

The Effect of Collaboration Culture on Project Success

Dr. Mohammed Ziara, QIF Board Member

Successful partnerships between different institutions must lead to mutual benefits to all involved parties. The collaboration between Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) and Business in Palestine has been resulting in many achievements. Since the start of the "Tertiary Education Project" implemented by the Ministry of Education and High Education (MOEHE) between 2005 and 2009, there have been noticeable improvements in the collaboration culture within the education and business domains. In particular, the Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) which is a main component of the ongoing "Education to Work Transition Project (E2WTP)" started in 2012 has fostered collaboration between TEIs and private sector. In fact, the collaboration culture is obvious even in the institutional structure of the QIF itself where it is managed independently by a "Projects Coordination Unit (PCU)" that is accountable to a "Board" representing the academia and the private sector.

It worthwhile mentioning that, collaboration culture exists in Palestine as individual initiatives even before the start of the Tertiary Education projects. However, QIF has contributed to the institutionalization and strengthening of the collaboration culture between institutions working in various domains as well as within the same domain.

QIF encouraged voluntary works, emphasized social responsibilities and maintained sustainability.

Evidence of collaboration culture as a contribution from the private sector has included training of students and graduates, offering advice on developing TEIs, and enhancing academic curriculums and programs, financing TEI infrastructure development, e.g. construction of buildings and facilities, giving scholarship to students, etc. On the other hand, contribution from TEIs has included solving technical problems facing industry and business, responding to labor market demand by providing graduates in concerned field, offering training courses and high-level education programs to private sector employees, etc.

In conclusion, QIF has strengthened collaboration culture between TEIs and private sector which has led to enhancement in Palestinian youth's transition from education to work, TEI competencies and capacity of private sector. It is strongly advised that, QIF collaboration culture experience be utilized by TEIs and private sectors at national and international levels; whether or not they have already participated in QIF programs.



For more information, please contact us at the following address:

Projects Coordination Unit (PCU), Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Curriculum Center Building – Al Masyoun, Hanna Ajlouni St.
Ramallah, Palestine

Tel: +970 2 2969352/366

Fax: +970 2 2969369

Website: www.palpcu.ps

E-mail: info@palpcu.ps

 World Bank Project Coordination Unit.

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Inside This Issue >

- ◆ Quality Improvement Fund "QIF" Background
- ◆ At a Glance
- ◆ TEIs Inspiring Stories
- ◆ Practice Tip: Track your project
- ◆ Guest Corner

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 -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 last quarter of year 2018 was featured by signing formal agreements with 13 out of 14 awarded projects under Cycle 4 which is considered the final cycle to be supported by the World Bank through the E2WTP- AF.
- In an effort to support the grantees, a delegation from the World Bank has implemented a visit to Palestine in November, 2018. A set of meetings with the Ministry in addition to other key players was held, this included two joint meetings with all grantees under both cycles in both Gaza and West Bank in addition to visiting multiple TEIs granted under Cycle 3.
- As part of the PCU's role in supervising the implementation of the projects, orientation sessions in both West Bank and Gaza were held to the newly assigned coordinators to ensure proper understanding of the WB administrative, financial and procurement procedures.

TEIs Inspiring Stories

Challenging Borders through Palestinian – Palestinian Collaboration

Based on UCAS mission to expand partnerships with academic institutions and private sector, the University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS) and Hebron University have successfully co-organized the 'GIS Day'.

The event which was held on November 26th, 2018 at UCAS campus aimed at demonstrating the most important applications of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and introducing them to the local community. Moreover, it encouraged and motivated researchers to contribute to and disseminate researches, experience and good practices in this field.



The private sector had also a distinct presence in the exhibition. About 25 local institutions and companies presented their GIS applications and experiences to the attendees and discussed their achievements and the obstacles they faced during applying these technologies.

"Hebron University is proud to collaborate in organizing such event with UCAS in the field of GIS which is a trending field in the modern era."

Prof. Salah ElZaro, President of Hebron University

Around 350 high-school students have attended the event where they had the opportunity to learn about GIS and its applications. During the gallery, they practiced some of the GIS applications and used some of the GPS equipment.

"Researchers from Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and United States have shared their research results and conclusions through three scientific sessions" said Dr. Maher El Hallaq, partner representative. 25 scientific papers were submitted and discussed some cutting-edge topics in GIS applications, remote sensing and smart water management. A fourth session was held to present the projects of Hebron University students via video conference.

This event was a valuable opportunity for researchers, university students and the companies from the private sector to exchange their know-how and innovative ideas in the field of GIS.
Dr. Tamer A. Eshawi, Vice Rector of Planning and External Relations - UCAS

Upgraded Curriculum for a Smooth Transition to Labor Market

Through a project entitled: Transition to Labor Market: Upgrading MIS Program, Palestine Ahliya University (PAU) seeks to enhance the quality of education and employment qualifications of students and graduates to match the needs and demands of the labor market for the Management Information System (MIS) sector.

One of the project's main activities is to upgrade a new curriculum following the highest international standards was introduced to increase harmonization between IT and Business lecturers. To do so, and facilitated by an external expert, a comprehensive review and upgrading of the MIS curriculum process took place involving all related departments at PAU. Authentic changes were proposed to modernize the program taking into account internal consultations and recommendations from private sector prominent stakeholders. Changes were then approved by PAU higher administration and academic council and were put into effect starting from the academic year 2018/2019. To start with, the total number of the program credit hours was reduced from 136 to 130 credit hours where life skills course and entrepreneurship course were included. PAU Higher Administration approved to increase the practical field training to 2 training rounds during summer after the second and third years. Moreover, four courses were redesigned to facilitate stimulating real cases training provided by the private sector to be solved by MIS students in the newly established interactive Living Lab. Further, and following the recommendations of the private sector stakeholders, three general requirements were redesigned to meet the skill-set desired by potential employers; hence Arabic skills course was replaced by critical thinking, English 2 was replaced by English for Science and Technology, and textbook of Introduction to Computer Basics and Programing was replaced by project partner's Talal Abu Ghazaleh IT Certificate textbook. The aforementioned market driven changes among others which will serve the overall objective of the QIF program; smooth transition to labor market; will be piloted during the lifetime of the project. They will be also introduced to students and to private sector stakeholders during the project's coming activities such as the information and career days.

PPU is Reaching Out for Regional Collaboration

In an effort to expand internship opportunities for students in the region, PPU project team and under the frame of "Improvement of the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Educational Programs" project has conducted fruitful study tour to Jordan and Turkey, where a delegation from academics and partners has initiated channels of collaboration with leading companies and educational institutes in the field of Air conditioning.



In Jordan, the delegation met with multi- companies specialized in the air refrigeration and conditioning industry. The meetings resulted in signing MoU with Brawish for a/c technology co., which included providing technical trainings for faculty members on the latest technology in the field, in addition to receive interns from PPU to practice working in a real environment. furthermore, a visit was conducted to Al Quds College "Luminus", through which the delegation had the chance to explore the implemented model of collaboration between the academic institutes and their partners in receiving interns, designing courses and building capacities.

A Step Toward Closing the Gap Between Education and Labor Market

Al-Quds university through its project "Quality Improvement of Competency-based-education and training of Health Professions students" is aiming at enhancing and developing five programs offered under the Health Professions College that includes Laboratory Science, Medical Imaging, Nursing, Midwifery, and Physiotherapy programs. Through the project, a comprehensive needs assessment study was conducted and resulted in clarifying the gaps between theory and practice, identifying in-campus labs settings, in addition to redefining of enrollment criteria for the new students. Furthermore, based on the study results, in-depth reviews -collaboratively with the private sector partners- were followed for upgrading the curricula for the targeted programs. It's anticipated that the fruitful collaboration between AQU and the private sector including Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), Roya Specialized Radiology Center, Red Crescent Hospital in Al-Bireh, and Abu Raya Center, with the participation from the digital learning department, academic staff, and alumni will prosper and continue to drive the project to success.

The tour to Turkey was also successful in establishing channels of collaborations between PPU and Bursa Technical University and other companies from the industry where options of academic exchange, joint conferences and training sessions in addition to provide training opportunities for students were discussed.

Practice Tip: Track your project

Tracking the progress of your project is crucial to lead the project to success. It allows the project team to early identify and troubleshoot any problem or delay, it also gives you the answer of the continuously asked question: "How is the project going?"

The following are useful tips to be considered in monitoring and tracking the project:



• **Project documentation:** Documentation of project's files in soft or/and hard copies keeps your project documents organized and allows you to easily obtain any file at any time.



• **Project schedule:** You need to have a good and reasonable schedule that is created with the involvement of your project team if you are going to track against it. Make sure to constantly update and accurately reflect the progress to the schedule.



• **Project budget:** Track your spending by recording what are the disbursements so you can always keep them updated with the budget position.



• **Change log:** Every time a change is approved, make sure your schedule and budget are updated accordingly.