

The Slow Progress of Rebuilding Gaza

Courtesy of The Danish Representative Office in Ramallah



The 51-day armed conflict between Israel and Hamas in 2014 left Gaza with damaged or destroyed roads, water supply, hospitals, and many buildings and other infrastructure. This made it difficult for the local population to build a normal life after the ceasefire in August 2014. With many public and private structures affected, the reconstruction of Gaza required a considerable amount of prioritising.

Rebuilding in the municipal sector

Within the municipal sector, the initiative for a response started with the “Rapid Assessment of Gaza Municipal Sector Damage,” produced by the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF), Gaza municipalities, and financing partners. The assessment revealed that not only had the conflict led to physical damages, it had affected the municipalities’ ability to sustain the provision of basic services. In order to speed up funding approval, additional financing was provided within an already existing cooperation program that focuses on municipal development. A total amount of EUR 15 million in grants was received from international donors, including Denmark. Taking into account the available funds, each municipality provided a list of projects and took charge of reconstruction in collaboration with MDLF. In total, 271 project proposals were received from the 25 municipalities. These projects covered the rebuilding of roads and other public facilities such as solid waste, wastewater, and potable water. With 242 projects completed, results are now emerging in several areas throughout Gaza.



Al Qubba Garden after the 51-day armed conflict. Photo by Mutazz Mohasien, manager, MDLF Gaza office.

Rebuilding Al Qubba Garden

One of the projects still under reconstruction is the public garden of Al Qubba in Shuja'iyya. This neighbourhood, one of the largest and oldest in eastern Gaza City, has limited social infrastructure such as playgrounds and gardens. Due to its proximity to the border, the entire neighborhood was greatly affected by the conflict.

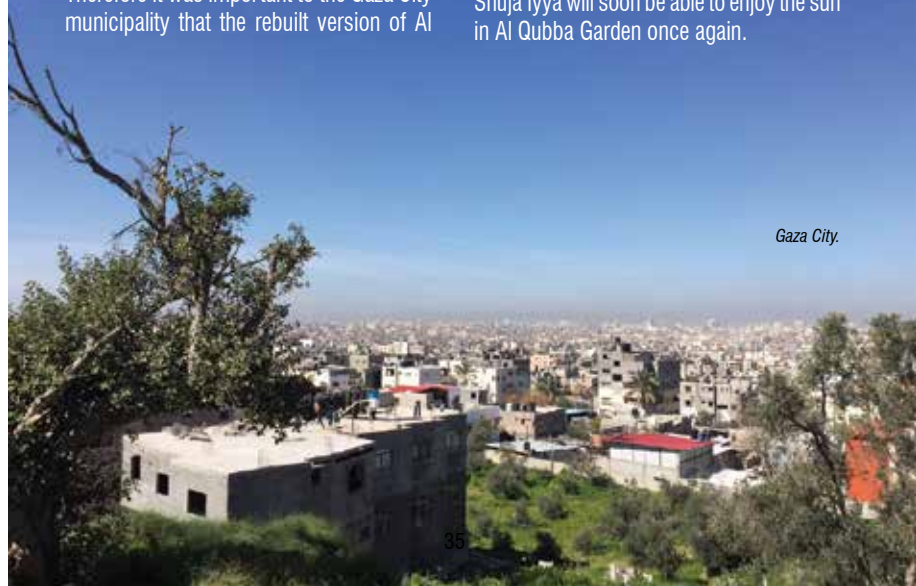
Al Qubba Garden was originally built in 2004 in collaboration with the French city of Dunkirk, as part of a twin-city program, and was the only large and modern garden in Shuja'iyya. However, it was severely damaged during the conflict. Before starting the reconstruction, some considerations had to be made. For instance, it was a key priority for the municipality of Gaza City to keep the original design of the garden instead of planning a new one. There are two reasons for this: first, the original design had proven to function well; and second, Al Qubba Garden represents the twin-city program between Gaza City and Dunkirk. Therefore it was important to the Gaza City municipality that the rebuilt version of Al

Qubba remain faithful to the original design as a symbol of international cooperation.

Everything in its own time

Al Qubba Garden is vital for the local society and an essential area in the neighborhood. For a population that lives under the crowded conditions in Gaza, recreational facilities are important venues that allow children to move and play, which also helps to alleviate stress and provide a free space for youngsters and adults alike. In comparison with other rebuilding projects in the area, both public and private, Al Qubba, while important, was not an area in need of immediate attention. For this reason, the rebuilding process required coordination and prioritization among a wide variety of projects. As the process of rebuilding more essential structures progressed, the time for reconstructing Al Qubba Garden had then arrived.

Rebuilding Gaza takes time and resources. But hopefully the Palestinians living in Shuja'iyya will soon be able to enjoy the sun in Al Qubba Garden once again.



Gaza City.