

GAP ANALYSIS

USAID/MOLSA IRAQ EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

DISCLAIMER

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Background and Overview

Among the most pressing issues facing the reconstruction efforts in Iraq is the high rate of unemployment. Some estimates of unemployment reach 65 percent of the working age population or about 5 million people. The high rate of unemployment has been one of the crucial destabilizing forces in Iraq.

In the aftermath of the overthrow of the Ba'athist regime, the mechanism responsible for serving the labor force became the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). MOLSA has primarily engaged in social services including social security but did not address the staggering unemployment rate in Iraq throughout the Ba'athist period. What was initially a program designed to register ex-combatants, the US Department of Labor (DOL) shifted their funding and focus to MOLSA to create employment and vocational training centers. Beginning in 2003, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) advisors to MOLSA, DOL employees, assisted in the development of a strategy to initiate employment services to the Iraqi public. The strategy was implemented primarily through two complimentary entities, Employment Services Centers (ESC) and Vocational and Technical Training Centers (VTTC).

During 2003, the US Department of Labor (DOL) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) signed a Cooperative Agreement for \$5 million to increase the employment rate in Iraq. The final agreement was signed in September of 2003. IOM contracted Legend Land, a private Danish contractor, to implement its goals at the Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The program mobilized on Dec. 15th, 2003 and ended on December 31, 2004. Legend Land was tasked to start-up the employment centers and vocational training centers in Iraq; train MOLSA employees; install a participant database; and match job applicants to vacant positions. At the conclusion of the contract, the providers were to open 18 operational employment assistance centers and 6 vocational centers in partnership with MOLSA.

In September of 2004, The Louis Berger Group, a joint venture with Management & Training Corporation (MTC) and several sub-contractors, was awarded the next phase contract of the USAID-MOLSA Employment and Training project in Iraq. The original proposal was to build and develop the centers in concert with MOLSA and any MOLSA staff working in any existing centers. Upon mobilization of the Berger/MTC team to Baghdad in December of 2004 it was apparent that IOM-LegendLand had already built



and established more than the 18 employment centers and the 6 vocational centers contracted for in the 2004 contract with DOL and IOM. However the centers were reported to be in varying states of operation, with some of the centers being looted.

To verify the state of the centers, their operational capacity and efficiency, reliability of the data collected by the MOLSA staff, staffing roles and activity, and make suggestions for further development or upgrade, a Gap Analysis of the centers was the first step for the Berger/MTC team.

During the time period of December 27, 2004 to January 16, 2005, the Gap Analysis tool and the process were designed. Also, during the period, the Project Leads were trained and helped develop the tool further. An Iraqi team of 9 men and 2 women assisted with the refining of the tool. Cultural, as well as language needs were considered. On January 12th and 13th, MTC staff and ResCare staff provided Gap Analysis training for the 11 Iraqis involved in the surveying of centers.

On January 11th, prior to training the Iraqi Gap Team, a visit was made to the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA). The Project Team was informed at that meeting that the Minister had not heard of the project and, without consultation with a representative of the US Department of State, the project could not progress. It was realized that there had been some misunderstanding and that it would take some time to correct the misunderstanding which may have arisen from concerns over the imminent election. Therefore, the team made the decision to have the Iraqi employees learn as much as they could about the labor market and condition of the centers in each of the governorates, on a private basis and without infringing on MOLSA sensitivities. While not being able to collect all of the specific data in the survey tool, the team was able to collect initial impressions.

On the following pages is the very rudimentary information collected by the Iraqi Gap Analysis Team. The Project Team has made an attempt to synthesize the limited data and make very early assumptions and recommendations based on our observations and input in the two (2) months we have been “on-the-ground” in Iraq. Certainly, the approval of the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs for the Gap Analysis and augmentation of the existing centers is critical to the project’s success. It is apparent that even in the best case scenario, the joint venture may not receive approval quickly. If a new Minister is elected, there may be an additional time lag for a new Minister to become established and form a new process for approving the work of the project. To keep on-target with the deliverables of the current USAID contract, the Project



Team submits this report as an initial, limited review of the centers. The Project Team will continue to visit the centers and cities surrounding the centers, to collect additional information which may help us with the consulting and advising to the MOLSA centers. For the purpose of this report, the information is only a starting analysis and will serve as the base for future gap identification in the MOLSA centers or other employment projects we may encounter. If MOLSA's leadership agrees to work with the JV, a more formal and robust gap analysis will be undertaken to fill in the analysis, but more importantly, MOLSA can work to target three (3) of the most important centers and work to expand their capacity and capabilities immediately.

Partners

USAID The U.S. Agency for International Development is an independent agency who provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of foreign policy goals of the United States. (<http://www.usaid.gov>)

Louis Berger, Inc. Louis Berger Group is the lead partner on the USAID Iraq Employment and Training project. Louis Berger is a private organization, who is one of the largest consulting groups in the world, with field offices in over 90 countries in the world. (<http://www.louisberger.com>)

MTC The responsible partner for the Gap Analysis was Management & Training Corporation (MTC). MTC is a private company providing workforce development services and vocational training through USDOL contracts to operate Job Corps Centers and Workforce, One Stop programs in the U.S. In addition, MTC provides vocational training and services at Correctional facilities in the U.S. and foreign countries. (<http://www.mtctrains.com>)

ResCare ResCare is a public company that also provides vocational services through the USDOL contracts to operate Job Corps Centers and also provides vocational training and management of projects in the U.S. and foreign countries. (<http://www.rescare.com>)

Introduction

The USAID/MOLSA Employment Services and Vocational Technical Training project in Iraq is an attempt by USAID to assist MOLSA in the establishment and upgrade of employment and training centers and the post-war employment system in Iraq. To identify next steps in the development of employment and vocational centers in Iraq, an analysis was necessary to establish a foundation for future work. The Gap Analysis was implemented under a very short timeline and during one of the most volatile times in Iraq. With increased insurgency and security issues leading up to the Iraqi elections, the curfews, border closures and the reluctance of Iraqis to work with American operations because of personal safety issues, the Gap Team consisted of very few Iraqis who were willing to risk their lives and the lives of their families to collect a small amount of data.

The tools and methodologies were developed by a joint team of contractor leads and Iraqi locals with some knowledge of the current employment and training centers. All Iraqis were keenly aware of the safety issues involved in travel and collection of data. The Iraqis developed their own teams of 2-3 people per team and conducted a discussion to determine what areas of Iraq would be covered by each team. Three leads were selected to cover North, South and Baghdad. Each lead coordinated several team members. Eighteen centers of the 18 Employment and Training Centers were visited and 9 Vocational Centers, which included 3 more than the original 6 that were to be visited.

All Team members visited the centers unofficially and were only able to record observations. At a few centers the team members were able to speak directly with center Managers, but for the most part, the visits were limited.

Methodology

MTC developed a Gap Analysis Tool which was used as the main data collection tool. In addition, teams were encouraged to talk with staff and participants at the centers as much as possible to glean the most information. The tool was color-coded and addressed such issues as condition of the building, type of center, equipment available, utilities in the building, capacity to serve, staffing and other location specific information. In addition, 5 questions were offered for focus-group interaction if possible or one-on-one questioning of participants when available.

The group of 9 men and two women were recruited from Iraq and were mostly people who had worked previously with Americans on USAID contracts. All were vetted and interviewed before selection for the team. All received two days of training in Baghdad on the Gap process, tool and how to administer the tool in lieu of MOLSA approval. The training included interpretation of questions to ensure inter-rater reliability; methods for talking to Managers and/or participants; solutions to safety threats; levels of evaluation on each element; and importance of the information.

Each team was also given a digital camera to try to collect visual information through pictures of the centers or labs/rooms/participants within the centers. Each team collected information on the paper analysis forms and then transported the data to the MTC and ResCare staff in Baghdad through flash drives on the computer. The completed data was sent to the MTC home office in Centerville, Utah where it was put into aggregate charts and analyzed for the report. Draft copies of the report were sent back to Baghdad for input from the staff and teams before submission to USAID.



Gap Analysis Objectives

The report includes information from aggregated data from the tool used by the Gap Analysis Team. The report first discusses the locales and structures in each governorate, secondly the conditions inside the centers, third the staffing and capacity to serve clients, and fourth, any open-ended questions that may have been asked during the visits. We have included charts and graphs to make the information easily available and have concluded with early comments and suggestions for “next steps” for short and long term development of the centers and the system. Pictures are provided when available and with the consent of those in the picture.

With the limited visitation allowed and the very preliminary information, this report can only provide a preliminary review of the conditions of the centers during the timeframe of January and February, 2005.

Executive Summary

Process: Under best conditions, the Gap Analysis Teams should return to each of the centers with a letter of Introduction and Approval from MOLSA. A MOLSA representative would visit each of the centers with a Gap Team staff person and present a unified front for completing the Survey. Certainly security issues and centers that are not operational will add to the barriers of completing the survey on all centers.

We did not detect any misunderstanding of the intent of the questions on the tool which we anticipated through translation of the tool from English to Arabic. The color-coded sections allowed for sorting of information quickly. However, we would suggest additional training sessions with the team to discuss any issues or changes to the process before they go back to the centers.

Center Conditions: It is the understanding of the Project Team that MOLSA has a plan for refurbishing and rebuilding the existing centers. In addition, the USAID contract allows for refurbishing and upgrading the centers. We would suggest a coordinated effort between MOLSA and the USAID contractors to ensure the maximum amount of effort around center improvements and also to not duplicate efforts,

services or funding. In the initial analysis the following center-specific issues were identified as needing attention:

- Centers ranged in condition from very poor to excellent. We would suggest that efforts begin with centers in the best condition, which can continue to offer services with minimal upgrade, and serve as models for the remaining centers.
- In most cases the centers had electricity and generators, which occasionally work, but electrical issues kept some centers from being open more than a few hours each day. We suggest immediate attention to electrical supply as a base service for each center.
- The condition and availability of equipment at each center varied from none to some in each of the centers. Minimum standards for number and condition of equipment and computers were identified in the USAID contract. We suggest ramping-up each center to the minimum standards addressed in the contract.
- The Project Team also suggests that MOLSA be encouraged to increase the hours of operation in each center. This may have staffing implications that will need to be addressed, but a full day of operations will allow for serving more participants and moving the centers to be more competitive in a global market.
- Fourteen out of eighteen centers indicated some utilities were available, but many were in poor condition and in need of repair. We suggest that more information is needed on the actual utility situation in each building, as staff and participants can't learn or even work in an unsafe, unclean location.
- The Project Team can serve as consultants and mentors to the existing MOLSA staff and assist with the upgrade of teachers and support staff.
- While most centers reported being safe and with security guards on the premises, the actual condition of the buildings and equipment were not safe for operation in two cases. Again, we suggest a coordinated effort between MOLSA and the USAID contractors for improving the conditions of the centers.



Data Management: While IOM/LegendLand developed a data base for collection of participant and center outcomes and information, verbal reports indicate that the system was only partially being used and in some ways the staff was not inputting correct data. Some centers were using the electronic system and others were still collecting data on paper. We suggest that the current USAID contractors work with MOLSA staff in the centers to increase the capability of the current database into a system that will work for all partners involved in center operations and provide training for all staff to ensure the correct input and collection of pertinent center information.

Participant Input: Finally, the Project Team suggests that several more Focus Groups be held in each governorate and at each center to collect more information from participants actually receiving services in the centers. The information collected was either from Gap Team member observations or interviews with center managers. To collect unbiased results we will need to collect input from many more center staff or participants. MOLSA collaboration is critical.



Gap Analysis Team for USAID/MOLSA project



Locations of centers visited

Data was collected from 18 Employment Services Centers and 9 Vocational Training Centers. All VTTC's were co-located with the ESC's. Locations were in the North, South and in/or surrounding Baghdad.

Center Locations		
Northern Iraq		
City	Center Name & Type	Center Address
Tekrit	Training and Rehabilitate Center/ESC	St. No. 40
Mosul	Training and Rehabilitate Center/ESC & VTTC	City Center – Hay al wasity
Arbil	Training and Rehabilitate Center/ESC	St. No. 60
Sulaymania	Training and Rehabilitate Center/ESC	City Center- Hay- Canseyan near the Children's Hospital
Kirkuk	Training and Rehabilitate Center/ESC & VTTC	City Center – Hay al wasity

Center Locations		
Central Iraq (Baghdad area)		
City	Center Name & Type	Center Address
Abu Ghraib	VTTC	
Ba'qubah	Dyala Vocational & Employment Center/ESC & VTTC	New Baquba, near Rafidain Bank

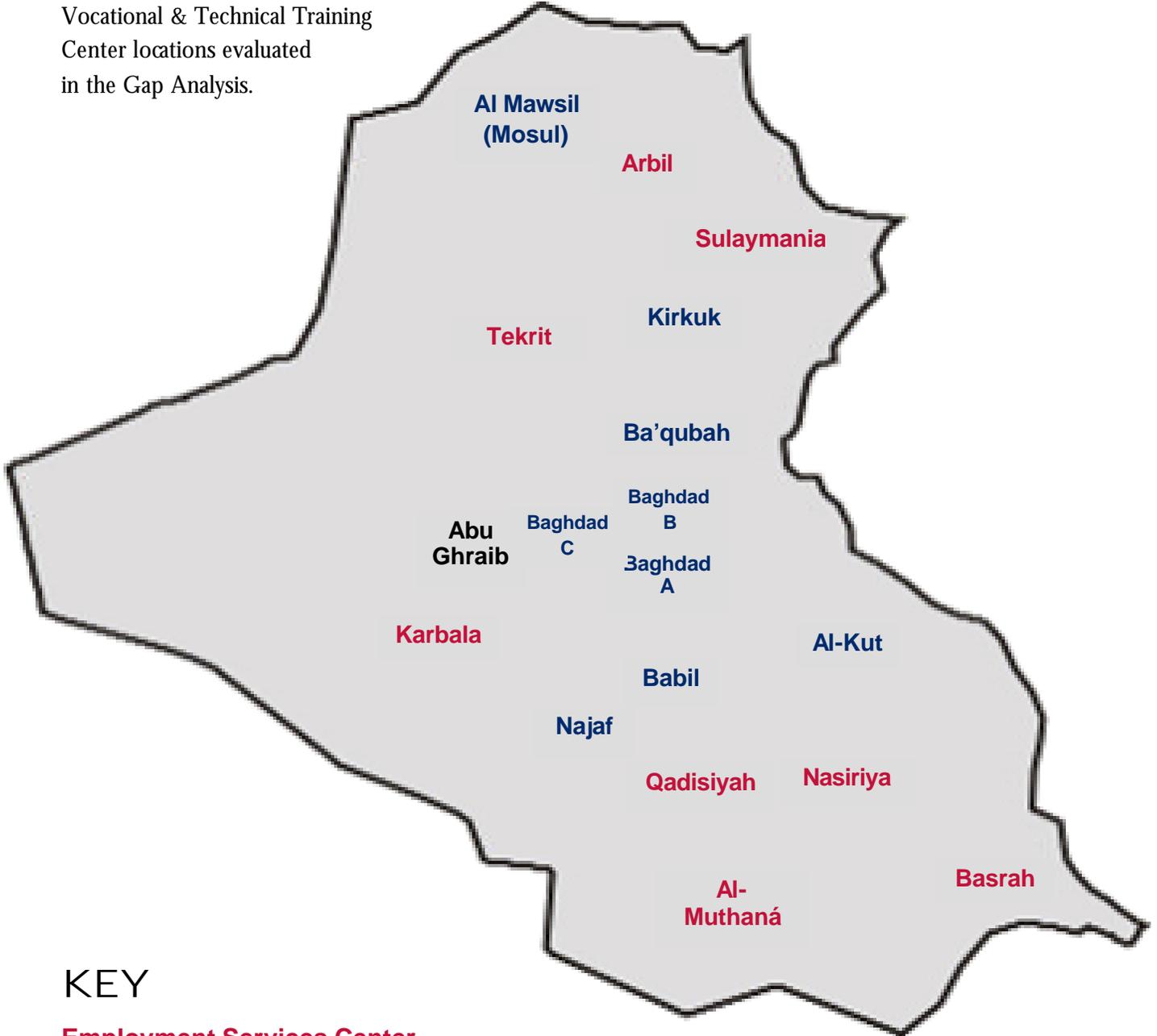


Baghdad A	ESC/VTTC	Al- Waleed, Al- Saydiya
Baghdad B	ESC/VTTC	Al- Baath – In front of Al Waleed Center
Baghdad C	ESC/VTTC	Al- Muatassam – Al-Waziriyah, near al-Baker University
Karbala	ESC	
Babil	ESC & VTTC	Al-Jabareen – Center of governate, near Baladiat
Al-Kut	ESC & VTTC	Opposite of textile factory

Center Locations		
Southern Iraq		
City	Center Name & Type	Center Address
Al-Muthana	ESC	
Najaf	Hayder Maky/ESC & VTTC	Al-Ansar district, near the wheels factory
Qadisiyah	ESC	
Nasiriya	Kornish- Iec/ESC	
Basrah	ESC	Sa'adoon Street, near Hamden Restaurant



MOLSA Employment Services and Vocational & Technical Training Center locations evaluated in the Gap Analysis.



KEY

- Employment Services Center**
- Vocational & Technical Training Center**
- Combination Center (ES & VTTC)**



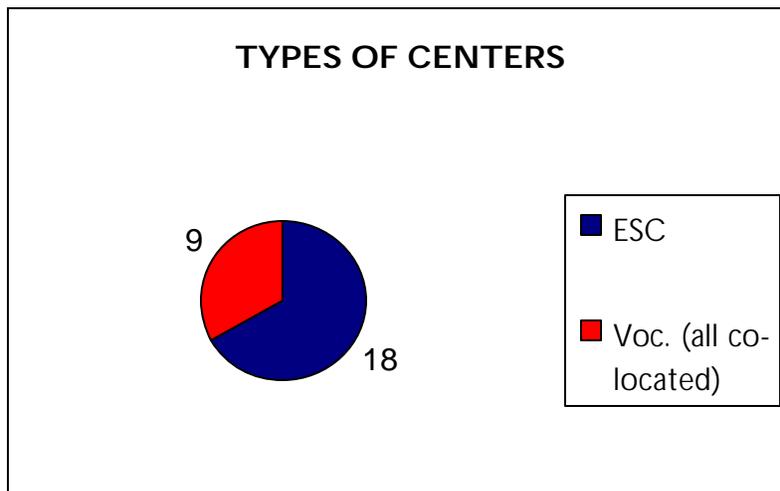
Review of data

From the surveys collected, several early assumptions can be made about the condition of the employment and vocational centers and the “next steps” for improvement. Each area of observation is presented in chart form, as well as with narrative.

Types of Centers: Most centers are large buildings in the main areas of the cities of each governorate. All centers visited were Employment Services Centers where participants are assessed for employment and training needs and then either referred to an employer for immediate job placement, or referred on to a Vocational and Technical Training Center for remediation of language and computer skills or specific occupational training in the classroom and/or worksite.

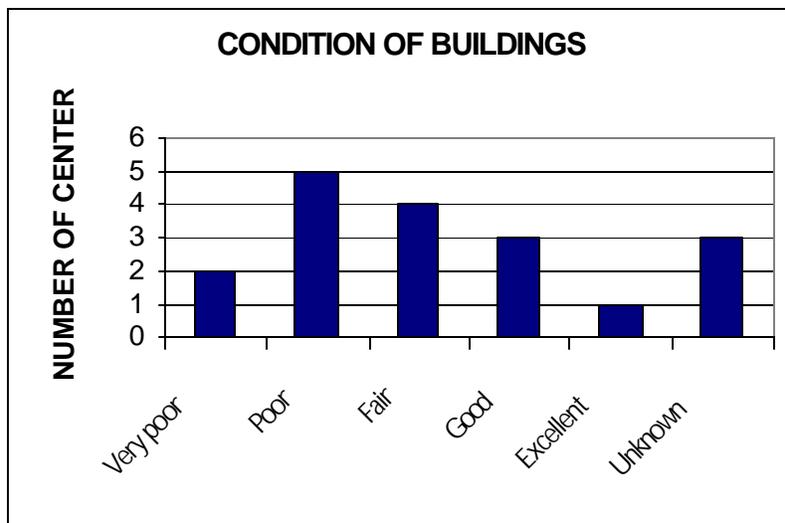
The use of On the Job Training (OJT) contracts and work-experience opportunities are allowed for in the contract. An Outreach Team is being developed to recruit employers in each of the governorates that will be willing to hire participants in an OJT relationship.

Of the 18 Employment and Training Centers visited, 9 also had Vocational and Technical Training Centers co-located in the same building. This was a very positive element of the centers as being co-located allows for a One Stop system of collaboration and referral without the participant having to travel all over the city or town to find a training facility. The team did however find that the Vocational Centers were poorly equipped and lacking equipment and curriculum to teach specific occupational skills.

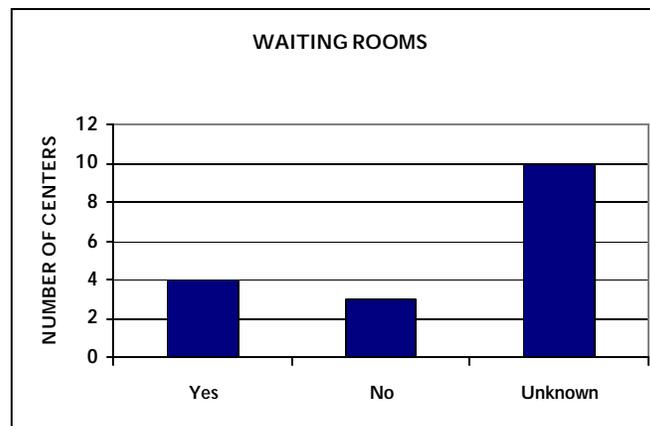




Condition of Buildings: Eleven (11) of the centers ranged from very poor to fair in condition. The majority of buildings had either been destroyed partially or totally by insurgents and several buildings had also been looted. Three buildings were in good condition and one additional in excellent condition. There is no data for the remaining three. The building in excellent condition was fairly new and therefore had not suffered from outdated wiring, utilities, equipment and lack of upkeep like most of the centers. The team would suggest that the 4 centers in good or excellent condition be used as models for determining what is needed for upgrade to the buildings in poor condition.

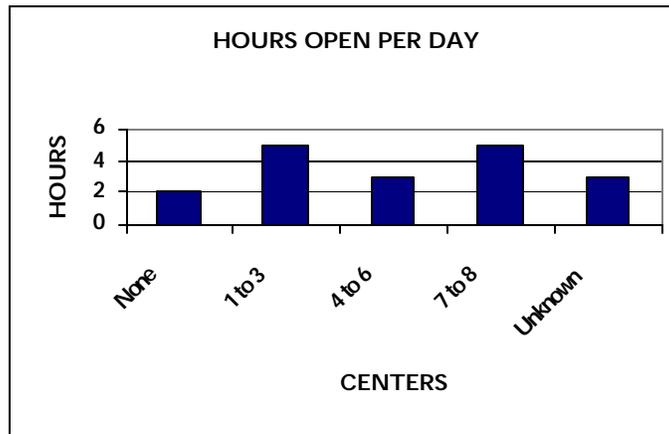


Waiting Rooms: Early input from Iraqis in each of the center areas reflected that most of the centers did not have adequate waiting areas when multiple participants were waiting for services. The data collected was not sufficient to make an observation on the amount or condition of waiting rooms in each of the centers. Future consultation between center staff and the Project Team may assist with center design and the provision of waiting areas for job seekers.

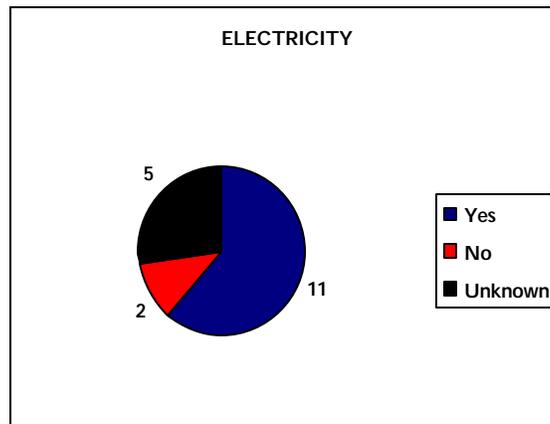




Hours of Operation of the Centers: The hours of operation of the centers ranged from not open at all to 8 hours. Most centers were either open, half days, (4 hours) or full days, (8 hours). However, 5 centers reported only being open 1 hour per day with very minimal number of staff. The team would recommend to MOLSA, that if possible all centers be open a minimum of 8 hours a day to offer the maximum amount of services and to begin to develop standards that are competitive in the global market.



Electricity: Most of the buildings had electricity and generators as back up. However, most reported loss of power several times per day, which interrupted classes and services. As power issues are a continuing problem for all of Iraq, the team suggests bringing the wiring and capacity of each building up to a minimum and then working with utility groups to employ our participants in projects with large electrical companies to serve as part of the solution to the problem. On the Job Training Contracts (OJTs) and work projects could be designed using the MOLSA participants to upgrade the centers. The USAID project has allocated funding for upgrade and refurbishment of the utilities in each center to hopefully bring the centers to an acceptable base level of operation.

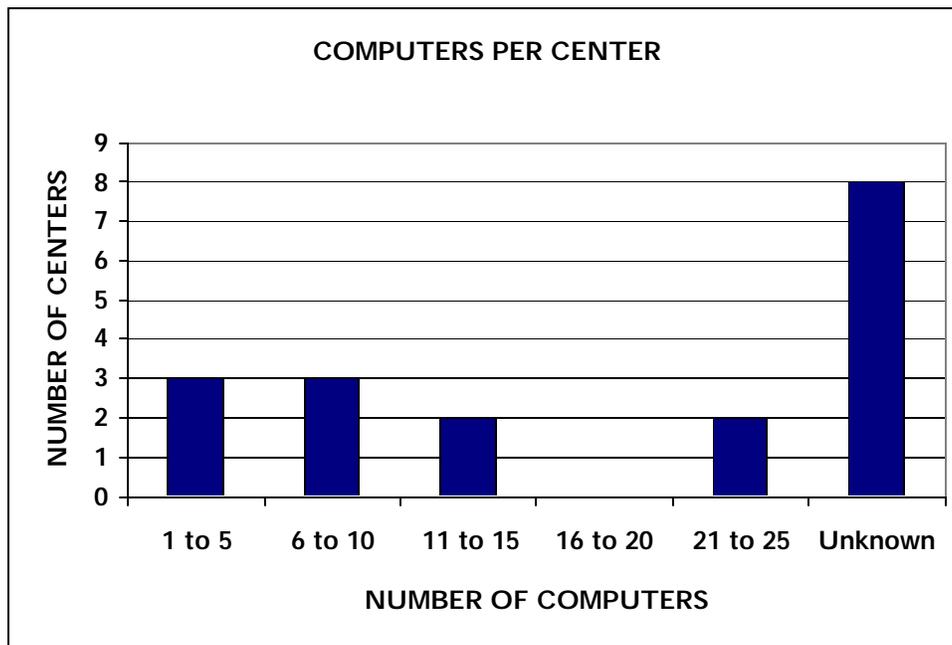




Computers: Very few centers had computers of any significance and all lacked adequate computers either in a lab or for staff use. Only 4 centers had the capacity to offer any kind of computer class. The computers in most of the centers were either outdated or in poor condition if working at all. Standards were established for each center in the USAID/MOLSA contract with the Project Team. We would suggest a more thorough analysis of each center and the purchasing of computers, software and equipment at a minimum level to adequately offer classes and skill-set assessments. Again, to be competitive in a global market, and allow the average job seeker in Iraq to compete for jobs, the minimal levels of computer literacy are needed. Those workers who hope to move up a career ladder in most occupations will need additional computer literacy training at higher levels.

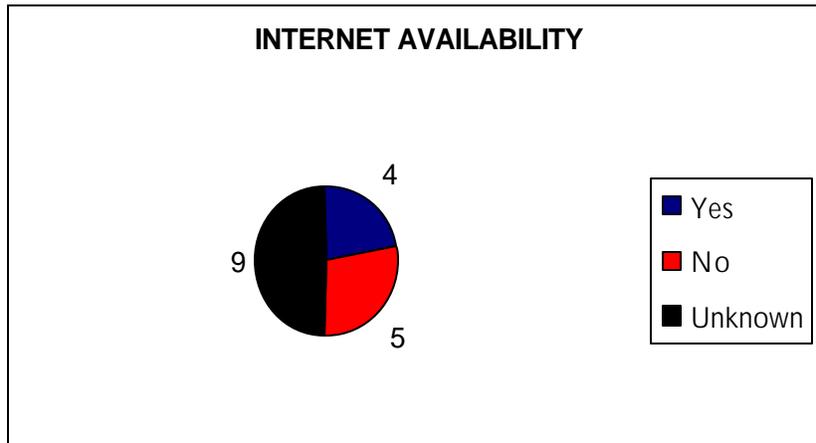
Some job seekers will learn well with an interactive, computer-based curriculum. Each center needs the capacity for on-line training/tracking and internet availability for access to other educational opportunities through local or international universities or schools.

The Project Team has also discussed the possibility of hiring Iraqis to build Mobile Training Vans to take the classes to the participants. The Project Team suggests a discussion with MOLSA to discuss such a venture.

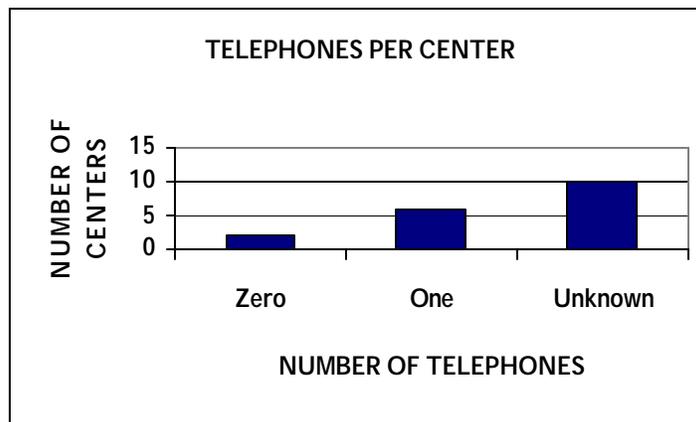




Internet Availability: While 9 of the 18 centers reported internet availability, the usage was minimal due to electricity problems and the condition of the computers and equipment. The team recommends internet availability for all staff and trainers and the development of a computer lab, with internet capability for each work station.



Telephones: In the majority of the centers it was unknown what telephone connections were available. However, in 6 of the centers there was only one phone for the whole building and in one center there was no phone at all. In the remaining 10 centers it was unknown how many phones may have been available. It is however, the recommendation of the team that each center determine the adequate level of phones needed and that the Project Team works with the centers on connectivity issues to ensure the adequate amount of phone sets.





Additional Data Implications

In addition to the measurable elements of the Centers reported above, several additional implications were made from the Gap information.

- At least four of the Centers had been looted and two were not operational. At the Abu Ghraib facility, squatters were living in the center.
- A few centers had some positive operational aspects such as air conditioning, photocopiers, TVs, health and medical labs with a medical practitioner on site, and computer network maintenance contracts. However, these center “niceties” were only in a couple of the centers.
- Most centers had tables, chairs and file cabinets, but they were mostly in very poor condition.
- Some centers reported having drinking water, but most said the water dispensers were not sanitary. A few centers had refrigerators and stoves. Only one reported having a medical cabinet.
- Almost every center reported having a security guard on site 24 hours a day.
- Almost all reported using a MOLSA Standard Operating Procedure manual. (SOP)
- Several reported being able to serve over 250 people per day, but those same centers also admitted that they had not served more than 2-3 people in the past few weeks.
- Most centers reported placing 1000s of workers several months ago on large restoration projects on the streets and rivers. However, most centers were not aware if the workers were still working.
- Intake documents and data were collected electronically by 5 of the centers. A few more reported collecting data on paper. Others were unknown.
- Only 2 centers reported any kind of collaboration with other local agencies and both centers were no longer partnering with the entities.
- Five centers reported a need for more teachers, larger classrooms, occupational-specific equipment, TVs, welding and car repair equipment, and training on safety factors.



- Three personal interviews were conducted with participants seeking work. From the three interviews, participants said they were all looking for work, one also wanted training. They heard about the Employment Centers in public ads on TV and through friends, and that they were pleased with the service they received.

Conclusion

As we indicated, in the view of the Gap Analysis Team, the next step is for the Project Team and MOLSA to sit down and discuss the preliminary findings and target three (3) of MOLSA's largest centers for increased operation. Conducting the next level of the Gap Analysis with a more thorough review of each MOLSA designated center and then to devise an action plan for all other centers to meet the minimum standards of the contract for building, equipment, operation and services will allow MOLSA to target their efforts with more direction and support for the project. In the meantime, the teams can go out with MOLSA officials to see how best to organize the next series of refurbishments and build a strategic plan for MOLSA's operational efforts. In conjunction, the National Labor Market Survey can provide MOLSA with the additional support to appropriately design the Vocational Training Centers throughout Iraq.

While refurbishing and equipping all of the centers, the Project Team will continue the outreach efforts and the building of strategic partnerships in each governorate.

After each center is fully equipped and refurbished, a team of consultants will begin helping MOLSA to incorporate elements of curriculum, training and systems in the center that will optimize the maximum number of participants who receive training and sustainable employment. The goal is to develop systems and workers who immediately receive employment and/or training that will make them competitive in the Iraqi and global market.



Sample Gap Analysis Tool

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT Gap Analysis Tool

FACILITY IDENTIFICATION				
Governorate				
Name of Facility				
Address				
Date				
Interviewee				
Type of Center	ESC	ESC	ESC	ESC
	VTTC	VTTC	VTTC	VTTC
Facility Manager				



PLANT AND FACILITIES								
How many buildings?								
How many rooms?								
Take photos of rooms								
Does the facility have electrical generator?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
If so, does it work?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
How often is the power on each day?								
How many bathrooms?								
Condition of building?	Excellent Good Fair Poor							

EQUIPMENT				
Computers				
Number				
Laboratories				
Internet Access				
Printers				
Networks				
Software				



FURNITURE & FIXTURES									
Number of desks?									
Number of Chairs?									
Number of file cabinets?									
Number of marker boards?									
Number of Telephones?									
Number of cell phones?									
Waiting facilities?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	

HEALTH & COMFORT									
Drinking water dispensers?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Refrigerators?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Stoves?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Medical Cabinets?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	



SECURITY								
Is the facility safe?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is the facility guarded 24 hours a day?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

STAFFING								
Number of employees?								
Number of handicapped?								
Are there job descriptions?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gender: Number of:	Men							
	Women							
What is the work day schedule?								



OPERATING POLICIES & PROCEDURES								
Does the facility have formal SOP?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are the SOP's followed?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

ESC OPERATIONS				
What is the Center's daily processing capacity?				
How many applications were processed yesterday?				
How many job placements were made yesterday?				
Is intake documentation on paper or electronic?				



VTTC OPERATIONS								
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does the Center offer vocational training? If so, what training is offered?								
What equipment does the Center have, for what programs?								
What are the sources and names of the vocational training curricula used by the Center?								



What capacity improvement is needed?								
Does the VTTC interface with the local ESC?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does the Center engage in market needs analysis?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does the Center form partnerships with local social, commercial, and humanitarian organizations?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No



DATA MANAGEMENT				
Are Center records maintained?	Electronically On paper	Electronically On paper	Electronically On paper	Electronically On paper
Who is responsible for records maintenance?				
How frequent are data submittals to MOLSA?				

FOCUS GROUP	
What brought you here?	
How did you hear about the Center?	
Did you come for a job or for training?	
Did you get what you came here for?	
Did you find this service helpful?	



Pictures submitted by Team



Mosul Employment Services Center



Baghdad Al-Baath Center



Baghdad Al-Baath Center



Restroom – Al-Baath Center



Classroom - Al-Baath Center



Classroom - Al-Baath Center