

# 2010 Conference Report Summary

BUILDING A GREEN PALESTINE, BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Ramallah | November 2010



## INTRODUCTION

The Green Building Conference "Building A Green Palestine: Building for The Future", funded by USAID, was held on November 8, 2010, bringing together over 320 community leaders, technical experts, students, academics, and professionals from the green building sector.

The conference was attended by national and international technical experts who presented a wide spectrum of topics and an audience from the public and private sector, civil society including academic and research institutions, the donor community and interested citizens. More than 320 people attended. It was held under the auspices of the Minister of Local Government who opened the conference and participated in sessions throughout the day. The USAID Mission Director spoke at the conference and presented prizes to children who participated in a drawing competition on the subject of environmental protection, as well as to engineering students who participated in a Green School design competition organized in conjunction with the conference.

CHF prioritizes the environment and the promotion of green building in the West Bank and globally. Recognizing the importance of the green building movement, this conference aimed at promoting general awareness on green and sustainable building, and highlighting recent activities in the Palestinian context. The Green Building Conference also served as a forum for information exchange among key stakeholders working in the sector, including government actors, the private sector, the development sector, and academia.

This report gives an overview of the speeches given at the conference and a summary of the key messages from the presentations and discussions.

## OPENING SPEECHES

**Dr. Khalid Qawasmi**, Minister of Local Government

**Mr. Jamil Matour**, Deputy Chairman of the Palestinian Environment Quality Authority

**Mr. Mohammad Abu Ajamyah**, Deputy Head of the Engineering Association



*"We at USAID believe that without environmentally friendly policies and construction technologies, the rapid urbanization in the West Bank and Gaza could be detrimental to the country's environment and local resources. In addition to showing the environmental benefits and social motivations of going green, we hope to showcase how eco-construction has a positive impact on local economies and human health."*  
Michael Harvey, USAID Mission Director for the West Bank and Gaza

## KEYNOTE SPEECH



## Architecture as a Sign of Peace: A Green School for a Green Future

**Mario Cucinella**

*Mario Cucinella Architects*

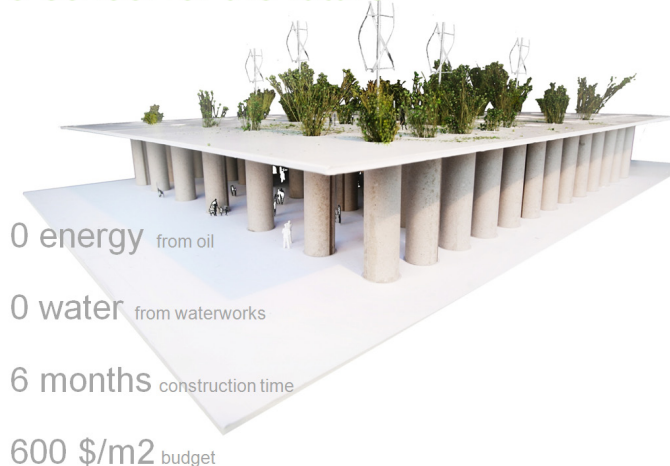
Mr. Cucinella presented an architectural proposal for a school to be built for the young people living in Palestinian refugee camps.

His proposal was developed based on the current economic and social conditions in the Palestinian territories and on the real needs of people in the refugee camps. The design relied on renewable and locally available resources (rainwater, solar and wind energy) instead of waterworks and energy grids. Mr. Cucinella explained that his design promotes the use of affordable and locally available materials as well as simple construction systems, minimizing the need for advanced and expensive technologies.

Mr. Cucinella's architectural concept was not only for a single building, but it would serve as a new way forward in design and construction practice in the Palestinian territories.



### a school for the future



*"Those of us who work in NGOs and are part of the civil society structure bear the responsibility of leading the way, working hand in hand with government, academia, and the private sector to demonstrate the benefits of green construction. While there are so many challenges to face, we cannot afford to ignore the issue of climate change today for we will all deal with the consequences tomorrow."*

**Lana Abu-Hijleh, Country Director, CHF International- West Bank and Gaza**



## PANEL SESSION

### Green Building Case Studies from the West Bank and Gaza



#### **Desert House Sustainable Dwelling: A Case Study in Jericho** **Hani Hassan**

*Hani Hassan Architects*

Mr. Hassan presented a design of a sustainable dwelling to be built in Jericho. He explained the sustainable green elements used in the design and the strategies he followed.

#### **Rawabi – Green Elements in the First Palestinian Planned City** **Amir Dajani**

*Bayti Real Estate Investment Company*

Mr. Dajani presented on the first Palestinian planned city highlighting the sustainable social and physical aspects of the design. He explained that Rawabi will incorporate building techniques that will support preserving water and the treatment of waste water in addition to using sustainable transportation.

#### **Sustainable Growth and Building Back Better in Gaza: Greener Houses, Greener Neighbourhoods** **Filiep Decorte**

*UN HABITAT*

Mr. Decorte provided a perspective, from the UN HABITAT experience, on sustainable growth and building back better in Gaza. He outlined the basic principles that should be followed to achieve sustainable development and to bridge the gap between humanitarian, early recovery and development.

#### **Geothermal Heating and Cooling in Palestine – Successes, Challenges, Potential** **Khaled Sabawi**

*MENA Geothermal*

Mr. Sabawi reflected on the work of his company in using geothermal technology to meet the energy requirements of Palestinians and environmental requirements of our planet. He explained the efficiency of this technology and how it will contribute to energy savings in comparison to conventional systems.

#### **Greener Pastures: Construction of Safeer Children's Centre Serving Askar camp** **Yaser Dweikat, Mariam Demyati**

*CHF International*

CHF staff engineers presented the green design elements in Safeer Children Centre. They argued that by applying green methods in construction, the building's energy consumption can be reduced up to 60%.

*"With the rapidly increasing world-wide energy demands and a dwindling world-wide energy supply, we are facing a crisis that if not resolved or at least mitigated, could surpass any political crisis this world has ever seen."*

**Khaled Sabawi**



## PANEL SESSION

### Toward Green Building Policies and Professional Capacity Building in the West Bank and Gaza



#### **Green Building Code for Palestine**

**Mutasim Baba**

*Engineering Association*

Dr. Baba presented the Engineering Association's plans to develop a green building code for Palestine. He explained the topics the code will cover and the steps that will be taken to bring this code into application.

#### **Approaches in Teaching Energy Efficiency in Green Building Design to the Next Generation of Engineers**

**Imad Ibrik**

*An Najah University*

Dr. Ibrik provided an analysis on how building designs can be optimized to reduce conventional energy demand. He also explored the potential for using on-site renewable energy systems to generate energy, and the effect of optimizing the energy performance of buildings within a specified comfort limit.

#### **Developing Support for Voluntary Green Building Standards**

**Mark McCord**

*USAID Jordan Economic Development Program - SABEQ*

Mr. McCord reflected on the SABEQ Program's experience in developing a Jordanian green building code. He argued that the establishment of such a code, promoted by empowered and informed business associations in collaboration with local, regional, and international stakeholders, can be an effective entry point to disseminating green building practices when combined with training, international certification and outreach.

#### **Training for Contractors and Designers on the Technique of Double-Skin Glass Facades**

**Bilal Abu Rayyan**

*Arabtech Jardaneh*

Mr. Abu Rayyan explained the double skin glass facade technology as a system of building envelopes that can improve the indoor climate, energy and comfort conditions. He provided a classification system of double skin facades that will help designers choose a suitable typology to enhance the performance of buildings.

#### **Exploring the Space Syntax Theory - Towards a Sustainable Housing Model**

**Shaden Qasem**

*Birzeit University*

Dr. Qasem explained the space syntax theory and how it can be used to understand the inhabitant-space relationship. She also highlighted how ultimately the space production and development is a social process by itself and how this new theory can assist in achieving housing sustainability.

*"In areas where the development of overall building codes and enforcement are nascent, creation of voluntary green building codes through and by a viable "champion" may be a way to create interest on behalf of government... private sector driven vs. public sector driven."*

**Mark McCord**





## PANEL SESSION

### The Costs and Benefits of Building Green

#### Achieving Cost Efficiency Through Solar Energy and Energy Conservation

**Afif Hasan**

*Birzeit University*

Dr. Hassan presented the use of solar energy in buildings for water heating and space heating through actual case studies and design cases. He also provided a comparison study on the economics of using solar energy vs. conventional energy.

#### The Economics of Green Buildings

**Mashour Arori**

*Envirotech Royal Company*

In his presentation Mr. Arori addressed the cost component of sustainable development compared to traditional development. He argued that going green will actually reduce buildings' capital cost.

#### Defining Priorities - Water Efficiency and the Cost Dilemma

**Badawi Qawasmi**

*Al-Reehan Real Estate Investment Company*

Mr. Qawasmi explained that Palestinians will need to start adopting water efficiency measures in new constructions to face the likely increase in water costs at a time when the number of people experiencing one form or another of water scarcity is also increasing.

#### Turning Trash into Cash: Solid Waste Recycling as a Component of Buildings

**Mohammad Hmeidi**

*Tadweer - Palestinian Recycling Company*

Mr. Hmeidi presented on how local government units can achieve cost savings through the construction of recycling units, solid waste management infrastructure, and use of wastewater treatment.

#### Towards A Green Palestine: Green Loan Program

**Fahd Abu Saymeh, Rula Rizik**

*Green Palestine - ARIJ*

The presenters introduced the Green Palestine Investment Company which provides loans to households to increase their ability to invest in energy and water efficient technologies.





## NEXT STEPS

The Green Building Conference was organized under the USAID-funded Emergency Jobs Program (EJP) which aims at creating short-term employment and revitalizing the local economy in the West Bank and Gaza through implementing labor intensive social infrastructure projects that create job opportunities while improving the quality of life for the communities.

In October 2010, the United States Agency for International Development awarded CHF International the Community Infrastructure Development Program (CID). A \$100 million program that will be implemented between 2011 and 2015, CID Program aims at improving the quality of life for the Palestinians in vulnerable communities through sustainable infrastructure packages.

Building on the momentum of the Green Building Conference, CHF International will continue working on adopting green initiatives and environmentally friendly measures in designing and implementing infrastructure and construction projects across the West Bank. Under the USAID-funded CID Program, CHF supports a green component that will continue facilitating and promoting green building techniques and approaches through incorporation of cost effective and easily implemented green building elements into all designs and projects. CHF will also support a series of Green Building Biennales and Workshops aiming at awareness building for local communities, the public sector, the private sector and local government units. Also, green awareness events will be organized yearly for schools, such as environmental drawing or science fair competitions to promote environmental stewardship.

In a special initiative, the CID Program with funding from USAID will pilot the first LEED certified building in the Palestinian territories and the eighth in the Arab World. CID Program will also construct three green projects in three locations in the West Bank. These buildings will benefit a broad segment of the population and will serve as models for future green construction initiatives demonstrating application of green techniques in various types of buildings.

Dr. Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority, authored an opinion piece in the Christian Science Monitor about the need for considering climate change in development in the Middle East. The piece was inspired by and references the green building conference. Article available at:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2010/1122/Palestinians-other-fight-in-the-Middle-East-for-green-development>

Conference Book of Abstracts available at:  
<http://www.chf-pal.org/etemplate.php?id=118>

### For Further Information:

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*\* The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government*

