

**GLOBAL TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT  
USAID/WEST BANK & GAZA  
SHORT TERM TRAINING & INTERNSHIP PROGRAM  
FINAL REPORT**

**Task Order No.: 823  
Effective Dates: 05/01/01 – 07/29/02  
Contract Total: \$1,947,580  
Obligated Amount: \$1,947,580**

This Final Report summarizes the activities of World Learning Inc. and its subcontractors, AMIDEAST and Development InfoStructure, from May 1, 2001 through July 29, 2002, under the Global Training for Development (GTD) Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) No. FAO-I-00-96-90020-00, specifically Task Order No. 823, with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The report is organized as follows: Summary, Activities, Concerns/Constraints, and Recommended Actions. **Summary** provides an overview of the entire Task Order. **Activities** describes the progress made during the reporting period toward fulfilling the major tasks and providing the deliverables required under the Task Order. **Concerns/Constraints** describes any issues and/or problems encountered in our efforts to fulfill those requirements. **Recommended Actions** describes proposed steps to address any such concerns and/or constraints.

## **I. SUMMARY**

The World Learning team was contracted by the USAID Mission in the West Bank to coordinate its technical training program consisting of three facets: the Short-Term Training and Internship Program (STTIP), a mix of two-to-four week U.S.-based and third-country training; the Palestinian-American Internship Component (PAIC), four-to-six week internships in the United States; and In-Country Training (predominantly for the Information Technology [IT] sector).

The training supported four of the Mission's Strategic Objectives (SOs):

- SO1. Expanded Economic Opportunities—part of the USAID's West Bank/Gaza Private Sector program combining emergency relief objectives with longer-term development goals.
- SO2. Greater Access to and More Effective Use of Scarce Water Resources—including training in water-system management.
- SO3. More Responsive and Accountable Governance—designed to support Palestinian civil society organizations, the Palestinian Legislative Council, and improved rule of law.
- SO7. Healthier Palestinian Families—supporting an integrated women's and children's health program.

The contract also included a separate Fee-for Service mechanism to support training funded through technical assistance contractors.

Modification 1, issued in October 2001, decreased the in-country training by \$18,259 and increased other direct costs by that amount.

Modification 2, issued in February 2002, officially extended the Task Order from April 30, 2002 to June 30, 2002. The extension was made to accommodate the effects of the increased time to secure visas that the US Government mandated during the previous quarter.

Modification 3, issued in June 2002, extended the Task Order from June 30, 2002 to July 29, 2002 at no additional cost.

## **II. ACTIVITIES**

### **Planned Objectives and Outputs**

The World Learning Team successfully carried out all activities required under the Task Order, while being in compliance with ADS 253.

#### ***Mission Training Plan***

Recognizing that a well-designed training plan would be the foundational piece for the Mission to gain maximum leverage from its training dollars and to ensure that training would be targeted to meet Mission program objectives, the World Learning team provided guidance and support to the Mission to develop a working Mission Training Plan that was the basis for identifying training objectives and participant profiles, and selecting training events under this Task Order. Early in the Task Order, World Learning provided the Mission's Strategic Objective (SO) teams a training plan development methodology that World Learning successfully worked with under other Task Orders. This methodology provided a consistent approach to training planning that led to the development of a Training Plan in June 2001 and that will serve the Mission well beyond the time frame of the Task Order.

#### ***Palestinian-American Internship Component***

Twenty-four participants successfully completed business internships in a variety of business fields including pharmaceuticals, public relations, hotel management, and geographic information systems under the Palestinian-American Internship Component (PAIC) for SO1. The World Learning team arranged internships in the following locations:

- Pennsylvania and Washington, DC: five interns, one of whom was female;
- Florida, State of Washington, and Alaska: eight interns, one of whom was female and two of whom were from Gaza;
- Arizona and California: eleven interns, three of whom were from Gaza.

Each participant's internship program was tailored to respond to his or her own training objectives. During their time in the US, participants joined together in small groups for the business planning sessions, a training design feature that also allowed for the kind of positive group dynamic that can both strengthen US programs and lead to post-training networking.

AMIDEAST provided the Mission with end of training reports and final Action Plans for these training programs.

### ***IT Training:***

Seventy-two computer systems professionals studied and successfully earned their Microsoft certifications in either Systems Engineering or Solution Development. Training was implemented at campuses in Ramallah (32 students), Nablus (16 students), and Gaza (24 students).

These seventy-two participants were selected from the 350 applications collected by AMIDEAST from IT professionals and newly graduated computer science university students through an ad placed in the Al-Quds newspaper announcing the USAID-funded partial tuition scholarships. AMIDEAST also conducted the needs assessment to determine viable providers of Microsoft certified IT training in the West Bank and Gaza, and then organized the fair and transparent procurement process to select the training provider.

AMIDEAST was especially careful to work in a collaborative and constructive way with all the bidders. For example, immediately after the training provider was selected and announced, AMIDEAST provided each bidder with a detailed feedback memo that gave specific comments on their proposals to help them be more competitive in future bids. Each bidder expressed positive comments about the process and looked forward to bidding again should the Mission fund IT training in the future.

Earning a Microsoft certification is not easy in the best of circumstances. The participants and trainers should receive special recognition for this program because ongoing military closures and tightened security at checkpoints contributed to difficulties and delays in both training implementation and testing.

### ***Third-Country Training***

Under SO7, nine mental health professionals from the West Bank and Gaza focused on children's psycho-social needs during conflict in their training at the University of Oxford in the UK and through site visits in Kosovo. A final report on this program was provided to the Mission. In addition, to provide support for future Third Country Training (TCT) activity, the AMIDEAST West Bank office collected and catalogued TCT opportunities to create a Resource Center.

### ***US Training***

In addition to the business internship program, World Learning arranged seven US training events for 17 participants from the West Bank and Gaza. Training was conducted in nine states and the District of Columbia.

- SO1, Pension Reform; conducted in Washington, D.C; eight participants.
- SO2, Project Implementation; conducted in Hartford, Connecticut; three participants.
- SO2, Regulation of Water and Sewer Services; conducted in California and Arizona; one participant.
- SO3, Oracle training; conducted in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Texas; one participant.

- SO3, Human Resources Training, conducted in Pennsylvania and Maryland; one female participant.
- SO7, Health Policy; conducted in Vermont by Harvard University's School of Public Health; one female participant.
- SO7, Managing Disasters and Complex Humanitarian Emergencies; conducted in Boston, Massachusetts; two participants.

### ***Fee-For-Service***

As requested in the Task Order, AMIDEAST established a Fee-for-Service structure for the Mission's contractors that included schedules, checklists, and a Request for Training Services agreement. Through this complete package, USAID contractors were made fully aware of costs, deadlines, and who had responsibility for what on a given training activity.

All Fee-for-Service documentation was put on the AMIDEAST Web site for maximum access and convenience to USAID contractors. The most current version of any Fee-for-Service document could be downloaded and printed out in Acrobat format. The Fee-for-Service structure was explained to SO staff so that they could require their contractors to utilize AMIDEAST's services to ensure ADS 253 compliance in training implementation.

AMIDEAST met with several Fee-for-Service contractors and signed Request for Training Services agreements with CH2MHill in support of training for Palestinian Water Authority staff and with World Learning in support of training for IT staff at Birzeit University. Six participants were trained in the US under these agreements. Information on participants was captured in TraiNet.

### ***Action Plans***

The World Learning team worked with training providers to ensure that all training programs provided extensive action planning components. Ultimately, training effectiveness is measured by the success of participants in implementing their Action Plans. Participants submitted their Action Plans to AMIDEAST and copies were forwarded to the Mission.

### ***Monitoring & Evaluation***

AMIDEAST regularly monitored participants and required that they complete and submit end-of-program questionnaires evaluating the training and the services provided by the World Learning Team. Copies of the questionnaires were provided to the Mission.

### ***Follow-on***

Following the two Israeli military incursions into the West Bank in Spring 2001, contingency plans were developed for the Task Order, including in the area of follow-on. In a meeting with the Mission's training staff, it was acknowledged that the likely long-term nature of the second incursion would prevent development and implementation of traditional follow-on designs that are done to support returned participants in carrying out their Action Plans. AMIDEAST proposed that all participants be enrolled in appropriate professional membership organizations because this type of follow-on support could be implemented in spite of the West Bank closures. One-year memberships in professional

associations were selected with technical input from participants, training providers, and other stakeholders.

### ***TraiNet***

In the first quarter of the project, TraiNet was installed in the AMIDEAST West Bank office and used to capture all activity under this Task Order including information on Fee-for-Service participants.

### **Effectiveness of Training Programs**

Assessments from the participants, the training providers, and the World Learning Team support USAID's training theory: that programs were highly effective when participants were well-selected, training objectives clearly identified, and there was stakeholder buy-in.

### **III. CONCERNS/CONSTRAINTS**

The volatile situation in the West Bank and Gaza, the terrorist attacks on the US, and the unique one-year nature of the Task Order resulted in some significant challenges for the program.

The ability to implement activity under this contract was made more difficult after September 11, 2001. Due to the attacks on the US, the time required to acquire US visas changed from two days to four weeks and then again to six weeks. This required re-scheduling and postponing training in what was already a tight schedule, and it severely limited the array of options for follow-on designs due to the limited time available to properly identify and implement them. It also led to a no-cost extension to the Task Order to accommodate the delays.

The two, long-term Israeli military occupations with curfews interfered with the safe and scheduled departure of the business interns and posed difficult challenges to the US training providers and their ability to carry out commitments. Special recognition needs to be made of all the stakeholders, including the training providers and not least of all the participants, for their flexibility and willingness to move forward with planned US programs. While their cities were closed and curfews were in force, thirty participants found their way out of the West Bank and Gaza with help where it could be found – in Mission cars, ambulances, TV correspondents' vehicles, and even from the ("Good") Samaritans. Travel to Amman, Jordan that normally takes less than one hour took up to nine.

Some participants were never able to get to the US, while others pulled out of the program due to high stress. Two participants, upon arrival in California, were held incommunicado four hours by immigration officials who were finally convinced of the legitimacy of their J-1 visas. The World Learning Team appreciates everyone's extraordinary efforts that far exceeded what is normal in USAID participant training implementation.

In March 2001, following the second military incursion, AMIDEAST developed a contingency plan for STTIP and immediately sent it to the Mission. The plan addressed each activity remaining in the Task Order and suggested solutions for delays brought about by the incursion.

A final concern of a different nature, which was observed over the course of the Task Order, was some evidence of contractor resistance to ADS 253, because it is easy to think of “training requirements” as not more than ensuring appropriate visa and medical insurance. World Learning understood that training for results was a new concept to almost every stakeholder in the West Bank and Gaza and that it would take time for people to fully understand their roles and responsibilities in training planning, implementation, and follow-on support.

#### IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The World Learning team enjoyed the excellent, collaborative relationship with the Mission and hopes to build on the lessons learned from STTIP for future participant training for the West Bank and Gaza. In this spirit, the following recommendations are made based on lessons learned during this Task Order.

- In an environment of military closures and curfews, participants who attempt to leave their homes for training do so at great personal risk and under high stress. The Mission might consider providing escorted departures to ensure safety and speed.
- AMIDEAST observed that contractors who use monies from their training budgets to send participants to the US once or perhaps twice a year to professional conferences regret the USAID requirement that prohibits a returned participant from receiving another J-1 visa for a USAID program for two years. These contractors are resistant to implementing their training in compliance with ADS 253, where they would be subject to this restriction. As with all stakeholders, AMIDEAST continued to emphasize to contractors the *training for results* requirement of USAID training funds. We note here that USAID training funds are typically not spent solely on professional conferences, as conferences are more networking opportunities than training events. One approach for Mission consideration is that other donor monies with looser restrictions, to the extent that they are available, fund professional conferences with USAID training funds reserved for programs that are results-oriented. Another approach taken by many Missions is to supplement professional conferences with a tailored training component, which can be a powerful training for results design.
- In discussions with contractors who have training budgets, AMIDEAST heard some express reluctance in using the Fee-for-Service mechanism, because in so doing, they faced smaller training budgets. One option would be to have the training contractor provide certain services (such as pre-departure and TraiNet data entry) at no cost, with the contractor covering all out-of-pocket expenses. This might serve as an incentive for contractors to be ADS 253 compliant.
- Finally, we have seen training participants resist the need to participate in some of the required pre-departure activities. Again, this is not unexpected and one response was to develop language directed to participants and post it on the AMIDEAST Web site. The message is clear that people at the highest levels throughout the world are also USAID-funded participants and go through the same pre-departure processing. This language can be seen at:

[http://www.amideast.org/offices/westbankgaza/STTIP/candidates\\_training.htm](http://www.amideast.org/offices/westbankgaza/STTIP/candidates_training.htm)

The World Learning Team encourages full stakeholder buy-in for the most effective and successful participant training implementation.