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QIF – Background

In 2005 The Palestinian National Authority through its Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) implemented a Tertiary Education Project with the support of the World Bank and participation of the European Union (EU) between 2005 and 2009. On July 2nd, 2012, the MOEHE received new financing from the World Bank in the amount of USD 6.5 million, under the project named “Education to Work Transition Project – E2WTP”. A major component of this Project was The Quality Improvement Funds (QIF). QIF is being administered by Projects Coordination Unit (PCU), branched out of the MOEHE. PCU includes small technical staff (QIF Team) that is accountable to a centralized Board representative from eleven qualified stakeholders representing the academia and the private sector as well. The project mainly aims at enhancing Palestinian youth’s transition from education to work through fostering the linkage between Tertiary Education Institutions “TEIs” and private sector employers.

A new allocation of USD 5 million-grant was approved on December 2, 2016 by the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors to support ongoing efforts to increase job opportunities for Palestinian graduates. The additional financing for the Education to Work Transition Project -E2WTP will focus on improving the employability of Palestinian students graduating from tertiary education institutions, thus improving their job prospects as well.

QIF will continue to manage the grants in a similar transparent and competitive manner to provide incentives to TEIs to develop and implement employment-oriented education programs in partnership with the private sector. TEIs have fostered their partnership with private sector employers through collaboratively designing curricula, updating teaching practices and providing practical training to students. It is expected that QIF will (i) increase the productive linkages between TEIs and businesses; (ii) promote social responsibility among the business community; and (iii) better prepare graduates to find and keep gainful employment.

At A Glance

The PCU has announced the completion of the evaluation phase of full applications submitted through Cycle III. In this phase, 14 different TEIs have submitted 20 applications in West Bank and Gaza; all received 20 applications were subject to technical evaluation by carefully selected external reviewers “Basically two reviewers for each application”.

However, 18 applications from 13 TEIs managed to successfully pass this phase.

Upon completion of the technical evaluation by the external reviewers, QIF Team has logistically processed all results to have it ready by the QIF Board who gathered to discuss the results in order to set up criteria for awarding, final decision was made by the Board to award a single grant for each applicant institute, this decision came in line with their policy to expand

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the pool of benefited TEIs from QIF grants. As a result “Initially” 13 projects will be granted to 13 institutes, “see table below” in which 5 TEIs are located in Gaza. The PCU team has officially notified the applicant institutes with the results and started conducting individual sessions of negotiations with each TEI’s representative and its partners prior to the signature of the grants contract agreements.

TEI Name	Region	Targeted Area	Degree Type
Islamic University of Gaza	Gaza	IT	BA
Polytechnic Palestine University	WB	Mechanical Engineering	Diploma
Modern University College	WB	Health Profession	Diploma
Najah National University	WB	Agriculture	BA
Quds University	WB	Health Profession	BA
Birzeit University	WB	Mechanical and Mechatronics	BA
Palestine Technical University/ Kadouri	WB	interdisciplinary	Diploma
University College of Applied Sciences	Gaza	GIS	Diploma
Palestine Ahliya University College	WB	IT and Business	BA
Palestine Technical College/ Arroub	WB	MEDIA	BA
Gaza Community College for Tourism Studies.	Gaza	IT	Diploma
University of Palestine	Gaza	Software Engineering	BA

TEI's Inspiring Stories



"Student Buddy" Application Built by Students from Al-Quds University...

Augmented Reality (AR) enhances one's current perception of reality, Aseel Imayyah and Ola Lahlouh, are two engineering students at Al-Quds University who launched their graduation project utilizing (AR) concepts by applying it on electrical components laboratory, supervised by Dr. Rushdi Hamamreh, targeting students from 2nd to 6th grades.

Naming it "Student Buddy" the two senior graduating students developed an application that helps school students get an access to the information they need rapidly and easily, as when students use any smart devices "such as mobile phones & tablets" then point them at the component, the application demonstrates a 3D object, texts and images for any component including resistors, capacitors, inductors, etc. This application helps documenting each circuit developed by students and makes the application updated. This will help them develop more experiments easily after identifying the component within seconds, now via using this application; time needed for learning becomes less and learning process is much easier and interesting.



The Palestinian Conference for Agricultural Education: A Successful Model of TEI's Collaboration...

Based on the successful partnership agreement between the University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS) and Al Azhar University (AZU) – Gaza, 'The Palestinian Conference for Agricultural Education – Applied Solutions for Sustainability' was successfully conducted between 23 and 24 May 2017.

"This conference mainly aimed to demonstrate the recent developments achieved within the agricultural programs at both AZU and UCAS as one of the most important outputs of QIF projects. Moreover, it encouraged and motivated researchers to contribute to the dissemination of research, experience and good practices in this field." Said Conference's Chairman.

The results of the conducted researches are expected to provide a wide spectrum of practical and sustainable solutions to the agriculture sector in Palestine. This event was a valuable opportunity for researchers to exchange their knowledge, present their innovative ideas to eventually improve the agricultural education strategies in Palestine

Follows, are the main outputs achieved throughout the 2-day conference:

- During seven scientific sessions, 44 scientific papers have been submitted by local researchers and other internationals from universities in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Germany. Those papers discussed some cutting-edge topics in plant & animal production, animal health, food processing technologies, soil & water and sustainable agricultural development. The final recommendations of the conference were published and shared with the agriculture-oriented governmental and non-governmental bodies.
- The private sector had a distinct presence reflected by the local agricultural companies and associations in addition to the project partners who showed their practical and applied expertise to conference audience.
- A local study tour was conducted on the second day of the conference, in which participants visited the practical education environment in UCAS, AZU and their local partners, granting them the opportunity to be acquainted with the modern applied technologies that presents solutions for the challenges facing the field of agriculture in Gaza.



A Study Tour to Open the Gate for Internship Opportunities Abroad...

As part of the effort to connect Palestinian students with various opportunities offered by the Institute of Hotel Administration at Bethlehem University (BU), a delegation from the institute travelled to Dubai to attend the Arab Travel Market where they established a contact with the regional Human Resource Manager of Marriott Hotels, aiming to accept graduates for long term training at their hotels in the United Arab Emirates.

The delegation additionally succeeded to sign an MOU with the Acting Chief Executive Officer of Tetra Hospitality; the owning company of around 80 hotels in UAE; to provide six-months professional training in luxury hotels to at least six students from BU in Dubai this summer.

The delegation also took the opportunity to visit the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management; a world known academy affiliated with Lausanne Hotel School in Switzerland, where they met the dean of the hotel school and had discussions about their course offerings, issues facing the hospitality industry and learned more about their experience in problem based learning methodology.



HHCT Enforces the Idea of Knowledge Transfer to Community...

The need for sharing knowledge between TEIs and industry was always a challenge and an objective that QIF works progressively on achieving throughout the implementation of its projects with the TEIs. This has been also realized by Hisham Hijjawi College of Technology which offered -under the frame of QIF project- a professional 40 hour training course in the area of Hybrid and Modern Electronic Vehicles Systems to local community service providers. The course title was; "Development of Auto Mechatronic Diploma Program".



Enforcing the concepts of knowledge transfer, this training which introduced basic and fundamental principles about this new automotive technology was conducted by faculty members of HHCT who had recently received an intensive training in this topic by international trainer from Germany. The training targeted 15 trainees from different stakeholders of the car maintenance industry, including some local business owners, partners companies and representatives from governmental bodies and syndicates.

Practice Tip

Step by Step for a Successful University-Industry Collaboration!

The following framework is a step by step framework for implementing collaborative projects which starts with the selection of the partners based on key evaluation factors. The process of implementing collaboration between university and industry continues with the steps that actualize university-industry collaboration. If these steps performed well, the framework will lead into mutual outcomes.

Partners Selection

- Mutual understanding.
- Compatibility culture.
- Complementary competencies.
- Collaborative experiences.
- Past Collaborative partners.
- Qualified staff.
- Clear agendas.

University-Industry Collaboration Steps

- Defining Parties' goals and responsibilities
- Planning project strategy with mutual agreement
- Creating comprehensive understanding of the project within the company and university
- Creating effective communication channels between universities and companies
- Interaction between universities and companies.
- Supporting the project until it can be exploited even after finishing.

Outcomes

Technology Transfer:

- Scientific Publications
- Technological inventions
- Patents intellectual
- Property rights.

Knowledge Transfer:

- Joint research projects
- Research contract and consultations
- Training
- Personal mobility.
- Informal interaction and social networking.

Guest Corner

Process of Engaging Employers with Academic Institutions

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In Palestine, the employer -whether it is a private company, business association, trade union, non-governmental organization or governmental body - plays a very minimal role in the build-up of universities' and colleges' academic curriculum. The lack of connectivity is a major weakness in building well trained skilled persons ready to drive the business and economy. True effective partnerships must be developed to ensure students acquire the right occupational skills needed for the market. There are several stages of engaging the employers with the academic institutions.

Here are the main four steps to create a sustainable productive partnership:

Step 1: Is for the collaborating parties to establish a national strategy for higher education in which various occupation standards are outlined for the various sectors of economy. Each academic institution must build its strategic mandate based on the national strategy.

Step 2: Is focused on meeting the various sectors' demand for skilled labour and building strong curriculum. Both faculty administrating the academic program and the potential employers need to be positively engaged in identifying the academic program occupational skills and how students are coached. The process starts in the very early stages of building

the academic or vocational program. An important step for effective engagement at this stage is to create a program advisory committee (PAC) for each academic or vocational program.

Step 3: Is to concentrate on building the institution policies including programs review rules and quality assurance standards. Whether the academic program is newly designed or upgraded as a result of the periodic reviewing process, delivery of courses is mutually sought by subject-matter experts with various levels of education and practical experiences. For quality assurance and for successful process of building or upgrading curriculum in any area of study, the program review process must consider the feedback of the employer as well as the comments resulting from the student perception of learning (SPL) surveys.

Step 4: Is to focus on building bridges and channels for sustainable collaboration between businesses and academics. Parties can work together in creating joint applied research and innovation centers. Here real life sector and businesses challenges are examined. Business innovative solutions are tested in academic environments tapping into the students' energy and talent to provide doable options to move the business forward.

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