



## SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM (SSP)

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Year Two Implementation Plan

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## List of Acronyms

Academic Year (AY)

Career Counseling Development Program (CCDP)

Community Engagement (CE)

Director General (DG)

District Leadership Teams (DLTs)

Face-to-Face (F2F)

Fiscal Year (FY)

Healing and Education through Art (HEART)

Joint Financing Partners (JFP)

Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD)

Leadership Diploma Program (LDP)

Learning Circle (LC)

Learning Management System (LMS)

Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE)

Model Schools Network (MSN)

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

National Institute for Education and Training (NIET)

Parent Councils (PCs)

Professional Development (PD)

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Save the Children International (SCI)

School Support Program (SSP)

School Improvement Teams (SITs)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Training of Trainers (ToT)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Value Added Tax (VAT)

West Bank (WB)

## I. Executive Summary

USAID's School Support Program (SSP) is an education reform initiative that offers a holistic approach towards school improvement supported by a change in perception and practice among educators and community members. In Year Two (October 2014 – September 2015) SSP will engage in a full complement of program interventions carried out by each of the program's component areas to include: professional development<sup>1</sup>; counseling and co- and extracurricular activities; parent council and community engagement; and school physical capacity building.

SSP's approach to professional development (PD) in schools is comprised of a number of interlinking and self-reinforcing activities that together work to improve the quality of education for students in marginalized areas in Palestine. These interventions include:

- Leadership Diploma Program (LDP)
- In-Service Teacher Training
- Professional Networking
- School Improvement Teams (SITs)
- District Leadership Teams (DLTs)
- U.S. Study Tours

In Year One of the program, principals were organized into two groups—one group of principals clustered with LTD principals in the five districts where this was possible, and one group for all the other SSP principals. Due to the limited number of available NIET trainers, instruction for the group of SSP-only principals began on June 17, two months after the commencement of PD activities for joint LTD/SSP groups. LDP training will conclude in May 2015. All LDP participants are currently engaged in forming School Improvement Teams (SITs) responsible for conducting needs assessments that will be used to establish School Improvement Plans (SIPs). SSP will review and help to procure school support based on the approved plans. SIP review will occur between October and December 2014, as plans are approved.

The formation of District Leadership Teams (DLTs) is the responsibility of the MOEHE. DLTs are charged with reviewing school implementation plans and their technical implementation, as well as supporting a reframing of school priorities toward improved classroom instruction and community partnerships. SSP will help foster ongoing and strong linkages between schools and DLT members by organizing opportunities to meet and exchange information so that successes gained can be shared and replicated.

The in-service teacher professional development conducted by NIET is an integral component that helps strengthen the quality of education in SSP schools by improving the teaching competencies of under-qualified teachers in the fields of science, math, English, Arabic and information technology. Funding for this intervention has been taken over by the Joint Funding Partners (JFP) for the 2014–15 academic year. In-service professional development will commence in September 2014 with a planned completion date of June 2015 for the first cohort.

The second area where SSP will introduce major program support in Year Two is through the implementation of counseling and extracurricular activities carried out by Save the Children International. Beginning in October 2014, school counselors will be trained to implement the Career Counseling Development Program (CCDP) aimed at helping students make informed decisions about their career paths. Counselors will offer career counseling sessions to students in grades 8–9 and organize career open days with private sector companies from February through May. Another area of intervention focuses on enhancing the psychosocial well-being of students, encouraging self-expression, self-empowerment and coping strategies through expressive means, such as music and art. A variety of co- and extracurricular activities will also take place during Year Two of the program. Some of these activities include visits to the math and science museums to encourage and enhance learning in non-traditional learning

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<sup>1</sup> This component was formally named Improving Schools through Collective Leadership.

environments, organizing sports tournaments, the establishment of environmental and drama clubs, and the introduction of debate programs.

SSP's approach to enhancing community engagement focuses on the activation of parent councils. New PCs will be formed this year with the support of SSP. These new councils will participate in a range of activities that will help inform and empower parents to become more engaged in their schools. SSP will support PCs through the Parent Council Incentive Program, offering councils access to financial support to develop and implement plans that strengthen community engagement and improve quality of education.

The school physical capacity building component ties into a broader agenda of school improvement and will directly support other SSP initiatives. The leadership and in-service teacher training, professional networking and extracurricular activities will each benefit from the provision of equipment, resources and connectivity in discrete ways. SSP will provide physical upgrades to science and computer labs and/or libraries in all 50 schools based on need. Improvements will commence in 27 approved schools followed by support for the remaining 23 schools in December–January. Each school has already been networked to support wireless Internet connectivity in all classrooms and administrative areas. SSP will also undertake the renovation and equipping of three district training centers managed by NIET and facilitate the school improvement planning process by supporting procurement in support of the approved plans.

To allow for a more intensive focus on renovating and equipping schools, the Ministry of Education has requested SSP to postpone the implementation of U.S. study tours and annual conferences to a future date. The program will use the second half of FY15 to plan its first U.S. study tour, which will occur in January 2016, while the first annual conference is slated to take place in August 2015.

Factors that could negatively impact program delivery include a delay in or lack of JFP funding for Cohort 2 of in-service teacher training; local and/or international political developments; and military incursions or impromptu checkpoints that limit our access to certain areas. Although SSP has worked through some of the resistance it has confronted in working with departments in the Ministry of Education, ministry departments that continue to represent a challenge are Field Follow-up and Supervision.

## II. Technical Delivery

### A. Professional Development

The Professional Development component contains six subcomponent activities that together seek to strengthen school leadership and teaching, leading to improved quality of education for students in marginalized areas of Palestine. These subcomponent activities are: the Leadership Diploma Program; facilitation of in-service teacher training; professional networking; activation of School Improvement Teams; work with District Leadership Teams; and U.S. study tours.

#### A.1. Leadership Diploma Program (LDP) and School Improvement Teams (SITs)

In the fall of 2014, the Leadership Diploma Program (LDP) will resume. Twenty-one SSP principals—in Bethlehem, Jerusalem suburbs, Ramallah, Salfet and Qalqilya—have been grouped together with principals from the Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD) Program for LDP training that is taking place in their respective districts. As this group of principals started their training in April 2014, they began fall semester AY2014–2015 with Session 4 of the LDP curriculum in early September. The other 29 SSP principals are grouped together into one Center cluster that meets in Ramallah for face-to-face (F2F) sessions and participate in learning circles (LCs) in Nablus and Hebron. The Center cluster did not begin the LDP until June 2014; therefore, fall semester of AY2014–2015 started with Session 2 for this group. NIET will accelerate the sessions for this second group so that these principals can catch up with the groups of principals clustered with LTD by the end of October 2014, which is when approval of School Improvement Plans (see section A.4 below) is slated to occur. All principals should complete the LDP by the end of AY2014–2015, sometime between April and June 2015.

In the last modules of the LDP, the principals will undertake capstone projects designed to foster community engagement and demonstrate leadership. SSP will provide \$1,000 per principal to carry out the projects for which SSP will procure any necessary inputs.

#### A.2. In-Service Teacher Training

SSP will follow the model of the LTD Program with regard to in-service teacher training. Funding for this component for Cohort 1 of SSP's teachers (21 schools) has been committed by the Joint Financing Partners (JFP). SSP staff will remain involved in the program, especially via the monitoring and evaluation of the training, but NIET will directly implement this component and handle all logistics for the training, unlike with the LDP, for which SSP staff handle logistics.

SSP's Cohort 1 of teachers is expected to start the in-service teacher training in early October 2014; Cohort 2 will begin in the fall of 2015. The districts included in each cohort are listed below.

Cohort One	Cohort 2
Qalqilya	Jenin
Jerusalem	Qabatya
Jerusalem Suburbs	Tulkarem
Salfet	South Nablus
Ramallah	South Hebron
Hebron	North Hebron
Bethlehem	Nablus

### **A.3. Professional Networking**

SSP's first national conference will take place in FY2015, probably in August 2015. The decision to postpone the first conference from 2014 to 2015 hinged on the beginning of teacher in-service training, which did not start until September 2014. The conference will focus on holistic education, and it is SSP's aim to encourage principals, teachers and counselors to participate by presenting their own research at the conference. Planning for the conference will begin in February 2015 based on an effective planning timeline developed under MSN.

Virtual networking has evolved to incorporate various forms of social media to share information and connect principals, trainers and teachers engaged in SSP programmatic activities. Participants have gravitated towards communicating and sharing information and feedback on such platforms as Facebook due to its ease of use. Moodle, an open-source Learning Management System, is a platform that provides a collection of tools that can be used for assessment, communication, uploading of content and collaborative work or reflection opportunities. Initially used by MSN and then LTD programs, Moodle is now primarily used as a place to store and share content while social media sites which tend to be more user friendly and visually attractive, offer a technological means to share learning experiences and best practices and remain connected and informed of major program developments taking place.

The trainer and or Learning Circle coordinator are the individuals who typically create a Facebook page for each learning group which is used for sharing and exchanging information to include providing feedback on action research projects, and is used as a forum for discussion among trainees.

Perhaps the strongest and most significant professional networking will occur among principals and teachers participating in a comprehensive series of training events, reflected in face-to-face training and learning circles, portfolio development and action research, all of which will build a collective experience. The learning circles, especially, are designed to promote the networking of principals and teachers by forming communities of practice in which their day-to-day challenges at the school level can be addressed in groups of peers. During AY2014–2015, teachers in Cohort I and all principals will meet with their learning circles for two sessions each month, following the monthly F2F.

### **A.4. School Improvement Teams (SITs)**

In the 21 schools in which principals started the LDP in April 2014, SITs have already been formed and school assessments have been carried out. In the 29 schools that started the LDP in June 2014, SITs will be formed and will carry out their assessments between October and December 2014. Implementation of school improvement plans will begin in October 2014 and will continue throughout the school year and summer. Toward the end of AY2014–2015, SITs will begin reviewing and revising their plans for AY2015–2016.

Under SSP, each school is slated to receive approximately \$15,000/year over three years in support of its School Improvement Plan; this amount is in addition to funding for computer labs, science labs, libraries, and laptops for use by participants in the LDP and teacher-training programs. SSP also requires, a part of the planning process, cost share by the schools in increasing larger amounts with each successive year. This requirement will help build each school's capacity to generate support from within its community, which promotes sustainability.

### **A.5. District Leadership Teams**

LTD holds the primary responsibility for forming District Leadership Teams (DLTs) in all districts in the West Bank. Seven of those teams (Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem Suburbs, Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin) were formed under MSN, and another two (Qabatiya and South Hebron) have been formed under LTD thus far. These existing teams will be engaged in the activities of SSP. LTD is currently working to form teams in Qalqilya and Salfeet as a part of the work with that program's Cohort 2 LDP and school improvement planning process. LTD will work with the MoEHE to re-activate DLTs in the areas in which that program's first cohort, or MSN, worked (Qabatiya, South Hebron). For SSP's second

cohort (Tulkarem, South Nablus, North Hebron), DLTs will not be formed and NIET will provide the oversight and review of school improvement plans. SSP has planned for DLT workshops to orient member to the program, the school improvement planning process, and their role in it. As schools are developing their school improvement plans, District Leadership Teams will review the contents and provide feedback. This feedback will improve the quality of the plans from early in the process, and will prevent schools from spending valuable time pursuing elements of a plan that may not be aligned with the strategic guidance of the MoEHE. The feedback is intended to be ongoing throughout the school improvement planning process.

#### **A.6. U.S. Study Tours**

The first U.S. study tour will not take place under SSP until January 2016, but the preparations for it must begin in January 2015 to identify a suitable university partner. The partner or partners should be capable of planning and implementing a high-quality program in the areas of 1) education assessment and evaluation; 2) school leadership; and 3) counseling and parent engagement.

The following principles will be used to develop and implement the SSP study tours.

- The goals for the study tour are mutually agreed upon between guests and hosts.
- The sites and activities are then chosen based on those goals; the sites and activities must be relevant.
- The visits involve the interaction of host and visiting teams (i.e., the Palestinian team visits a team at the host institution).
- Appropriate preparation prior to the actual visit is crucial. This includes orientation to the context in which the visiting team will engage and the development of frameworks for inquiry.
- Ongoing opportunities for facilitated reflection, both together (guests and hosts) and separately, are built into the schedule.
- The study tour structure includes meaningful follow-up after the visiting team returns home and will include a specific action plan to ensure follow-up. This includes sharing experiences and insights with other colleagues who did not participate in the study tour.

The theme for the first study tour will be finalized by February 2015, and selection of study tour participants will begin in May 2015. Participants should be selected by July 2015 so that SSP can begin visa requests. The criteria for participant selection will be developed and shared with USAID and the MoEHE for feedback. An announcement will be issued encouraging educators from SSP schools as well as other eligible participants to apply. Applications will be reviewed and short-listed over the summer 2015 school break, and a recommended list of study tour candidates will be submitted to USAID for review.

Study tour participants may consist of teachers, principals, parents, counselors, district administrators, and MoEHE officials. Participants will be provided with information about the U.S. school districts they will visit in order to maximize the benefit of their time spent there. Similarly, host teams at the partner U.S. university will be prepared with information about the educational system, policies, and institutions in Palestine. Upon returning from the study tour, a variety of follow-up activities will be designed for the participants that link back to the SSP program goals and the roles and responsibilities of the participants themselves.

### **B. Parent Council and Community Engagement**

The parent council and community engagement component aims at strengthening the linkages between schools and their communities through parent councils. The component supports parent engagement in school decision making and in their children's education, and in connecting the schools with the broader community including local community-based organizations, government bodies and the private sector through a set of activities described below.

### **B.1. Awareness Sessions**

Nurturing a child and preparing him/her for school starts at home by the parents. PC workshop sessions that took place at the end of AY2013–2014 emphasized the need for informing and educating parents. Based on participant feedback, the first awareness session for AY2014–2015 will be "building children's self confidence." Three consultants will be hired, one for each geographical area (North, Center and South). This first awareness session topic will be covered in each of the fifty schools in September and October. The goal of these sessions will be responding to parent needs when it comes to supporting their children both academically and on the personal level.

### **B.2. Parent Council Elections**

Awareness of the value and importance of an active role for parents and the local community in children's education will be one of the motivating factors for parent involvement. The role of the PC is vital for ensuring that parents have a voice in their children's school. MoEHE policy stipulates that each school is to have its PC in place by the middle of November. SSP's CE component will work closely with each of the fifty schools to invite and motivate parents to attend the PC elections. The MoEHE has agreed to allow special arrangements to be made for PC elections at the fifty SSP schools. Accordingly, an election day will be organized at each school with support from SSP's program officers, and elections will take place in October and November.

### **B.3. Activity Plan Workshops**

One of the goals of the CE component and working with PCs directly is to empower PCs in decision making in their children's education. SSP has allocated funds for PCs to utilize to plan activities for parent involvement in the schools. Workshops will be organized for each of the fifty school's elected PC members. An output of these workshops will be a work plan of activities that the each PC has decided to carry out based on the needs of their specific school and parent bodies. Where possible, cross-cutting themes among the fifty SSP schools will be identified. Activity plans will be finalized over the months of November, December and January.

### **B.4. Implementation of Activity Plans**

Another of the CE component goals is to promote positive change in parents' role in their children's school. The PC plans are key in making this component successful. The PCs are the decision makers on activities in the plans, and SSP will ensure the plans are coordinated with the School Improvement Plans to avoid duplications and ensure synergies. This empowerment in decision making will help develop a sense of ownership and commitment in the implementation of activities. The CE team will work with the PCs and school staff to help implement the 50 activity plans starting in December 2014 and continuing through AY2014–2015 and the following summer.

### **B.5. Community Engagement & Extracurricular Activities**

An old African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." The same can be said for education today in terms of the entire community needing to invest in the education of its children. In planning co- and extracurricular activities, the PCs will ensure that parents are invited and encouraged to participate not only as an audience, but as participants wherever possible. All fifty PCs will include participation in extracurricular activities in their plans to be developed in November, December and January.

Community involvement and cost share will be required in the PC activity plans and constitute part of the program's required cost share. Cost share by the PCs is an important aspect of the program's strategy to build in sustainability. Recognizing the Ministry of Education's level of concern surrounding this sensitive issue, SSP will work to build awareness of myriad possibilities for in-kind contributions through ongoing discussions and sharing examples of how similar support has been provided in more disadvantaged countries.

## C. Co- and Extracurricular Activities in Support of School Improvement

The second of three interlinking SSP component areas is Co- and Extracurricular Activities in Support of School Improvement. As evidenced by experience gained under the Model School Networks (MSN) Program, co- and extracurricular activities can enrich the curriculum, motivate student learning and attendance, foster creativity, critical thinking, and leadership, and promote students' overall health and social development. Enhancing the offering of co- and extracurricular activities in targeted schools is yet another means of improving education quality, and it provides key opportunities for the active participation of parents and the broader community.

This component contains two main subcomponent areas; both will contribute to the outcome of strengthening the social competencies of students in the targeted schools. Activities listed under C.1 represent support to schools in building the capacity of counselors in the fields of career counseling and psychosocial needs of students in targeted communities. Subcomponent C.2 represents support to promote co- and extracurricular activities that increase experiential learning opportunities and promote leadership and life skills.

Save the Children International (SCI), our partner responsible for implementing co- and extracurricular support activities under this cooperative agreement, has substantial experience delivering similar programmatic support to schools and students in West Bank and Gaza. SCI will work closely with MoEHE supervisors and district representatives from the Directorate of Student Affairs and Directorate of Educational Counseling to ensure that the support provided is consistent with and supportive of the agencies responsible for these interventions and will help ensure overall programmatic sustainability.

### C.1. Career Counseling Development Program

The career counseling component will help students make informed decisions about their career path through meaningful career counseling in schools and by engaging parents and the private sector. The program will use livelihood mapping to assess employment opportunities and a learning-by-doing approach to provide the students with experience and understanding of different jobs.

Since 2009, SCI has worked closely with the MoEHE on building effective career counseling in schools. SCI collaborated with the MoEHE to develop three levels of age-appropriate and contextualized curricula for grades 8, 9 and 10, and also piloted these curricula in schools in different geographical areas, gaining critical experience in tailoring implementation to local community resources.

Building on the experience in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Program, SCI will design a set of training workshops to roll out the Career Counseling Development Program (CCDP) in the second year of implementation, targeting school counselors as follows.

### C.2. Preparatory training and capacity-building of counselors

Based on earlier experience implementing the CCDP program, preparatory skills training is required to prepare counselors and ensure their success in mastering the CCDP curriculum. This list of topics was identified after analyzing the results of the counselors' needs assessment as follows: applied training techniques, life skills and communication, IT, and engagement with communities, parents and private sector.

Since there are 48 counselors at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level in the SSP schools, two training sessions will be organized in late September and first week of October 2014—one for the North and Central districts and the other in the South—to keep the size of trainees within the accepted range for delivery and cost effectiveness. Three training days will be required for each workshop. Trainers will be selected from among the 22 master trainers trained under TVET Program that are the core training team in the MoEHE.

### C.3. Training counselors on rolling out CCDP curricula in grades 8 and 9

This activity is structured training on CCDP curricula and manuals for grades 8 and 9. The counselors will undergo a training of trainers (ToT) training, using practical and theoretical exercises involving all of the skills needed to understand the curricula, methods of delivery to classroom children, and living the

experience by livelihood mapping, internships, linkages with private sector, skills needed to organize career days and community engagement.

The 48 targeted counselors will be divided into two groups—one in the Center and one in the South—and each group will attend five days of training on CCDP curricula starting 28 September and concluding on 2 October. The training will equip the school counselors with the tools and techniques needed for delivering and facilitating interactive career counseling classes and sessions, enabling them to better support students in their career path planning and in making informed decisions of their future career choices. Trainers will be selected from among the certified trainers trained by the TVET Program in the ministry and private schools. Based on a MoEHE request in August 2015, 35 counselors will be trained on the curricula for grade 10. Schools that lack a counselor will be invited to attend career days organized at other SSP schools in their district.

#### **C.4. Engagement with private sector**

- Between December 2014 and March 2015, trained school counselors are expected to facilitate/lead three introductory sessions, seminars, workshops and meetings on topics selected from the curricula targeting local community, businesses, industries, public institutions, non-governmental organizations/service providers, higher education institutions, chambers of commerce, local employment councils, and TVET institutions in the North, South, and Center regions.
- School counselors will be implementing career counseling sessions with students in grades 8 and 9 starting in October and continuing throughout the academic year. The sessions will include supporting important community and private sector-linked activities such as community livelihood mapping and field visits.
- from February to May 2015, school counselors will organize career open days featuring private sector companies, with an aim to increase the knowledge and awareness among students on their possible career paths by bringing private sector representatives and students together in a one-day event. Three career open days will be conducted for grade 8 students, one in each region.

#### **C.5. Child Resilience Methodology**

This methodology focuses attention on responding to child protection needs in marginalized communities. The methodology uses a child-centered approach, with the goal of enhancing the psychological well-being of students. The Child Resilience methodology has been developed by Save the Children and has been implemented by SCI in Palestine over the past three years in full coordination with MoEHE. The approach is based on a globally tested and approved methodology, which consists of 12 sessions with structured activities that target children between grades 5–9. The sessions strengthen social interactions and empower children to reduce child protection risks. Trained counselors will conduct the sessions in schools, with the support of and coaching by SSP staff. The intervention is designed to increase the psychosocial well-being of children in vulnerable communities on at least three out of five selected indicators: self-esteem; engagement at home; engagement in school; problem solving; and social relations.

School counselors in the fifty targeted schools will be offered four days of ToT on the methodology by an external trainer in January; training will be delivered in each of the three regions. Counselors will be expected to implement the Child Resilience sessions with two groups of children in their school each semester starting February 2015, with the support of trained SSP staff in co-facilitating some of the sessions.

#### **C.6. HEART Intervention**

SSP's intervention will encourage the use of expressive mechanisms, such as music and art, to support children's self-expression, self-empowerment, and coping strategies as a mean to strengthen their psychological well being. SCI's Healing and Education through Art (HEART) program, previously piloted in the West Bank, will be implemented in grades 1–3 in 20 SSP schools. One teacher per school will receive four days of training on the HEART methodology in August and September 2015, and the

teachers will utilize this methodology in their teaching and learning throughout the following academic year.

### **C.7. Co and Extracurricular Activities for Experiential Learning**

SSP will promote co- and extracurricular activities that increase experiential learning opportunities and promote leadership and life skills. The MSN Program found the most successful and sustainable activities were co-curricular in nature: hence, a focus on activities with academic enrichment linked to the curriculum that may not necessarily occur after school hours. SSP will also prioritize support for school-based activities that create opportunities for strengthening students' social skills, freedom of expression, teamwork, leadership, physical activity, and related life skills. The SSP staff worked with the MoEHE's Department of Student Affairs to decide on a strategy of activities. Implementation of these activities will occur in tandem through SSP staff as well as district and school educators. Activities in the second year will include the following.

- **Visits to math and science museums**

Science centers offer a rich social environment for learning, and provide a hands-on approach, which is the hallmark of science centers in enhancing learning. It has been found that field trips and school outreach programs contribute to learning and support positive attitudes toward science. Therefore, SSP will be organizing visits for 5,000 students to Al Quds Math and Science Museums, as well as Qalqilya Natural History Museum and Zoo between November 2014 and March 2015.

- **Organizing Sports Tournaments**

To increase the appeal and relevance of school sports clubs, SSP will organize regional sports tournaments and competitions, including non-traditional sports, between February and May 2015. SSP will help schools explore opportunities for coaching and support from the local sports clubs, and identify private sector tournament sponsorship. SSP will support one sports tournament for each of six different sports in three regions (North, Center, and South). SSP has budgeted for awards and materials. Although tournaments will start in February 2015, SSP will be working with schools on establishing the sports teams and procuring equipment on behalf of schools as early as October 2014.

- **Establishing school environmental clubs**

SSP will establish environmental clubs in October and November 2014 in 50 schools (20 students per school from grades 5–10). The students will get the opportunity to increase their environmental knowledge and awareness through group discussions, worksheets, and voluntary campaigns, and eventually use their talents to express their environmental awareness during exhibitions.

SSP will train one teacher per school on environmental issues, environmental challenges in the West Bank, and how to organize a students' environmental club. Teachers will be guided through the program by professional trainers who will coach environment teachers in the implementation of the clubs and in organizing exhibitions. SSP will support students' transportation for field visits and will supply materials for each school.

- **Debate Programs**

Debate is an excellent way to model the analytical and communicative processes that students are learning whenever they examine course material through oral or written work. SSP aims to challenge students through in-class debates to think critically about course material, and will provide them with a forum to develop the art of expression that allows them to communicate their ideas.

SSP will offer three days of training in December for one teacher from each school that has grades 8–10. These teachers will lead the debate club in their schools and implement three debate competition events (two semi-finals and one final event) in February–April 2015, which 100 participants will attend. The trainers are MoEHE activities supervisors and they will be

responsible of visiting schools to ensure that teachers are meeting the technical part of the program and provide on the job mentoring. SSP staff will also visit schools to support in logistics and to ensure that in school students' trainings are implemented as planned.

- **Establishing school drama clubs**

These clubs are meant to foster creativity and create new and different opportunities for students to share talents and assume leadership roles. SSP will offer 50 school teachers with a three-day training on leading drama and theatre clubs in October and provide theatre clubs with costumes, script materials, and set construction materials for two performances (April–May 2015) per school per year.

## **D. School Physical Capacity Building**

Physical capacity building will support schools in developing the quality of their physical environment, making the schools safer and allowing them to benefit from the technological support that will be provided through networking and renovation of computer and science labs and libraries, in addition to addressing other school needs. SSP's approach to school physical capacity building ties into a broader agenda of school improvement and will directly support other initiatives within the School Support Program. The leadership and in-service teacher training, professional networking and extracurricular activities will each benefit from the provision of equipment, resources and connectivity in discrete ways. SSP will provide physical upgrades to science and computer labs and libraries in 50 schools based on needs. Improvements will commence in 27 approved schools in early FY15, followed by support for the remaining 23 schools. Each school has been networked to support wireless Internet connectivity in classrooms and administrative areas. SSP will also undertake the renovation and equipping of three district training centers managed by NIET.

Two approaches will be employed in delivering school capacity building support. The first approach works in full collaboration with the School Improvement Team (SIT), which allows schools to identify their needs and priorities to be supported by SSP. The second approach will be standardized for all schools and directly implemented by SSP.

### **D.1. School capacity building support delivered in collaboration with SITs**

This approach focused on establishing SITs in September 2014 (headed by the school principals) that empowers schools to take ownership in developing their own vision for improved school quality while supporting shared leadership in decision making.

The School Improvement Teams (SITs) identify critical school needs and support the SSP team in the procurement process for up to \$15,000 in supplies, equipment, and services annually over three years.

The first three modules of the Leadership Diploma Program (LDP) will equip school principals with the knowledge and skills required to create a school improvement plan and organize their SITs to carry out an annual needs assessment. This needs assessment will be used to develop initial school improvement plans between September– December 2014. The school improvement plans will be reviewed and approved by early January 2015 by the DLTs and SSP's procurement team.

Beginning in January 2015, the SIT at each school will lead the competitive process of identifying local contracting partners. AMIDEAST will support the SIT through the provision of training and oversight. SITs will be given a variety of templates for issuing an RFQ, conducting a price analysis, and providing recommendations to SSP. SSP's procurement team will be responsible for reviewing the analysis, preparing a purchase order or contracts, requesting VAT exemptions (if needed), ensuring adherence to USAID compliance regulations, and monitoring costs so that the schools do not exceed their allocated budgets. For items requested by multiple schools, SSP will be responsible for soliciting bids in order to procure more efficiently in bulk. The SIT is responsible for ensuring that local providers deliver the bills of quantity and specifications, that goods and/or services are delivered on time, and that the quality of the product or service is acceptable according to the contract terms and conditions. Finally, the procurement subcommittee reviews and approves each invoice and obtains a clearance letter from the school principal so that AMIDEAST staff can process payment directly to the local vendor.

## **D.2. Delivery of school capacity-building support implemented by SSP**

The School Support Program will upgrade selected school facilities above and beyond what schools include in their improvement plans. Upgrades may include the renovation, furnishing and equipping of school science labs, computer laboratories and/or libraries based on school needs assessments conducted and approved by the MOEHE. All schools have been networked and will receive laptop computers for use by principals and teachers involved in NIET training. School improvement plans that include goals focused on the expanded use of these renovated facilities are encouraged.

AMIDEAST, under the supervision of SSP's Operations and Compliance Manager, will implement school capacity building with a major focus on renovating existing computer and science labs and libraries or reconfiguring and using the current space to establish labs and libraries where they are absent, taking into account their accessibility and location within the school building. SSP has contracted an engineering firm that assessed the needs of the 50 schools in June 2014 and submitted designs for the school labs and libraries in addition to identifying other school needs. The designs were shared with MoEHE's building department and approved in August 2014 for the first 27 schools. The engineering firm is responsible for overseeing work carried out by contractors and for assuring that they deliver upgrades according to the specification of the approved designs and other contractual requirements to include site safety, delivery time and sign-off on completed works.

Due to funding uncertainties in summer 2014, it was decided the program would divide the school renovation activities into 2 stages; the first stage includes 27 schools that require support in all labs and libraries, while the second stage involves upgrading 23 schools that require support in two or fewer spaces. This approach was approved by USAID and the MOEHE in August 2014.

## **D.3. Major procurement activities planned during Year Two**

- Distribution of 50 laptop computers to principals for use in the LDP training program by November 2014, and 214 laptop for teachers enrolled in in-service teacher training offered by NIET, also by November 2014. The laptops were procured in Year One and will enable principals and teachers to apply in their schools and classrooms the skills obtained in NIET training.
- Renovation and equipping of school labs in Stage 1: Based on the engineering firm's approved designs, SSP published three tenders that included renovations of labs, IT equipment, and furniture in 27 schools in August 2014. Suppliers and contractors were selected in September 2014. In October and November, the 27 school labs and libraries will be renovated, equipped and furnished.
- For the 23 schools in **Stage 2**, SSP will publish the tender documents in October 2014, and the implementation of renovations and equipping of those schools will take place in December 2014 and January 2015. Renovation of all 27 schools will be completed by the end of November. The equipment for these 27 schools will be delivered by mid December. The second group of 23 schools will be renovated and equipped by early February given delays in funding and the resulting decision to focus renovation support in areas where all three spaces could be upgraded. Further delays were experienced in obtaining feedback on plans submitted to the MOEHE.
- SSP schools were networked during Year One, and SSP was able to reach an agreement with Paltel Group to provide Internet connection to the schools free of charge for 15 months starting October 2014, but six of the fifty schools are outside Paltel's coverage area, so we will be looking for alternative solutions to connect those schools with the Internet.
- Procurement of remaining laptops for teachers enrolled in the Cohort 2 in-service teacher training offered by NIET will begin in June 2015 for delivery in the October–November 2015 timeframe.
- SSP has requested and received approval to renovate and equip three (3) District Training Centers utilized by NIET to conduct LDP training. SSP will solicit the tender documents in October and the implementation of renovations and equipping of those training center will take place in November 2014.

## E. Sustainability

SSP has been designed with sustainability in mind. The MSN and LTD Programs have already produced many lessons learned with regard to sustainability, and SSP has taken those lessons into account to increase the sustainability of its results. SSP will operate under two overarching principles of sustainability: whole school reform and extensive cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

### Whole School Reform

The whole school reform model is critical to SSP's sustainability. MSN has shown that the most effective way to improve schools is to engage simultaneously with multiple facets of school life, creating a "buzz" around school improvement. By including both teachers and principals (instead of teachers only) in an in-service professional development program, organizing practical, real-world, hands-on co- and extracurricular activities, and engaging local communities (including both parents and local institutions), SSP hopes to reach almost all students, educators and parents affiliated with each of its schools, and to engage each one in multiple activities associated with the program. If the whole school community is involved in school reform, the community itself can support its school in an ongoing process to improve the quality of education in the community.

The whole school reform model extends to the idea of shared leadership. The SSP leadership model builds sustainability by fundamentally changing the way participants look at school leadership. Instead of centralizing all school-level decisions with the principal, SSP envisions teacher and parent empowerment through collective decision-making. Such shared leadership is embodied in the School Improvement Team at each school, which will assess and prioritize the school's needs under a multi-year school improvement plan collaboratively developed by representative teachers and parents working in conjunction with the principal. SSP will support the SITs by providing training on planning and procuring resources to meet needs identified under the plans.

SSP's whole school reform approach views co- and extracurricular activities as integral to quality education aimed at improving teaching and learning. SSP's co- and extracurricular program includes activities aimed directly at students as well as activities aimed at the teachers and counselors who support those student activities. SSP's co- and extracurricular student activities are designed to peak interest in school in two ways: through direct, hands-on engagement with real-world activities connected to the subjects in which their teachers are developing professionally (math, science, Arabic, English and technology); and through extracurricular activities that build life skills linked to self-confidence and improved academic performance. Increased student engagement is linked to improved academic performance and provides one form of sustainability, in that students will, themselves, better manage their own learning as a result of their heightened interest in school and education through their participation in co- and extracurricular activities. The activities do not need to be externally funded to stimulate student engagement, and participation can continue after SSP funding has ended.

SSP's co- and extracurricular component will also train teacher sponsors for various clubs and other activities, as well as counselors to implement the career counseling and child resilience programs that fall under this component. As a result of this training, teachers and counselors will gain the skills needed to continue these activities after SSP concludes and without significant ongoing funding needs.

SSP's approach to physical capacity building will also reflect the whole school reform model. The upgrading of science and computer labs and libraries, as well as the procurement of laptops for participating principals and teachers, is designed to complement the teacher and principal professional development programs so that participants can put what they've learned into practice. Building on lessons from MSN, SSP will also work with schools—through the SITs, parent councils, and/or local community engagement—to develop plans to raise and designate funding for equipment maintenance and continued Internet connectivity after the end of the project so that schools have individually relevant plans for making the purchases usable and sustainable over the long-term.

### Extensive cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

SSP's principle of extensive cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education acknowledges that the MoEHE is the governing body for basic education in Palestine. In order to ensure sustainability, the MoEHE must fully understand, support and be integrally involved in both the

conceptual basis for SSP's activities and their implementation. The NIET-based approach to teacher and principal professional development is a key example of SSP's approach to cooperation with the Ministry. As the MoEHE's central training institute, NIET is the logical partner through which all teacher and principal training will run. Such partnership builds the capacity and recognition of NIET by centralizing some professional development programs that were previously scattered throughout the MoEHE's various departments. In addition, under SSP, NIET will cluster some participating teachers and principals together with teachers and principals receiving professional development through other programs such as LTD. This approach, requested by the MoEHE itself, builds NIET's long-term capacity to manage multiple professional development programs financed by different donors. In this way, SSP will not only continue to strengthen NIET by gathering all its professional development programs under the NIET umbrella, but also give NIET the chance to develop management systems. As NIET will continue to manage all MoEHE professional development, this capacity building increases the sustainability of professional development results for teachers and principals who participate in SSP, as they will have ongoing resources within the MoEHE's own system after the end of the training program. It also builds NIET's capacity to expand its professional development programs to greater numbers of teachers and principals in the future.

Co- and extracurricular activities cannot be sustainable without the involvement of the MoEHE. SSP will work closely with the DG of Student Affairs to plan co- and extracurricular activities aligned with MoEHE goals and strategies. SSP will recruit MoEHE staff from the DGs of Student Affairs and Counseling into the teacher and counselor training for co- and extracurricular sponsors in order to provide some depth of knowledge on each club activity and so that these DGs can replicate the training for other schools in the future should they wish to do so. In this way, SSP ensures that the MoEHE can sustain and expand such programs without continued external donor support.

Close collaboration with the MoEHE is absolutely vital to ensuring the long-term development of effective and empowered parent councils and the growth of school-community ties and commitments. Therefore, SSP will work closely with the MoEHE to build on existing work undertaken by MSN in partnership with the Directorate of Student Affairs in creating the *Parent Council Guidelines* booklet. SSP will utilize the *Parent Council Guidelines* with its schools in order to disseminate knowledge of best practices with parents and school officials. SSP will also collaborate with the MoEHE to review rules for parent council and local community contributions (both financial and in-kind) for community schools and find opportunities for parents and local communities to contribute to improvement of their schools in a systematic and sustainable way.

## **F. Communications and Public Relations**

As a key USAID funded program that aims at strengthening and improving the quality of education in a selected number of schools in marginalized areas, the outcomes and successes of SSP must be highlighted and the program must be branded according to USAID marking and branding guidelines to help promote and sustain school improvement activities and highlight the support provided by the American people. All SSP marketing products, such as pop-ups, roll-ups, posters, folders, binders and on-line materials will be produced in order to brand the program and be used in all program events.

SSP's public relations will focus its outreach to its main constituents, including teachers, principals, students, counselors, local communities, district and ministry staff, USAID and local NGOs that work in the field of Education. Given the size and number of beneficiaries, a quarter newsletter will be produced and published. The newsletter will consist of a series of brief articles about recent SSP achievements, activities, and events that will be published in print outs and shared virtually through SSP website. It will include interviews with program participants and stakeholders, as well as articles written by other MoEHE public relations officers. The newsletter will be published in both Arabic and English.

An AMIDEAST SSP website will be a venue for internal and external communication. It will provide information to visitors, partners, and participants about all aspects of the program. Content will include a short description of the program with some photos, then the website will regularly updated with new articles, pictures, activities, and highlights of activities.

The Communications Officer will also use online social networking sites, such as AMIDEAST Facebook and Twitter (including USAID's) to post program-related content. The use of these on-line formats will be a mean to reach all beneficiaries within the MoEHE, including participating schools and others involved or interested in SSP. Furthermore, the SSP Communications Officer will maintain a close working relationship with public relation officers of the school districts to ensure that all parties are involved in reaching out to the largest audience possible. During this Fiscal year the SSP communication component will work on the following activities:

1. **Promotion Materials:** SSP will produce promotional materials such as notebooks, folders, rollups, calendars and others as needed. These promotion materials will target SSP stakeholders in its various events. .
2. **Newsletters:** A bilingual newsletter will be produced on quarterly basis. The newsletter will include success stories about the program and articles about the major events. It will be designed by a local vender and will be distributed virtually and in hard. Stories for the newsletter will be developed by the SSP Communication Officer through field visits and interviews with beneficiaries.
3. **Public Events:** the Communications Officer will be in charge of covering all major events such as conferences, workshops and high level meetings. This responsibility includes coordinating logistics and reservation of venue, catering, photography, invitations and arranging with press agencies for media coverage.
4. **Short Films:** SSP Communications Officer will produce short films that are related to program components. These films will show before and after story, activates conducted and SSP impact on beneficiaries such as students visits to educational museums, the career counseling development program, parent councils initiatives, positive impact of renovation work, etc
5. **Success Stories:** SSP will capture major success stories which will be communicated to USAID and feed directly into the quarterly newsletter.
6. **SSP Website:** SSP website will be created and updated in cooperation with the IT unit of AMIDEAST/HQ. During this fiscal year of the program SSP website will be created. The Communications Officer will ensure that the site includes a full description on each component along with pictures.
7. **Communicating with USAID:** All success stories, films will be communicated to USAID so that they publish them through USAID social media platforms such as facebook and twitter, this will include photos as well.

Appendix 1. Gantt Chart

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
<b>Teacher Education and Leadership Diploma Program</b>													
<b>A - Leadership Diploma Program</b>													
Conduct curriculum review according to needs of SSP (ongoing)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█					
Conduct LDP for principals (ongoing during AY)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█					
Hold LDP graduation								█					Media, press release, film, tweets
<b>B - Teacher In-Service Professional Development Program</b>													
Conduct PD programs for Cohort 1 teachers (ongoing during AY)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█				
Conduct curriculum review according to needs of SIP (ongoing)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Select teachers from within Cohort 2 schools (during AY)												█	
Conduct PD programs for Cohort 2 teachers (ongoing during AY)												█	
<b>C - School Improvement Teams</b>													
Ensure SITs develop draft school improvement plans for review/revision	█	█											
Ensure SITs finalize plans	█	█	█	█									

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
Ensure SITs begin implementation of plans													
Follow up on and support SIT plan implementation													Press Release, tweets
Ensure SITs review and revise school improvement plans for AY2015-2016													
<b>D - District Leadership Teams</b>													
Review and form new DLTs where necessary (in partnership with LTD)													
Work with DLTs to review and approve SIT plans													
<b>E - Study Tours</b>													
Develop selection criteria for 1 <sup>st</sup> US study tour													
Collect applications for 1 <sup>st</sup> US study tour													
Select participants for 1 <sup>st</sup> US study tour													
Make logistical arrangements for 1 <sup>st</sup> US study tour													
<b>F – Conferences</b>													
Plan for 1 <sup>st</sup> annual conference													
Hold 1 <sup>st</sup> annual conference													Media, press releases, film,

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
													success story, tweets
<b>Community Engagement Components</b>													
Completing awareness sessions on building children's self confidence in schools													Press release, article for a newsletter, tweets
Establishing PC For 2014-2015 Academic Year													
Developing activity plan for PC in schools 2014-2015 academic school year													
Implementation of Activity Plan													Films, success stories, press releases, tweets
Parents taking part in Co and Extracurricular activities													Tweets
<b>CO &amp; Extracurricular Activities Components</b>													
<b>A - Career Counseling Roll Out:</b>													
<b>Training and capacity building of counselors from target schools</b>													
Skill and Knowledge upgrading program and CCDP trainings/ 48 counselors													CCDP Film, press release, tweets
<b>Engagement with private sector and other stakeholders to support CCDP implementation</b>													
Seminars, workshops/ experience exchange –meetings with PS													

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
<b>Provision of resources and materials to facilitate CCDP implementation of 50 schools</b>													
Printing CCDP curricula (needed for 50 schools); student’s books (grade 10)													
Procurement of stationary and CCDP training kits													
Support students livelihood mapping and field visits													
Implementation in schools: Interactive Career counseling session implementation.													tweets
Conduct career open days													press releases, tweets, articles for newsletter
Support students job shadowing													Tweets
<b>B - Enrichment Extracurricular Activities</b>													
Organizing students visits to Al Quds math and science museums.													Tweets, press release
Organizing sports tournaments													Tweets, press release
Train science/ environment teachers on leading environmental clubs													tweets
School environmental clubs													
Debate program.													Tweets, press releases, success stories

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
Establish school drama clubs													Tweets, press releases, success stories, film
Train school counselors on Child Resilience Methodology													Tweets, press release
HEART Training													press releases, tweets
<b>School Physical Capacity Building</b>													
Distribution of laptops for school principals and Cohort 1 teachers.													tweets, press release
Supervising the SITs on developing their yearly procurement plans													
Follow up with the SITs of implementing their Approved School Procurement Plan for the school needs and items mentioned in the School Improvement plans													
Implementing of the rehabilitation works for the ( 27 ) schools													Film, press release, tweets, article
Delivery of the furniture and IT equipment for the ( 27 ) schools													Film, press release, tweets, article
Amend the engagement with the engineering firm services to supervise and oversee renovation and equipping of (23) schools laboratories and Libraries in addition to other school needs													
Re-conduct a need assessments- field visits for the (23) schools To verify the information collected before.													

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
Obtain MoEHE sign-off on the (23) school designs based on the school needs.													
Tendering of (23) school laboratories and Libraries renovation works.													
Tendering of furniture for (23) school laboratories and Libraries													
Tendering of equipment and supplies for the (23) school laboratories and Libraries													
Rehabilitation works for (23) schools													Film, press release, tweets, article
Delivery of the furniture and equipment for the (23) school laboratories and Libraries													Film, press release, tweets, article
Renovate and equip three (3) district training centers													Press release, tweet
Procurement of a new quantities of laptops for school Cohort 2 teachers													Press, tweets
Supporting other program components with facilitating their Procurement requirements													
<b>Communications and Public Relations</b>													
SSP Website Launch													
SSP Quarterly Newsletter													
Production of Promotion Materials (Calendars)													

Description/Month	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	PR events/ Communication Products
Press Releases													
Produce a film on education field visits													
Produce a film on CCDP													
Produce a film on renovations of schools labs and libraries													
Work on SSP first annual conference													
SSP website update													
Promote SSP via twitter													