

AMIDEAST امد ياست

PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

Second Quarter
Performance Monitoring Report
January 1 – March 31, 2006



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Open Society Institute



Implemented by:

AMIDEAST

Open Society Institute

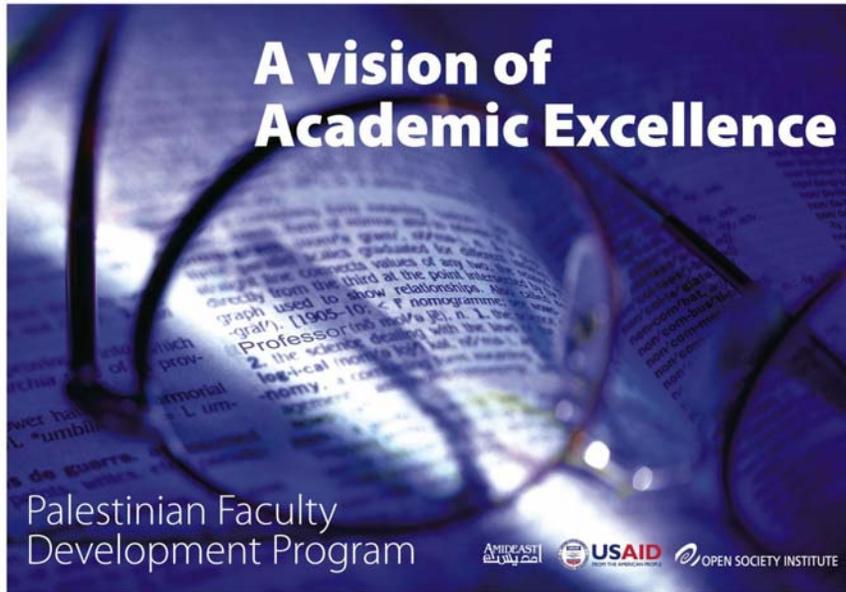


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Executive Summary

The second quarter of implementing PFDP involved several key milestones.

- TOEFL and GRE testing of all candidates was completed
- Final selection of candidates was completed
- The official launch of PFDP occurred
- Pre-academic training courses were begun.

The three week freeze in activities in March associated with USAID's request following the Hamas PLC election victory somewhat delayed the placement process and pre-academic training. Nevertheless, by the end of the second quarter project activities were on track in terms of implementation, quarterly expenditures and administrative backstopping.

1. Testing of Applicants

A critical part of the selection process involved testing PhD applicants in the GRE and TOEFL tests, and similarly testing the Short-term Fellows using the TOEFL. Importantly, all applicants had previously submitted an ITP test (unofficial TOEFL exam) in their applications to determine eligibility. Official GRE and TOEFL exams were used to inform the final selection of candidates and their scores will be used for placement at US universities. Testing was completed at AMIDEAST Ramallah's Computer-based Testing Lab, as well as at AMIDEAST Gaza using paper-based exams. The timing of the GRE exam was critical because the Educational Testing Service has only permitted the GRE to be offered twice a year in the paper-based format. Hence, our PFDP candidates in Gaza only had a single opportunity that could not be missed. In total, 65 applicants took the TOEFL test and 42 completed the GRE. The average TOEFL score of West Bank finalists was 580, whereas the average TOEFL score of the Gazan finalists was 543. Overall, English skills of the finalist were surprisingly high while GRE scores were not surprisingly low.

2. Final Selection Interviews

The success of AMIDEAST's approach toward outreach, recruitment and selection is evident in the Summary Data Sheet of Applications (see Annex A below). 218 pre-applications were received during 4 weeks of recruitment in the first quarter. This number was ultimately narrowed down to 71 interviews through a process described in the first quarter performance monitoring plan.

Interviews of the applicants were conducted between February 2-6 in Ramallah, as well as via DVC in Gaza. The interview committee was composed of eight individuals. Given the number of applicants needing to be interviewed we divided up into discipline teams of two each, and organized a complicated matrix of interviews that happened simultaneously in various rooms at AMIDEAST over four days. The interview committees were composed of the following:

Education

Chris Shinn, AMIDEAST
Lou Cristillo, Columbia Teachers College

Political Science

Barbara Safriet, Yale Law School
Joseph Glicksberg, Program Manager, Open Society Institute

Public Policy/ Public Administration

Barbara Safriet, Yale Law School
Joseph Glicksberg, Program Manager, Open Society Institute

Urban Planning

Donald Miller, University of Washington Seattle
Martha Loerke, Director Network Scholarship Programs, Open Society Institute

Social Work

Nabila El-Bassel, Columbia University
Joseph Glicksberg, Open Society Institute

The interview committees used standardized Interview Guidelines and an Interview Rating Sheet for each interview. Both of these forms are attached in Annex B and C. Interviews typically lasted 30 – 40 minutes. A period of discussion among the interviewers then occurred after the candidate had left the room. A wrap-up session also took place at the conclusion of all the interviews for that discipline. The aim of this discussion was to review the full range and quality of applicants and make final decisions regarding who would be selected and who would not. Candidates were not formally ranked in priority; however, a number of candidates were flagged for further discussion among the entire group of interviewers. These individuals, as well as the highlights of each selection committee, were discussed in a general forum at the conclusion of the entire selection process on February 6, 2006.

Logistically the interviews went extremely well. The exception was Dr. Nabila El-Bassel was unable to make the interview trip to the West Bank. Therefore, she conducted interviews with 6 social work finalists with Joe Glicksberg by videoconference from OSI's office in NY in mid-February. The demands of time on each interviewer were significant. However, enthusiasm for the quality of applicants grew as the process progressed, and culminated with a robust, very positive assessment of the total applicant pool during the general forum discussion. Candidates asked few questions during the interview. The guidelines and rating sheets were found appropriate and useful. Finalist selection results include 25 PhD finalists, plus 4 alternates, and 15 Short-term finalists and two alternates. A detailed breakdown can be found in Annex A.

3. Official Launch of PFDP

On February 7, 2006 PFDP had its official launch ceremony at the Ministry of Education in Ramallah. The guests included representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Palestinian universities in West Bank and Gaza, AMIDEAST, Open Society Institute (OSI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the donor



community.

Naeem Abu Hummous, Minister of Education at the time, began the ceremony by welcoming the attendees. David Harden, USAID Deputy Mission Director's speech followed, concentrating on the current political situation and uncertainty. Ambassador Theodore Kattouf, President of AMIDEAST also made some formal remarks as did Martha Loerke, Director Network Scholarship Programs at OSI. Chris Shinn, PFDP Chief of Party gave a PowerPoint presentation on the projects components and scope and answered questions. USAID arranged for permits so that 10 of the 25 Gaza invitees were able to attend. The new PFDP brochure along with OSI brochures were distributed to the guests for more information on the program. A general reception followed the presentation. This, in turn, was followed by a VIP lunch at Darna Restaurant in Ramallah which was attended by 25 honored guests. Overall, both events were low key, but well attended and generally a success.



4. Pre-Academic Training

An integral part of the PFDP program is to provide the PFDP participants with a variety of pre-academic professional training to enhance their capabilities and better prepare them for their scholarship.

The first pre-academic training course was an intensive TOEFL preparation course for all semi-finalists held late December and into January 2006. The course was provided in Ramallah, Nablus and Gaza for the semi-finalists in preparation for the TOEFL exam in mid-January. The aim was for the candidates to be able to present stronger scores to the interview committee in February, and not to delay the placement process in the event they were selected as finalists. A 22-hour TOEFL course was simultaneously given in Ramallah and Nablus. Twenty-two participants attended the Ramallah course while 11 attended in Nablus. In Gaza a 30-hour TOEFL course was given for 23 students. The course provided exercises on all sections of the test: listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension and the TOEFL Longman Book was given for additional self practice.

Following the TOEFL course a GRE intensive preparation course was given to the PhD semi-finalists only. A 32-hours course was given to 19 candidates in Ramallah with a similar course given to 9 participants in Nablus the following week. The West Bank semi-finalists sat for the GRE exam at the end of January. Gaza provided their 30-hour GRE training course a month later since their test dates were scheduled for March. The GRE course was designed so that two days concentrated on the verbal section of the exam and two days on the analytical section. Different instructors were used for each section to provide the participants with helpful exam taking strategies. A GRE Barrons book was given to each participant for additional self practice.

Course evaluations received after the trainings were overall positive. The instructors felt that the participants were interactive, enthusiastic and wanted to learn as much as possible. They appreciated being taught tactics and strategies on how to deal with standardized tests. The one complaint from the participants was that the courses were too intensive and too short.

PFDP will embark on additional pre-academic professional training during the next quarter. Finalists will be trained on Public Speaking, Communication and Presentation Skills and Stress Management. In addition, AMIDEAST will launch three tailored,

advanced level, 45-hour English courses for PFDP finalists in Gaza, Nablus and Ramallah. Four candidates not able to attend in-person courses will be enrolled in online English courses.

During the summer PFDP will conduct a series of intensive seminars on academic writing and research methodology. The one-week Effective Teaching Strategies Course, which is a pillar of PFDP, will also be given to the Short-term finalists during July.

5. Open Society Institute US-Based Activity

In January, OSI advertised for the PFDP program coordinator position via e-mail listserves and print media. OSI reviewed over 100 resumes, conducted initial interviews with 11 applicants, and chose Mr. Patrick Hynes after a second interview and reference check. This position was budgeted as an OSI cost share. Mr. Hynes will assume an increasingly active role once candidates begin arriving in the US.

Throughout the quarter OSI staff in New York City began approaching US host universities. OSI has started notifying universities across the United States, informing them about the program and responding to inquiries. Institutions interested in the program have responded directly to OSI and completed an initial “host university” form. OSI will follow-up with institutions in the second quarter. This process has also been aided by the COP’s suggestions and affiliations with various US universities. At the same time, OSI finalized the interview teams in early January and made all of the ground and air travel arrangements for the six individuals flying from the US to the West Bank.

In March, OSI staff prepared and mailed approximately 100 packets to potential host universities to begin individual finalist placements. The packets were mailed to doctoral program directors, associate deans of graduate studies, and select faculty members in approximately 80 departments at 50 public and private universities. The packets were discipline-specific and contained: a) a cover letter; b) finalist files with interview comments summaries; c) a program and PhD component overview; d) ranking instructions; e) a ranking sheet; and f) a host university application. Follow-up was conducted throughout March by phone and e-mail and remains ongoing.

6. Public Relations

After soliciting bids from three local advertising firms, AMIDEAST engaged V&V Marketing and Communications to design and print the PFDP brochure. An example of the main theme is pasted on the cover of this report. This image will be used to create foam-board posters which will be distributed to universities during the next recruitment cycle starting in September. The actual brochure includes text describing the program and its various components. In addition to general public relations, the front-facing image of the brochure is meant to brand the program with an identifying image of class and integrity throughout the life of the program.

7. Administration and Reporting

Financial: AMIDEAST submitted its second quarter financial pipeline report on March 15, 2006. This report included estimations for the month of March. The total cumulative expenditures reported in the pipeline report was \$381,148. Total actual expenditures were estimated to be \$386,764. This does not include a total of \$73,099 of cash OSI has spent on US-based activity as of March 31, 2006. Overall, project expenditures are on target for the fiscal year.

Amendments: AMIDEAST submitted a letter to the USAID Agreement Officer on October 30, 2005 requesting several amendments pertaining mostly to financial reporting deadlines. AMIDEAST is still awaiting USAID’s review of these requested changes.

Annual Implementation Plan: As per the Contracting Technical Officer's request, AMIDEAST submitted the 2005-2006 Annual Implementation Plan on November 30, 2005. AMIDEAST has not yet received approval of its Implementation Plan.

GIS: As per the Cooperative Agreement, an initial GIS report will be submitted within 30 days of approval of the Annual Implementation Plan.

TraiNet: Reporting for TraiNet has not yet occurred. However, the COP, Chris Shinn, visited Washington DC in late-February and received an orientation about the TraiNet system from USAID's responsible contractor Devis. Follow-up from this meeting resulted in both AMIDEAST and OSI being properly entered into Devis' system so that appropriate Initiators and Verifiers now exist for the issuance of DS-2019s later in the year.

**Summary Data Sheet of Applications
2006 Recruitment**

Category	Pre Applications Received	Full Applications Requested	Full Applications Reviewed	Semi-Selection Results	Finalists Candidates
Total Applications (WB & Gaza)	218	175	115	71	46
WB Applications	168	127	78	47	30
Gaza Applications	50	48	37	24	16
PhD Fellowship Applications	128	110	80	55	29
Short-term Fellow Applications	88	65	35	16	17
Full-time Faculty (Employees)	151	115	88	53	38
Part-time Faculty (Contracts/ Adjuncts)	36	39	24	17	7
Practitioners	33	14	3	1	1
Male Applicants	181	36	97	54	37
Female Applicants	37	8	18	17	9
Ineligible/ Rejected		43	60	44	28
Graduates from Non-Arabic Speaking Countries			81		
West Bank Universities and Colleges					
Birzeit University	26	22	18	12	9
An Najah University	26	24	18	10	7
Al Quds University	15	12	10	8	3
Al Quds Open University	27	19	8	4	3
Arab American University	3	3	2	1	0
Hebron University	5	5	5	2	2
Bethlehem University	4	4	1	1	1
Polytechnic University	23	9	3	2	0
RWTC and RMTC (UNRWA)	5	2	6	4	3
Palestine Technical College (MOE) (Khdoury and Aroub)	4	4	2	2	2
Other: Tiera College, Ibn Sina	2	0	0	0	0
Gaza Universities and Colleges					
Al-Aqsa University (PA-MOE)	8	8	4	2	1
Al-Azhar University	16	15	17	11	8
Al-Quds Open University	4	4	4	2	1
Islamic University	13	12	7	6	5
Gaza Community Mental Health Program	1	1	1	0	0
Community College of Applied Sciences and Technology	6	6	4	3	1

Discipline/ Sub Field	Full Applications	Full Applications	Semi Selection Results	Finalists
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THE PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

	Requested	Received		
Education				
Educational Policy	0	1	0	0
Higher Education Administration	9	7	5	3
International and Comparative Education	1	2	2	0
Primary School Administration	1	0	0	0
Primary School Teaching and Curriculum	4	5	2	1
Secondary School Teaching and Curriculum	8	5	4	4
Special/Disabled Student Education	8	2	2	2
Foundations and Philosophy of Education	3	4	1	1
Educational Evaluation and Measurement	9	8	4	2
“Other” or Unspecified Sub field	33	8	4	5
Total	43 applications 25% of total	42 applications 37% of total	24 applications 34% of total	18 finalists 40% of total
Public Administration/ Public Policy				
Health Administration	4	7	6	3
Local Government Administration	2	3	1	0
Nonprofit Management	3	2	2	1
Public Finance and Budgeting	17	8	6	3
Public Services Management	0	2	2	1
Energy and Environmental Policy	1	0	0	0
Health Policy	5	5	2	3
Policy Analysis and Evaluation	2	1	0	1
Social Policy	1	1	0	0
Fiscal Policy	1	1	1	0
“Other” or Unspecified Sub field	11	3	2	2
Total	47 applications 27 % of total	33 applications 28.5% of total	22 applications 31% of total	14 finalists 31% of total
Urban Planning				
Land Use Planning	1	2	1	
Urban Design	3	4	1	1
Urban Growth Management	1	2	2	2
Infrastructure and Transportation Planning	3	1	1	1
Environmental Planning	8	6	5	3
“Other” or Unspecified Sub field	7	2	2	
Total	23 applications 13% of total	17 applications 15% of total	12 applications 17% of total	7 finalists 15.5% of total
Social Work				
Advanced Clinical	0	0	0	0
Social Policy & Policy Analysis	1	1	1	1
Social Policy & Administration	1	1	1	0
Child and Family Development	2	2	2	0
Social Development/Poverty Alleviation	1	3	0	0
Gerontology (Aging)	0	0	0	0
Mental Health	7	2	1	1
Social Health Issues (Substance Abuse, HIV AIDS)	4	2	0	0
“Other” or Unspecified Sub field	2	0	0	0
Total	21 applications 12% of total	11 applications 9.5 % of total	5 applications 7% of total	2 finalists 4.5% of total

Annex B
2006 Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)

Interview Guidelines

Procedure

Interviews are scheduled for one hour time slots. We will spend about 45 minutes talking to each semi-finalist and about 10-15 minutes completing the interview form and preparing for the next interview. Because we will be interviewing in teams of two, you may find it easier for one of us to take the lead in asking questions, while the another writes down the responses on the form. However, each team is free to set up its own system. It is quite likely that team members may have differing opinions of the same candidate. This is to be expected but needs to be noted on each interviewer's form.

It is important to write detailed comments about each semi-finalist on the interview form. We rely heavily on them during the host university placement stage. Thus, while “applicant shows tremendous potential for multiplier effect in urban planning in Gaza with her previous work at XYZ, plans to teaching XYZ course upon her return, wants to initiate XYZ policy changes in her department” is a very useful comment, “interesting background – a definite finalist” is not! Descriptive notes will not only help you defend your position (and refresh your memory!) when discussing the applicant with other interviewers.

Overview

When interviewing candidates, please consider not only their academic abilities and potential for success in a PhD Program or Short-Term Visiting Placement in their field, but also their compatibility with the goals of the program, which are: 1) to “promote the professional development and retention of promising Palestinian academics, and 2) to revitalize and reform the teaching of selected disciplines at Palestinian universities and promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning.

Although we will use a uniform set of questions on standardized rating sheets to help us to obtain consistent interview results, we encourage interviewers to ask additional questions and initiate discussions in the interview. This helps assess candidates' motivation and English language proficiency and can be useful in keeping interviewers interested. Therefore, please feel free to ask open-ended questions, i.e., questions that do not lead the candidates to appropriate responses, but rather allow them to express themselves. Whenever possible, please encourage interviewees to give specific or anecdotal examples which support broad statements.

Competitive Finalist Profile

A competitive candidate should express a strong commitment to Palestine and offer examples of reform or changes he/she would implement in their field of specialization. It is also important to assess whether a candidate possesses the personal qualities (e.g., flexibility, willingness to change, open-mindedness) needed to adapt to a new cultural and educational environment. **The ideal candidates will be:**

- 1. Dedicated to Teaching.** In the case of two candidates that you rate equally, we ask you to give preference to those that show a stronger interest in teaching than research.
- 2. Able to Match or Fit with a US PhD Program or Host Department.** We ask that you think of strong candidates as those who you can envision being accepted into an academic program in the US due to ability *and* potential “match” between applicant interests and particular faculty interests and/or departmental strengths. In this regard, please envision that anyone who is selected at this stage should have what you would consider to be a 75% chance of actually being placed in a US graduate program (PhD Fellows) or host department (Short-Term Scholars). (There is no specific limit to the number of finalists that should be chosen per field.)

3. Able to show a Strong Potential for the Multiplier Effect and Ability to Contribute to a US and Palestinian Universities: Ideal candidates will show potential for the multiplier effect – i.e., have potential for generating change in research and instructional methodologies among their Palestinian colleagues and at Palestinian institutions of higher education. In addition, they will be able to positively contribute to their US host departments.

4. Able to show Competency in English and Research Methodology. When evaluating these categories, please keep in mind that *all finalists will receive 6-8 months of academic training before starting their programs in the US*. This training will include extensive research methodology training, so please consider your views on a candidate's research ability accordingly. In this area, we ask reviewers to give candidates some benefit of the doubt.

5. Able to Convey that they have a Strong Understanding of Their Field. Candidates should exhibit an understanding of their field, and have realistic goals for their PhD program or short-term visit in the US as well as their future career development.

6. Able to Show that they have an Appropriate Professional Status. This award is not meant for individuals who wish to drastically change their career so much as for those able to enhance their abilities in their current field or gain expertise in a *new but related* field. The nature and quality of the candidate's professional or academic experience should be related to their chosen field.

7. Able to exhibit Strong Character. Ideal candidates exhibit resourcefulness, self-confidence, focused motivation, and a high level of maturity, which enables them to fully exploit the fellowship's cultural and professional opportunities.

8. Dedicated to the West Bank/Gaza. Individuals who express a desire to remain in or emigrate to the US do not meet the program's goals; applicants must be dedicated to fulfilling their J-1 visa return commitment. Please note on the rating sheet if an applicant appears to express an intention to emigrate.

9. Previous international experience. If choosing between two identical potential finalists, those with less international experience (from studying or working abroad) should be given preference.

Further Points to Keep in Mind Regarding Selection

Points to keep in mind as you evaluate both PhD and Short-Term Scholar semi-finalists:

1. Palestinian universities have long been operating in an environment of political, social, and economic crisis. **Many Palestinian academics may therefore have not had exposure to international academia, professional development opportunities, and publishing options that scholars from other areas of the world may have had.**
2. **Universities in the West Bank often have better facilities, international connections, and resources than those in Gaza.** The backgrounds of scholars from the West Bank and Gaza may reflect this discrepancy.

Confidentiality

Ranking and interview results are completely confidential. A strong ranking does not guarantee finalist placement at a host university. Please do not discuss the interviews or ranking with anyone that is not on the PFDP Interview Team.

Interview Report Form

Applicant: _____ PhD or STS? _____	Interviewer: _____
Applicant's Affiliation: _____	Interviewer's Affiliation: _____
Applicant's Major Field and Subfield: _____	Date and City: _____

1. Has anything in your application changed since you submitted it? Your job or address, etc.?

2. What are your career goals? How do you think doctoral study or a short-term visit at a US institution will help you accomplish your career goals?

3. What is your specific area of interest within your major field? Do you have any professional, teaching, or research experience in this area? Why does this subfield interest you?

4. What is the most recent professional article you have read in your field? What was it about and why did it interest you?

5. What are some of the obstacles to the improvement of teaching, research, and higher education in general in Palestine? Can you discuss some ways in which you personally would like to make changes in the way your field is taught or in how higher education is administered at various levels in Palestine?

6. What are your plans if you do not receive a fellowship?

7. Give an example of a situation where you initiated a change, or an accomplishment you're proud of.

Please rate all of the candidates by using the following scale:

Cannot Assess, Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent.

No Show

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| _____ | 1. | English |
| _____ | 2. | Understanding of Field |
| _____ | 3. | Commitment to Field |
| _____ | 4. | Leadership Potential |
| _____ | 5. | Presentation/Communication Skills (not English ability) |
| _____ | 6. | Maturity/Independence |
| _____ | 7. | Motivation |
| _____ | 8. | Match w/ Program Goals |
| _____ | 9. | Overall Rating |

Additional comments:

Placement suggestions:

1.

2.

3.