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**AN OVERVIEW OF PALESTINIAN INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND
DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS IN THE HEALTH CARE, AGRICULTURAL,
INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL SECTORS OF
THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP**

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NEAR EAST BUREAU

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

1

I. Overview of West Bank/Gaza Institutions

3

II. The Health Care Sector

The State of Palestinian Health Care

5

Extant Institutions and Capacities in the Health Care Sector

6

Recommendations

8

III. The Agricultural Sector

The State of Palestinian Agriculture

10

Extant Institutions and Capacities in the Agricultural Sector

11

Recommendations

13

IV. The Industrial Sector

The State of Industry in the West Bank and Gaza

14

Extant Institutions in the Industrial Sector

Investment-promoting Institutions

15

Labor Unions

16

Women's Committees

17

Recommendations

18

V. Education

The State of Education in the West Bank and Gaza

19

Extant Institutions in the Educational Sector

20

Recommendations

21

Executive Summary

This essay provides an overview of the extant problems and relevant Palestinian institutions and their capacities in four sectors in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: health care, agriculture, industry, and education. A number of recommendations are made which focus on ways AID may wish to enhance Palestinian economic and social development during autonomy, and those Palestinian institutions which have the administrative capacity to most effectively and efficiently carry out such development projects are indentified. A brief overview of the sources of Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and Gaza and their often politicized nature precedes the larger discussion.

The level of **health care** in the West Bank and Gaza lags far behind its neighbors according to a series of indicators. Facilities are mal-distributed geographically, with most health-related institutions located in the Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem corridor. Maqassad and Augusta Victoria hospitals are cornerstones of Palestinian health care, with many of the remaining hospitals in poor condition. Efforts to enhance this sector should concentrate foremost on questions of *primary health care*. The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees and Union of Health Works Committees are the most effective Palestinian institutions dealing with the issue of primary health care, although they are small in relationship to need. The beginnings of a rationalization of health care in the West Bank and Gaza are found in the National Health Care Plan. The establishment of a medical school is *not* the most pressing need.

Agriculture has been of diminishing importance in the occupied territories due

to a series of government restrictions and loss of labor. The extension programs of the military government virtually disappeared during the Intifada. The most important and capable Palestinian institutions dealing with agricultural development are the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee and the Union of Agricultural Works Committees, but they are small compared to the need. Specific areas for agricultural development during autonomy include the elimination of discriminatory agricultural restrictions, the establishment of *lending institutions* with sufficient capital to sustain development, the training of more agricultural engineers, and assistance in the international marketing of agricultural products.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip are among the most *under*-industrialized areas of the world. A number of government restrictions and an unstable environment for investment have prevented significant Palestinian **industrialization**. Recently, several small credit institutions have been established which may help prompt industrial development. Other institutions in this sector include unions, chambers of commerce and women's committees. The greatest need during autonomy for industrial development - like agricultural development - is the expansion of *credit institutions* which can provide sufficient capital for productive investments in industry.

Most of the problems in the Palestinian **educational sector** can be attributed to the vagaries of military rule, and thus can be expected to ease during autonomy. Major needs in the K-12 schools include *curricular reform, teacher training, laboratory resources* and enhancement of *physical structures*. The university system is good and is not in need of major reform. Specific projects coordinated with the Higher Education Council are recommended instead. Several literacy-oriented

institutions, such as the Tamer Institute, can effectively utilize resources and should be considered for support.

Questions of administrative efficiency inform the ranking of Palestinian institutions in each sector. A byproduct of supporting a variety of institutions is the promotion of *institutional pluralism* in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

I. Overview of West Bank/Gaza Institutions

There are three principal sources of institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. First, there are a large number of institutions which were in operation under Jordanian (and to a much lesser degree Egyptian) jurisdiction prior to 1967 and were subsequently taken over by Israel after the war. Many of these institutions, while subject to Israeli restrictions, have effectively remained in Palestinian or Jordanian hands. These include most Islamic institutions, such as the *Awqaf* (religious endowments) and *shari'a* courts, charitable and professional associations, chambers of commerce, and the municipalities prior to the early 1980s. In addition, one coalition of labor unions carried over from earlier Jordanian control.

A number of important institutions captured by Israel in 1967 were put under direct Israeli control through its military government (later transferred to the Civil Administration, or CIVAD, which itself is formally part of the military government). These include the government K-12 school system, the secular judicial system, and the government health services (GHS).

The second principal source of institutions in the West Bank and Gaza is constituted by those institutions which have been created by Palestinians since 1967 (most since 1979). These include the various medical committees, agricultural

committees, women's committees, most labor unions, and some professional and charitable associations. More will be said about these institutions below.

The third source for West Bank/Gaza institutions has been the international community, specifically the United Nations (through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, or UNRWA) and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). UNRWA administers a number of schools, health clinics, food distribution centers and the like. International NGOs, such as ANERA, Save the Children, and Catholic Relief Services, have been important sources of economic and social development, and are almost entirely staffed by Palestinians from the occupied territories.

Virtually all Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and Gaza are politicized in one of three ways. First, all significant institutions created by Palestinians since 1967 have been affiliated to varying degrees with political factions. Each major faction of the PLO has created its own 'cluster' of institutions.

For those institutions not explicitly affiliated with a political current, the politicization is of a somewhat different nature. That is, for those institutions inherited from Jordan, political control is not constant but episodic, and is measured by periodic institution-wide elections. The most important of these institutions are the chambers of commerce, professional associations (especially those of doctors and engineers), some unions (e.g. for the Jerusalem Electric Company), and university councils. It is here where Hamas - which has not built a significant institutional network - has been able to "capture" a number of institutions during local elections.

Finally, international NGOs remain an attractive option for political groups to

try to influence either by having their own members staff the local offices, or by competing for particular projects. This type of politicization is far more subtle and historically less pervasive than the other two forms. However, there is some evidence that it is of increasing importance in the run-up to autonomy.

II. The Health Care Sector

The State of Palestinian Health Care

By almost any measure, the level of health care provided in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is far lower than what is found in either Israel or Jordan. A few examples bear this out:

- * Infant mortality rate for Palestinians in the occupied territories is five times greater than it is for Israelis, and is 30 percent higher than the infant mortality rate in Jordan.

- * The doctor/patient ratio in the West Bank and Gaza is one-quarter of that found in Israel and one-third of that found in Jordan.

- * Israel has four times more hospital beds per capita than the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan has 30 percent more hospital beds per capita.

- * Unlike in Israel and Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza have no medical school of any sort.

Other difficulties plague the health care sector in the occupied territories. Two

problems deserve mention. First, there is no effective health insurance in the West Bank and Gaza, so even the relatively meager medical services available are beyond the means of many Palestinians. This problem is particularly acute in the private sector, where full payment for services rendered is expected. UNRWA and other clinics are subsidized, so this is less of a problem.

Second, there is a severe geographic mal-distribution of health care services. The vast majority of clinics, hospitals and doctors can be found in the Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem corridor, and secondarily in Nablus and Hebron. Such facilities are rare in the Gaza Strip and secondary cities (e.g. Tulkarim, Qalqilya, Jenin), and are virtually non-existent in the 400 villages of the West Bank.

Israel's decision in early 1993 to break the ties between the West Bank and East Jerusalem has proved particularly devastating to the provision of health care to Palestinians, given the centrality of East Jerusalem as the geographic home for many Palestinian health care institutions.

Extant Institutions and Capacities in the Health Care Sector

In spite of the poor state of health care in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, an institutional base for more effective health care does exist, and could prove relatively effective under autonomy if given sufficient resources and control over decision-making in health-related areas. Included among health care institutions in the occupied territories are 34 hospitals of varying size, both public and private. By far the most important and effective Palestinian hospitals are Maqqasid and Augusta Victoria, both private and both located in East Jerusalem. Both of these hospitals routinely receive

patients from other areas in the West Bank where local facilities are not equipped to handle more complicated or severe cases. Patients needing more extensive care are sometimes transferred to the Israeli hospital of Hadassa-Ein Karim, also located in Jerusalem. Regularized and easy Palestinian access to the medical facilities located in East Jerusalem is absolutely essential to the enhancement of health care in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is particularly true because of the generally low quality of care found in the other hospitals in the occupied territories, especially those run by the Government Health Services.

Clinics have been an increasingly important source of health care in the occupied territories during the past decade. Most clinics are sponsored by one of three sources. First, the GHS runs a number of clinics, although the actual number is widely disputed. Estimates range from 200 to over 400. What is clear, however, is the generally dilapidated condition of most of these clinics. Few have been properly maintained, usually due to insufficient resources. While enhancing primary health care should be the principal goal in the health care sector during autonomy (see Recommendations below), and enhanced GHS clinics could play a positive role in this regard, AID is advised to assist GHS clinics only on a case-by-case basis.

Second, as part of its mission to assist Palestinian refugees UNRWA runs a number of health clinics. While UNRWA facilities tend to be of relatively good quality, they are already over-burdened and have little capacity to take on additional responsibilities during autonomy.

The largest growth in clinics during the past decade was provided by four medical committees, all of which concentrated on providing primary health care. The

medical care given by these committees has varied in quality from committee to committee and from place to place. However, these committees should be viewed as essential players in any attempt to enhance primary health care in the West Bank and Gaza during autonomy. The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) was the first grassroots, primary health care-oriented institution in the occupied territories. It remains the most professional of the health care committees. UPMRC has established 24 clinics, 10 first aid stations, a blood donor system of 25,000 individuals, and works with several hundred mostly volunteer health professionals. All of the UPMRC clinics are of good quality, in part because the UPMRC resisted building make-shift clinics during the Intifada - a common practice by others.

The second most effective medical committee is the Union of Health Work Committees (UHWC). The UHWC is more widespread than the UPMRC, but is less well funded and the quality of its services is more variable. It administers 38 clinics throughout the occupied territories, including the most effective clinic in the occupied territories: the Greek Catholic Convent Clinic in Bayt Sahur. With the closure of East Jerusalem to West Bank residents, this clinic has become a major provider of medical care in the southern half of the West Bank. As a significant source of health care services during the Intifada, the UHWC has an extensive network of supporters and volunteers, and it is the only medical committee to have a significant presence in the Gaza Strip.

The other two medical committees provide poorer quality services, and, by comparison to the two committees mentioned above, are administratively less efficient.

The largest - and youngest - of the medical committees is the Health Services Council (HSC). At its height it ran 74 clinics and 10 medical centers of widely varying quality. However, a number of clinics have since closed because of a number of problems. In addition, HSC is increasingly moving away from providing primary health care, and is instead concentrating on building larger medical centers. It is primary health care that is most urgently needed in the West Bank and Gaza. HSC has been the best funded health committee in recent years, but has a poor record of administrative capacity and efficiency. Finally, the Union of Health Care Committees has been beset by internal problems in recent years and, until it is able to effectively overcome its disarray, should not be considered a viable partner in the development of the health care sector.

Recommendations

1. Primary Health Care. The greatest health care need in the West Bank and Gaza is the extension of effective primary health care to all rural areas, much of the Gaza Strip, and secondary towns throughout the northern area of the West Bank. The issues of primary health care should be defined broadly so as to include not just the establishment of small local health care facilities to both treat and educate the population, but also the improvement of basic infrastructure. For example, a large number of health problems accrue in the West Bank and Gaza due to the complete dearth of sewage treatment facilities. The establishment of sewage treatment centers alone would dramatically reduce health problems among the Palestinian population.

In terms of institutional partners, it is recommended that AID support the

private hospitals of Maqqasid and Augusta Victoria, both of which have proven track records of quality health care under difficult circumstances. This recommendation is contingent upon the Palestinian population having open access to facilities in East Jerusalem, which is essential to the rationalization and effectiveness of health care in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, strong consideration should be given to supporting the Red Crescent Society.

For extension of primary health care to areas outside the Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem corridor, it is recommended that AID work with Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees and the Union of Health Works Committees, both of which are relatively effective in providing primary health care and have the capacity to grow efficiently.

2. National Health Care Plan. The first steps toward rationalizing the provision of health care under autonomy have already been taken in the form of the National Health Care Plan. Most components of the disparate health care community in the West Bank and Gaza have already endorsed the major points contained in this plan. It is recommended that AID work with the committee charged with implementing this plan, and in particular press for the establishment of an effective national health insurance policy (which is contained in the overall plan).

3. Medical School. Current Palestinian plans call for the establishment of a medical school in the West Bank. The absence of a medical school means that doctors must go abroad for their medical training. AID should support this project only as a third

priority. Given the more pressing needs in the area of primary health care, the concentration of resources in a medical school would not be the most effective use of funds. As an alternative, AID may wish to consider helping Palestinian medical students get their medical training in the United States or, in conjunction with European states, in those countries.

The principal educational need in this sector is for the training of mid-level personnel, in particular medical technicians and medical assistants. Currently there are no Palestinian plans in this regard, but it is a strongly encouraged alternative to a full-fledged medical school.

III. The Agricultural Sector

The State of Palestinian Agriculture

Palestinian agriculture in the West Bank and Gaza has been considerably weakened over the years by a number of factors. These problems include:

* Restricted water use. Virtually no permits were granted by the military government to Palestinians seeking to dig a new well or expand an old one. As a result, only 5 percent of all cultivated areas in the West Bank are irrigated, limiting Palestinian farmers to rain-fed crops. The annual diversion of 80 percent of the West Bank water supply to either Israel or Jewish settlements in the occupied territories further limits the availability of water to Palestinian farmers.

* Loss of labor. Agricultural employment currently accounts for less than 20 percent of the West Bank labor supply and much less in Gaza. This constitutes a drop of approximately 40 percent in agricultural labor since 1969.

* Flooded markets. Subsidized Israeli agricultural products have had unhindered access to Palestinian markets, leading to a loss of market share by Palestinian farmers not entitled to similar state subsidies.

* Restricted exports. Jordan and Israel severely restrict Palestinian exports, leading to a loss of revenue by Palestinian farmers.

* Lack of credit. All Palestinian lending institutions were closed following the 1967 war and only recently have some small credit institutions been established (see below). Lack of lending institutions has prevented capital improvements from being undertaken on farms (and elsewhere).

* Lack of expertise. Agricultural programs were forbidden in Palestinian universities before 1986, leading to a lack of agricultural engineers to provide effective extension services.

* Limited land availability. Both because of extensive land use and various types of restrictions placed on Palestinian farmers, there has been little opportunity to expand agricultural production horizontally (i.e. bringing more land under cultivation).

Even with a number of factors working against the productive use of agricultural lands, this sector remains central to the economic development of the West Bank and Gaza during autonomy. It remains a large employer and can effectively complement attempts at small industrialization during the self-government period. The clear lesson of third world industrialization is that the agricultural sector should be enhanced, not squeezed, during the initial phases. This lesson should not be ignored in the case of the West Bank and Gaza.

Extant Institutions and Capacities in the Agricultural Sector

There are four types of institutions involved in the provision of extension and other services in the agricultural sector. First, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, under the authority of the CIVAD, and staffed by Palestinians, provides a limited number of extension services. The programs of the ministry virtually disappeared during the Intifada. These offices will be of limited value during autonomy given their standing in the community, and should not be seen as viable institutional partners.

The most important sources of agricultural extension services currently in the West Bank and Gaza are found in private Palestinian organizations established in the 1980s. The largest and most capable of these organizations is the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), established in 1984. Currently PARC employs about 45 engineers in the occupied territories, in addition to having a wide network of volunteers. Because of the quality of its work, PARC has been able to attract funding from abroad. It should be able to effectively expand its operations during self-government if sufficient resources are available.

After PARC, the most important organization for agricultural extension is the Union of Agricultural Works Committee (UAWC), established in 1986. While not as large as PARC nor as well funded (nor as well publicized), the UAWC has demonstrated a creativity in approaching and solving agricultural problems on the ground. It too has the capacity to absorb greater responsibilities under self-government. However, like a large number of Palestinian institutions, it is currently facing a particularly acute financial crisis. Neither the Technical Center for Agricultural Services (TCAS) nor the Union of Palestinian Farmers Committee

(UPFC) have demonstrated a particular effectiveness in their agricultural works, and should not be considered serious players in agricultural development.

A third institutional source providing some assistance to Palestinian farmers is international NGOs. While some extension is undertaken directly, most NGOs prefer to work through one of the private Palestinian agricultural committees, most often PARC or UAWC. There are also a number of cooperatives, both local independents and members of the Jordanian Cooperative Organization. The JCO cooperatives and the independents have decreased in size and importance in recent years, and should be looked at on a case-by-case basis. (Cooperatives established by women's committees are a third type, and are mentioned below).

Finally, with the lifting of the ban on agricultural studies in 1986, university programs have become important in this sector. The most important university-affiliated agricultural institution is the Rural Research Center at Al-Najah National University in Nablus.

Recommendations

1. Reverse Restrictions. Perhaps the greatest assistance the agricultural sector can receive is the reversal of the restrictions listed above. Greater access to water through the establishment of more wells and the expansion of existing ones, a more level 'playing field' in the import-export realm, and fewer restrictions in land use alone will greatly assist Palestinian agricultural development.

2. Credit. A second essential feature in modernizing Palestinian agriculture is the

establishment of lending institutions. During the self-government period, efforts should be made to open (or reopen) banks and license credit institutions which can provide capital to farmers (and others). Two banks and four small credit institutions currently exist (and are described below), but are insufficient to the needs.

It is strongly recommended that AID seek to significantly enhance sources of credit during autonomy so that Palestinian development projects in agriculture - and elsewhere - are sufficiently funded. Unless corrected, lack of credit will be the single greatest barrier to overall economic development in the West Bank and Gaza during autonomy.

3. Training and Marketing. While significant progress has been made in recent years in building a critical mass of Palestinian agronomists and agricultural engineers in the West Bank and Gaza, there is still a shortage. Thus, it is recommended that AID seek to promote the training of experts either through enhancing programs at Palestinian universities or training qualified individuals abroad. In addition, the international marketing of Palestinian agricultural products, particularly fruit and olive oil, has been relatively ineffective. Assistance in this area is essential for the acquisition of foreign exchange in the Palestinian entity.

IV. The Industrial Sector

The State of Industry in the West Bank and Gaza

The industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza is virtually non-existent. Given the relatively propitious social factors - in particular the disproportionately large

wage-labor force and the relatively high educational levels of Palestinians - the West Bank and Gaza is one of the most *under*-industrialized areas in the world. This is particularly ironic given the significant role that the Diaspora Palestinian population has played in the industrialization process in other Arab countries.

There are five primary reasons for this low level of industrial activity in the West Bank and Gaza:

* Lack of credit. As in the agricultural sector, the dearth of lending institutions virtually made impossible the acquisition of sufficient capital to industrialize.

* Export restrictions. A number of restrictions placed on Palestinian exports limited potential profits, making industry unattractive.

* Denial of permits. Potential entrepreneurs had to acquire a large number of permits from the military government. Often permits were denied directly or indirectly.

* Taxation. High tax rates and the use of taxation as an instrument of control by the military government limited the availability of private capital to invest in industry.

* Poor investment atmosphere. The political uncertainties which accompanied the military governance of the West Bank and Gaza made it a particularly unattractive place for potential outside investors.

Nevertheless, there are some industries in the West Bank and Gaza. The small industries that do exist are primarily centered around food and drink processing, textiles, shoes, cigarettes, and stone cutting.

Extant Institutions in the Industrial Sector

Investment-promoting Institutions

Currently there are six small lending institutions in the West Bank and Gaza, four of which are new. There are two Arab banks in the occupied territories: the Bank of Palestine in Gaza, and the Cairo-Amman bank in the West Bank. Both institutions are severely restricted in the activities they can undertake. They are forbidden from accepting deposits from abroad, and therefore have scant capital for development loans. If such restrictions are repealed during self-government, then both of these banks - and others - could be major players in capital allocation.

Recently, four small non-profit shareholder companies opened in East Jerusalem. They are: Economic Development Group, Arab Technical Development Center, Arab Development and Credit Company and Cooperation for Development. Each is capitalized at only \$2 to 3.5 million, so they have little capital to loan for development projects in the industrial (or any other) sector. The European Community has been instrumental in supporting these groups, but the restrictions placed on them (e.g. they are forbidden from accepting deposits) have limited their usefulness to this point. It is too early to effectively evaluate their performance, although there are some indications that some loan agreements have been politically driven.

Palestinian business interests are institutionally expressed through the various chambers of commerce and the recent establishment of two Unions of Industrialists (one each in the West Bank and Gaza Strip). Both organizations promote the commercial and industrial interests of Palestinian capitalists, and the chambers of commerce have maintained a long-standing relationship with Jordan. Once again,

however, the limited nature of the industrial sector and the restrictions under which it toils, leave the sector open to virtual creation during self-government.

Labor Unions

There are four large groupings of labor unions in the West Bank and Gaza, three of which are known by the same name: General Federation of Trade Unions. The fourth one is the Progressive Labor Front. The largest (by far) General Federation of Trade Unions is that headed up by Shahir Sa'd, and based in Nablus. It claims a membership in the West Bank of 55 unions comprising nearly 88,000 workers. While there exists no independent confirmation of these figures, the first figure likely includes a number of 'paper unions' (i.e., they exist only on paper), while the latter figure is almost certainly inflated significantly. Still, there is little doubt that the GFTU headed by Sa'd is the largest coalition of labor unions in the occupied territories.

The other relatively significant union coalition was headed, until recently, by George Hazboun. Again, independent figures are not available, but this General Federation of Trade Unions probably has half the membership of Sa'd's coalition. The other two labor union coalition have been particularly repressed by the military government, and therefore are much smaller in size.

No more than 20 percent of the labor force of the occupied territories is unionized. This low figure is due, in part, to the fact that it is illegal for the large Palestinian labor force working in Israel to be represented by any of these Palestinian unions. As such, the unions are not recognized to be the bargaining agents for

upwards of 40 percent of the Palestinian labor force. Where the unionized labor force is important is in the industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza. Unions have a significant presence in all Palestinian industries.

Women's Committees

Four separate women's groups emerged from the Palestinian labor unions in order to address issues unique to Palestinian female workers. Since their origins in the industrial sector, these committees have been active in a range of activities, including establishing various types of cooperatives, and producing and marketing a variety of goods (usually foodstuffs and handicrafts). Such activities have constituted an important income supplement for Palestinian families, although the overall level of production remains small.

Until recently, the most effective women's organization was the Women's Action Committees (WAC). However, in the past two years WAC has developed serious internal troubles. AID should carefully monitor the group's cohesion prior to providing resources to its activities. The second most effective women's group - and perhaps the most effective now - is the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees. This group is followed by the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees and finally by the Women's Committee for Social Work.

Assistance to these groups would provide for both economic and social development, and is thus encouraged; however, the ability of these groups to effectively absorb resources quickly is limited. They are still relatively small and under-developed. AID may wish to consider supporting individual projects (especially

cooperatives and literacy programs) undertaken by these committees.

Recommendations

1. Credit. As in the agricultural sector, the biggest need during self-government in the industrial sector in the West Bank and Gaza is the availability of capital through lending institutions. Because of the low rates of industrialization in the occupied territories, there will be a significant need for a number of different industries to be established. This cannot be done effectively without sources of capital for industrial investment.

2. Investment stability. Outside investors will require a politically and economically stable area before substantial amounts of capital will be invested. Technical assistance will be needed by the Palestinian self-governing authority in drawing up the rules governing investment in order that investors feel that their capital will not be subject to unwarranted restrictions, such as nationalization of industries.

Palestinians have been central to the economic development and industrialization of a number of Arab countries. If sufficient credit is available and the investment atmosphere appropriate, there is no reason to believe that the same thing will not occur in the West Bank and Gaza.

V. Education

The State of Education in the West Bank and Gaza

As with other dispossessed peoples, the Palestinian community excels at and

highly values education. In fact, on a per capita basis, Palestinians have among the most PhDs of any people in the world. The educational system in the West Bank and Gaza has a number of strengths and weaknesses. The major problems in the educational sector revolve around its administration by the military government: periodic and often long-term closures (particularly in the last six years), widespread censorship of educational materials, a curriculum which has not been allowed to keep up with current needs, limited resources and lack of control by the educators themselves over those resources that do exist. In addition, the extraordinary disruption of the educational process during the Intifada has created a number of serious problems, none of which will be impossible to correct given appropriate circumstances. Presumably, the cessation of military government control over education during autonomy will relieve the educational system of its biggest liability.

On the positive side, the bases upon which to build a first-rate educational system already exist. In addition to the social value placed on education, the West Bank and Gaza have a relatively good university system already in place. It is the K-12 system that is in need of an overhaul (see below).

Moreover, educational institutions have avoided the overt politicization which other Palestinian institutions have witnessed, making professional standards easier to apply.

Extant Institutions in the Educational Sector

At the K-12 levels there are three providers of education, all of which are currently under the domain of the Military Governor. First, the government schools,

inherited in part from Jordan, administer to the bulk of Palestinian youths.

Approximately 340,000 students are currently enrolled in public schools. Second, as part of its larger mission, UNRWA runs a number of primary and secondary schools.

UNRWA schools are currently attended by approximately 130,000 students in the West Bank and Gaza. Finally, about 30,000 Palestinians attend private primary or secondary schools, many of which are affiliated with a religious order.

The strength of the Palestinian educational system lies in its post-secondary institutions. There are 25 community colleges in the West Bank and Gaza, 21 of which are accredited by the Higher Education Council. Of these, four are administered by UNRWA and five are public; the remaining ones are private. Of the 21 accredited community colleges, all but four are located in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Approximately 7,500 students currently attend a community college in the occupied territories.

The West Bank and Gaza contain six universities with a total current enrollment of approximately 15,000 students: Bir Zeit, Bethlehem, Najah, Hebron, Jerusalem and the Islamic University in Gaza. In addition, the Quds Open University opened in May 1991, and has 2500 students. Bir Zeit University is clearly the elite Palestinian university, but Bethlehem and Najah are also very good institutions. The other universities are relatively good, but are a clear step behind these three.

Another strength of the university system is its coordination by the Higher Education Council, which has tried to provide a uniformity of standards, and has acted as the accrediting agency. It is recommended that AID work with the Higher Education Council in support of its work.

Finally, there are a number of small literacy programs throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Perhaps the most imaginative is the Tamer Institute, based in Bayt Hanina, and run by one of the most respected Palestinian educators in the occupied territories, Munir Fasha. Other worthwhile literacy programs include the Popular Committee for Literacy and Adult Education, the Books on Wheels program of the Center for Non-Violence, and the Self Learning Project of the Ramallah Friends School.

Recommendations

1. K-12 Public Schools. The greatest educational needs during autonomy will be in the public K-12 schools. It is recommended that a zero-based review be undertaken early in the autonomy period in order to effectively gauge the specific needs of the school system. However, several areas where improvement is necessary are clear. A major priority will be curriculum development, as the various curricula have been allowed to stagnate under military rule. Second, teacher training in conjunction with curricular reform will be necessary. Third, there is a serious shortage of laboratory resources, including a virtual absence of computers. Fourth, the physical structures of a number of schools are dilapidated and in need of repair.

On the positive side, there are a large number of qualified Palestinian educators who can effectively reform the K-12 system if provided sufficient resources and latitude to do so.

2. Post-Secondary Schools. Unlike the K-12 schools, Palestinian universities are not in

need of major rebuilding. They are well administered, effectively coordinated, and supplied with good faculty, both Palestinian and foreign. Instead, AID should concentrate on specific university projects deemed worthy of support, and coordinate its activities with the Higher Education Council.

3. Literacy Programs. The literacy programs mentioned above are worthy of support and are highly cost effective. That is, for a relatively small level of financial assistance, a good deal of progress in terms of social development can accrue.

A number of institutions have been mentioned in this essay as worthy of support because of their capacity to effectively undertake development goals. This has been the primary criterion for selection. It should be noted, however, that by supporting a variety of Palestinian institutions in different sectors, AID will be promoting institutional pluralism in the Palestinian polity. This may well have an unintended but beneficial impact on political development, in addition to the intended economic and social modernization.