



Quality Improvement Fund Projects

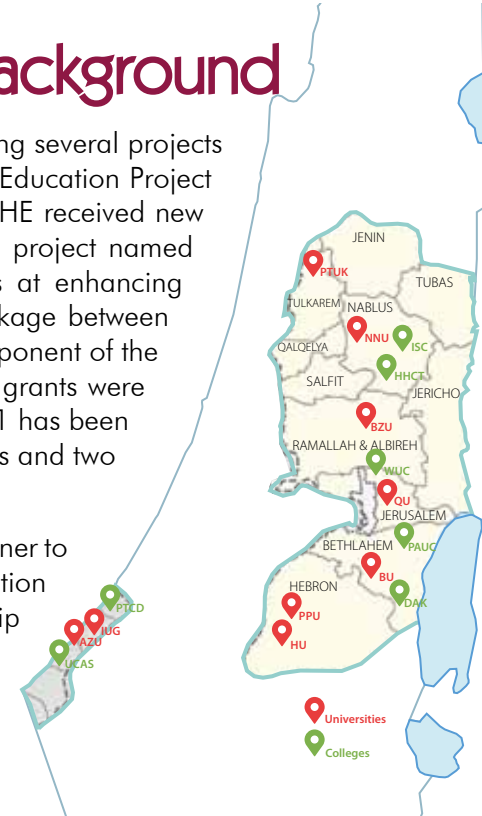
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The Newsletter will be issued quarterly aiming at promoting results and outputs of the QIF projects

Quality Improvement Fund “QIF” – Background

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has been implementing several projects since 2005 to help finance scaling-up activities of the well-performing Tertiary Education Project (TEP). As a result of the success of these projects, on July 2nd, 2012, the MoEHE received new financing from the World Bank in the amount of 6.5 million USD, under the project named “Education to Work Transition Project – E2WTP”. 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 major component of the E2WTP is the Quality Improvement Fund Grants (QIF), by which a total of 20 grants were awarded to 16 TEIs through two cycles, where a total amount of \$4,580,749.21 has been committed among nine universities and seven colleges, of which, two universities and two colleges are located in Gaza Strip.

QIF continues 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 last quarter of 2015 witnessed several major events. Initially, the Partnership and Mentorship Consultant (PM) arranged his third visit to be from December 06 till December 17. The focus of the PM consultant’s visit was to complete the program mapping task and focus on new methodologies and framework for developing strategic partnerships. It is worth mentioning that the program mapping assignment, a new tool suggested by the PM Consultant, assisted the majority of TEIs to evaluate their curriculum designs, the courses relevancy and the relationship between the courses through the development of three main maps. This process facilitated the finding of gaps within these programs as well as finding solutions.
- Moreover, the PM third visit coincided with the World Bank’s Mid Term Review (MTR) mission. The mission aimed at conducting a mid-term review in order to assess the overall progress achieved by the project, as well as starting the dialogue for the envisaged additional financing. During the two weeks, the World Bank visited all the benefiting TEIs in West Bank as well as several partners from the private sector. Due to movement restrictions, the World Bank couldn’t visit TEI’s in Gaza. Instead, they carried out video conferences with all benefiting TEIs in Gaza.
- A QIF workshop was also carried out on December 08. The workshop hosted all benefiting TEIs and their

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TEIs Inspiring Stories



Integrating Long-Term Care Concepts into Undergraduate Nursing Education in Palestine

According to the World Health Organization, palliative care is an approach to improve the quality of life of patients facing problems associated with life-threatening illnesses and their families through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychosocial and spiritual problems.

In full collaboration with its partners, Augusta Victoria Hospital and Al-Sadeel Society, Ibn Sina College, through its project "Integration of Palliative and Advanced Geriatric Care within the BS Nursing Curriculum" responded to the national needs to introduce palliative and advanced geriatric care concepts into the nursing education at the national level and met the international standards of nursing education, hence, will contribute to enhancing its practice within the nursing field in Palestine.

An important concept underlying this transformation is integrating student learning outcomes in reference to geriatrics and palliative care. This pedagogy is linked with the achievement of core competencies and learning outcomes. Together, teachers and students use evolving evidence-based palliative and geriatric knowledge, technology, and best practices to encourage a spirit of enquiry and to provide competent care for patients.



Gaza Students Reach beyond Blockade through their Apps

Under the framework of the project "Pal Apps", the University College of Applied Sciences "UCAS" aims to prepare the diploma program students of Information Technology "IT" for careers in the expanding and evolving fields of mobile web and application development by developing a transformational learning model drawn from the intensive review of curriculum and teaching methods used around the world.

An important element of this model is challenging students to solve real life problems and provide them with the opportunity to put their skills to work in a real – world setting with the collaborating private sectors. The students started to achieve solid results for partners and their achievements exceeded expectation despite the challenges they face in Gaza, particularly the electricity blackouts for 12 hours a day.

For instance, Wajdy Isleem, one of the benefitted students from the project, broke the siege of Gaza and reached out to Jordan. He even signed a contract with Al-Isra University to develop an android mobile application that illustrates students' schedules to organize their time at college.

IT-Bridge: Learning by Practice is the Key for Innovation and Employment

Under the framework of the project “Linking with the Private Sector: IT Faculty Curriculum Reform”, the Computer Information System Undergraduate Department at An-Najah National University developed and modified the IT curriculum, as well as, established several collaboration agreements with local software companies, such as Isra’, Spark, Ultimit, Cortoba, Innerchip, Alandalus, and Pinchpoint, in the aim of enhancing technical and life skills of students to enhance their readiness for employment after their graduation.

The re-designed program provides a unique opportunity for students to explore the career life within software development companies by working in authentic projects under the supervision of professional mentors. It is a dream coming true for students, and only serious students can take advantage of this opportunity. Ahmad Jamal and AlMotazBellah Atallah are great success stories. They are part of a group of students supervised by Isra Company since three semesters. The company decided to invest in them through recruiting them to their team! They were offered part-time jobs while still enrolled in their undergraduate studies.



Students Well-equipped to Portray Uniqueness through the Lens of the Camera

In an era where media has become a powerful weapon to send important messages, Dar Al-Kalima University College of Arts & Culture (DAK) aspired to empower its students to give them the opportunity to become active players in the society and contribute to the variety and quality of the local media and film production in Palestine.

Through its project “Portrait of Palestine”, DAK worked towards adjusting the curriculum of the TV and Cinema Professions Diploma program, updating the audio-visual equipment and most importantly institutionalizing DAK’s relationship with the private sector in Palestine and networking regionally.

The project’s success has been reflected through the various job opportunities that were given to students. For instance, Bilal Krunz, from Arroub Refugee Camp, participated in producing a promotional film for Hirbawi Furniture Company. He had an essential role being the director and one of the camera men team. His work was very special and well-appreciated. Another three students, Yazid Dadu, Mohammad Al-Shalodi and Noreen Kaoud were selected to work on a short documentary film about Al-Zuhoor Kindergarten in the Old City of Jerusalem, in addition to several other students who are getting work opportunities while still studying.



Practice Tip

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are quantitative and qualitative measures developed by a projects’ team to assess a project’s performance and progress against set goals and objectives. These measures are set as targets for achievement. SMART KPIs are:

Specific

Does your KPI clearly tell you what to achieve by the project?

Measurable

Does your KPI show progress towards the desired result?

Attainable

Does the KPI let you track and account for the project?

Relevant

Does the KPI contribute to measuring the overall success?

Time-bound

Is there an exact end point to work towards?

partners to shed the light on the major success stories of the program along the three main components, **Partnerships, Student Placements, and Curriculum Development**. The workshop also facilitated the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of networks among TEIs, as well as developing new networks with the private sector. Moreover, Intellectual Property was also discussed within international and local contexts. This topic has become a major concern as students in many TEIs, such as Palestine Polytechnic University and An-Najah University, started to develop actual products within the scope of this program.

- Finally, it is worth mentioning that two projects were concluded during this quarter. The first project is the “Graphics, Animation and Multimedia Lab” project conducted by Wajdi University College – Jerusalem, by which they have developed a total of 12 courses within

the Graphic Design field, and secured internships for all their students. The second project is “Fashion Design and Dress Making Department Development” conducted by Deir El-Balah College in Gaza. In the scope of this project, a total of 39 female students have successfully completed a two-months training in different specialties within the fashion design field. Among these students, six students were offered job opportunities, whereas 20 others were offered extended training/ volunteering opportunities. Also, eight new modules were developed in partnership with the private sector, and were accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). The MoEHE decided to disseminate the new study plan within all national colleges running similar programs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

GUEST CORNER

A Turning Point in the Understanding of Partnerships between TEIs and Employers...

*Dr. Iyad Masrouji
A QIF Board Member and a QIF Grant Partner*

Partnership between the private and education sectors have been almost absent or marginalized within the Palestinian culture. Despite that this important approach has been adopted in other countries and resulted in notable improvement in the private sector, tertiary education institutions (TEIs), and the research and development field. QIF came as a successful tool to accelerate the process and promote “Strategic Partnerships”. This has raised awareness among TEIs to include the private sector in all major decisions from modifying the curriculum to developing students’ internship systems.

Our professional experience on ground proved to be successful. As a big company, Jerusalem Pharmaceutical Co. regularly hosts interns from other universities. We have realized the difference between universities who approached us as a result of QIF projects and other universities. Relationship with other universities has been restricted to providing non-structured training to students without any further intervention, follow up or support.

Nevertheless, through our partnership with Palestine Polytechnic University, we have discussed the university’s concerns together. We have then worked as a unified team with a common vision to brainstorm for solutions and apply the necessary changes. This resulted in a stronger curriculum that meets the market needs with an integrated solid internship program where both the employer and university drew the internship plan together and had a clear feedback, follow-up and evaluation procedures.

Despite the proven success, the importance of building the capacities of personnel working in the human resources department and other technical departments at the private sector cannot be overlooked. Raising their awareness about the importance of such partnerships, and building their capacities on effective students’ mentorship will maximize the benefits, and take the strategic partnership to a higher level.

That being said, this is definitely an experience worth being shared with other universities. On one hand, companies now have a say, and on another hand, TEIs guarantee to fill the learning gap for students. Both, employers and TEIs, contribute to providing the students with the utmost theoretical knowledge and its practical applications.

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