

A Fresh Start for Gaza's Farmers



"A CARE International agricultural engineer coaches a Gaza farmer planting watermelon seedlings provided by CARE with funds from the DEC"

CARE is helping farmers in the Gaza Strip retake control of their lives with funds raised by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), a UK registered charity that acts as an umbrella for 13 humanitarian aid organizations, including CARE International.

The generosity of those private donors – ordinary people - who contributed to the DEC Gaza Crisis Appeal means that through this particular action, valued at about £200,000, 2,000 dunums (1 dunum = 1000 square meters) will be replanted with potatoes and watermelons. The anticipated harvest is 6,000 tons of food. 350 farmers and their families are benefiting from the restoration of their sustainable livelihoods, an estimated 2,800 people.

The three weeks of Operation Cast Lead hit Gaza's farmers hard. Crops and animals were destroyed. Green houses, wells, irrigation systems, and equipment were

damaged beyond repair, particularly since many of the materials required to repair or replace these things are unavailable in Gaza. Most important, farmers were left unable to capitalize the next planting because they were unable to harvest and sell the crops destroyed.

The Gaza Strip is already deeply food insecure with 88% of the population reliant on international food assistance. Therefore, the loss of food production for the Strip was not just a tragedy for impacted vulnerable farmers and their families.

CARE, supported by the DEC, has stepped in to capitalize poor farmers unable to stand up again without a helping hand with the provision of seedlings. Those little plants are a big deal in Gaza.