

Save the Children and the European Union launch a project to fight Child Labour in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Save the Children with the support of the European Union (EU) launched a three-year project to fight child labour in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT). This project, which began at the start of the year with a total budget of 720,000 Euros, will tackle the issue of child labour in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The project works at the national and local level and engages the government, private sector, communities and schools to achieve its main aim of reducing child labour in the OPT. At the national level, the project will support the Palestinian Authority to develop and strengthen its policies related to child labour and school drop-out. A sub-sector of the existing national Child Protection Network led by the Ministry of Social Affairs will be developed specifically to fight the related phenomena of child labour and early school drop-out.

At the local level, working across communities through different community-based organizations, the project will target caregivers through an awareness-raising program on child labour in the formal and informal sectors, and the social and legal consequences. In addition, awareness-raising to promote children's right to education will focus on communities and the education system in particular in an effort to reduce the number of school drop outs and to re-integrate those children who were engaged in child labour. In the schools, the project will work to establish training and other systems to strengthen the provision of counseling, remedial education and vocational training opportunities for children who were engaged in child labour.

Lastly, the project promotes corporate social responsibility and mobilizes employers as a means to eliminate child labour. Small businesses and the informal sector will be targeted with awareness-raising activities on the social and legal ramifications of employing children and an introduction to the national system to combat labour. And, working with the private sector including the Chambers of Commerce, Workers' Unions and Syndicates the project will also work to ensure a safe and protective environment for children engaged in the labour market.

Save the Children UK Country Director, Ms. Salam Kanaan, highlights the role of the organization by saying: ***“our role is to support and empower youth and children to claim their rights and to ensure that duty-bearers take seriously their responsibility to provide for these rights. Accordingly, we in Save the Children are working through this project to help the children as well as the responsible bodies to fight child labour in the OPT.”***

It is envisioned that 16,000 children aged 10-17 years will be reached through this project as will 600 families and community representatives. In addition, 100 school social workers and teachers, and another 100 members of the Chambers of Commerce, Workers' Unions and Syndicates will be reached. Those children at highest risk of dropping out of school to engage in the labour market are the direct beneficiaries who stand to gain the most from the project.

In partnership with Save the Children UK, Save the Children Italy designed this project with key Palestinian Ministries and national agencies to address the root causes behind the phenomenon of child labour. The project will be implemented in partnership with the concerned Ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior/Police, in addition to local NGOs Defence for Children International (DCI) – Palestine Section, Democracy and Worker's Rights Center, El Amal Rehabilitation Society, El Wedad Society for Community Rehabilitation, Teacher Creativity Center and Arab Counseling Center for Education.

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