

Quality Improvement Fund

This Newsletter is issued quarterly aiming at promoting results and outputs of the QIF projects

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Quality Improvement Fund "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 the Projects Coordination Unit (PCU), branched out of the MOEHE. The 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 – through additional two cycles - 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 MOEHE has announced signing formal agreements with 12 different TEIs that have successfully passed the full proposal phase under cycle 3 of the Quality Improvement Fund. This cycle, which valued as approximately USD 2 million over a round of three years, is targeting different programs at different levels; out of which 4 projects are located in Gaza. It is worth to mention that this cycle is promoting the partnership between TEIs themselves in addition to the partnerships with the employers from the private sector. However, a thirteenth project is expected to be approved and signed in the coming few weeks.
- As part of their continuous efforts to support the grantees, a delegation from the World Bank has implemented a visit to Palestine between 15 – 19 October. A set of meetings with different players was held, this included gathering all new projects with their partners in an introductory meeting, in addition to have a round table discussion with leading firms from the industry who were partners in previous grants and are continuing in this cycle. It is also worth to mention that the delegation has informed his excellency Dr. Sabri Saidam about their satisfaction with the performance of all projects funded by the World Bank and implemented by the PCU – MOEHE, moreover, they referred to the Quality Improvement Fund - Palestine as the top ranked project in the MENA region.
- With the exception of two projects, it is official to report that all projects under cycle 2 have either closed or in the reporting phase, the remaining two projects will conclude by the end of this year.
- An external consultant is currently carrying out an evaluation for all 20 projects that were implemented under both cycles 1 & 2. The results of this evaluation are expected to be disseminated and shared in a national workshop with the presence of all benefitted TEIs by the end of year 2017.



Cycle 3 New Projects

Institution: University of Palestine (UOP) – Gaza	Targeted Programs: Software Engineering (BA)
Project Title: Bridging the Skills Gap of the Software Engineering Students at the University of Palestine to Enhance International ICT Exports.	
Private Sector Partners: Unit One Group	

This project aims to bridge the skills gap and increase the employability of graduates during their middle and last years of education for the international ICT market by providing professional training on various subjects marked as essential by the private sector. During the implementation period of the project, the TEI will work progressively to develop a strong and thriving relation between the University of Palestine and the ICT private sector to create a platform of opportunities for income generation, creating business entrepreneurship and enhance teaching practices and methodologies.

Institution: Palestine Ahliya University College (PAUC)	Targeted Programs: Management Information System (BA)
Project Title: Upgrading the PAUC MIS Bachelor Degree Program	
Private Sector Partners: PALTEL and Talal Abu Ghazaleh Organization (TAG)	

The primary aim of this project is to upgrade the PAUC Management Information System (MIS) program and to raise the caliber of its graduates enabling them to smoothly transit into the labor market. The project will also feature a model of collaboration between PAUC and its partners; in which each party provides valuable know-how in their specific areas of expertise. This academia-industry partnership, will work directly with MIS students by providing real cases to be solved in the established Living Lab which will be the driving force to innovation as well as an anchor to PAUC's plans for outreach and social responsibility.

Institution: Birzeit University (BZU)	Targeted Programs: Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronic Engineering (BA)
Project Title: Enhanced Employment of Mechanical Engineering Graduates through Partnership with Industry and Private Sector	
Private Sector Partners: Engineering Association, Royal Company, United Motors Trade Company	

This project aims to bridge the growing supply-demand skills gap and to tackle the problem of lack of job-readiness of mechanical and mechatronics engineering students and recent graduates entering the various Palestinian and international market sectors. Through this project a platform and communication channels will be established between the university and private sector. This platform will ensure an active role of private sector in curricula modification and updates to be in line with job requirements. Through this project, curricula will be upgraded with active participation of the private sector, practical training of students will be modified to maximize the experience gained during this training, training supervision and evaluation will be revised and included in the practical training manual to be adopted by the programs.

Institution: University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS)- Gaza	Project Title: GIS For Community
Private Sector Partners: Al Banna Engineering Company	
Targeted Programs: Geographic Information System "GIS" (Diploma)	

This project aims at developing a comprehensive work based program in GIS specialty, which is an application oriented program through a set of improvement endeavors targeting all components of the program; curriculum, staff, students and infrastructure. The project also aims, in full collaboration with the private sector partners, to establish a well-equipped GIS Community and Training Center (GCTC) which will serve as a hub for innovation and research with the industry.

Institution: Modern University College (MUC)	Targeted Programs: Nursing (Diploma)
Project Title: Developing and Enhancing the Quality of Practical Nursing Program in Palestine	
TEIs Partners: Ina'ash Alusra College, Haja Andaleeb Al-Amad College for Nursing and Midwifery, Al- Rawdah Technical Community College	
Private Sector Partners: Istishari Arab Hospital – Ramallah, Arab Care Specialized Hospital – Al-Bireh, Arab Women Union Society Hospital – Nablus, Nablus Specialty Hospital - Nablus	

This project aims at improving and developing Practical Nursing Diploma Programs in four colleges in Palestine to become responsive to labor market needs and international standards, through leverage quality of healthcare presented to the Palestinian population. Students, teaching staff, private sector mentors, and institutions will all be influenced by the implementation of this project. It is an integrated effort that is based on partnership of four nursing colleges in cooperation and collaboration with four private sector hospitals to develop the curriculum, training methods, laboratory competences, and Work Based Learning components.

Institution: Islamic University of Gaza (IUG)	Targeted Programs: Information Technology (BA)
Project Title: Developing the Competencies of IT Graduates to Integrate into Freelancing and Software Outsourcing	
Private Sector Partners: PITA, PICTI, EUTD	

This project aims to build capacity in freelancing through a comprehensive plan that targets academic staff, students, unemployed graduates, and the local ICT companies in full collaboration with the private sector and professional institutes in Europe. The project also aims to increase job opportunities for IT graduates through academic and practical qualification in freelancing and promoting the software outsourcing sector to become one of the sustainable branches of the Palestinian economy.

Institution: An-Najah National University (NNU)	Targeted Programs: Agricultural (BA)
Project Title: Transforming Agriculture Curriculum and Training Practices- TACT	
Private Sector Partners: Khaizaran Palestine Fresh Herbs (AGRIPAL), Palestine Poultry Company (AZIZA), Aljunaidy Group for Agricultural Supplies	

This project is designed to improve the learning and training opportunities for Agriculture students by gradually moving towards more experiential learning approach. Its main goal is to develop a well- structured education model for agriculture program in collaboration with agri-businesses and the agriculture associations; the model will focus on client – driven demands for innovation and problem solving, as well as better structured internship program. It is also anticipated that the project will increase entrepreneurial awareness and skills among agriculture students and will increase higher education responsiveness to the market needs.

Institution: Palestine Technical College/ Arroub (PTCA)	Targeted Programs: Media Technology (Diploma & BA)
Project Title: Developing Media Technology Center of Competence at PTCA Depending on Local Market needs and TVET Skills	
TEIs Partners: Palestine Technical College – Ramallah (PTCR)	
Private Sector Partners: Ma'an Network Association, Jana Media Co., Oroba FM Radio Station and Network	

The primary aim of this project is to improve professional, technical, entrepreneurial, and life skills of Media Technology students at PTCA and PTCR through developing Media Technology curricula and practical training to match media industry needs and to provide media technology and multimedia students and graduates with necessary skills and attitudes to enter media industry market directly without a need for in-service training. During the implementation period of the projects, the TEI will work progressively to develop a strong and thriving relation between the media industry to create a platform of opportunities for income generation, creating business entrepreneurship and enhance teaching practices and methodologies.

Institution: Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU)	Targeted Programs: Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Program (Diploma & BA)
Project Title: Improvement of Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Educational Programs to Meet the Needs of Local Market.	
Private Sector Partners: Al-Ahli Hospital, Alzaro A/C, Al-Rafah Engineering Co., Al-Bader A/C	

This project aims at enhancing the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (AC&R) program to meet the labor market needs by updating programs curricula and establishing partnerships with the private sector to create a model for students learning through experience. Thus, the College will be able to fulfill professional and technical qualifications required by students by learning advanced technologies in AC&R.

Institution: Al Quds University (QU)	Targeted Programs: Nursing, Midwifery, Medical Lab Sciences, Physiotherapy, Medical Imaging (BA)
Project Title: Quality Improvement of Competency-Based Education and Training of Students in Health Professions: New Approaches, Better Opportunities	
Private Sector Partners: Augusta Victoria, Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hospital, Ro'ya Radiology Center, Abu Raya Center for Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	

This project will help improve prospective opportunities for employment among the graduated students of Faculty of Health Profession (FHP), more business, self-employment and research opportunities will be created. Use of novel curricula and innovative learning-teaching methodologies supported by evidence based practice in health will help to graduate competitive health professionals, primed to bridge the gap of "education-to-work" and enabled to meet the dramatic advances in health professions practice and the crucial need of health professions in labor market. It is also anticipated that the Academic-clinical partnerships will provide an opportunity for partners to work side by side with academic institutions to make the new generations of students more qualified and capable to meet the needs of the health sector.

Institution: Palestine Technical University/ Kadoorie (PTUK)	Project Title: My Profession
TEIs Partners: Palestine Technical College – Ramallah (PTCR)	
Private Sector Partners: Talal Abu Ghazaleh, Magic Line for internal Decoration, Malki Style for Internal Decoration, Bisan Air Conditioning, United Motor Trade Company, Al-Tanneh Company, Safad Auditing, Palestinian Federation of Industries,	
Targeted Programs: Technical Accounting (Diploma), Air-conditioning (Diploma), Industrial Automation (Diploma), Internal Design and Decoration (Diploma) and Mechanical Engineering (BA)	

This project aims at adopting both the “Dual Studies” and “Cooperative Education” models as the best models that combine the education with the practical work experience, to contribute to bridging the growing gap between supply and demand of skilled graduates and tackling the problem of job unpreparedness of university students. From 2 Palestinian colleges, the Dual studies will be applied to 20 students from four diploma programs where the students will be placed from 35- 50% of their study period (8-12 months) to the employers based on the Dual model approach, while cooperative education students from the Autotronics track of the bachelor of the mechanical engineering, will spend the whole 4th year of their study (12 months) in the maintenance workshops of the local automotive/automobile companies.

Institution: Gaza Community College for Tourism Studies (GCCTS)	Targeted Programs: Computer Technology (Diploma)
Project Title: Developing Knowledge and Skills of Computer Technology Program students to meet the Needs of Labor Market.	
TEIs Partners: Gaza Training Center College (GTCC)	
Private Sector Partners: Palestinian Information Technology Association (PITA)	

This project aims at developing knowledge and skills of computer technology program students to meet the needs of the labor market. It is specifically designed to develop specialization and keep pace with this development in order to raise the level of graduates by providing them with the necessary skills needed to integrate them easily in the LM or help them to create their own career. During the implementation period of the projects, attention will be paid to equip the students with life and soft skills and to promote for innovation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, relationships with employers and community will be developed, also there will be a wider dissemination of technology and its importance role in developing the Palestinian economy.

Guest Corner

Building on Experience to Shape the Future

Eng. Mohammed Abu Ajamieh
Chairman – QIF Board

Higher Education Institutions carry an important role in producing individuals capable of incorporating within labor markets locally and abroad. A solid partnership between all labor market stakeholders is essential, by which the private sector, academic institutions, and employing organizations work in partnership to develop theoretical and training curriculum that meet the needs of the market.

Over several years, the Quality Improvement Fund provided the necessary support to the Palestinian Higher Education Institutions, in partnership with the private sector and several organizations, in an effort to improve curriculum and enhance graduates’ skills and employability. So far, many higher education institutions benefited from this program and positive impact was felt at the institutional level, as well as the graduates and the employers. We are proud that such program is one of the most successful among several other programs funded by the World Bank according to their own assessment.

After piloting this partnership between the private sector and the tertiary educations institutes in 2013, the impact was satisfactory; both sides of partnerships realized that they are both benefiting from this win –win relationship. As we are now at the beginning of implementing a new group of projects in West Bank and Gaza we feel that the relationship is much stronger and more mature specially among those who experienced this partnership in the previous projects. They are well aware of the need to each other and the gains of each party. The long-term impact includes having more employable and skillful graduates, enhancing the communication channels between the PS and TEIs, bridging the gap between them and also between the students and market, and ensuring the need for more long term sustainable partnership.

We aspire for the continuity and sustainability of such program following the ending of the grant, as this has so far proved to be successful and impactful. Based on all what has been mentioned above I call all TEIs who have not yet benefited from the last QIF cycle to try again and ensure their proposals really reflect their privates sector partners’ needs in workplace and this will surely be a factor to get their proposals succeed.

Contact Info:

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