

Guest Corner

How to Achieve Sustainability: From a Beneficiary's Perspective

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Sustainability means continuing to benefit from, and deliver, the project results even after the project closure. The project team should invest time to put the sustainability in concrete terms and plan. Indeed, it is imperative to integrate sustainability facets in your project from the beginning of your proposal writing stage.

Funding agencies look carefully at the sustainability plan, since it is the only approach to assure that the fund will have long-term impact even after the grant expires. The sustainability plan should envisage key stakeholders' and the funding agency's visions, and not merely the institution's view.

The following are the most significant mechanisms that you should take into account when you define your project scope and prepare the sustainability plan:

- **Long Term Vision:** It is extremely important to know where you see your institution after a period of time. Therefore, involving top management at your institution can give you a thorough understanding of what they need on the long-term.
- **Institution's Strategic Plan:** The strategic plan of your institution would have important dimensions related to the development of curricula and programmes. It explores your current situation and gives profound SWOT analysis of your institution.
- **Integrate the Quality Assurance Units (QAU):** The QAU plays a crucial role in the success of any development initiatives. In this dynamic workplace, market needs changes frequently. Therefore, the QAU unit should continually assist the gap between the existing programmes and skills required by market place. When your project proposal is based on the real needs of your potential employers, it would be easier to explain to the funding agency the required resources to ensure long-term success.
- **Establish Strategic Partnership with Key Stakeholders:** Involving stakeholders should be done at two levels. At strategic level, their vision should be reflected in your proposed initiatives. At more operational level, project managers and QAU should ensure the participation of key stakeholders in programme development, e.g. through initiating focus groups and dialogues with stakeholders in regular basis. Establishing long lasting relationships with stakeholders ensures that the project will continue even after the project terminates.
- **Communication:** The institution should develop a concrete communication strategy and tools. Indeed, the purpose of communication strategy is two-fold. Firstly, it will help you share your results with different stakeholder groups, stimulating them to support your existing and future initiatives. Secondly, a well-established communication strategy will help you in reaching potential funding agencies.

Practice Tip:

Procurement Management is a key stone for the success of any project. Procurement management and proper execution of your planned procurement activities helps you get the best quality with best price and within the needed time in goods and services which will result in avoiding any delays and problems and will also enhance the accountability during the project implementation. Here are some highlights to guide a TEI in this area



- **Procurement Plan:** is a tool that helps you identify the needed resources (goods and consultants) to achieve the projects objectives, once drafted it will help you track all your planned activities during the project lifetime. It will allow you to check the progress of your procurement activities, to early identify any problem or delay in any task, it also gives you the answer of the continuously asked question: "How is the project going". Your procurement plan should be updated continuously to track all changes.



- **Keep your records:** keeping all your records on time is very important to avoid missing or duplicating any procurement or contractual information. You should have a good filing and documentation system of the project's files in soft or/and hard copies, keep your project documents organized allows you to easily obtain any file or document at any time.



- **Contract Management:** once the contract is signed with the consultant or supplier, it is very important to pay attention to the deliverables' deadlines mentioned in the contract, and that the delivery period is within the agreed timeframe, otherwise; an extension can be made.

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STATE OF PALESTINE
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QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUND

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

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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 -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



- As part of its supervision and support mission, a delegation from the World Bank has implemented a visit to Palestine in April, 2019. A set of meetings with the Ministry and other key players were held, in addition to visiting multiple TEIs granted under both Cycle 3 & 4 in West Bank and Gaza.



- The QIF Board members have intensified their efforts in developing a policy note for institutionalizing QIF initiative that highlights the main attributes, successes and associated policies of this initiative. Multiple visits have been conducted by QIF board members in West Bank and Gaza with key stakeholders from TEIs and the private sector who are familiar with the successful outcomes of the QIF program. It is expected that this policy paper will be discussed officially with the Minister of Higher Education in the coming few days.

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TEIs Inspiring Stories

Kadoorie is the First Institutes to Obtain AQAC Accreditation for Diploma Programs Under Integrated Education Track

Palestine Technical University-Kadoorie (PTUK), as part of the Mihnati-My profession for Integrated Education Project, has successfully obtained accreditation from the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) for a Diploma program (Technical Accounting / Integrated Track), which is the first Diploma under integrated track in Palestine. This education model aims at integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills to contribute to bridging the gap between the education deliverables and labor market demands, thus, enhances the readiness of graduates to smoothly engage in the labor market. The development of the aforementioned program was carried out in compliance with the new methodology (Complex Task Approach) adopted by the department of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education with the assistance of an international consultant specialized in Integrated Education. Furthermore, in an effort to expand internship opportunities for students, over 40 MOUs were signed with local companies in different sectors.

In addition, a delegation from Mihnati-My professional project has conducted a study tour in Austria. The delegation included a number of academics from Kadoorie, supervisors from the project's partners from the Palestinian labor market, and a representative from the Palestinian AQAC. During the tour, a set of meetings was held with Austrian academic institutes as well as private sector companies that apply the integrated model, through which the team was briefed on their experience. The Austrian accreditation body was also part of the conducted visits to explore the international procedures in the field of development, evaluation and accrediting of such programs.

It is worth to mention that PTUK, through Mihnati-my profession project, is targeting four diploma programs in addition to three engineering B.A. programs that will be developed in Co-operative Education model.

Freelancing and Entrepreneurship as an Essential Part of IT Upgraded Curriculum in Islamic University of Gaza

Freelancing is the future of the work industry and possession of technical skills is no longer enough to engage graduates into labor market. Therefore, Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) under a QIF project titled "Developing the competencies of IT graduates to integrate into the freelancing and software outsourcing" stepped to a higher level by incorporating freelance skills and entrepreneurship in the newly developed curriculum.

"We aim to enhance the quality of education and to increase job opportunities for IT students and graduates through academic and practical qualification in freelancing and software outsourcing" said Dr. Tawfiq Barhoum, the Project Director.



Based on the market need assessment that was conducted at the beginning of the project, the IT curriculum was upgraded in cooperation with project partners, furthermore, five courses equivalent to 15 credit hours were developed/ updated and reviewed by EUTD in light of the European practices. *"In freelancing course, the students are practically working on freelancing portals to be able to reach international job opportunities and clients. This is achieved by having competitive profiles and portfolios as well as good understanding of how to apply for the freelancing jobs. The students are doing well and we are getting results and jobs from some of them already"* said Mr. Mohammed Al-Afifi, Freelancing instructor.

The newly added freelancing and outsourcing course is being taught this Spring Semester in the newly established and operated freelance lab. The benefited IT students expressed their excitement to attend each class and they presented high commitment in their attendance to get more benefit from these classes.

New Supporting Infrastructure Operating at Gaza Community College for Tourist and Applied Studies

Through a project titled: "Improving the Quality of Students and Graduates of the Administration and Office Automation Program at Gaza Community College for Tourism Studies by Providing them with Digital Technological Skills to Increase Employment Opportunities", Gaza Community College for Tourist and Applied Studies (GCCTS) 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 Administration and Office Automation.



At this point of view, the College was able to furnish and equip a training room and two computer labs at the premises of GCCTS as well as the project partner, Al-Aqsa University, as part of the development process which aims to serve the diploma students and raise their educational levels to fit in with the requirements of the labor market. The use of the new equipped and furnished training room helped to make a significant difference with a positive impact on the students' skills. Also, the equipped laboratories will be used as training centers for students and graduates to improve their skills.

Students of University of Palestine are Advancing Their Programming Skills with The Latest Techniques

The Department of Software Engineering at University of Palestine (UOP) has implemented a training course titled "Full Stack Web Developer" as part of the QIF project "Bridging the Skills Gap of the Software Engineering Students at the University of Palestine to Enhance International ICT Exports". 24 students from the department of software engineering have received the training and got the chance to skill up their technical capabilities and improve their opportunities for outsourcing as well.

It is worth mentioning that the area of training was determined according to the need assessment report and as recommended by the project partner; Unit One Group for Technology, and it included three parts:

- UI/UX Design
- Front-End Web Development
- Back-End Web Development

Three specialized trainers were assigned to conduct the training which was carried out in the newly established computer lab with focus on the practical aspects where the student worked actively on practical graduation projects including designing their own websites.

"The focus on the practical side, made it distinctive and upgraded the quality of the course, for us, it was our first time to address the issue of UI / UX in this detailed and supported methodology that enabled us to create User Persona. I also learned a lot from the course subjects and applied what I learned in practice, which helped me understand the course of web programming well" Ahmed Magdy Badah - Third level software engineering student.

An Interactive Living Lab Equipped and Launched in Palestine Ahliya University

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) program.

The project aims to clarify the identity of the MIS program and to bring the private sector's prominent representatives as genuine partners. This desired partnership is to directly enhance the opportunities of students to encounter real business cases following a problem-solving approach even in the early stages of study. To achieve this, an Interactive Living Lab "ILL" was equipped and officially launched with wide participation from the private sector representatives. The ILL will act as an innovation hub hosting IT companies

and business people and receiving real cases to be worked on by students and researchers. Additionally, and in line with PAU efforts to strengthen bonds with the private sector, the IT department and the project team have been working hard over the last few months to expand the number of private sector partners. Therefore, the team was working on developing and signing MOUs with private sectors to offer internship for MIS students in their departments in close coordination with PAU administration; 8 MOUs were signed with private companies, 3 of which with big leading institutions that can offer internship to number of students, such as Al-Quds Bank, Rawabi Foundation, and Royal Industrial Trending Company. Through this process, the project team seeks to provide students with practical hands-on experience that will help them to enter the labor market after completion of the academic study.