



LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Year One Work Plan

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List of Acronyms

Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC)
Assessment and Evaluation Department (AED)
Chief of Party (COP)
Commission for the Development of the Teaching Profession (CDTP)
Department of Field Follow-up (DFF)
Department of Planning (DP)
Department of Supervision and Qualification (DSQ)
District Leadership Team (DLT)
Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit (FALT)
Graduate Research Fellowship in Education (GRFE)
Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD)
Leadership Diploma Program (LDP)
Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ministry of Higher Education (MHE)
Model Schools Network (MSN)
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
National Institute for Education and Training (NIET)
Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)
Readiness to Teach Index (RTTI)
Quality Improvement Fund (QIF)
School Improvement Team (SIT)
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
Supervisor Diploma Program (SDP)
Teacher Education Improvement Project (TEIP)
Teacher Educator Enhancement Program (TEEP)
Teacher Learning Index (TLI)
Teacher Performance Assessment Framework (TPAF)
Understanding by Design (UbD)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass)
University of Palestine (UP)
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Executive Summary

The Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD) Program is a comprehensive education reform initiative focused on supporting the Ministry of Education's national effort in teacher development. The goal is to improve the quality of school education through an effective approach to leadership and teacher development. Underpinning this macro goal are four intermediate objectives which encompass all of the various program components directed toward achieving this goal:

- Capacity of school principals, supervisors and teachers to improve classroom instruction is enhanced
- National cadre of high-quality teacher and leadership educators is created
- Policies, structures and systems within key Ministry of Education departments supporting leadership and teacher development are created and harmonized
- Pre-service teacher education in Gaza is enhanced

This broad agenda will be addressed by AMIDEAST's first-year Work Plan in discrete ways. The myriad of program components and sub-components of LTD will require a policy consensus within the Ministry of Education (MoE) at all levels, as well as a concentration of resources in key areas in Year One. Through each of these initiatives detailed below, AMIDEAST will work with the MoE in revisiting existing education policies and practices so that the interventions are institutionalized and codified in norms of practice. Therefore, key achievements envisioned in the first year are the following:

- Establish LTD in the eyes of all stakeholders as a leading initiative funded by USAID and designed to support teacher education and leadership on a broad scale through alignment of policies and interventions targeting schools, districts, and central MoE.
- Establish a solid foundation for large-scale teacher development beginning with school and teacher selection, an accepted design and approach to delivery, curriculum development for in-service modules and start the training of the first cohort of approximately 830 teachers.
- Introduce a comprehensive, sustainable reform toward school leadership that encompasses the following dimensions:
 - Revise the Leadership Diploma Program and embark on training the first cohort of principals.
 - Develop a Supervision Diploma Program and embark on selection and training of the first cohort.
 - Establish District Leadership Teams and School Improvement Teams for LTD schools and districts.
- Develop a national cadre of teacher educators capable of effectively delivering the Professional Diploma in Education for 5-10 teachers. This network of individuals will

include staff from the National Institute for Education and Training (NIET), content-area experts and others. AMIDEAST's partner, University of Massachusetts Amherst will lead this endeavor with a series of workshops and interventions that build professional development through learning circles, action research and portfolio assessment.

- Assist in establishing a teacher performance assessment framework that attempts to rationalize an unfolding system of assessments while improving the overall approach by introducing a Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit (FALT) for teachers, supervisors and principals.
- Embark upon a series of interventions in Gaza that measurably improve the quality of pre-service teacher training. These will focus on:
 - Local scholarship support for approximately 100 pre-service students enrolled in University of Palestine's Faculty of Education and a further 120 Masters of Education students enrolled in Al Azhar University's Faculty of Education.
 - Introduce a pre-service practicum for 100 University of Palestine students and integrate MSN private schools in Gaza as host institutions
 - Support faculty development through research grants, portfolio assessment and action research, all of which focus on improving the delivery of pre-service teacher education.

The Work Plan also covers AMIDEAST's administration of LTD. This section covers the transition from MSN to LTD, as well as details compliance, budget and documentation procedures. Separate from this Work Plan is a detailed approach to monitoring and evaluation which is reflected in the Performance Management Plan. In sum, this Work Plan for Year One establishes a framework and details a host of concrete interventions associated with the five program components. Finally, a corresponding Timeline for Year One has been developed as a separate document.

Introduction

This Work Plan outlines the specific types of engagement and interventions planned between October 2012 and October 2013. This Work Plan describes each of the priority interventions. In most cases the approach and details of these interventions have been closely discussed with relevant staff within the Ministry of Education. The guiding vision for the first year and beyond is one that involves a consultative process with relevant stakeholders. However, this consultative dialog is also balanced with direct action that deliberately drives the process forward so that there will be concrete achievements in Year One and beyond. A separate Year One Timeline in outlines when each of the components and sub-components is expected to take place and the duration of each.

Core Rationale and Approach of LTD

The underlining approach of LTD is to concentrate training, time and valuable resources among a group of teachers, principals and supervisors in select schools who all have a similar understanding of good teaching, and who are working toward common goals of improved leadership that supports teachers and improves classroom instruction. The rationale is this core group of LTD beneficiaries will have a better chance of changing the classroom environment and school professional climate leading to improved student learning. These LTD schools can then become magnet institutions for follow-on pre-service student practicum experiences and other types of school-based management reforms that influence the entire system of education. Therefore, teacher and school selection, and the basic designs set forth in various training components establishes the foundation for all other interventions.

Governance and Policy Development

Governance and implementation of the LTD Program are premised upon the Ministry of Education providing consistent leadership and follow through. This includes clear actions based upon timely decisions and the allocation sufficient human resources within the various departments of the MoE, particularly the National Institute for Education and Training and the Department of Supervision and Qualification. In this regard, AMIDEAST, can provide technical guidance and support to the Ministry of Education, but actually achieving the benchmarks and accomplishing the many activities outlined in this Work Plan is largely dependent on the Ministry of Education.

Governance of the LTD Program is premised upon a dual mechanism of leadership. This is illustrated in the graphic below:

LTD Governance Structure

LTD Policy Committee

Minister of Education
Deputy Assistant Minister for Planning and
Development
USAID EDO Director
USAID LTD AOTR
AMIDEAST LTD COP
AMIDEAST Director of Capacity Building
AMIDEAST Director of Teacher Education

LTD Steering Committee

Deputy Assistant Minister for Planning and
Development
AMIDEAST Chief of Party
AMIDEAST Director of Capacity Building
AMIDEAST Director of Teacher Education
USAID LTD AOTR
Directors General
of relevant MoE Departments

The Policy Committee will provide macro-level oversight of the project and provide guidance on key policy issues of national significance

The Steering Committee will periodically review the issues surrounding implementation of LTD and decide on how best to proceed on all important technical matters

AMIDEAST envisions policy development as a continuous process and will be very much tied to the implementation of various LTD program components. The previous two months of discussion with key MoE figures which resulted in this Work Plan is illustrative of how policy development will generally unfold in Year One and beyond. Development of the Work Plan has prompted a whole range of conversations with various MoE constituents that have not happened in the nearly five years since the launch of the Teacher Education Strategy. This process of discussion and negotiation over concrete issues, such as school selection and the modality of professional development, is effectively laying the groundwork for policy development and will lead to the creation of new practices and procedures.

Furthermore, collaborative planning in Year One with all of the departments outlined in the Capacity Building section of this report is expected to result in a burst of new policy development. AMIDEAST will play an intermediary role among all stakeholders, field consultants to contribute expertise and develop policy research (if needed) to inform practice, and promote a policy consensus by bringing stakeholders together and push for decisions as an external arbiter within an agreed upon timeframe. Our approach to advance policy development will include defining the challenges or problems, assembling evidence, presenting policy options within specific criteria, projecting outcomes, and addressing the trade-offs so that decision makers are informed and prompted to make decisions.

However, it must be recognized that AMIDEAST can advise and suggest directions, but not actually change education policy. Furthermore, the political capacity and financial latitude of the MoE to set new policy, regardless of the need, relevance and importance, is tied to a consensus of opinion with the MoE leadership that may or may not exist, and may also be dependent on the funding priorities of the Palestinian Authority. Any policy that has significant resource implications is outside the purview of even the Minister to decide. Nevertheless, AMIDEAST envisions certain areas where one can expect changes to occur based upon new practices,

structures or systems put in place through LTD which may reasonably lead to new policy, whether it is defined in official terms or otherwise. This may include the following:

1. AMIDEAST expects to see a variety of MoE policies that trend toward making the teacher more accountable based upon performance.
2. Policies based upon new procedures and expectations associated with the role of the principal vis a vis teacher development and school effectiveness.
3. New policies based upon new procedures and expectation associated with the role of supervisors, particularly with respect to teacher support and assessment.
4. Strengthened policies associated with the role of districts and how they support and manage schools leading to a more decentralized management structure.
5. Policies that recognize and support school-based management reforms linked to school improvement planning and a process of distributive leadership where parents and teachers have greater input.

School/Teacher Selection

AMIDEAST will provide in-service professional development to approximately 2,500 teachers in grades 5-10. The intent is to recruit a critical number of teachers from each school so there can be shared experiences, networking and establishment of a school-based professional learning community. In this regard, the process of school selection becomes one of the first and most important parameters of implementing LTD and is intrinsically linked to teacher selection. The specific location of the LTD schools, and their proximity to each other and to NIET regional training centers, will be critical in shaping how services are supported and provided. AMIDEAST has discussed criteria with the MoE and there is general agreement on the following dimensions:

School/Teacher Selection Criteria

- Schools are selected from all 16 districts. The size of the district will be a factor in the selection process.
- Schools form geographical clusters that cover both cities and villages.
- Schools serve grades 5-10, allowing for clusters of teachers teaching similar grades.
- LTD targets 4 disciplines: Arabic, science, math and English.
- LTD aims for a balanced number of boys'/girls'/ schools or coed schools.
- Schools should have at least 3 teachers who are under-qualified, although an ideal concentration will include approximately 50% of all the teachers in the school after three years of training.
- The school has not recently received teacher/principal professional development from other programs.
- All teachers in need of a bachelor's degree or a diploma.
- The school leadership wants to participate in the program.
- Priority is given to schools with acceptable infrastructure and that may also be eligible for other donor-funded project support.

Selection of the Disciplines

AMIDEAST is proposing to engage four different types of teachers representing the following disciplines: math, science, Arabic and English. All four have been chosen because they represent a core subject taught in school for grades 5-10. Teachers teaching more than one discipline may be trained under one of these four disciplines depending on their teaching in load. The type of professional development each teacher will receive will adhere to a common framework. This framework will involve approximately a one year commitment to training and focus on three areas: 1) content knowledge; 2) techniques in instruction or pedagogy; and 3) pedagogical content knowledge. The framework will involve face-to-face instruction, reflective learning circles, action research and portfolio assessment.

School Selection and Vetting

AMIDEAST is currently waiting to receive detailed data from NIET that will identify under-qualified teachers by discipline and age and school. This data will allow for various scenarios to present themselves in terms of school and teacher selection and the organization of in-service teacher development. AMIDEAST is also waiting on NIET to submit names of schools and teachers for review and approval by USAID. AMIDEAST will work closely with NIET and USAID in a process that confirms teacher selection and gets all relevant individuals vetted and schools approved in a timely manner so that in-service teacher training can begin in early March 2013.

Capacity Building for the Ministry of Education

A wide body of international literature and AMIDEAST's experience within the Model Schools Network (MSN) Program confirm the importance of school leadership in developing school capacity to manage change and improve the school. School-based management reforms that lead to improved instruction in the classroom require the understanding and support of the principal. In the Palestinian education system, the role of a school principal and district level administration combine to form an important axis of the collective leadership. Consequently, AMIDEAST's approach in Year One focuses on improving school leadership and its relationship to other institutional structures. The challenge is to support principals and supervisors as lead change agents, particularly in terms of improving classroom instructional practice.

Supporting the leadership within the MoE will require initially better understanding the roles and responsibilities of key departments, including:

- National Institute for Education and Training (NIET)
- Department of Supervision and Qualification (DSQ)
- Assessment and Evaluation Department (AED)
- Department of Planning (DP)
- Department of Field Follow-up (DFF)
- Commission for the Development of the Teaching Profession (CDTP)
- Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC)

AMIDEAST will focus on these departments in two stages. The highest priority will be to conduct a functional audit in order to clarify the missions, priorities, current policy parameters, and near- and long-term goals of NIET and DSQ. The Director of Capacity Building will start this process in October 2012. Similarly, AMIDEAST will hire consultants to conduct a functional audit of AED and DP starting in December in order to ascertain what kind of capacity building should be provided to these departments. AMIDEAST will also be relying upon some staff in either or both of these departments to assist in establishing a baseline for evaluation purposes. This baseline should be concluded by February 2012 in advance of training and capacity building. Cooperation with AED and DP in monitoring and evaluation throughout the project will be essential because LTD does not have the staff or financial resources to undertake a large or complex monitoring and evaluation strategy.

A review and functional audit of the Department of Field Follow-up, as well as the Commission for the Development of the Teaching Profession and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (CDTP) will occur during a second, later stage. Understanding and supporting these three departments is less time sensitive relative to program priorities. Building the capacity of these two entities is the least clear; consequently, AMIDEAST has not suggested a specific course of action in this work plan. Overtime, the role of these entities will emerge and the best course of action will present itself. What follows is a description of activities and interventions planned for all other departments in Year One.

National Institute for Education and Training (NIET) and the Leadership Diploma Program (LDP)

As a result of MSN, the Leadership Diploma Program (LDP) is now an accredited professional diploma program for public school principals implemented by NIET. In addition, the Minister of Education has promised the hiring of 18 new staff to support the existing staff in NIET. Official hiring has not yet taken place and the capacity of NIET to manage all the different interventions proposed under LTD is very much dependent on NIET having these staff on board in October 2012. This staff will be assigned various roles including material development and actual training. They may also be divided into specialized groups, some responsible for supporting teacher education, while others may support the leadership program and a third group may support the supervision training. These roles and responsibilities of these individuals have yet to be defined, but will provide an important contribution to implementing various initiatives within LTD. If official approval of this staff is not granted, AMIDEAST will need to revisit important elements of the delivery of the in-service teacher professional development program and probably have to spend considerable funds on additional consultants during the life of the project.

In terms of the Leadership Diploma Program, AMIDEAST's Director of Capacity Building will work with NIET staff and form a larger team to revise existing materials, engage in a trainer of trainer program so they may take the lead in providing the actual training, as well as facilitate reflective sessions. This team will be formed in October with the expectation that the first cohort of LTD principals will begin in February 2013.

The content of the LDP integrates real issues in the daily life of school principals with a particular focus on instructional leadership so that all school activities are oriented around improving student learning and academic growth. The LDP involves:

- 320 hours of a practicum, action research, face-to-face training, reflective learning circles, virtual learning, and a school leadership project.
- Half of the year-long program involves face-to-face meetings. The other half encompasses an on-the-job practicum.

Another important feature of the LDP involves each school principal being required to undertake a hands-on leadership project. Each principal will be eligible to receive up to \$1000 for his/her project, which may engage the school community in ways that further the school-community partnership and demonstrate leadership.

A pending challenge will be to help guide NIET in expanding and developing its scope of work so they are continuously prepared to support larger and ongoing numbers of principals. This will demand a continuous revision of the functions and scope of work for NIET, and NIET will need some time to mature and see how to link objectives together and form a system for effective delivery vis-a-vis the Department of Supervision and other entities. Therefore, the focus for NIET during Year One will be on modifying the Leadership Diploma materials, selecting trainers, agreeing with districts and principals on the training framework, including all logistics, and training the first cohort of school principals. Finally, NIET will also be involved in coordinating the work with districts to support the leadership program and in this regard, there will be some overlap with District Leadership Teams.

Department of Field Follow-up (DFF)

This department is responsible for school principals, and has a small staff in each district office. This department was not originally known or suggested in the original conception of LTD; however, it could assume a small, but constructive role in leadership development. Therefore, AMIDEAST intends to include it in the functional review in Year One. DFF's exact functions and scope of work need to be analyzed relative to the whole effort to improve leadership in support of improved classroom teaching. Once roles and responsibilities are identified it may be possible for DFF to assume a constructive role in supporting the Leadership Diploma Program, as well as the District Leadership Teams and School Improvement Teams.

District Leadership Teams and School Improvement Teams

AMIDEAST's approach to developing leadership capacity among Palestinian schools and districts recognizes the current system involves many actors. The objective is to create a sustainable school improvement network led by the principal that is tied to a collaborative and supportive district structure. MSN created District Leadership Teams (DLTs) in seven districts to enhance the participation of middle management and institutionally support school improvement initiatives. The DLTs will be further developed among all relevant districts within LTD. The total number of DLT's will be reflected in the outcomes of the school selection process, although it is presumed that most of the 16 districts will be included. A decentralized

management structure is also complemented by a new MoE discussion of "clustering" 10-16 schools within a district (depending on the district's size). The notion of clustering is not yet official policy. However, AMIDEAST views some aspect of clustering schools necessary to implementation given the number of schools and geographical distribution. School clusters (official or otherwise) will allow great sharing and networking among teachers and principals. School clusters will also be linked to the learning circles for teachers and principals.

The DLTs will operate in tandem with School Improvement Teams (SITs). The DLTs are inclusive teams comprised of approximately 6-8 individuals. These teams typically include the: 1) district director; 2) technical and/or administrative deputies; and 3) relevant heads of sections. The objectives of the DLTs include reviewing and supporting the school improvement plans, and overseeing the technical implementation of these plans. The DLTs can also support a reframing of school/cluster priorities toward improved classroom instruction and community partnerships. DLTs are meant to meet quarterly, with cluster leaders meeting more frequently during the academic year. AMIDEAST will suggest to the MoE that they convene the first DLT meetings in March 2013. In sum, the objective of the School Improvement Teams and District Leadership Teams is to create a collective leadership structure with an understanding and commitment to school improvement.

Successful models of school improvement are anchored in a collective approach to school-based management reforms and distributive leadership that engages the community in shared problem solving and decision making. MSN validated this approach by linking participation in the LDP to School Improvement Teams (SITs). The major objective of the SITs is to lead the school-based improvement effort. Each school's SIT is comprised of the principal, teachers, and parent representatives. The SITs are charged with two core responsibilities. First, they must conduct a school self-assessment. The assessment will be conducted in conjunction with a set of seven Effective School Standards developed by NIET. The school self-assessment helps set school priorities and is linked to the second responsibility of participating in a school improvement planning process. This process involves building a school vision and mission and encompasses the following:

- Teaching and learning practices
- School environment
- Relationships with parents and their involvement
- School resources and how to effectively improve them
- School leadership practices
- Professional development within the school

The planning process includes setting school improvement goals and priorities with a corresponding timeline, budget and delegation of responsibilities, including identifying opportunities for community engagement. LTD does not currently have budgeted support for schools to implement their school improvement plan. Very modest support may be possible through a reorganization of the budget, such as identifying savings in the in-service teacher training component. Alternatively, selection of LTD schools may include schools due to receive support from other donor-funded projects. For example, USAID's pending School Improvement Program will support school renovation of up to 50 schools, while a Belgium-funded e-learning program provides grants to schools for e-learning related projects. There are other smaller

programs, as well, that could help drive the school improvement planning forward in ways that result in tangible improvements.

The AMIDEAST school improvement planning process will be driven forward by the LTD school principals who will receive training within their Leadership Diploma Program on how to facilitate this process. Furthermore, the District Leadership Teams will also supervise the ongoing plans. This approach means school improvement plans will only be advanced in Year One among the first cohort of principals enrolled in the LDP. The aim is for each of these schools to start the school improvement planning process in the spring of 2013 and target their first plan for the academic year of 2013/2014.

Department of Supervision and Qualification (DSQ)

There are approximately 480 supervisors distributed throughout the districts. The Department of Supervision is involved in a form of supervision reform which is currently unfolding. Therefore, AMIDEAST will take advantage of ongoing discussions within the MoE and decide on what form of capacity building is most suitable. Tentative discussions underway involve the creation of a Supervision Diploma Program (SDP) modeled after the Leadership Diploma Program. The focus in Year One will involve recruiting approximately 90 supervisors who will receive training within the SDP as a form of in-service professional development. This assumes six groups of 18 supervisors each will participate. The focus of the program will be on all eligible supervisors and not necessarily dependent on their existing credentials and educational qualification.

The training of supervisors will help LTD concentrate resources, training and capacity building in a manner that reinforces a strategic policy of school reform and improved delivery of quality instruction. The SDP needs to be developed from scratch, so there is a need for clear, timely decisions on the framework, content, material, as well as who will provide the training and facilitate reflective sessions. The goals of the program are to improve teacher supervision through a greater focus on improving instruction, increasing teacher satisfaction, helping teachers assess students work in more authentic ways, and creating learning communities. DSQ staff, in collaboration with NIET staff and the Director of Capacity Building, will jointly design the program which may build supervisors competencies in the following areas:

- The use of ICT in learning and teaching
- Development of student portfolios for assessing learning
- Development of action research and data-based decision making
- Provision of materials, resources, and assistance to support teaching and learning
- New teacher evaluation methods and approaches
- Leadership, coaching and mentoring strategies

AMIDEAST anticipates the pilot phase of this program will begin in the spring 2013. The intention is to have the pilot program accredited by AQAC. Any proposed changes in the roles and responsibilities of supervisors will also require approval by the MoE which may change the inherent functions and/or scope of work of the DSQ. The work with DSQ during the first year will focus on the following:

1. Implementing a needs assessment of all supervisors which will be internally guided by DSQ staff with strategic direction from AMIDEAST.
2. Agree on the framework, content, and delivery approach of the SDP. Supervisors will need to be selected, and trainers will need to be trained before the actual training of the first cohort of supervisors in March 2013
3. The functions and scope of work of DSQ also needs to be clarified. This will be a work in progress, similar to the unfolding effort within NIET.
4. DSQ supervisors will also be integrated into the District Leadership Teams and linked to the leadership program. This will occur through professional networking, overlap with the in-service teacher professional development program and shared instructional leadership responsibilities with principals who will be participating in the Leadership Diploma Program.

Assessment and Evaluation Department (AED) and Department of Planning (DP)

AMIDEAST's effort in capacity building for both of these departments will start with a needs assessment that is focused particularly on how well and in what ways they can become a stronger resource for other departments within the MoE. Schools could greatly benefit from having AED develop systems that allow the substantial amount of testing now required in every school to be utilized so that the data informs principals and teachers, and in turn, improves instruction and student learning outcomes. Similarly the Department of Planning has a substantial staff, including a Monitoring and Evaluation Division and School-GIS Division which gather data on schools and teaching quality annually. Consequently, both departments need to be a part of the general review of roles and responsibilities and current practices. This will then allow concrete needs to be identified, as well as allow the MoE to better understand how these departments can focus efforts that meet the broader goals of teacher development. AED and DP's capacity to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the LTD is significant. AMIDEAST envisions hiring consultants to initially conduct a functional audit of these departments so that their responsibilities and needs are identified by January 2013. It is expected the Department of Planning will assume an important role in helping establish a baseline of data for purposes of monitoring and evaluation by January 2013.

MoE Study Tours Supporting Leadership & Supervision

Study tours provide opportunities for all participants to learn from the experiences of colleagues who are engaged in similar work, albeit in different cultural contexts. AMIDEAST's partner, the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass), will organize and host up to three study tours over the course of the project, with the first study tour tentatively scheduled for mid-May 2013. AMIDEAST views these study tours as a form of capacity building for select MoE staff that could have a broader influence on policy and practice.

The goal for these study tours is to ensure mutual benefit through collaborative inquiry. The study tours will be designed around that goal, and all participants in the exchange will be asked to engage from that same perspective. Put simply, by opening their doors to inquiry, the hosts reflect and learn; by entering with interest and willingness to see alternatives, the guests can also

reflect and learn. The hosts should not see their role as putting on a display for the purposes of impressing; rather, the hosts should be willing to discuss strengths and weaknesses, benefits and challenges. The guests should approach their experiences with appreciation, seeking to learn what works well, and what does not work and why. Most important is for them to reflect and consider how practices could be adapted to fit the Palestinian context. The ultimate goal is action to improve current practices in both settings, that of the American hosts and Palestinian guest.

Resources in the UMass Amherst Area

The study tours for Palestinian educators hosted by UMass Amherst will be structured around activities that reflect the project goals of LTD. While UMass anticipates each of the study tours will consist of different activities that reflect the needs and interests of that particular team of educators, the following description offers some possible activities for study tours.

The Commonwealth (or State) of Massachusetts is ranked first in the U.S. in student assessments in math and science. The established relationships that the School of Education has with local schools will ensure that our Palestinian colleagues have ample opportunities to observe successful approaches to teaching STEM subjects in grades 5-10. Moreover, school leaders (including superintendents, principals, department chairs, others in supervisory roles) in those districts can discuss and demonstrate instructional support systems for the improvement of teaching and use of collaborative practices for decision-making. In addition, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Connecticut have initiated new teacher performance evaluation systems. Two districts (one in each state) are currently piloting these systems and can provide authentic illustrative windows, both into STEM instructional approaches in their schools and into district efforts to implement new methods to assess quality of instruction.

Study Tour Principles

The following principles will help to ensure that UMass accomplishes its goal of mutual inquiry leading to action for improvement:

- The goals for the study tour are mutually agreed upon between guests and hosts;
- The sites to observe and activities to engage in are then chosen, based on those goals; the sites and activities must be relevant;
- The visits are made up of teams (i.e., Palestinians visit a team of peers at the host institution);
- Appropriate preparation prior to the actual visit is crucial. This includes orientation to the context where the visiting team will engage and the development of frameworks for inquiry;
- All parties are as comfortable as possible (that is, physical needs are met and anxieties are reduced);
- There are ongoing opportunities for facilitated reflection, both together (guests and hosts) and separately, built into the schedule;
- The structure for the study tour includes meaningful follow-up after the visiting team returns home. This includes sharing experiences and insights with other colleagues who

were not participants in the study tour and may include a specific Action Plan to promote substantive change.

Selection of Teams

Following the design logic of LTD which includes working with clusters of schools, supervisors, district administrators, Study Tour Teams will be selected and consist of teachers, principals, supervisors, district administrators, MOE officials, and perhaps a faculty member from the associated university that is training in-service teachers in the modules. Pre-trip meetings with UMass Amherst team members will be arranged during one of their visits to Palestine, prior to the study tours. These teams will be prepared with information about the local school districts, in order to maximize the time spent there. Similarly, host teams will be prepared with information about the schools and policies in Palestine, the purpose of the study tour, and time for questions and planning. Upon returning from the study tour a variety of follow-up activities will be designed for the participants that link back into the LTD program goals and the roles and responsibilities of the participants themselves.

Requiring fluency in English would significantly reduce the number of eligible participants. While some fluency in English would be desirable, assistance from select bilingual AMIDEAST colleagues will make the experience much more valuable and avoid expensive full-time, official translation.

In order to be prepared for sending a Study Tour Team by mid-May 2013 will require identifying and selecting participants by early January 2013 at the latest. This would provide enough time to process vetting and visa procedures and make travel arrangements and conduct a pre-trip orientation. This date may simply be too early given all of the other program deadlines in the initial two quarters of Year One. Therefore, a second option may be to aim for sending the first group in October 2013. This decision will be made jointly by AMIDEAST, UMass and the MoE in December 2012.

School Connectivity and Netbooks

The Ministry of Education has requested that AMIDEAST prioritize providing LTD schools with connectivity, as well as providing teachers, principals and supervisors with netbooks. Both are considered valuable incentives for the schools and beneficiaries. Consequently, AMIDEAST will begin the process of contracting to install wireless Local Area Networks (LAN) so that every school's classroom and administrative area is accessible to the internet through strategically installed access points. The second half of the connectivity equation is the provision of internet service through a subcontract with a local vendor. AMIDEAST has agreed to depend upon the MoE to arrive at a solution for the internet service, perhaps through a negotiated arrangement with PALTEL. The LTD budget does not have sufficient funding for both the LAN installation in 300 schools and internet connectivity service for even one year. Therefore, an alternative funding source will be necessary if full, sustainable and functional connectivity is to be provided to all LTD schools. Nevertheless, it is AMIDEAST's understanding that USAID would like to move forward with the school infrastructural needs for connectivity, in anticipation

of this problem being resolved in the future. AMIDEAST expects to start the contracting process for LAN installation in October with the goal of having the first 100 schools ready to be connected by April 2013. Training, support and troubleshooting of the network will occur only after the MoE has finalized a solution for internet service. Total cost of LAN installation per school is estimated at \$2,600, or \$780,000 for 300 schools.

In order to assist teachers involved in the professional development trainings and to provide a crucial incentive to participate, AMIDEAST will also provide netbooks (smaller, lighter laptops) for LTD public school teachers participating in the professional development activities, as well as for supervisors and principals participating in LTD professional development. These computers have the capabilities necessary for schools' participation in the English, science, math, and Arabic VLE components. Each individual netbook is estimated to cost \$500 and this includes all relevant software and one-year of anti-virus software. Total cost for the provision of netbooks to 2,500 teachers, 300 principals, 250 supervisors, and 50 teacher educators is \$1,550,000. In sum, nearly all of the savings identified from not contracting with universities will be consumed by the procurement of netbooks and school connectivity infrastructure.

Teacher Educator Enhancement Program (TEEP)

The quality of a national in-service teacher training program depends most importantly upon the pedagogical expertise and experience of the teacher educators. To be effective in modeling new practices, in-service teacher education courses should not repeat the same practices and teacher-centered pedagogy commonly used in Palestinian universities and school classrooms.

Developing qualified teacher educators in sufficient numbers to address the massive challenge of providing quality professional development to thousands of teachers will require enhancing individual teacher educator skills. AMIDEAST, in close cooperation with the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass), will deliver a cross-disciplinary Teacher Educator Enhancement Program, targeting individuals from different institutions, as well as NIET staff and others. A team of four faculty members from UMass visited Palestine in late June and early July for ten days. This trip essentially comprised a needs assessment and shaped the strategy presented below.

Based upon a consultative process with AMIDEAST, UMass is proposing activities within TEEP are guided by three core commitments:

- Building capacity for collaboration among and between teacher educators and other stakeholders
- Focusing on learning (a future orientation – improvement)
- Focusing on strengths (Appreciative Inquiry – assets-based rather than deficit-based)

Activities will also be guided by the following overall approach. The goal of the MoE is to upgrade not only the qualifications but also the knowledge and skills of practicing teachers, as well as to ensure that new teachers have 'cutting-edge' knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are consistent with international standards. One aspect of international standards is an approach called Inquiry Cycles through which educators engage in processes and actions that support continuous improvement of their practice. The goal is for teachers to become reflective

practitioners. Through an inquiry cycle, teachers (and other educators) identify problems of practice; conduct small-scale experiments to try out new pedagogical approaches; gather data on those experiments; and develop a new action plan that further refines their practice, based on the data gathered and the critical feedback received.

UMass' approach incorporates three elements that define an inquiry cycle: Learning Circles, Action Research, and Portfolio Assessment. Learning Circles create an environment for reflective practice; Action Research is the methodology; and Portfolio Assessment generates a repository of evidence of professional development upon which to reflect.

Learning Circles, or communities of practice, provide the environment – the space and time – for reflection. Educators come together, share problems of practice, strategize together about possible actions, implement those actions, and share the outcomes back with colleagues in the Learning Circle. Successful Learning Circles are founded on trust and transparency. Participants need to be skilled in giving and receiving critical feedback, taking action and learning from those actions, and learning how to gather data about their practice. When done well, they provide an environment that overcomes the isolation of teachers as 'solo practitioners' in their classrooms. UMass does not underestimate the challenges in helping develop these skills and 'habits of mind' with educators in Palestine (or, for that matter, anywhere). The challenges are substantial but the goals are consistent with the MOE's vision for teaching practice and student outcomes in Palestine.

Action Research enacts the inquiry cycle, described above. As they engage in Action Research, educators develop an action plan to try to solve a problem of practice, implement that plan, gather data about the outcomes, critically evaluate the outcomes, and modify their practice once again. It is a continuous, on-going process through which teachers become reflective practitioners.

Portfolio Assessment is a strategy for systematically gathering data which are 'the evidence' used to critically reflect upon through the Action Research cycle. Portfolio Assessment is multi-faceted, relying on a variety of 'artifacts' as evidence of teaching and learning. Syllabi, lesson plans, videos of lessons, observation protocols, supervisory evaluations, and examples of student work can all be used in developing a portfolio of practice. To be meaningful and useful, the specific content of a portfolio needs to be contextualized. Ideally (and consistent with international standards), portfolios can be managed electronically, providing a permanent, accessible repository of a teacher's career development.

The Process to Implementing TEEP

UMass will depend upon NIET to select appropriately qualified teacher educators from a national pool of applicants. These individuals will be hired by AMIDEAST, but managed by NIET and will be required to participate in TEEP.

UMass faculty members will convene a series of workshops with teacher educators. In addition to faculty members, other teacher educators, such as staff members from NIET will be involved in TEEP activities. NIET staff and university faculty consultants will be the primary deliverers

of the school-based portion of in-service training, consequently they, too, need to have experience participating in Learning Circles, conducting their own mini-Action Research projects, demonstrating that they can lead Learning Circles, and teach others about Action Research and Portfolio Assessment.

UMass' first visit will occur in late November 2012. This will mark the start of workshops focusing on embedding two key practices – Action Research and Portfolio Assessment. Ideally, such workshops (whether faculty members only or involving other teacher educators from NIET and the Department of Supervision) would have no more than 30 participants to ensure quality small-group work, development of collegial relationships, and opportunities for sharing.

AMIDEAST anticipates no more than 35-45 teacher educators will need to be recruited and managed by NIET. The first day of each workshop will frame the overall approach (the alignment of Learning Circles, Action Research, and Portfolio Assessment); participants will develop a mini-Action Research project (based on an authentic problem of practice they are concerned about) which they will implement before the next workshop session; the final workshop session will offer the opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues, receive critical feedback, and develop next steps for both the Learning Circle and their own action research.

Teacher educator enhancement activities during Year One will also support LTD's effort to develop modules, prepare teacher educators (faculty members, NIET staff, and possibly others), and deliver in-service modules to teachers, grades 5-10, to upgrade their qualifications. While UMass is not responsible for developing or delivering the modules, they are charged with helping teacher educators *learn* the content of the modules; *apply* that knowledge (by using content and approaches directly in schools or in their own practice); and then *demonstrate* skills in teaching the content (perhaps to other teacher educators). A second round of UMass-led Learning Circles in spring 2013 will involve Refining Action Research Projects and Portfolio Assessment Strategies based on modules under development.

UMass will provide critical feedback and revisions of the modules, as these are used with teachers in schools. This feedback/revision loop is important for ensuring high quality, relevant modules and is consistent with Action Research principles. In *January-February 2013*, teacher educators will implement the modules with in-service teachers, grades 5-10. Close monitoring and adaptation of the modules will be made. Building in critical feedback loops as modules are delivered will ensure their relevance and appropriateness for Palestinian schools and is consistent with the idea of continuous improvement described above. This process will be repeated at different intervals throughout 2013. The overall schedule proposed by UMass faculty is presented below in Table 1.

Table I

Target dates (range)	Persons (possible)	Purpose
Late November-early December 2012 (est. 8 days)	Rossman, Rallis,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Learning Circles with teacher educators (Action Research & Portfolio Assessment) • Provide module refinement support
Late March 2013 (est. 8 days)	Hudson, Rallis, Rossman, Berger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and critique facilitation of Learning Circles in target schools • Conduct formative assessments of teacher educators conducting F2F sessions • Initiate 2 days of strategic planning in Gaza
April 2013	2-3 persons to be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Learning Circles with feedback • Focus on Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) • Hold Learning circles with teacher educators (NIET staff and others) • Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit development • Hold short workshop on principles and practice of Action Research in Gaza
<i>May 2013 (very tentative)</i>	<i>All</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct study tour to UMass</i>
June 2013 (est. 8 days)	2-3 persons to be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Learning Circles with teacher educators (NIET staff and others) • Adapt FALT to pre-service practicum in Gaza
Late August-early September 2013	2-3 persons to be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for Year 2 • Monitor on-going work in Learning Circles

In-Service Teacher Training

Current trends in teacher professional development emphasize a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systemically to promote growth and development in the profession. The following principles summarize AMIDEAST’s approach:

- Teachers are expected to be active learners engaged in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection.
- Training should be a series of related experiences taking place over a long period of time in order for teachers to relate prior knowledge to new experiences.
- The most effective professional development is connected to actual classroom experiences and daily activities of teachers and learners and is school-based.
- Training takes place within a larger environment of school-based reform in order to foster a culture of support from school leaders and peers.
- Content is focused on intended student learning and addresses the differences between actual student performance and standards.
- The teacher is expected to be a reflective practitioner, a person with prior knowledge and experiences upon which new theories and practices of teaching will be constructed.
- An effective program is organized around collaborative problem-solving, and includes external support from teachers and education administrators.

Extensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation and reporting demonstrated that the MSN Professional Certificate programs for teachers of math, science, and English resulted in measurable increases in learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning. MSN's model of in-service professional development assisted teachers to critically evaluate, self-reflect, and change their fundamental assumptions and practices about their own and their students' learning. Teachers also demonstrated a shift toward more formative types of classroom assessments that encourage critical thinking and collaborative problem solving. Professional development also promoted a community of practice among teachers in the network.

These evidence-based outcomes guide AMIDEAST's approach to improving teaching and learning among LTD teachers and schools, which centers on the alignment of professional development activities for teachers and principals with district management and school improvement initiatives. Furthermore, a central component of LTD is to assist NIET in developing its capacity to oversee and manage a national approach to teacher development, through the training of approximately 2,500 teachers teaching in grades 5-10. The broad framework under discussion with NIET includes a pedagogical approach which expects teachers to be active learners engaged in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection. Cohorts of no more than 25 teachers, clustered by geography, and grade range, representing one of six core disciplines: Arabic, math, science, English, technology education and social sciences.

This approach is meant to be implemented over 10 months and result in teacher certification. Delivery will be conducted by NIET staff and other consultants hired from a national pool of qualified teacher educators. The program is meant to be entirely school-based, that is all activities and meetings will take place in schools or other MoE district facilities. The face-to-face sessions are meant to occur during a regular teaching day, while learning circles will occur mostly after school hours. Contact hours will not occur on the weekend nor during the summer break. However, homework assignments, development of action research, teaching portfolios and written papers will require significant teacher commitment after hours. The whole program will have formative and summative assessments built into successful completion. Pending availability of school connectivity, the framework may integrate an online component, whereby

teachers also conduct assignments using Moodle, experiment with netbooks in classrooms and submit e-teacher portfolios.

Type of Activity	Length/Frequency	Hours	Details
Face-to-Face session (F2F)	12 sessions X 6 hrs/each	72	Scheduled between 8:00-2:00 thus avoiding the need to provide lunch
Learning Circles	12 LCs X 3 hrs/each	36	11:00-2:00 two weeks after the F2F, thus allowing practice of new concepts and reflection.
Assignments	12 sessions X 3 hrs/each	36	Each F2F session will end with an assignment that the teachers complete prior to the next F2F, resulting in practical exercises on the new concepts.
Action Research	5 months X 4 weeks X 3 hrs.	60	Action Research and portfolio will take an average of 3 hours a week over the life of the training (40 weeks)
Portfolios	10 months X 4 weeks X 1.5hr	60	
Experimentation	10 months X 4 hrs/month	40	The teachers are expected to put the training into practice once they are back in their classrooms. It is expected that they will experiment with new concepts and skills.
Papers	3 papers X 7 hours	21	The teachers are expected to choose three topics/issues and write papers regarding their experiences regarding these topics.
TOTAL		325	

Appendix A also includes a Unit Plan, illustrating what thematic areas will be covered when during Year One. The school-based component will have four sub-components, each of which will be facilitated by NIET trainers and supervisors from the Department of Supervision and Qualification and link directly back to UMass' Teacher Educator Enhancement Program. These include:

1. Learning Circles: Approximately 36 hours of learning circles, held approximately twice per month, 2.5 hours in length will be organized by discipline cluster. The aim of learning circles is for all teachers to have the opportunity to discuss the more formal classroom experience, share challenges, and reflect on their teaching practice.

2. Development of a teaching portfolio: Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching from a variety of sources and provide context for that evidence. The process of selecting and organizing material for a portfolio can help a teacher reflect on and improve their teaching. Teaching portfolios capture evidence of a teacher's entire teaching career and help them see teaching as an ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation, and growth. They also allow

teachers some latitude to shape their own professional development based upon their level of experience.

3. Action Research: The process of action research involves a cycle of planning, action and fact-finding about a particular problem or challenge pertaining to classroom instruction and can transform a teacher's practices and beliefs. Each teacher will be supported and facilitated in conducting at least one action research project. NIET and staff from the Department of Supervision and Qualification will be provided relevant training by UMass in how to effectively mentor an action research project. An action research project can be tailored to the individual aspirations of the in-service teacher, creating further flexibility within the professional diploma program.

4. Classroom observations: Observations will be conducted by different individuals, including the school principal, a supervisor, and/or a peer teacher. Teacher observations are not meant to be evaluative, although they may involve an unannounced visit. While a collective record of at least four observations will be necessary to earn the professional diploma, the broader goal is to provide ongoing coaching and mentoring in support of learner-centered instructional practices, as well as strengthen the principal's role as an instructional leader who reinforces a common vision toward improving teaching and learning. The Supervisory Diploma Program will contribute directly to this component of the in-service professional development.

Delivery of Teacher Professional Development

In order to train approximately 2,500 teachers in a one-year professional development program that must conclude by May 2016, it is imperative that the first cohort begin no later than early March 2013 in order to take advantage of the second semester scheduling of teachers. AMIDEAST envisions three cohorts of approximately 833 teachers representing all six disciplines.

Training delivery will be similar to the MSN approach. That is face-to-face instruction at regional training centers operated by NIET is anticipated to take place once a month, with learning circles taking place twice a month within schools. Portfolio assessment and action research will be ongoing throughout the year, as will classroom observations. NIET will need to coordinate a complicated training schedule that involves dozens of cohorts of teachers attending regional and school-based events unfolding every month in different locations. AMIDEAST will assist NIET in formulating this schedule and negotiating the logistics with the schools and districts in the months of October and November 2012.

Provision of In-Service Teacher Training

Based upon Minister Alami's decision to not engage directly with universities, NIET now has the responsibility of recruiting from a national pool of qualified teacher educators. This important policy decision will allow faculty performance to be closely monitored so that payment is tied to actual work performed. Systems of evaluation of teacher educators and teacher feedback can be borrowed from the MSN approach or created to ensure high quality trainings. AMIDEAST has proposed to support NIET in creating a Teacher Educator Certificate Program thereby ensuring

an important level quality and accountability involving all those responsible for teacher professional development. This flexible, decentralized approach would support the long-term national interest of focusing in-service professional development within NIET.

The cost savings associated this approach cannot be calculated until more information is known from the MoE. For example, if NIET really receives the 18 new staff requested of the Minister, this will greatly off-set how many consultants AMIDEAST needs to hire as teacher educators. AMIDEAST will submit a revised budget in November or December as part of a formal re-alignment of its grant with USAID.

The MoE has also asked that further savings identified in the LTD budget be applied toward transportation for teachers and any food requirements during the course of training. AMIDEAST estimates teacher, principal and supervisor transportation expenses to cost as much as \$200,000. The cost of food should be minimized with a carefully constructed schedule, however, these costs could still amount to tens of thousands dollars, even if we budgeted simply for snacks and tea and coffee for learning circles and face-to-face sessions.

Curriculum Development

AMIDEAST's approach to the development of curricula for the in-service modules is meant to be focused, comprehensive, and transportable between institutions and teacher educators and efficiently developed so that training may begin in March 2013. International best practices to curriculum design and instruction for 21st century skills will be integrated with and informed by the MoE's nationally approved core competencies and standards for teacher performance. However, these core competencies and select sub-competencies may be augmented in order to align the competencies with the pedagogical content knowledge and skills relevant to the four subject areas: Arabic, science, math and English..

LTD's approach to the development of the in-service modules is distinctive because it will adopt the "backward design" approach to planning curriculum, instruction and assessment based on McTighe and Wiggins' *Understanding by Design* (UbD) model of learner-centered, standards-based curriculum design for 21st century skills. This approach is internationally recognized and has been under taken in a Palestinian context. AMIDEAST's Director of Teacher Education has used UbD in his coordination of a World Bank Quality Improvement Grant with Palestine Technical University in Khadoury. The approach shifts the focus from covering curriculum to a process of understanding and creating curricula through questioning. Moreover, the composition of the curriculum teams will bring together experts in the key domains of content knowledge and theory, pedagogical practice, training expertise, and curriculum design. AMIDEAST proposes each of the four subject-specific teams will be composed of the following five to six members:

- Subject area experts (2 university professors)
- Training coordinator (senior NIET staff member)
- Subject area practitioners (2 NIET staff members with experience as school teachers)

New training content will be developed through LTD and draw upon several resources. The independently evaluated and well-received curriculum used in MSN for math, science and English teachers is highly relevant. These modules, which were developed, piloted and validated by internal and external research, will be upgraded for grades 5-10 by Palestinian subject-area specialists and local and international curriculum designers hired by LTD. Furthermore, eight of the sixteen modules are multidisciplinary and can be integrated into other subjects. The central themes include:

- Student-centered learning
- Strategies for promoting critical thinking
- Assessment theory and techniques
- Curriculum analysis as it applies to the classroom environment
- Information technology in the classroom
- Materials design, focusing on low-cost alternatives

The recruitment of Curriculum Committee members will be lead by AMIDEAST with agreement and support from NIET staff. AMIDEAST will solicit known local experts, as well as advertise locally. Teams will be fully formed and begin working after a group orientation regarding the UbD approach and shared templates in order to ensure each finished module has important consistencies in terms of goals, objectives and approach. This initial process is ongoing from September and will involve all of the Curriculum Committees and will initially include an agreement on how the seven core competencies and sub-competencies are modified and added to and incorporated into the curriculum. Each team member will be contracted individually, although those that are MoE employees will be remunerated through other means, such as being provided computer hardware.

AMIDEAST expects the Curriculum Committees to be identified and start work by the end of September and produce a 12 unit curriculum covering the entire Professional Diploma in Education by the end of December. Each committee will be asked to develop specific subject area content that addresses teachers teaching in grades 5-7 and 8-10. In this regard, a small amount of the content will be specialized by grade range in order to account for the significant variation in the Palestinian curriculum between a 5th grader and 10th grader. The next step will involve sharing the curricula with all teacher educators and begin the process of explaining and demonstrating how it should be delivered. AMIDEAST learned through MSN that this process of sharing and gathering input from the teacher educators as a group can greatly enhance the quality and richness of delivery. As a result, the role of UMass, described above, in monitoring how the curriculum is delivered is very important.

Teacher Performance Assessment Framework

UMass will be responsible for contributing to the emerging Teacher Performance Assessment Framework that is currently being developed through various existing initiatives, such as the MoE Teacher Education Strategy; the World Bank-funded TEIP (the development of the RTTI); the efforts in CDTP to create a teacher career development strategy with associated guidelines, performance indicators, rubrics, and policies. UMass will contribute in two ways: (1) developing

a framework that incorporates the above elements; and (2) drafting a Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit (FALT) that will focus on continuous improvement of the teaching profession.

The MoE is committed to moving away from developing policies and tools in a project-driven manner. To this end, the framework for teacher performance assessment will not be yet another stand-alone effort. The framework will be used to make recommendations to align standards and components in a clear system that focuses on teachers in grades 5-10, and building on work for grades 1-4. The framework will be a work-in-progress that can be modified and adjusted over time.

Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit (FALT)

Existing assessments of teacher performance are primarily summative and directly linked with formal career transition points and advancement. UMass will augment these efforts by providing teachers, supervisors, teacher educators, and MoE officials with formative assessment tools that emphasize assessment for learning as an essential element of professional development. These tools are consistent with the principles of learning for improvement outlined earlier in terms of Action Research and Portfolio Assessment.

The toolkit will build on the work being done by ABU (the World Bank’s consulting team supporting the TEIP) to extend the Readiness To Teach Index (RTTI) for pre-service teachers, and potentially include a number of tools, such as a performance-based Teacher Learning Index (TLI, across the teaching career); classroom observation protocols (again, building on what has been done); portfolio assessment protocols; and formative assessments that align teacher formative assessment, principal instructional leadership, and supervision for improvement. As other formative assessments are developed, in conjunction with Palestinian teacher educators, these too will be folded into the FALT. These formative assessments will be developed within existing standards and competencies and will prepare teachers for various summative assessments. Thus, the formative and summative assessment systems will ultimately work synergistically. The FALT will also be integrated, where appropriate, into the Teacher Educator Enhancement Program (TEEP).

The centerpiece of the FALT framework is the Classroom-data Observation Guide (COG). The COG is a formative, diagnostic guide that facilitates collecting observational data in classrooms. These data reflect what the observer *sees* the teacher and students *do* – the focus is on describing *actions*. Thus, the guide is not a checklist but a semi-structured form with attachments (see bullet points below) including lists of possible expected actions (verbs). These actions reflect real classroom practice and will be generated from existing expert knowledge in alignment with the Palestinian standards and core competencies and with input from the teacher educators at our Learning Circle workshops (currently planned for November and March).

The COG provides descriptive data that can be used for reflective inquiry and that can inform the subsequent planning and delivery of professional development.

The COG includes four “pieces”

- Descriptive observation form (as described above)

- Reflective inquiry analysis form (a template to guide reflection and inquiry about specific practices and their outcomes; used by the teacher in tandem with a principal, master teacher, or other professional engaged in supporting improved teacher performance)
- User's guide (to help teachers, supervisors, principals and others make the effective use of the COG)
- Multi-dimensional cross-walk linking observed activity with competencies and sub-competencies (this cross-walk identifies how various stakeholders – i.e. teachers, principals, first teachers, expert teachers, supervisors – can use the data to formatively assess classroom teaching)

A draft COG is expected to be ready for the Learning Circle workshops planned for November 2012 and March 2013. Beginning with this initial draft, the COG will be developed in collaboration with experienced teacher educators during the workshops. UMass will work closely with MoE as the COG is developed, ensuring their support and investment. In addition to sharing the initial draft of the COG with the MoE, we anticipate that NIET staff will be participating in the Learning Circles workshops and so will have a direct role in developing, testing, and refining the COG.

During Year One, draft tools will be developed with an emphasis on the TLI, portfolio assessments, and classroom observation protocols. Making early progress on the TLI is important as this index will unify the larger toolkit and build upon other components, such as the RTTI and the competencies. Portfolio and classroom observation assessments will be developed in conjunction with the TEEP activities, as these tools will be used for the enhancement of teacher educators and for their work with in-service teachers. Therefore, the draft Framework for Teacher Performance Assessment will be submitted for review and critical feedback in mid-November 2012. After revisions the final Framework will be submitted and followed by draft FALTs submitted for review and critical feedback by the end of December 2012. These too will be revised and start to be utilized in March 2013.

Professional Networking

A strength of the MSN approach was the development of a community of practice among teachers and principals in the school improvement network. Professional networking also created opportunities for principals and teachers to understand the key interrelationship between school leadership and classroom instruction. Consequently, AMIDEAST will provide a structure of professional networking opportunities in order to inculcate a culture of support, innovation and inter-connectedness among all program beneficiaries. This will be accomplished in several ways.

AMIDEAST will work through the District Leadership Teams and organize a national conference on teacher development. The goal of this first conference, tentatively scheduled for March, will be three-fold: 1) to introduce the various goals and components of the LTD Program to representatives of each group of stakeholders and illustrate how they link together; 2) build interest and a sense of mission toward teacher development and launch a national conversation about important issues in teacher development; and, 3) raise awareness and start to develop real understanding and appreciation for their collective contribution within LTD. Invitees may

include all of the MoE staff at the central and district level that will have a role in LTD, a representative sample of teachers chosen from the first cohort for professional development, all teacher educators and relevant NIET and DSQ staff, and all principals and supervisors also chosen for the first cohort of training within the Leadership Diploma Program and Supervision Diploma Program. AMIDEAST will need to coordinate closely with the MoE on the organization of this event and tentatively suggests a July date (just before Ramadan but after the close of the school year and administration of the tawjihhi). This timing has the advantage of keeping key stakeholders engaged through a major LTD event during the summer months when most other activities will cease. AMIDEAST envisions inviting up to 600 people altogether and hosting the conference over two days at a major hotel in Ramallah. If July is not an appropriate date, then an alternative date could be late September, at the start of the new school year.

Professional networking will be supported in many other routine ways. The District Leadership Teams and School Improvement Teams are meant to generate communication and shared mutual objectives toward improved leadership. Similarly the professional networking that takes place among the cohorts of principals and supervisors earning the Leadership and Supervisor Diplomas are meant to build understanding and respect through shared experiences. The multiple cohorts of faculty and NIET staff participating in the Teacher Educator Enhancement Program will also acquire a shared understanding through learning and participation. Perhaps the strongest and most significant professional networking will occur among teachers participating in a comprehensive series of training events, reflected in face-to-face training and learning circles, portfolio development and action research, all of which will build a collective experience. Classroom observations of teachers conducted by principals, supervisors and peers will be one element that brings all three of these constituents together for a shared purpose.

Virtual networking will provide yet another dimension. The MSN Program used Moodle as the platform for its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and all of the architecture as well as the server are at the disposal for LTD. Moodle is an open source software system that works through the interface of an Internet browser. Moodle provides a collection of tools that can be used for assessment, communication, uploading of content, collaborative work or reflection opportunities. In short, the VLE can fulfill several roles related to professional networking and general administration of LTD. During the first national conference AMIDEAST and NIET will host a specific session on how the existing VLE may be used to support an intra-network of communication, repository of relevant documents, reports and streamline monitoring and evaluation. Taken together, use of the VLE may be able to address both the aims of professional networking and administrative management.

Gaza Programming

LTD's focus in Gaza seeks to enhance pre-service teacher education programs through three types of interventions: 1) faculty professional development and research for the advancement of excellence in scholarship and improved teaching linked to pre-service education programs; 2) improved practicum learning among students in undergraduate pre-service teacher education; and, 3) local student scholarships for undergraduate students involved in pre-service education programs.

These efforts are informed by discussions with administrators and faculty of Al Azhar University and the University of Palestine, the results of which underscore four guiding principles for LTD's funding and technical assistance. First, the strategic plan of any faculty of education in Gaza must locate the cognitive, emotional, social, and practical real-world needs of the Gaza's school children in its vision and mission statement. Second, Action Research - in the context of faculty professional development - is a modality of lifelong learning that fosters critical self-reflection, creativity, and innovation. Third, building capacity for collaboration both within and across universities and other stakeholders creates communities of practice. Fourth, focusing on assets and strengths rather than weaknesses and deficits cultivates critical reflection, collaborative inquiry, and meaningful capacity building.

Therefore, the agenda for Gaza seeks to engage two partner institutions of higher education so that LTD serves as a catalyst for improving practices and processes of pre-service teacher education, as well as enhancing a broader policy framework for Faculties of Education in Gaza. In this context, AMIDEAST intends to embark upon a series of activities to further these aims. The first intervention highlighted below uniquely bridges the school-to-university divide, as well as the challenge of merging theory and practice in pre-service education.

Capacity Building for MSN Schools in Pre-Service Education

AMIDEAST will offer the opportunity for MSN's private schools in Gaza to become model hosts for pre-service practicum students studying at University of Palestine. This initiative will build on the previous two-year investment in these schools and links MSN's objectives with those under the Leadership and Teacher Development Program.

Visiting UMass faculty will introduce the Formative Assessment for Learning Toolkit (FALT) with teachers, principals and supervisors in approximately 8-10 MSN private schools. These educators will learn how best to support pre-service practicum students from the University of Palestine. The LTD Practicum Fellows will be placed in participating MSN schools for their three-year practicum experience. Furthermore, each fellow will be expected to maintain for each year an ongoing practicum portfolio to document and critically reflect on how their observations of classroom teaching and their own practice teaching informed their understanding of the application of education theory, concepts, and approaches to teaching and learning in the Gaza context. Therefore, the length of the scholarship support (described below) is meant to extend over the period when the students are also participating in their practicum. In this way, their commitment to and performance within the practicum is leveraged through the scholarship.

Introduction of the FALT to principals and teachers will begin in the winter of 2012, while MSN teachers will first start mentoring pre-service students in the end second semester of the 2012/2013 academic year and continue into the fall of the 2013/2014 academic year. AMIDEAST hopes as many as 30 experienced teachers will be recruited as pre-service practicum mentors and receive training in the spring of 2012 in their roles and responsibilities. They will each supervise 3-4 students at different intervals. For their effort, AMIDEAST will negotiate with each school for their normal teaching load to be reduced 25-30%. In effect, AMIDEAST will pay the private school for the cost of one full-time teacher for the second

semester. This will only cost approximately \$13,000 to cover the cost of 10 teachers in the second semester assuming ten schools participate. Follow-on costs in future years will also be very modest. The notion of having these schools as host institutions for the pre-service practicum is viewed as a form of capacity building for the schools themselves, therefore, worth the investment by AMIDEAST and USAID.

Faculty Development Interventions

Faculty development opportunities will be framed in the context of five types of activities that build on past initiatives within AMIDEAST's Palestinian Faculty Development Program and ongoing work of university faculty. Importantly, PFDP's engagement in this area over the last year has been minimal, and a pending extension of the program does not involve any activities in Gaza. In this way, LTD is able to address similar key themes regarding the importance of teaching and learning, but focus that discussion and related interventions on the role of higher education in pre-service teacher education. AMIDEAST will provide technical assistance through local consultants and on-the-ground staff, and periodic visits and expertise from the Director of Teacher Education, the Chief of Party and support from UMass faculty in order to implement the following interventions.

Defining University of Palestine's Strategic Mission

University of Palestine is a new private university founded in 2006 and the university's Faculty of Education was just established in 2011/2012. The university enrolled its first class of undergraduate education students last year. The university has 7 full-time education faculty members and the university is committed to maintaining a student-faculty ratio of 30:1. The Faculty of Education is also committed to introducing the 200 pre-service students enrolled to a comprehensive practicum experience starting in January 2013. This opens up the possibility of investing in a small group of faculty and students in order to raise the quality and institutional capacity of a fledgling university. AMIDEAST intends to develop University of Palestine's Faculty of Education. AMIDEAST, with support from UMass, will help senior faculty embark upon an internal, consultative process of producing a 5-10 year strategic plan consisting of a vision and mission statement that aligns with the university's mission, the MOE's national standards for schools and core competencies for teachers, and the needs of children in Gaza's elementary schools. This process will start in the winter of 2012 and may not finish until the spring of 2013.

Faculty Research Grants

AMIDEAST will support small grants for the University of Palestine and Al Azhar University faculty. Faculty will have the opportunity to conduct collaborative research on selected topics through individual Action Research or collaboratively through team-based research projects within or across universities. In either case, these research projects are expected to contribute toward building a body of locally produced case study literature focused on practical issues of curriculum, instruction and assessment in Gaza schools.

AMIDEAST will establish a grant solicitation and review process, borrowing resources and templates from its administration of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program. AMIDEAST will establish a peer review committee for identifying and selecting research grantees and supporting applicants through the refinement of their proposals. AMIDEAST staff will monitor the progress of the awards using a specific set of criteria. Grant awards may vary in value from \$2,000 to \$5,000 depending on the nature of the project and the number of people involved. Depending on overall funding, AMIDEAST anticipates awarding up to ten research grants with the first five awards being issued in Year One. Awards will not support international travel.

The award of a Faculty Grant or Graduate Research Fellowship will be preconditioned on the submission of a proposal that meets the criteria for design-based action research. Proposals submitted for purely academic or scholarly interests will not be accepted. Proposals will meet the following criteria: 1) the focus of research is Gaza-specific, 2) data collection includes fieldwork to collect data from students (e.g., pre-service students or from teachers and/or students in local schools), 3) the report ends with an Action Plan that can be incorporated into a pre-service course or, in the case of graduate students, implemented in local schools, and, 4) the final report is presented in appropriate public forum within or across Faculties of Education. In short, the above criteria provide a strong link between the grants and further supporting pre-service programs.

Education Conferences

AMIDEAST will also sponsor three major education conferences for the purposes of bringing various beneficiaries, stakeholders and researchers together to share and discuss pre-service education issues. Professional networking, as well as highlighting the challenges and bridges linking university and school education will also be valuable outcomes of these conferences. Each conference will also provide an opportunity for:

- University of Palestine pre-service practicum students and MSN teachers to discuss their experiences in a novel program
- Recipients of Faculty Grants and Graduate Research Fellowships in Education (GRFEs – see section below) to share their research
- Al Azhar University faculty to discuss the developments and achievement within the National Center for Teaching Excellence.

AMIDEAST envisions the first conference to occur in Year Two, perhaps in January of 2014.

Support for Pre-Service and Masters Education Students

AMIDEAST will provide two types of scholarships to Palestinian education students studying at Al Azhar University and University of Palestine. These local scholarships will also be supplemented with further research and grant opportunities described below.

University of Palestine

In consultation with senior staff at University of Palestine, AMIDEAST will offer an LTD Practicum Scholarship to 100 undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Education. The scholarships will cover five semesters (54 credit hours) of tuition support at a level of 75%. Therefore, students will still be required to pay 25% of the cost of their fees each semester. The total cost to USAID will be approximately \$144,000 and cover the period from January 2013 until their prospective graduation in May of 2015.

Al Azhar University

In consultation with Al Azhar University two cohorts of 170 masters of education students will be provided with full support during the second year of their degree program. The second year is devoted to thesis development and costs each student approximately 1,500JD. The 170 scholarships will cost approximately \$360,000. The rationale for the focus on these students is based on the fact that some will become future university faculty so USAID is indirectly investing in developing new faculty. Furthermore, by focusing on their second year there is a track record of who to support and their focus on thesis research offers the opportunity to target individuals with a particular focus on pre-service or in-service teacher development.

AMIDEAST also envisions supporting some of Al Azhar University students with additional funding in the form of a fellowship to support research and writing of their thesis. Approximately 50 Graduate Research Fellowships in Education (GRFE) will be funded during the life of the project. Eligibility for this supplemental funding will be based on merit, and it must coincide with their second-year thesis project and the nature of the research proposals should explore applied issues, such as curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational leadership in Gaza's schools.

AMIDEAST will design selection criteria for the research grants jointly with Faculty of Education staff at Al Azhar University. Grant proposals will be advertised and reviewed in the spring of 2013 so that successful applicants can embark upon their research at the start of academic year in September 2013. The value of the GRFEs will range up to \$2,000 each and AMIDEAST envisions awarding as many as 20 GRFEs in Year One. Each grant will come with an orientation process regarding procedures, reporting and expected outcomes. An overarching goal is to offer opportunities that helps develop graduate student skills in a critical process of inquiry that meets international standards for research and publication which they can then pass onto their students.

Graduate Research Fellowship will be preconditioned on the submission of a proposal that meets the criteria for design-based action research. Proposals will strictly meet the following conditions: 1) the focus of research is Gaza-specific, 2) data collection includes fieldwork to collect data from students (e.g., pre-service students or from teachers and/or students in local schools), 3) the report ends with an Action Plan that can be incorporated into a pre-service course or, in the case of graduate students, implemented in local schools, and, 4) the final report is presented in appropriate public forum within or across Faculties of Education.

Criteria for Scholarship Selection

At University of Palestine (UP), the group of 100 second year undergraduates will be selected from a pool of approximately 200 currently enrolled students. Therefore, the process of selection will be competitive and based initially upon their achievement results the previous year. In addition, the UP has a database of needy students that is verified through field visits and interviews with student families. The university will provide LTD with a verified list of students that meet the following criteria:

- Previous year's academic achievement was 75% or higher
- ID information required for USAID vetting
- Student financial need
- Students receiving scholarships must not be related to AMIDEAST or university staff
- Awardees must hold Palestinian ID. Holders of US passports or Green Cards are not eligible
- Students must have indicated their interest in financial assistance by completing the university application form
- Students must not already be receiving a scholarship from another agency

Retention of the scholarship will continue to be based on academic merit, with a particular focus on reporting from Head Teachers supervising their school-based pre-service practicum experience.

Al Azhar University scholarships will focus on 85 second year students from a pool of about 170 students. Otherwise, this level of support will cover about half of the graduate students for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. Al Azhar University has a database of needy students that is verified through field visits and interviews with student families. The university will provide LDT with a verified list of students that meet the same criteria above.

Process for Selection

- A. Students are identified through the university database of registered students and their GPA, and application for financial assistance
 - University submits list of students with a cover letter signed by the Registrar and President indicating that the students on the list meet the established criteria
 - The university submits supporting documents for each student and this includes: copy of student's ID, student number, course registration, and transcript.
- B. Student names are submitted for vetting but no interview is required.
- C. Vetting is conducted on UP students in the fall of 2012, whereas Al Azhar students are processed in the spring of 2013 for a scholarship the subsequent fall.
- D. A final pool of students from both scholarship programs who meet all of these criteria will be interviewed by a nominated committee in the fall of 2012 (for UP students) and the spring of 2013 (for Al Azhar graduate students).

Funding and Monitoring

Payments will be made directly to each university. Each university will invoice AMIDEAST Gaza with one general invoice where it will indicate the amount to be paid on behalf of each student. Each university will also issue two original copies of receipts: one for the student and the other for LTD financial records. The university will also produce an overall receipt of the total amount paid on behalf of all scholarship recipients by year.

Among the issues that arose from the discussion with the University of Palestine's senior administration were: 1) students dropping courses during the semester, 2) students receiving assistance from the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) or other sources. To avoid these issues or discrepancies, AMIDEAST suggests linking payments to the end of each semester. Both universities will provide LTD with a preliminary list of students and their expected tuition fees at the beginning of each semester. An updated version of this list will be sent to LTD staff in Gaza at the end of the same semester where it will indicate the actual fees for each student. This will ensure that amounts paid by the program will only go to courses a student passed successfully.

LTD staff will develop a database or spreadsheet to capture various information on scholarship/fellowship applicants and recipients. The database will allow staff to generate statistical reports, both formal and informal, for project reporting. Scholarship updates will be submitted to USAID in the LTD quarterly reports. The final evaluation will report how many students received financial assistance and how the university and the students have benefited from the program.

Administration and Management

Consistent with AMIDEAST's standard approach to field management, LTD will be managed locally. The LTD Chief of Party (COP), Dr. Chris Shinn, will have authority to direct and supervise all field-based program personnel. Dr. Shinn will be the program's direct contact with USAID. The Director of Capacity Building, Dr. Said Assaf will take the lead implementing the components pertaining to capacity building with the Ministry of Education. The Director of Teacher Education, Dr. Louis Cristillo will manage all activities pertaining to teacher education, including being the liaison with the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Ms. Rana Sager will serve as the Gaza Coordinator for LTD and will report directly to Dr. Shinn. However, Dr. Cristillo will also assume a detailed role in Gaza programming providing technical oversight, taking advantage of his willingness and ability to easily travel in and out of Gaza. In practice, many of the LTD program components overlap. Therefore, these senior staff--Dr. Shinn, Dr. Assaf, and Dr. Cristillo--will form the leadership team and most decisions on most program components will be made collectively. There is no deputy chief of party, although in the absence of the COP, Dr. Assaf will be Acting COP.

Dr. Shinn will have full signatory authority and will be held responsible for all management matters, as well as technical implementation. Dr. Shinn will report directly to AMIDEAST's Vice President for Programs, Ms. Leslie Nucho, who is based in Washington, DC. As an officer

of the organization, Ms. Nucho will ensure that the LTD team receives all required managerial, administrative and technical support.

An important number of other former MSN staff are already working on LTD. These include Mr. Mazen Mallah as the Compliance and Contracts Manager, and Ms. Sarah Capper as the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager. Also included are Ms. Naila Handosh, who is now working under Dr. Assaf as the Capacity Building Specialist, and Ms. Nariman Rajab who is the Teacher Education Specialist assisting Dr. Cristillo. Lastly, Mr. Khalil Bitar, also formerly with MSN, was hired as the Documentation and Reporting Officer and will work under the supervision of Ms. Capper.

LTD will be managed out of AMIDEAST's Ramallah office, formerly the MSN office. The Gaza activities will be managed out of what is currently AMIDEAST's MSN office, located in the main building where all other AMIDEAST services and programs for Gaza are managed. The transition from MSN and mobilization and start-up of LTD as described in the Mobilization Plan submitted to USAID in early April has unfolded as planned. Operationally, as LTD moves into Year One, AMIDEAST is fully prepared to implement all activities. A professional staff retreat is being planned for all staff in mid-November. The objective of this retreat will be to internally discuss this Work Plan and arrive at a better collective understanding of Year One objectives, deliverables and how best to achieve them vis-a-vis our MoE counterparts. In this regard, key MoE staff from relevant departments and USAID staff will also be invited to attend at least part of the retreat. Relationship building will be an important objective of the retreat.

Compliance and Budget

The complexity of LTD will require careful monitoring and advance planning of compliance and budget issues. AMIDEAST West Bank/Gaza and particularly the staff on LTD charged with addressing these issues in accordance with USAID's regulations, procedures and Mission Order 21 are experts with years of experience thinking through and managing such details. Nevertheless, AMIDEAST takes very seriously the need to avoid delays when planning and providing training to thousands of individuals and engaging in sub-contracts with many entities. For example, individual names of the teachers and principals selected for the first cohorts of training in March 2013 should be confirmed by early-October so that individual vetting can be submitted. AMIDEAST will depend on the district and school staff to collect all necessary vetting information.

Similarly, any consultant contracts that are negotiated will need all the corresponding back-up documentation associated with applicable clauses of Mission Order 21 well in advance of the provision of services. All sub-award reporting, VAT exclusions and contract compliance will require careful attention. AMIDEAST has well established systems for addressing these necessary USAID requirements and does not foresee any particular difficulties except for the challenge of planning sufficiently far in advance and track documentation very closely on what is by all accounts a very complicated program.

The original LTD budget was developed more than one year ago and revised slightly with the re-submission of the proposal in February 2012. Consequently, once the Year One Work Plan

is approved by USAID, a budget modification will be necessary given the significant programmatic changes that the MoE and USAID have requested. Significant costs have changed, including the addition of completely new program components and subtraction of others. AMIDEAST proposes that any budget realignment is completed by December 2012.

Transitioning from MSN to LTD

AMIDEAST has submitted a no cost extension for MSN activities to continue until April 2013 in Gaza only, while LTD activities in Gaza are expected to begin in September 2012. However, this will involve a low level of activity (described above) that focuses on the design and preparation phase of several components supporting pre-service teacher education with Al Azhar University and University of Palestine. Full implementation of LTD in Gaza will begin in January 2013. The level of effort required from Gaza staff between September and December for LTD will only involve partial time of the Program Manager and one coordinator. All five AMIDEAST Gaza staff will be needed to manage the fall start-up of MSN activities at least until routines and procedures are in place for the first semester.

The level of effort in the second semester for MSN will be much reduced once systems and contracts are in place. For example, it is envisioned oversight and management of the MSN components between January and April 2013 would involve less than 10% time of the Gaza Program Manager, and one third time of three other local staff. Their remaining time would be filled with responsibilities associated with implementing LTD. The COP and Compliance and Contracts Manager in the West Bank will be the only remaining staff in the West Bank spending any time on MSN Gaza activities. Their level of effort is budgeted at 5%. This reflects a realistic assessment of effort based upon familiarity with the expected programming in Gaza.

In sum, AMIDEAST is projecting a staggered approach, whereby LTD becomes fully operational in September 2012 in the West Bank, and Gaza becomes fully operational approximately four months later. This approach proportions resources effectively and allows the COP and other senior staff in the West Bank to focus on a strong start to activities for LTD in both regions. In the West Bank, the only remaining event for MSN is the final graduation ceremony for the first cohort of principals who completed the Leadership Diploma Program under MSN.

In Gaza, the LTD budget and program of activities were only ever imagined to be three years in length. This remains the case. Consequently, starting later in Gaza does not put pressure on the time frame for completion of activities. In effect, LTD in Gaza would start later and end earlier than West Bank activities which cover a four-year period. The close-out of MSN at the end of April 2013 in Gaza will be seamless because the office and all equipment and staff will simply transition to LTD.

Documentation and Communication

AMIDEAST now has a full-time Documentation and Reporting Officer, as well as a Communication Officer. The Documentation and Reporting Officer responsibilities will be closely supporting the monitoring and evaluation agenda, as well as the communications

strategy. For example, this person will assist with writing program reports in both English and Arabic for distribution the MoE and USAID, and the public; write quarterly reports summarizing activities for USAID; and cooperating with the Communications Officer in highlighting project successes. The Communications Officer will spearhead the overall strategy for internal and external outreach, and work in close cooperation with the MoE's district-based public relations staff. The Communications Officer may also coordinate use of the VLE for outreach and communications purposes.

As a first step, AMIDEAST will create a program image in order to brand the project according to USAID marking and branding guidelines. This image will be created in close cooperation with the MoE and is expected to be decided by November 2012. AMIDEAST will then create a set of permanent promotion materials using this image including marketing products, such as a pop-up, roll-ups, posters, folders and binders. All printed and on-line materials will utilize the image.

AMIDEAST does not anticipate a formal launch of the project until November 2012. The setting of this date is conditioned upon the approval by USAID of the selection of all schools. It is also preferred that all PR materials are ready so they may be used for the event.

Given the size and number of beneficiaries, a quarterly online newsletter will be produced. AMIDEAST anticipates the first online issue in December 2013, followed by editions in March and June in Year One. The newsletter will consist of a series of brief articles about recent LTD achievements, activities, and events. It will include interviews with program participants and stakeholders, as well as articles written by other MoE public relations officers. The newsletter will include information in both Arabic and English, although Arabic will be prioritized.

The AMIDEAST LTD website will be a venue for internal and external communication. It will provide information to visitors, partners, and participants about all aspects of the program. Content will include articles, pictures, activities, and notices of upcoming events. Whereas this website will be open to the public, information posted on the VLE will be for members and designated beneficiaries only and require access via administrator approval.

On a routine basis, the LTD Communications Officer will write press releases and news stories to be sent to local media outlets for publication. AMIDEAST will coordinate with the PR firm Al Nasher on any broader USAID public relations themes that they might want to advance. The Communications Officer will also use online social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter to post program-related content. The use of these on-line formats will be a means to reach all beneficiaries within the MoE, including participating schools and others involved or interested in the LTD program.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Accountability mechanisms will feature prominently in AMIDEAST's approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E). AMIDEAST has submitted a comprehensive Performance Management Plan to USAID. Review, re-drafting and changes are expected by the end of October 2012.

Appendix A: Unit Plan for Year One

Month	Thematic Areas and Topics	Methods of Performance Assessment		
		Type of Activity	Length/Frequency	Hours
March	1. National Standards for Teacher Performance: what teachers should know and be able to do. 2. Learning circles as communities of practice: Action research and portfolio assessment	Face-to-Face session	12 sessions X 6 hrs/each	72
April	3. Curriculum design and instruction for 21st century learning skills: <i>Understanding by Design</i> (UbD)	Learning Circles	12 LCs X 3 hrs/each	36
	4. Identifying and analyzing (content area) learning standards for enhanced curriculum and instruction	Assignments	12 sessions X 3 hrs/each	36
May	5. Theory and approaches to the integration of educational technology	Action Research	5 months X 4 weeks X 3 hrs.	60
June	6. Theory and methods of pedagogical content knowledge	Portfolios	10 months X 4 weeks X 1.5hr	60
September	7. Authentic assessment: theory, strategies, approaches	Experimentation	10 months X 4 hrs/month	40
October	8. Authentic assessment methods for (content area)			
November	9. Effective strategies for the integration of educational technology in (content area)	Papers	3 papers X 7 hours	21
December	10. Theories of learning and cognition and their application to classroom management and differentiated instruction			
January	11. Community-based education for authentic learning experiences			
February	12. Development of low cost instructional materials for and by students		TOTAL	325