order to implement their projects. That said, women remained optimistic about the idea that being economically empowered would help them gain more power in terms of decisions in their household. There are many examples of gender mainstreaming within this project, one of which can be seen in the project’s announcement, which was done publicly and in the presence of farmers and members from cooperatives, PARC team, and local management committee and local councils. It was emphasized at that time that this initiative would prioritize women’s agricultural groups in order to encourage female small farmers to join the project. Which was especially significant as the agricultural sector is highly male dominated and women are often limited to work in the processing and packaging of the products in the value chain.

Another example of gender mainstreaming can be seen in the number of women representatives who were part of the project local committee in Faqqoua since it is a mixed cooperative (50% males, 50% females) and participated in the follow up and monitoring of the project implementation. This was very important for the empowerment and strengthening the role of women in the community of Faqqoua, as now they are part of decision making when it comes to their community risks and resources. This also represents an important platform for networking and getting to know and be part of community CBOs, especially working with women CBOs (political empowerment). Furthermore, gender equality was embedded in the design of the project and selection process and gender mainstreaming was part of the design of all provided training and capacity building sessions. Through this initiative, women have been encouraged, reach out to, and targeted with technical and managerial training. They were given equal opportunities through the project to have access to knowledge and develop skills necessary for their work and economic activities. This was particularly significant, due to the fact that women suffer from a lack of access to information and capacity building especially in this value chain, and their role is concentrated mainly in the packaging and processing. This is very important for empowerment of

women socially and economically as well as psychologically as small farmers feel confident of their skills and abilities to work in the Agricultural sector and be successful. As a result of this inclusive approach women farmers have been provided with many necessary inputs to support and strengthen their economic activities.

## 3. Methodology

In order to provide Asamblea de Cooperación por la Paz (ACPP), with an external evaluation of the "Sustainable, equitable and fair. Consume local, consume Palestine (GVA 17)" project, that analyses the projects achievements in relation to the overarching goal of contributing to improving the living conditions of the Palestinian rural population, *Riyada Consulting and Training* proposed the following balanced and well-rounded methodology.

### **3.1 Strategy and Timetable of Work:**

#### **3.1.1 Inception Meeting/s:**

Following the preliminary desk review conducted by the consultants, our research team held an inception meeting/s with the designated ACPP and PARC programme staff for this consultancy. The purpose of this activity was mainly to receive a comprehensive overview of the project's outcomes/results from PARC/ACPP and to discuss the objectives of the evaluation and understand more clearly its expected deliverables, confirming the proposed schedule of deliverables and the proposed methodology, and to request any remaining relevant programme documentation. The aim was also to gain initial feedback on the proposed approach before proceeding with the development of the research tools and finalized methodology.

#### **3.1.2 Desk Review:**

After the preparatory meeting/s, our research team received all relevant project documentation as well as conducting research of additional data to conduct comprehensive literature review and gain a thorough understanding of:

- Final Technical Report of the project
- Documents for the formulation of the intervention and annexes (Annual planning, Diagnostic studies, viability etc).
- Monitoring reports.
- Sources of verification, graphic and audiovisual material.
- Collaboration agreements with partners.
- GVA regulations.
- Country's legislation.
- Any other relevant documentation provided by ACPP or PARC

This review assisted in supporting and reinforcing the findings of the interviews to be conducted in the fieldwork portion of the study and form the quantitative portion of the data to be utilized in the study

#### **3.1.3 Development of Evaluation Tools/Questionnaires:**

Riyada Consulting's evaluation team have developed the draft qualitative and quantitative research

tools taking into account the tools developed in the baseline, adapting them to the evaluation and the results of the project and any modifications that have taken place during implementation. The tools were fed by the “Evaluation Planning Matrix” and the TOR based on discussions between ACPP and consultants as well as the findings of the document review and the feedback received during the preparatory meetings of the evaluation. All questionnaires were based on the research questions prepared by the consultant and reviewed by ACPP and PARC, cross-checked with the project's logical framework, and adapted to the local context as appropriate. The draft research tools were shared with ACPP, Tenda de Tot el Món and PARC prior to implementation, and updated or modified as necessary, based on comments received.

The following table shows the main dimensions of the evaluation proposed to address, the criteria and the key questions to be addressed (the detailed Tools are included in the Annex):

| Dimension                   | Criteria   | Evaluation questions  |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|
| <b>Design and Structure</b> | Relevance  | Does the project design respond to the context in the one that has been executed?   |
|                             | Coherence  | Degree of articulation of the objectives of the intervention with the proposed instruments to achieve them and their appropriateness to the problems? |
|                             |            | Is the intervention compatible, complementary, and does it have synergies with other actions, strategies or programs?                                 |
| <b>Processes</b>            | Ownership  | Do the owners make the objectives of the project their own, as well as the values and principles?   |
| <b>Results</b>              | Efficiency | Have the necessary resources been committed to achieve the operational objectives of the project?   |
|                             | Efficiency | To what extent has the implementation of the activities contributed to the achievement of the results and the specific objective?                     |
|                             | Coherence  | To what extent has it contributed to the achievement of the higher goal?  |

### Challenges and Limitations:

Usually, travelling in the West Bank is made according to standards. However, sudden restrictions occurred during the evaluation period due to the COVID19 pandemic, therefore in order to maximize participation during periods of quarantine and lockdown, Riyadh used technological tools such as Zoom and Skype to conduct interviews within the safety of their homes/offices and to mitigate close contact until the virus is contained and it is safe to proceed in person. However, it should be noted

that the use of these virtual alternatives has slowed down the data collection process and the responsiveness and availability of beneficiaries and stakeholders was challenging at times.

**There was a limitation relating to the availability of the audited financial statements for the cooperatives; mainly as a result to Covid-19 pandemic where some cooperatives opted to combine 2020 with 2021 financial reporting. Thus, it took more efforts from the consultants and additional discussions with the cooperatives to come up with the economic analysis of the financial status of the cooperatives included in the current report.**

### **3.2: Fieldwork:**

#### Key informant and focus group interviews:

The team of consultants carried out key informant interviews at each of the 4 project sites with representatives and key staff members of the cooperatives. This has presented an opportunity for the beneficiaries to have a more in-depth discussion of the project and its impact on them specifically.

The consultants also conducted 8 focus groups with board and general assembly members, as well as beneficiaries and members of the local community. Notes from the discussions and reflections were prepared and compiled for analysis. Participants were identified through the ACPP and PARC networks, and were also taken into consideration those who participated in the Baseline Assessment.

#### Semi-structured questionnaires with direct beneficiaries:

In addition to qualitative methods, Riyadh's team collected quantitative socio-economic data from direct beneficiaries who participated in interviews and focus groups. A total of (109) Socio-economic profiles were collected from both men and women providing indicators on the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries after participating in the project, perceptions of gender aspects and decision-making dynamics within and outside the household. The plan was to collect 120 socio-economic profiles from direct beneficiaries; however, due to Covid-19 and the lockdown measures repeatedly imposed by the government made it difficult to collect the profiles through face-to-face interviews. Instead, online alternatives and phone interviews were applied that have slowed down the process of the data collection and lowered the response rate from the interviewees. The collected 109 profiles were representative and sufficient to conduct the analysis and to avoid further delays, the research team in consultation with ACPP and PARC agreed to proceed with the analysis of the collected profiles to meet the deadlines; especially with the start of the holy month of Ramadan, it would have been very difficult to collect any further responses.

#### The quantitative data included:

- Demographic information: age, marital status, education, household size, etc.
- Economic indicators: household income, ownership of income generation projects, income from the cooperative, etc.
- Asset ownership: land, housing, other assets,
- Decision-making: about assets, inside and outside the home,

- Access and mobility: role in marketing, access to markets, educational and capacity building activities, etc.
- Training and capacity building needs.

| Instrument                | Actors   | Sample    |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Interview guide 1:</b> | <p><b>Key informant interviews with project partners:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with coordinators of this intervention by the PARC counterpart: the interviews must be carried out with both the project coordinator and the field supervisors, as well as with the person responsible for marketing, advocacy and mobilization of the organization, in other words, all those people who have had a relationship with the project and the approaches and strategic development of this action.</li> <li>• Interviews/Focus groups with the Local Councils of the communities where the groups work and with religious leaders of the communities.</li> <li>• Interviews/Focus groups with local business agents, participants in the "Consume Local, Consume Palestine" Campaign, with representatives of the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), among others</li> <li>• Interviews/Focus groups with the ACPP team: headquarters staff, expatriate, Middle East team coordinator, volunteer staff involved in the project</li> <li>• Interviews/Focus groups with the Tenda team: project coordinator and volunteer staff</li> <li>• Interviews/Focus groups with key professionals who have been contracted to develop an external professional service, both in Palestine and in Spain (in this case we are talking about IDEAS (Iniciativas de Economía Alternativa y Solidaria and Al Reef)</li> </ul> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Interview guide 2:</b> | <p><b>Key informant interviews with representatives and key staff members from each of the 4 groups involved in the project:</b></p> <p>Interviews/Focus groups with the 4 groups involved in the project Al Jalama Women's Club, Faqu'a Consumers Association, Meithalun Farmers Cooperative, Jaba Credit and Savings Association': in case it is not possible to interview all the people in the groups, the people interviewed should be men and</p>  | <b>10</b> |

|                           |   |            |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
|                           | women, not just women.  |            |
| <b>Interview guide 3:</b> | <p><b>Interviews with local actors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ministry of Agriculture in Jenin.</li> <li>● Department of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Labour - Jenin Office</li> <li>● Ministry of Economy - Trade Mark Registration Department - Jeni District Office</li> <li>● District office of the Ministry of Agriculture in South Jenin.</li> <li>● City council representatives, Al Jalama.</li> <li>● Representatives of the Faqqoua municipalities</li> <li>● Rural Women's Development Society - Jenin Coordinator</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: the final list of stakeholders will be discussed and finalised with ACPP, Tenda and PARC, as it will depend on the actual stakeholders involved in the project.</i></p> | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Interview guide 4:</b> | <p><b>8 focus group discussions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board members and general assembly of the 4 cooperatives</li> <li>● Members of the local community (men and women) who participated in or were aware of the project activities, such as local participants in the "Consume Palestine" campaign, etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: the final list of focus groups will be discussed with ACPP, Tenda and PARC in more detail to identify key groups.</i></p>   | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Questionnaire:</b>     | <p><b>109 semi-structured questionnaires will be implemented through the consultant's field researchers targeting project leaders and beneficiaries/right holders.</b></p> <p><i>Note: 47 semi-structured questionnaires were collected at the baseline.</i></p>  | <b>109</b> |

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Consulting team conducted Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions according to the agreed work plan across relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries. The notes from the interviews and reflections were prepared in English and compiled for analysis. The following tables list the key informant interviews and focus groups conducted:

| <b>Key informant Interviews with project partners</b>      |   |   |                          |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Email/Telephone</b>  | <b>Date</b>              |
| ACPP- Amaia Camacho  | ACPP Middle East Coordinator                                  | <a href="mailto:orientemedio@acpp.com">orientemedio@acpp.com</a>  | March 8, 2021            |
| ACPP- Analía Lévêque                                       | ACPP Middle East Project Manager                              | <a href="mailto:middleeast@acpp.com">middleeast@acpp.com</a>  | March 11, 2021           |
| ACPP-Silvia Tusón  | ACPP País Valencià  | <a href="mailto:paisvalencia@acpp.com">paisvalencia@acpp.com</a>  | March 12, 2021           |
| Ana María Escrihuela Escrihuela/Carlos Javier López Benedí | La Tenda de Tot el Món  | <a href="mailto:carlesx@la-tenda.org">carlesx@la-tenda.org</a><br><a href="mailto:anae@la-tenda.org">anae@la-tenda.org</a>      | Responses Sent via email |
| Mercedes García de Vinuesa                                 | Ideas Comercio Justo/others                                   | <a href="mailto:comerciojusto@ideas.coop">comerciojusto@ideas.coop</a><br><a href="https://ideas.coop/">https://ideas.coop/</a> | Responses Sent via email |
| Izzat Zeidan   | Programmes and Project department Manager /PARC - headquarter | <a href="mailto:izzat@pal-arc.org">izzat@pal-arc.org</a><br>0598904464  | <u>March 9, 2021</u>     |
| Ruba Daas  | Project Coordinator /PARC-headquarter                         | <a href="mailto:Ruba.daas@pal-arc.org">Ruba.daas@pal-arc.org</a><br>0595916838  | <u>March 9, 2021</u>     |
| Mohammed Jaradat   | Jenin office coordinator- PARC                                | <a href="mailto:Mohammed.jaradat@pal-arc.org">Mohammed.jaradat@pal-arc.org</a><br>0598921798                                    | <u>March 7,2021</u>      |
| Noor Zaghari   | PARC Project Coodinator                                       | <a href="mailto:noor.zaghari@pal-arc.org">noor.zaghari@pal-arc.org</a>  | April 12,2021            |
| Ismail Soboh   | PARC cooperative unit   | <a href="mailto:ismal.soboh@pal-arc.org">ismal.soboh@pal-arc.org</a> ,<br>0599240247  | March 25,2021            |

| <b>Key Informant Interviews with representatives and key staff from each of the 4 groups involved in the project:</b> |              |             |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Title</b> | <b>Date</b> |



|                 |  |                 |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| Wasfieh Shabaan | Head of AL-Jalameh women center        | March 11th,2021 |
| Amal Shaban     | Member of AL-Jalameh women center      | March 15th,2021 |
| Israa Hindawi   | Head of Jabaa consumer cooperative     | March10th,2021  |
| Fayza Nasrallah | Member of Jabaa consumer cooperative   | March16th,2021  |
| Basmeh Odeh     | Member of Faqqoua consumer cooperative | March17th,2021  |
| Mohammed Salah  | Head of Faqqoua consumer cooperative   | March11th,2021  |
| Ferial Nuirat   | Head of Maithaloune women center       | March10th ,2021 |
| Khaldiya Nuirat | Member of Maithaloune women center     | March10th,2021  |
| Nazmiah Saeq    | Member of Maithaloune women center     | March10th,2021  |
| Fatima Saad     | Member of Maithaloune women center     | March10th,2021  |

\*Every effort was made to interview and engage with the coops, however it is important to note that despite an ongoing effort over the duration of the consultancy service to invite and include more and more participants, as well as with the support from PARC coordinators, there was a challenge coordinating interviews evenly across the locations. Specifically, as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, there were key individuals that were not available as a result of being sick or having to take care of a family member that had become sick. Additionally, there was a challenge related to timing, as some of the targeted individuals were busy and unable to commit to an interview. This was despite providing very flexible scheduling, that was designed to connect based on their availability.

| <b>Key Informant Interviews with local actors:</b> |                                       |                        |                 |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Title</b>                          | <b>Email/Telephone</b> | <b>Date</b>     |
| Fuad Kharma  | Cooperative work Association/Ramallah | 0562004376             | March18th, 2021 |
| Mohammed Dalaq                                     | Palestinian standard institute        | 0592924484             | March18th, 2021 |
| Taghreed Shehadeh                                  | Palestinian standard institute        | 0599316617             | March18th, 2021 |
| Hakam Salah  | Ministry of Agriculture               | 0597999868             | March15th, 2021 |
| Sufian   | Cooperative work Association/Jenin    | 0562001795             | March11th, 2021 |
| SalimAbu Ghazaleh                                  | Al Reef                               | 0599751447             | March 23,2021   |
| Lama Abu Baker                                     | Ministry of Agriculture- Jenin        | 0599355954             | March11th, 2021 |

|               |                                      |            |                 |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Dr.Fuad Ardah | Ministry of National Economy - Jenin | 0599386380 | March 11th,2021 |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|

| <b>Focus groups</b> |  |                  |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>Name</b>         | <b>Title</b>                                   | <b>Date</b>      |
| Anam Shaban         | General Assembly- Al Jalameh Women Center      | March 15th ,2021 |
| Amal Shaban         | Member of Al Jalameh Women Center              | March 15th ,2021 |
| Wasfieh Shaban      | Board - I AJ Jalameh Women Center              | March 15th ,2021 |
| Izdihar Farahneh    | General Assembly -Al Jalameh Women Center      | March 15th ,202  |
| Shuair Shaban       | General Assembly- Al Jalameh Women Center      | March 15th ,202  |
| Shazah Shaban       | General Assembly-Al Jalameh Women Center       | March 15th ,202  |
| Fayza Nasrallah     | Member of Jabaa Consumer Cooperative           | March 16th ,2021 |
| Rasmeiah Neiarat    | General Assembly- Jabaa Consumer Cooperative   | March 16th ,2021 |
| Angham Shaban       | Coordinator at- Jabaa Consumer Cooperative     | March 16th ,2021 |
| Basem Saed          | Head of Jabaa Consumer Cooperative             | March 16th ,2021 |
| Manal Alawneh       | General Assembly- Jabaa Consumer Cooperative   | March 16th ,2021 |
| Lina Sbaih          | General Assembly- Jabaa Consumer Cooperative   | March 16th ,2021 |
| Afeefah Abu Hamed   | General Assembly- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative  | March 17th ,2021 |
| Moneer Barakat      | Financial Manager--Faqqua Consumer Cooperative | March 17th ,2021 |
| Basmah Zeidat       | General Assembly- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative  | March 17th ,2021 |
|                     |  |                  |
| Mohammad Salah      | Head of Faqqua Consumer Cooperative            | March 17th ,2021 |
| Majd Zedan          | General Assembly- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative  | March 17th ,2021 |

|                     |  |                  |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| Mariam Zadiat       | General Assembly- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative  | March 17th ,2021 |
| Aminah Sabaneh      | General Assembly- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative  | March 17th ,2021 |
| Basma Odeh          | Member of the Local Community- Consume Palestine Campaign- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative | March 23th ,2021 |
| Mariam Zaidat       | Member of the Local Community- Consume Palestine Campaign- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative | March 23th ,2021 |
| Faida Jal           | Member of the Local Community- Consume Palestine Campaign- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative | March 23th ,2021 |
| Zakeiah Abu Salamah | Member of the Local Community- Consume Palestine Campaign- Faqqua Consumer Cooperative | March 23th ,2021 |
| Ibitisam            | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Imerah              | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Kholoud             | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Samirah             | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Shireen             | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Fatimah             | General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center  | April 11 ,2021   |
| Manal Alawneh       | Food Producer- Consume Palestine - Campaign -Jaba                                      | March 27th, 2021 |
| Sabrieh Jamil       | Food Producer- Consume Palestine - Campaign -Jaba                                      | March 27th, 2021 |
| Faizeh Naser        | Food Producer- Consume Palestine - Campaign -Kafar Raai                                | March 27th, 2021 |
| Sawsan Sawafta      | Food Producer -Consume Palestine Campaign  | March 31,2021    |
| Ali Abu Baker       | Consumer Protection Palestine  | March 31,2021    |
| Im Hazem            | Jalboun Cooperative for Rural Development  | March 31,2021    |
| Mohammad Fahmi      | Kafarthan Association  | March 31,2021    |

|                |  |               |
|----------------|--|---------------|
| Mohammad Kamil | General Director- Chamber of Commerce -Jenin | March 31,2021 |
|----------------|--|---------------|

### **3.2.2 Quantitative Research:**

In order to compare results of the baseline conducted at the start of the project, there were **109 semi-structured questionnaires** implemented through the consultant's field researchers in order to target project leaders and beneficiaries/right holders. The result of this process were compared to that of the 47 semi-structured questionnaires that were collected during the baseline assessment, in order to highlight the impact and any changes that have resulted from the implementation of the project. Please see Annex 5 for the questionnaire.

### **3.3 Draft and Finalize the Evaluation:**

Riyada Consulting then developed the Evaluation report. This report is inclusive of the findings of the literature review and the results of the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) as well as the questionnaires in order to present a holistic and evidence-based assessment of the impact of phase one of this project. Riyada's research team included a balanced combination of expert statisticians, gender experts, and analysts to ensure all components of qualitative and quantitative data is triangulated clearly against the baseline assessment and the intended goals and outcomes of the project.

The draft will be presented in English. An initial draft report will be shared with the staff for reflections and feedback and then a final draft report will be developed inclusive of the executive summary.

### **3.4 Ethical Protocols:**

Throughout the entire research process, but especially throughout the fieldwork, general ethical protocols were adhered to. Riyada Consulting ensured the privacy and quality of data collection through assigning its well trained and experienced supervisors/researchers for the interviews. Riyada Consulting research studies have included sensitive topics and thus we were familiar with the ethical considerations attached to this type of research.

In addition, Riyada Consulting commits to the principle of informed consent that was obtained from all respondents. In giving their informed consent, the confidentiality of all information obtained through all data collection will be assured.

If they wish to do so, respondents were able to terminate their participation in the interviews, focus groups and surveys at any stage.

And finally, Riyada commits to adhering to the principle of **DO NO HARM** and applies a conflict sensitive approach to the entirety of this Assessment.

## 4. Findings

This final evaluation of the GVA17 initiative was conducted through a mixture of field interviews and focus group discussions held with the projects partners, beneficiaries as well as local representatives and stakeholders, as well as includes a quantitative survey which compares the results from the baseline analysis with the endline to help provide insight into the changes that occurred over the time of the project for the beneficiaries of the project. The results of all these efforts are provided in the subsections below.

### 4.0 Demographics:

The sample size of the quantitative survey in the Endline assessment was 109 beneficiaries compared to 47 beneficiaries in the baseline, see Table 1.

Table 1: Sample distribution according to basic and demographic variables in Endline and baseline assessments:

| Variables      | Categories          | Endline          |           | Baseline         |           |
|----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
|                |                     | Number of People | Percent % | Number of people | Percent % |
| Age Group      | less than 40        | 28               | 25.7      | 12               | 25.5      |
|                | 40--49 years        | 31               | 28.4      | 19               | 40.4      |
|                | 50--59 years        | 34               | 31.2      | 11               | 23.4      |
|                | 60 years and more   | 16               | 14.7      | 5                | 10.6      |
|                | Total               | 109              | 100       | 47               | 100       |
| Gender         | Male                | 30               | 27.5      | 9                | 19.1      |
|                | Female              | 79               | 72.5      | 38               | 80.9      |
| marital status | Single              | 15               | 13.8      | 9                | 19.1      |
|                | Engaged             | 2                | 1.8       | 1                | 2.1       |
|                | Married             | 87               | 79.8      | 31               | 66        |
|                | Widowed             | 3                | 2.8       | 3                | 6.4       |
|                | Divorced            | 2                | 1.8       | 3                | 6.4       |
|                | No formal education | 2                | 1.8       | 2                | 4.3       |

|   |  |    |      |    |      |
|---|--|----|------|----|------|
| <b>highest level of education</b>                                   | Basic school (up to 10th grade)            | 33 | 30.3 | 14 | 29.8 |
|   | Secondary school                           | 33 | 30.3 | 14 | 29.8 |
|   | Bachelor's                                 | 34 | 31.2 | 16 | 34   |
|   | Master's                                   | 7  | 6.4  | 1  | 2.1  |
| <b>number of household members</b>                                  | 1-2 persons                                | 15 | 13.8 | 6  | 12.8 |
|   | 3-4 persons                                | 20 | 18.3 | 7  | 14.9 |
|   | 5-6 persons                                | 34 | 31.2 | 13 | 27.7 |
|   | 7-8 persons                                | 32 | 29.4 | 18 | 38.3 |
|   | 9 persons and more                         | 8  | 7.3  | 3  | 6.4  |
| <b>relationship to the head of household</b>                        | 1. Head of household                       | 34 | 31.2 | 9  | 19.1 |
|   | 2- spouse                                  | 60 | 55   | 28 | 59.6 |
|   | 3- son/daughter                            | 11 | 10.1 | 4  | 8.5  |
|   | 4- father/mother                           | 2  | 1.8  | 1  | 2.1  |
|   | 5- other                                   | 2  | 1.8  | 5  | 10.6 |
| <b>Location: name of community that the respondents are located</b> | a. Faqu'a                                  | 42 | 38.5 | 9  | 19.1 |
|   | b. Aljalama                                | 17 | 15.6 | 10 | 21.3 |
|   | c. Meithalun                               | 20 | 18.3 | 13 | 27.7 |
|   | c. Jaba'a                                  | 30 | 27.5 | 15 | 31.9 |
| <b>relationship/role to the project/cooperative</b>                 | a) Women's Club Meithalun                  | 20 | 18.3 | 13 | 27.7 |
|   | b) Consumer's Association Faqu'a           | 42 | 38.5 | 9  | 19.1 |
|   | c) Women's Club Al Jalama                  | 17 | 15.6 | 10 | 21.3 |
|   | d) Association of Credit and Saving Jaba'a | 30 | 27.5 | 15 | 31.9 |
| <b>Monthly Income of the household</b>                              | less than 2000 NIS                         | 23 | 21.1 | 14 | 29.8 |
|   | 2000--2999 NIS                             | 32 | 29.4 | 7  | 14.9 |
|   | 3000--3999 NIS                             | 25 | 22.9 | 14 | 29.8 |
|   | 4000 NIS and more                          | 29 | 26.6 | 12 | 25.5 |

#### **4.1 Relevance**

In this section, the analysis is focused on whether the GVA17 initiative, in terms of design and implementation, was relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries, aligned with the national and institutional priorities, expertise of the project implementing partners including the sector stakeholders of the Ministry of Women Affairs, RWDs and CWA-MoOL, and appropriate for the context. In this section of the examination, particular attention is given to the social and economic relevance of the GVA17's cooperative structure in terms of the promotion of women's economic empowerment within the patriarchal economic sphere in Palestine, highlights the specific relevance of each cooperative in terms of their capacity as an economic actor within their communities and explores the coordination with Spanish partners and impact of the exchange between Spain and Palestine.

Relevance was a strength of the GVA 17 project in terms of being appropriate and encouraging engagement within the community, and among the partners involved. As the cooperatives targeted were run by women and the partners all work with a focus on gender equality and women's empowerment, the methodology and aims of the project were easily understood and acted upon from the start, as well as throughout the project implementation. This strong sense of relevance also aided all of the actors during the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to coordinate their efforts and change plans when needed, while at the same time staying true to the objectives of the project. Additionally, the design of the project was shaped by the expertise of the partners as well as highly considerate of the local context and constraints.

From the point of view of the beneficiaries, there was a sense that incorporating awareness raising activities, within the framework of economic initiatives, was a positive way to engage cooperative members, their families and communities in the idea of gender equality. By providing an opportunity to help alleviate the economic strain these communities are under, it was easier for male leadership in the communities to reconsider the value of women within the economic sphere, as well as provide opportunities for women to take a bigger role in decision-making within their communities, as well as to some extent their households. Furthermore, the process was **inclusive**, and the communities targeted, and local councils were consulted in order to ensure that the action was aligned with the larger community needs.

Furthermore, the project interventions are highly aligned with the priorities and needs of the rights holders, which is partly due to the fact that from the start of the project design time was taken to ensure the selected coops were relevant to their communities. During the final evaluation the relevance of the cooperatives were affirmed by beneficiaries in all locations recognizing the utility and important role their coop played within the community. The interventions coordinated to jointly target priorities and needs of the beneficiaries, both social and economic.

"This project has provided a great opportunity for us, we have become more aware of our community economic priorities, more empowered to contribute. We now are able to exchange ideas with the local council and representative and to share with them our experience in running

our project and learning from other cooperatives, and the partners in Spain,” Ferial Nuirat, Head of Maithaloune Women Center.

In focus groups discussions held with female cooperative members it was clear that the participants felt the benefit of the provided training and awareness sessions, pointing out a renewed sense of confidence in decision-making and empowerment in terms of managing their own economic initiatives. Additionally, respondents explained that the discussions around human rights and violence against women were helpful and informative.

In the case of the Faqqoua Consuming Cooperative, the store is one of the biggest in the village, representing around 40% of the market share, and it provides a wide selection of products. With the project support, the store has been expanded, which created additional revenue streams to the cooperative. Prices are competitive due to the ability of the Coop to purchase in bulk at a lower cost and to sell at attractive prices with limited competition, and the availability of various products in one point of sale. The cooling facilities and the expansion of the store are of great value to the cooperative.

“Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative is a safe environment for shopping, serves the local community, which is about 5,000 people, through its work until long hours a day and contains all the necessary food stuff and cleaning materials,” Mohammad Salah , Head of Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative

The establishment of Consumer Association for Jabba’ in the middle of Jaba’ village, which is marginalized and has high rates of poverty and prepare it as a consumer association with all logistical needs has enabled the cooperative to provide a consumption products at reasonable prices because there are lack of shops which sell these products at that areas ; customers are looking to purchase all they need from one location with emphasis on quality, variety and price. Additionally, the supermarket is also offering a space for other groups/coops to sell their products, which further promotes local goods and strengthens the economy.

“We have been looking for a long time to achieve this goal and now it exists. We are able to continue managing this association with high efficiency and with the cooperation of all in our local community, serving their needs,” Isra Hindawi, Head of Jabba Consumer Cooperative

The development of Al Jalama Project is an innovative idea to replace the traditional farming into an intensive and suspended farming system. The project location is an area of intensive cultivation, with access to available water networks for irrigation and credible prices. It was selected not only for its accessibility to needed resources, but also for the number of experienced farmers, in particular women with an interest in agriculture. This new system will increase production to four times the current rate, as well as produce better seedlings. Additionally, it will help to reduce the risk for diseases.

Additionally, the use of innovative agricultural techniques for the Meithalun Project, which included using a grape climber in order to increase crop productivity up to 5 times more than the usual production rate associated with traditional techniques, resulted in trees growing with greater exposure



to the sun and reduced the possibility for disease in addition to creating job opportunities for women, and generate a source of income for the Meithalun.

Overall, the GVA17 project was very relevant and appropriate to the needs of the targeted cooperatives from its design phase through its implementation. This was largely due to the continuous monitoring and follow-up conducted by ACCP and PARC. Additionally, as PARC has field offices located close to the various cooperatives, they were able to remain responsive to the needs of the cooperatives even during COVID-19 related movement restrictions. Furthermore, the strong communication that took place between the partners in Spain and Palestine, ensured that all project changes and adjustments were made in a manner that kept the initiative highly relevant to the context and the beneficiaries. It is important to point out that while this was a success of the project, the understanding of the cooperative approach in terms of its economic versus its social benefits remains slightly different between ACPP and PARC. This at times led to different interpretations and expectations regarding the relevance of changes observed on the ground, and for the beneficiaries as well, they may at times have been more motivated by the social shifts regarding enhanced roles for women within the economic sphere, than able to achieve the economic objectives given their starting point. However, this difference in perspective provides a space for a better common understanding to develop, especially as the two organizations have such a strong partnership and history of working together. Therefore, relevance here needs to be considered on multiple levels and with particular attention given in the future to how to monitor relevance using both qualitative and quantitative tools. That being said, it is clear that the project as a whole paved the way to empower women in designing their projects as decision makers considering the existing culture and the enabling environment.

## **4.2 Coherence**

In this section particular focus will be on Coherence, which has two dimensions, the internal and external. For this analysis the internal dimension relates to an examination of the correspondence that exists between ACPP and PARC's vision, mission regarding coops, as well as the different objectives of this specific intervention. Internal coherence implies that there is a hierarchy of objectives, with those at the bottom logically contributing towards those above. In contrast, the external dimension focuses on the correspondence between the objectives of the intervention and those of other public interventions which interact with it, this analysis focuses on whether the intervention is compatible, and complementary, as well as considers whether it has synergies with other actions, strategies or programmes in Palestine. Therefore, the analysis will first discuss the alignment of the project objectives to each of the cooperatives, and expand out to an examination of the partners and larger frameworks such as national, and international objectives related to gender equality, women's empowerment and sustainable development.

"I felt like the project had a good structure, and it provided support in establishing our project, building our skills and help us to lead our own project, which is something that our community and families will benefit from and provided a source of income to the cooperative members " as stated by Ibtisam, General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center.

Despite the situation generated by Covid19, which forced the reformulation of a large part of the planned activities, many efforts were made to maintain coherence, establishing effective management methods that helped to ensure quality. This was helped by the fact that the objectives were so clearly defined and aligned with the expertise of the partners in the project. But it is important to note that the pandemic did push the partners to reformulate many of the programmed activities in order to adapt them to fit the new reality of the COVID-19. It also meant that in the case of the planned field activities between the Spanish and Palestinian actors were modified and as a result there was less direct contact with the direct beneficiaries by their Spanish partners, as well as less contact with the Valencian Community, which hampered the awareness raising efforts. As this is a significant part of the overall aim of the project, it was seen by all involved as a missed opportunity for meaningful exchange and deepened understanding. Although there were some accommodations made, as described above, La Tenda and IDEAS, both felt that they were able to implement the intervention successfully and to the extent possible, which furthered the coherence between the baseline vision for the project and its final execution.

When examining the GVA17 project in relation to the cooperation policy of the Generalitat Valenciana, the partners agreed that there is strong alignment in this regard, not only because of how well the project fit into the call for grants, but also due to its consistency with the main regulatory framework of the Master Plan for Valencian Cooperation 2017-2020 and the Valencian Law on Cooperation for Sustainable Development. Additionally, considering the fact that fair trade is understood by the aforementioned law as an instrument of cooperation, the importation of four fair trade products within the project activities through the coordinated efforts of La Tenda, Al Reef and the IDEAS cooperative, expands the adaptation of the project to the cooperation policy generating added value by involving citizens in choosing these products. Furthermore, the project was also aligned with the 2030 Agenda, as it involved the importation and commercialization of fair trade products, which reinforces the achievement of objectives 5 (gender equality), 12 (responsible production and consumption), 8 (decent work) and 13 (action for the climate) for the environmental commitment in the production of imported products and the certification of organic farming of dates.

When considering GVA17's possible compatibility and whether there exist synergies with other actions, strategies or programs, it is clear that the project is highly related to the work of all of the partners. This compatibility has not only allowed the project to progress despite the challenge of the pandemic but also resulted in an overall conversation to adoption of organic methods of production and farming. Additionally, the development cooperation and technical assistance to producers is within the strategic lines of IDEAS, as a Fair Trade organization, which ensures the medium and long-term viability of the project and its objectives. Furthermore, the expertise of IDEAS and La Tenda, created a successful synergy that contributed to the dissemination of the "Consume Palestine" label, in both the Community of Valencia as well as in the rest of the territory of the Iberian Peninsula. Therefore, both trade organizations have worked together in a highly complementary manner, which has contributed to reaching the project's targets and enhanced the dissemination of Palestinian products.

Finally, one of the most important aspects that contributed to the coherence of the project remains the strong partnership between ACPP and PARC, as well as their long history of developing programming with the support of the Generalitat Valenciana. As a result of the continued commitment of each of these actors to the implementation of these cooperative interventions has created an

opportunity to not only create synergy between Palestine and Spain, cooperative to cooperative and women to women, but also has at this point created the strongest initiative promoting the cooperative economic model within Palestine. The knowledge gained in previous iterations of this initiative served the beneficiaries and partners of the GVA17 in that the objectives and activities, and the approach taken within vulnerable communities has created a durable framework, that can remain flexible and achievable even during a challenge such as the global pandemic. That being said, it was also clear from the GVA17 project, that the exchange element is an essential piece to expanding the possibilities for the cooperatives, as well as significantly contributes to awareness raising efforts within Spain, which in the end helped create a market for the 'made in Palestine,' products. There is of course more work to be done in terms of Ministry of Labor within Palestine to also come to appreciate and have the capacity to support economically feasible cooperatives that can be sustainable, however given the on-going occupation and conflict, the support and capacity building provided by the Generalitat Valenciana, the Spanish partners and PARC remained an essential component to ensure coherence.

#### **4.3 Ownership**

This section of the evaluation focuses on examining the spaces that have been created for participation of all actors and beneficiaries within the framework of the GVA17 project. As an essential component of the cooperative approach is the engagement of 'member-owners,' it is clear that a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries is key to the sustainability and viability of developed cooperatives. Additionally, considering the donor dependency that characterizes the Palestinian context as a result of the political stalemate that exists regarding ending the occupation and on-going conflict, it is a particularly challenging aspect this and other similar initiatives to achieve.

Given these established contextual constraints, it is a highly positive indicator that the evaluation team observed a deep sense of ownership in the conducted interviews and focus groups discussions. Specifically, it was noted that this project provided the needed space for planning and increased community engagement with the project. Furthermore, the participants in the Focus groups discussions held with each coop, mentioned a sense of ownership in relationship to their project. Additionally this was also shared with the local committees and governorate representatives, as from the start they were included in the establishment of the coops and implementation of the project. The fact that such a participatory approach was taken from the start, provided much needed support for the coops, as well as worked to reframe the work of the women as community projects rather than just an isolated project for women. This was particularly important with the COVID 19 outbreak which increased the pressure on the project activities and cooperative members to continue.

“This project has provided for us enough space to participate in some activities, encouraged the local community to commit to achieve the results, which let all of us feel as if we own it and motivated us to do our best to work as one team. We started from nothing to see our dream achieved, I would say that this has created a sense of ownership by us as cooperative members and the community as well,” Fayza Narallah, member of the Jabaa Consumer Cooperative states

In terms of the spaces for **participation** that have been created it is clear that a lot of effort was made to provide space for all actors involved in the project to have a voice. From the perspective of the

partners, there was a sense of connection and ownership developed through the use of communication technology, that throughout the process of implementation, even through the CoVID-19 pandemic, IDEAS, La Tenda and Al Reef were all able to coordinate their efforts with ACP and PARC. Furthermore, as ACP has a representative in the field in Palestine, they were able to create a sense of ownership, which was furthered by PARC's field team that had the most direct engagement with the project beneficiaries. This open communication between the partners, not only allowed for everyone to feel connected to the project, but also allowed the expertise of the team to be a resource to help strategize to address issues as they arose related to the pandemic. Furthermore, the direct support of PARC's team and the local ACP team with the beneficiaries, helped to create safe spaces for the cooperative members, their communities, as well as other relevant stakeholders.

This sense of ownership was further extended through the exchange visit to Spain, in which the Spanish partners noted that this led to the creation of meeting spaces that hosted a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and insights, which was also seen as a result of the replacement virtual exchange meetings held later in the project due to COVID-19 restrictions. Through these spaces the beneficiaries were given the opportunity to share their stories and perspectives, as well as benefit from engaging with the partners and the community of Valencia in Spain.

"I found that the idea of the exchange visits very useful, and it allowed for new experiences and networking with Valencia Municipality and Maithaloune Municipality. Through this we were able to share experience in the field of agriculture, had the chance to visit large cooperatives there, and learned about the foundations of cooperative work, as well as visited the University of Valencia. When we visited the international exhibitions, we had the chance to promote Palestinian products, including Thyme and Maftoul in front of attendees, and conducted some visits to stores that produce and sell chemically safe products, the fair trade headquarters, and the Mayor of Valencia. I was all so great and we benefited from the trip a great deal," Ferial Nuirat, the Head of the Maithaloun Women's Center states

Further reflections on the exchange from , remarked on the how the experience expanded her and others understanding of their own projects:

"It was a wonderful visit to Valencia. We visited organic farms, cooperative societies and restaurants that work with organic food. We visited shops for the cooperatives there to get some ideas of how they manage them. We visited the Municipality of Valencia, where we were warmly welcomed and were able to present and discuss our own cooperatives in Palestine. From this I, as well as others felt better about to see the strengths and weaknesses of Palestinian cooperatives and begin to imagine what we could develop in the future,"Wasfied Shabaan, the Head of the Al-Jalamah Women Center

Additionally, there was a strong sense of ownership in terms of the **values and principles** of the project. All of the partners involved have a strong commitment to gender equality, as well as utilizing the cooperative approach as a means of economic empowerment. The perspectives across the partners were different depending on the piece they held within the project, which added the complexity of the project to some extent. In terms of PARC, as they are based in Palestine, their

sense of ownership is rooted in the fact that these cooperative initiatives and their partnership with ACPP as an essential to addressing women's social and economic empowerment in Palestine. They therefore, look at the GVA17 project in terms of its project specific objectives, as well as remain mindful of the larger theory of change that aims to support women as economic actors, creating gender equality within the economic sphere as a means to help the Palestinian economy to become more sustainable. For ACPP, their sense of ownership from this project is also rooted in the organizations long term commitment to support the cooperative approach within the Palestinian context. Through their partnership with PARC, they see real value in the cooperative approach and opportunity to engage with Spanish actors and communities in awareness raising and the promotion of products made in Palestine. It is important to note that in the targeting of vulnerable, isolated agricultural communities in the GVA17 initiative, both PARC and ACPP recognize the inherent need for both economic and social development to take place, and as a result there is a sense of ownership regarding the mixture of activities that are designed to support these different, yet connected needs within the targeted communities. This at times does however present a challenge, in that it is difficult to approximate the balance between the need for social support, and the drive to make the cooperatives profitable, while at the same time finding ways to articulate the achievements in both areas in the monitoring of the project. Despite this difference in perspectives, it actually appears to be a strength of the partnership that serves the project well, as it ensures that there is constant awareness for the need of both the social and economic changes to take place.

In terms of the Spanish partners, their sense of ownership is rooted in their commitment to the cooperative system and interest in supporting the sale of 'made in Palestine' products, raising awareness within Spain about the situation in Palestine and working in a coordinated manner. Additionally, there is a link between the partners in Spain in terms of their interest in sustainable models of economic development. Their shared focus on sustainability created a real opportunity for these partners to own the Spanish side of the project and support small producer groups so that they have access to the market, promote responsible consumption and Fair Trade, as well as raising awareness about human rights and sustainable development.

#### **4.4 Efficiency**

In this section of the evaluation, the analysis seeks to examine how efficiently the resources of the project were utilized and managed throughout the project lifecycle. Particular attention is given here to areas of coordination mechanisms, budgetary responsibilities and allocations, as well as monitoring approaches. Additionally, the experience of the cooperatives was examined for their efficiency in terms of the production of their goods, and development as an entity in terms of management, as well as the beneficiary's impression of the project management and support provided from the partners.

When examining the human resource and the efficiency of achievement within the project, it is clear that throughout the project period, including the extension, PARC was able to implement all activities with all of the groups. Therefore all the capacity building training sessions were held and the cooperatives were equipped with needed materials in order to begin the operation of their initiatives. Additionally, PARC allocated local supervisors, agronomists, social workers, and marketing specialists, all who helped to implement different activities. Through the inclusion of experts and advisors, the implementation of the action plan was made easier and more efficient. The cooperatives were able to use this support to **improve their marketing readiness in terms of branding and**

**attainment of needed certifications.** In addition, local ministries, councils and cooperatives all worked together with PARC's team in all activities, as a means of creating community buy-in and support of the cooperatives and promoting the empowerment of the cooperative members to engage in the economic decision-making within their communities. This open approach provided the opportunity to include professional and experienced members from all related stakeholders, who gave effective suggestions and rich insights stemming from their different backgrounds working in the sector. This approach created confidence and strengthened trust between the beneficiary's groups and governmental and local institutions.

“The project was efficient and in line with our cooperative’s structure, the support received from the project management, allowed us to improve and gave us the resources and support we needed to establish and manage our own project. We now know we are the owners of our own project and can contribute to our communities and families economically,” stated by Ibtisam, General Assembly - Maithaloune Women Center.

In terms of challenges faced, it is important to recognize that there was first a delay at the start of the project, which was due to a mixture of issues including the time-consuming tasks of signing the work plan and agreements with cooperatives, and the seasonality for some products such as strawberries, as well as the added issues that arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on the implementation of the project. Additionally, the project was delayed due to the late approval of budget modifications by the donor and the collection of the beneficiaries’ contributions. As a result of these factors the project was extended for one year. Although there were many challenges in terms of the timing of the project, all of the cooperative management teams confirmed that once the project was able to progress, and the budget was modified and approved, it was very efficient. That said, it was also noted that considering the fact that many of the obstacles faces, particularly regarding the time it took to confirm the work plans, and collect the fees from the beneficiaries, many of the cooperatives felt that more time should be allotted for the inception phase of the project, that way the implementation period can be more focused and less stressful on the members.

Overall, the cooperatives and related local stakeholders, (CWA, MoA, MoNE and PSI) were able to clearly communicate and garner support for the respective coops initiatives, with the support of PARC’s staff. This process of engagement was also made more efficient because of the budgetary transparency and design of the project. This helped to enhance the level of trust among the actors. In cases when there was a surplus in the budget for some funded items, it was clearly reallocated in full transparency with PARC and ACPP, and used to fund other needs per cooperative. Decisions were made about these needs through a participatory approach, which included an ongoing review and comparison of the costs of different types of interventions and activities for lessons learned and decision-making process.

The PARC field staff was primarily responsible for tracking progress and monitoring activities and tasks to ensure the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness. The project monitoring system in the field was then supported by the PARC main office staff in order to support the translation and oversee the GVA17 project as a whole. Here there exists some opportunities to enhance the efficiency as the field notes are done by hand and this resulted in some delays and complications when dealing with

COVID-19 restrictions on movement. There does appear to be an opportunity to build the capacity of the field staff, as well as resources to computerize the process, which in turn would help decrease information loss and help with the time taken in monitoring and reporting.

When examining the efficiency of the partners, it was clear that the pandemic was a real challenge that all involved worked hard to adjust to. Specifically, the partners used communication technology in order to communicate about the project's activities. This approach allowed the partners to adapt and coordinate these changes with each other quickly and efficiently. La Tenda pointed out that although this was a highly challenging experience, it did inspire their staff to be creative in their strategy and develop increased problem-solving skills and decision-making. This was made easier due to the fact that the design of the project optimized the resources of the partners well, which made it possible for the expertise and creativity of the partners to facilitate the adaptation of the planned actions to the complex Palestinian context, as well as in their response to the pandemic.

When considering whether the transformation of resources into results was efficient, there was a slight concern expressed regarding the desired result in 4 of the products, which aimed at strengthening the marketshare of 4 of the Palestinian products within the international arena using fair trade networks, awareness raising/promotion campaigns. In this there was a noted lack of stock of supply of BIO dates provided to Al Reef, which limited the impact of the action. Therefore, it was suggested that in order to increase the efficiency, it would be necessary to increase the sales and volumes of Palestinian products. To this end, it was suggested to improve these four variables, including:

- Increase supply capacity (quantity of product available)
- Periodicity of imports (to be carried out in coordination with CTM)
- Reduction of the minimum required by CTM-Al Reef for the use of " Private label " with the "Consume Palestina" brand
- Reduction of some volume prices

In terms of the efficiency of the project's operational management carried out by the ACPP, La Tenda and PARC team, all partners recognized the open communication and positive collaboration which was supported by the compatible commitment to cooperative structures as a means of economic and in the context of this project, the promotion women's empowerment and gender equality. The budget was managed well, even when they had to be reformulated in order to adapt to the new realities and restrictions related to the COVID19 pandemic. Finally, the periodic coordination meetings, as well as the continuous communication with the ACPP team in Valencia, helped to carry out a satisfactory follow-up among the Spanish partners, as well as helped to keep the project on track through PARC.

#### **4.5 Effectiveness**

In this section of the analysis the evaluation team examined the validity of the resources and strategies put in place within the project, as well as sought to determine how effectively the expected objectives and results of the intervention were achieved. Additionally, attention will also be given to whether the approach taken was effective in creating the desired economic and social changes across the multiple

levels of the intervention, as well as whether there were any unintended effects that might have occurred as a result of the implementation.

In general, one of the strongest elements of the project was the ability to coordinate across the stakeholders and partners, as well as among the members of the cooperatives and their communities. This high level of collaboration and coordination all contributed to the effectiveness, especially given the specific challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, as a result of the participatory approach taken and context sensitive design, there was a noted remarkable level of coordination between important actors in the cooperative sector in Palestine such as the cooperative itself, CWA, local councils, and PSI. A further example of how the engagement of actors helped to contribute to the effectiveness of the project could be seen in the establishment and participation of community councils, who were tasked to differing degrees with supervising the activities throughout the whole project lifecycle. The level of engagement resulted in fostering citizenship, promoting participatory democracy and increased accountability. It also built and strengthened beneficiaries and community ownership towards the project and its activities.

In particular, the beneficiaries' sense of ownership was very effective within the Maithaloun coop, as women are now owners of their own project, which required that there be not only a large commitment among the women members, but agreement and support from the community as a whole. This high level of commitment among members was also found in the Jaba' coop, which due to their ability to work together and follow their work plan successfully, were able to launch their initiative from scratch, despite the challenge of the pandemic. Additionally, in the Faqqu'a coop, the effective and transparent awareness raising efforts helped to expand female leadership not only within their coop, but also helped to increase the role of women in the economic sector within their community. In addition, creating job opportunities for women. All the groups were committed to pay their contribution. Safe models in production and certification were effectively implemented and further supported by a functioning network that was developed between cooperatives and important actors in this sector. This led to the Al Reef company gaining access to international markets through the exportation of products to Spain. When discussing the effectiveness of the project with Al-Reef, it was clear that they were pleased with the engagement with the project and emphasized how the project design and management, as well as support from the Spanish actors helped in coordination of the Fair trade activities. This optimism is reflected well in the discussions held with Salim Abu Ghazzaleh, who stated:

“We were proud to work on this initiative and support the cooperatives to encourage the principle of Fair Trade in Palestine. We could see how our work helped to develop the cooperative’s capacities and improve the quality of their products.”

The effectiveness of the approaches taken within the coops development was a true strength of the project. This was particularly apparent in the results of the Jaba coop, who through this project were able to not only establish but also expand their production of quality and safe products, as well as create needed job opportunities. For Maithaloune, new techniques for planting and cultivation were provided, which increased the effectiveness by standardizing their methodology and ensuring a more reliable production process. For Al Jalameh, their approach to contract an outside farmer with more experience and capacity to take care of the strawberry crop, since it is sensitive to heat, proved



effective as they now have a yearly income for the cooperative. In the contract, Al Jalameh agreed with the farmer based on NIS 20,000 for 3 years in total. Furthermore, the technical and administrative training conducted during the implementation of GVA 17 are a value added to the participants who have shown their satisfaction on the quality of the sessions as well as the great benefits to them; this was clearly investigated in the KII and FGs conducted for the project evaluation.

Furthermore, the local committees constitute members from CBOs and local governments which ensure effective outreach to targeted groups, optimize sharing of knowledge and learning process for those community actors, and increase engagement and participation in decision making between community actors and community members. This ensured a high level of transparency and accountability during the project implementation, and promoted best practices in the beneficiary selection process among CBOs, community members, and local governments. This was complemented by the strategic design of the project, which was made more effective because of the wealth of experience of ACPP and PARC in implementing these projects. The learning that has taken place during the implementation of previous projects did help to contribute to the effectiveness of GVA17, particularly in regard to ensuring that the required resources were put in place and accessible to the beneficiaries in order to best position the cooperatives for success from the start. This planning and early actions taken by the project team to support the coops in the early days, was particularly significant and important when considering the unforeseen challenges the project, as well as the whole world would face in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the Spanish partners it was noted that the importation of products has contributed directly to the overall objectives, effectively as this effort has contributed to the improvement of the conditions for the participating cooperatives, by creating an economic opportunity in a new market. This was especially true due to the fact that it was possible to sell the items at a higher price than the usual export in the local marketplace. Likewise, the importation of products also contributed to the specific objective 'to strengthen the value chain of Palestinian products with criteria of sustainability and responsible consumption,' due to the fact this process was implemented in a manner that eliminated the intermediaries in the value chain and the sale has been carried out in specialized circuits with a large amount of promotional information on the reality of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Finally, in terms of monitoring of the project it was noted that some of the methods of monitoring and the approach to reporting were not as effective as they could be, in regards to producing a clear understanding of all of the changes that took place on the ground. This was particularly true regarding the quantitative analysis of the public awareness campaign. In this case there was a significant issue when it came to having the analytics shared in a timely and effective manner with ACPP. This not only created a gap in information and understanding of the best ways to reach the public in Palestine, but also as the GVA17 project is part of a series of similar projects, hampers the future planning of similar public campaigns related to upcoming initiatives. Additionally, due to the lack of electronic monitoring tools, and the complication of the pandemic, there were challenges in terms of reporting what was happening in a timely and effective manner. Which also points to the issues surrounding the general effectiveness of the reporting cycle related to the project. As this is a relatively short-term project, with rather ambitious long-term goals, there is a lack of clarity in the purpose and**

**strategy of the reporting on a bi-monthly cycle. Without specific benchmarks and mid-terms indicators, it was at times ineffective to report on all elements of the project in each report, therefore it is recommended that this process is reconsidered and the approach to monitoring made more streamlined and considerate of the nuances of the realities on the ground.**

#### **4.6 Impact**

In this section, the analysis focused primarily on the economic analysis of the coops, as well as worked to identify the human rights and gender impact of the project. Furthermore, particular attention was given to the overall social impact of the project in terms of shifts in cultural norms and the opening up of new space for women in the economic sector and in decision-making processes within their homes and their communities. It is important to note that the COVID19 pandemic had a very big effect on the impact of this project, not only in terms of limiting some of the possible the potential in terms of profit, but also in terms of the coops capacity to report on their financial achievements as many of them have been delayed. Furthermore, it is clear that the COVID19 pandemic negatively affected governance and management of existing cooperatives in terms of their ability to manage their internal committees, carry out administrative tasks, hold meetings and approve budgets, as well as follow up with the Cooperative Work Authority.

However, the pressure placed on the coops as a result of the pandemic also had an unexpected impact of creating a stronger sense of ownership and commitment to the project, as well as enhanced their resilience during a difficult time. This is particularly remarkable as these cooperatives are in already vulnerable communities, so it is worth remarking on the fact that despite these challenges the members became more invested in their project's survival and maintain a positive outlook for each coop's future potential. The evaluation team believes that this is not only a by-product of the pandemic, but also a testament to the continued support of the PARC field team, who also facing many challenges continue to encourage the members to remain committed. Furthermore, the support of ACPP and the Spanish partners was also felt by the beneficiaries, and the feedback on the exchanges, capacity build and awareness activities was overwhelmingly positive.

“The Human rights awareness workshop has emphasized on raising awareness about our rights as women based on the law, what I learned was very useful and informative and gave me time to consider how I want to promote these ideas in our coop and community,” Wasfieh Shaban, Head of Al Jalameh Women Center

This effective engagement has helped to translate stakeholders needs into the cooperatives' goals and created the basis of an effective project design and strategy development. The project beneficiaries arrived at the point of consensus and shared motivation, which helped to create a participatory decision-making process within each cooperative. Moreover, there was a high level of buy-in and sense of ownership from the start of the project from not only the beneficiaries, but also their communities and local representatives. Additionally, coop representation and engagement in decision making in the conducted conference allowed PARC's beneficiaries to share their experience and spread the acquired knowledge and expertise to the attendees (women groups, decision makers,

etc), and gave them the opportunity to benefit from all the attendees from different institutions and backgrounds, especially in the cooperatives field.

Finally, it was clear that there was a shared sense of achievement and growth among the beneficiaries, many commented on their expanded capacities and skills, as well as this learning made them more confident in terms of the management, marketing, and planning. Many have expressed that they are more active in their work life, and enjoy the opportunity to creatively work with other members of their coops to problem-solve, as well as work with local leaders and other groups as representatives of their projects. These are all positive impact indicators, which have been recognized and for the most part shared by ACPP and PARC. However, there is a sense that there is a need for more in depth understanding of what actually changes have occurred in terms of the socio-economic status of these women. In particular, there is a clear need for reporting and monitoring of the impact to become more nuanced, while at the same time remaining realistic to the context and timeframe of the initiative. To this end, both ACPP and PARC showed signs of working to increase the depth of analysis throughout the life of the project, which was helped by the case studies conducted and the policy paper created.

#### **4.6.1 Economic Impact**

Overall, the project has provided a source of income to the targeted women and has enabled them to work in their own cooperatives, as well as built their capacity to run their own business. Gradually, as they worked to develop their initiatives, the level of income earned shows potential to enhance their economic situation and increase their family incomes, which has begun to improve their living conditions. This progress was challenged during the COVID19 pandemic as restrictions on movement impeded the movement of goods to the marketplace and hampered the ability of the project to take place. Additionally, as the pandemic resulted in delays and restrictions, it appears that this also affected the extent to which each coop was able to track their economic progress. In fact 3 out of the 4 coops had no available updated financial statements, while this can not entirely be related to the pandemic, the evaluation team did receive feedback from the coops that it was a contributing factor and challenge for them. Additionally, it is challenging to capture the success of the grape crop as this crop needs about three years to establish an economic impact. In order to understand the economic impact, the evaluation team conducted an economic analysis of each cooperative. It is important to note that due to the differences in the approach and capacity of each coop, the depth of available economic information varies. With these limitations in mind, the evaluation team did as extensive of an analysis as possible, with the information provided. The results of this analysis are described below.

**Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative:** Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative works on selling food and cleaning products on an area leased from Faqqoua Village Council which reaches 300 square meters, and the annual rent is NIS 9,500, equivalent to USD 2880. The coops provides weekly price offers as well as on various occasions in the year to increase sales through a sales discount technique. Among the main competitors of Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative's project is Al Sadiq Supermarket, which provides sales on credit to customers. Sales reached NIS 3,992,314 in 2020 compared to NIS 3,586,488 in 2019; an increase of 11.3%. The cooperative pays a minimum wage of NIS 1450 monthly. The cost of goods sold reached NIS 3,611,700 in 2020 compared to NIS 3,318,003 in 2019;

an increase of 8.9%. The gross profit reached NIS 438,632 compared to NIS 316,936 in 2019; an increase of 38.4%. The operating expenses reached NIS 270,713 compared to NIS 231,808 in 2019; an increase of 16.8%. The net Profit reached NIS 167,919 in 2020 compared to NIS 85,128 in 2019, an increase of 97.3%. In terms of job creation, 6 positions were sustained through this project. There has been an increase in sales and profit as a result of the GVA17 project, that can be linked to the project support, as well as to yearly growth. It is worth mentioning that part of the percentage increase of profit which is 97.3% was due also to modification of some financial transactions, mainly regarding the inventory. The percentage increase of sales is very good, but it is subject to the availability of the salaries of the Palestinian Authority employees, the wages of workers in the Palestinian territories and Israel and the country lock down due to Corona pandemic. Despite this challenge, the association is currently trying to provide capital for expansion. The coop deals with suppliers through a cash payment system with a discount or 45 days deferred payment / on credit. Specifically, for purchases from suppliers, 90% of the purchases on credit for 30-45 days and 10% on cash with 2%-3% discount. Sales are on a cash basis only and they have established bank accounts and an accounting system named "Sham Tech" developed by Babel Soft Co.

It is worth mentioning that competition for Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative does not pose a threat to their sales growth. The number of competitors is only two right now and are not big in volume/size compared to Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative. The strength of the Cooperative comes from the following:

- Reliance on their members with their families who are committed to buy everything they need from the Cooperative, whose number reaches 400 people (Members with their families) in addition to the rest of the customers outside the members.
- The Cooperative's market share in the local market is about 60%-70% of the 1,500 families who live in Faqqua village.
- Other competitors cannot sell less than the prices of the Cooperative in any case, and this is due to several reasons, including that Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative depends on their purchase policy on buying in large quantities and obtaining a cash discount.
- The Cooperative is always looking for preferential prices from suppliers and making distinguished efforts in the purchase process.
- The focus on the main sources for supply chain; buys directly from the original sources and obtain annual bonuses, the extra efforts of those in charge of managing the Cooperative and its workers, and finally, the diversity of goods in the Cooperative where the family can find all what it needs in from food and cleaning materials and other items in one location with very good quality and best prices as well.

To achieve financial transparency, the responsibilities and roles are separated, a daily inventory of the cash, sales, cash and sales returns are verified on a daily basis through the records and the camera system. There is a daily/ weekly count for cash to prevent theft, meaning that there is a financial control system and bank accounts/ transactions are matched/ reconciled with the records continuously. Approximately 780 customers out of 1,300 customers buy from the coop, meaning that their market share is approximately 60%. The Coop distributes annual profits once the financial

statements are audited by an external auditor and approved by the board members, the general assembly and CWA as well. 5% of the net profit is deducted within the law for the development of the local community, 5% for public institutions, and 5% to support cooperative work, 25% of the profits is distributed among the members in the months of May of each year. Mohamed Salah is the head of the coop since 2016, board members are volunteers but receive annual profits like the general assembly. The members of the general assembly are obligated to buy from the coop. The coop supports the poor families between time to time through distributing a food basket. The coop is in constant contact and coordination with Faqqoua Village Council on various issues for the benefit of Faqqoua Community. Membership fees in the coop is 20 Jordanian dinars and subscription fees are 400 dinars for shares, both are one-time. The General Assembly meets every year to approve the financial statements and every two years to elect a new board member. The last meeting took place in September 2020, with a quorum of 70% due to the Corona pandemic, conducted in the presence of Cooperative Work Authority representatives. This year, the General Assembly will meet early in May 2021. It is significant to note that this was one of the only coops in this analysis that had available financial statements, making it possible to investigate more deeply their economic progress.

**Maithaloune Women Center:** The financial statements for the years 2019-2020 are under preparation and processing by the auditor; not ready until the date of preparing the evaluation report. The grape leaves project takes 3 years to obtain the product. The return from the greenhouses is 20% for the coop and 80% for the beneficiary; the average annual return is 15,000 shekels, and there are 4 greenhouses. The board members include 5 women and the general assembly members are 40 women. In terms of job creation, 8 positions were created through this project. Additionally, there is coordination and cooperation with the local community regarding the needs. The center relies on keeping simple account books for transactions (in/out). Maithaloune Women Center is not classified legally as a cooperative, meaning there is no profit distribution; it is registered as a branch of the Rural Women Development Association. The center depends for revenue on the school canteen project by selling various foods and meals to 10 schools 'students. The center works on developing rural women in all social, economic, and political fields: agricultural courses, animal husbandry, embroidery, medical day services that benefit women in all respects. Economic empowerment is one of the priorities of the cooperative's work. Coops have a strong team spirit, which helps the interaction between different members of the group to be focused on a common goal; members work interactively to achieve the intended goals. The head of the center has a high ability to coordinate, manage groups and distribute tasks. The women have experience in the agricultural field, and there is available agricultural lands and water in the area at minimal prices. In terms of the financial information available, the coop explained that there is a delay in receiving the financial report from the accountant, this was attributed to COVID19 restrictions slowing down the process for both the coop and the auditor. It is important to note that PARC will be following up with the coop and has committed to gathering this audited information in this coming year.

Furthermore, the cooperative continues to cultivate these herbs and currently focus on growing parsley, watercress, coriander and thyme, and this is done through two agricultural sessions/cycles during the spring and summer seasons where 8 people (4 women beneficiaries) work in it. The total annual revenue currently ranges from NIS 8,000 -10,000 with an annual net return of NIS 3,500. The product is sold to the local markets in Jenin, Nablus and Tulkaram. As for grape leaves, during this month the picking of this project started. The financial statements are not ready as of to date and need

some time to be issued and approved due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The financial return is usually distributed according to the following formula: 20 % for the cooperative, 80% for direct women beneficiaries.

**Jabba Consumer Cooperative:** The idea of establishing a cooperative feminist consumer enterprise was born out of the women's need to own a sustainable and income-generating feminist project that would serve the local community and provide for basic needs. It also provides an opportunity to market women's rural products, and address the challenges they face bringing their products to the existing market, as well as find new marketing channels. The Coop conducted an economic feasibility study at the Jabba site, in partnership with experts in this field, and a local survey was carried out and a field study was made for consumer institutions in the city of Jenin. The project was presented at the general assembly meeting of the Coop, and the idea obtained the approval of the general assembly of the Coop and shares were offered to the members to participate in the project. 50 members participated in the project from the Coop's work sites, 34 of them from the town of Jaba, and the remaining contributions came from the remaining sites of the association. To start the work on the ground, 3 shops were rented in 2017, as a prerequisite of their participation in the GVA17 initiative and the inauguration was in March 2020 in the town of Jabba. 3 people work in the Coop (2 females, 1 male) in 2 shifts. The value of sales since the opening of the association in the period from January 3, 2020-April 25, 2021, reached NIS 880,000 with gross profit percentage of 10%, the monthly wages reach NIS 4000, yearly rent is NIS 9000. The Coop was not able to obtain preferential prices in purchases due to the lack of liquidity and the lack of sufficient capital; paying cash to suppliers is a burden on the Coop, which makes clear that the Coop needs additional capital to expand their inventory and product line, in order to increase the volume of their sales. In terms of job creation, 4 positions were created through this project. There is competition from a new Mall which opened recently not far from the Coop, this is concerning for the coop as the Mall offers lower prices. The Coop uses an electronic accounting system (Al Shamel), which did help the elevator gather some information, however the depth of the analysis was limited by the fact that there are no available financial statements. The reason provided for this lack of reporting was that as a result of the COVID19 pandemic the coop did not make significant strides in terms of their economic performance, furthermore, as the official opening of their project was March 2020, they decided to merge 2020 and 2021 into one financial statements, which means that the next financial statement will be produced by the end of 2021.

**Al Jalama Women's Center:** In this initiative the focus is on the development of a Strawberry Farm and the implementation of an innovative system of cultivation that depends on transforming and modernizing the existing strawberry farming system. This would allow for the cultivation of the crop to take place in an intensive and suspended farming system. In terms of job creation, 2 positions were created through this project. This is helpful as the strawberry is very sensitive to heat and needs special care including the irrigation system. To carry out the project, Al Jalameh board members decided to contract a pioneer farmer to take care of the whole strawberry cycle on a 3 year contract with a total value of NIS 20,000. They reached this decision based on the fact that through the project they were provided a water device which cost around \$3000.00, instead of a computer irrigation system, which cost around \$14,000. This created concern within the coop as to their ability to successfully cultivate the sensitive strawberry crop, therefore they outsourced this task to a more experienced farmer. It is important to note that they have no updated financial statements available

as of the date of producing the evaluation report; the last data was from 2018. The reason given for this lack of financials was related to Covid 19, which inhibited the progress of the project and negatively affected their operations' performance as a result of limitations on movement. As a result the coop did not push to finalize their financial reporting and placed no clear deadline for their completion in light of the ongoing COVID19 restrictions, furthermore it is important to note that they have been waiting for two years for the auditor to complete their work. Additionally, it is important to note that despite the challenges, this coop has started to cultivate cucumber and pumpkin themselves, in addition to the arrangements made with the pioneer farmer regarding the strawberry crop.

#### 4.6.1a Economic Indicators

The results showed the household average monthly income is approximately the same amount in the endline assessment (2952 NIS) and the baseline assessment (2926 NIS), in addition, 55% of the respondents says that the trend of household income still the same and 42.2% says it decreased in Endline compared to baseline. When the beneficiaries were asked about Household Earning in the last season from the cooperative project, the average of earning was 248 NIS in the endline compared to 186 NIS in the baseline. Other economic indicators could be seen in table 2.

Table 2: household Economic indicators related to the project according to in Endline and baseline assessments:

| Indicator  | Mean (NIS) |          | Trend of Endline Indicators compared to Baseline assessment |          |           |                |         |
|--|------------|----------|---|----------|-----------|----------------|---------|
|  | Endline    | Baseline | Increased   | The same | Decreased | Not Applicable | Total   |
| Household Average monthly income, in NIS                               | 2952       | 2926     | 2.80%   | 55.00%   | 42.20%    | 0%             | 100.00% |
| Household Earning in last season, from the cooperative project, in NIS | 248        | 186      | 0.90%   | 64.20%   | 22.90%    | 11.90%         | 100.00% |
| Income that the consumer cooperative has obtained                      | 409        | 808      | 3.70%   | 68.80%   | 17.40%    | 10.10%         | 100.00% |
| Household Income from the cooperative during 2020                      | 350        | NA       | 0.90%   | 67.00%   | 21.10%    | 11.00%         | 100.00% |
| Households other sources of income (for family)                        |            |          | 5.50%   | 55.00%   | 39.40%    | 0.00%          | 100.00% |
| Household Expenditure in the last month on food                        | 1412       | 1495     | 83.50%  | 7.30%    | 9.20%     | 0.00%          | 100.00% |
| Household Expenditure in the last month on basic needs                 | 855        | 1650     | 83.50%  | 9.20%    | 7.30%     | 0.00%          | 100.00% |

\*This table provides a comparison of economic indicators between baseline and endline assessments. The results represent beneficiaries' responses when asked directly about the values in 2020, and whether the trend has increased or decreased compared to 2019. The values of the baseline were calculated from the 2019 data collected at that time.

### 4.6.1b Capacity Development Indicators

About 88.9% of respondents in the endline received at least 1-3 training related to their project from the cooperative, while they were 63.6% in the baseline, see Figure 1.

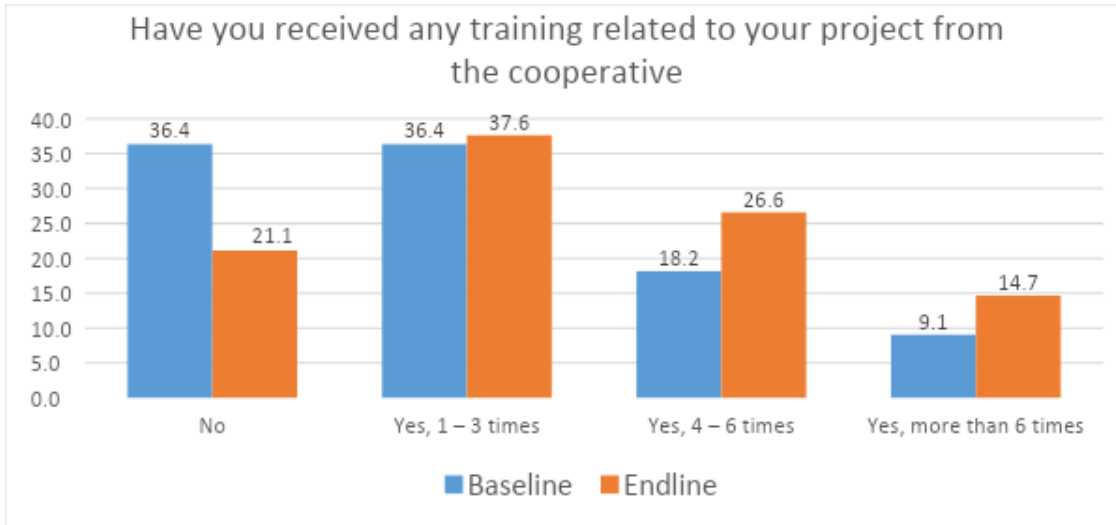


Figure 1: Percent of beneficiaries who received training related to your project from the cooperative in the endline and the baseline.



When asked "what is the biggest training needed in terms of improving their projects?", they put the priorities in the endline to train in "cooperative work", "marketing", and production, while in the baseline they focused on "marketing," see Figure 2.

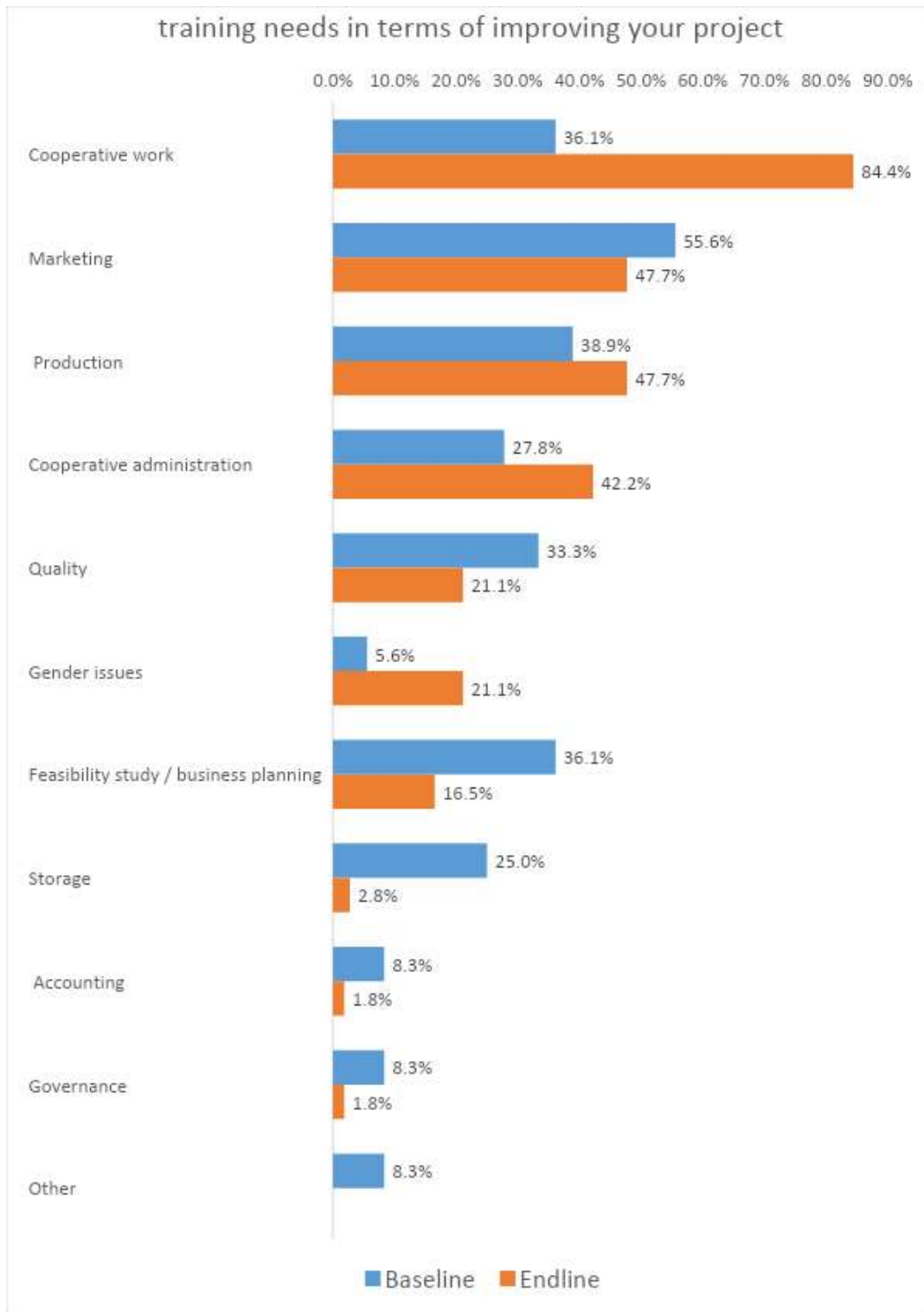


Figure 2: beneficiaries training needs in terms of improving their projects in the baseline and the endline

### 4.6.1c Access to the Market Indicators

Most of the beneficiaries in the endline (67.4%) said that they market the products by themselves; only 15.2% of them market the products by the cooperatives, see Figure 3. We can see most of these products are marketing in other places, and only 17.4% of them were marketing in the local fairs, see Figure 4.

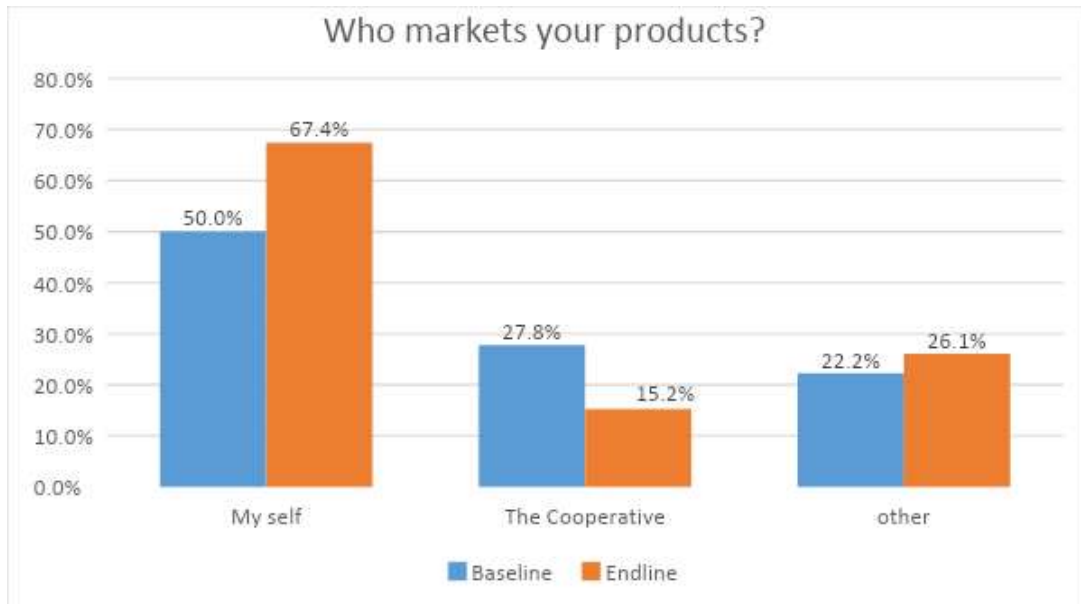


Figure 3: percent of "who markets the beneficiaries' products" in the endline and in the baseline

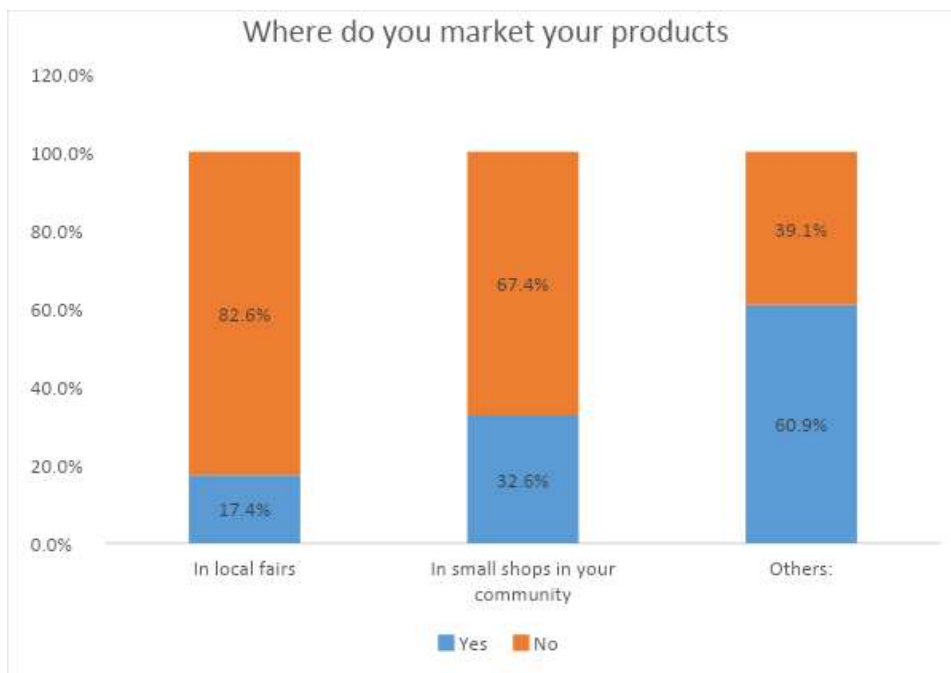


Figure 4: percent of "where the beneficiaries market products" in the endline

It is important to note that in the endline, the results indicate that the marketing through cooperatives has decreased compared to marketing by themselves. It is thought that this perhaps happened mainly because of covid 19 pandemic closure in 2020.

55% of respondents don't think there is enough institutional support to market and sell Palestinian products. And when asked "has your group expanded its network of contacts and managed to close a commercial agreement?". Only 5.5% answered yes, see Figure 5.

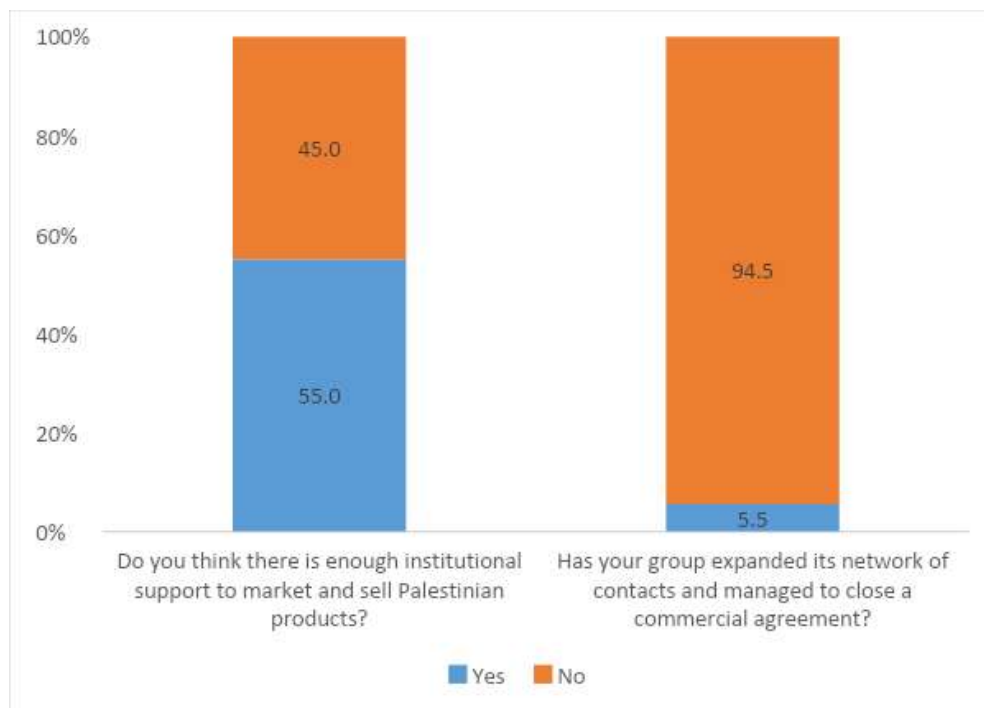


Figure 5: perceptions of the beneficiaries on institutional support

## 4.6.2 Social Impact

This section of the evaluation seeks to define the changes that have occurred as a result of the project regarding the human rights and gender dynamics that the beneficiaries, as well as takes into consideration the result of the quantitative survey in terms of the Decision-Making and Ownership of Assets Indicators, and Gender Equality Indicators.

An essential component of the GVA17 project was the implementation of activities that were designed to strengthen the social role for women within their families and communities, by increasing their capacity to engage in the economic sphere. In the support of the coops, there was a particular effort made to enhance decision-making opportunities and leadership skills.

“This project helped our members to contribute to our families’ income and opened our minds on the importance of enhancing our linkages and connections with our community at Jabaa,” Fayza Nasrallah, Member of Jabaa Consumer Cooperative.

The exchange visits opened up the participants minds and allowed them to reconsider the limits of their project, and expand their self confidence. It is important to recognize that the targeted beneficiaries chosen in the project come from particularly isolated and traditional communities, which has resulted in limiting the women’s capacity to enter the economic sphere, due to limited resources and networking opportunities, as well as strong cultural pressure for them to remain in the domestic sphere. Therefore, the opportunity to expand their network and resources through their participation in economic activities was highly impactful on an individual and group level.

“The project has provided jobs opportunities for women, and encouraged us to open channels with other cooperatives and enhanced our connection with the community in a new way, we will continue our commitment and contribution and hopefully over time strengthen our cooperative, ” Afeefah abu Hamed, General Assembly, Faqqoua consumer Cooperative.

The group projects have helped to strengthen women's self-esteem and improve their confidence. Gender equality embedded in the design of the project and selection process. Women have been encouraged, reached out to, and targeted with technical and managerial training. They were given equal opportunities through the project to have access to knowledge and develop skills necessary for their work and economic activities. Men were involved in different activities through the project to support women, especially within the awareness sessions activity. The women participated transparently in all implementation stages, and their financial contributions through their investment in the project added to their energy and persistence to succeed.

“Through this project, we were provided the resources and technical assistance needed, such as business and financial management, and helped to better understand marketing, packaging and labeling. Moving forward, I feel I can use what we learned to run our own small projects and make decisions. In our coops, our members are in a better situation with self-confidence and are more willing to prove that we can do and work along with the men in our community,” Nazmiah Sadeq , Member of Maithaloune Center.

#### **4.6.2a Decision-Making and Ownership of Assets Indicators**

In this section, there is a positive trend in results of the endline in the field of woman decision- making. When asked the female respondents who make decisions in several issues, we can see the increase of women who can take decisions by themselves. The highest percentages were in answering “The number of hours you can commit to working weekly” (94.9%) and “Healthcare for yourself” (91.1%). The comparison between endline and baseline also supports the positive trend in women's decision-making in most of the issues, see Figure 6:

## Females who Take decision by themselves in Baseline and Endline

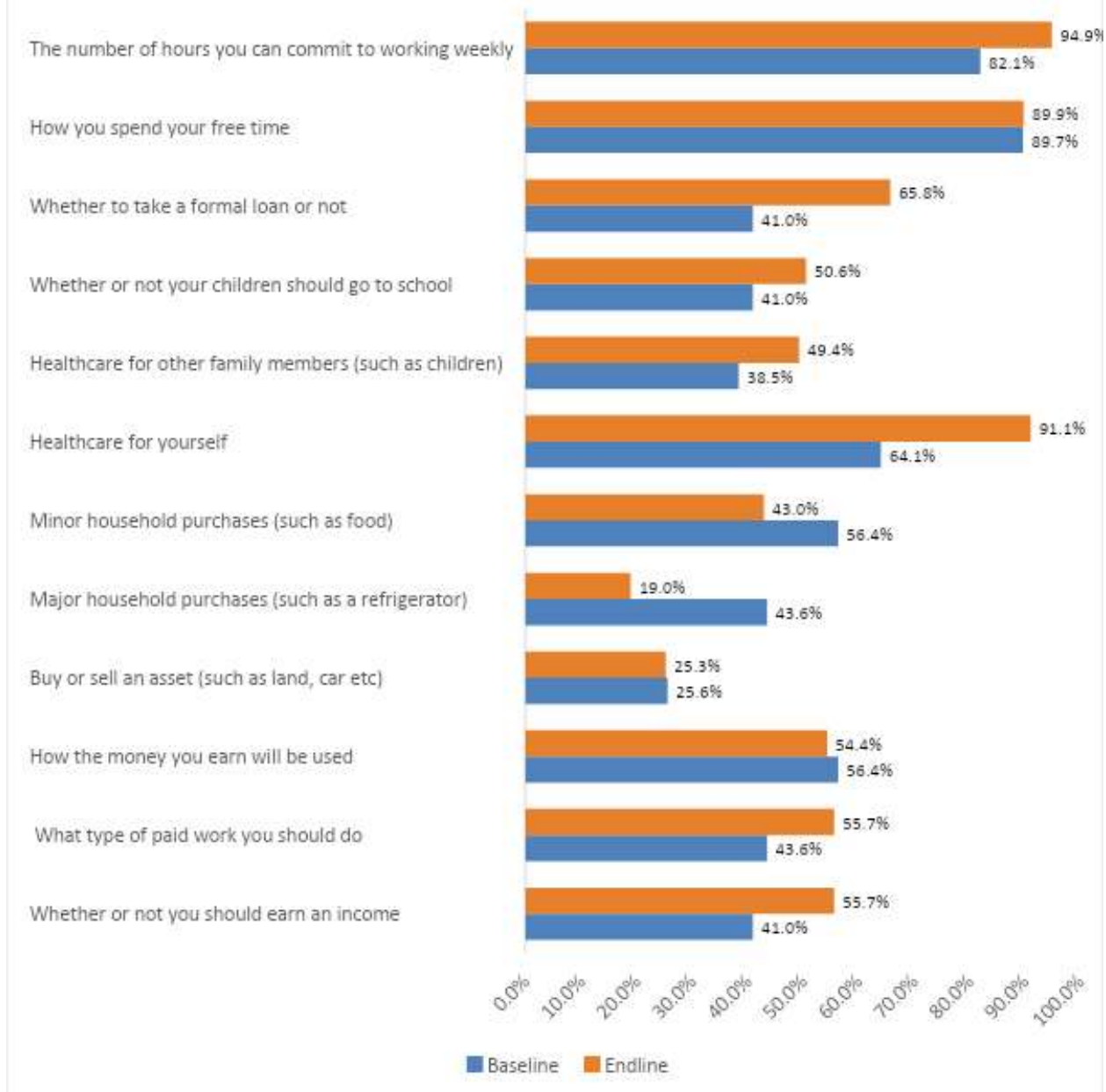


Figure 6: comparison of percent of Females Who Take decision by themselves in the baseline and the endline

Furthermore, there is a slight increase in percent of the beneficiaries who have a formal bank account in their names in the endline (52.3%) compared to (48.9%) in the baseline, see Figure 7. In addition, 91.4% of beneficiaries said that they are operating their formal bank account by themselves in the endline compared to 74.1% in the baseline, see Figure 8. 88.2% of them answered in the endline that they can decide alone to use their money, compared to 66.7% in baseline, see Figure 9.

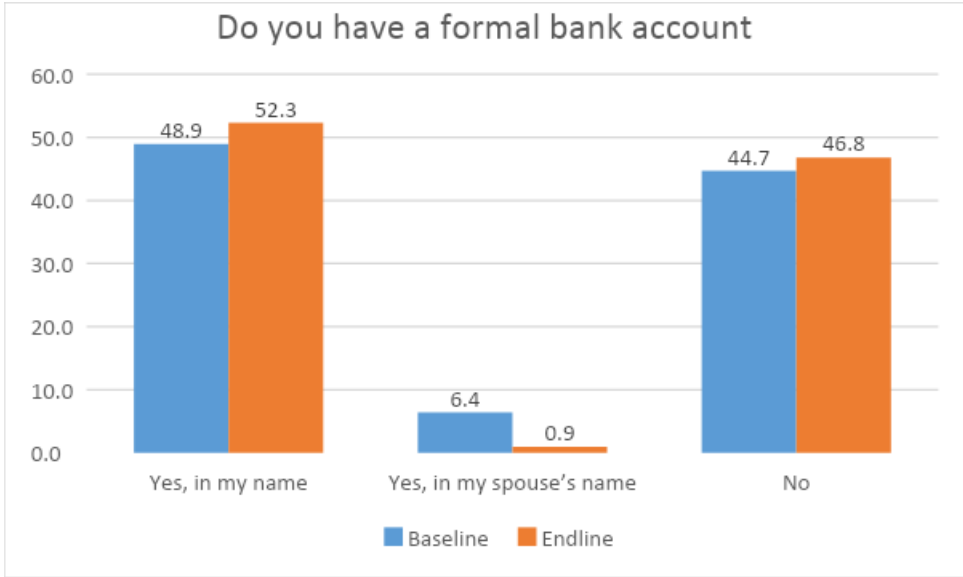


Figure 7: percent of beneficiaries who have formal bank account in their names in the baseline and the endline

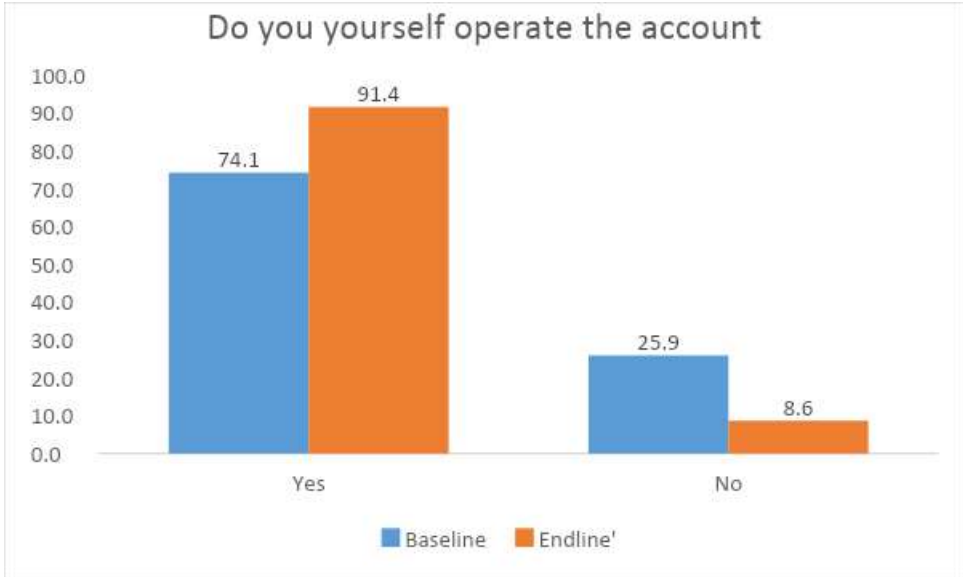


Figure 8: percent of beneficiaries who operate their formal bank account by themselves in the baseline and the endline

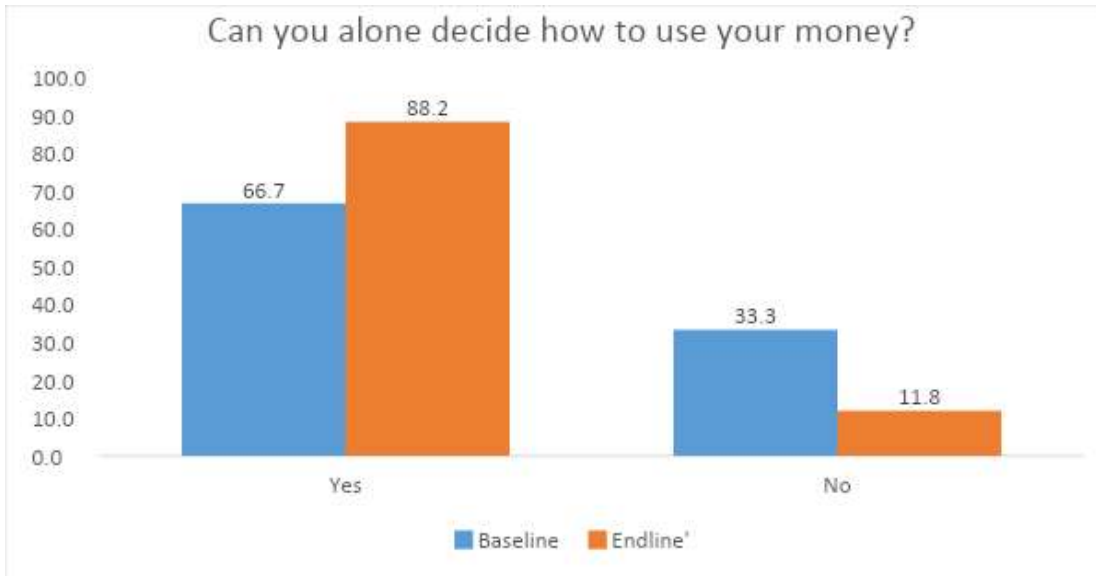


Figure 9: percent of beneficiaries who decide alone to use their money in the baseline and the endline

#### 4.6.2b Gender Equality Indicators

While there are many recognized obstacles to women’s participation, many communities do see some value in women working outside of the home. As seen below when asked in the endline whether a woman should be able to work outside of the home if she wants to, 96.3 % agreed or strongly agreed, and they were 87.0% in baseline, see Figure 10. While the majority of individuals surveyed were women, it is significant that there exist such positive attitudes in support of women working outside of the home if she desires. This indicates that across the 4 communities there is a great potential for growth in this area, in particular if the project design remains actively inclusive of men and boys to increase their awareness of the value of women as socio-economic agents and attention is given to creating the correct balance between the women’s domestic responsibilities.

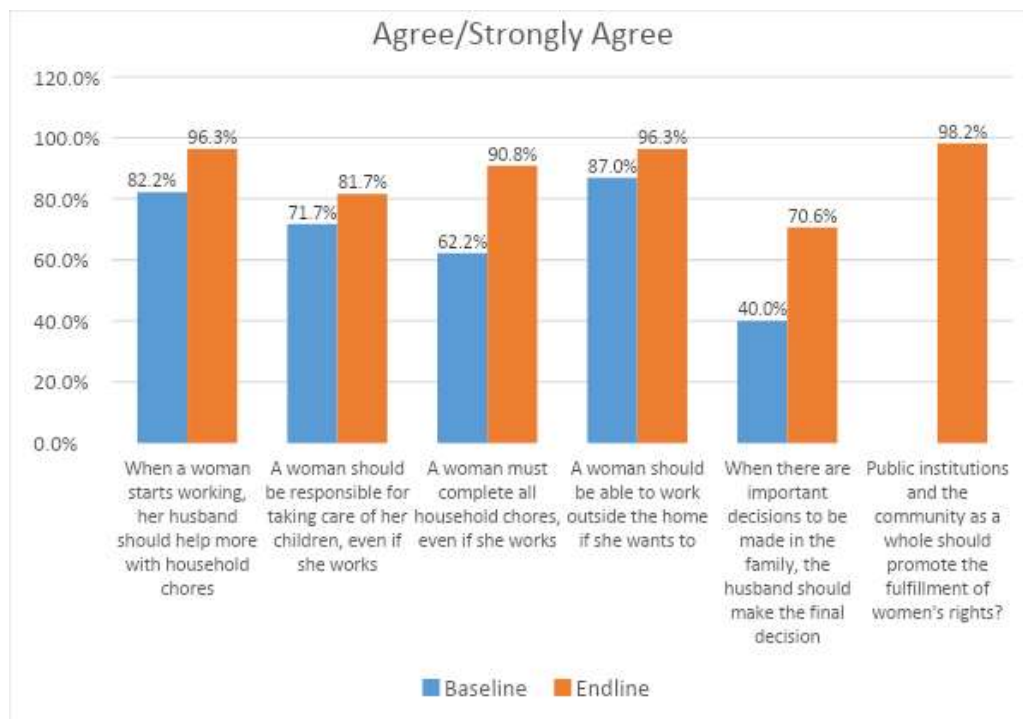


Figure 5: beneficiaries who answered agree/strongly agree with gender equality issues in the baseline and the endline

#### 4.6.2c Living conditions

ACPP and PARC view cooperatives as important in improving the living and working conditions of women and their families; cooperatives are highly relevant and important in the realization of the proposed sustainable development goals. There is a widely held consensus among the interviewed people for this evaluation (KII & FGs), that the cooperative enterprise is the type of organization that is most suited to addressing all dimensions of reducing poverty and exclusion. The way cooperatives help reduce poverty is important - they identify economic opportunities for their members; empower the disadvantaged to defend their interests; provide security to the poor by allowing them to convert individual risks into collective risks; and mediate member access to assets that they utilize to earn a living. Cooperatives play a significant role in employment creation and income generation.

The GVA 17 project has deeply focused on the role played by women cooperatives as a livelihood strategy adopted by the rural communities to sustain their livelihoods to earn a decent living. The interviewed persons clearly focused on how rural cooperatives have helped in improving the standards of living among the rural populace. They clearly emphasized that the ACPP and PARC initiative has positively impacted the economic situation of the cooperatives including the participating women and their families. Cooperatives play a critical role in improving the living conditions of the members, particularly those in the low-income groups, the rural people and the urban poor; such ACCP and PARC initiative will improve the living conditions in other Palestinian rural areas; for clarification, this project has enabled the targeted four cooperatives to enhance their cooperation with other cooperatives, create marketing linkages, strengthen the value chains for Palestinian products as well as promoting the consumption of the local products which will improve the living conditions of other rural areas.



## **4.7 Sustainability**

The sustainability of the project has benefited from **the attention to the design**, the care taken in the baseline assessment process to identify the needs of the cooperative and their individual communities and the investment made in cultivating strong connections with the cooperatives and their community, as well as local authorities. Building on the early engagement and transparency with local actors, there was a noted sense of ownership not only among the coops membership, as well as the community at large. This is particularly remarkable as these are women driven, so this high level of acceptance and integration of their work helps to establish and reaffirm women's role within the economic sphere. This helps envision a positive outcome beyond the life of the project as the work is not seen as a separate 'women's project,' but rather as a viable economic opportunity for the community as a whole. Additionally, as the projects of the cooperatives provided and responded to real services and goods needed in the targeted areas, there is a realistic assumption to be made that they are likely to continue. The women participated transparently in all implementation stages, and their financial contributions through their investment in the project added to their energy and persistence to succeed.

The projects implemented were environmentally friendly. The projects implemented modern technology techniques and equipment such as computerized systems for irrigation and fertilization, in Maithalune they used earthen water ponds to collect rainwater using modern machines and materials. There was particular attention given to the coops made up of women producers, in order to ensure that they received training in their productive specialties, which focused on sustainability and environmental issues. Specifically, the Maithalun group received specific training for grape cultivation and for aromatic and medicinal herbs cultivation. In addition to accounting and financial management in agriculture training new production techniques and ecological production, with a gender perspective. Additionally, Al-Jalama group received training on the cultivation of strawberries, as well as sessions on accounting and financial management in agriculture and ecological production. These training sessions were created and implemented to ensure the sustainability of the projects, as well as promote the significance of women as economic actors by presenting materials through a gendered lens.

The cooperative sector is like other economic sectors that depend primarily on the contributions of members as well as from foreign aid. The project has provided all what is needed regarding human resources, financial resources, continuous quality improvement, well-developed strategies, this is to ensure the sustainability of these projects at the targeted coops. Furthermore the steps taken to raise awareness, create market linkages and build capacity have helped to formalize the coops and have increased their ability to plan and sustain their initiatives. Additionally, participation among diverse stakeholders, participation and involvement of the coops and local actors have enabled them to take ownership of the project, effective institutional arrangements in place to sustain needed changes by time. It is highly likely that institutional support is foreseen and expected to mitigate obstacles and challenges that might be raised moving forward. The Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Agriculture, ARC, CWA, PSI and the community could be considered as institutional bodies that are positioned to pave the way for these projects to be sustainable.

As a result of the commitment of the project actors to transparently communicate, it was easy for all involved to develop a realistic plan for sustainability future sustainability all the information grouped together by the direct work with the communities, we have advanced in the creation of a structure to guarantee the sustainability of future imports of products from Palestine. Synergies have been created between Alreef , IDEAS and CTM that increase the probability of success in reducing obstacles in future imports from Palestine. And thanks to the promotion / dissemination of the project and the work carried out between La T enda de Tot el Món and IDEAS, the knowledge about Palestinian products in our territory has increased, creating a loyal customer base that will ensure future purchases of these products .

When considering the sustainability of the promotion and sale of products related to GVA17, it was noted that this is possible, but also very dependent on the following conditions,

- Price reduction for volumes less than 2500 units per reference
- Acceptance of incorporating our needs in the maritime containers imported by CTM
- Ensure stocks according to annual planning sent the previous year by IDEAS

However, if these conditions are not fulfilled, there is still the possibility of achieving the continuity of the project, if Al Reef can manage to acquire their products directly from CTM, with their packaging in Italian. This would be economically sustainable according to IDEAS, as it would ensure that the products do not have to be sold at prices below their CIF cost value.

Furthermore, in terms of the overall sustainability of this initiative, it is important to note that there are many aspects that signal a great deal of potential, but remain unclear due to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the project's implementation. These positive signs include the fact that the project activities were designed and implemented based on careful identification and addressing the targeted group needs in a collaborative and participatory approach. In addition, the targeted cooperatives have financially contributed to these projects, the management and technical capacities were built, the ownership is there, the community is supportive to a very good extent, the need is high and the willingness is bigger, cooperative members coordinate with each other. They are on the right track towards achieving sustainability within this year and moving forward, therefore it seems highly likely that they will grow once COVID 19 is over.

#### **4.8 Analysis of Cooperative System**

The Palestinian Decree-law N° 20 of 2017 is the only law that regulates cooperative associations in Palestine. It was enacted in November 2017, ten years after the first draft of a bill had been formulated with ILO assistance, replacing cooperative laws N°50 of 1933 (which used to apply in the Gaza Strip) and N° 17 of 1956 (which used to apply in the West Bank).<sup>10</sup> This is a major achievement – for the first time in history, Palestine has a unified cooperative law, as an indispensable basis for a unified cooperative movement. The total number of registered cooperatives in Palestine is around 795, of

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<sup>10</sup> ILO. (2020, November 19). *ILO COOP 100 Interview with Mounir Kleibo, Representative of the International Labour Organization in Jerusalem*. ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS\\_761549/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS_761549/lang-en/index.htm)

which 785 are in the West Bank and 172 in the Gaza strip.<sup>11</sup> The number of active cooperatives in the West Bank amounted to 545 (69% of the total), with 46,000 members; the corresponding figures for Gaza were 122 active cooperatives (71% of the total) with 8,000 members.<sup>12</sup> All Palestinian cooperatives belong to one of five categories: Agriculture, Housing Services , Artisans, Consumers.

The law requires the following governance structure of cooperatives:

- **General Assembly:** This is the highest decision-making body in cooperatives, and is responsible for electing an Executive Board, and deciding general policies that govern the cooperative operations, including reviewing and amending bylaws, approving operational plans and budgets, appointing an external auditor, deciding on how surplus will be distributed, and authorizing acceptance of donations, cooperative loans, dissolution, mergers, and membership in cooperative unions. The General Assembly is composed of members of the cooperative.
- **Management Committee/Board:** This is elected by the General Assembly from the ranks of its members in accordance with the provisions set in the individual cooperatives' bylaws. The Management Committee/Board is responsible for implementing policies set by the General Assembly in accordance with the cooperative bylaws and is accountable to the General Assembly.

These structures facilitate the inclusion of women in the Palestinian workplace to some extent and enable women to increase their income, which ultimately aims at increasing the rate of women's labour force participation in Palestine.

It is significant to note that the Cooperative Law comprises all of laws, administrative acts, court decisions, jurisprudence, cooperative bylaws/statutes or any other source of law, which regulate the structure and/or the operations of cooperatives as enterprises in the economic sense and as institutions in the legal sense. Furthermore, the funded projects by different donors over the last 15 years have been a great support to the cooperatives in Palestine, and this external funding has enabled these coops to increase their capability in production lines and provide a service to their members. Furthermore, the cooperative sector in the Palestinian territories faces obstacles related to the legal and institutional environment supportive; obstacles related to the governance and management of existing cooperatives, and others related to awareness and cooperative proliferation, and this negatively affects the management of its various operations and activities effectively and efficiently. Accordingly, the cooperative societies incurred large losses due to the decrease in revenues in return for fixed operating costs, as they were forced to pay salaries of workers in cooperatives, regardless of the number of days and hours of work, as well as payment of all rental and operational expenses.

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<sup>11</sup> ICA-PA. (n.d.). *LEGAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS within the ICA-EU Partnership National Report of Palestine*. coop2dev. [https://www.coops4dev.coop/sites/default/files/filefield\\_paths/National%20Report%20-%20Palestine.pdf](https://www.coops4dev.coop/sites/default/files/filefield_paths/National%20Report%20-%20Palestine.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> ILO. (2020, November 19). *ILO COOP 100 Interview with Mounir Kleibo, Representative of the International Labour Organization in Jerusalem*. ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS\\_761549/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/news/WCMS_761549/lang--en/index.htm)

The last year was a particularly challenging year on these coops due to the country lockdown, ongoing closures, and movement restrictions due to the COVID 19 pandemic which are still going on; negatively affected their accessibility to their markets; accumulated losses to them due to the destruction of many of the stored foodstuffs with limited time validity. Furthermore, this tough situation affected negatively these coops in Palestine in different areas such as: management and administrative matters, daily operations and organizing their meetings, approving their budgets, collecting membership contributions from their members or even expanding and developing the capacity of their members, following up their files and transactions with the governmental bodies.

However, despite these challenges, the evaluation team observed that across the interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries, as well as local stakeholders and representatives, there is a strong positive sense that the cooperative model is not only good for economic development, but also provides unique opportunities for women's empowerment within the GVA17 framework. In particular, as the cooperatives are owned by the members, there is a greater feeling of ownership of the project, which had a positive impact on the confidence of the women involved. Additionally, some of the male local representatives expressed more acceptance of women in the economic sphere. Furthermore, as the cooperative model allows for the cultural and context of its members to shape the initiative, it was easier for the community as a whole to accept the women in this expanded role. This is not to say that it automatically created gender equality in the household and community, but as such a transformation takes time, it is a positive indicator for continued acceptance of women in the economic sphere.

When considering the cooperative system from the perspective of ACPP and PARC, it is important to recognize both organizations' deep commitment to this model of economic empowerment and a tool to promote gender equality. At this time, in fact the initiatives implemented through this partnership, and with the support of the Generalitat Valenciana, are the most significant in all of Palestine. The fact that there has been such a commitment to this model and approach over several projects, has allowed for the development of a deeper understanding of how cooperatives are viewed and many lessons learned regarding how they may work best. However, within this learning it has also been made clear that there are differences in the expectations that these coops will work in terms of economic versus social achievements. For ACPP, it was emphasized that the established cooperatives are successful when they can eventually be economically viable and independent of outside support. Which in most contexts this would be a clear cut objective, however within the Palestinian context there are some significant challenges that have shaped the view of cooperatives to not only be a vehicle for economic, but also social change. This view is a product of the reality that as a result of the ongoing occupation and conflict, vulnerable Palestinians and their governmental structures have become dependent on outside aid, and are generally not independent economically.

This pattern of dependency within Palestine is deep-seated, particularly among those communities that are geographically vulnerable to displacement and harassment, and/or isolated from economic centers. Therefore, what is created are communities that in a needs assessment would be identified as in extreme need of economic intervention and support, while at the same time poorly positioned to operate counter to the pattern of dependency on donor aid within the country. This is made even more a consideration when the issue of gender is also included within the framework of a cooperative initiative, due to the cultural norms and restrictions these women encounter and the expectation that

the men in their communities and households would be dominant in the public sphere, while the women would remain focused on the domestic sphere. Within this vulnerable context, there is a strong need for social empowerment, as well as economic empowerment, which creates at the heart of cooperative initiatives such as GVA17 a tension between how to address the layers of needs to be addressed and capacities to be built. Despite these challenges, and differences in perspective, ACP and PARC have created a special framework in their design which has been for the most part successful, as can be seen in the result of the GVA17 project. In fact it is this success that encourages the two organizations to continue to develop such initiatives, while at the same time strive for improvements with each consecutive project implemented.

It is also important to note that the issues faced by this initiative are also highly related to the issues faced by all projects being implemented within Palestine at this time. As a result of the ongoing and intractable nature of the conflict, many humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors have had to reconsider their approach to programming, which has led to an increased focus on the adoption of nexus approaches that are designed to address the urgent humanitarian needs with short to mid-term objectives and activities, the development needs with mid to long-term objectives and activities, as well as consider protection needs with both short and long-term objectives and activities. The nexus approach stems in part from a recognition that emergency needs (and the identities of those most affected) are often symptoms of underlying issues that reflect broader inequalities and injustices. The nexus represents an opportunity to engage with these root causes and recognize that humanitarian crises can be caused and/or heightened by poor development policies and a lack of inclusive and appropriate development investment.<sup>13</sup> Thus, meeting life-saving needs at the same time as ensuring longer-term investment addressing the systemic causes of conflict and vulnerability has a better chance of reducing the impact of cyclical or recurrent shocks and stresses, and supporting the peace that is essential for development to be sustainable.

This is all to say the development and refinement of the cooperative system in Palestine is a nuanced idea, that requires particular attention not only to the specific elements of the targeted communities, but also consideration of the larger dynamics and protection concerns driving the continued occupation and conflict. Furthermore, as these cooperatives are developed with the support of the Spanish public, there exists additional opportunities for this particular approach. Specifically, the ability to not only build a marketplace outside of Palestine, as well as draw attention to the situation in Palestine among a European public, helps to strengthen the cooperatives, and encourages their ability to break out of this dependency, develop independent coops, and push against established gender norms. This all takes time and the ability to appropriately measure such changes, particularly when they are taking place within Palestinian context.

#### **4.8.1 Individual and Collective Relationship**

One of the strengths of implementing the cooperative system in Palestine is that the society in general is already traditionally structured to prioritize the collective over the individual. This preference is the

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<sup>13</sup> OXFAM. (2019). *THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENTPEACE NEXUS What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations?* OXFAM. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/dp-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-260619-en\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/dp-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-260619-en_0.pdf)

result of not only the social, religious and ethnic foundations of Palestinian culture, but is also further emphasized as a result of the on-going occupation and conflict that has illustrated the importance for Palestinians to stick together in order to ensure their collective survival. Of course, at the same time it is also true that the ongoing occupation and conflict has caused a splintering of communities and families, particularly as this upcoming younger generation is faced with less and less opportunities within their own communities. Keeping these social dynamics in mind, the cooperative system is inherently a great fit for this context, as it not only honors the collective traditions, but has the potential to provide needed economic opportunities for its members. Through this cooperative approach, combined with the emphasis on gender equality, there was a marked increase in women's participation in spaces of political representation, assemblies, associations, and women's clubs, which indicates real possibilities for women to now be part of decision-making processes as representatives of their collectives.

The level of growth of individual relations between men and women in cooperatives/associations is improving with increased inclusion of women in the leadership and acceptance of their contribution within the economic sector, as was noted by Muhammad Salh, Head of the Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative:

“There is a sharing in the roles, a change occurring between women and men. Women are managing the cooperative, including its related financial responsibilities, such as signing of checks and budgeting. Maryam Zaidat (board member) is a key member of the financial committee of Faqqoua Coops and holds the primary signature on the coops checks as a guarantee of transparency. We also are engaged with ongoing consultation with women board members to solve issues as they arise in order to improve the quality of work and production.”

Across the coops there is an emphasis on creating an enabling environment that is designed to increase women's participation and representation in leadership positions within the cooperative, as well as in the community. Particularly the beneficiaries expressed benefitting from the exchange visit and related activities, as it provided the opportunity for them to expand their thinking about Fair trade and cooperatives, as well as gave them new confidence to implement their own initiatives. Additionally, the training helped to develop a platform for the development of leadership skills and encouraged them to think of themselves as economic actors within their community. This shift in their individual perceptions also contributed to increased acceptance of their initiatives within the community, which is a marked change especially considering the patriarchal structure of the community.

#### **4.8.2 Local Products and Social Economy in Palestine**

In general as a result of the occupation and ongoing conflict, and the economic strain being placed on the Palestinian community, it is a challenge for them to prioritize 'made in Palestine,' products as many of the Israeli products are marketed at a lower cost. Additionally, the market for Palestinian goods within the market is shrinking due to increased restrictions on movement, such as the separation wall, expansion of settlements, settler access roads all of which disrupt the continuity of the Palestinian landscape making transporting of goods and resources highly difficult and costly.

Furthermore, many Palestinian producers lack the capacity to appropriately market their goods and make them as attractive to the public.

In terms of the social economy which depends on a rich diversity of enterprises, it is clear that the suffering is deepening in Palestine as its economy continues to deteriorate and rising poverty levels and increasing environmental degradation exact a heavy toll .<sup>14</sup> Even period to the COVID-19 Pandemic, in 2018 and early 2019, the Palestinian economy stagnated, per capita income further fell by 1.7%, unemployment increased, poverty deepened, and the environmental toll of occupation rose in the occupied Palestinian territory (Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem).<sup>15</sup> This grave reality was made even more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for Palestinian Women. The pandemic has placed a heavy burden on Palestinian women, affecting their lives of women in a number of ways, including higher rates of violence, increased domestic burdens, and psychosocial suffering, as well as exclusion from decision-making groups to address the crisis.<sup>16</sup> Taking this into consideration, cooperatives designed to empower women economically are particularly facing challenges, especially when many of the male members of the community are unable to find sustainable livelihoods.

Despite these challenges, it is also important to point out that there remains a great deal of potential for further development within the Palestinian context. Especially considering the wealth of natural resources and high level of education among the population. There has been an increase of start-up and innovation hubs, women's entrepreneurial groups and youth initiatives that have shown promise throughout the occupied territories. Additionally, there has been success in exporting goods not only through this project but others as well that helps raise awareness and promotes the 'made in Palestine,' idea. Therefore, it is clear through support and capacity building, as well as from the inspiration of the Palestinian society itself there is much that can be achieved within the growing social economy.

“This project has enabled the Cooperative to enhance the level of coordination with Faqqoua Community and Faqqoua Village Council in regard to the social responsibility; we allocated 5% from our profit for this purpose as well as another 5% to support the collaborative work in our community” Mohammed Salah, Head of Faqqoua Consumer Cooperative.

Finally, it is important to consider the overall effectiveness of the stamp, and whether this ambitious aspect of the project can be achieved at a level that it addresses the needs of the local communities, as well as increase engagement of relevant governmental bodies. For local sales, more promotion and awareness campaigns and exhibitions are needed to promote the local products, which is a process that would need to be done through a strategic communications and advocacy plan. There are many factors people are not buying Palestinian within Palestine, and in order to change these habits, it is essential that the campaign is designed with long-term goals in mind. For the export

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<sup>14</sup> UNCTAD. (2019, September 19). *Palestinian socioeconomic crisis now at breaking point*. UNCTAD. <https://unctad.org/news/palestinian-socioeconomic-crisis-now-breaking-point>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Palestinian NGO's Network (PNGO) (2020). *Conditions of Palestinian Women in Light of the Spread of COVID-19 Pandemic*.

market, Al Reef Co. can easily support these initiatives through their export channels in the region and international markets. The quality is there, but would need to be further developed and enhanced in order to address gaps in the supply chain and to meet international standards. The core factor in the end will remain with the strength of the “ Made in Palestine ” marketing, which is challenging, but as recognition of the need to support these products is more widely understood there is a great deal of potential for this program.

#### **4.8.3 Fair Trade**

The project has promoted Palestinian fair-trade products in the Valencian community, has provided a linkage between Palestinian producers to Spanish Fair Trade Market in addition to the provided an opportunity for cohesion and collaboration between Palestine and Spain, in particular among women cooperatives and entrepreneurs in both countries. The visit of the targeted beneficiary women to Valencia has enabled them to meet with other cooperatives of the Community there and to learn from each other, to exchange ideas to improve what they already do; it is a kind of awareness as well as knowledge about best practices in different areas related to their work. Furthermore, this trip was an opportunity to meet with the Spanish fair trade companies, importers to establish contacts and distribution channels to access the Spanish market.

The beneficiaries across all of the cooperatives, agreed that they now have a better understanding of Fair Trade, and are encouraged by the possibilities it presents in terms of increasing the consumption and sale of Palestinian products. This was particularly significant to all groups, as they are all economically vulnerable. Therefore, the awareness sessions and capacity building provided a much needed introduction to fair-trade sales channels. Additionally, representatives of Al Reef expressed their appreciation and optimism from their participation in the project as well.

“We are very keen to provide promotion, marketing, and packaging services for Palestinian agricultural products and to develop their quality. We apply the principle of fair trade in cooperation with PARC and in support of the cooperatives,” -Al Reef representative.

However, it is important to note that this enthusiasm must be met with appropriate support on a governmental level. At this time much is needed to promote awareness regarding the rights of producers, the development of regulatory mechanisms and communication with them from a fair-trade standpoint, as well as the values of social justice, transparency and the philosophy of fair-trade principles. There is clear evidence that fair trade principals have much to offer, and investment should be made to expand the general public and political leadership’s understanding of how it can contribute to achieving sustainable development in the Palestinian rural areas.

#### **4.9 Evaluation of GVA17 Planning Logistical Framework**

The purpose of this section of the evaluation is to provide an analysis of the existing approach to monitoring and evaluation within the GVA17 project. It is based on conversations with ACPP and PARC, about their current approach and is designed to offer insight into how the method and logic of the project could potentially be strengthened.



#### 4.9.1 Analysis of Current Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

When examining the existing LFA for GVA17, and considering the positive feedback received from the beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders in terms of the overall design and implementation of the project, it is clear that there are many strengths to the existing LFA. However, when considering the challenges faced when trying to identify the exact socio-economic impact of the overall initiative, it suggests that a review of the monitoring and evaluation approach **and nature of reporting conducted can prove a useful and fruitful exercise.**

At this time, PARC and ACPP are monitoring the project through the use of a local field staff that are based near the project implementation sites, and are supported by the main office of PARC in Ramallah and complemented by in-country ACPP staff, also located in Ramallah. Additionally, ACPP Palestine staff and PARC are supported by the main ACPP staff in Spain, who are also close to the Spanish partners and the Generalist Valencia. The advantage of this set-up is that there is a great deal of local contextual knowledge that is inherent in all of the decision-making and design of the project, and the teams in both countries can help translate the needs and aims of all involved in the project relatively easily. This flow of information is further strengthened by the fact that ACPP and PARC are long time partner organizations with an established positive track record of working together on many iterations of the GVA cooperative initiatives. Additionally, the shared belief in women's empowerment through the implementation of the cooperative model and principals means that the monitoring and evaluation, as well as reporting is focused and aligned with the mission and vision of both partners, as well as each of their staff's expertise. However, as the project's aim is focused on women's socio-economic empowerment within not only an ongoing occupation/conflict, but also in some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank, the approach to monitoring could benefit from some extra consideration, in order to ensure that the impact of such initiatives are clearly understood. This is particularly important as the next round of similar programming builds on the progress and learning from the previous one.

#### 4.9.2 Key Contextual Considerations

Considering the resources available, the structure of the monitoring/reporting system, and the complexity of the project itself, there are a few key areas that need to be considered:

**Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Palestine:** At this time many of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors implementing and funding programming in Palestine are in the process of reconsidering their approach based on the recognition that humanitarian relief, development programmes and peacebuilding **are not serial processes:** they are all needed at the same time. To reflect this understanding, actors working and funding programming in Palestine are increasingly turning to the concept of a '**humanitarian-development nexus**', or a 'humanitarian-development-peace nexus'. It focuses on the work needed to coherently address people's vulnerability before, during and after crises. It challenges the status quo of the aid system, which is overstretched and operates with little coordination between project-based development and

humanitarian interventions, resulting in it not effectively meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people.<sup>17</sup>

The idea is not new. The nexus is a continuation of long-running efforts in the humanitarian and development fields, such as ‘disaster risk reduction’ (DRR); ‘linking relief rehabilitation and development’ (LRRD); the ‘resilience agenda’; and the embedding of conflict sensitivity across responses. Unlike previous efforts, however, the nexus dialogue goes beyond a programmatic or conceptual approach. It relates to ongoing structural shifts across the aid system that are changing how aid is planned and financed. These will have profound implications for what we do, how we do it and with whom we do it. For example, the UN and the World Bank set up the New Way of Working (NWoW) to deliver the nexus approach.<sup>18</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has made the nexus a priority and members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) are showing some signs of changing how they fund programmes. It also has strong relevance to the Grand Bargain<sup>19</sup> and the UN Development System Reform (UNDS Reform). All UN agencies and many donors and multi-mandated NGOs are supportive of the approach.<sup>20</sup> The broader changes to the system, and to some extent the way in which donors deliver funding, indicate that the nexus framework is more likely than previous initiatives to impact how aid is coordinated, funded and delivered.

With this shift in mind, and the likelihood that this will also lead to a shift in the manner in which programming is implemented and funded in Palestine, it is essential that the monitoring approach and reporting begin expand its scope to include measurements that relate to not only the immediate economic gains, which are already well represented in the existing set of indicators, but also consider the longer-term aspects related to social empowerment and economic change through the implementation of the cooperative model and principles related to this and similar future initiatives.

**Need for Agency indicators within the Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) programming:** Improving women’s agency is crucial for advancing gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. Expanding agency brings broader gains for development and advances the agenda of poverty elimination and shared prosperity. When individual women have agency, they can make more informed and better financial choices for themselves and their families based on their own vision of the future. When workers have agency, they are able to negotiate fairer wages and safer working conditions.<sup>21</sup> When collectives have agency, they can often negotiate better input and output

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<sup>17</sup> T.R. Gingerich. (2015). Turning the Humanitarian System on Its Head: Saving lives and livelihoods by strengthening local capacity and shifting leadership to local actors. Oxfam America. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/turning-humanitarian-system-its-head>

<sup>18</sup> C. Bennett, R. Kent, A. Donini and D. Maxwell. (2017). Planning from the future: is the humanitarian system fit for purpose? ODI. <https://www.odi.org/publications/10694-planningfuture-humanitarian-system-fit-purpose>

<sup>19</sup> The Grand Bargain is an agreement between 59 of the biggest donors and aid providers. It aims to get more means into the hands of people in need. Its original tenth workstream was to enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors. See: Agenda for Humanity. Grand Bargain. <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

<sup>20</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Humanitarian Development Nexus. <https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus>

<sup>21</sup> ILO. (2019) <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Labour-Relations/Can-Collective-Bargaining-Create-a-Fairer-Economy#right-to-be-heard>

prices.<sup>22</sup> Fostering agency for the most marginalized groups enables them to improve the terms and conditions of their employment and production, raise wages and reduce poverty.<sup>23</sup> Agency also has intergenerational value as a mother's agency benefits her children as well as future generations.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Agency is part of the conceptual framework of empowerment, which when considering the aims and theory of change related to the GVA17 and similar initiatives should be well represented in the indicators to be measured, monitored and reported on.

However, this is a highly difficult thing to do as globally, gender indicators **are lacking or entirely missing**.<sup>25</sup> As a sector, especially at a program level, programme frameworks are much stronger at understanding and measuring women's economic advancement via economic outcomes: income, earnings, savings, and assets. These are concrete and often quantitative measures that we use to show success in the process of economic empowerment. Yet, this is only one part of the equation. If a woman makes more money as a result of an intervention but cannot control how it is used, she is still disempowered. That said, this important distinction is not easy to measure for various reasons.

First, agency is a difficult concept to both understand and define. Agency is interpreted differently across disciplines as well as within various spoken languages, creating confusion when there is not a one-to-one translation of central concepts and words. Furthermore, the lack of formative research and rigorous psychometric testing leads to poor quality data and analysis. The challenge is further exacerbated by several internal and external influencing factors such as self-perception and social norms. As J-Pal's *A Practical Guide to Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Impact Evaluations* shares, norms can affect agency by influencing which decisions feel like empowerment. For instance, some women may feel disempowered by taking charge of more household decisions, considering it an additional burden rather than a choice.<sup>26</sup> Second, capturing self-confidence, relations and perceptions within households and communities is complex, and therefore agency is difficult to quantify and measure. The most common measurements of agency use decision-making modules, freedom of movement questions, and other measures such as control over spending. Yet, decision-making measures rarely account for how decision-making processes vary across time, genders, and spaces, as well as within the household versus the community. Moreover, there is limited understanding of incentives and trade-offs at play between decision-makers and how collective decisions are made.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, even within common measurements of agency – such as women's participation in household decision-making – measurements and ranking are different across research studies. The research

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<sup>22</sup> Budlender, D. (2013). "Informal Workers and Collective Bargaining: Five Case Studies, "Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing." WIEGO Organizing Brief No. 9 October 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Jones, E., S., Smith and C. Wills. (2012) "Women Producers and the Benefits of Collective Forms of Enterprise," Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing, <https://www.wiego.org/resources/women-producers-and-benefits-collective-forms-enterprise>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> 4Data2x (2019). Bridging the Gap: Mapping Gender Data Availability in Africa.

<sup>26</sup> Glennerster, R., C. Walsh and L Diaz-Martin (2018). *A Practical Guide to Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Impact Evaluations*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-Pal)

<sup>27</sup> Donald, Aletheia Amalia; Koolwal, Gayatri B.; Annan, Jeannie Ruth; Falb, Kathryn; Goldstein, Markus P.. (2017). *Measuring women's agency* (English). Policy Research working paper; no. WPS 8148. Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group

expertise required to fully comprehend and assess the sensitivities around the agency is often lacking or not prioritized in programs, staffing and resourcing. Therefore, as GVA17 and similar programming seek to support independence of the cooperatives, as well as agency for the women beneficiaries, it would be helpful to consider how the monitoring, evaluation and reporting can be sensitive to the developments being made in measurement and analysis methodologies for WEE projects.

**Cooperative Model in Palestine:** As discussed in the sections above, it is clear that the cooperative model and its principles have been recognized for the potential for economic growth within the Palestinian context, however due to the donor dependency and limitations of the ongoing occupation/conflict it faces many challenges. It is therefore, from a monitoring point of view to consider these external factors when assessing the success of the individual cooperatives. In particular, there should be a recognition of the different perspectives that exist between Spain and Palestine in terms of the appropriate social and economic progress that can be achieved within the timeframe of the project. This is of course considered in the design and so much attention is given to building capacities and raising awareness, however measuring the socio-economic impact is less clear in the forms of verification in the reporting structure, and could benefit from enhanced tools that can help illustrate the balance between these perspectives and impacts on the ground.

**Monitoring/Reporting Capacity:** In the structure of this project there is a lot of weight placed on the local field team, as well as the cooperatives themselves to monitor and report appropriately on a wide range of issues and elements within the project. However, there remains a feeling that the information provided could be deeper by both ACPP and PARC. This was also illustrated in the economic analysis conducted by the evaluation team, when attempting to gather financial information that it is often difficult for the coops to present cohesive economic impact reports within the short programme cycle that often is taken up with a lot of capacity building and awareness raising before there can be any substantial financial reporting. This is made more difficult when also factoring the reality that agricultural initiatives will always be impacted by seasonality and climate sensitivity of the crops, which will dictate when such projects will be able to illustrate impact and economic results.

#### **4.9.3 Opportunities for Further Development**

1. Invest in capacity building and resourcing the field teams with digitized systems and new skills regarding both qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation techniques.
2. Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation plan template that compliments the project plan, and determines specific benchmarks, provides opportunity for case studies from previous similar projects for contrast and can be used to support more nuanced analysis
3. Take into consideration other actors in the field that are working on similar programming and find ways to share information. This can help better contextualize the results on higher level goals of the project related to needed economic policy changes and trends, human rights protections and womens empowerment, as well as the status of the nexus within the Palestinian context.
4. Consider how your awareness raising efforts can include field staff, so that they can also expand their understanding of key concepts such as Fair Trade and Cooperative principles.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Lessons Learned

Importance of the project design and early buy-in: ACCP and PARC applied learning from previous similar GVA projects to the design of GVA17, which contributed to the success of the design and method of implementation of the project. Specifically, the attention and effort given **to conducting a baseline study**, helped to ensure that the initiatives selected for this project were aligned with the needs of their community, presented a diversity in terms of being producers and consumers, as well as had a strong potential of being economically viable. Additionally, the attention to how the concepts **of Fair Trade and Cooperatives** were shared with the beneficiaries was highly aligned with the expertise among the Spanish partners, making the 'made in Palestine' component of the project stronger, and increased the overall buy-in of the beneficiaries and their communities in the initiative. The buy-in was also enhanced by the diversity of project activities, studies and plans, inputs for cooperatives, capacity building, exhibitions, exchange visits, round table discussions, certification, as well as the SEAL design, promotion, and conference. It was also clear **that donor financing should not 100% cover the cost of the project**, but by creating a pathway for the beneficiaries themselves to make a cash contribution, at a reasonable rate for the economic context, enhances their ownership to their projects as well as its sustainability. Furthermore, the design of a business plan for each of the four women entrepreneurship groups (production or consumption), followed by strategies for each of the initiatives with the aim of strengthening them, has enabled ACCP and PARC to obtain a rich and in-depth diagnosis of the transformation needs of each of the groups. Helping to identify where capacity needed to be built, whether that was in production/providing services, management, accounting, marketing, efficiency and sustainability as well. It is worth mentioning that these implementation plans have focused on gender issues and mainstreaming in order to facilitate a positive shift in the gender dynamics within the targeted groups themselves as well as with their interactions with other cooperatives in the surrounding environment, as well as the community at large.

**The Positives and Negatives of the COVID19 pandemic:** The COVID19 pandemic created a very difficult challenge for the GVA17 project, which undoubtedly impacted the level of success of the income generation activities and limited the potential for the coops economic development. It also challenged the management and administration of the coops, as well as limited their ability to engage fully in financial reporting in a timely manner. Additionally, it also impacted the capacity to get the goods to market and therefore limited the ability to really test how the products will connect to the marketplace. That said, the restrictions and intensity of the pandemic experience did have an unexpected impact on the level of ownership and commitment to the project's initiatives. Where it might have been expected that these challenges would decrease interest among the coop members, it actually had a rather unifying impact for not only the beneficiaries but also their communities and local representatives. The projects were seen as more essential than ever and in this time there was a real drive to ensure that the coops continued their work.

**Importance of engagement with Relevant Stakeholders:** The ministries, local councils and cooperatives participated with PARC's team in all activities supervision and implementation (PSI, CWA, local councils). The evaluation findings have shown a consistency between the designed

activities, proposed results, objectives, and the implemented actions. The project is in alignment with the national and regional strategies and the inclusion of Human Rights and Gender Approaches. The project concretely built on the baseline study performed at an early stage of the project. High consideration to 2030 agenda, the intervention's relevance to the carefully chosen framework. It is particularly important to point out the importance of the Palestinian Standard Institution (PSI), which through their support of the productive cooperatives, worked with them to improve the quality and compliance of their products with all the legal requirements of the products. This created a pathway for the coops to attain legal registration and institutionalization of their project. This measure will open the local and international markets for these products and provide needed support through the mandatory complex and long procedures required to bring their products to the marketplace.

**The Palestine Seal and Awareness raising about 'made in Palestine' products:** The Palestine SEAL was an innovative approach to make Palestinian products visible and distinguish all the products made in Palestine, it is clear that the seal should be incorporated into the packaging of the various products towards local and international markets. It was also clear that the Seal was made more effective in coordination with awareness raising efforts about the situation in Palestine, so as this process moves forward, there should be a continued awareness raising component to the effort. Specifically, the coops participation in the local exhibitions, the promotional campaigns and stands with tastings for the public has improved the production commercialization in the local market, enhancing the visibility of their products. Moreover, the presence of a successful model in safe production and certification is a value added to the cooperatives, which was also supported further by Al Reef's access to the international markets. Such pathways to the international market should be prioritized moving forward.

**The importance of providing opportunity to exchange ideas and learning:** The knowledge exchange activities (The mission to Spain) between the representatives of the Palestinian entrepreneurship groups and similar groups in the Valencian Community, both producer cooperatives and consumer cooperatives are a very good approach to establish direct contact with interested companies and participate in a fair trade. Furthermore, the conducted round tables with the participation of private sector key representatives are a brainstorming technique to raise aware of the socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian women and pave the way to mitigate the challenges for achieving gender equality.

**Socio-Economic Empowerment and Change Take Time:** Understanding the complexity of women's socio-economic empowerment, it is essential time is given for such changes to take place. The fact that this project focuses on some most vulnerable individuals, within the most vulnerable communities, located within an occupied and conflict affected West Bank means that time is needed to achieve tangible changes on the ground. Therefore, continuing to apply a mixed approach that focuses on both capacity build and income generation is essential to the process.

**Enhance Coordination and Communication:** To enhance communication and coordination between the PARC team, ACPP and the Tenda de Tot el Món, however, the establishment of the Local Management Committee of the project including PARC project coordinator and the ACPP project technician, representatives of the community-based organizations and the Local Councils has led to effective participation of women, guarantee the formalization of the participation of representatives of the Local Council and local community organizations; strengthen relations with the community; ensured transparency in the selection of beneficiary rights holders when necessary; guarantee the sustainability of the project.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

**Simplification of the Approval Process:** There is a need to simplify/quick the process of getting approval / modification from donors, applies also on procurement and financial procedures; this approach will save time and enable the productive cooperatives not to miss the season considering the seasonality of the crops. This is particularly important when considering that grape production needs 3 years to start, and achieving the results in this cycle takes some time to enable measuring the indicators properly.

**Increase the sales and volumes of Palestinian Products in the Marketplace:** In order to increase the efficiency, it would be necessary to increase the sales and volumes of Palestinian products available within the marketplace. To this end, it was suggested to improve these four variables, including: increase supply capacity (quantity of product available), periodicity of imports (to be carried out in coordination with CTM), reduction of the minimum required by CTM-AI Reef for the use of “ Private label ” with the “Consume Palestina” brand, and reduction of some volume prices. It should also be noted that at this point, international sales of products is very complex and ACPP does not know if it will be able to include it in future projects in the short-term. At this point, ACPP and PARC are strategizing instead ways to reinforce as much as possible local sales in Palestine.

**Economic Opportunities to Women with consideration to their families:** The overall economic situation in Palestine is weak, many families are struggling to find work to support their needs, this leads to even more pressure on the women within the household. In particular, these women are seeking to meet their most basic needs through finding some economic initiatives to increase their income for the benefit of their families, enhance their accessibility to work. At the same time there exists a strong cultural norm that restricts their role as economic actors, which needs to continue to be considered in the implementation of such projects. It may be useful therefore to consider how the family, inclusive of male members of the family, could help create a more stable model of economic empowerment. This model has been tested recently in Gaza where the focus shifted from solely one of women’s economic empowerment to one of family economic empowerment, therefore it is suggested to explore some of the success of these models and consider testing such an approach within a future initiative.

**Promote the Fair Trade concept and local products in Palestine:** As a result of the occupation/conflict the Israeli authorities have a great deal of control over the dynamics within the Palestinian marketplace. This has resulted in not only a challenge for Palestinian producers, but also the ability of Israeli products to be sold at a lower price. Therefore it is essential that continued efforts are made to raise the awareness of the concept of Fair trade and the importance of supporting local products. This effort will need to be handled carefully as the Israeli authorities have several mechanisms in place to punish any efforts that may be seen to ‘boycott’ Israeli goods, however assuming the messaging is handled well there is an opportunity to promote an increased reliance on Palestinian goods within Palestine. This effort could also be helped by partnering with other existing initiatives within Palestine in coordination with relevant stakeholders and organizations working with the same aim.

**Capacity Building of the Coops through networking with successful past projects:** In order to continue building the capacities for the targeted groups and enable them to acquire knowledge in different areas such as: Digital marketing, agri-food marketing, business planning, creative thinking, products storage and packaging, book-keeping, products quality assurance...etc; it may be useful to connect the existing targeted coops with successful models from the past, this way the multiplier effect of the project and sustainability can be strengthened from within the project itself. By building mentorships of particularly successful leaders/coops within Palestine to connect to the new coops there is an opportunity for a strengthening of the Palestinian coop movement, as well as a space to promote female leadership in the economic sector by providing such an opportunity to previous project leaders.

**Specs identification of the Procured items:** Extra effort could be paid to agree with the targeted beneficiaries on what is exactly needed for full utilization and successful implementation of the activity. As was seen in this project, can be seen in the confusion that arose regarding the requested computer system that the coop needed for irrigation of the strawberries for Al Jalamah Cooperative. Due to the fact that the strawberry crop is very sensitive to heat and needs special techniques for irrigation, the coop felt that they needed this specific technology, but were given something different instead. This resulted in the COOP not planting the crop themselves, because they no longer felt they had the capacity to do it successfully, and therefore contracted an outside pioneer farmer to plant the strawberry in his farm through a special contract between them. The fact was that this computerized system was too expensive and not promised to the coop, however there was an impression that it was, which points to the need for more detailed discussion around what equipment and materials are going to be used. While it is positive that a solution was made, it is critical that there is clear communication about what the coops and Project staff are requesting in the procurement process, and if changes are made or misunderstandings arise that they are dealt with in a manner that is transparent and well documented. This will protect both the project staff and the coops from having misunderstandings or misguided expectations.

**Build Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity and Increase Accuracy:** As the GVA17 project, and other similar initiatives are complex in terms of the context, as well as their gendered socio-economic objectives, it is essential that the project team is well equipped to implement multiple monitoring/evaluation techniques. Therefore, it is essential that an investment is made in first digitizing the monitoring process to reduce information loss, and second that capacity building sessions are conducted with the PARC field team to increase their ability to capture the nuances of such a project. Additionally, as financial reporting is a challenge, particularly for informal coops at the beginning stages of their development, it is essential that the field team has resources with the tools to support this reporting process to a higher extent. Finally, when implementing awareness campaigns that are conducted on radio or social media it is essential that analytics are collected and analyzed in order to more clearly define impact.

**Establish a clear Monitoring & Evaluation Plan to complement the Project Plan:** It is clear that in this project the design was one of its core strengths. The attention given to considering the needs of the targeted groups was outstanding and benefited the project greatly. However, the project would be greatly improved and management of progress could be enhanced by reconsidering the plan for Monitoring & Evaluation processes, and detailing the exact benchmarks that need to be achieved at



what time. By developing a detailed and practical plan, and guide to help support staff in its implementation, there can be an improved level of efficiency and accuracy in the analysis of the project.

**Engage in Nexus related information sharing and learning:** As there is a shift occurring within the Palestinian context related to the promotion of nexus implementation, it would be helpful for ACPP and PARC to consider what other actors in the field are working on complementary economic, gender and human rights programming. Connecting with others would not only provide more contextual information about the external drivers that may impact the project, but could also help better integrate this theory of change and promotion of cooperatives and Fair Trade into the matrix of interventions being used in Palestine. It can also help raise the awareness around the made in Palestine effort and raise the profile of the GVA projects, as well as ACPP and PARC among other actors and donors, which may result in opportunities to access more resources and new pathways to the marketplace.

**Revisit Previous GVA project participants for planning support and long-term impact analysis:** One of the assets of the GVA programme is that there have been several iterations of the same project approach over several years. Therefore, there is an untapped wealth of information for the project team to draw from in terms of the true long-term impact of these initiatives. This can be useful first in terms of the planning phase of the project to gather through a focus groups discussion previous project participants from different coops to help understand what they suggest be included or avoided in the design of an upcoming project, as well as to gain information about key considerations regarding the cooperative system and gender equality impact in the longer-term. This will allow the project to make gains in understanding the key elements of success, a realistic timeline for economic viability, and identify what are realistic gender shifts within targeted communities, as well as contextualize the progress of the coops involved in the current projects. This can also be done on the Spanish side to measure the societal impact of these projects in the longer-term related to their consumer habits and understanding of the situation in Palestine at this time.

## 6. Annex

### **Annex 1: Questionnaire for Key Informant Interviews with project partners**

These questions will be directed to selected representatives of this intervention by the PARC, the ACPD team, the Tenda team, the IDEAS team (Iniciativas de Economía Alternativa y Solidaria and Al Reef),

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| <p><b>Relevance</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the intervention correspond to the priorities and needs of the Rights Holders?</li> <li>● Have practical gender needs, strategic needs or both been taken into account?</li> <li>● Do the problems identified correspond to the reality of women, the priorities correspond to the proposed objectives and the deadlines set in the project?</li> <li>● Was it possible to influence the contextual factors that limited women's participation in public affairs?</li> <li>● What analysis did the project make of the gender relations in the specific context where the project was to be implemented?</li> <li>● Is the internal logic of the project the best way to address the problems identified by the participating population from a gender perspective?</li> <li>● Is the methodological approach of the project appropriate to the contents and capacities of the rights holders?</li> <li>● Have the methodologies, work approaches, materials and activities proposed been adequate to achieve the expected results?</li> <li>● What were the facilitating elements and difficulties in incorporating such a methodology?</li> <li>● In case of changes of context during its execution, Is the project still relevant today?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Coherence</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do the problems identified correspond to the proposed objectives?</li> <li>● Has the structure of objectives, results and activities of the intervention been correctly defined?</li> <li>● Have the programmed activities, their methodologies and tools been the most relevant to achieve the objectives of the intervention?</li> <li>● Describe the coherence of the project in terms of the cooperation strategies in Palestine and the Strategic Plan of the entity itself, as well as with the regional and national strategies and the incorporation of gender and human rights approaches.</li> <li>● Is the project in line with the cooperation policy of the Generalitat Valenciana?</li> <li>● Orientation of the processes carried out towards Agenda 2030.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Ownership</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have spaces been created for the participation of all the owners, where</li> </ul>   |

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|                      | <p>the objectives of the project for development have been assumed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you characterize the degree of participation and sense of ownership in the actions carried out among the cooperative members and other relevant actors within the community?</li> <li>• What is the degree of satisfaction of the various stakeholders on the progress of the project and the results achieved?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Efficiency</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the human resources involved been in line with the needs?</li> <li>• Were the activities designed in such a way as to optimize the use of resources? Were the costs of different types of interventions compared or activities before decisions are taken?</li> <li>• Assessment of the operational management of the project carried out by the ACPP, Tenda and PARC team.</li> <li>• Have the budgets initially set out in the document been respected?</li> <li>• Have the timetables and deadlines been respected?</li> <li>• Have the coordination mechanisms between the different actors been strengthened?</li> <li>• Has the transformation of resources into results been efficient?</li> <li>• Was the coordination between the promoting entities sufficient and were the established coordination mechanisms complied with?</li> <li>• How did coordination or lack of coordination affect the achievement of project results?</li> <li>• Did the resources used include gender perspectives (human resources, budgets)?</li> <li>• Has the project monitoring system worked?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Effectiveness</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the resources and strategies put in place to achieve the expected results been valid?</li> <li>• Have all the expected results of the intervention been achieved?</li> <li>• Has the specific objective of the intervention been achieved?</li> <li>• Have other unintended effects been achieved?</li> <li>• Is it possible to pressure at the institutional level to change the laws related to cooperatives? Is it possible to improve the law to recognize the work of women?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Impact</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the planning foresee any specific impact on human rights and gender equality?</li> <li>• Has the intervention considered the impact on human rights and gender equality in the long term?</li> <li>• To what extent the project contributes to guaranteeing human rights in Palestine and women rights?</li> <li>• Has the intervention succeeded in improving the realization of human rights and in particular those of women?</li> <li>• Have there been any unexpected outcomes related to the realization of human rights and gender equality, positive or negative, and how have they</li> </ul>  |

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|   | affected rights holders?   |
| <b>Sustainability</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What intervention strategies allow the process generated to continue over time?</li> <li>● What human, material and financial resources are available to ensure the continuity of the action?</li> <li>● Is any institutional support foreseen for the continuity of the project?</li> <li>● Identification and analysis of the problems or constraints, both regulatory and operational, that hinder project management, as well as the strengths and good practices that improve project management capacity.</li> <li>● Are the results achieved sustainable over time or do they tend to be?</li> <li>● What steps have been taken to institutionalize the project, build the capacity of stakeholders or ensure that rights holders benefit from accountability and monitoring systems?</li> <li>● Are the benefits of the intervention maintained after the withdrawal of external aid?</li> <li>● Have the policy makers in the process expressed their commitment to the results of the process?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Analysis related to cooperatives system:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Please describe the legal situation in the cooperatives system? Has there been any noticeable change regarding the legal status?</li> <li>● Please describe the level of participation of the women in the cooperative system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has there been any noticeable change in the level of participation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What do you attribute this change or lack of change to?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Are these structures facilitating the inclusion of women in the Palestinian workplace? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In what ways are they helping or not helping the inclusion of women?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Do women increase their income by participating in them?</li> </ul>   |

**Annex 2: Questionnaire for Key Information Interview with representatives and Key Staff Members from each of the 4 groups involved in the project**

These questions will be directed to the 4 groups involved in the project Al Jalama Women's Club, Faqu'a Consumers Association, Meithalun Farmers Cooperative, Jaba Credit and Savings Association

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| <b>Relevance</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the intervention correspond to the priorities and needs of the Rightsholders?</li> <li>● Have practical gender needs, strategic needs or both been taken into account?</li> <li>● Do the problems identified correspond to the reality of women, the priorities correspond to the proposed objectives and the deadlines set in the project?</li> <li>● Was it possible to influence the contextual factors that limited women's</li> </ul> |
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|                   | <p>participation in public affairs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the methodologies, work approaches, materials and activities proposed been adequate to achieve the expected results?</li> <li>• What were the facilitating elements and difficulties in incorporating such a methodology?</li> <li>• In case of changes of context during its execution, Is the project still relevant today?</li> <li>• What skills and capacity do you now have as a result of the project?</li> <li>• Are these new skills and capacity in line with what was needed in terms of the association/group as well as individual beneficiaries?</li> <li>• What training do you feel would be needed in the next stage of development in order to make the work of the project sustainable?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Coherence</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the programmed activities, their methodologies and tools been the most relevant to achieve the objectives of the intervention?</li> <li>• If the project is re-implemented, what will you repeat and what will you cancel? And why? Your recommendations?</li> <li>• Has the project contributed to improving your relations and the level of coordination and networking with institutions at the level of the region and beyond?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ownership</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have spaces been created for the participation of all the owners, where the objectives of the project for development have been assumed?</li> <li>• Degree of implementation of the population participating in the actions carried out, in addition to other actors involved.</li> <li>• Level of perception of the project by the different actors (holders of rights, obligations and responsibilities)</li> <li>• Degree of satisfaction of the various stakeholders on the progress of the project and the results achieved</li> <li>• In your opinion, were the project activities sufficient to develop your business? How and Why?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Efficiency</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the activities designed in such a way as to optimize the use of resources?</li> <li>• Were the costs of different types of interventions and activities compared before decisions are taken?</li> <li>• Have the budgets initially set out in the document been respected?</li> <li>• Have the timetables and deadlines been respected?</li> <li>• Have the coordination mechanisms between the different actors been strengthened?</li> <li>• How did coordination or lack of coordination affect the achievement of project results?</li> <li>• Did the resources used include gender perspectives (human resources, budgets)?</li> <li>• Has the project monitoring system worked?</li> </ul>  |

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| <b>Effectiveness</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the resources and strategies put in place to achieve the expected results been valid?</li> <li>● Have all the expected results of the intervention been achieved?</li> <li>● Has the specific objective of the intervention been achieved?</li> <li>● Have other unintended effects been achieved?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Impact</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Considering the process and approach taken with this project, what new opportunities have been created for the association/group, as well as individual beneficiaries?</li> <li>● What are the possibilities for growth and development did this provide now and how can these be further developed in the future for the association/group as well as individual beneficiaries?</li> <li>● What products are produced and sold?</li> <li>● How are their revenues and profits distributed to the participants?</li> <li>● Has the intervention succeeded in improving the realization of human rights and in particular those of women?</li> <li>● Have there been any unexpected outcomes related to the realization of human rights and gender equality, positive or negative, and how have they affected rights holders?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What human, material and financial resources are available to ensure the continuity of the action?</li> <li>● Have the marketing studies carried out and the business plan been useful to you?</li> <li>● Have you read all the information and are you working in your group to implement it?</li> <li>● Is any institutional support foreseen for the continuity of the project?</li> <li>● Are the results achieved sustainable over time? Particularly with the withdrawal of external aid?</li> <li>● What steps have been taken to institutionalize the project, build the capacity of stakeholders or ensure that rights holders benefit from accountability and monitoring systems?</li> <li>● Have the policy makers in the process expressed their commitment to the results of the process?</li> <li>● Considering the process and approach taken with this project, what new opportunities have been created for the association/group?</li> <li>● What are the possibilities for growth and development did this provide now and how can these be further developed in the future for the association/group?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Analysis related to cooperative system:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Please describe the legal situation in the cooperatives system? Has there been any noticeable change regarding the legal status?</li> <li>● Please describe the level of participation of the women in the cooperative system.</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has there been any noticeable change in the level of participation?</li> <li>○ What do you attribute this change or lack of change to?</li> <li>● Are these structures facilitating the inclusion of women in the Palestinian workplace?</li> <li>○ In what ways are they helping or not helping the inclusion of women?</li> <li>○ Do women increase their income by participating in them?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Individual and Collective Relationship</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the degree of improvement regarding individual relations between men and women in cooperatives / associations and in local councils, other associations, social structures in the communities?</li> <li>○ In other words, did women already participate in representative positions within the cooperative or in the community?</li> <li>○ If so, what role do they play in it?</li> <li>○ Are your contributions taken into consideration?</li> <li>○ Are they free to deal with problems faced by women in their groups / communities?</li> <li>● Has the cooperative structure enabled women's participation in spaces of political representation, assemblies, associations, and women's clubs? Please explain.</li> <li>● Have women taken on representative roles in their place of work, with real possibilities to be part of decision-making processes? Please explain.</li> <li>● Would be important work in networking between women's groups in rural and urban areas of the West Bank? How?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Local products and the social economy in Palestine</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the role in your opinion of consumers and credit groups in the promotion of social and solidarity economy within the project?</li> <li>● How would you characterize their contribution?</li> <li>● What was the impact of Institutional support on the following:</li> <li>● Increasing the knowledge, consumption, and sale of Palestinian products?</li> <li>● Increase their producers' income through the fair trade sale channel?</li> <li>● Promoting and Dignifying Palestinian products?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Fair Trade</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is your understanding of Fair Trade in Palestine?</li> <li>○ To what degree do you believe consumer's know about fair trade in Palestine?</li> <li>○ What could be done to increase this awareness among consumers?</li> </ul>   |

### **Annex 3: Questionnaire for Key Informant Interviews with local actors**

These questions will be directed to local actors as decided by ACPP, PARC and Tenda, potentially including Ministry of Agriculture in Jenin, Department of Cooperatives of the Ministry of Labour - Jenin Office, Ministry of Economy - Trade Mark Registration Department - Jeni District Office, District office of the Ministry of Agriculture in South Jenin, City council representatives, Al Jalama,

Representatives of the Faqqoua municipalities, Rural Women's Development Society - Jenin Coordinator

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Relevance</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the intervention correspond to the priorities and needs of the Rights Holders?</li> <li>● Have practical gender needs, strategic needs or both been taken into account?</li> <li>● Have the methodologies, work approaches, materials and activities proposed been adequate to achieve the expected results?</li> <li>● Do you think that the Campaign Consume Local, Consume Palestina was useful?</li> <li>● Is the Palestinian Seal a good tool to promote the Palestinian products?</li> <li>● Is it possible to pressure at the institutional level to change the laws related to cooperatives? Is it possible to improve the law to recognize the work of women?</li> <li>● Were the Cooperatives, Opportunities and Challenges meetings useful?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Coherence</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do the problems identified correspond to the proposed objectives?</li> <li>● Have the programmed activities, their methodologies and tools been the most relevant to achieve the objectives of the intervention?</li> <li>● Has the structure of objectives, results and activities of the intervention been correctly defined?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Ownership</b></p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have spaces been created for the participation of all the owners, where the objectives of the project for development have been assumed?</li> <li>● Level of perception of the project by the different actors (holders of rights, obligations and responsibilities)</li> <li>● Degree of satisfaction of the various stakeholders on the progress of the project and the results achieved.</li> <li>● After the exchange visits, have commercial agreements been concluded between the groups and distribution or sales companies?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Efficiency</b></p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the coordination mechanisms between the different actors been strengthened?</li> <li>● Has the transformation of resources into results been efficient?</li> <li>● Was the coordination between the promoting entities sufficient and were the established coordination mechanisms complied with?</li> <li>● Have the timetables and deadlines been respected?</li> <li>● How did coordination or lack of coordination affect the achievement of project results?</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Effectiveness</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the resources and strategies put in place to achieve the expected results been valid?</li> <li>● Have all the expected results of the intervention been achieved?</li> <li>● Has the specific objective of the intervention been achieved?</li> </ul>   |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Impact</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the planning foresee any specific impact on human rights and gender equality?</li> <li>● To what extent the project contributes to guaranteeing human rights in Palestine and women rights?</li> <li>● Have there been any unexpected outcomes related to the realization of human rights and gender equality, positive or negative, and how have they affected rights holders</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are the results achieved sustainable over time or do they tend to be?</li> <li>● Are the benefits of the intervention maintained after the withdrawal of external aid?</li> <li>● Have the policy makers in the process expressed their commitment to the results of the process?</li> <li>● What human, material and financial resources are available to ensure the continuity of the action?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Analysis related to cooperatives system:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Please describe the legal situation in the cooperatives system? Has there been any noticeable change regarding the legal status?</li> <li>● Please describe the level of participation of the women in the cooperative system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has there been any noticeable change in the level of participation?</li> <li>○ What do you attribute this change or lack of change to?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Are these structures facilitating the inclusion of women in the Palestinian workplace? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In what ways are they helping or not helping the inclusion of women?</li> <li>○ Do women increase their income by participating in them?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Individual and Collective Relationship</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the degree of improvement regarding individual relations between men and women in cooperatives / associations and in local councils, other associations, social structures in the communities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In other words, did women already participate in representative positions within the cooperative or in the community?</li> <li>○ If so, what role do they play in it?</li> <li>○ Are your contributions taken into consideration?</li> <li>○ Are they free to deal with problems faced by women in their groups / communities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Has the cooperative structure enabled women's participation in spaces of political representation, assemblies, associations, and women's clubs? Please explain.</li> <li>● Have women taken on representative roles in their place of work, with real possibilities to be part of decision-making processes? Please explain.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Local products</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the role in your opinion of consumers and credit groups in the promotion of social and solidarity economy within the project?</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
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| <b>and the social economy in Palestine</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How would you characterize their contribution?</li> <li>● What was the impact of Institutional support on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increasing the knowledge, consumption, and sale of Palestinian products?</li> <li>○ Increase their producers' income through the fair trade sale channel?</li> <li>○ Promoting and Dignifying Palestinian products?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Fair Trade</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is your understanding of Fair Trade in Palestine? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what degree do you believe consumer's know about fair trade in Palestine?</li> <li>○ What could be done to increase this awareness among consumers?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

#### **Annex 4: Questionnaire for focus group discussions**

These questions will be directed to Board members and general assembly of the 4 cooperatives and Members of the local community (men and women) who participated in or were aware of the project activities, such as local participants in the "Consume Palestine" campaign, etc. in a focus group format.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Relevance</b>  | <p>Does the intervention correspond to the cooperatives priorities and the needs of the community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did you feel that the gender components of the project and method of support were relevant to the needs and capacities of the cooperative and community?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Coherence</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the programmed activities, their methodologies and tools been the most relevant to achieve the objectives of the intervention?</li> <li>● Have the structure of objectives, results and activities of the intervention been correctly defined?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ownership</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the level of the sense of ownership over the project among the community and cooperative members?</li> <li>● What is the degree of satisfaction regarding the progress of the project and the results achieved?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Efficiency</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the timetables and deadlines been respected?</li> <li>○ How have you been supported in increasing efficiency?</li> <li>○ What were the barriers to timely implementation throughout the life of the project?</li> <li>● How did coordination or lack of coordination affect the achievement of project results?</li> <li>○ Describe how the capacity to coordinate and efficiency implement the project has changed throughout the life of the project among the members of the cooperatives, the board and general assembly?</li> </ul> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Effectiveness</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have the resources and strategies put in place to achieve the expected results been valid?</li> <li>● Have all the expected results and specific objective of the intervention been achieved?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Impact</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have there been any unexpected outcomes related to the realization of human rights and gender equality, positive or negative, and how have they affected rights holders</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Sustainability</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent are the results achieved, sustainable over time?</li> <li>● What do you see as the likelihood that the benefits of the intervention will be maintained after the withdrawal of external aid?</li> <li>● What human, material and financial resources are available to ensure the continuity of the action?</li> <li>● The impact of the project at the level of the policy of the association / group?</li> <li>● What are the main achievements of the association? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At the assembly level?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What are the main challenges faced by the Association during the implementation of the project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Will you face any challenges after the end?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <b>Living Conditions</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How has this initiative impacted the economic situation of the cooperatives, the participants (women mainly) and their families.</li> <li>○</li> <li>● How has it improved the living life conditions of people living in your community?</li> <li>○ How might such initiatives improve the living conditions in other Palestinian rural areas?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Individual and Collective Relationship</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is the degree of improvement regarding individual relations between men and women in cooperatives / associations and in local councils, other associations, social structures in the communities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In other words, did women already participate in representative positions within the cooperative or in the community?</li> <li>○ If so, what role do they play in it?</li> <li>○ Are your contributions taken into consideration?</li> <li>○ Are they free to deal with problems faced by women in their groups / communities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Has the cooperative structure enabled women's participation in spaces of political representation, assemblies, associations, and women's clubs? Please explain.</li> <li>● Have women taken on representative roles in their place of work, with real possibilities to be part of decision-making processes? Please explain.</li> </ul> |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would be important work in networking between women's groups in rural and urban areas of the West Bank? How?</li> <li>● In your opinion, has the participation of women in the association reflected positively on their economic empowerment and their ability to participate in decision-making within and outside the family?</li> <li>● Have you noticed any development on the performance of the group/association as well as individual beneficiaries during the past two years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the reason for your view?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What do you see as the role of women in economic development within your community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you see any reason for changes to their current role? What would changes in their role mean for the community, family and individual women?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What do you think of the economic empowerment of women? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has the project contributed to and affected women's economic and social empowerment within your community as well as family?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Has the project contributed to any change in the society in which it is implemented? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At what level?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Do you have the good tools to control your income and expenses?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fair Trade</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is your understanding of Fair Trade in Palestine? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what degree do you believe consumer's know about fair trade in Palestine?</li> <li>○ What could be done to increase this awareness among consumers?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

**Annex 5: Quantitative Survey for Project Direct Beneficiaries**

| Demographic Data                |        |         |         |         |          |           |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 1. What is your name?           |        |         |         |         |          |           |
| 2. What is your age?            |        |         |         |         |          |           |
| 3. What is your gender?         | Male   |         |         | Female  |          |           |
| 4. What is your marital status? | Single | Engaged | Married | Widowed | Divorced | Separated |

|   |   |   |   |            |          |
|---|---|---|---|------------|----------|
| 5. What is your highest level of education?   | No formal education   | Basic school (up to 10 <sup>th</sup> grade)   | Secondary school                                      | Bachelor's | Master's |
| 6. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?   |   | 6a. relationship to the head of household: 1. Head of household<br>2- spouse 3- son/daughter 4- father/mother 5- other..... |   |            |          |
| 7. Where do you live?   | Faqu'a  | Al Jalama   | Meithalun   | Jaba'a     |          |
| 8. What is your relationship to the project?  | Member of a local cooperative; please choose one:<br>a) Women's Club Meithalun<br>b) Consumer's Association Faqu'a<br>c) Women's Club Al Jalama<br>d) Association of Credit and Saving Jaba'a |   |   |            |          |
| <b>Economic Indicators 2020</b>   |   |   |   |            |          |
|   |   | <b>a. value</b>   | <b>a. Trend/compared to 2019</b>                      |            |          |
| 9. What is your total monthly income, in NIS?   |   |   | <b>1-increased 2- the same<br/>3- decreased 4- NA</b> |            |          |
| 10. Who in your family earned this income?  |   |   |   |            |          |
| 11. How much money did you earn last season, from your cooperative project, in NIS?   |   |   | <b>1-increased 2- the same<br/>3- decreased 4- NA</b> |            |          |
| 12. What is the products types and the quantities did you sell last month through the cooperative? (for example ,the types are Zaatara, Freekeh,, Maftool, etc and the quantities are in Kg |   |   |   |            |          |
| 13. What income has the consumer cooperative obtained?  |   |   | <b>1-increased 2- the same<br/>3- decreased 4- NA</b> |            |          |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 14. What was your total income from the cooperative during 2020?                              |  | 1-increased 2- the same<br>3- decreased 4- NA |
| 15. What are your other sources of income (for family)?                                       |  |   |
| 16. How much money did you spend in the last month on <b>food</b> (for family) in NIS?        |  | 1-increased 2- the same<br>3- decreased 4- NA |
| 17. How much money did you spend in the last month on <b>basic needs</b> (for family) in NIS? |  | 1-increased 2- the same<br>3- decreased 4- NA |

### Decision-Making and Ownership of Assets Indicators

For each of the following statements, please choose the **main** family member that is responsible for the following decisions in your household:

| Decision   | Number | Family Member   |
|--|--------|---|
| 18. Whether or not you should earn an income               |        | 1) Me<br>2) My husband<br>3) My wife<br>4) Me and my spouse jointly<br>5) My mother<br>6) My father<br>7) Other |
| 19. What type of paid work you should do                   |        |   |
| 20. How the money you earn will be used                    |        |   |
| 21. Buy or sell an asset (such as land, car etc)           |        |   |
| 22. Major household purchases (such as a refrigerator)     |        |   |
| 23. Minor household purchases (such as food)               |        |   |
| 24. Healthcare for yourself                                |        |   |
| 25. Healthcare for other family members (such as children) |        |   |
| 26. Whether or not your children should go to school       |        |   |
| 27. Whether to take a formal loan or not                   |        |   |
| 28. How you spend your free time                           |        |   |

|  |                         |                                    |                                   |                            |                                      |                |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 29. The number of hours you can commit to working weekly                                       |                         |                                    |                                   |                            |                                      |                |
| 30. Do you have a formal bank account?   | Yes, in my name         | Yes, in my spouse's name           | Yes, jointly in both our names    | No                         |                                      |                |
| 29a. is the account opened after sharing in the project?                                       |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 31. Do you yourself operate the account, that is, sign checks, and deposit and withdraw money? |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 32. Do you have any money on your own?   |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 33. Can you alone decide how to use this money?  |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 34. Do you have any assets in your name?   |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 35. If yes, can you decide alone on what to do with the asset?                                 |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 36. Do you save money?   |                         |                                    | Yes                               | No                         |                                      |                |
| 37. How do you save?<br><i>Circle all that apply</i>   | Stash cash in the house | Informal / community savings group | Purchase of assets (stocks, gold) | Savings account at a bank  | Other                                |                |
| 38. How many days in the last month were you able to meet your family's food needs?            |                         |                                    | All                               | Half the days of the month | Less than half the days of the month |                |
| <b>Gender Equality Indicators</b>  |                         |                                    |                                   |                            |                                      |                |
| Please rate how much you agree with the following statements:                                  |                         |                                    |                                   |                            |                                      |                |
| 39. When a woman starts working, her husband should help more with household chores            |                         | Strongly disagree                  | Disagree                          | Neutral                    | Agree                                | Strongly Agree |

|   |  |                  |                  |                              |                |
|---|--|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 40. A woman should be responsible for taking care of her children, even if she works                        | Strongly disagree  | Disagree         | Neutral          | Agree                        | Strongly Agree |
| 41. A woman must complete all household chores, even if she works   | Strongly disagree  | Disagree         | Neutral          | Agree                        | Strongly Agree |
| 42. A woman should be able to work outside the home if she wants to   | Strongly disagree  | Disagree         | Neutral          | Agree                        | Strongly Agree |
| 43. When there are important decisions to be made in the family, the husband should make the final decision | Strongly disagree  | Disagree         | Neutral          | Agree                        | Strongly Agree |
| 44. Public institutions and the community as a whole should promote the fulfillment of women's rights?      | Strongly disagree  | Disagree         | Neutral          | Agree                        | Strongly Agree |
| <b>Capacity Development Indicators</b>  |  |                  |                  |                              |                |
| 45. Have you received any training related to your project from the cooperative?                            | No   | Yes, 1 – 3 times | Yes, 4 – 6 times | Yes, more than 6 times       |                |
| 46. What are your biggest needs in terms of improving your project? <i>Circle all that apply</i>            | a) Cooperative work<br>b) Feasibility study / business planning<br>c) Accounting<br>d) Cooperative administration<br>e) Marketing<br>f) Production<br>g) Quality<br>h) Storage<br>i) Governance<br>j) Gender issues<br>k) Other, please specify: _____ |                  |                  |                              |                |
| <b>Access to the Market Indicators</b>  |  |                  |                  |                              |                |
| 47. Who markets your products?  | Myself   | The Cooperative  |                  | Other, please specify: _____ |                |



|  |                |                                  |         |
|--|----------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| 48. Where do you market your products?   | In local fairs | In small shops in your community | Others: |
| 49. Do you think there is enough institutional support to market and sell Palestinian products?  | Yes            | No                               |         |
| 50. Has your group expanded its network of contacts and managed to close a commercial agreement? |                |                                  |         |
| 51. What is the added value of your product and why is it different from other products?         |                |                                  |         |