DATA FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IN ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (DEP/AME)

CASE STUDY ON USAID WEST BANK AND GAZA EDUCATION PROGRAMS

EDDATA II

NOVEMBER 2016

Data for Education Programming in Asia and the Middle East (DEP/AME)

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November 2016

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Mr. Mitch Rakusin and Dr. Bader Al-Araj.

The views expressed by the authors at RTI International do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Cover photos. Left to right: First row; Leadership and Teacher Development Conference, AMIDEAST. Second row; Leadership and Teacher Development Conference, AMIDEAST; Club Qalqilya Ahli Youth Development Resource Center, IREX

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Abbreviations

CECD	Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development
CELT	Center of Excellence for Learning and Teaching
CQA	Club Qalqilya Ahli
EdData II	Education Data for Decision Making indefinite quantity contract
EDSP	Education Development Strategic Plan
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ERS	Education Reform Support
GER	gross enrollment rate
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
IYF	International Youth Foundation
JFA	Joint Financing Arrangement
LTD	Leadership and Teacher Development
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
NER	net enrollment rate
NIET	National Institute of Educational Training
NIS	New Israeli shekel
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PFDP	Palestinian Faculty Development Program
TES	Teacher Education Strategy
TIMSS	Trends in Math and Science Study
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YDRC	youth development resource center

Executive Summary

The purpose of this case study is to illuminate how and why US Agency for International Development (USAID) education programs in the West Bank and Gaza were able to achieve the lasting impact in basic, higher, and non-formal education despite the considerable political and environmental challenges. This study attempts to illuminate the pathways to sustained reform, the underlying reasons for the programs' success, and the key lessons learned. It focuses far more on the how and why of program impact than on the "what" of program content.

A small research team comprised of one international researcher and one Palestinian researcher conducted a desk review and series of interviews with key informants. The team met with and interviewed nearly three dozen education authorities over a 10-day period in July 2016, ranging from Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) officials, district officers, school principals, and teachers, as well as USAID and implementing partner officers. The interviews centered primarily on which aspects of the programs were likely to be sustained and why the programs were successful in creating buy-in and ownership. In so doing, we asked the respondents to identify the barriers to adoption of the programs and how they were able to overcome them, in terms of strategies and approaches. Because the team concentrated almost exclusively on the successes of the programs, the thrust of this report is more positive, focused on success stories rather than on the program letdowns, while being honest about the challenges.

The report details the historical and present day context of the Palestinian education system, tracing the MEHE's progress over the years in basic and higher education, in which USAID has actively engaged. It was only 22 years ago, as a result of the 1994 Oslo Accords, that the Palestinian Authority assumed control and ownership of the education system in West Bank and Gaza. The Authority faced significant challenges from a neglected system: crumbling infrastructure, borrowed curriculum from the Egyptians (in Gaza) and the Jordanians (in the West Bank), a disproportionate number of unqualified teachers, an administrative management system that had to be built from scratch, and severe financial constraints.

USAID has over the years adjusted its program focus to support the needs of the sector and add value to the education system. Prior to Oslo, USAID mostly focused on scholarships and infrastructure to support schools and nascent universities. From 1994 to 2005, USAID provided critical support to the MEHE to help stabilize the education sector, providing assistance to ensure access and improve school facilities. In 2005, the USAID/West Bank and Gaza Mission established a formal education office. This event marked a strategic shift in USAID programming: to align the Mission's work with the Ministry's priorities to improve the quality of basic and higher education, as well as to strengthen opportunities for youth development, workforce preparation, and global citizenship.

USAID's strategic shift corresponded to the development of the MEHE's education sector plans (I and II) and its 2005 Teacher Education Plan. A number of structural deficiencies within the system, which persist till this day, have guided the strategic design of the Mission's education program portfolio. **Table ES-1** summarizes these issues. The programs established from 2005 onward have collectively focused on many of these priority areas for improvement. **Table ES-2** summarizes the programs examined under this case study of best practices, which identifies the sector focus, the models and innovations introduced, and notes the precursor projects upon which these programs built.

Table ES-1. Priority Issue Areas Addressed through USAID/West Bank and Gaza Education Program Portfolio

Basic Education System Challenges	Tertiary, Technical/Vocational, and Non-Formal Sector Challenges
Financially constrained: 80% of budget goes to salaries, 5% operational costs, and only 15% to capital development	Near 40% youth unemployment rate according to International Labour Organization
Heavily centralized system with minimal delegation of authorities to the district and school level; department silos	Most students enroll in humanities and social sciences (74%), and a low percentage (24%) enroll in sciences in secondary and tertiary education
Lack of authority over the Gaza education system; challenges in Jerusalem, Area C	A very low percentage of students (2%) enroll in technical and vocational education
No standard set of grades/levels for all basic and secondary schools – many different combinations of grades offered by different schools	Female students outnumber male students in secondary and tertiary education
60% of teachers are unqualified to teach per Ministry's standards	Complaints from employers about quality of university graduates. Complaints from universities about quality of school graduates
Persistently low achievement rates in international and national examinations	Students lack the training in utilization of higher order cognitive skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies

Table ES-2. USAID Portfolio of Education and Youth Programs

Program	Period	Technical Focus	Model / Innovation(s) Introduced	Development Partner	Precursor Program
Palestinian Faculty Development Program	2005 to 2015	Quality and relevance of instruction in universities	-Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning -Community-based learning	AMIDEAST	University Scholarship Programs
Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program	2011 to 2016	Youth development and workforce preparation, soft skills and leadership development in universities and schools	University-based Career Center services and tools: -Personality assessment -Pathways to Success -Social Entrepreneurship -Building Your Business	International Youth Foundation	None
Leadership and Teacher Development Program	2012 to present	Quality of instruction and leadership in basic and secondary schools	-Diploma programs -School-based management -District Leadership Teams -Experiential, peer learning	AMIDEAST	Model Schools Network (2007 to 2012)
School Support Program	2013 to present	Quality of instruction and leadership in basic and secondary schools	-School-based guidance and counseling -School-based management -Diploma programs	AMIDEAST	Model Schools Network (2007 to 2012)
Partnership with Youth Program	2012 to present	Youth development and civic engagement	Youth Development Resource Centers	IREX	Ruwwad (2005 to 2011)

The Palestinian Faculty Development Program (2005–2015) focused on improving the quality of instruction in universities by promoting and institutionalizing Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. These Centers continue to have dedicated full- and part-time staff and an operating budget that sustains their efforts to support university professors. A few universities have developed curricular policies on instruction, assessment, and relevance, which direct the efforts of the Centers within an overarching strategic plan.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program (2011–2016) aimed to strengthen the capacity of the guidance and counseling centers in universities to better prepare their students for the workforce by introducing a suite of tools and services offered to students. The guidance and counseling centers continue to deliver these services through dedicated staff and trainers, and budgets and policies that mandate student participation and link with overarching university strategic plans.

In the basic education sector, the **Model Schools Network** (2007–2011) introduced models of best practice for teacher professional development (diploma programs), school-based management, and project-based, peer-learning. The follow-on **Leadership and Teacher Development Program** (LTD) (2012–present) and the **School Support Program** (SSP) (2013–present) built on and further refined these models, paving the way for the MEHE's adoption of the Leadership Diploma the Teacher Qualification Diploma programs. Leadership and Teacher Development introduced additional models for district education management, and the School Support Program introduced a model for strengthening school-based guidance and counseling services. Today, the Ministry has accredited the Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs, identified external financing to sustain both diploma programs, and graduated an additional 3,000 teachers over and beyond the projects' contributions. District Education Leadership Teams have been formalized by the Ministry, which have helped break down bureaucratic silos and strengthened the decentralized education management and support system.

In the non-formal sector, the **Ruwwad Program** (2005–2011) introduced the Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) as a community-based model for youth engagement, development, and empowerment. Ruwwad worked with Youth Clubs whose primary mission was to sponsor young men to participate in sporting activities. Ruwwad sought to transform them into YDRCs by financing the initial capitalization to enhance their facilities and service offerings, and by working with their ownership and board to adjust policies related to gender inclusion, mission, and community engagement. **The Partnership with Youth Program** has expanded the number of YDRCs building on the model introduced under Ruwwad. Today, many of the YDRCs are generating their own revenue and directing their core service offerings independent of USAID support. These developments augur well for their long-term sustainability.

Criteria for determining successful interventions. Each of these programs offers an example of a successful intervention. The criteria ascribed to determine success of these models include: degree of counterpart ownership; demonstrated behavioral change counterparts; meaningful systems reform of counterpart institutions; gains in outcomes for key beneficiaries (student learning, employment); positive changes in the organizational culture of counterpart institutions; clear pathways to sustainability of models and innovations; the practicality and opportunity for counterparts to scale the models; and the demonstration of cross-program synergies and multiplier effects across the programs.

Not every program or model can claim all criteria. But each in its own way has satisfied a plurality of these criteria. The body of this report discusses in detail how the programs have

met the relevant criteria and, in doing so, have overcome specific challenges. In viewing the portfolio as a whole, **10 important themes** emerge that have contributed to the overall success of USAID's programs in the West Bank and Gaza.

Theme 1. Taking the long-view and staying the course. The programs have benefited from the Mission's ability to stay the course over a decade of activity by maintaining the *continuity of programmatic focus* on its strategic objectives. All too often, Missions are buffeted by headwinds from many different stakeholders and clients that pivot their activities away from their initial strategic direction. The USAID West Bank and Gaza Mission has managed to keep to its strategic focus over the past 10 years while responding to continuing client and stakeholder demands. This continuity of effort has enabled programs to achieve incremental, small victories that cumulate and build momentum toward lasting positive change. A good example of this is how USAID maintained support to Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs first introduced under the Model Schools Network and continued under the Leadership and Teacher Development Program, which eventually led to its adoption and full accreditation as a Ministry in-service training program in 2012, four years after it was first introduced under the Model School Network.

Theme 2. Program coherence across education and youth activities. The portfolio of USAID programs reflects and aligns to the overarching objective to improve the competitiveness of Palestinian youth, ensuring a high degree of *program coherence* across the individual projects. All the programs have at their central core the unifying mission to enhance the competitiveness and good citizenry of the Palestinian youth. Each of the programs offers complementary strategies and approaches to meet these goals across the subsectors of basic, higher, and non-formal education. This consistency of vision and purpose across all programs mirrored and aligned to the MEHE's long-term strategic goals and priorities, which has proved instrumental for counterpart buy-in and ownership, and for fostering cross-program synergies.

Theme 3. Employing innovative, workable models for evaluation, replication, and scale. The Mission designed each of these programs as *innovative models for service delivery* that the MEHE and other counterparts could replicate and eventually sustain. These programs were never intended to supplant Ministry services; rather they served to demonstrate practical and effective models to be adopted, owned, and institutionalized by their Palestinian counterparts. The models for the Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma Programs, the Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning, the Career Center guidance and counseling services, and the YDRCs are exemplar illustrations of how unique innovations in the West Bank and Gaza context were modelled for scale and sustainability.

Theme 4. The intervention models were generally responsive, practical, and effective. None of these interventions would have succeeded if they had not directly responded to counterpart needs, or proven effective and replicable in changing behaviors and leading to desired outcomes. Universities took up the Career Center services based on the demonstrable gains in post-academic employment of their students. The MEHE took up the diploma programs based on the demonstrable effect they had on the quality of classroom instruction and school leadership practices. YDRCs have sustained their services based on the impact these have had on increasing membership and girls' and women's participation.

Theme 5. High degree of credibility and strong working relationship with counterparts. The relationship between USAID, the universities, and the Ministry has roots that extend back to the 1970s. Many of today's present educational leaders received their degrees through the USAID-sponsored PhD and master's scholarship programs. The scholarship alumni took on leadership positions in the Ministry and universities, and later

became crucial champions for the models introduced. USAID has further cultivated the trust and credibility of their counterparts by actively engaging with senior leadership and working to ensure the Ministry is seen as the face and driver of the programs. Notably, their implementing partner in basic and higher education, AMIDEAST, has been working in the West Bank since 1962 and has an excellent reputation in-country for providing a host of educational services.

Theme 6. Excellence in program leadership. The characteristics of USAID's design and approach described above underscore the quality of the leadership within its Education Office. USAID leadership and visibility have been consistent since the inception of the Ministry in 1994, ensuring a continuity of approach and institutional memory over 22 years, which is rare in any organization. In addition, the Model Schools Network and Leadership and Teacher Development program have benefited from the leadership of their Chief of Party, Dr. Said Assaf, a Palestinian educationist considered one of the "founding fathers" of the Palestinian Education System. Likewise, Dr. Mohammed Mbaid, Chief of Party for the Youth Education Development Program, is a respected Palestinian authority on youth and entrepreneurship development. These individuals, as well others, bring a deep knowledge of the sectors' idiosyncrasies and degree of cache with their institutional counterparts that take years to establish. Perhaps the most difficult aspect for other USAID Missions to replicate is the unique stature of the individual program leaders. However, their work ethic and leadership attributes should serve as models for other senior education officers and chiefs of party.

Theme 7. Emphasis on experiential, project-based, and peer learning. All programs— from teacher training to guidance and counseling to youth development—have capacity building interventions that emphasize project-based learning and peer-to-peer sharing. These elements are crucial for participants' to tailor and apply their knowledge and skills to the relevant needs of their institutions, while learning and reinforcing from one another the best practices and lessons learned. The diploma programs introduced under the Model Schools Network and Leadership and Teacher Development program require trainees to undertake projects that are both experimental in nature and focused on improving learning outcomes. The completion of a project is one requisite for obtaining the diploma qualification. As part of this diploma program, teachers and school principals meet monthly in clusters to share and discuss their experiences. Similarly the Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning assist university instructors to develop project-based learning courses that may focus on community and social development programs as well as services for private-sector industries.

Theme 8. Concerted efforts to strengthen the institutional monitoring and feedback systems. The programs introduced in the formal education sectors could not be replicated or sustained without due attention to the monitoring, support, and feedback systems for schools and universities. The Leadership and Teacher Development program successfully established a feedback mechanism whereby the Ministry implementing agency (National Institute for Education and Training) and districts review and evaluate projects undertaken by diploma participants to certify they met the quality standards for obtaining the diploma. District Leadership Teams were formed under LTD's guidance to coordinate school supervisory and mentoring activities. Leadership and Teacher Development undertook comprehensive functional review of MEHE, which has led to continued engagement in the Ministry's systems reform efforts. Under the guidance of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program, universities have mobilized the Centers of Excellence to establish

quality standards for instruction and to mentor and support teachers' professional development through the monitoring and feedback of their teaching practices.

Theme 9. Continuous program adaptation and adjustment to lessons learned and evolving counterpart priorities. Programs that are able to adjust their technical approach based on midterm evaluations, continuous monitoring, and counterpart needs will have a greater chance of success than those that do not. Each of the programs has demonstrated this capability: Leadership and Teacher Development shifted focus from relying on universities to working with and through the Ministry's National Institute of Education and Training for delivering the teacher and principal diploma programs. The Youth Education Development program shifted focus from secondary schools to intensify support to universities based on the findings and recommendations from the midterm evaluation. Support to YDRCs has evolved from highly capitalized, resource-intensive facilities established under Ruwwad, to service-oriented centers supported by the Partnerships with Youth Program. The Palestinian Faculty Development Program introduced the concept of the Centers of Excellence only in the last three years of the program to institutionalize the instructional reforms and professional development opportunities for university lecturers.

Theme 10. Celebrating victories, sharing successes, and garnering widespread recognition. One mantra of promoting change in any context is to celebrate the small victories and share the successes. All programs in one way or another have implemented a communications strategy that has led to the garnering of recognition amongst counterparts and beneficiaries. Schools participating in the LTD and School Support Program are recognized in national and international competitions. Regional project conferences offer opportunities for participants to showcase projects and share ideas and celebrate their achievements. Publications and video vignettes have generated evidence and a research base for promoting the Leadership and Teacher Development models and demonstrating their effectiveness. District Leadership Teams have begun to recognize high-performing school leaders and teachers. Centers of Excellence organize forums to share and recognize best practices across universities.

Concluding Observations: USAID's lasting legacy. The story of the USAID/Education West Bank and Gaza portfolio is not that the programs were implemented perfectly or were 100 percent successful in achieving their goals. Rather, USAID has enjoyed a modicum of success in an exceedingly difficult operational and political environment by following core program design and implementation principals described above. The models discussed under each program have led to significant change in the culture of educational institutions and the behaviors of the participants and counterparts. The lasting legacy of the USAID-supported education programs may fundamentally be how the Ministry and universities now view their role in preparing students and youth for the demands of the modern economy and the acumen for global citizenship. Through these programs, they have the tools, the wherewithal, and most importantly, the desire to do so.

1. Introduction, Purpose, and Research Methodology

Background and Purpose of the Case Study

The work of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the West Bank and Gaza has long been hailed as a potential model of success for other countries in

the region. Despite the extraordinary challenges that the Palestinian Authority (PA) faces in delivering high quality education, the geo-political complexities and the persistent environment of conflict and uncertainty, the PA Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has been able to achieve lasting reforms with the assistance of USAID's interventions in country. The purpose of this case study is to shed some light on how and why a number of USAID education programs were able to have long-term impact and success in reforming basic and higher education despite the considerable challenges faced by counterparts and implementing partners alike. This study attempts to illuminate the pathways to sustained reform, the underlying reasons for the programs' success, and the key lessons learned by telling the story of the individuals and institutions who have led and participated in these programs. It focuses far more on the how and why of program impact than on the "what" of program content.

Organization of Report

The study is divided into 11 sections. Sections 1 and 2 provide the historical context for USAID's work with the PA, including an historical overview of education in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as a brief narrative describing the history of USAID's support to education from the 1970s to today. Sections 3 and 4 provide an overview of the programs examined and summarize the key factors that have contributed to their successful uptake by Palestinian counterparts.

Sections 5 through 9 discuss the impact that USAID programs have had in sustaining reforms in higher education and basic education respectively. These sections describe in detail the key legacies of the various programs, and how and why certain aspects of them have been adopted by MEHE and other institutional counterparts, by focusing on specific individual and institutional experiences. Chapter 10 of this study examines USAID's efforts in the non-formal education and youth development sphere. Unlike those in the basic and higher education sectors, the non-formal programs are more community-driven than they are anchored to a governing counterpart institution. The opportunities for sustained service delivery take on a different character than that reflected in the experiences and lessons learned in the formal sector.

Finally, Section 11 concludes this study by attempting to highlight and summarize the major factors behind the successes. This section offers a high-level objective account of the overall effort and outlines a set of guidelines for how future programmers and practitioners might design, implement, and scale up efforts in similar contexts based on the lessons learned from this case study.

Research Methods

RTI International, which was contracted by USAID through the Education Data for Decision Making indefinite quantity contract, fielded a small research team to conduct the case study. The team relied on a desk review of over 50 documents, from scholarly articles on education in Palestine to internal project documents. In addition, the team met with and interviewed nearly three dozen education authorities over a 10-day period in July 2016. The individuals and institutions the team met with are noted in the acknowledgements portion of this report. They ranged from ranking officials of MEHE, district officers, school principals, and teachers and school-community stakeholders. USAID officers and senior officers from the implementing partners were also interviewed, as well as institutional representatives from various universities. The questions were open-ended and tended to focus on how and why

changes in behavior and adoption of models occurred, the reasons for the reforms, and the barriers and opportunities for their sustained implementation beyond the life of the program. In some cases, interviews with individual key informants were conducted; in other cases, institutions and organizations were represented by several individuals around the table. Every institution and organization was exceedingly cooperative and helpful, for which we are very grateful. Much more was shared than could possibly be captured in a limited report such as this, and omissions or factual inaccuracies are solely the responsibility and fault of the report's authors.

2. Context and Environment – Historical Perspective and Timeline on Education in Palestine and USAID's Support

On March 13, 2016, A Palestinian primary school teacher who grew up in a refugee camp and educates her students about non-violence won a $1 million "World's Best Teacher" prize for teaching excellence, besting 8,000 other applicants from around the world. Hanan Al-Hroub, who works with children exposed to violence in the West Bank, won the prize this year at a ceremony featuring tributes from Prince William, Duke of Cambridge; Pope Francis; and former US President Bill Clinton (Coughlan, 2016). Al-Hroub's successful story may symbolize the story of the Palestinian educational sector. Despite the difficult circumstances and the fact that formal education in Palestine has been historically controlled and administered by foreign rule, Palestine has one of the highest percentages of education participation and enrollment in the Arab world, and in the developing world at large. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), literacy was 96.3 percent in 2014. In addition, Palestine has achieved equality between men and women in terms of access to basic and secondary school education as well as to higher education; women made up 57 percent of university enrollment in 2008–2009 and 50.7 percent of school students in 2013–2014 (Saleh, 2010).

It is hard to understand the "successful story" of education the West Bank and Gaza without looking at the historical circumstances that surrounded the developments of that sector. Education in Palestine is an arena of international and regional interests. From the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in 1517 until the establishment of the PA in 1994, education has been controlled and administered by foreign rule (Ramahi, 2015).

Pre-1994–Ottoman-British-Israeli Civil Administration

Over the years various foreign powers introduced their own education agendas to maintain their rule. The Ottoman Empire was the first to introduce an education system that was delivered in the Turkish language to the overwhelming majority Arabic-speaking population. Starting in 1917 during British rule, education access was expanded to supply a growing need for civil servants for the British Empire (Barakat, 2007). Palestinian education policies in the 1950s and 1960s were subject to both Jordanian and Egyptian dictates, and later to Israeli ones. During the 1970s, 1980s, and early1990s the school curricula were directly controlled by the Israelis and indirectly by the Jordanians and the Egyptians whose curricula were used in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. The secondary school examination itself (called *Tawjihi*) was directly controlled by Jordan and Egypt (Abu-Duhou, 1996).

According to Dr. Ibitsam Abu-Duhou who published extensively on schools in the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli administration:

During the first 27 years of Israeli Occupation (1967–1994), Palestinian educational institutions suffered a drastic decline in quality and growth. No new schools were built during the first 10 years of occupation, and very few have been built since then outside of donor assistance. Thus the expansion of school facilities and the hiring of additional teachers did not keep pace with the dramatic growth in the student population. Classrooms became increasingly overcrowded, with an average class size in government schools reaching 40 to 60 students per class. In addition, most government schools lacked basic facilities, such as vocational workshops and audiovisual teaching aids. Science laboratories had a shortage of the necessary equipment for carrying out experiments. Meager funding and the high number of banned books limited the schools' capacity to provide adequate libraries for their students. Extracurricular activities, vital for students' academic, social, and cultural development, were prohibited by the Israeli authorities, as were science clubs and cultural lectures. In a survey carried out by the MEHE soon after the establishment of the PA in the mid-1990s, it was found that many schools lacked such essential facilities as proper toilets. Additionally, low pay had sapped teachers' morale and compelled many of them to seek a second, supplementary job elsewhere. In addition, Palestinian educators had to fend against academic restrictions, frequent and prolonged school closures, and the banning of textbooks and educational material; the effect of such policies has been immeasurable and will be felt for many years to come (Abu-Duhou, 1996).

Unfortunately, there are few objective data or studies to inform judgment about the quality of education or skills imparted to Palestinian children under Israeli authority (Abu-Duhou, 1996). In 1990, an attempt was made to fill this vacuum, and an initiative to assess the skill levels of about 3,000 elementary schoolchildren was carried out in the central region of the West Bank during the First Intifada/Uprising (1987–1993). This unprecedented study found that elementary schoolchildren had great difficulties acquiring even basic skills in Arabic and mathematics. The severity of the educational situation in the West Bank and Gaza reached an acute level during that uprising. The extended and repeated closures of schools by the Israeli authorities impacted negatively on the schools' ability to provide a stable and predictable learning environment.

Later, several studies found that the Second Intifada (2000–2005) also severely affected the Palestinian school culture, creating challenges for school leaders and teachers in how they related and taught the difficult aspects of the conflict to their school children (Qaimari, 2016).

Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles (the Oslo Accord) between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization on September 13, 1993, responsibilities for education in Palestine were transferred from the Israeli authority to the newly established PA. The new Authority created the MEHE, which started operating in August 1994. This transition provided an opportunity for the Palestinians to determine their history. The main challenge that confronts this new Authority in the field of education is how to tackle the problems inherited and that persist from the Israeli Civil Administration (Al Zaroo, 1998).

1994–2000—Establishing the MEHE under the PA

On the eve of the transfer of administration of education to the PA in the West Bank and Gaza, the deterioration in Palestinian education had reached a crisis point due to the rapidly deteriorating situation under the first Intifada. Again, according to Abu-Duhou

The Palestinian MEHE made a strategic decision to continue, during the first year, with the management of the system inherited from the Israelis. This would give MEHE the needed breathing space to develop more familiarity with the system, in order to draw up the necessary work plans for improvement and for building quality in education. A major challenge the MEHE faced in its first year was the existence of two different educational

systems in the West Bank and Gaza: the Jordanian one in the former, and the Egyptian in the latter. Thus, MEHE took some important steps towards unifying the two systems and bridging the gap between the two geographical areas by standardizing the nominal tuition fees and textbook prices. A major achievement during the 1994–1995 school year was conducting, for the first time under full Palestinian control, the secondary school matriculation exam (the *Tawjihi*), simultaneously in the West Bank and Gaza (Abu-Duhou, 1996).

Donors spent $353 million on education-specific projects in Palestine from 1994–2000. Many of the achievements in education would have been unattainable without this support. A World Bank study published in June 2000 found 78.8 percent satisfaction with the PA record on educational infrastructure development. The study found slightly less satisfaction with educational quality, although satisfaction with PA performance was higher in the education sector than in any other (Save the Children, 2001).

2000–to Present—Curriculum and Teacher Education Strategies

The MEHE developed, created, and implemented a new national curriculum. Beginning in 1999, the Ministry convened Palestinian academics and educators to help write the new curriculum for primary and secondary education, which was formally completed in 2006. Moreover, training workshops were organized for all teachers on techniques for the better utilization and implementation of the new curricula. Since launching the new Palestinian curricula, the Ministry has been careful to include technology as a subject for students in grades 5 to 12. It also developed and implemented programs relating to the effective employment of information technology in education (Ramahi, 2015).

The development of the Palestine Teacher Education Strategy (TES) began in early 2007, continuing until May 2008 when the TES was formally launched. The TES was conceived as a result of a large-scale school survey conducted by the MEHE in 2006–2007, which found that 72 percent of all teachers did not possess the minimum academic qualifications to teach. Eight major projects and programs related to the TES have been implemented. The total financial commitment associated with these eight projects amounted to approximately $81 million during the period from March 2005 to December 2014. A variety of agencies and organizations contributed to the implementation of the TES. Local Palestinian institutions are marshaling their own capabilities and resources to develop programs and improve operations and these efforts are bolstered with technical and financial support from international bodies through projects and programs specifically designated to support the TES.

To overcome the challenges it faces, MEHE started developing national strategic and action plans. This first Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP I) (2003–2008), focused on indicators of achievement within the national context. Palestinian students showed weakness in mathematics and sciences, which prompted the Ministry to adopt an emergency plan that included the implementation of a number of unified periodic tests for all students (Saleh, 2010). The resulting EDSP II (2008–2012) was extended by one year to align itself with the national planning cycle. In February 2014 the Ministry launched the third EDSP (2014–2019). Subtitled "Palestine 2020: A Learning Nation," the EDSP III calls for a learning-centered strategy. It is hoped that this plan will be a catalyst for moving education reform beyond a patchwork of globally informed programs with a shift towards context-relevant and problem-based approaches. This entails addressing classroom practices and methods to improve student learning through local knowledge-building efforts. Other aspects of MEHE's efforts to improve education in Palestine, such as developing new curricula and teacher education strategies, will be discussed in the following sections.

During the years 2008–2012, the efforts led by MEHE to further improve the educational sector in Palestine were guided by EDSP II, which also served as a regulatory framework for partnership with relevant Palestinian public institutions and nongovernmental organizations. During those years the Authority achieved high enrollment levels in both primary and secondary education and bridged the gender gap at all levels, as well as achieved a reduction in the illiteracy and dropout rates. It also realized significant improvements in developing and improving educational infrastructure and the educational environment and strengthened the administrative practices in program-based planning and budgeting. Also during that period, the MEHE benefited from the establishment of a new funding modality (Joint Financing Arrangement [JFA]), which has greatly enhanced the implementation capacity of its systems, districts and schools (MEHE, 2014).

The Joint Financing Arrangement. Insufficient funding has been an ongoing major concern, and has had a serious negative impact on the quality and relevance of education in the West Bank and Gaza. To support the MEHE better, the Ministry and donor community established the JFA as a pooled fund to support the implementation of the Ministry's strategic plans and priorities. The JFA was signed on November 11, 2010, by the PA and four development partners (Norway, Ireland, Finland, Germany). In June 2011 the JFA came into effect after all pre-conditions were met. The JFA aims to support the MEHE in the implementation of the EDSP. Other funding sources of the strategic plan are the Ministry of Finance and local contributions, as well as other external donors. The objectives of the EDSP are to increase access to all education levels (access), to improve the quality of teaching and learning (quality), to develop the capacity for planning and management, and to improve the financial and management systems used (management) (MEHE, 2014).

Present Trends, Progress, and Continuing Challenges of the Education Sector

Despite these and other achievements, the Palestinian education system exhibits a number of structural and systemic challenges that continue to constrain learning outcomes, employment, and competitiveness of youth. These challenges are underscored by the near 40 percent youth unemployment rate, according to the latest figures by the International Labour Organization. Most students in secondary and tertiary education enroll in humanities and social sciences (74 percent), while a relatively low percentage (24 percent) enroll in sciences. A very low percentage of students (2 percent) enroll in technical and vocational education. Though achievement levels are improving, Palestinian students continue to perform significantly below the median score in math, sciences, and English according to the 2011 Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS, 2011) and the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2011). Teaching methods continue to rely mostly on memorization and rote learning, and 60 percent of teachers remain unqualified to teach per the Ministry's standards (EDSP 2014–2019).

These issues are compounded by a heavily centralized system with minimal delegation of authorities to the district and school levels. Administrative management silos reduce information-sharing among divisions and units, and limit the capacity of the system to learn and evolve. The Ministry has significant financial constraints: 80 percent of the budget goes to salaries, 5 percent to operational costs, and 15 percent to capital development according to the 2014–2019 EDSP. Moreover, the variety of different school types that offer different combinations of levels leads to an inefficient allocation of resources and limitations to the planning processes. Lastly, the continuing challenges in Israeli-controlled Jerusalem Area C and lack of authority in Gaza have reduced the MEHE's ability to assure support and quality over all schools in the West Bank and Gaza.

Key Indicators and Trends Regarding Quality, Access, Efficiency and Equity

1. Quality Indicators. Palestine has participated in a number of international standardized assessments. These include the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) for 8th graders in 2007 and 2011[1], and the Early Grade Reading Assessment, which was funded by USAID in school year 2013/2014. **Table 1** details the 8th grade math and science TIMSS results for all participating countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The Palestinian Authority shows considerable improvement in math and science scores from 2007 to 2011 with increases by 10 percent and 4 percent respectively. In Math, Palestinian students outperform their regional peers by 9 points (404 average score in comparison to 393 regional average). In contrast, Palestinian students scored below the regional average in science by 8 points (TIMSS 2007 and 2011 International Reports). Nevertheless, these scores are well below the global standard median of 500 for both math and science.

Table 1. MENA Country Performance on 8th Grade Math and Science TIMSS 2007 and 2011

Country	2007 Math	2011 Math	Math Delta	2007 Science	2011 Science	Science Delta
Palestinian Authority	**367**	**404**	**10%**	**404**	**420**	**4%**
Egypt	391	NA	---	408	NA	---
Jordan	427	406	-5%	482	449	-7%
Oman	372	366	-2%	423	420	-1%
Qatar	307	410	34%	319	419	31%
Saudi Arabia	329	394	20%	403	436	8%
Syria	395	380	-4%	452	426	-6%
Regional Average	**366**	**393**	**7%**	**414**	**428**	**4%**

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) is an internationally recognized test of students' literacy levels.[2] An Arabic-language EGRA for Grade 2 students was conducted in March 2014 in a representative sample of 150 MEHE primary schools, stratified by school gender and selected randomly from 16 districts in the West Bank. The 2,953 tested students were randomly selected from Grade 2 enrollment lists prior to each school visit. The results are representative of MOEHE Grade 2 students and primary schools in West Bank. The EGRA comprised of 6 subtasks including two (2) oral reading passages in Arabic – one *with* full diacritics and the other *without* diacritics. **Table 2** presents the fluency and comprehension results, including the percentage of students with zero scores (not able to read a single word or correctly answer a single question), the average score for all students tested, the proposed oral reading fluency and comprehension benchmarks and the percentage of students performing at or above those benchmarks. According to the EGRA

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[1] Note the 2015 TIMSS results are not yet publicly available.
[2] See https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/index.cfm for more information on the EGRA

report, most students struggled to read connected text and comprehend the passages, although their foundational pre-reading skills (letter sound identification and decoding skills) were relatively strong (EGRA Grade 2 Baseline, West Bank, USAID, 2014).

Table 2. Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension Results of the 2013/2014 Grade 2 Early Grade Reading Assessment

Subtask	Percentage of students with zero scores	Grade 2 average score	Proposed benchmark	Percentage of students performing at or above benchmark
Oral Reading Fluency – 60 seconds with diacritics (cwpm)	22.1%	16.7	22	32%
Oral Reading Fluency – 90 seconds without diacritics (cwpm)	10.9%	24.9	31	33%
Reading Comprehension – after 60 seconds with diacritics (max. 6)	35.7%	1.6	4.0	13%
Reading Comprehension – after 90 seconds without diacritics (max. 6)	25.9%	2.2	4.0	27%

EGRA results for second graders in Palestine compare favorably to those of other countries in the MENA region. **Table 3** details the proportion of Grade 2 students with a score of zero (i.e., who were not able to read a single word of connected text correctly) on the Arabic Oral Reading Fluency task for all participating MENA countries. Only Jordanian students tested in 2014 significantly outperformed their Palestinian counterparts (EGRA Barometer, www.earlygradereadingbarometer.org).

Table 3. Percent of Arabic Oral Reading Fluency Zero Scores by MENA Country

Country (Grade Level)	All	Boys	Girls	Data Year
West Bank (Grade 2)	22%	27%	17%	2014
Egypt (Grade 3)	22%	25%	18%	2013
Iraq (Grade 2)	34%	37%	31%	2012
Jordan (Grade 2)	21%	25%	17%	2012
Jordan (Grade 2)	11%	16%	7%	2014
Yemen (Grade 2)	42%	45%	38%	2011

2. Gross and net enrollment rates. Overall, access to basic (primary and secondary) education remains at very high levels in comparison with other countries in the region. However, the efficiency and equity of the system remain a challenge. **Figure 1** compares the gross enrollment rates (GER) with the net enrollment rates (NER) in the West Bank from the 2007/2008 school year to present for primary and secondary. The NER is a proportion of the population of age-appropriate learners enrolled at their appropriate grade level. The GER is the ratio of all learners enrolled in a cycle or grade level, relative to the number of children of

the appropriate age for that cycle or grade level in the population. The difference between GER and NER for a given grade level indicates the proportion of learners who are under-age or overage. From 2007/2008 to present, the proportion of overage/underage learners is on average 3.1%, but is trending downward and at a low of 2.8% as of 2015/2016.

Figure 1 GER and NER in the West Bank, School Year 2007/2008 to Present for Basic Education (Primary and Secondary)

GER and NER in West Bank, 2007/2008 to Present

The difference between GER and NER indicates the proportion of learners who are under- or over-age
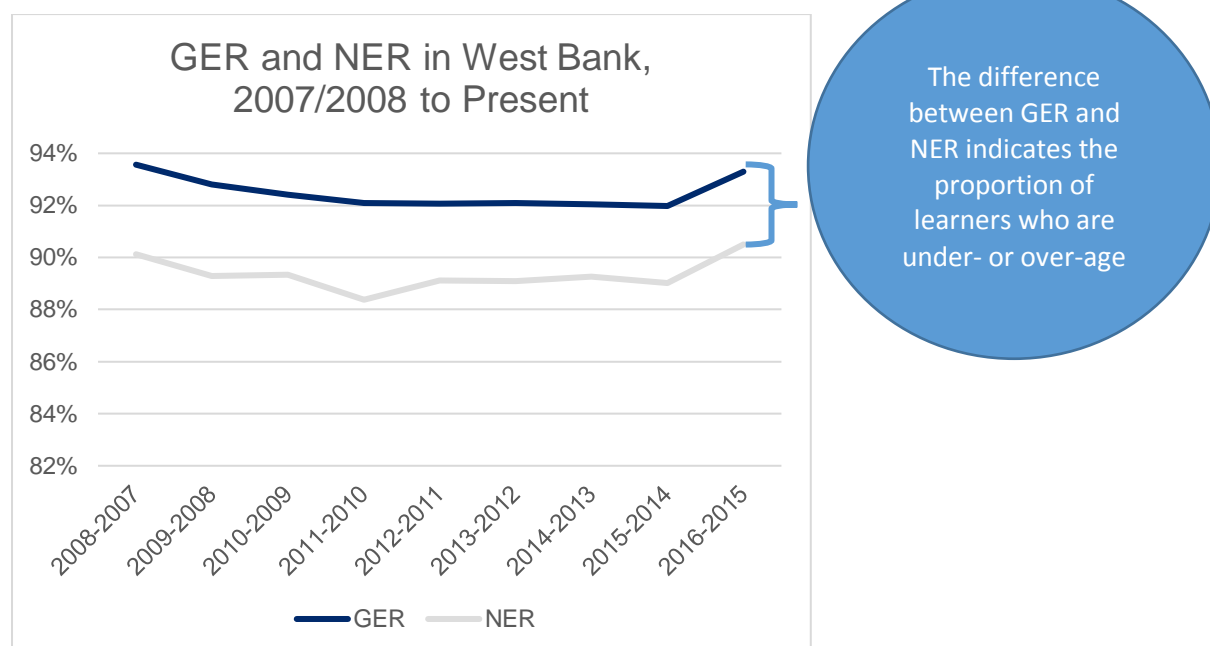
Figure 2 compares net enrollment rates for male and female students, respectively. It is clear from these data that boys' enrollment is significantly lower than that of girls. From school year 2007/2008 to present, girls on average have an NER of 92 percent and boys have an NER of 87 percent. These figures underscore the challenge facing the education sector in attracting and keeping boys in school, and preparing youth (and particularly young men) for the demands of the modern economy and good citizenry.

Figure 2. Net Enrollment Rates by Gender in the West Bank, School Year 2007/2008 to Present for Basic Education
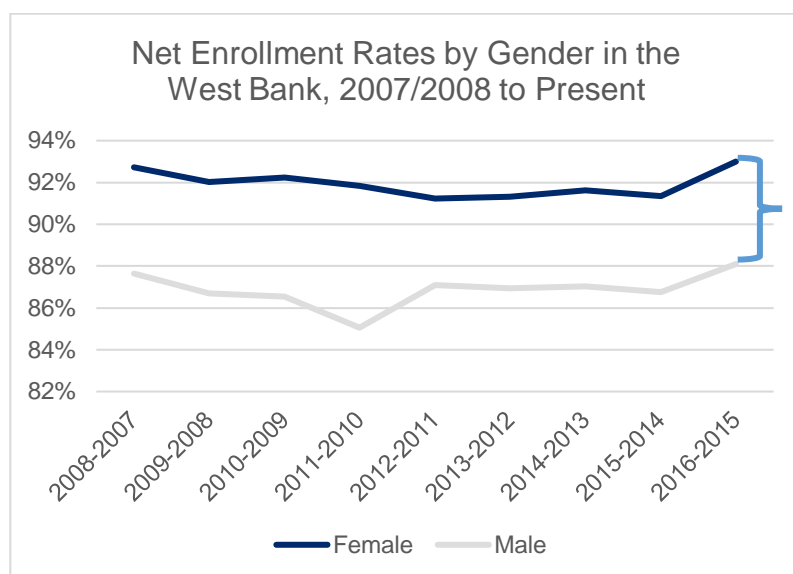
3. Dropout rates. The gender gap in enrollment reflects the gender gap in dropouts as shown in **Figure 3**. While the overall dropout rate among Palestinians in the school year 2015/16 (1.1 percent) is the same as the overall dropout rate during 2007/2008, this overall rate disguises a widening gender gap. In 2007/2008, 0.9 % of girls dropped out of school, against 1.2% of boys. By 2015/2016, girls' dropout rate decreased to 0.8% whereas that of boys increased to 1.4%. The gender gap difference has effectively doubled from 0.3 percentage points in 2007/2008 to 0.6 percentage points in 2015/2016.

Figure 3. Dropout Rates by Gender in the West Bank, School Year 2007/2008 to Present for Basic Education
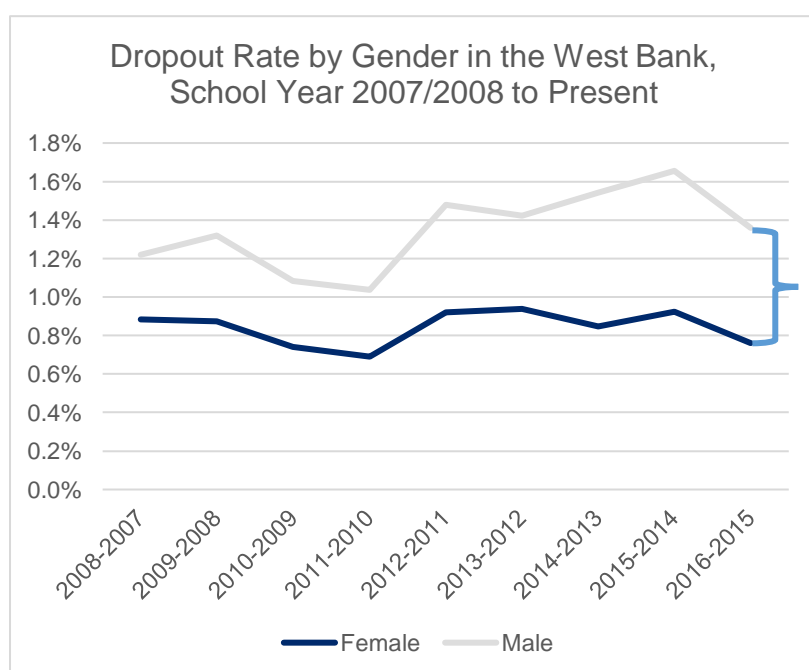
USAID's Historical Support to Palestine

USAID's support to Palestine's education system has undergone three distinct phases, following in part the historical trajectory of the country and the Mission's evolving strategy. Phase 1 broadly relates to USAID support from the late 1960s to 1994 and the advent of the Palestinian Authority. Phase 2 covers the period from 1994 to 2005. Phase 3 covers the period from 2005 to present day, beginning with the establishment of the USAID Education Office.

Up until Phase 3, education-related activities were broadly focused on infrastructure and human development. Infrastructure programs consisted primarily of school buildings to improve access to education. Human development activities consisted primarily of scholarship programs. The hallmark of the scholarship programs was the 230 scholarships for PhD and master's degrees sponsored by USAID in the 1970s and into the 1980s. According to USAID, this initiative helped create a generation of leaders and populate the ranks of faculty at the nascent Palestinian higher education institutions. This scholarship program ended in the 1980s.

All infrastructure related assistance prior to 2005 was overseen by the Mission's Infrastructure Office. Following the 1994 Oslo Accords, USAID focused its support to the PA's nascent education system. The focus of activities during this period was to help the Ministry meet basic schooling needs by providing material assistance to infrastructure and facilities. Also during this period, USAID renewed support to higher education through the Clinton Scholarship Program and the Presidential Scholarship Program. The scholarship programs were administered by the Mission's Program Office.

However, the support to education through the Infrastructure and Programs Offices were largely untethered to a clear sector strategy. That changed when the USAID mission established the formal Education Office. This event marked a strategic turning point in USAID's assistance strategy in the sector. The shift in focus and strategy was based on the Mission's recognition that it could provide more targeted support to advance the Ministry's strategic objectives to improve the quality of teaching and learning, youth and workforce development. This strategic shift reflects the increasing need to focus on education quality and equity, given the high level of attainment in access and efficiency as described above. In addition, the Education Office would ensure that Mission could make use of the basic education earmarked funds and for supporting quality improvement, which until then had gone unutilized.

Just as the Mission re-organized to support the MEHE more strategically, the unity government joining Fatah and Hamas was formed, and USAID re-directed support to private schools and other nongovernmental entities. In 2007, Fatah separated from Hamas, allowing for a more broad-based engagement with West Bank counterparts. USAID continues to support private organizations in Gaza to this day.

The following chapters outline and then detail the programs that USAID has supported from 2005 onward. While the scholarship programs have been instrumental in strengthening the leadership base of the universities and MEHE, it was USAID's strategic focus, beginning in 2005, that has led to the gains in education outcomes and its broader positive impact on the system as whole.

3. Overview of USAID Education Programs in West Bank from 2005 Onward

The USAID education programs, since 2005, have been guided by the core mission to improve the competitiveness and good citizenry of the Palestinian youth and workforce through education and youth development. The goal of these programs, fundamentally, is to transform instruction and school culture in higher and basic education and empower communities to help youth develop the "soft skills" to succeed in a modern world.

Instruction in Palestine traditionally relied on rote memorization, was lecture-based, and did not offer a dynamic learning environment. According to many Palestinian education reformists, these instructional methods have led to individually minded students, undermined cooperative behavior, and curtailed expressions of tolerance, dialogue, and civility among learners. The lack of discourse and engagement reduced the capacity of learners to work in teams and solve problems in a participatory, collaborative way. These instructional methods have stifled creativity and penalized innovative and critical thinking, and broad-based student engagement. In short, the traditional learning methods have produced a dearth of soft skills that has limited Palestinians' competitiveness and good citizenry. Education in Palestine has not been oriented to produce the necessary traits, behaviors, and skills needed in today's marketplace and to respond to the sophisticated service economy. This lack of competitiveness is in stark contrast to the success Palestinians enjoyed in leadership positions throughout the Middle East and North Africa, but particularly in the Gulf, in the 1960s and 1970s.

As of 2005, there was very little donor investment in soft skills or competitiveness. USAID's approach was to model a reform, create buy-in, and enable MEHE to claim credit, visibly lead, showcase the successes, and develop pathways to scalability and sustained implementation. This Ministry-driven, Ministry-owned approach is embedded in all programs and integrated across all components of each program.

USAID's strategic shift corresponded to the development of the MEHE's EDSPs (I and II) and its 2005 Teacher Education Strategy. A number of structural deficiencies within the system, which persist till this day, have guided the strategic design of the Mission's education program portfolio. **Table 4** summarizes these issues. The programs established from 2005 onward have collectively focused on many of these priority areas for improvement. **Table 5** summarizes the programs examined under this case study of best practices, which identifies the sector focus, the models, and innovations introduced, and notes the precursor projects upon which these programs built.

Table 4. **Priority Issue Areas Addressed through USAID/West Bank and Gaza Education Program Portfolio**

Basic Education System Challenges	Tertiary, Technical/Vocational and Non-Formal Sector Challenges
Financially constrained: 80% of budget goes to salaries, 5% operational costs, and only 15% to capital development Heavily centralized system with minimal delegation of authorities to the district and school level; department silos Lack of authority over the Gaza education system; challenges in Jerusalem, Area C No standard set of grades/levels for all basic and secondary schools – many different combinations of grades offered by different schools 60% of teachers are unqualified to teach per Ministry's standards Persistently low achievement rates in international and national examinations	Near 40% youth unemployment rate according to International Labour Organization Most students enroll in humanities and social sciences (74%), and a low percentage (24%) enroll in sciences in secondary and tertiary education A very low percentage of students (2%) enroll in technical and vocational education Female students outnumber male students in secondary and tertiary education Complaints from employers about quality of university graduates. Complaints from universities about quality of school graduates Students lack the training in utilization of higher order cognitive skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies

Table 5. **USAID Portfolio of Education and Youth Programs**

Program	Period	Technical Focus	Model / Innovation(s) Introduced	Development Partner	Precursor Program
Palestinian Faculty Development Program	2005 to 2015	Quality and relevance of instruction in universities	-Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning -Community-based learning	AMIDEAST	University Scholarship Programs
Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program	2011 to 2016	Youth development and workforce preparation, soft skills and leadership development in universities and schools	University-based Career Center services and tools: -Personality assessment -Pathways to Success -Social Entrepreneurship -Building Your Business	International Youth Foundation	None
Leadership and Teacher Development Program	2012 to present	Quality of instruction and leadership in basic and secondary schools	-Diploma programs -School-based management -District Leadership Teams -Experiential, peer learning	AMIDEAST	Model Schools Network (2007-2012)
School Support Program	2013 to present	Quality of instruction and leadership in basic and secondary schools	-School-based guidance and counseling -School-based management -Diploma programs	AMIDEAST	Model Schools Network (2007-2012)
Partnership with Youth Program	2012 to present	Youth development and civic engagement	Youth Development Resource Centers	IREX	Ruwwad (2005 to 2011)

The **Palestinian Faculty Development Program** (2005–2015) focused on improving the quality of instruction in universities by promoting and institutionalizing Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. These Centers continue to have dedicated full- and part-time staff and an operating budget that sustains their efforts to support university professors. A few universities have developed curricular policies on instruction, assessment, and relevance that direct the efforts of the Centers within an overarching strategic plan.

The **Youth Entrepreneurship Development** (2011–2016) program aimed to strengthen the capacity of the guidance and counseling centers in universities to better prepare their students for the workforce by introducing a suite of tools and services offered to students. The guidance and counseling centers continue to deliver these services through dedicated staff and trainers, budgets, and policies that mandate student participation and link with overarching university strategic plans.

In the basic education sector, the **Model Schools Network** (2007–2011) introduced models of best practice for teacher professional development (diploma programs), school-based management, and project-based, peer-learning. The follow-on **Leadership and Teacher Development Program (LTD)** (2012–present) and the **School Support Program (SSP)** (2013–present) built on and further refined these models, paving the way for the MEHE's adoption of the Leadership Diploma and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs. Leadership and Teacher Development introduced additional models for district education management, and the School Support Program introduced a model for strengthening school-based guidance and counseling services. Today, the Ministry has accredited the Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs, identified external financing to sustain both diploma programs, and graduated an additional 3,000 teachers over and beyond the projects' contributions. District Education Leadership Teams have been formalized by the Ministry, which have helped break down bureaucratic silos and strengthened the decentralized education management and support system.

In the non-formal sector, the **Ruwwad Program** (2005–2011) introduced the Youth Development Resource Center (YDRC) as a community-based model for youth engagement, development, and empowerment. Ruwwad worked with youth clubs whose primary mission was to sponsor young men to participate in sporting activities. Ruwwad sought to transform them into YDRCs by financing the initial capitalization to enhance their facilities and service offerings, and by working with their ownership and board to adjust policies related to gender inclusion, mission, and community engagement. The **Partnership with Youth** program has expanded the number of YDRCs building on the model introduced under Ruwwad. Today, many of the YDRCs are generating their own revenue and directing their core service offerings independent of USAID support. These developments augur well for their long-term sustainability.

4. Defining Programmatic Success and Summary of Contributing Factors

Criteria for Determining Successful Interventions

We approach the question of success through the lens of two analytic frameworks: systems-theory and social and behavior change theory. There is a great deal of literature on systems theories that focuses on education reform, scale, and sustainability. However, the model for lasting behavior change has deep roots in the public health space, but is only rarely if ever

incorporated into education programs on a systematic basis. The theoretical framework that this study draws from synthesizes the various strands of research on systems and behavioral change theories. For ease of reference, **Annex B** details the analytic approach the research team employed.

Each of these programs offers an example of a successful intervention. The criteria ascribed to determine success of these models include: degree of counterpart ownership; demonstrated behavioral change counterparts; meaningful systems reform of counterpart institutions; gains in outcomes for key beneficiaries (student learning, employment); positive changes in the organizational culture of counterpart institutions; clear pathways to sustainability of models and innovations; the practicality and opportunity for counterparts to scale the models; and the demonstration of cross-program synergies and multiplier effects across the programs.

Contributing Factors to the Success of the Interventions

Not every program or model can claim all criteria. But each in its own way has satisfied a plurality of these criteria. In viewing the portfolio as a whole, **10 important factors** emerge that have contributed to the overall success of USAID's programs in the West Bank and Gaza.

Theme 1. Taking the long-view and staying the course. The programs have benefited from the Mission's ability to stay the course over a decade of activity by maintaining the *continuity of programmatic focus* on its strategic objectives. All too often, Missions are buffeted by headwinds from many different stakeholders and clients, which pivot its activities away from the initial strategic direction. The USAID West Bank and Gaza Mission has managed to keep to its strategic focus over the past 10 years while responding to their continuing client and stakeholder demands. This continuity of effort has enabled programs to achieve incremental, small victories that cumulate and build momentum toward lasting positive change.

Figure 4 shows how the portfolio of programs has maintained its strategic focus, building on prior efforts to continue advancing the overall goals of the portfolio. The initial scholarship and infrastructure programs laid the foundation for much of the success in helping the Ministry and universities develop a core cadre of leaders. The Palestinian Faculty Development Program continued with the strategic focus to strengthen higher education to a sector that has only 20 percent of its faculty holding PhDs. The Model School Network paved the path for significant reforms in the basic education sector, in particular, models for school-based management, community engagement, and in-service teacher professional development. These models were further refined and advanced by the Leadership and Teacher Development and School Support Program. In the non-formal sector, the Ruwwad program to activate YDRCs as a model has been refined and advanced under the Partnership with Youth Program.

Figure 4.   Continuity of Program Focus of the USAID Education Portfolio
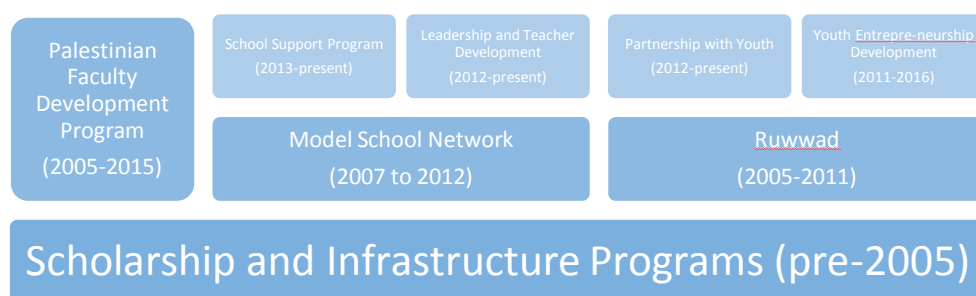
Palestinian Faculty Development Program (2005-2015)	School Support Program (2013-present)	Leadership and Teacher Development (2012-present)	Partnership with Youth (2012-present)	Youth Entrepre-neurship Development (2011-2016)
	Model School Network (2007 to 2012)		Ruwwad (2005-2011)	

Scholarship and Infrastructure Programs (pre-2005)

Theme 2. Program coherence across education and youth activities. The portfolio of USAID programs reflect and align to the overarching objective to improve the competitiveness of Palestinian youth, ensuring a high degree of *program coherence* across the individual projects. All the programs have at their central core the unifying mission to enhance the competitiveness and good citizenry of the Palestinian youth. **Figure 5** illustrates the common goal that underlies the theory of change for all programs. The blue-shaded blocks reflect those programs that are predominantly focused on changing school culture and instruction; the red-shaded blocks reflect those programs that are focused on youth employment and development. Each of the programs offers complementary strategies and approaches to meet these goals across the subsectors of basic, higher, and non-formal education. This consistency of vision and purpose across all programs is mirrored and aligned to the MEHE's long-term strategic goals and priorities, which has proved instrumental for counterpart buy-in and ownership, and for fostering cross-program synergies.

Figure 5.   Unifying Program Goal across all Education and Youth Programs
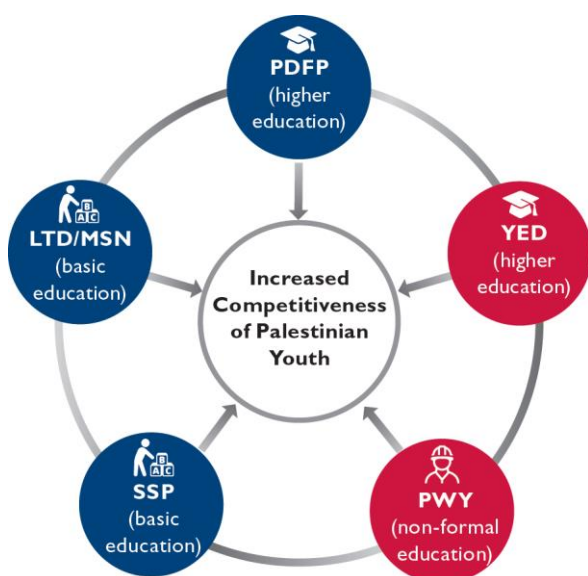
The advantage to having a unified goal across all programs is that they become by nature self-reinforcing. Improving skills, changing culture, and creating opportunities lead to multiplier effects beyond the direct impact that only one or two projects might have, and promote opportunities for cross-program collaboration, synergy, and the leveraging of resources and tools.

**Theme 3. Modeling interventions for evaluation, replication, and scale.** The Mission designed each of these programs as *innovative models for service delivery* that the MEHE and other counterparts could replicate and eventually sustain. These programs were never intended to supplant Ministry services; rather they served to demonstrate practical and effective models to be adopted, owned, and institutionalized by their Palestinian counterparts. The models for the Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs, the Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning, the Career Center guidance and counseling services, and the YDRCs are exemplar illustrations of how unique innovations in the West Bank and Gaza context were modelled for scale and sustainability.

Theme 4. The intervention models were generally responsive, practical, and effective. None of these interventions would have succeeded if they had not directly responded to counterpart needs, or proven effective and replicable in changing behaviors and leading to desired outcomes. The models introduced under each of the programs reflected new and innovative ideas that took time to gain traction with counterparts. The programs were successful in part because they were able to draw on an evidence base to help the change the mindset and opinion of reluctant adopters and skeptics. The programs also paid significant attention to supporting the institutions in developing pathways to scale and sustainability, whether they were universities attempting to increase participation in their guidance and counseling services, or the Ministry attempting to increase participation and reach of their Leadership and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs. **Figure 6** summarizes the common approach that each program took to model, support, and scale the innovations.

Figure 6.   Modeling and Demonstrating Innovations for Replication and Scale
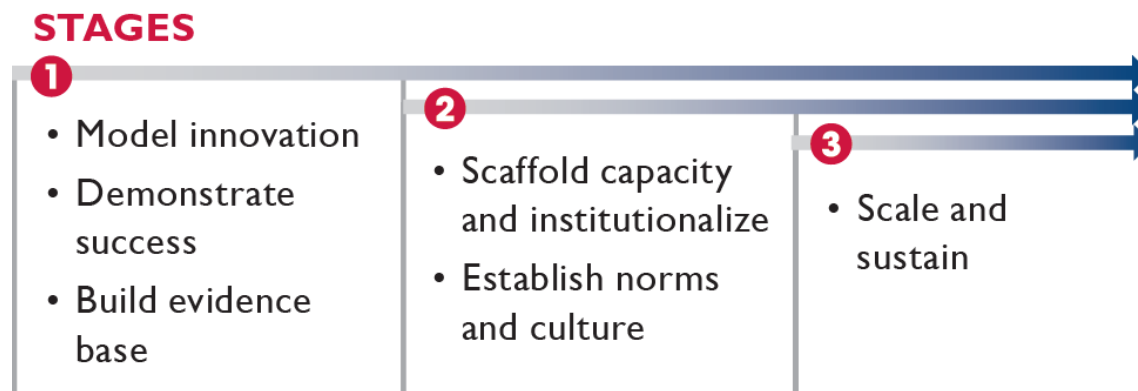
Theme 5. High degree of credibility and strong working relationship with counterparts. The relationship between USAID, the universities, and the Ministry has roots that extend back to the 1970s. Many of today's present educational leaders received their degrees through the USAID-sponsored PhD and master's scholarship programs. The scholarship alumni took on leadership positions in the Ministry and universities, and later became crucial champions for the models introduced. USAID has further cultivated the trust and credibility of its counterparts by actively engaging with senior leadership and working to ensure the Ministry is seen as the face and driver of the programs. Notably, the implementing partner in basic and higher education activities, AMIDEAST, has been working in the West Bank since 1962 and has an excellent reputation in-country for providing a host of educational services.

Theme 6. Excellence in Palestinian portfolio and program leadership. The characteristics of USAID's design and approach described above underscore the quality of the leadership within its Education Office. USAID leadership and visibility has been consistent since the inception of the Ministry in 1994, ensuring a continuity of approach and institutional memory over 22 years, which is rare in any organization. In addition, two of the programs benefited from the appointment of strong Palestinian experts as chiefs of party: the Leadership and Teacher Development Program and the Youth Education Development Program. Perhaps the most difficult aspect for other USAID Missions to replicate is the unique stature of the individual program leaders. However, their work ethic and leadership attributes should serve as models for other senior education officers and chiefs of party.

Theme 7. Emphasis on experiential, project-based, and peer learning. All programs—from teacher training to guidance and counseling to youth development—have capacity building interventions that emphasize project-based learning and peer-to-peer sharing. These elements are crucial for participants to tailor and apply their knowledge and skills to the relevant needs of their institutions, while learning and reinforcing from one another the best practices and lessons learned.

Theme 8. Concerted efforts to strengthen the core institutional monitoring and support functions. The programs introduced in the formal education sectors could not be replicated or sustained without due attention to the monitoring, support, and feedback systems for schools and universities. **Figure 7** depicts a functional monitoring and support system that USAID has been able to foster, particularly in the basic education sector. The Leadership and Teacher Development program successfully established a feedback mechanism whereby the Ministry implementing agency (National Institute for Education and Training) and districts review and evaluate projects undertaken by diploma participants to certify they met the quality standards for obtaining the diploma. District Leadership Teams were formed under Leadership and Teacher Development's guidance to coordinate school supervision and mentoring to teachers and school principals.

Figure 7.   Core Functions to Set Expectations, Monitor and Assure Support

Theme 9. Continuous program adaptation and adjustment to lessons learned and evolving counterpart priorities. Programs that are able to adjust their technical approach based on midterm evaluations, continuous monitoring, and counterpart needs will have a greater chance of success than those that do not. Each of the programs has demonstrated this capability: Leadership and Teacher Development shifted focus from relying on universities to working with and through the Ministry's National Institute of Education and Training for delivering the teacher and principal diploma programs. The Youth Education Development program shifted focus from secondary schools to intensify support to universities based on the findings and recommendations from the midterm evaluation. Support to YDRCs has evolved from highly capitalized, resource-intensive facilities

established under Ruwwad, to service-oriented centers supported by the Partnerships with Youth Program. The Palestinian Faculty Development Program introduced the concept of the Centers of Excellence only in the last three years of the program to institutionalize the instructional reforms and professional development opportunities for university lecturers.

Theme 10. Celebrating victories, sharing successes, and garnering widespread recognition. One mantra of promoting change in any context is to celebrate the small victories and share the successes. All programs in one way or another have implemented a communications strategy that has led to the garnering of recognition amongst counterparts and beneficiaries. Schools participating in the Leadership and Teacher Development and School Support Program are recognized in national and international competitions. Regional project conferences offer opportunities for participants to showcase projects, and share ideas and celebrate their achievements. Publications and video vignettes have generated evidence and a research base for promoting the Leadership and Teacher Development models and demonstrating their effectiveness. District Leadership Teams have begun to recognize high-performing school leaders and teachers. Centers of Excellence organize forums to share and recognize best practices across universities.

By seeing the forest (the unifying USAID education goal) from the trees (the individual component programs), we can begin to understand the overarching factors for USAID's success in Palestine broadly. While each of these programs was implemented separately, under distinct acquisition and assistance agreements, there are a number of common threads that ripple across them. These include the utilization of common tools and approaches, the leveraging of counterparts and individual beneficiaries from one program to another, and the tight working relationships between and among the implementing partners—all of whom have been guided by the steady hand and focused support of the Mission, which has emphasized a systemic and strategic approach to institutional and behavior change.

How have these programs been able to engender, not just the cooperation of counterparts, but the leadership, the cultural change, and the ownership that have led to broad-based success? To answer this question, we examine each of the programs that have faced and overcome the numerous barriers, how individuals affected within these programs are not only transformed but then directly or indirectly affect other programs—and how the leadership among USAID and the implementing partners has served to cultivate and nurture key relationships among the leaders and change agents within the MEHE, universities, and communities. This case study therefore is about the human story that shows, through the prism of the individual experience, how these programs have made their indelible mark on the Palestinian education system and youth development community.

5. The Palestinian Faculty Development Program— Modeling Reforms for Higher Education Learning and Effectiveness through Centers of Excellence for Learning and Teaching

Prior to the advent of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program, the notional approach to higher education instruction in universities was teacher-centered, conducted through professorial lectures, and with few student-teacher, peer-to-peer interaction and experiential or project-based learning opportunities for students. Further, the academic curricula were highly theoretical, divorced from the practical work-life aspects of Palestinian society.

Students graduating from these institutions were ill-prepared for the rigors and requirements of the needs of the modern workforce. The lack of student preparedness and dearth of "soft skills" was a common complaint voiced by prospective employers.

Innovative Model: The Center of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. The Palestinian Faculty Development Program was designed in 2005 to respond to the needs of the Palestinian higher education institutions. Originally conceived by USAID, AMIDEAST, and the Open Society Foundation, the scope of work focused on providing scholarship opportunities to graduates to pursue master's and doctoral degrees, provide short-term training and study tours to improve the quality of instruction in the classroom, and recognize high-performing professors and lecturers who were able to demonstrate innovative instructional practices. Beginning in 2012, the question of how universities were to sustain these reforms led to the creation of Centers of Excellence for Learning and Teaching (CELTs).

The mission of the CELT is to provide a resource to lecturers and professors at universities to build faculty capacity to deliver high-quality, effective instruction and research opportunities to their students. CELTs fulfill their mission through delivering ongoing training and support to faculty in areas ranging from syllabus development to implementing relevant research projects with community and private-sector stakeholders. They have produced and managed a clearinghouse of materials and online resources, which span a variety of disciplines and serve many different departments. They also sponsor and organize conferences and symposia and help faculty produce and publish research. Since 2015, the CELTs have been self-sustaining without direct external support provided by any donor. Their lasting impact on the university system is their influence on how the traditional academic culture of the university has given way to fostering dynamic research and learning for both students and faculty.

We interviewed key informants from three universities: An Najah University in Nablus and Bethlehem University and Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron. These universities have actively situated the CELT as one of the mechanisms to advance their institutional missions. The foundation of the CELTs was laid in the Palestinian Faculty Development Program's earlier efforts with senior administrators and faculty. Key to their success was the Palestinian Faculty Development Program's **ability to work over a longer-period time horizon** with senior decision-makers who grasped how the one-off benefits of the short-term studies and workshops could be institutionalized and replicated through the work of the CELTs.

When USAID and AMIDEAST conceived of the CELTs, they envisioned a center within the university that could continue the professional development services to faculty introduced under the Palestinian Faculty Development Program. These services include workshops on enhanced instructional practices and classroom interaction techniques, outreach to private businesses to link theory with real world practical experiences, and facilitation of experiential- or project-based research and learning opportunities for faculty and students. And yet, if these centers only provided this service function, their long-term impact would be muted. Rather, in the case of the three universities visited, each had elevated the role of the CELT to ensure that these centers have more direct influence over the organizational culture and direction of the university faculty and policies. How did this come to be?

Case study of Bethlehem University's experience. The story of Bethlehem University begins in the 1970s when it was first established with an emphasis on providing high-quality instruction and learning for students. According to Dr. Irene Hazou, Vice President for Academic Affairs, the university early on established an office for teaching support that

served as a precursor of the CELT. In 2000, the university underwent a process of evaluation of its teaching and learning practices and environment. The findings identified specific areas of weakness, which shifted the university's focus to providing a more interactive learning environment and improving its learning outcomes. Born out of this evaluation was an institutional strategy to improve the quality of instruction. *Herein lies the first key to USAID's success: the Palestinian Faculty Development Program that was introduced in 2005 responded directly to a need already self-identified by the university.* From 2005 onward, Bethlehem University was very much involved in the activities of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program, including senior leadership in the office of Academic Affairs (the equivalent of the provost). As part of their involvement, a number of faculty received national awards and recognition for outstanding teaching. This raised the profile of Palestinian Faculty Development Program's efforts and drew the attention of the university's leadership to do something more formal and structured in approach. The pump was thus primed for the establishment of the CELT.

The CELT was demand-driven, responsive to need. The factors critical to the CELT's sustained success were that it was driven by the university's leadership driven from the outset, situated within the university's mission, and supported by the university's policies. The proposal for the CELT was led by Dr. Irene Hazou, then assistant vice president for Academic Affairs and currently the vice president of Academic Affairs. It was directed by Dr. Rabab Tamish, who holds a PhD from Cambridge University in adult education and was a current professor at Bethlehem University. The leadership from the outset reflected a sound marriage of Dr. Hazou's vision with Dr. Rabab's know-how.

In Dr. Hazou's words, they did not want reduce the center to a place where only training occurred. Rather, the trainings and workshops were to be situated in a broader context. The policies that drive academic excellence, which set expectations for faculty and facilitate an enhanced learning environment, were to be driven from an array of mission-focused programs. The CELT at Bethlehem University became one of the most important tools to advance the university's vision and drive these academic policies. In short, the thrust was to align the vision of the university with the mission of the CELT. As such, the center became an integral part of the work—a hand of the Academic Affairs office.

One example of forging policy with practice relates to a workshop on assessment practices for faculty. Prior to conducting the workshop, the center analyzed hundreds if not thousands of exams, including the feedback and reflection. All professors, fulltime and part-time participated. The synthesis of the analysis formed the basis of the training materials and also led to systematic changes in the university's academic assessment policies.

The CELT became a key policy driver and professional development resource. The link between policy and practice was crucial. It was part and parcel of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program's design of the CELT grant. The first grant was to establish the infrastructure; the second grant focused on the center's role in enhancing academic leadership within the university. The center worked with all departments to analyze the needs of the students, observed classrooms, developed methodology for teacher observation and feedback, and helped teachers develop structured course portfolios. Based on the findings of the survey, the center focused its support on professors of English and Arabic, which helped to completely revise the language courses offered. Today, all teachers maintain records of their course portfolios, including the course outline, articulated learning outcomes, examples of practicum or products that students are to produce, and self-reflections on the quality of the course.

Demonstrating the CELT's effectiveness to change mindsets. The changes to academic policies and embrace of the CELT as a driver for innovation neither occurred overnight, nor reflected the whim of an individual. Bethlehem University's Academic Council, which comprises department deans and chairpersons as well as the library and academic affairs vice presidents, had to sign off on any academic-related policy change. Naturally a few individual council members were (and to some extent still are) resistant to change. The academic and center leadership were able to chip away at this resistance by i) modeling or demonstrating the center's effectiveness in terms of its service offerings; ii) getting the council members to delegate tasks and participation; and iii) targeting center programs to their relevant needs. One indicator of the council's buy-in was the voluntary participation of the departments' faculty and leadership in center activities. But over time, the center has become a norm within the university for modeling teaching and learning excellence.

The future of Bethlehem's CELT is bright as its work continues. The university intends to work with the library, information technology, and facilities departments to ensure they do not operate as stand-alone activities. The intent is to bring these under the umbrella of a newly constituted office of the assistant vice president to oversee all initiatives that affect the teaching and learning environment, with the center at the lead. The future director of the CELT would therefore also be at the level of an assistant vice president, with a broader portfolio responsible for supporting the overall quality of teaching and learning, including the conducive policies, norms, and environments. The vision moving forward is that the center will help ensure that teaching quality and learning outcomes are central to the design and direction of the university's facilities, equipment, and material resources.

Establishing the CELT as a key aspect of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning system. The next big project is to link the quality assurance work more directly with the service offerings of the CELT. If the duty of the Quality Assurance Department is to ensure learning outcomes are being achieved, the role of the center is to provide a resource to those departments and teachers who are struggling or in need of remedial support. The center has developed methodologies for observing and providing feedback to teachers, reviewing the quality of course outlines and syllabi, and reviewing assessment methods.

Figure 8 illustrates how the CELTs shape the institutional culture to advance the goals of the program.

Figure 8.   The Link between CELTS, Academic Policies, and Outcomes
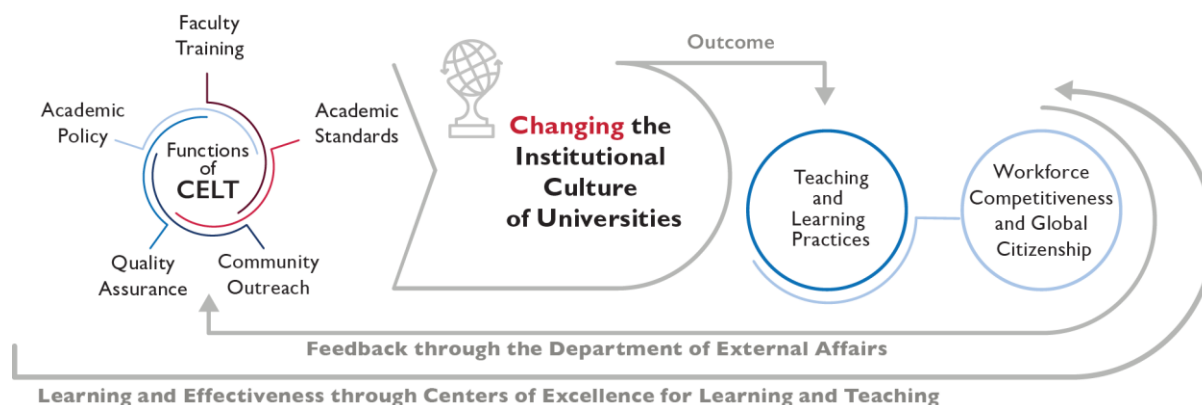
The functions of the CELT touch upon a number of different aspects of university academic life: academic policy and standards, community engagement and outreach, faculty training, and quality assurance. The work of the CELT promotes changes in institutional culture that

positively influence instructional practices and behaviors, and downstream impact on student outcomes in relation to workforce competitiveness and preparation. By observing and monitoring teachers, and by engaging private-sector stakeholders help the CELT become a better learning organization to further advance the instructional quality and relevance of the faculty.

Another initiative just taking shape is the university's intent to link the work of the career center, community outreach and partnerships, and the CELT. The 2012–2018 Strategic Plan outlined five broad goals of the university. However, in 2016, an additional goal was included to prepare students for global citizenship. Under this goal, the university outlines its strategy for promoting student and faculty awareness of the "soft-skills" for workforce preparedness and for integrating career needs of students more directly within the curriculum. To date, a strategy committee has been formed from the Academic Council along with the executive vice president for student affairs, the director of the career center, and the director of external academic relations.

6. Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program: Preparing University Students for the Demands of the Modern Economy

The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program was conceived by USAID to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian universities to prepare students for the demands of the modern economy. Implemented by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), the program aimed to enhance the role and capabilities of the university career centers to deliver an array of student-focused services ranging from career counseling to internship programs.

Innovative Model: Career Center tools and services. The core programs introduced for each career center include the Passport to Success, Social Entrepreneurship, Build Your Business, and Psychometric Assessment tools. Each of these programs or tools offers distinct services to students as part of a structured approach to guidance and counseling. Over the course of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program, 11 universities were supported either through direct grants and/or technical assistance.

Adjusting mid-coursing and adapting to beneficiary needs. The success of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program was how the universities have come to adopt the guidance and counseling services as a core mission of their work. The program shifted its focus to supporting career centers as a result of the midterm evaluation's recommendations. The shift was based on the midterm evaluation's finding that youth-serving institutions best placed to sustain the impact of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program were the university structures. This was a testament to the relevance and effectiveness of the counseling service programs introduced, as well as their alignment to the mission and goals of the universities these programs were supporting.

Cultivating leadership and credibility with counterparts. Unlike CELTs, career centers were already established by all universities. Yet few universities had taken any measures to professionalize the guidance and counseling services offered, nor situated the career centers within the universities' broader strategic vision and goals. Moreover, few if any purposefully linked the work of the career centers with the practical needs of the private sector. The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program sought to reinvent the career centers by cultivating the relationships with the university leadership and reaching out to private-sector stakeholders, such as the chambers of commerce and technology incubators.

The notable success of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program's guidance and counseling programs in universities is underscored by the efforts of IYF and USAID to engage directly with the universities' leadership. The universities that have taken up the guidance and counseling programs most consistently are those where leadership was clearly invested. And no university embodied the vision of program coherence—how the CELT and career center served to transform and prepare students for the modern economy—more than Palestine Polytechnic University.

Case study of Palestine Polytechnic University's experience. When William Butler Yeats said that education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire, he could have been describing Palestine Polytechnic University's response to the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program and Palestinian Faculty Development Program. Polytechnic was not so much the passive receptor of technical assistance as it was the protagonist in the search for ways to meaningfully reform the culture of the institution. The Palestine Polytechnic experience shows how existing demand by leadership coupled with strong technical assistance can lead to lasting and sustained institutional reforms designed to produce better learning outcomes. As Mr. Aiman Tamimi, vice president for planning and development and external affairs at the university put it, "we are the masters of the programs; the programs are not masters of us." In other words, Palestine Polytechnic was able to proactively use the programs to advance the university's goals rather than readjust the university's strategy to fit the goals of the programs.

Prior to 2012, Palestine Polytechnic University did not offer any systematic service for career counseling or workforce preparedness to its students, according to Mr. Fadi Sweti, the coordinator for the alumni unit and head of the career center. Today, it not only has an established Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (CECD), but has transformed its strategic focus to that of an "entrepreneurial university development model" (**Figure 9**). The entrepreneurial model shifts the university from education provider to institution that fosters the commercialization of knowledge and contributes to the development of private enterprises and the regional economy (Etzkowitz, 2008). Preparing students for the modern economy and establishing direct links with community and private enterprises are part of the core pillars of their strategic plan.

Figure 9. **Palestine Polytechnic University's Entrepreneurial University Development Model**
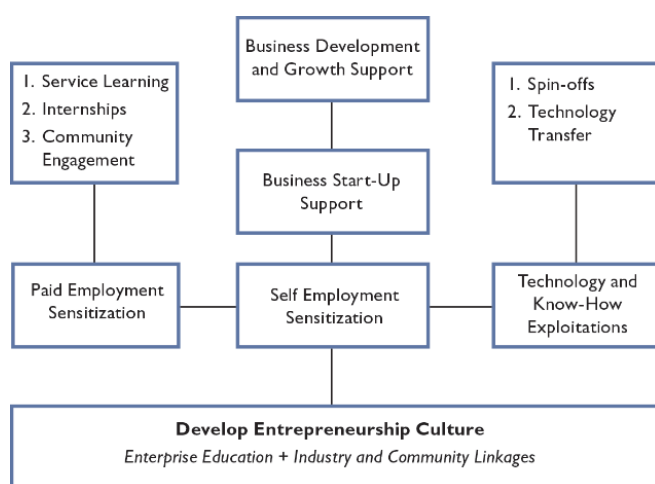
Source: Palestine Polytechnic University, Department of Development and Planning

Establishing program synergies between Career Center services and the CELT. The CECD along with the CELT are viewed as key drivers to advance Palestine Polytechnic's

goals to become an entrepreneurial development university. All students at the university today are required to participate in programs offered by the CECD. First-year students take the Passport to Success Program. Students then take either the Build Your Business Program or the Social Entrepreneurship Program, depending on the track they prefer to pursue. Lastly, all students are expected to intern with an external company or organization as part of their work-practicum requirements. The elevated role of the CECD reflects the evolving role of the university's CELT, supported by the Palestinian Faculty Development Program.

Where the CECD is focused directly on the student body to prepare them for the demands of the modern economy, Palestine Polytechnic saw that the CELT can produce similar outcomes by influencing the quality of teaching and learning to shift the mindset of teachers and change the way instruction is delivered. As with Bethlehem University, the efforts of Palestinian Faculty Development Program prior to 2012 laid the foundation for the successful establishment of the CELT. The CELT itself benefited from the full support of the university's leadership, as well as the appointment of a strong director to oversee its operations. As one of the key drivers for advancing the entrepreneurial development goals of the university, the Palestine Polytechnic's leadership recognized that the CELT must play a stronger role in changing the culture and normative behavior of the faculty. To this end, the director of the CELT was recently appointed head of quality assurance at the university, coupling CELT's mandate for improving instructional practice with the function to evaluate faculty performance and monitor quality indicators associated with teaching and learning. Linking the two functions (quality assurance and quality improvement) directly signals the university's commitment to ensuring meaningful and lasting change in normative classroom practices.

Palestine Polytechnic has further taken advantage of the reinforcing and multiplier effects between the CELT and CECD programs. The CECD programs have led to improved instructional practices by relying on professors to deliver the modules. The modules themselves reflect best practices in student-centered, inquiry-based, and experiential instruction. The CECD programs emphasize an external community focus for students, which resonates with the community-based learning activities encouraged and promoted by the CELT. Moreover, the CELT emphasis on engaging students in critical thinking, communication, and experiential learning fosters the outcomes in student behavior and workforce preparedness that the CECD aims to achieve. The symbiosis of the two programs is recognized through their integration into Palestine Polytechnic's Entrepreneurial University Development Model (**Figure 9**) where the CELT advances goals related to community linkages and enterprise education, and the CECD supports efforts related to business startup, service learning, internships, and self-employment sensitization. The relationship of these two programs to achieving the common goal is illustrated in **Figure 10,** where the CELT and Career Centers offer the universities two pathways to improve the competiveness and employability of youth: CELTs through enhancing the learning environment and Career Centers by enhancing their employability and preparation for the workforce.

Figure 10. Two Trajectories for Improving Student Global Citizenship through Career Centers and Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning
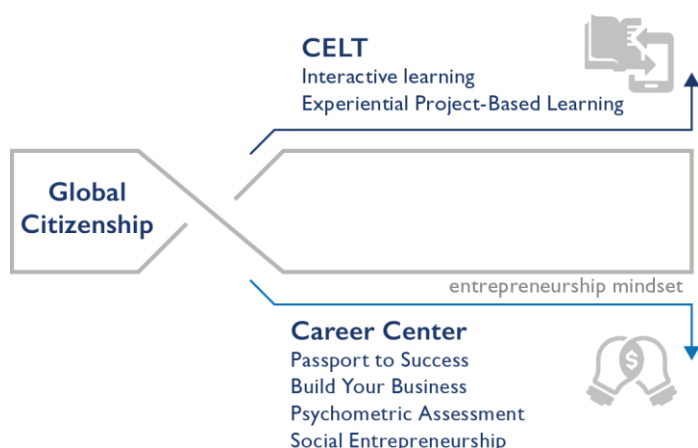
The main question for our study is how Palestine Polytechnic managed to act as swiftly as it did in enacting these changes. What were the factors that precipitated the adoption of these programs and elevated their role in advancing the strategic goals of the university? And why among the 11 universities assisted under the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program did Palestine Polytechnic manage to excel while other universities lagged? The answers reside in the quality and continuity of Palestine Polytechnic's leadership, their perceived ownership of the programs, and the organizational culture that enabled these programs to thrive.

Responsive to need, demonstrated effectiveness of the Career Center. In Hebron, the unemployment rate has been quite high, though the city is widely recognized as the center of industry in Palestine. The businesses are family run and tend to be insular in their hiring of employees. Palestine Polytechnic University was getting consistent feedback that its graduates were not ready for the demands of the labor market, that they did not have the soft skills that employers needed, such as interpersonal communication. Graduates were thrust into the labor market wholly unprepared to do the necessary networking, interviewing, and employment preparation needed to find employment or stay employed. This feedback to the university's leadership led in part to the university's pursuing the entrepreneurial model and embracing the role of the CECD.

CECD's programs were adopted early on based on their demonstrated success in helping students become more employable. The Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program-supported internship program proved particularly effective in helping students obtain employment post-graduation. According to Mr. Sweti, during the first three years of the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program, 40 percent of all participants were employed at the place of internship, 28 percent were hired immediately elsewhere, and 3 percent opened their own business. The evidence of impact, more than anything else, elevated the role of the CECD in the strategic plan and focus of the university. The success of this initial batch of students led to another round of proposals, which led to the institutionalization of the center as a core structure in the university.

In 2014 Palestine Polytechnic leadership began to revise its strategic plan to shift to the entrepreneurial university model. The strategy was led by the president of the university, and overseen by the vice president for planning and development, Mr. Tamimi. Mr. Tamimi had led the proposals for establishing the CECD. This shift was borne out of the recognition that

the university needed to become more competitive in producing employable graduates, engaging with the private sector and community, and offering unique and differentiated services for its student body and faculty. Seeing the success of the CECD programs, the leadership pushed to institutionalize these services as part of its strategic plan.

When so many technically sound programs fail to anchor within the institution it is due often to the senior leadership either not being aware of the programs or not connecting those programs to their overall goals and strategy. In the case of Palestine Polytechnic, the leadership was engaged from the outset. They saw a clear link between their university's mission and goals, and perhaps most importantly, made the willful decision to direct the programs toward their end goals and not the other way around. Rather than having the programs dictate their goals to the university, Palestine Polytechnic directed the programs to advance their own goals and agenda. This is an important and instructive insight for how programs can and perhaps should be introduced. It was in a similar vein that USAID through the Model Schools Network and the follow-on Leadership and Teacher Development Program was able to succeed in the basic education sector.

7. Institutionalizing a Model for School Leadership and Teacher Professional Development

Whereas the lasting impact USAID has had on higher education lies principally with the individual institutions, USAID's work in basic education has resulted in broader systemic reforms. From 2005 to present, USAID has implemented a series of programs aimed at transforming the way instruction is delivered in the classrooms, beginning first through the Model Schools Network and carried on through the Leadership and Teacher Development Program and the School Support Program. Each of these programs has been implemented by AMIDEAST with oversight from the same USAID agreement officer, and so has benefited from **a continuity in programmatic vision and leadership for over a decade**. This is but one of several features of these programs that have led to their successful uptake by MEHE, district and school counterparts.

The Model Schools Network was a program designed to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by focusing primarily on school leadership, the use of technology, and classroom instruction methods. The program launched in 2007 in response to MEHE's teacher education program and strategy. MEHE undertook an ambitious strategy to upgrade the vast majority of its teacher workforce. Based on a census survey of all teachers, the Ministry found 72 percent were unqualified. The MEHE strategy relied on residential upgrading of teachers at universities. However, there were two main challenges with this approach: first, universities had limited facilities in which they could train only so many teachers at a time, and second, the instruction provided at universities itself was modeled on traditional pedagogic approaches, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the training.

Establishing an innovative model for in-service teacher professional development.
The Model School Network offered a different approach that was strategically oriented to address school as the unit of change and model a scalable, sustainable program for teacher professional development by introducing cluster-based training and support. The Network program focused on building capacity of school leaders and teachers with a focus on how to change teaching practices at the classroom level. From 2007 to 2009, the Model School Network worked in 17 private schools. From 2009 to 2012, it expanded its work to 40 public schools.

The positive experiences from these intervention schools sowed the seeds for the follow-on programs. The initial Model School Network program gave way to the Leadership and Teacher Development Program (beginning in 2012) in 300 schools, and the more comprehensive School Support Program begun in 2013 targeting 40 schools. Taken together, the models these programs have introduced include: i) the Leadership Diploma Program and the Teacher Qualification Diploma Program; ii) decentralized school-based management practices and District Leadership Teams; and iii) experiential and collaborative learning processes. The first model involves the school principal and teacher qualification programs that are being continued through the work of the MEHE and the National Institute of Educational Training (NIET), a semi-autonomous affiliate of the Ministry. The latter two models reflect changes in the Ministry systems and operations, as well as in the normative instructional practices and school culture.

As such, the impact of these programs extends well beyond the 400 schools that have directly participated. Today, over 3,000 teachers and school principals have been trained directly by NIET with support from non-US government funding through the Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA), in addition to the over 3,000 teachers and principals trained through USAID support directly. How were USAID and AMIDEAST able to have such broad impact on the sector, particularly as the scope of their work was limited to only a small fraction of Palestinian schools? The remaining sections of this study examine these models and explore how they came to take root and flourish in the West Bank despite the obvious political and security challenges.

The Leadership Diploma and Teacher Qualification Diploma programs are the touchstone achievements of USAID's investment in the basic education sector. The success of these programs resides in the quality of their content and the means by which they have been institutionalized. While the diploma programs were initially conceived under the Model School Network, it was not until the Leadership and Teacher Development Program that they were shaped into their present-day incarnation and institutionalized as core service offerings of the NIET.

Prior to the 2007 Model School Network program, MEHE did not have a formal, structured or comprehensive in-service teacher education program. The Network partnered with local universities to design and deliver a module for an accredited teacher professional development that could advance teachers' professional qualifications or certification. By demonstrating the effectiveness of the teacher training program, the Network was able to convince the Ministry that the framework for teacher training as a model could be scaled, and that the Ministry should leverage professional development of teachers and school principals as a means to tackle education reform by making the school the unit of change in the system. To put it more directly: the Model School Network demonstrated to MEHE that teacher training was not merely a means to produce qualified teachers, but also a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning by changing the ways in which schools were managed and instruction was delivered. As Dr. Shahnaz Far, former director of NIET and current director of supervision related, "the other directorates in the Ministry saw how often the [Model School Network] and [Leadership and Teacher Development] schools were getting recognized for their high quality, their performance on national competitions, and inspired them and other schools to get involved in the training NIET was delivering. When principals talk with other school principals, they see the quality of their work and say 'this is what we can learn from NIET.'"

The shift in strategy required MEHE to focus equally on changing the qualities of school leadership so that the impact of the teacher training on the classrooms could be reinforced

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and replicated throughout the school. The notion that school leadership matters extended to the community as well as to the overall education administration (the districts and the Ministry). The ripple effects of the Leadership Diploma Program were felt beyond the classroom walls, and have begun to influence the character of decentralization in the education system, as discussed in Chapter 8. So how did the teacher training program initiated in 17 private schools in 2007 come to be adopted by the Ministry as the key program for in-service professional development of its school principals and teachers by 2012?

There was something revolutionary about this idea in the West Bank at the time the Model School Network was introduced. For up until then, instruction—whether it was the university or primary level—was considered an interaction dominated by lecturing and in which students were passive receptors of knowledge and learning. To be qualified as a teacher meant holding a certificate and nothing more. The very idea that schools and classrooms could or should be dynamic learning environments was not widely accepted until the Network program demonstrated the efficacy of new instructional techniques. These techniques, based primarily on experiential, project-based learning and child-friendly, student-centered practices, took some time to take hold. The Model School Network's success was to demonstrate the efficacy of both the model for teacher training—that is, through cluster-based, short-burst workshops; and the efficacy of the content—that is, the experiential learning and emphasis on pedagogic best practices. Both of these characteristics represented a departure from MEHE's traditional notion of teacher training and professional development.

Yet, the delivery of the training under the Model School Network program in itself was not institutionalized within the MEHE. It was developed and delivered through a consortium of universities coordinated by AMIDEAST. The institutional linkages with MEHE were tenuous and informal. Key officers from MEHE and NIET were engaged as stakeholders, participants, and co-developers, but the institutional roles that MEHE and NIET played at this point were more functionary in their blessing of the activities than they were active implementers or leaders of the program. This all began to change under the advent of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program.

Aligning the program to MEHE strategy, policy, and institutional needs. The Leadership and Teacher Development Program was designed to work with MEHE to institutionalize the teacher training and professional development programs introduced under the Model School Network. A necessary first step was to find an organizational home within MEHE. At the time, NIET, which was established in 2003, was implementing training programs for school principals and education administrators. The training programs NIET offered were reliant on donor funding and mostly ad-hoc; they were not systematically focused on producing accredited, certified diplomas, nor were they tied to specific Ministry strategies, goals, or outcomes. The Model School Network and, subsequently, the Leadership and Teacher Development Program were able to change this.

When the Model School Network first developed the teacher diploma training course, senior NIET officers were involved as part of the team of counterparts developing the modules. Their initial engagement set the stage for future ownership of the program. The first hook, so to speak, was the success of the diploma program itself and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The second hook was that the training was standards-based: it reflected the professional standards for teaching and school leadership described by the Ministry. The third hook was that it was demand-driven and relevant to the needs of the school principal and teacher. While the course modules were formalized and structured

following a standard curriculum, the participants selected projects to complete based on their school and classroom needs and relevant interest to their work.

Partnership leadership and Ministry champions. Three key individuals from MEHE and AMIDEAST were responsible for leading the efforts to institutionalize the diploma training programs. Dr. Saeed Assaf, the Leadership and Teacher Development Program chief of party; Dr. Shahnaz Far, then director of NIET, and Dr. Basri Saleh, then deputy assistant secretary for planning at MEHE. The partnership between AMIDEAST, the NIET, and MEHE was based on a mutual respect and professional relationships established over the years since AMIDEAST was first active supporting the scholarship programs in the 1970s and 1980s. Dr. Saleh and Dr. Assaf were together in the early years after the Oslo Accord working to transition basic and higher education from Israeli civil administration to the control of the Palestinian Authority. Indeed, as one of the "founding fathers" of the Palestinian education system, Dr. Assaf has earned a high degree of respect amongst Palestinian educators and administrators. There is no question that his stature has imbued the Model School Network and Leadership and Teacher Development Program with a degree of credibility and cachet with Ministry counterparts that might take other programs years to develop, if ever. Coupled with AMIDEAST's reputation for excellence in education in the region, and the high regard in which it is held from its work over 60 plus years in-country, the Model School Network, Leadership and Teacher Development Program, and now School Support Program have enjoyed unique advantages in getting the necessary traction with Ministry counterparts.

The relationships between AMIDEAST, Leadership and Teacher Development Program leadership, and MEHE leadership were among several important factors underlying the Leadership and Teacher Development Program's success. Perhaps more important was the sense of ownership from the Palestinian counterparts, which was cultivated early on under the Model School Network program. While many programs attempt to instill ownership through participation, the Network/Leadership approach drew on the visible leadership of the Palestinian counterparts in developing and implementing the principal and teacher diploma programs. The ownership of these programs was fostered within the Ministry, NIET, and districts, as well as among the participating school principals and teachers. As Dr. Sofia Rimawi, head of research and evaluation at NIET, mentioned at the North Hebron Leadership and Teacher Development Project Conference, "LTD changed the culture of cooperation between and within the Ministry, NIET, districts, and schools. Before we were closed off from one another. Now look around, you can see that there is much more openness and willingness to share what works, what needs support and how. The culture within NIET has changed considerably. We are far more knowledgeable now of the needs of schools and teachers, and we owe this to our efforts in developing the diploma modules and our participation in project conferences like this."

Focus on institutional and systems strengthening. Early on in the Leadership and Teacher Development Program, the decision to work primarily through NIET paid dividends. NIET received a much-needed boost in its capacity to serve as a national training center, building up its core cadre of national trainers and drawing on the ranks of educators and university professors to professionalize and certify a cadre of national trainers. Secondly, NIET, with the support of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program and technical assistance from the University of Massachusetts, refined and streamlined the diploma curriculum to fit within the school year and respond to the relevant needs of school teachers and principals. The refined curriculum also reflected the school leadership and teaching competencies and standards. Under it, the diploma program became far more than

participation in one-off workshops. Rather, it became a pathway for school principals and teachers to explore and experiment with new techniques in pedagogy, classroom management, school leadership, and community engagement, while focusing their efforts on positively affecting student learning outcomes and teaching practices.

Every school that currently participates can give testament to the impact of the diploma program. Their stories are shared through the publications that the Leadership and Teacher Development Program produces as well as through the diploma project conferences. These project conferences are organized as an end-of-school-year forum for diploma candidates to share the projects they have implemented over the course of the school year, to discuss their ideas, innovations, and challenges with other teachers, principals, district officials, and university professors. The project is one of the core requirements for obtaining the diploma. Every year, diploma candidates submit their projects to the board for review and evaluation. The very best ones are selected for presentation, while many others are selected to showcase as posters at the conference.

Experiential, project-based learning. Several instructive lessons emerge this experience. First, that the project-based experiential learning requirements compel a degree of fidelity to the training that most workshop-based training programs cannot ensure. Presenting a work-practicum project as a requirement for obtaining a diploma forces the participant to apply the learning to a real-world application in the school or classroom. The projects also emphasize the experimental nature of the work with the intent of the diploma candidate to evaluate the impact of learning through baseline, midline, and endline assessments. One of the projects featured in the North Hebron Conference dealt with creating an active classroom learning environment for mathematics classes, where traditional instruction was replaced with a diverse set of interactive learning programs, such as dramatic role play, peer-to-peer student learning, sports and outdoor activities, and the development and use of non-textbook learning aides.

A second takeaway lesson is that the projects themselves were open to what the diploma candidates felt were the greatest needs or what would have the greatest sustainable impact on their learning environment in the school. While many projects were subject-specific as the one above demonstrates, others were not subject-specific, but focused on the soft skills of learners. One such project was the brainchild of a school principal that focused on creating a Fair School.

Under this program, the school selected 100 students to participate in extracurricular activities designed to instill critical thinking, collaboration and group problem solving, and interpersonal communication. While at first many parents first objected to their students' participation out of concern that it would take away from their academic studies, the program found many other parents who wanted their children to participate. The program, according to the principal, created a great deal interest on the part of both parents and students.

A third takeaway lesson is the holistic nature of the program. The diploma program pushed the participants to tackle issues of teaching and learning from the basis of the school as the unit of change. This was not about delivery of a new curriculum or set of textbooks, or even a specific pedagogy. By engaging school principals and teachers together, the avenues for change in the classroom were reinforced and supported by corresponding changes in the way principals led and managed their teachers, students, and parents. The mathematics teacher who designed the active classroom was given the full support of the school principal because the principal, who had participated in the leadership diploma course, understood the importance of the pedagogy. The teacher received continuous support through participation in peer learning circles and assistance from the principal and district supervisor. The school principal was an active stakeholder in ensuring the success of the project, because the project aligned to the new vision, culture, and goals that the principal was trying to instill and advance in his school.

The fourth lesson learned from the Leadership and Teacher Development Program experience is its emphasis on peer learning and sharing. Just as the school principal and teachers support and reinforce one another's efforts, so, too, do the learning circles peer teachers use to share each other's experiences, the conferences that bring educators together, and the transformative role that district supervisors have begun to play in supporting teachers in their classrooms.

School principal at the North Hebron Diploma Conference sharing his project experience from the Leadership Diploma Course. Photo credit: AMIDEAST

In short, the diploma programs have been successful in changing behaviors of school principals and teachers by instilling a sense of agency (control), a shared understanding of the reforms, and the attitudes or beliefs in the value of the reforms. Still these might wither under time and external pressure if the normative environment went unaddressed. To this end, the Leadership and Teacher Development Program focused its attention on the broader education systems that had to be addressed to support and sustain these reforms.

8. Strengthening District and MEHE Systems for Broad-Based School Support for Teaching and Learning

Above and beyond the success of the diploma program, another legacy of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program was its ability to align the education system to foster and support behaviors of school principals and teachers that prior to 2012 were the exception, not the norm. These behaviors of peer sharing, experiential learning, and experimental, assessment-based innovation in the classroom and schools reflect a major departure from the traditional approach to teaching and learning. The Leadership and Teacher Development Program understood early on that lasting behavior change could not come from participation in a training program or completion of a project alone. The education system would need to align to support and reinforce these behaviors at the school and

classroom level. Thus, the Program turned its attention to the workings of MEHE and districts as part of a broader effort to sustain the pedagogic and school leadership reforms introduced through the diploma program.

Although Palestine is relatively small in comparison with other countries in the region, its geo-political complexities and historical legacies have resulted in a highly centralized, highly bureaucratic command and control Ministry. District education offices function as extended branches of the Ministry, each unit in the district reflecting and reporting to its parent division in the Ministry. According to a Functional Review Audit conducted by the Leadership and Teacher Development Program, most districts up until recently could be characterized by the lack of information sharing and coordination between units. Furthermore, a 2015 Data Gap Assessment commissioned by USAID and the MEHE found that the flow of information mirrors their work practices, in that information is stove-piped and curated by individual MEHE units and flows vertically up the chain of command to the central Ministry. Only rarely if ever was information shared horizontally across units. The district directors have often been relegated to managing human resources of their teaching workforce and dealing with the execution of Ministry policy in schools. Little in the way of meaningful planning, resource allocation, and decision-making, or coordinated and collaborative work planning, was undertaken by district leadership. In this environment, district supervisors carried on their work independent of the broader reforms in pedagogy and school leadership that MEHE and NIET were attempting to foster through the Leadership and Teacher Development Program.

Systems focus for decentralized support and quality assurance. The Leadership and Teacher Development Program sought to reform the work of the districts in two meaningful ways. The first was to help each district function as a coordinated and cohesive unit through the establishment of District Leadership Teams. The second was to help the Ministry identify the barriers and constraints in administrative management systems through a functional audit of the Ministry and districts.

The Leadership and Teacher Development Program introduced in early 2013 the concept of district leadership teams comprising the district director and heads of several units (planning, administration, finance, supervision, etc.). The leadership teams took on the functions of cross-unit planning, coordination, and communication. Collectively the teams meet to review and provide feedback on schools' improvement plans, to organize district-wide conferences, and to coordinate activities of district officers who planned to visit schools. The district leadership teams were also responsible for developing and monitoring the implementation of the district education plan. The District Leadership Team was formally recognized as an administrative structure within the district through formal communique by the Ministry. And again, it took a combination of the persistence of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program leadership and the strong positive relationships with the Ministry to make it happen.

But the formation of the District Leadership Teams alone did not guarantee meaningful change of behaviors. The Leadership and Teacher Development Program experience is instructive in that much of the positive reinforcement that the program provided to districts was in the form of the personal engagement of the chief of party, Dr. Saeed Assaf. When he called upon the district officers, they listened. They viewed him not merely as a counterpart but more as a family might view a patriarch. He brought to bear the gravitas from his prior senior post in the Ministry, as well as the international experience gained in Egypt. And while it is extraordinarily rare for programs to have as their chief individuals of his stature and position, the work ethic and moral certitude that underscored his efforts should and could be a model for all chiefs of party to emulate.

The Bethlehem and North Hebron education districts shared their experience of how the work of their District Leadership Teams has transformed the role that districts play in supporting their schools. In Bethlehem, the first action taken after the formation of the leadership team was to establish 44 school clusters and reorganize the school supervisors to take geographic responsibility. Prior to this action, supervisors were organized by functional responsibility (following subject-based advising or solely responsible to a division within the Ministry). The districts, too, were motivated by seeing the success enjoyed by schools under support from the Leadership and Teacher Development Program, the infusion of technical and material assistance, and the changes in quality from those schools and teachers participating in the diploma programs. The initial victories cascaded into greater buy-in from both school principals and district officers.

Bethlehem District today has taken on a greater role in expanding the service offerings of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program to non-program schools. Bethlehem sponsored participation of non-program schools in the NIET diploma program, established a database of school needs that all units access and use to prioritize school support and allocate resources, and even introduced localized and relevant curricula, such as a vocational-technical education tract for secondary school students that focuses on tourism and hospitality. North Hebron has elevated the 20 Leadership and Teacher Development schools to serve as mentors and trainers to non-program schools, establishing exchange visits between program and non-program schools, and creating clusters for intensifying school support. These initial activities do not guarantee that the Leadership and Teacher Development Program interventions will be replicated or sustainable beyond the life of the program, but they do signify the degree of ownership and sense of agency that districts possess as a result of their engagement.

Strengthening organizational culture for monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The Leadership and Teacher Development Program has begun to effect changes within MEHE and its national institutions. Notably, the culture of NIET has come to reflect the principles and values espoused under the diploma program, according to Dr. Rimawi of NIET. NIET leadership now refers to its trainers as facilitators. Trainers or facilitators are motivated and mindful of their own professional development needs, and NIET has established a professional development track for staff. Moreover, the formative work NIET undertook to assess the needs of the teachers and schools was transformative for many of NIET staff whose exposure and engagement with basic education was primarily through an academic lens. The continuing evaluation and feedback role that NIET facilitators provide to diploma candidates about their project work enables a continuous learning opportunity for NIET as it continues to look for better and more innovative approaches to pedagogic and school leadership best practices.

As **Figure 11** shows, the degree of cooperation, communication, and feedback between NIET, the District Leadership Teams (which also serve to review projects), and the schools is one of the lasting reforms of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program. Teachers receive support from principals, who in turn receive support and feedback from the District Leadership Teams. The inner circles of the diagram reflect the peer-to-peer cluster based learning. The arrows moving from right to left reflect the setting of expectations through the accredited diploma programs. The arrows moving from left to right reflect the feedback loops between teachers, school principals, and district supervisors.

Figure 11. Positive Reinforcing Relationship between Districts, Schools, and National Institutions Fostered by the LTD Program
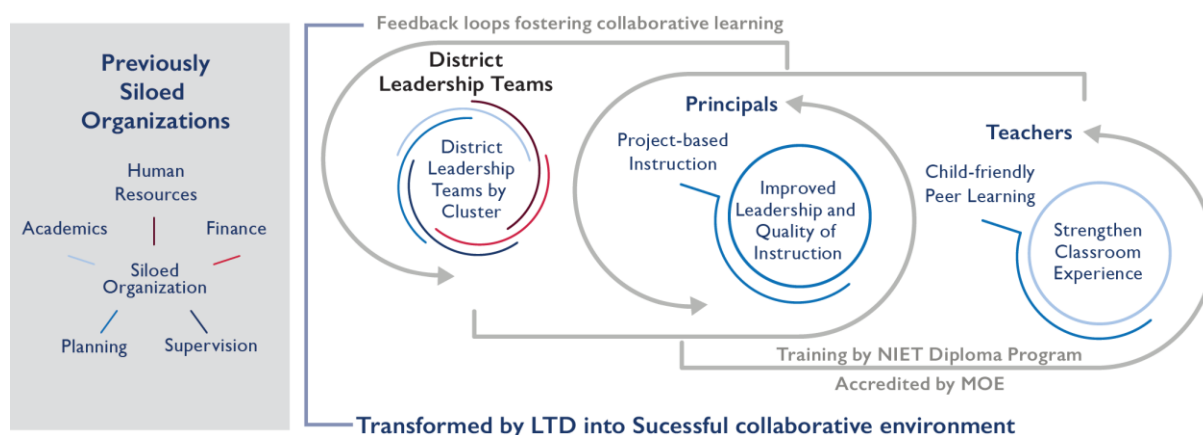
Lastly the functional audit conducted by the Leadership and Teacher Development Program has begun to lead to meaningful reform of MEHE's administrative management systems. The functional audit, completed in December 2014, identified an array of administrative redundancies, inefficiencies, and bottlenecks that conspired to reduce the effectiveness of the Ministry in delivering its education services to schools, teachers, and students. The functional audit examined workflow and information sharing practices across many of the Ministry divisions and the operations of the districts. The findings of the audit have led in part to the participation of Leadership and Teacher Development leadership, namely Dr. Saeed Assaf, on the committee that is re-drafting the education law. This is a substantial piece of legislation that will attempt to codify wholesale reforms to the management of the education sector, including the roles of districts and the curriculum and schooling systems.

The new education law may also attempt to review and revise the role that school communities play in the delivery and financing of education. School-community engagement, primarily through parent councils, was another focus of both the Leadership and Teacher Development and the School Support programs. Their work with parent councils in transforming their role is the third legacy of USAID's assistance in basic education.

9. Models for School-Based Management and School-Community Partnerships

Under the Leadership and Teacher Development and the School Support programs, a concerted effort was focused on transforming and strengthening the school-community partnerships. Prior to these programs, parents and communities were viewed essentially as "wallets": a source of funding to be mobilized in support of basic school services and facilities. In most schools, the parent council was only notionally active, and in many cases, not functioning at all. For most, the old model was to have one or two parental champions whose job it was to raise funds from within the community. The new model, developed first under the Model School Network and then institutionalized under Leadership and Teacher Development and School Support programs, is based on an elected parent council that works with school leadership to set vision, mission, and long-term goals (strategic planning) and to develop and implement activities that serve the students as well as the community.

Schools' involvement in these programs animated school-community stakeholders through the provision of a school improvement grant as well as the distributed leadership techniques

introduced through the diploma program. As one school principal described it, the idea that parent councils would self-organize and develop their own work plans, mobilize in-kind resources, and implement activities that serve both students and the community would have been unthinkable prior to the Leadership and Teacher Development and School Support programs.

The transformative role of parent councils was first introduced as a concept under the Model School Network. It was toward the end of this program that guidelines for parent councils were first formulated and adopted by MEHE for all schools to follow. However, the success school principals have had in mobilizing the parent councils goes beyond the provision of school grants and the dissemination of the guidelines. Principals have long recognized the constraints and barriers to real parental engagement. The degree of participation depends on many different socioeconomic factors, including the relative wealth of the community, the employment status of mothers, the availability of fathers, proximity of school to the community, etc. As part of the Leadership Diploma program, principals are required to identify specific barriers to parental engagement unique to their school and then brainstorm and implement the ways to overcome them. In some schools, fathers were engaged through sporting events (youth soccer clubs for instance); in other schools, the principals reached out to the community through the local mosques.

For Beit Surik Boys Secondary School, the switch flipped, so to speak, soon after the principal completed the initial training under the leadership diploma program. It was at this point that he realized that mobilizing the parent council required his delegation of tasks and duties that were theretofore under his tight control. The parent council in turn took the steps to organize a mobile health care clinic for the community, receiving a delegation of doctors and nurses from nearby St. George Hospital in coordination with the Red Crescent to provide eye treatment services for students and elderly in the community. This delegation of authority was echoed by the principal for Arab Al-Jahalin Basic School, who cited an emphasis on distributed leadership as one of the key changes in his leadership style. This shift to collective responsibilities among members of the parent council as well as other senior teachers at the school paved the way for the development of meaningful school improvement plans and broader ownership and buy-in of the schools' development according to the principal.

Responsive to needs, practical, and scalable. If the Model School Network was designed as a model program, Leadership and Teacher Development was designed specifically to institutionalize the core programs for MEHE to scale and sustain. In this regard, Leadership and Teacher Development had to focus on revising the technical content of the program to fit within the framework of the Ministry's system, as well as to address the organizational, institutional barriers and human resource challenges for widespread system uptake. To this end, the Leadership and Teacher Development approach posited what changes had to occur in the classroom and how the Ministry could affect those changes through training and leadership support. At the same time, the program examined what changes had to occur at the school-community level to support teachers' changes in classroom practices. Finally, Leadership and Teacher Development had to address what changes had to occur at the district and MEHE levels to support the schools in achieving the school- and classroom-level outcomes. At each level, key changes in behavior had to occur and were systematically addressed to reinforce and promote those behaviors, as shown in **Figure 11**. One of the key lessons learned from the Leadership and Teacher Development approach was that systematic interventions at each level are necessary to support basic changes in classroom instruction.

10. The Experience of the Youth Development Resource Centers

The prior chapters focused on USAID's programs with formal education institutions. However, USAID recognized early on that in order to reach the greatest number of youth, interventions in the non-formal sector would be needed to complement the efforts in the formal education sphere. First Ruwwad, and then the Partnerships with Youth Program was conceived to expand educational and leadership opportunities for young people aged 14–29 in the West Bank by creating sustainable hubs for youth innovation and learning. Partnerships with Youth is designed around a cohesive youth engagement strategy based on the principles of positive youth development and service learning. The approach ensures that participating youth develop key personal skills, pre-employment skills, and technical skills. Partnerships with Youth focuses on two intermediate results: 1) to strengthen the capacity of selected YDRCs to provide sustainable youth programming, and 2) to increase the number of youth throughout the West Bank who are participating in activities, training, and other leadership opportunities through the YDRCs. According to Dr. Jill Jarvi, Chief of Party of Partnerships with Youth, whom we interviewed in Ramallah, "IREX has inherited three [YDRCs] (Al Bireh, Hebron, and Nablus) from another USAID-funded program (*Ruwwad*), and during the last fiscal year (2015) three new YDRCs have been established by IREX and its local partners in the Jenin, Jericho, and Qalqilya governorates."

Qalqilya YDRC, for example, was established on October 17, 2014, as a result of cooperation between IREX and Club Qalqilya Ahli (CQA). The CQA, the oldest club in town, was founded in 1952. The club, however, was closed by Israeli Authorities from 1967–1977 and during the First Intifada/Uprising (1987–1993). With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the club reopened in 1994.

When asked about the main challenges that Partnerships with Youth in general faces, Ms. Jarvi referred to several obstacles such as limited funds; conflict between different "mentalities" or "styles"; youth who are active members of YDRCs and the "old guards," particularly board members of some local centers that host YDRCs; and the difficulty of integrating female youth in the YDRCs and the activities it conducts due to conservative social norms.

However, despite the "conservative nature" of Qalqilya and its people, especially in terms of gender equality, the town's YDRC was able to put an end to the exclusion of girls in general and from sport and cultural clubs in particular. Girls and young women now constitute 48 percent of YDRC members and beneficiaries.

Youth (aged 18–29) from Qalqilya YDRC after completing a five-day-training workshop titled "Leadership for the Future" (credit PWY)

Behavior change and communications. When asked about the reasons behind this success in attracting and recruiting girls and young women to the YDRC and its activities, Ms. Rabee Arabas, the program coordinator at the Qalqilya YDRC whom we interviewed in the center's office in Qalqilya, explained that "in the beginning parents were hesitant to send their daughters to the center because they were worried that their daughters would meet and

interact with their male counterparts at the center. However, we tried to deal with this sensitive matter carefully. Our first step was visiting women's unions and societies in the town to introduce YDRC to let them know about the activities we were planning to organize. Then we encouraged women activists from those unions to come and visit the Ahli Club and its YDRC. We also conducted some activities to reassure parents that nothing is wrong with our activities and that those activities are useful to their daughters. We, for example, organized some activities with people with social needs at Qalqilya Zoo and conducted a campaign to raise awareness among youth about the negative consequences of cigarette smoking on health and society. In short, we first built a good reputation and showed our beneficiaries that we are serious and that we 'mean business.' As a result, parents and local community started accepting the idea of allowing young women to come to the YDRC and to participate in its activities. They [parents] even started calling us to inquire about our new activities."

Qalqilya YDRC was not only able to face the first challenge (attracting young women to join the YDRC and its activities), but it also overcame some of the obstacles that Partnership with Youth's Dr. Jarvi referred to above—namely limited funds and the potential conflict between CQA's board and the youth regarding how to lead YDRC. Youth activists were able, according to Ms. Arabas, to build good relations with the CQA's board. "The nine CQA board members have been very supportive of our activities. Most of them are educated, with some of them holding master's degrees, and open minded. They also did not look down at us. They were modest and helpful. We also dealt with them with respect. This good relationship with the board was a very important asset for us and for YDRC's success. It helped us a lot in developing good relations and partnerships with other local institutions."

Establishing partnerships. In addition to direct partnerships between IREX and other organizations active throughout the West Bank and in the Middle East region, Partnerships with Youth staff also assisted the YDRC staff and board members in seeking out their own local-level partnerships that will help build a more sustainable and supportive community for the YDRCs in the long term. As a result, Qalqilya YDRC was able to develop productive relations with

Qalqilya YDRC celebrating its partnership with local organizations (May 26, 2016). Photo credit: IREX

governmental and nongovernmental institutions, mass media, and the private sector in the town. As the following examples show, these relations and networking activities were not only useful to YDRC's exposure and public relations, but also contributed to reducing the impact of the limited funding problem on YDRC's activities and made such activities much more successful:

- *Chemonics – Enhanced Palestinian Justice Program.* Provided informational workshops in 2015 to youth at the Qalqilya YDRCs to raise awareness of the rule of law and social justice for young people in the West Bank.

- *Al Quds Open University in Qalqilya*. Assisted the Qalqilya YDRC to recruit university students to participate in ongoing community outreach, information and communication technology, and media activities.
- *Palestine Radio and TV Qalqilya*. Provided media coverage for Qalqilya YDRC's activities.
- *Paltel Group*. Donated 40, 000 Israeli new shekels (NIS) to the Qalqilya YDRC to help cover administrative costs and to support some activities.
- *Qalqilya Education District*. Helped the Qalqilya YDRC conduct training in schools, recruit new students, and offer entertainment and summer camp activities for youth.
- *Al Quds Bank-Qalqilya*. Donated NIS 3000 to Qalqilya YDRC to support a community race in Qalqilya.
- *Trust International Insurance, Qalqilya*, and *Marawi.* Trust International donated NIS 8000 to Qalqilya YDRC to support a community race in Qalqilya.

In explaining YDRC's success in building productive local-level partnerships, Program Coordinator Arabas said that "building a good relationship with the governor and mayor of Qalqilya has helped us a lot in developing partnership and cooperation with other local institutions. We organized some of our activities especially in the beginning 'under the patronage of the Governor.' This, in turn, encouraged many of these institutions to attend our activities and to support them. In addition, conducting youth-led initiatives and community outreach activities that are based on the needs of youth and local community has played a vital role in developing good relations with the local community and its organizations."

In the following, we briefly shed the light on YDRC youth-led initiatives and community-outreach events.

The youth-led initiatives. To offer youth an opportunity to put the new skills they receive through training courses into practice, Partnerships with Youth encouraged youth affiliated with the YDRCs to design and submit applications for their own community initiatives. Partnerships also guided youth through the process of developing a proposal for their initiative, including creating a realistic budget and determining desired results (outputs and outcomes). This proposal preparation and project implementation experience has proven invaluable to youth.

YDRC's volunteers participate in a cleaning (recycling) campaign in Qalqilya. Photo credit: IREX

As a result of these youth initiatives, Qalqilya YDRC created a community park on a piece of unused land by repurposing discarded tires to create picnic tables, park benches, and flower boxes; provided tutoring in Arabic, math, and science to disadvantaged youth; and established a library with novels, books, and health-related materials for patients, visitors, and staff at the local hospital.

Community outreach events. In addition to the youth-led initiatives, the YDRCs also conducted many community outreach events. These activities were implemented by the YDRCs under their Partnership with Youth subgrants to promote the youth programming and services available at the YDRCs, to recruit new youth to take part in activities at the YDRCs,

and to foster goodwill and support within their local communities. For example, youth at the Qalqilya YDRC participated in discussions of the rule of law in the West Bank that were facilitated by the USAID-funded, Chemonics-administered Enhanced Palestinian Justice Program. They also attended a workshop at the Qalqilya YDRC on women's right to inheritance that was conducted by a woman lawyer sponsored by the YMCA. In addition, youth volunteered to clean a school as part of an effort to improve the educational environment in Qalqilya, tutored young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and participated in a 5K Fun Run organized by the Qalqilya YDRC.

Finally, we must point out that Partnerships with Youth has also worked in a variety of ways to assist the YDRCs in providing high-quality employability programming for youth. Through partnerships with well-established organizations in the region, as well as ensuring that the YDRCs continued to offer time-tested soft-skills training for youth, Partnerships increased its focus on preparing youth in the West Bank for inclusion in the workforce. In

Participants in a filmmaking course/Qalqilya YDRC (July 2016). Photo credit: IREX

partnership with Silatech, Partnerships with Youth provided one-on-one career advising with psychometric assessments to 382 youth through the six YDRCs (including Qalqilya). These psychometric assessments are the same employed by Career Centers supported under the Youth Entrepreneurship Development program. It also partnered with the IYF to provide training at all six YDRCs on the joint Silatech-Microsoft employment portal, Ta3mal. The Ta3mal website, www.ta3mal.com, is designed to connect young graduates to career paths. Twenty-four YDRC staff and interns received training on the website in 2015; they subsequently held four orientation sessions for 98 youth in Jericho, Jenin, Nablus, and Qalqilya. Also in early 2015, Silatech trained 13 Partnership and YDRC staff and interns, 12 of whom subsequently completed all requirements for certification as Tamheed career advisors. Partnerships with Youth has maintained the career advising sessions at the YDRCs by making them a required activity under subgrants.

In the same context, Partnerships with Youth reached 2,160 youth through 87 media-related training courses and activities. Each of the YDRCs in Al Bireh, Jenin, Jericho, Nablus, and Qalqilya implemented at least one of the following media training courses: filmmaking, photography, photo editing, journalistic writing skills, digital media skills, and graphic design. For example, in March 2015 Partnerships staff conducted a three-day media training of trainers for 16 new and 6 continuing interns from the YDRCs. The activity coordinators from the Qalqilya and Jericho YDRCs also attended. The training covered journalistic writing, photography, interviewing, and presentation skills, as well as digital media and effective communication.

11. Synthesizing Lessons Learned and Guidelines for Future Programming

Taking a systems approach to capacity building. The success of the programs we investigated is based on how well they have been able to gain traction with their counterparts and beneficiaries through a fostering a combination of leadership, ownership, and culture. In the higher education realm, the programs responded to a real and perceived market need for the universities to improve themselves in an increasingly competitive environment. In the basic education sector, the programs have taken on a systems approach to their institutional and capacity building strategy.

Emphasis on experiential and peer-learning. The Ministry, schools, and universities in the West Bank benefited greatly from multi-faceted programs that focused broadly on the principles of instructional reform and experiential and peer learning, which led to higher degrees of fidelity, buy-in, and ownership. These programs stand in contrast to many other education programs in the region and globally, which rely almost exclusively on training and curriculum delivery as a means to build capacity or influence instructional reform. USAID education strategy might benefit by advancing a more holistic approach to education reform as modeled through USAID/West Bank and Gaza's focus on institutional and systems strengthening programs.

Demonstrating innovative models, evaluating and fostering counterpart ownership. USAID's success in modeling an intervention, demonstrating success, and then working toward scale and sustainability over an extended time period underscores the viability of this approach. That the coherent portfolio of programs is focused on the same long-term outcome of improving the competitiveness of the youth and workforce reinforces the various programs' objectives and leads to multiplier effects, which universities such as Palestine Polytechnic have grasped and run with. Moreover, the continuity of USAID's vision and leadership in supporting the programs in achieving their long-term goals, while maintaining program flexibility in adjusting and learning from the mid-term evaluations, was key.

Staying the course and maintaining a continuity of program vision and goals. The programs also benefited enormously from USAID's determination to stay the course, particularly in the basic education sector where external pressures from the USAID global education strategy could have easily shifted focus and attention away from the diploma programs and the institutional strengthening and instructional reform strategies. Rather, USAID was able to keep to its long-run strategy for wholesale reforms to the teaching and learning environment while not focusing narrowly on only literacy or numeracy.

Excellence in program leadership. The professionalism and leadership exhibited by both USAID and its implementing partners is *sine qua non*. The qualities possessed by the Chief of Party of the Leadership and Teacher Development Program are rare, but that energy, ethic, and vision are models that any program leader can emulate. For both Leadership and Teacher Development and Youth Entrepreneurship Development, the Palestinian leadership plays a unique and advantageous role in negotiating between the demands of the US government and the needs and realities of the counterparts. Though other programs such as the Palestinian Faculty Development Program and the School Support Program have experienced turnover in their chiefs of party, they have managed to succeed in part through the mainstay that is AMIDEAST.

Strong, credible counterpart relationships. Finally, the relationships built on trust and good faith between USAID, MEHE, and institutional counterparts, and the implementing

partners, cannot be fabricated over a short time period. In the Middle East, but in Palestine particularly, there is always some fragility in the relationship between the US government and counterparts that stems from the historical legacies of the countries' experience with the West. The experience in Palestine shows that by staying the course, cultivating and nurturing relationships, working from a position of good faith, and establishing a positive working relationship over a long period of time, we can set the stage for real and meaningful reform in the most difficult of environments. While most country strategies follow 5-year time horizons, USAID and country counterparts would benefit by expanding strategic periods to much longer durations, upwards of 10 to 20 years.

Concluding observations: USAID's lasting legacy. The programs we examined have offered demonstrable pathways to scale and sustainability. In many ways, USAID and its implementing partners have overcome most difficult barriers to scale and sustainability: they have successfully developed programs that shape the organizational culture of institutions and schools and have addressed the underlying factors that inhibit behavior change. A change management system is like a garden that requires constant attention and cultivation, particularly with the relationships that must be nurtured and supported. The Ministry is at a point where it has the technical skills and know-how to replicate and scale the Leadership and Teacher Development Program / School Support Program. USAID has the opportunity to consolidate the gains from the basic education programs by continuing to work with the MEHE to further its financial and administrative decentralization efforts, which have transformed the role of districts, schools and communities as modeled under the Leadership and Teacher Development Program and the School Support Program.

The story of the USAID/Education West Bank and Gaza portfolio is not that the programs were implemented perfectly or were 100 percent successful in achieving their goals. Rather, USAID has enjoyed a modicum of success in an exceedingly difficult operational and political environment by following core program design and implementation principles described above. The models discussed under each program have led to significant change in the culture of educational institutions and the behaviors of the participants and counterparts. The lasting legacy of the USAID-supported education programs may fundamentally be how the Ministry and universities now view their role in preparing students and youth for the demands of the modern economy and the acumen for global citizenship. Through these programs, they have the tools, the wherewithal, and most importantly, the desire to do so.

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Annex B. Analytical Framework for Understanding Institutional Capacity for Reform and Behavioral Change

We approach the question of success through the lens of two analytic frameworks: systems-theory and social and behavior change theory. There is a great deal of literature on systems theories that focuses on education reform, scale, and sustainability. However, the model for lasting behavior change has deep roots in the public health space, but is only rarely if ever incorporated into education programs on a systematic basis. The theoretical framework that this study draws from synthesizes the various strands of research on systems and behavioral change theories.

Figure B-1. Forces Opposing Education Reforms*
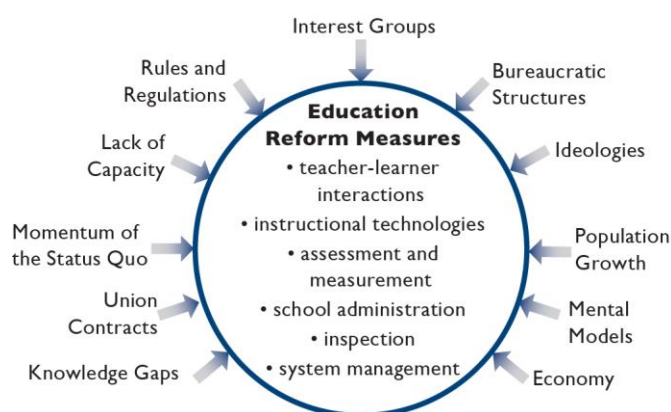
*DeStefano & Healey, 1997.

The systems theories for sustaining education reform address the political, environmental, and contextual issues that govern the institutional landscape. These theories are most comprehensively described in USAID's Education Reform Support (ERS) literature (DeStefano & Healey, 1997), which identifies a host of external politico-economic and societal pressures on system actors that serve as potential barriers for widespread uptake and reform. **Figure B-1** illustrates examples of factors on a typical set of reform measures. Other similar "systems-focused" frameworks include USAID's Human and Institutional Capacity Development Model (USAID, 2010) and the World Bank horizontal/vertical accountability models (Gershberg, Gonzalez, & Meade, 2012).

Social and behavior change communication theories have been popularized through the success of public health and safety campaigns that target individual intentions toward a specific behavior. Campaigns to promote smoking cessation and use of vehicle seatbelts offer blue prints for public health practitioners seeking to reduce risky behavior among segmented demographic groups or society at large. The theory underpinning these campaigns was described by Fishbein and Cappella in their integrated model for behavior change (2006). **Figure B-2** illustrates the three key elements required for behavior change—environmental factors, intention, and skills. Behavior change communication interventions bring to the table an array of techniques for addressing an individuals' intention.

An individual's intention to behave, Fishbein and Cappella argue, is determined by three underlying drivers: the individual's attitudes (and behavioral beliefs), the prevailing societal

or peer norms (normative beliefs), and self-efficacy (control beliefs or sense of agency). The critical lesson from this research is that in targeting "non-intenders," each set of underlying beliefs requires a unique communications strategy. For example, in the case of smokers, attitudinal beliefs would suggest that individuals do not believe that smoking is harmful; normative beliefs indicate that they do not feel social or peer pressure; self-efficacy beliefs indicate that the smoker does not believe they have the ability or self-control to quit.

In the educational context, the attitudes, normative environment, and sense of self-agency are highly relevant. For example, if teachers do not fundamentally *believe* that the instructional change is effective or useful—that is, their attitudes do not change because of training—the less likely they will change their behavior. Similarly, if school leaders or other teachers do not require or demonstrate instructional changes, the normative status quo environment may inhibit uptake of reform. Lastly, the desired changes in instruction may not occur if teachers do not believe they have the capacity or sense of control to undertake the necessary changes in instructional approach, either due to their own abilities or the lack of materials and equipment at their disposal.

Figure B-2. Fishbein & Cappella Integrated Behavioral Change Model
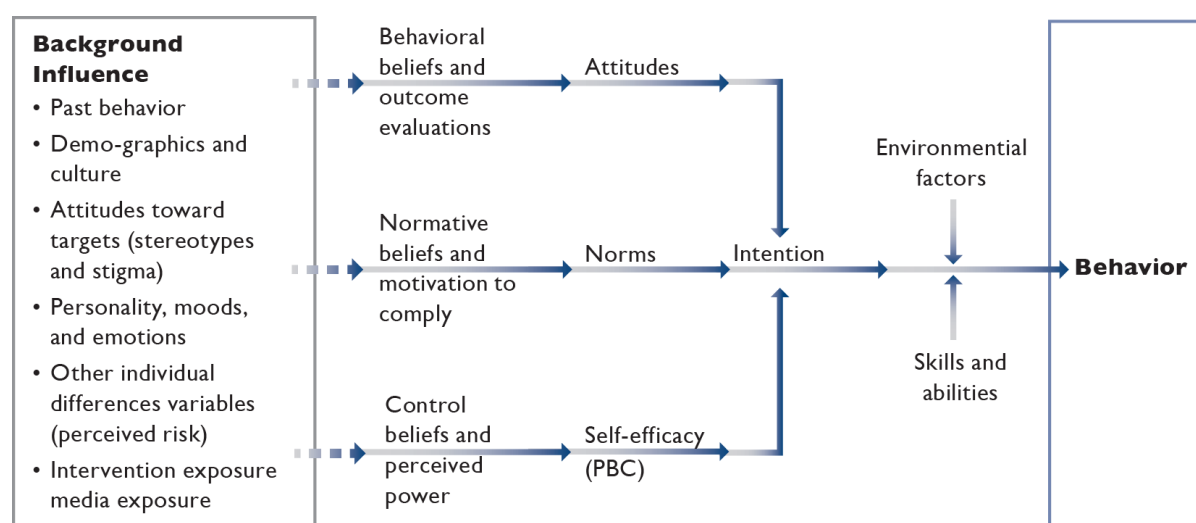
The synthesized model that is described in **Figure B-3** brings together the systems and behavioral change theories. Whether at school, district, or central level, the notions of setting expectations, monitoring progress, and providing remedial support all require behavioral change of different actors at different levels. The belief drivers, underscored by Fishbein and Cappella (2006), are an important part of the equation, but are by no means the only consideration. Environmental factors (including political-economic and accountability considerations), and technical skills and capacity, which relate to each actor's technical, operational, and financial wherewithal, are also of fundamental concern. Each of these dimensions forms a holistic picture of the institutional and individual readiness to adopt and sustain meaningful education reform.

Figure B-3. Synthesized Model for Understanding Behavior Change and Education Reform
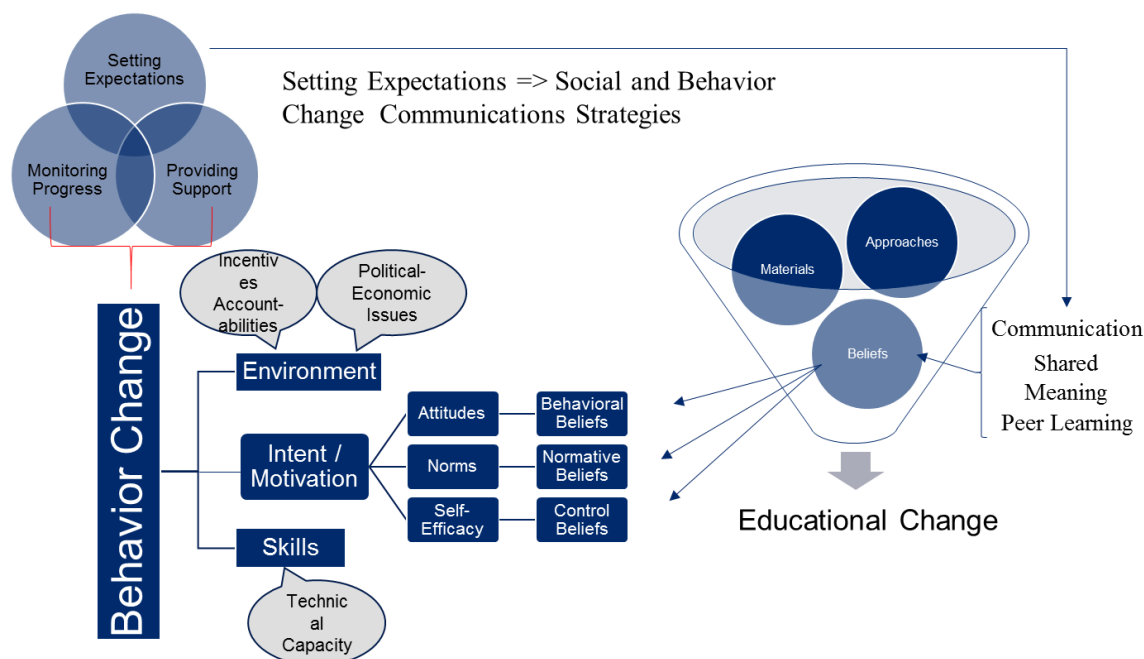
The technical skill/capacity factors are concerned specifically with the quality of the technical product and content produced under each program. Too often evaluation over-emphasizes the technical deliverable by basing the assessment on the outputs of training—the competencies and skills acquired (number of teachers trained and percent of qualified teachers)—over the outcomes (teaching practices and learning gains). Less attention is paid to the changes in attitudes of the beneficiaries, culture of the organizations, and the enabling environment in which they function, all of which have, theoretically, a stronger influence on the long-term behavior change. The intention of this case study is to shed light on these dimensions.

This discussion is not academic. Rather, this synthesized framework (**Figure B-3**) offers a useful starting point from which to investigate how these programs are able to succeed in an environment where the confluence of organizational, political, and security factors conspire against them. We use this framework to guide the areas of inquiry with the key informants in order to illuminate how changes in attitudes, culture, norms, and self-efficacy translated into changes in policy and behaviors, at each relevant level—whether in instructional practice in classrooms or in the sustained delivery of career services at universities.