



External Evaluation

CASH FOR WORK PROJECT

Funded by
Disaster Emergency Committee

SUBMITTED TO
Islamic Relief Palestine (IRPAL)

SUBMITTED BY

Mahmoud Abdel Latif

Tel.: 00972 (0)8 2865010
Mobile: 00972 (0) 599329683
Email: mahlatif@yahoo.com

Mamoun Besaiso

Tel.: 00972 (0)8 2863073
Mobile: 00972 (0) 599272607
Email: mbesaiso@gmail.com

November 2009

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	3
Executive Summary.....	4
1. Project Description.....	6
2. Evaluation Objectives.....	7
3. Scope of Evaluation.....	7
4. Evaluation Methodology.....	8
5. Findings and Achievements.....	10
6. Key Evaluation Issues.....	13
7. Overall Project Assessment.....	16
8. Lessons Learned and Recommendations.....	28
9. Conclusion.....	30
10. Annexes.....	31
• Photo Gallery	
• Evaluation Questions Guide	
• Evaluation Work Plan	
• Worker Survey Questionnaire	
• Minutes of Meeting for Focus Groups	

List of Abbreviations

CFW	Cash for Work
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HAP-I	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership-International
IR	Islamic Relief
IRPAL	Islamic Relief - Palestine
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PRA	Participatory Rapid Assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the final external evaluation for the Cash for Work project funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee and implemented by Islamic Relief. The evaluation work was carried out by external consultants over a one month period starting October 20, 2009.

This project was initiated, designed, and implemented with the goal of improving the living conditions of the target breadwinners in Gaza strip and delivery of the following outputs:

- Providing 219 unemployed labour forces with temporary job opportunities for a 2 month period
- Alleviating the hardship conditions of about 1533 people and to access the beneficiaries from the basic need
- Enabling the municipalities to carry out the repair and maintenance of some facilities

This project is a response to the Gaza crisis. The social and economic infrastructure of Gaza sustained extensive physical damage. According to the Palestinian Authority, 4,036 housing units were destroyed and a further 11,514 were partially damaged, leaving tens of thousands of displaced persons. Government buildings, water, energy and communications infrastructure, educational establishments and hospitals all sustained significant damage.

The employment situation in Gaza went from bad to worse under the impact of the total blockade which has virtually strangled all regular economic activity. This was reflected in a steep increase in unemployment in Gaza, from 28.9 per cent to 44.8 per cent (16 percentage points). These numbers are likely to have increased even more following the military invasion of Gaza in January 2009. The employment rate (population aged 15 and over) declined further in Gaza to 21.4 per cent – equivalent to one person in five in that age group. Both rates are extremely low by international standards. Another measure of the scarcity of employment is the dependency ratio: on average, one employed person supports 8.8 persons in Gaza.

The aim of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the project in achieving the stated goal and objectives and to examine the extent to which the projects' inputs have been converted into outputs and results. In addition to extracting lessons learnt which can be taken into consideration in design of future similar projects.

The evaluation process used mixed methods including interviewing individuals, holding focus group discussions, conducting surveys and site visits to partner organizations and project sites.

KEY FINDINGS

Feedback from the focus groups, survey questionnaire and stakeholder interviews revealed that the project interventions have made an effective contribution to achieve project goals and objectives as follows.

- CFW project offered greater potential for increasing people’s access to essential living items and protecting livelihoods in immediate term. This has been explored with the current IR -CFW project in Gaza strip
- The project appeared to have a very positive impact on direct beneficiaries and community members as follows:
Households benefited from the injection of cash, particularly during the difficult situation nowadays in Gaza. Community members in project areas have also benefited from the creation of community and municipal assets that address specific community needs. Many of these assets comprise rehabilitation of roads and trees planting.
- Also, one of the most important aspects achieved in this project is that the CFW project interventions have supported the public infrastructure and enhancing the personnel skills of workers

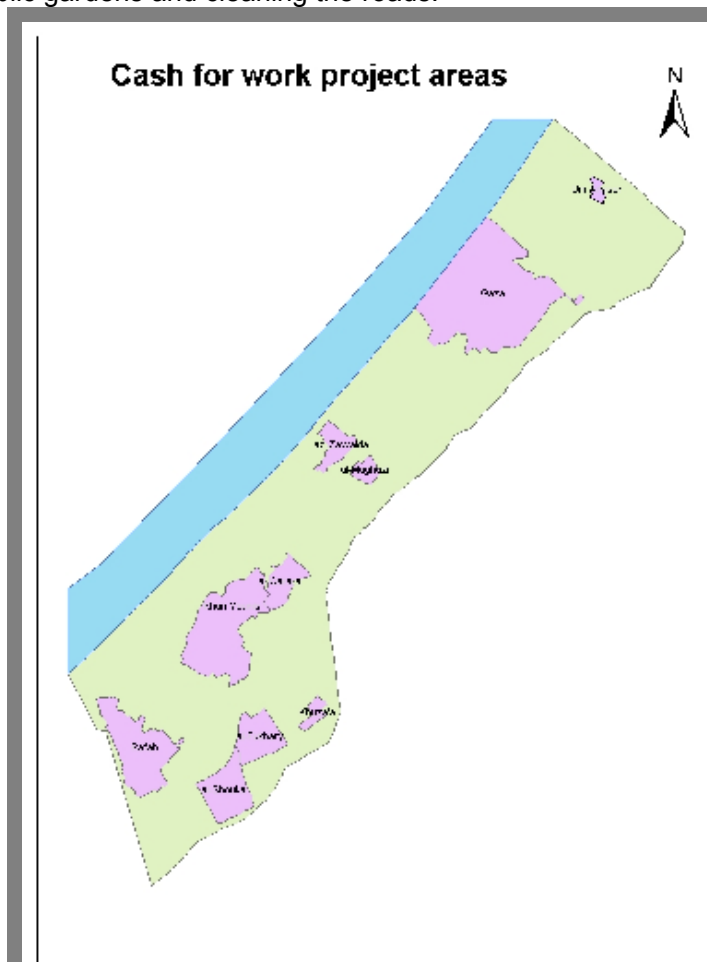
To conclude, the CFW project interventions have achieved the outputs satisfactorily in terms of generating provisional employment opportunities for short term period and injection of cash into the community through providing 219 in addition to improving the assets of community and public infrastructure by rehabilitation of roads (tiling and repair) and planting trees.

IRPAL was keen to ensure accountability in implementing this project based on international standards

1- PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In response to the severe economic situation, represented mainly in increasing the unemployment rate and to alleviate the poverty in Palestinian communities, IRPAL implemented the Cash for Work project funded by DEC to enable the breadwinner to access their basic needs by providing them temporary job opportunities and on the other hand to support municipalities and facilitate them to rehabilitate the small scale damages of their facilities.

The project was designed to provide 219 job opportunities, distributed over the five Gaza's governorates, targeting the skilled and unskilled labour force. It was implemented with nine municipalities, supporting the municipalities in carrying out some of renovation and rehabilitation of the public facilities such as repairing roads, planting public gardens and cleaning the roads.



2- EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

General Objective

- Identify and assess the achievements of the project in relation to stated objectives and expected results.

Specific Objectives

The main specific objectives are as follows:

- Assess the evaluation criteria, listed below, taking into account the assessment of the extent of the code of conduct, HAP-I, and sphere standard that has been respected and the level of the involvement and accountability to beneficiaries
- Assess the extent of ongoing 'real time' and past lesson learning to identify challenges, obstacles, and lessons learned in the project implementation as well as design, and make recommendations for use in future similar projects;
- Recommendations for future interventions in the same sector.

3- SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The basic elements of any project matrix comprise inputs, activities, outputs, purpose and goals. In other words input is provided, activities are undertaken, output is produced then evaluation is needed to assess the extent to which the project has succeeded in meeting its purpose and contribution towards achieving the project goal.

In particular, the goal of the cash for work project is improving the living conditions of the target breadwinners in the Gaza Strip; the scope of this evaluation includes project outputs and activities carried out under the lifespan of the project as follows:

1. Providing 219 unemployed labour forces with temporary job opportunities for two months.
2. Alleviating the hardship conditions of about 1533 people and to access the beneficiaries for their basic needs.
3. Enabling the municipalities to carry out the repair and maintenance of some facilities.

Other activities were taken into consideration in the evaluation process as:

- Beneficiary selection process
- Implementation and monitoring of job creation activities
- Payment wages to direct beneficiaries.

The specific focus of the End of Project evaluation was mainly on the following areas:

- Project utility/relevance:
- Project efficiency and effectiveness:
- Sustainability:
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E):
- Accountability to beneficiaries and quality standards

4-0 The evaluation methodology

One of the main evaluation purposes was to assess the impact of the CFW project on the beneficiaries and to bring about recommendations to further strengthen the sustainability of the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. To assess the impact of the CFW project on the beneficiaries, quantitative and qualitative (participatory) tools were used

The evaluation used mixed methods and instruments including documentation review, interviewing individuals, holding focus group discussions with beneficiaries and conducting one survey. The primary methods employed for the evaluation purposes included:

4.1 Project documentation review

The evaluators reviewed project documents as provided by IRPAL. These documents provide relevant information, as project proposal, implementation plans, progress reports, and key meetings over the life of the project. This extensive documentation provided an excellent basis for understanding the project, its processes and achieving outputs.

4.2 Interviews with key project actors

A set of guiding questions was prepared for interviews with project staff and municipalities' staff taking into consideration all inquiries which were based around the main questions in the ToR with additional probing questions added as needed. They included questions that address a peer review of the project. The evaluation team made every attempt to interview a wide range of project staff and municipalities' staff who played significant roles in the CFW project.

4.3 Focus group discussions

Qualitative data was obtained through a series of focus group discussions (three with workers and one for municipalities' staff). The purpose of the FGDs was threefold. Firstly, the FGDs aimed to place the people and their perceptions at the centre of the

evaluation giving them a chance to contribute to a definition of the project ‘success’ which goes beyond the pre-defined (log frame) objective and project goals. The second purpose was to gain a detailed insight into the economical and social impacts of the project on the beneficiaries and their direct environment. Thirdly, the FGDs aimed to get a qualitative insight into the views of the beneficiaries on the project’s design and implementation

Therefore, a set of guiding questions was prepared for many FGs meetings for different project stakeholders as workers and municipalities' staff. Inquiries were based around the main questions in the ToR with additional probing questions added as needed.

4.4 Survey questionnaire

Quantitative data was collected through a survey conducted by a questionnaire.

The evaluation team developed and pilot tested one questionnaire for direct project beneficiaries who already participate in project activities and receiving wages for two month period.

The survey instruments were developed in English and translated to Arabic, the questionnaire focused on the participation in CFW project activities and work environment, households expenditures and CFW payments

The questionnaires were distributed to 110 CFW participants from nine communities; a total of 98 participants completed the questionnaire and all of them used in final analysis

4.5 Sampling strategy

In general the evaluation covered all project areas by dividing the whole Gaza Strip area into five geographical locations, included nine concerned communities. Based upon the time and resources available, a sample size of 50% was chosen (confidence level is 95 %). With a population (n) of 219, the sample comes to 98 (43%). For survey questionnaire, the sample was selected through the method of systematic random sampling from CFW participant's lists. This is very vital to ensure a reasonable representation of different geographical locations, activity types and beneficiaries' age.

4.6 Data analysis

The Quantitative data related to questionnaire used in this evaluation were analyzed in the following steps:

1. The questionnaire responses were entered into pre-designed data templates.
2. The data was exported to statistical analysis software – Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for cleaning and eventual analysis. As part of the data cleaning process, consistency and validity checks were made; finally, using the SPSS software package data analysis was conducted.

4.7 Report writing

First a draft report was prepared which reflected the consulting team’s output including the survey findings, results and conclusions in addition to the report components specified in the ToR for the end of project evaluation. Secondly, a final report was presented after World Vision staff revised and commented on the draft report.

5- Findings and achievements

The goal of *this CFW* project was improving the living conditions of the target breadwinners in the Gaza Strip, through generating provisional employment rapidly and injects cash into the community

The findings presented below discuss if and how the objectives have either been achieved or not and how these contribute to the attainment of the goal and objectives of the project.

Achievements toward Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

The consultant believes that the project was designed hastily during the war. The performance indicators are not designed well. But, as far as the scope and duration of the project is limited, the set indicators are barely sufficient to monitor actual achievements against the plan. While the core performance indicator is to provide 219 temporary job opportunities, there are no specific and measurable indicators on how to enable municipalities to carry out maintenance work. This two month project is not expected to have a real sustainable impact on building the capacity of participating municipalities in maintaining public facilities. This explains why there was not any performance in indicator in this regard.

Goal : improving the living conditions of the target breadwinners in the Gaza Strip		
Objectives and Outputs	Targeted indicators	Actual output achievement
1. Providing 219 temporary job opportunities for workers for two months	219 unemployed person will benefit from temporary job opportunities for a 2 month period	219 temporary jobs from different governorates were created (Gaza, Khan Younis, Rafah, North and Middle) for a two month period
2. Alleviating the hardship conditions of targeted people and enable them to access basic living needs	1533 people will have access to the basic needs	More than 1600 people have access to the basic needs (based on 7.6 members per household on average) as calculated in a sample of surveyed beneficiaries (workers)
3. Enabling the municipalities to carry out the repair and maintenance of roads and planting the gardens	Repair and maintenance of some public facilities in 9 municipalities	One of the main project outputs was rehabilitation and repair of municipal infrastructure (roads) and gardens. Rehabilitation of roads including (interlock tiling and road painting) and cleaning

The following table details the actual achievements against the planned activities

Task	Planned	Actual
Labour Force		
• Employing labourers	219	219
Material Supplied		
• Agricultural tools	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
• Interlock tiles	\$10,000	640 m2
Field Work		
• Roads rehabilitation	6 main streets	640 m2 for 6 streets
• Painting	15 building	15 building
• Trees plantation	200 palm	160 palm
• Street (debris) cleaning	13 street	13 streets

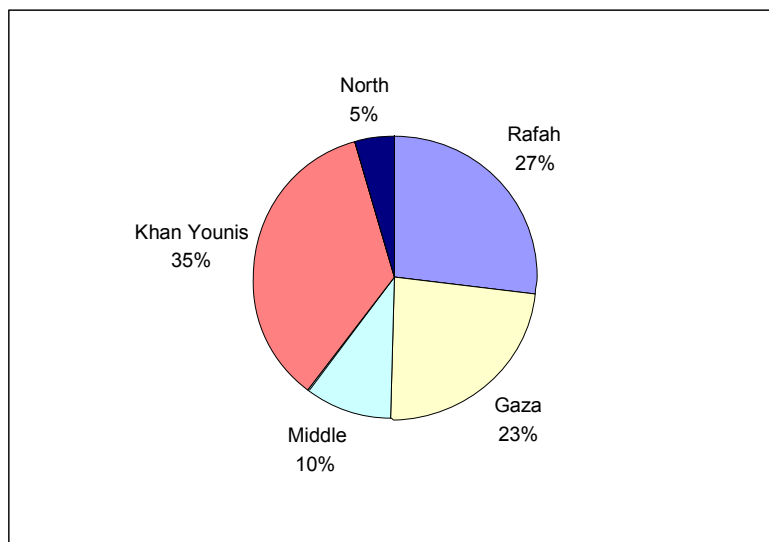
The project interventions covered 5 governorates (Gaza, North, Middle, Khan Younis and Rafah) and comprised providing temporary jobs for unemployed persons and rehabilitation of municipal assets which were concentrated for the benefit of large communities in Gaza, Khan Younis and Rafah.

The distribution of workers per geographical areas was as follows:

Distribution of workers per geographical areas (governorates)

Municipality	Governorate	Labour force/municipality	Labour force /governorate
Rafah	Rafah	46	59
Al – shokah		13	
Gaza	Gaza	51	51
Al-zawaidad	Middle	10	22
Al-Maghazi		12	
Khan Younis	Khan Younis	50	77
Khozaa		12	
Qararah		15	
Om-alnaser	North	10	10

The chart below shows the geographic distribution of workers who participated in project activities from all Gaza strip governorates, where 5% of workers were deployed in north, 23% were deployed in Gaza , 10% were deployed in Middle, 35% of them were deployed in Khan Younis and 27% of workers were deployed in Rafah.



As part of achieving project goal and objectives, Islamic Relief CFW project had creative and positive outcomes. The project has been identified as an effective and innovative model for other CFW projects, short term job opportunities were created for main beneficiaries and the products of those CFW activities were utilized by

community members as secondary beneficiaries through rehabilitation of public facilities.

6- Key evaluation issues

The evaluation has highlighted a number of key issues as follows:

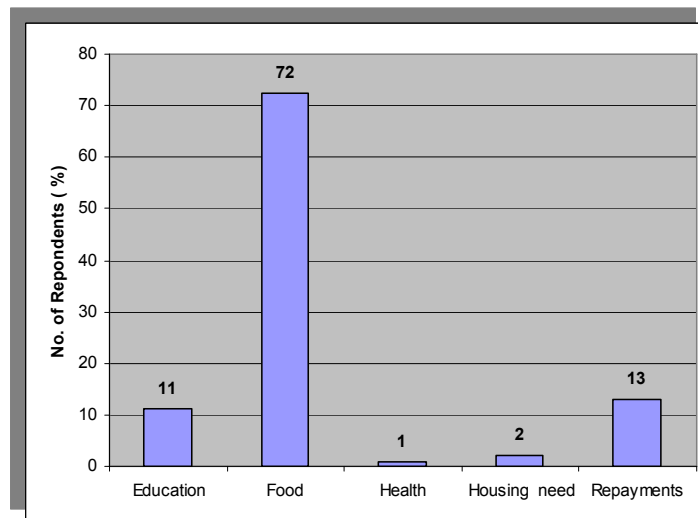
6.1 Project impact

In general, one of the key advantages of CFW project is providing households with a degree of choice with regard to their own spending priorities (flexible and fungible) which was achieved in addition to generating income for affected households (especially the vulnerable ones) to enable them to meet their basic needs; In this evaluation, the project impact was divided into different categories and levels as follows:

6.1.1 Beneficiaries (households) level

In this project the cash injection was appropriate and necessary response enabling beneficiaries to choose the means of their own livelihood recovery.

One of the available evidence from extracted information, that people do not use the money to purchase non-essential goods, and that it is spent on basic items that are needed to survive and protect livelihoods. This was clear in the result of survey conducted which indicated that the majority of participants used direct cash payments for purchasing food items (72 % of respondents). The second group indicated that the cash was gone towards repayment of loans but the third group in education expenses as shown in the figure below.



The duration of the project was calculated around a work time of 60 days to give sufficient income to make a reasonable contribution to household Income to some extent. The CFW beneficiaries felt that they can benefit more from a longer duration of work, but in general they felt that the duration was adequate for their immediate needs.

According to FGDs, the participants indicated that CFW income reported a positive change in both the quality of the food bought and the ability to purchase it. In addition, CFW beneficiaries explained that they gained further status within their community as a result of working on assets that were perceived to be of general benefit

“I heard one of the kids saying it’s the first time in a month that my father is coming home from the market, thinking he was gone shopping”.

Worker quoting his kid

6.1.2 Community level

CFW program contributed to community recovery by supporting municipal activities, among other outputs, the CFW project activities comprise rehabilitation of roads, cleaning street and planting trees.

The roads were reported to be of benefit to the community in terms of improving access to markets, schools and hospitals

The cash for work intervention was over a short period of two months. However, the impact on beneficiaries seems that it has gone beyond the project cycle. As mentioned above, the beneficiary household’s acquired certain assets such as create and improve community assets that benefited wider members in targeted communities

6.1.3 Local economy

The number of beneficiaries out of the total population was very small, but the CFW project has contributed in enhancing the local economy to some extent as other similar projects implemented by other agencies due to the cash component of the interventions which used in purchasing the basic needs of 219 households for a period of two months. The importance of project interventions to the local economy

is not known, but project interventions have a significant indirect impact on the local economy as follows: traders and producers of the items as raw materials, equipments and tools purchased by those working on the project are expected to have benefited indirectly.

6.2 Targeting of beneficiaries

The effective targeting of beneficiaries and communities was probably the most problematic part of carrying out the cash for work intervention. In general, the targeting worked well in terms of identifying the direct beneficiaries and the affected communities, the communities (municipalities) were selected due the fact that IR has implemented other similar projects in other communities funded by other donors, so the selection of municipalities was based in ensuring benefits for people who were not covered by these projects.

Another important aspect in the implementation of CFW project was targeting the direct beneficiaries. In this context, CFW project reached the most vulnerable and poor people through adopting the following steps as selection criteria:

- The project staff conducted orientation meetings to explain CFW project objectives, community needs and beneficiaries' selection criteria.
- Community leaders in cooperation with municipalities' staff nominated and defined a list of poor households as beneficiaries of CFW taken into consideration the following
 - Have five (5) or more dependants,
 - Are from unemployed households,
 - Do not receive or benefit from any other similar project during their engagement in the project,
 - Are living under the poverty line.
- The previous steps followed by crosschecking from Islamic Relief side in order to avoid duplication of beneficiaries participation in other projects implemented by other related agencies. Then the final one was prepared

In brief, the targeting criteria for selecting participants in this Cash for Work project was very clear and communicated to community leaders and local municipalities.

Based on survey results, the majority of surveyed participants indicated that they have five members or more in their households. This reflected the high application of selection mechanism used in this project and transparency

6.4 Household CFW income and expenditures

CFW provided an essential source of income for the majority of project participants and their households; CFW was the only source of income for a two month period following the Gaza war.

“Our children thought it’s a holiday season”.

Worker quoting his kid

The reported monthly household income from CFW project was 200 EURO. This cash was spent mainly on food items, loan repayments, and education based on the survey conducted. In addition, 62% of surveyed beneficiaries were satisfied with their wages and 38% were not satisfied.

6.5 The amount of cash distributed and payments

The project distributed 400 EURO over two month period for 219 beneficiaries. The wage rate was estimated due to the prevailing market rate for waged labour. Discussions with workers and households indicated that they agree with the wage rates to some extent but they expect this rate will be increased in similar future projects.

Wages were directly paid to beneficiaries in cash at the end of each month from specified banks, regarding delivery of cash. Timely delivery of wages was particularly difficult to some extent, due to constraints imposed on the local banks in Gaza strip by Israeli authorities resulted in the unavailability of cash. This caused some delay in receiving payments for few days, but eventually, the beneficiaries received their payments by IR coordination and efforts.

7 Overall project assessment

7.1 Project management

The project was managed by the Islamic Relief staff and supported by municipalities' related staff and community committees which met as needed. The project management team composed of project manager and project coordinator from Islamic Relief-Gaza office and field supervisors. The staff have proven experience in tackling this endeavour based on the institutional and individual experience in this regard. The field operations were mainly managed by the participating municipalities under higher supervision of IRPAL staff. This enhanced the partners' role in the project in making joint decisions with IRPAL.

7.2 Project monitoring and evaluation

A routine periodic monitoring was administrated by IR office and municipalities, which carried out to track project progress against planned tasks.

Based on project documents and project team interviews, IR has an adequate and effective M&E system in place as follows;

- Monthly regular monitoring reports using prepared templates which measure progress in project activities undertaken by the project team
- This evaluation report as end of project prepared by external consultant with coordination of IR
- The presence of workers is tracked on daily basis and documented to form a base for disbursing a monthly stipend
- The community has no role in monitoring the implementation of activities

7.3 Effectiveness

The project interventions have contributed to the improvements of the livelihood of 219 beneficiaries to respond their basic needs in nine different communities in Gaza Strip. In this context, it was found that there are positive changes on their life after receiving cash.

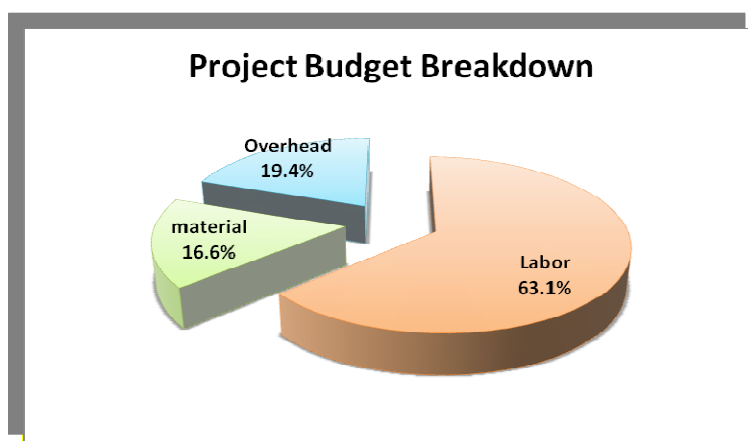
Many activities related to this project were carried out, among them rehabilitation of municipal assets as rehabilitation and cleaning of roads and tree planting, which have a core part in project activities.

Based on the evaluation findings, it was found project activities were effective for benefit of target community members. In addition It was observed that there is high satisfaction with the effectiveness of the project among the various parties and target groups

7.4 Project efficiency

The initial planned entire project budget has a value of Euros 129,929

The breakdown of the project budget is as follows:



Municipality	Materials EURO	Labour	Wages EURO	Total EURO	%
Gaza	7667	51	20,400.00	28,066.67	25%
Khan Younis	7667	50	20,000.00	27,666.67	25%
Rafah	7667	46	18,400.00	26,066.67	24%
Qarrara		15	6,000.00	6,000.00	5%
Shoka		13	5,200.00	5,200.00	5%
Maghazi		12	4,800.00	4,800.00	4%
Khozaa		12	4,800.00	4,800.00	4%
Zawayda		10	4,000.00	4,000.00	4%
Um Nasser		10	4,000.00	4,000.00	4%
				110,600.00	

Clearly most of project fund was spent to provide cash for workers which is the main objective of this project

Another measure is by looking at the cost of materials procured. Further analysis to construction of interlock tiles revealed that the efficiency in this task is much more than usual. Indeed, the purchasing price was as low as 63 NIS per square meter for used but in excellent condition based on engineering testing. Procuring interlock tiles at this price and quality was an excellent decision that doubled the efficiency compared to regular price in market.

The third factor in assessing efficiency is the workers' productivity compared to working hours and monthly wage. Workers earned Euro 200 against working average of 40 hours per week which was guaranteed by strict monitoring in the field, and more important is the motivation of workers improving its own neighbourhood. This was clearly reflected by dedication showed by workers.

Generally, the efficiency of the projects can be judged as very good. The inputs provided from the DEC side by Islamic Relief were generally appropriate in quality, quantity, timing, and implementations were satisfactory. Furthermore, the work in this project was carried out efficiently, in the sense that within the chosen strategy, the costs are reasonable.

The project efficiency findings can be summarized as follows:

- High level of satisfaction was found among various parties and target groups
- Good capacity of IR to mobilize projects of sizable budgets
- The level of management arrangements (delegation and control) varied among local partners
- Good M&E system was taken
- Good reporting system
- Good adjustment to external challenges during the implementation of the project
- Good synergy with other CFW projects
- Proper identification of beneficiaries and very good adherence to the selection methodology

7.5 Project relevancy

The goal and the objectives of the project are consistent with the national priorities especially in the current situation which aimed to improve the living conditions of needy Palestinian people in Gaza strip in particular after war, and meeting their basic needs, the project has high relevancy with respect to meet the needs of project beneficiaries. Project was mutually consistent with strategic plan of Islamic Relief Palestine and Disaster Emergency Committee strategy in Gaza Strip.

Furthermore, the project interventions were found relevant and well targeted. As well as the intervention strategies were adapted to the needs of the target groups and the means employed were found in the project are adequate and efficient and was fully adapted to the local conditions.

7.6 Project procurement

Islamic Relief has documented and well established procurement procedures for works, goods and services. The procurement manual clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of relevant staff and its authority in processing and approving financial transactions. Broadly speaking, IRPAL follows the standard procurement practices. While reviewing the procurement process for this project, it is found that procurement activities are limited to procurement of goods through competitive bidding. The consultant is comfortable with conformity to procurement standards. However, the consultant recommends having procurement plan for each project soon after signing the contract.

The participating municipalities has limited role in procuring goods; mainly preparing list of goods and its specifications and later participate in checking for conformity check before officially accepting the goods. Municipalities have the right to reject receiving any goods that do not comply with the predetermined specifications.

7.7 Project accountability

The basic aim in evaluating ‘accountability’ in humanitarian projects is to make sure that power granted by the project to all relevant stakeholders is used responsibly. Based on substantial evidences, the consultant is convinced that Islamic Relief at organizational and project level is adopting the relevant accountability international standards and enforced these standards.

In 2008, Islamic Relief was acknowledged as the best Palestinian institution in terms of performance excellence and won “Palestine International Award of Excellence & Creativity”.

7.7.1 Endorsing international accountability standards

Islamic Relief has endorsed the following three international standards:

- The Sphere Standards - Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
- The People in Aid Code of Good Practice.

7.7.2 Awareness of accountability standards

Islamic Relief management tier and project staff are aware of accountability requirements in such a project. This awareness is conveyed to project partners and to workers as well as tested by the consultant.

Islamic Relief has set of documented guidelines and code of conduct that continuously train the staff to adhere to these guidelines. Few months ago, Islamic Relief had an orientation session on these guidelines, attended by line managers and project coordinators aimed to ensure the adopting accountability standards and the value of adopting these standards at organizational and project level.

7.7.3 ACCOUNTABILITY BENCHMARKS

1. QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Islamic Relief at headquarter and branches is adopting and implementing set of quality management standards that cover 17 areas. Every year, Islamic Relief – Palestine review its compliance to these standards and report to the headquarter the lessons learnt, corrective actions, preventive actions and time-phased action plan for implementation. The staff is allowed to participate in this annual exercise.

2. TRANSPARENCY

The Islamic Relief maintained reasonable and acceptable level of transparency in managing the project and dealing with its partners.

Participating Municipalities

The participating municipalities ensured their satisfaction in this regard and they believed that Islamic Relief provided them with all needed information related to project and gave them adequate space for decision making.

Islamic Relief provided these municipalities with partnership guidelines. These municipalities are well aware of their roles, responsibilities, selection

criteria for sub-projects and workers, but they are not aware of selection criteria for municipalities, budget allocated to each municipality and management overhead charged by Islamic Relief as management fees to cover operations expenses. Consultant believes that this practice is fair and information provided is adequate

“Compared with other organizations on similar project, I rate overall experience with IRPAL as outstanding. IRPAL dealt with us as true partners. We know everything about the project. No information is hidden. We were the ones who made decisions on the ground. IRPAL team respected our role in the project.”

Mr. Montaser Shehada, Municipality of Gaza

Participating Workers

All workers are fully aware of working conditions, working hours, monthly payment and the role of municipalities and Islamic Relief project staff. The contractual relationship was directly between workers and Islamic Relief. Payments were processed through local banks. Workers are aware of the contract and the illiterate workers were acquainted of the contract content before signing it. Workers reported their satisfaction and reported no single case of power misuse, discrimination, ill-treatment, abuse, etc.

Generally speaking, workers appreciated the transparency measures taken by project staff

3. BENEFICIARY PARTICIPATION

The participating municipalities expressed their satisfaction with level of participation. Islamic Relief granted them adequate

“IRPAL showed high level of transparency in managing the project. IRPAL staff was so friendly and cooperative for the best interest of our citizens and workers”.

Mr. Hamza Mugat, Municipality of Gaza

power to participate in the project and to make technical decisions and participate in the project design and implementation. The field operation was basically done by municipalities with higher supervision from Islamic Relief project staff.

Islamic Relief provided its partners with all needed documents which includes, but is not limited to partnership guidelines, project documents and forms.

4. STAFF COMPETENCIES

The project staff are hired through standard and transparent recruitment process which is handled by Human Resources Department in a professional way to ensure hiring competent staff. All Islamic Relief staff are subjected to continuous capacity improvement through participation in training, workshops, seminars, etc. The training budget for the year 2008 was Euro16,500 . All Islamic Relief staff are subject to an annual appraisal to measure their performance and make needed actions. Project staff are aware of ‘Accountability’ concept and measures needed to ensure accountability in their projects.

5. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

There is no documented system of complaints handling. However, all complaints are taken care of seriously either by participating municipalities and/or Islamic Relief staff. Complaints of workers are mainly conveyed orally as there is no predesigned form to capture the complaints. Most of complaints were related to unavailability of cash in local banks

Islamic Relief shall establish and document complaints handling procedures which clearly state:

- The right of beneficiaries and other specified stakeholders to file a complaint
- The purpose, parameters and limitations of the procedure
- The procedure for submitting complaints
- The steps taken in processing complaints
- Confidentiality and non-retaliation policy for complainants
- The process for safe referral of complaints that the agency is not equipped to handle
- The right to receive a response

Moreover, a monitoring system will ensure that all complaints are handled as per the established procedures.

6. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Islamic Relief adopted continuous improvement policy at all levels. This is very clear through annual review of management guidelines, annual staff appraisal, annual training program, etc. The Islamic Relief staff are very open for suggestions and criticism with the aim to improve performance

7. COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Islamic Relief maintained continuous coordination with relevant humanitarian organizations. It regularly participates in cluster meetings led by UNRWA. On the other hand, it coordinates with other organizations to avoid duplication of works and to ensure that workers are not working on other projects concurrently with IRPAL's project

8. COMMITTING TO ETHICAL FUND-RAISING PRACTICES

Islamic Relief established a positive image among various international organizations. It adopts and adheres to “code of conduct” as a must follow document.

9. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Islamic Relief procures goods, works and services based on competitive bidding relying on local resources, keeping in mind, the emergency nature of the projects that needs quick but efficient supply procedures.

7.8 Project sustainability

This is a short-term fast track project aimed at solving immediate problems and achieving immediate results. However, sustainability is an issue achieved as follows:

- Workers got new skills that will improve their opportunity in finding jobs after the project. Many workers reported that they learnt tiling and tree plantation for the first time
- Many workers, who excelled in their work, got hired on other projects for a longer period

“This project helps building skills of workers. Workers consider this project as an opportunity beyond the two months duration. At personal level and after project completion, I recommended the best workers to other organizations to work on similar project.”

Mr. Mohammad Al Jadba

- The psycho-social aspect of this project will last beyond the project duration. Workers will have better social position among their families. As caring and responsible head-of-household
- The tiling and trees planting works have longer and sustainable impact if, and only if, participating municipalities provided periodic maintenance

7.9 Following the humanitarian standards

In response to the changing nature of humanitarian context stemming from the growth and diversity in responders, certain norms have been standardised through tools such as the Sphere Handbook and IR Code of Conduct. To ensure the accountability and transparency of the cash grant projects, humanitarian standards were consulted and adhered to by IR.

Prior to starting this project, a review of all the available standards and codes was conducted to ensure adherence to the appropriate norms. This review was followed by cross-checking and matching of the humanitarian standards and the codes with the objectives and the processes of this project.

The heart of this cash grant project lay in the two core believes of the Sphere Standard:

- That all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict.
- That those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance.

The table below provides further information on how the project adhered to the humanitarian standards

General humanitarian principles	Project adherence to the humanitarian standards
Humanity: Overarching principle of assistance based on humanitarian needs.	The 219 beneficiaries of needy people were provided cash money to meet the basic needs of their households

<p>Impartiality: Non-discrimination in regards to religion, gender, age, ethnicity etc</p>	<p>Thus, this project demonstrated humanity and impartiality by reaching out to the poor people who needed support to improve their livelihood</p> <p>This project was open to poor people irrespective of any other aspects</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security standard income and employment 	<p>Income generation and employment were created and, people have access to appropriate income-earning opportunities, which generate fair remuneration and contribute towards food security.</p>
<p>Code of Conduct for Islamic Relief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to life with dignity • The right to humanitarian assistance • Accountability, development and empowerment 	<p>This project helped many poor people to preserve and improve their traditional livelihood.</p> <p>The project were designed to empower local communities and people to the maximum extent by providing them cash money and repair of community assets.</p> <p>The basic needs of more than 1600 people in terms of their livelihood were improved.</p> <p>The project team developed various controls mechanism and tools to remain accountable to both the donors and the beneficiaries</p> <p>The project respected the dignity of poor people: by providing cash, the beneficiaries were given the opportunity to identify and meet their needs themselves. There was maximum freedom of choice on how to use it.</p>

7.10 Gender balance

This project is designed in the first place to provide temporary jobs for head of households. This explains why it is male dominated project. Employing females was not appropriate as all project field activities need male-workers like, roads rehabilitation, tiling, streets cleaning, debris removal, trees plantation, etc.

The consultant believes that there was an opportunity, although slim, in recruiting females to take care of some co-ordinating functions at Islamic Relief and participating municipalities. Females’ participation could be enhanced if the project during design phase paid more attention to gender sensitivity. Many activities are appropriate for women and could be included in such “Cash for Work” project.

Other than this project, Islamic Relief had implemented many other similar projects that realized gender balance as detailed below:

Project Name	Donor	Beneficiaries	Duration	% Female
Job Creation for unemployed workers in Gaza Strip	Sida	700	Sept. 2008 – Feb. 2009	40%
Cash for Work for unemployed workers in damaged areas of the Gaza Strip	Sida	560	March 2009 – August 2009	21%
Cash for Work in Gaza	DFID	575	Sept. 2009 – Dec. 2009	35%
Job Creation program for affected people in the Gaza Strip (Cash for Work)	Islamic Relief – Deutschland	325	Sept. 2009 – Dec. 2009	36%

Currently, many projects are aimed at empowering females by providing them with training and employment opportunities. Islamic Relief is addressing this issue in a separate project called “*Graduated Women Empowerment*” targeting 150 females.

8- Recommendations and lessons learned

Recommendations for future similar projects include:

- Expanding the coverage and beneficiary numbers by increasing the size of targeted beneficiaries and covering other communities.
- Extending the project period up to 6 months, this give the beneficiaries the chance of improving their livelihood for a longer term.
- Increasing the project activities type such as maintenance of schools or work in hospitals or paint the walls or the sidewalk.

- The wage level for CFW should be carefully decided in relation to the prevailing labour market. Every effort should be made to coordinate these decisions with other agencies and with local authorities
- Maintain coherence of projects with IR strategies, national development priorities and donor's strategies while meeting the needs of target beneficiaries
- Updating needs assessment to reflect economic and social situation for CFW future project
- Consider an increase in wages based on market prices in future CFW project
- Consider targeting several groups of beneficiaries (such as male and female workers and graduates) and consider increasing support provided
- It is important to stress that a strong dialogue with communities has been instrumental to the project success
- Give the opportunity for women and disabled persons to participate in cash employment in proper type of work activities
- IRPAL to seek an official certification on accountability from HAP-I or other organizations
- The agency shall establish and implement complaints handling procedures that are effective, accessible and safe for intended beneficiaries, disaster-affected communities, agency staff, humanitarian partners and other specified bodies and make sure that all complaints are handled according to the established procedures.

The overall lessons learned are concluded as follows:

- The project implementation mechanism and the management were effective and efficient and should be enforced
- Focusing on the family size and family income as a main selection criteria
- There is a need for reinforcing and maintaining the effective management model adopted in this project through strengthening the network of local partners
- There was high level of satisfaction among all project stakeholders
- IR has adequate capacity to mobilize projects of sizable budgets
- There is a differentiated level of management arrangements (delegation and control) with local partners

- IR has adequately applied adjustment to external challenges during the implementation of the project at the types of activities as results of the availability of raw materials
- Cash for Work projects appear to offer significant advantages over food projects and are worth continuing
- Workers can learn new skills and upgrade their knowledge of works in CFW projects as interlock tiling and planting trees
- There is a need for utilizing the lessons learned in this project and further develop the monitoring, evaluation and reporting system at Islamic Relief Palestine particularly in the context of emergency projects
- There is a need for participation of women in future CFW projects
- There is a need for maintaining the high level of satisfaction and expectations of the target beneficiaries.
- IR has adequate capacity to mobilize projects of sizable budgets
- Distributing money rather than food enabled households to choose how to spend the cash whether on food or on non food items depending on their needs
- Reasonable synergy with other CFW projects

Although the project is over, I feel connected to the palm trees I planted in my neighborhood. Continuously, I am taking care of the trees when needed, although I am not paid for that. The project has strengthened a sense of responsibility and dedication to our community.”

Abu Mohammed, Worker

9- Conclusion

The CFW project was successful in generating 219 temporary jobs for a two month period of work among poor groups, leading to improve their livelihood for short term period. The program was very effective in rehabilitation of municipal infrastructures. The impact of the CFW program was manifold, with direct support to beneficiaries and with recovery of the community assets as a whole.

CFW clearly had a positive impact as follows:

- short-term improvements in livelihoods for 219 households
- employment generation for those able and willing to work
- an injection of cash into cash-poor economies
- benefits from the use of local resources in CFW projects
- the targeted communities also benefited from project output

In addition to the above mentioned points, IR has implemented the project with a very adequate effectiveness and achievement of stated objectives.

- IR has very adequately identified the project beneficiaries and adhered to the selection methodology
- IR has very adequately utilized outputs of various project activities. This has been identified as an effective and innovative model for other CFW projects
- IR has an adequate M&E and reporting system
- Paying for food and necessities is the main channel for workers' wages expenditure, followed by education and repayments of loans

The target groups were very appreciative of the role of IR and DEC for their valuable efforts towards satisfying their needs.