

# JOURNEY TO GAZA

## ■ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS

### THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

Jesus spent years working as a carpenter. Work is important to help people fulfill their potential. And everyone must receive a fair wage to provide for themselves and their families.

#### ENCOUNTER ONA

Ona always knew she wanted to be a “shining woman” in her community—and an example to her two young daughters. She studied hard and eventually earned her teaching degree from a university. But in Gaza, jobs are hard to find. Even though Ona had been a good student, she could not find work as a teacher.

“The financial situation was so difficult,” Ona says. “I started to feel hopeless.”

That’s why CRS matches workers with job opportunities. Through CRS, Ona applied for an internship as a teacher and was hired to teach math.

Ona knew she wanted to take full advantage of the opportunity. “I took time to ask questions and learn. I tried to better myself—and become a better teacher.”

Through her internship, Ona gained the confidence and inspiration to branch out on her own. She saved enough money to open a tutoring center. She now helps students of all ages with their math skills, as well as with other subjects. After one month in business, 41 children had visited her center.

“When people encourage you, you start to think in a more creative way,” Ona says.

As she thinks about the future, she thinks of her children. “I hope I can be an example to my daughters. I hope that my daughters can achieve their dreams.”



#### SHARE THE JOURNEY

Access to dignified work at a living wage allows people to remain with their families and strengthen their communities.

#### FACTS TO CONSIDER

**Population:** 1,795,183

**Size:** 360 square miles; slightly more than twice the size of Washington, D.C.

- For the last 10 years, there has been a blockade of Gaza’s borders preventing Gazans from finding better economic opportunities.
- Gaza’s unemployment rate of 41 percent is one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.
- CRS’ work in Gaza has included building transitional shelters, rehabilitating agricultural land, creating child-friendly spaces, distributing household survival kits, providing short-term work opportunities, distributing food and water and offering psychosocial support.



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