

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	West Bank and Gaza
Program Title:	Higher Education and Training
Pillar:	Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade
Strategic Objective:	294-005
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$2,250,000 ESF
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$716,000 ESF
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$2,500,000 ESF
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 2000
Year of Final Obligation:	FY 2007

Summary: USAID's education program is working to increase higher education and training opportunities for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This initiative responds to the need for a cadre of professional managers and trained leaders to support the economic and political development of the future State of Palestine. Over 90% of the 51 scholars that have completed their Masters degree have honored their commitment to return. A second program, the Presidential Scholarship Program (PSP), will continue the effort. The U.S. and Palestinian University Linkage activity (UPLINK), and the independent Utah State-Arab American University in Jenin Linkage, assisted local higher education institutions in developing capacity through partnerships that were completed this year.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Higher Education Support Initiative (HESI) (\$1,500,000 ESF, \$226,000 Prior Year Unobligated). USAID has a contract with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to manage this multi-faceted activity from 2002 to 2005. The goal is to increase Palestinian access to higher education and training. HESI supports 89 Masters' degree candidates (70% male/ 30% female) studying in the U.S. The project funds in-depth reentry follow on, mentoring, and job placement support for scholars returning to the West Bank and Gaza. The HESI program provides local undergraduate scholarships to talented and needy students in fields that support economic, social and political demands on the developing state. Based on the strong demand for training in Information Technology (IT) and other sectors critical to the economic development of the WBG, HESI provides IT and training opportunities based on short term needs. This training takes place in the WBG and in third countries. HESI conducted an in depth needs assessment survey from January to August 2003 to assess long-term local higher education and training needs and help formulate planning for future training activities. This document is being used as a basis to develop a forward strategic plan for the mission's higher education activities and for distribution as a planning tool to Palestinian institutions, other donors, local NGOs and international organizations. The principal implementing partner is: AED.

Program Development and Support (PD&S) (\$750,000 ESF, \$490,000 ESF Prior Year Unobligated). The Program Support Office provides a variety of liaison services for USAID contractors and grantees, including travel permits, customs and visas, and support in immediate emergencies. Funds also cover the work of the public relations staff in the Mission, who provides a vital liaison between the mission and outside interested parties, and links to local and international media. USAID will also fund Program Office staff, other technical staff, evaluations, audits, and other studies and analyses.

FY 2005 Program:

Higher Education Support Initiative (\$731,000 ESF). USAID will provide funding to continue to maintain approximately 30 Masters degree candidates in 2004, who are currently in the U.S., through May 2005 and will select 50 additional candidates for studies beginning in 2005. All participants returning to the WBG during FY 2004 are provided re-entry assistance, mentoring, and job placement support. USAID will continue to strengthen local institutions of higher education by providing undergraduate and

community college tuition scholarships to talented and needy Palestinian students. USAID will also support approximately 150 local information technology (IT) and ten primarily local short-term training opportunities.

Program Development and Support (PD&S) (\$1,769,000 ESF). PD&S is used to fund the Program Support Office, which, given the extenuating circumstances of working in the West Bank and Gaza, provides a variety of liaison services to USAID contractors and grantees, including permits, customs and visas, as well as support in immediate emergencies. Funds also support the Mission's Public Relations Office, which provides a vital liaison between the Mission and outside interested parties, as well as links to local and international media. Funds also support program staff, project evaluations, and technical analyses. Salaries for the Project Support Unit and Public Outreach Office will be funded from PD&S funds. The principal implementing partners are TBD.

Performance and Results: Under the ongoing Master's scholarships program, USAID has provided scholarships to 89 Palestinians as of the end of 2003 for graduate scholars study in the U.S. in areas such as business administration, law, urban planning, information technology, public health, and water resources management. Thirty percent of these scholars were women. Most scholars have adapted well and excelled in their programs, maintaining high grades. Many have received honors, awards, participated in community outreach, internships, and are establishing professional linkages. A major challenge is that scholars returning to the West Bank and Gaza have experienced difficulties in securing employment due to the devastation of the Palestinian economy as a result of the Al Aqsa Intifada. Despite the setbacks, the vast majority (over 90%) honor their commitments to return and seek leadership roles in the development of an economically viable and democratic Palestinian State.

In September 2003, USAID awarded a new contract under the Presidential Scholarship Program to provide U.S.-based scholarships for Palestinian masters level graduate students. The selection of the first batch of scholars is proceeding and is expected to be evenly divided between male and female. Most students will be placed in programs of a one year duration, when possible, and in universities that have demonstrated the ability to insure timely completion and adequate preparation of participants. Those who succeed in receiving these awards demonstrate not only high academic credentials but exceptional leadership qualities.

The seven U.S.-Palestinian university partnership linkages completed their work, with some modifications in approaches and timelines to accommodate on-the-ground challenges including closures, curfews and the continued threat of violence. Nonetheless, despite modifications, few achieved their intended outcomes because of the threats on the ground and faculty unwillingness to travel to West Bank and Gaza. Positive results were achieved in some instances such as the provision of training to key employees of Al Quds School of Public Health, preliminary runs of a hydrological modeling software program at Bethlehem University, and changes to the curriculum at Al Najah University of its Masters Program in Economic Policy Management.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

West Bank and Gaza

294-005 Higher Education and Training	ESF
Through September 30, 2002	
Obligations	117,637
Expenditures	103,348
Unliquidated	14,289
Fiscal Year 2003	
Obligations	12,032
Expenditures	0
Through September 30, 2003	
Obligations	129,669
Expenditures	103,348
Unliquidated	26,321
Prior Year Unobligated Funds	
Obligations	716
Planned Fiscal Year 2004 NOA	
Obligations	2,250
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2004	
Obligations	2,966
Proposed Fiscal Year 2005 NOA	
Obligations	2,500
Future Obligations	2,500
Est. Total Cost	137,635