

**WEST BANK/GAZA HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

CONCEPT PAPER

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AMIDEAST CONCEPT PAPER

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The environment in which Palestinian development takes place is a chaotic one. Indigenous development institutions struggle against numerous odds to improve the economic and social well-being of their society. Limited funding, labor market forces, emigration of skilled labor, controlled capital, and restricted educational opportunities have all played significant roles in distorting and confining human resource development.

While the Occupation remains the single most important constraint to West Bank/Gaza development, the decrease in funds available to Palestinian institutions from the Palestinian community and the Gulf is also showing its effect. Since shortly before the Gulf War, covering investment and operating costs has become nearly impossible: most Palestinian university faculty, for example, have not been paid for three months, while a number of major health institutions may soon have to cease operations.

Another recent development is the dramatic increase in the number and scope of institutions in the West Bank and Gaza. Due in part to a combination of Israeli liberalization of permits and to evolutionary changes within the Palestinian community itself, new businesses are being established and new organizations and colleges are being created. In all sectors, competing unions and higher councils are trying to influence the distribution of resources, and the possibility of new political arrangements has produced a system of "technical committees" that are attempting to define national needs and priorities and establish strategic directions.

This dramatic growth in institutionalization at a time of grave financial distress has created tremendous tensions within and among organizations. Competition for scarce resources in an uncertain environment has led to the politicization of management within institutions and to conflict over elections. Institutional leaders must now not only seek to improve the effectiveness of their organizations but steer a prudent financial course while desperately seeking funds from international donors. Multiple, competing organizations attempt to lay claim to decision-making in all sectors. As a result, the responsibilities of leadership are daunting and the problems of managing institutions day-to-day in this context, let alone planning for human resource development, at times overwhelming.

II. PROJECT GOAL AND PURPOSE

The goal of the Human Resource Development Project (HRDP) is strengthen the capacity of Palestinian institutions and individuals to contribute to the economic and social development of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The purpose of the project is to alleviate the management, information, and technical skill deficiencies of key Palestinian intermediary development institutions to enable them to better meet the needs of their constituencies.

AMIDEAST will adopt a comprehensive, integrated approach to institution building, focusing initially on strategic planning and subsequently on management development, information systems, and technical skill enhancement. Strengthening institutional capacity depends on many factors, a number of which are interlinked. Attempting to deal with only one type of problem can often have little overall impact on how an organization functions. For example, professional training of mid-level technical staff without regard for the overall management and planning environment of an institution can result in wasted training and frustrated employees.

The differing roles of management and the need for specific management skills are concepts that are generally misunderstood in the Palestinian environment. Board members do not understand their proper role, and do routinely immerse themselves in day-to-day operations. Municipalities lack strategic plans, organizational charts, or job descriptions for their employees. Most associations, unions, institutions and decision-making bodies have never developed strategic plans, carried out human resource needs assessments, or evaluated staff performance. Many organizations are dominated by strong individuals who centralize authority and responsibility. Given the environment, only a focused and concerted effort to reinforce the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling functions of management in key Palestinian institutions can produce a significant improvement in their ability to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

A second, related, focus of the HRDP, is to provide access to information. Institutions cannot be efficient or effective when they have little or no access to pertinent data. Currently, little reliable information needed for development purposes is available to managers or decision-makers, and planning without information cannot take appropriate directions. An important political tactic of the Occupation has been to deliberately deny Palestinians access to information about their own environment and society. Palestinian access to international information sources has been limited through censorship and control, restricted funds, and lack of experience and contacts on the part of Palestinian institutions. A critical need therefore exists in the Palestinian community to collect, access, manage, standardize, and disseminate information to indigenous development institutions. The HRDP will improve the information systems available to targeted organizations.

A final and related focus is on technical skill development. Palestinians have long been concerned with academic and degree training, understanding that gaining academic expertise represents an important individual and national need. The concept of ongoing professional development through continuing education and training as a crucial component of human resource development has not caught on as readily, however.

Despite growing recognition of the value of in-service and continuing education and training, identifying training needs remains difficult for even the most professional managers. The vicissitudes of the Occupation, limited resources, lack of information, poor management, and changes in labor market demand all make human resource development projections difficult. AMIDEAST will work with indigenous institutions to conduct human resource development needs assessments and to improve human resource planning and evaluation. The project will then attempt to meet these critical technical skill needs so that the institutions can better serve their community.

III. COMPONENTS

The project will concentrate on four sectors: Education, Business Services, Health, and Public Policy.

A. Education

Education provides the foundation for sustainable economic growth, and educational institutions are primary development agents. Continued improvement in the management, planning, information systems, and technical skills of educational institutions is thus crucial. The project will focus on two sub-components of education: higher education and basic education.

AMIDEAST has a long record of achievement in higher education in the Palestinian community, having trained over 60% of all current faculty members through USAID-funded grants. Over the past 15 years, AMIDEAST has provided scholarships for academic degree programs, technical training, conference attendance, and applied research grants for university staff, undergraduate scholarships, and technical and material assistance for the universities.

The needs in higher education have changed over the past few years, and the new project will address emerging realities, focusing on practical training and continuing education rather than on academic degree programs. For example, the new project will offer only a few academic degree scholarships for the College of Science and Technology in Khan Younis, and Gaza Islamic and Al-Azhar Universities in Gaza City. West Bank institutions will receive only a limited number of scholarships for Master's degrees in specific applied fields.

The need for practical training remains strong. Faculty are well-grounded in theory but lack practical experience in many of the applied areas emerging as primary needs in the community at large. A frequently heard complaint is that faculty are of little value to the business community, for example. Likewise, scientists are ill-equipped to address the applied research needs of a developing society. The project will endeavor to supplement the theoretical skills of faculty members with practical training relevant to the community's needs. Practical sabbaticals that place faculty members in nonacademic applied settings for up to three months will provide such training in addition to study

tours and technical assistance. The technical training of university staff, but with a greater emphasis on management, planning, information, and financial management skills, will continue.

In response to the need for better access to information, the new project includes two special commitments. The first is to connect all the universities to Internet, the worldwide electronic network that links computer systems at universities, research centers, organizations, some government agencies, and some companies. This activity, combining material assistance, training in information management, and technical assistance, will mark a new phase in faculty involvement with their research specialties and their access to expanded and improved information resources.

The second is to fund and support through training the creation of a Geographic Information System Unit at Birzeit University. There is an urgent need for a central cartography analysis system for the Territories--numerous national economic and infrastructural development imperatives depend upon this analysis capability.

Whereas AMIDEAST's basic education program in the past targeted curriculum development, distance learning, and an educational network, the new project will be directed more explicitly towards improving teacher quality. Teachers, whether in private, UNRWA, or government schools have limited access to information, new techniques, discussion of alternative approaches to teaching and learning, or guidance from master teachers. There are no in-service or continuing education opportunities for teachers, and little specialty training in areas such as reading or laboratory technology. Since USAID prohibits direct funding to UNRWA and government staff, AMIDEAST will assist in the establishment of regional teacher resource centers connected with private teacher groups in the key cities around the country. These centers will offer workshops and support discussion on educational theory and practice, management issues, and alternative methodologies as well as house a variety of resource materials. AMIDEAST will assist in the establishment of such centers in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, Gaza, and Khan Younis.

B. Business Services

The second project component will strengthen intermediary organizations serving enterprises in two key service industries: tourism and equipment maintenance and repair.

AMIDEAST has conducted business training and offered technical assistance to the business sector for the past ten years, with concerted efforts in this area over the past year and a half. Much of AMIDEAST's assistance has been geared toward enterprises in the service sector.

The tourism sector remains central to the Palestinian economy, contributing over \$90 million in 1989. Investments in management, information, and technical skills

development in this sector are likely to yield significant benefits throughout the sector, facilitating Palestinian job retention and new job creation.

AMIDEAST will work in close association with universities, and institutions such as the Notre Dame Center, the Higher Council for Tourism, the Hotel Owners' Association, and the technical committees to meet specific technical and management deficiencies within firms. In addition, the project will build the informational, managerial, and planning skills of indigenous institutions working for sectoral development. AMIDEAST proposes to fund language training for tourism students from the Notre Dame Center, a training library at the Higher Council for Tourism, support for a tourism materials production team, and academic and short-term training of trainers.

AMIDEAST will also continue its support for enterprises providing equipment maintenance and repair services. Throughout the Palestinian economy, there are inadequate numbers of skilled technicians to repair and maintain existing equipment such as computers, facsimile machines, laboratory equipment, photocopiers, printers, sewing machines, and telephones. Only one or two qualified technicians are available in the region to service a given type or piece of equipment. As a result, customers are generally forced to try to obtain service from Israel, an uncertain proposition at best. This project will work with organizations such as colleges and vocational schools to offer training for individuals who have some background in this field. By bringing in technical experts for specific types of machines and by sponsoring short-term technical training with companies, AMIDEAST expects to increase the pool of trained technicians in the various regions of the country.

To build the expertise of Palestinian institutions in identifying needs, conducting training and technical assistance, and evaluating results while meeting the technical or managerial needs of businesses, all activity in the service enterprise sector will be carried out in conjunction with Palestinian partner organizations.

C. Health

AMIDEAST will focus on three sub-components: occupational health, health management, and professional specialization.

Over the past five years, a number of environmental and public health studies conducted in the Occupied Territories have highlighted the need to address occupational health concerns, but little has been done to date. The high incidence of pesticide overuse and misuse, along with worker contamination, is the most obvious manifestation. Other environmental and occupational health problems include industrial pollution, hazardous waste, worker safety, and air quality. Lack of knowledge within industry and among health practitioners and health educators necessitates a concerted effort to begin to address these issues. Trained personnel, information, and informed debate in the community are urgently required. The objectives of this sub-component will be to increase the technical skills base in occupational health, train trainers, and provide core

information to health institutions and providers. Academic degree scholarships, library and materials acquisition, technical assistance, and workshop and publications support will be provided towards this objective.

Health management will continue to be a focus of the HRDP. The health sector analysis commissioned by USAID and conducted by Policy Research Incorporated recommended the following: "strengthen health systems planning and management at all levels of the health care system; improve financial management capability; expand facility, regional and interregional health planning and needs assessment activities." AMIDEAST has provided management training to a range of institutions in the health field over the past several years, and in the new project will build on its achievements and track record to date, while focusing on a small number of key target institutions and organizations in a comprehensive manner, drawing on technical assistance, academic scholarships, short-term training, and material assistance to enhance the capability of hospitals, unions, and associations to manage, plan, and finance health sector development. Institution-specific needs assessments in policy, planning, and management will be conducted, and training and technical assistance implemented to meet the needs identified. The training of trainers in the field of hospital and health administration will also build indigenous capability. The Health Systems Clearinghouse activity as well as the Continuing Education program will continue to receive support under this sub-component.

The lack of a critical cadre of certain medical specialists in the Occupied Territories--doctors, nurses and laboratory technicians--has been well-documented. AMIDEAST's professional specialization sub-component will address this acute need by providing certificate, degree, and short-term training programs to increase the number of specialists in a very few, crucial specialized fields targeted to the health needs of the population. These fields will be identified through needs assessments and in conjunction with the appropriate sector associations, such as the Doctors' Union or the new Nurses' Association. These program are badly needed in the Gaza Strip. In addition, the project will support two nascent local residency programs, one at St. John's Hospital in Ophthalmology, and the other at Makassed Hospital in Family Practice.

D. Public Policy

The question of governance, public policy, and public administration is one of critical importance for the future of the Occupied Territories. Of parallel importance is the question of Palestinian preparedness for the assumption of governance functions. At the present time, only three Palestinians currently residing in the Territories hold advanced degrees in Public Administration. This field of study has to date received scant attention on the part of municipalities, higher councils, and sector associations. In the aftermath of the Madrid Conference and with the ensuing Peace discussions, a new recognition of the importance of public policy and public administration skills is in evidence,

particularly as a result of the creation of a variety of institutions and committees attempting to set priorities and to determine public policy.

AMIDEAST will focus on three areas: strategic planning, administration, and legal systems.

At the national level, the Palestinian leadership is struggling to develop skills to design strategic plans. Training and technical assistance in the concepts of policy planning, the role of strategic planners, decision making in government and administration, evaluation and assessment of policies, and implementation strategies are all topics of importance. The target audience will include policy-makers at the national level, and the activities will involve academic degree scholarships, workshops, as well as material and technical assistance.

The second sub-component, public administration, will target mid- and upper-level managers in municipalities, universities, businesses, unions, associations, councils and other NGOs who need to improve their management and administration of divisions, departments, staffs or programs. Human resource development including training and technical assistance in personnel management, public finance such as budgeting, accounting and taxation, and information resources management are all of significant importance. Court management, which includes specific issues related to the effective administration of the judicial system, is a relevant activity in the administration sub-component and is also tied to the legal systems sub-component.

The final sub-component is legal systems. Public Policy depends on coherent and established legal systems. No forum currently exists for discussing the constitutional, administrative or contract laws or legal frameworks which should/could underlie the Palestinian entity. Palestinian lawyers and political leaders need a context in which to discuss these issues and to support the development and expansion of the rule of law. Activities under this heading would seek to encourage research and discussion of legal system issues in preparation for a Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority (PISGA). For example, the project will provide financial and training support for a Center for Legal Research at Birzeit University.

Support for public policy will include material assistance, information systems, research, technical assistance, training, and academic degree scholarships. In particular, AMIDEAST will facilitate the creation of a range of programs to reach different levels and needs. AMIDEAST will support the establishment of a Department of Public Policy at Birzeit University, and support the creation of a National Institute of Executive Leadership or Civil Service. In addition, courses through continuing education department, or through other institutions in the community, will provide relevant workshops as needs are determined.

IV. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By the end of the three-year project, AMIDEAST expects to achieve the following:

- needs assessments for human resource development for education, business services, health, and public policy sectors
- assist with development plans for targeted institutions
- strategic plans for institutions and sectors, including detailed annual work plans
- information systems for single institutions
- information systems for tourism, basic education, health, higher education, public policy sectors
- trained staff/professionals in targeted institutions
- publications produced /research conducted
- evaluation systems in place
- new academic department in public policy
- increased facility in English for professionals

V. BACKGROUND AND TRACK RECORD

AMIDEAST is the oldest and largest U.S. organization devoted exclusively to human resource development in the Arab world. Established in 1951, it has worked continuously in partnership with regional institutions to enhance Arab education and training capacity. AMIDEAST first established an office in Jerusalem in the early 1950s. AMIDEAST initiated the Human Resource Development Project in 1977 and has received three grants from USAID since that time in support of its programs. Projects have included faculty development, health manpower development, technical assistance and training for the business sector, English as a Second language (ESL) programs, support for basic education, and a range of related professional development and continuing education programs benefitting associations, municipalities, and NGOs.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

AMIDEAST will build on its 15-year record of achievement in human resource development in the Occupied Territories to implement the new project, bearing in mind that for the project to have measurable impact, a more focused approach targeting a select group of key institutions in each sector will be required. AMIDEAST will conduct surveys to identify target institutions, engage these institutions in strategic planning processes, and develop action-oriented project planning systems. This process will facilitate the establishment of short- and long-term objectives, and permit the development of detailed implementation plans, including annual work plans. The planning process will determine what interventions are likely to be most effective and which institutions they should be directed towards. An evaluation and monitoring plan for each component, linked to the project Management Information System (MIS), will be designed to ensure that AMIDEAST and USAID reporting requirements are met.

AMIDEAST's Country Director for the West Bank and Gaza in Jerusalem has overall responsibility for project implementation. The Project Director's responsibilities include development of strategic and operational work plans, monitoring of project activity, supervision of staff assigned to the project, liaison with other AMIDEAST offices involved in project implementation (Cairo, Amman, Washington), budgeting and monitoring of expenses, project evaluation, liaison with USAID and local institutions, and preparation of reports. The Country Director reports to the Vice President, Education and Training Programs.

The project will utilize the following types of program interventions for implementation:

a. Technical Assistance

Through the use of staff experts or consultants, AMIDEAST will provide more extensive on-site expertise than in the past, particularly in the tourism and public policy sectors.

b. Technical Training

AMIDEAST will continue to work with institutions to identify training needs as part of our broader assistance to a sector or institution. Whether through local, regional or US-based training, professional skills will be enhanced through short-term practical training. It is AMIDEAST's goal to develop local training capability in all of the sectors in which the project will work.

c. Material Assistance

AMIDEAST will increase its use of material assistance, primarily in the area of training support or meeting information systems needs. For example, connecting Palestinian universities to the international electronic network Internet requires training, hardware and maintenance.

d. Practical Sabbaticals, Study Tours or Conference Attendance

A crucial problem for professionals remains practical experience. Many Palestinians have theoretical expertise in a field but have little opportunity for hands-on, applied study. These programs will be tailored to the specific needs of individuals or small groups.

e. Applied Research

Grants to conduct applied research in key sectors or with specific institutions will be offered. These research activities produce valuable development information.

f. Academic Scholarships

Under the new project, AMIDEAST will continue to offer a very limited number of certificate, Master's, or PhD degrees to support sector or institutional requirements.

g. The English as a Second Language Program will continue to undergird all the work of the project. Built around three regional English Language Centers (Gaza, Jerusalem and Nablus), six specialists in ESL will work with a variety of institutions and professional groups to improve the English language skills needed for development. This

program grows from our conviction that English Language skill enhancement is a crucial factor in the empowerment of indigenous institutions.

Specific plans for the ESL program include workshops for teachers of English; sets of sequential courses in English for professionals in the fields of Health, Business, Tourism and Public Policy; ESP courses for particular institutions; advanced courses for training candidates; and editing training in publication production for NGOs.

In developing institutional assistance criteria for the new project, AMIDEAST will take into consideration regional diversity, including a balance between the Jerusalem-Bethlehem-Ramallah center of the country and the peripheral areas. In particular, activities and partner organizations in the Jenin District, Rafah, Khan Younis and Hebron will be actively sought. In addition, marginalized groups, including women, those just starting their careers, and other disadvantaged segments of Palestinian society, will receive priority attention. A key criterion will be whether a proposed sub-component intervention is likely to build and institutionalize local expertise. Finally, AMIDEAST will judge activities on how self-sustaining they might be in the future. AMIDEAST will seek ways to make programs self-sustaining or income generating.

VII. COORDINATION

As AMIDEAST focuses on particular human resource deficiencies within a specific group of target institutions, we expect decreased overlap, increased coordination, and more complementary relationships with other development assistance agencies, in particular with the other U.S. PVOs. In this regard, AMIDEAST would expect USAID to assess the comparative advantages of PVOs that are the recipients of USAID financing.

VIII. BUDGET

AMIDEAST requests a three-year grant from USAID in the amount of \$12,000,000.