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**Palestine Economic Policy
Research Institute**



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Executive Summary

**Local Economic Development (LED)
for the State of Palestine
Economic mapping of Joret Amra**

July 2017

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Joret Amra

Target Area

The Joret Amra area is comprised of a number of villages including Haja, Kufr Laqef, Jensafout, Al-Funduq, Baqet Al-Hatab, Amateen, Faraata, Kufr Kadoum, Jet, and others and is surrounded by the four governorates of Qalqilya, Nablus, Tulkarem, and Salfeet. The infrastructure is relatively poor and needs extensive development.

Political Context

Administratively, the Joret Amra region is part of the Qalqilya governorate even though it was part of the Tulkarem governorate before the Palestinian government took control. The communities are represented by eight village councils, with Amateen and Faraata having one joint village council. As reported by the village councils, the total area is 89,900 dunams (or 8990 hectares), and the total population is estimated at 21,500 inhabitants. The strategic development plan for the Qalqilya governorate (2016-2022) includes several development projects targeting Joret Amra including: a property registration project (excluding Kufr Laqef), improved master urban plans for Kufr Kadoum and Kufr Laqef, a major water transport line, a central public transportation station, a sewage network in Jensafout, and a program to rehabilitate and improve connecting roads. However, the implementation of such projects faces numerous challenges due to reasons related to insufficient funding and weak financial contribution from the local communities as well as the Israeli occupation's control over most of the land and water resources.

The Qalqilya governorate has suffered immensely from the Israeli policies since the 1970s. Qalqilya is a frontier town, located on the border between Israel and the West Bank. There is a particular concentration of illegal Israeli settlements around Qalqilya and its villages. Not to mention the Barrier that is so dominant in the area, designed to 'protect' the Israeli settlers and to enforce strict segregation between the relatively privileged settlers and the local Palestinian population. Of the major illegal settlements in the Joret Amra area is the Karnei Shomron (settlement and town) that has been partially built on Palestinian land of Kufr Laqef, Jensafout, Haja, and Deir Istya; Immanuel (settlement and town) that has been built on land belonging to the villages of Amateen, Jensafout, and Deir Istya; Kedoumim (a settlement including the settler neighborhood of Maaleh Adumim, Givat Gelaad, Givat Hadeqel, Kadoumim Tsofon, and central Givat) that is built on land of the villages of Kufr Kadoum, Jet, and Quseen.

Economic Situation

The Joret Amra area boasts relatively active commercial and production enterprises working in the production of furniture, textiles, mattresses, and animal feed. Most of this production is located in the vicinity of Al-Funduq, Kufr Laqef, and Haja. The owners and employees are mostly from outside (from Hebron, Qalqilya governorate, Nablus, and Al-Faraa). The proximity of the area to the Green Line border with Israel (and hence the ease and relatively low cost of bringing in of raw materials and delivering the finished products to inside the Green Line) makes it attractive for investors to establish and operate such businesses, in addition to the fact that land is relatively inexpensive.

Most of the agricultural land in Joret Amra is cultivated with olive trees. Agriculture is considered the major source of income for about 10% of the households, while being a secondary source of income for some households. Agriculture in the area depends mainly on rain water as large quantities of water for irrigation are not available at low prices. Olives are the main crop that is produced, in addition to field crops used for local consumption or as animal feed. Many households have home gardens and produce small quantities of vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchini for home consumption. There are several livestock businesses in operation and numerous poultry farms that produce meat and eggs.

Joret Amra receives support from various international and development organizations, especially in the agriculture and infrastructure development domains. In the past years, organizations such as Oxfam, PARC, UNDP, Islamic Aid, and others have implemented many projects, including but not

limited to the construction of roads, rehabilitation of agricultural land, installation of solar panels for electricity generation, and construction of wells for water collection.

Development Needs

Of the most prominent problems related to infrastructure in Joret Amra is the lack of a sewage network as all the villages (with the exception of Haja) rely on cesspits that potentially contaminate ground water, in addition to incurring a high cost for emptying. One potential solution to the problem is the construction of a sewage network and wastewater treatment plant for all villages. Given the geographical location of the villages, and the distance between them, there is a possibility to build two networks: one for Amateen, Faraata, Kufr Kadoum, and Jet, and the other for Jensafout, Al-Funduq, Baqet Al-Hatab, Kufr Laqef, and Haja.

The continuous supply of water is a prerequisite for generating common positive spillover effects on the development of the agricultural, industrial, and services sectors in the local economy. There were preliminary studies assessing the feasibility of constructing a water pipeline to transport water from Jayyous village to the communities in Joret Amra, as well as constructing a water reservoir with a capacity of 5,000 cubic meters, provided that each of the village councils puts forward a contribution of USD 10,000. The implementation of such projects could benefit and serve all villages of Joret Amra, and will thus contribute to the development of agricultural activities there. There is an alternative project that is also being considered, including the construction of a water pipeline running from the city of Qalqilya to these villages as there is an oversupply of water in Qalqilya and the prices are relatively low (NIS 1 per cubic meter). In addition, the artesian wells in Qalqilya, whose operating licensing could be renewed, could provide another viable water source.

The villages of Amateen, Faraata, Haja, Jensafout, and Kufr Kadoum boast the presence of active grassroots organizations that are focused on social and economic development projects. They provide mostly cultural, social, sports, and training activities to the communities there and are credible agents of communal transformation and development. Unfortunately, the villages of Al-Funduq, Baqet Al-Hatab, and Jet lack any community-based organizations.

All villages of Joret Amra have at least one health clinic, with the exception of Al-Funduq and Kufr Laqef, which lack a governmental health clinic with permanent medical staff presence. People seeking health services have to travel to neighboring villages or cities.

Two other key economic infrastructure interventions are rehabilitating and paving agricultural roads to link villages in the area and establishing a crafts zone in the area in order to revive the area, taking into consideration the governorate's plans to establish an industrial zone north of Nabi Elias village.

Local Economic Development Forum

The Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) is fostering the decentralization of local development and is thus institutionalizing the establishment of a local economic development forum for Joret Amra as well as the establishment of a local economic development unit as an integral part of the organizational structure of the local government units (LGUs). The forum's role is planning and development at the local level as well as following up and making recommendations on the implementation of existing and future development projects. The forum is also responsible for overseeing the technical and professional work of the local economic development unit of either the joint services council or the joint village councils or municipalities in the targeted areas. The local economic development unit is mandated with an executive role with regards to the projects and plans that are recommended by the forum and the local government units. This is to make sure that the plans of the LGUs and the recommendations of the forum are streamlined. The local economic development unit is institutionalized as part of the joint services council or as part of the local government units' committee (in case there is no joint services council).

Joret Amra

