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26 May 2005]

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## PRESS RELEASE

### USAID INVESTS \$6 Million in Job Creation Schools and Municipal Buildings to be Renovated

HEBRON, West Bank – The American people Thursday invested an additional \$6 million into programs that will construct or renovate public buildings and playgrounds throughout the West Bank and Gaza while creating hundreds of jobs for local workers.

The expanded projects will be financed by the \$41 million rapid response fund set up by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to demonstrate American support for the democratically-elected Palestinian leadership.

The new projects fall under USAID's JOBS program, a multi-sector initiative that finances labor intensive activities aimed at developing and improving infrastructure and social services in the West Bank and Gaza. The JOBS program provides a two-fold benefit -- creating employment while providing tangible, long term benefits to communities.

The new funds will be used to broaden existing programs and to fund new projects currently being implemented for USAID by the Save the Children Federation, World Vision and the YMCA.

The \$2 million allocated to Save the Children will be used to renovate and expand at least 14 existing educational structures and six health and youth facilities in the most under-served communities in the West Bank and Gaza.

Those activities should generate some 24,000 labor intensive workdays of employment. Additional workdays will be created in neighboring factories because all construction materials will be purchased locally.

Some 7,000 persons will benefit from the upgraded facilities and an estimated 10,000 community members, including family members of the workers, will benefit from the generated income.



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Another \$2 million will be used to enlarge an employment-generating, rural development project run by World Vision and the MA'AN Development Center, a Palestinian non-governmental organization, in a cluster of West Bank villages. The project is already operating in nine villages and the new funds will be used to add another five villages in Salfit, Ramallah and Qalqiliya districts.

These projects included the construction and/or renovation of four schools, the building of a community center and the renovation of a youth facility. In addition, the program will provide more than 550 hours of vocational training to local youth.

The expanded program is expected to create more than 20,500 workdays in the targeted villages.

A third \$2 million grant, this one to the YMCA, will be used to create not only jobs but also educational and recreational facilities through construction work at youth centers and playgrounds – all with facilities to allow access to the disabled.

The project includes a component for after-school programs that will benefit 15,000 children.

The YMCA projects will benefit 10 municipalities and are expected to create a total of 24,300 workdays of employment, including 6,300 workdays needed for the construction of a multipurpose youth hall and outdoor recreational area at the YMCA Ramallah Sports and Recreational Center.

The American people have spent more than \$1.5 billion in the West Bank and Gaza to combat poverty, create jobs, improve education, build roads and water systems, construct and equip medical clinics, and promote good governance.