



# **Administrative Report**

**2014**

**Establishment:**

The Arab Center for Agricultural Development “ACAD” was established in 1988 as a project under name of the United Agricultural Company in Jericho and Ramallah. The project aimed to build the economic capacities of small farmers who were facing risks of collapse during the Palestinian First Intifada by offering them in-kind finance. The project primarily targeted the agricultural lands in the Jordan Valley and later on expanded to include the Central West Bank and Nablus in the North West Bank.

In 1993, the project was institutionalized by transforming it into a developmental organization registered as a non-governmental non-profit organization in Jerusalem under the name of the Arab Center for Agricultural Development (ACAD) as a center specialized in financing small enterprises. The Center has identified its broad objectives, which focused on developing the agricultural sector and provision of assistance to small farmers through financing, marketing and technical support.

**Objectives:**

- To empower and build the capacities of farmers and cooperatives so as to improve their productivity and economic situation and defend their individual and collective rights.
- To contribute to improving the Palestinian food security and preservation of environment.
- To contribute to providing emergency and relief support for farmers and develop affected and “C” areas.
- To work on ACAD’s sustainability and develop its programs in service of the agricultural and rural sector.

**Mission:**

ACAD is a developmental non-governmental organization that contributes to the development of the agricultural rural sector through building partnerships based on complementarity, professionalism and involvement of target groups including marginalized farmers and rural people especially women and youth. ACAD supports initiatives that encourage generation of job opportunities, capacity building and development of the agricultural and productive infrastructure and facilitates access to finance opportunities to establish small size enterprises.

**Vision:**

ACAD is a Palestinian civil developmental pioneer model that contributes to building an effective rural and agricultural community relying on its own capacities, identifying its future by itself and living with dignity in the democratic independent State of Palestine.

**Our Values:**

Justice, transparency, devotion and dedication to work

**Board of Directors Members:**

Engineer Joudeh al-Jamal – Chairman of Board of Directors

Mr. Haseeb Nashashibi – Deputy Chairman

Mr. Sameer Barghouthi – Treasurer

Mr. amjad Al-Masri – Secretary

Ms Haneen Zeidan – Member

Ms Randa Abed Rabbo – Member

Mr. Saed Nashashibi – Member

**Administrative Staff:**

Mr. Khalil Al-Khatib – Executive Manager.

Mr. Issa Shatleh – Programs Manager.

Mr. Muhsen Abu Ramadan – Gaza Branch Manager.

## **Introduction:**

In 2014, ACAD witnessed a significant leap forward and substantial change in its work. In that year and after the issuance of a new law by the Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA) that organizes and identifies the work of lending institutions within the framework of specialized institutions belonging to the PMA and necessitates the separation of financing and lending activities from developmental work and activities, ACAD established ACAD Finance to be specialized in the financial and financing aspect.

Since the beginning of 2014, ACAD actively embarked on separating the tasks of ACAD Finance from ACAD the NGO taking into consideration that separation should not affect progress of work. The separation procedures were culminated with several agreements between ACAD Finance and ACAD the NGO including: ACAD management of ACAD Finance portfolio in Gaza Strip, services agreement, cooperation agreement that contributed to strengthening performance and achievement of the objectives identified by the Boards of Directors and implemented by the executive administrations.

Believing in the distinguished role that may be played by both ACAD the NGO and ACAD finance in achieving together the developmental activities, ACAD NGO owns 56% of ACAD Finance shares, which makes it the biggest shareholder in ACAD Finance.

In 2014, the economic activity in Palestine considerably deteriorated and which in turn was reflected on all aspects of life. The Israeli military aggression on Gaza Strip in summer 2014, which has lasted for 51 days, negatively impacted ACAD's activities, created a great challenge for ACAD's work and impeded its developmental activities, not to mention the deep negative impacts sustained by Gaza Strip in particular and the Palestinian society in general.

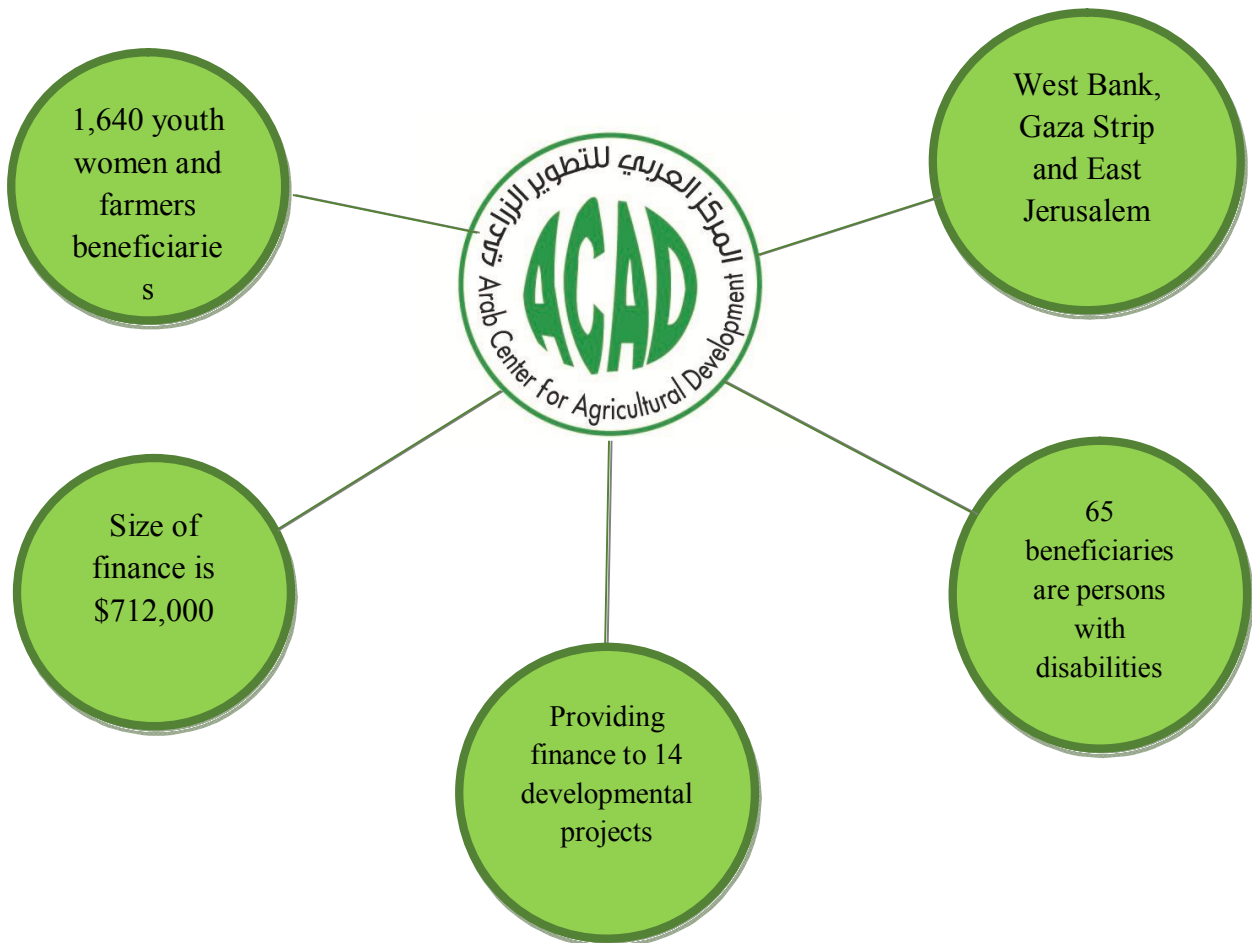
ACAD coped with the economic crisis and the reflections of the Israeli aggression's impacts by setting up emergency plans. Nevertheless, the challenges created real difficulties to ACAD as they weakened the financing sources and were reflected on its activities and developmental projects.

In 2014, ACAD's activities focused on emergency and support projects, empowerment of pioneer women and rural families. During that year, ACAD implemented 14 developmental projects. These projects were geographically distributed on the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem of which 1640 persons from the youth, women and farmers benefitted including 55 persons with disabilities benefitted. The size of these projects financing amounted to more than \$712 thousand.

After separation between ACAD NGO and ACAD Finance, ACAD confined its work in developmental activity and supporting of poor and marginalized households, especially

women in the Palestinian rural areas. This resulted in reducing the number of employees in ACAD NGO by 50% and due to our belief in gender equality, the number of staff is equally distributed between males and females.

ACAD NGO also worked on promoting its relationships with partners and beneficiaries. Meanwhile, trust and credibility with donors and concerned governmental parties enhanced.



## Programs and Projects

During 2014, ACAD built new work relationships and professional partnerships with local, regional and international organizations working in the field of development. Moreover, ACAD's sustainability increased by raising funds allocated for the implementation of its programs and projects.

In this aspect, partnerships with international solidarity and developmental organizations were noticeable and ACAD carried an emblem stating "partnership and Solidarity for a Better Life for Palestinians". Through the support of these organizations, funds were raised for the implementation of ACAD's activities, exchange and solidarity visits and participation in cooperation conferences between Palestine and other countries.

Most important projects and activities implemented by ACAD during 2014 include:

### **1. Rehabilitation of Ein Arora Spring in Bani Zaid Al-Sharqieh in Ramallah governorate:**

This project was designed and implemented in partnership with the Palestinian Hydrology Group and Bani Zaid Al-Sharqieh Municipality, each according to its specialization in the field of infrastructure projects and capacity building. This project was financed by the Palestinian French Friendship Society in Besancon French city and some of its French partner organizations at an amount of 37 thousand Euros. This project worked on the rehabilitation of the spring so as to show its heritage as an important historical place in the village, taking into consideration environment preservation standards. On the other hand and most importantly, the project contributed to increasing quantity of water storage by building a ground cistern of capacity 170 cubic meter of which a large number of neighboring households benefit. It is worth noting the number of beneficiaries increased from 30 households to 75 households in addition to other two schools located in the vicinity of the rehabilitated spring.

### **2. Promotion of the Socio-economic Situation of Underprivileged Households Project – Phases 1 and 2, DEEP Project:**

This project is funded by DEEP (UNDP), the Islamic Bank for Development and Qatar Charitable Society. Phase one of this project, which was funded by \$34,050, targeted 45 households in areas of Tobas, Jenin and Nablus by providing training and guidance for them in addition to grants of \$6,000 for each household to implement small income generating projects. This project aimed to improve the economic circumstances of beneficiaries and give them financial independence instead of

relying on the financial assistance they used to receive from the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs.

Phase Two of this project (\$261,462) was funded by the UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. This project targeted 35 households in five villages south west of Nablus city.

By the end of 2014, an agreement was signed for the implementation of phase three of the project with an amount of \$480,540 to serve six villages in south Nablus area. This project targeted 50 women of economic and social hardships in addition to pioneer women having ideas and proposals for productive projects that they may implement in their areas of living and have the potential to contribute to the local economic movement.

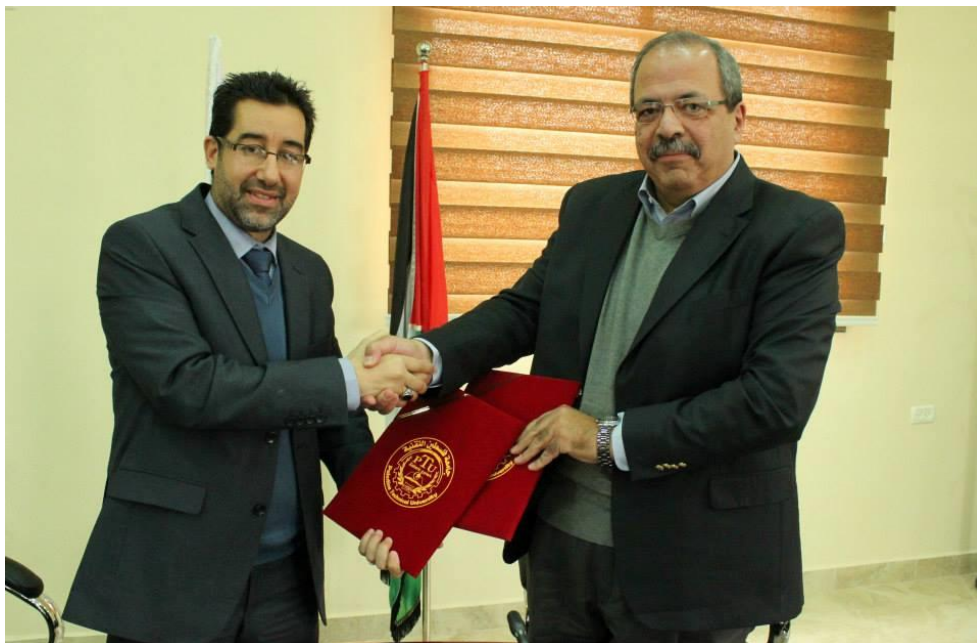


### 3. Youth Entrepreneurship Project (YEP):

This is a project implemented by ACAD throughout all areas of the West Bank in cooperation with the French Foundation “Planet Finance” funded by the European Union. YEP targets graduates and newly graduate male and female young people.

Since its inception in February 2013, the project targeted 550 young males and females willing to enter the labor market or develop their productive and services projects, if they have projects. ACAD works on the implementation of this project in full partnership with ACAD Finance in such a manner that each of them offers its services for the target groups in accordance with each specialization (financial and non-financial services).

This project targets graduates and newly graduates male and female young people and others of age group 18-30 years from several Palestinian areas willing to invest in their own economic enterprises. The project works on building youth capacities and provides them with financial and non-financial services in the area of how to start or develop your project. Moreover, the project organizes field, study and training visits for the target groups so as to get acquainted with models of successful small and medium enterprises in several locations and to encourage them to involve in the labor market due to the lack of job opportunities in the governmental, private or civil sectors. The project signed three agreements with Palestinian universities and colleges: Palestine Technical University – Khadoori, Palestine Technical College – Al-Aroob and Fashion and Fabrics Institute in Beit Sahour. The project also implemented training courses and provided loans for starting new developmental projects. It is worth noting that by the end of 2014, the number of the beneficiaries amounted to 281 young males and females and 81 loans were granted for 81 productive and services projects in the agricultural, industrial, trade and services sectors. The project will continue until the end of 2015 so as to achieve its full objectives.





#### **4. Planting of a million Olive Tree in Palestine Project:**

During 2014, 7,000 olive trees were planted in 18 areas distributed throughout the West Bank of which around 82 farmers whose lands are located in the tangency areas and in the vicinity of the Separation Wall and settlements. This project was funded by French and Swiss organizations and implemented by Abad Al-shams society and Al-Hakourah Farm due to the fact that they have groups of young volunteers, who contributed to planting trees with the beneficiary farmers and assisted them so as to preserve their lands from confiscation.



#### **5. Supporting Youth Economic and Social Orientations in Beit Sira town in Ramallah Governorate:**

With support from Montreuil Municipality located in Paris area, a partnership agreement of an amount of \$36,500 was signed between ACAD and Beit Sira Municipality and the French-Palestinian Decentralized Cooperation Network as the support and sponsor party of the project. The project aimed to provide development services and to create job opportunities for youth and women in Beit Sira. It also sought to provide services that contribute to local development of the town through optimal utilization of available resources including human, natural and financial resources.

The project implemented a number of activities most important of which is establishment of “Savings and Credit” program for 17 female beneficiaries, who

succeeded in saving good amounts of money and offering internal credits for the participants to implement or develop productive or social activities. The project also established a students services center that provides services for all schools and universities students. The services included provision of students needs such as stationery, school supplies, printing papers, computers for scientific research in addition to a library rich with books, references and novels for all levels and groups of the town.

Moreover and within the project activities, ACAD opened a grocery run by Beit Sira Cooperative in which 21 women are members. The grocery serves all the cooperative members in addition to a large number of the town residents due to its distinction and quality of its goods and its competitive prices. The grocery also markets and sells the products of the village women such as honey, hams, pickles, zaatar, cheese, etc.

#### **6. Persons with disabilities support Project:**

In partnership with Bethlehem Arab society for Rehabilitation and ACAD Finance, a number of training courses were implemented under “Build your Business” of which 65 persons with physical disabilities benefitted in 2014. At the end of these courses, work plans and feasibility studies were prepared for their proposed projects and good loans (without interests) were provided for them. To ensure success of their enterprises, ACAD continuously follows up their work through monthly visits to provide them with technical and economic guidance.

#### **7. Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Women and Children in East Jerusalem Project:**

In September 2014, ACAD signed an agreement to implement a project to advance the rights of vulnerable women and children in East Jerusalem. The three-year project is managed by Heinrich Boll foundation and funded by the EU with an amount of 504000 Euros. The project will target three women groups (180 women) within the framework of three base organizations in East Jerusalem: The African Community Society Jerusalem, Burj Al Luq Luq Community Center and Society and the Domari Society of Gypsies. This project will provide the target groups with capacity building, psychological counseling, vocational training and will create part time job opportunities for minimum 60 women of low income families.



## **8. A Local Network to Support Farmers' Rights:**

Within the strategic framework with the Norwegian People Assistance Program (NPA), ACAD, for the second year, implemented several relevant events and activities. For example, ACAD conducted training for 15 farmers (10 males and 5 females) on concepts of voluntary work, social communication and democracy, participation and human rights principles. After training, the pioneer farmers conducted 30 workshops on related subjects, which targeted farmers from different geographical areas. Through the participation of the pioneer farmers, ACAD organized three campaigns: A campaign to support the national products and promote the farmers' role in the BDS (Boycott, divestment and Sanctions), the olive cooking campaign, and a campaign to establish a fund for the defense of farmers' rights.

## **9. Building ACAD's Capacities Support Project:**

This project was funded by the French organization CCFD with an amount of 8,000 Euros. Through this project, ACAD re-reviewed and developed its strategic plan for the period 2015-2017 with the participation of ACAD's Board of directors and the executive Administration employees. A part of the grant will be used to construct a webpage for ACAD.

#### **10. An Emergency Relief Project:**

Following the Israeli military brutal aggression against Gaza Strip, which has continued for 51 days and targeted, in addition to humans, several economic and productive sectors foremost of which is the agricultural sector, ACAD implemented an emergency relief project funded by NPA with an amount \$67 thousand. This project, which was implemented in Central Gaza Strip, aimed to assist farmers and provide them with water and rehabilitate the agricultural lands affected by the war.

#### **11. Construction of 70 Agricultural Pools in Central Gaza Strip:**

This project was implemented in partnership with the Japanese JICA at an amount of \$135 thousand. The project targeted 70 farmers with small acquisitions of greenhouses each of them is not exceeding three dunums in area. The project aimed to supply farmers with water and assist them to harvest rain water during winter in addition to reducing the high costs of water in favor of small farmers.





## Public Relations and Networking

### ❖ Public relations and Networking at the Local Level

ACAD built partnership relationships with a number of organizations working in the field of development. These relationships were represented in joint work based on specialization and professionalism in implementing joint activities that respond to beneficiaries needs including:

- Building partnership **with the Palestinian Water Training Institute “Palestinian Hydrology Group”** in the designing and implementation of Ein Arora spring located in Bani Zaid Al-Sharqieh town in Ramallah governorate.
- Building partnership with **Abad Al-Shams for Protection of Humans and Environment** to raise donations from the French and Swiss solidarity societies so as to plant olive trees in areas threatened with confiscation and those located in the vicinity of settlements and the Separation Wall.
- Signing a partnership and cooperation agreements with each of: **Palestine Technical University – Khadoori, Palestine Technical College – Al-Aroob and Fashion and Fabrics Institute in Beit Sahour** to implement training programs in the field of “How to Start Your Project”.
- Building partnership with **Al-Hakorah Farm in Irtah- Tulkarem** to use the farm in the implementation of training activities related to “Management of Agricultural Enterprises”.
- Building partnership with the **Rural Women Society and the Palestinian Youth Federation** to work together in partnership and complementary professionalism to provide joint projects in agricultural and rural development that particularly target women and youth.
- Building partnership with **Palestinian Agronomists Association** in the field of agricultural training and research that serve new agronomists in addition to providing advanced guidance services for farmers.
- ACAD maintained its membership in the Non-governmental Organizations Network in Gaza Strip, where the director of ACAD Gaza Branch chaired the Network Administrative Board.

## ❖ **Public Relations and International Networking**

During 2014, ACAD communicated with several international organizations operating in the field of agricultural and rural development. In this respect, ACAD built a number of solidarity and technical partnerships so as to provide better services for its beneficiaries. These partnerships are represented in the following:

- A partnership with the **Middle East Network for Just Peace** aiming to support the Palestinian people to acquire its legitimate rights in addition to financing a project for planting olive trees within the framework of “Planting One Million Olive Trees in Palestine”.
- Partnership with the **Palestinian –French Friendship Society**, which hosted 15 persons and introduced them to the most important activities of ACAD in addition to visiting marginalized areas and lands threatened with confiscation and exposed to the settlers’ harassments as well as those located close to the Separation Wall. The visit resulted in funding a project for rehabilitating Ein Arara in Ramallah governorate.
- Promoting partnership and cooperation with the **French ACTED** organization and raising funds for implementing joint projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Currently, ACTED is raising funds for a number of designed and proposed projects.
- Building a partnership relationship with **Dan Church Aid (DCA)** to implement a number of joint agricultural developmental projects with other partners (Bir Zeit University, ACTED and YMCA). Currently, they are raising funds for certain proposed projects.
- Membership in **Housing and Land Rights Network/ Habitat**, a coalition which includes tens of societies and organizations operating in the agricultural, relief and development field.
- Promoting the partnerships, which have been existing for a long time with a number of international organizations such as the **Catholic Committee Against Hunger for Development (CCFD)**, Palestinian French solidarity organizations and the Palestinian Belgium solidarity organizations.
- Participation in all the agricultural sector activities of **PNGO Network** in terms of formulating unified vision, influencing decision makers and attaching importance to the existence of a developmental and reconstruction plan for the agricultural

sector , which was considerably affected by occupation and successive aggressions on Gaza Strip.

- Organizing several events on national occasions, most important of which is the Land Day on 30 March, which was organized with tens of farmers and in coordination with baseline agricultural organizations in Beit Lahia. Also a conference was held marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In another move, ACAD organized a week for volunteering in each of Al-Qarara, Al-Breij and Beit Hanoun in Gaza Strip in participation with the pioneer farmers and in coordination with grassroots agricultural societies.



#### ❖ **Advocacy and Lobbying**

During 2014, ACAD actively participated in advocacy and lobbying campaigns, most importantly the campaign for boycotting all types of the Israeli products, foremost of which the agricultural products and inputs of agricultural production that have national alternatives. Actions of advocacy and lobbying concentrated on Gaza Strip where a number of programs and projects were implemented to organize farmers and raise their awareness to act collectively and demand their legal and legitimate rights.



#### ❖ Participation in Conferences and Events Locally and Abroad

ACAD participated in a number of conferences and events locally and abroad, most important of which are:

- Participation and offering financial contribution to the event held on the Lands Day “Bokjet Beit Sakaria” implemented in partnership with a number of partner organizations including the Non-governmental Development Center (NDC), YMCA, Riwaq, The Women’s Center for Legal Aid and counseling, Adel for Fair Trade and Department of Agriculture in Bethlehem.
- Participation in the Decentralized International Cooperation of Pays de la Loire held in Nantes in France in late May 2014 by an invitation from the province chairman. During the conference, ACAD’s representative gave a presentation about the Palestinian agricultural sector followed by a debate for two hours in which more than 500 persons participated.
- Participation in the International solidarity Conference of Rhone Alps Province held in Lyon in France in late June 2014 in which ACAD’s representative gave a full discussion on the general situation in the Jordan Valley (Al-Aghwar) and the most important problems and challenges which farmers and their families face and threaten their steadfastness.
- Participation in Sanabel Conference on Microfinance institutions and Networks in the Arab World held in Dubai in late September 2014.
- Participation in the regular meetings of the committee on “Youth Employment Sustainability” held in Alexandria in March 2014.



### List of projects implemented in 2014

Project name	Donor	Funds allocated for the project in 2014 in US\$
Toward a Local Network for the Support of Farmers' Rights/ 2012	NPA	3004.70
Toward a Local Network for the Support of Farmers' Rights/2013	NPA	1978.93
Economic empowerment of Poor households Program	DEEP	313161.42
Supporting Economic and Social Life in Beit Sakaria	NDC	18289.20
Youth Entrepreneur Project (YEP)	Planet Finance	32711.99
Beit Sira Project	Decentralized Cooperation Network	39192.20
Planting Olive Trees Project	French Cooperation	24933.77
Toward a Local Network for the Support of Farmers' Rights / 2014	NPA	59516.41
Empowerment of Pioneer Women	DEEP - SIDA	125729.38
Youth Employment Sustainability (YES)	Welfare	1800.00
Advancing the Rights of Vulnerable Women and Children in East Jerusalem Project	Heinrich Boll Foundation - EU	14078.67
Toward a Local Network for the Support of Farmers' Rights/ Emergency Relief	NPA	65244.00
Empower of Pioneer Women 2	DEEP - SIDA	11116.24
Rehabilitation of Ein Arora spring in Bani Zaid Al-Sharqieh	Palestinian French Friendship	
AFEF Project Administrative Costs	DEEP - AFEF	1741.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>712,507.58</b>

## Resources

### ❖ Human Resources

In 2014, a change took place on the number of ACAD's employees as a large part of the employees were transferred to ACAD Finance, especially the lending officers, branches directors, secretaries and some employees from the administration and financial departments. Meanwhile, new competent employees were hired on projects in the general administration and Nablus branch. The total number of employees became 26 distributed as follows:

- Three directors.
- 10 administrative employees.
- 13 projects employees.

### **Distribution of employees by education**

Two employees hold M.A. Degrees.

21 employees hold B.A. degrees.

Three employees hold Diploma and below.

### ❖ Training and Qualifying of Employees

Due to the changes made on ACAD's nature of work, the training courses in which the employees differed in accordance with the new tasks. For example, employees participated in trainings related to procurement and bids management, training of trainers on how to start new enterprises, English language and others.

### ❖ Physical Resources

In 2014, new developments occurred on the physical resources as a result of the separation between the lending activities and the development activities and in other words separation between ACAD the NGO and ACAD Finance. Currently, ACAD the NGO manages the development activities centrally through the main office in Ramallah and Gaza branch. As a result, the offices of ACAD NGO were dispensed with in favor of ACAD Finance. In Nablus, ACAD NGO uses ACAD Finance

premises to follow up its activities and projects in accordance with signed agreements between the two parties.

With regard to the assets that were transferred to ACAD Finance, they were considered as a contribution in ACAD Finance capital. Accordingly, the ownership of all liabilities and immovable assets of ACAD's main office and branches were transferred to ACAD Finance.

Also, a new headquarters was rented in Ramallah and shared by both ACAD Finance and ACAD NGO. The headquarters was newly equipped and furnished. As for Gaza Strip branch, the immovable assets were purchased through the Norwegian project.

**Developments on immovable assets in 2014 and adding the following assets**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Main Office</b>	<b>Gaza branch</b>	<b>Total in \$</b>
Furniture	15823.40	1110.74	<b>16934.14</b>
Office equipment and apparatuses	1046.54	3032.50	<b>4079.04</b>
Computer sets and related devices	4956.20	2380.00	<b>7336.20</b>
Finishing and qualifying the main headquarters	35462.85		<b>35462.85</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>57288.99</b>	<b>6523.24</b>	<b>63812.23</b>