



Centre for Development Studies

Improving the Flow of Information between Universities, Youth, and the Labor Market to Enhance Learning and Development of the Workforce

2010



This report constitutes part of a wider research project, YouthFutures, which was conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and with support from the World Bank and European Commission.



Tertiary Education Project

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Improving the flow of information between Universities, Youth and Labor Market to Enhance Learning and Development of the Workforce

The present study is a multi-organizational project coordinated between the Center for Development Studies at Birzeit University, Harvard University Research Fellows and Souktel Inc., a project that uses the SMS function of mobile phones to support youth in finding work. The QIF Youth Futures project of the World Bank serves to examine the school to work transition through the use of ICT, including internet and mobile technology, and a series of pertinent interviews and focus groups in order to understand employability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), and the synergy that this has with the education system, both structurally and qualitatively.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Durkheim (1956) believed that the education system has two key roles: the socialization of the young into society, including preparation for their future adult roles, and selection into the occupational structure based on individual achievement.¹ This project addresses the dichotomy of these educational purposes and proposes how best to integrate young people into decent work.²

The parameters of this project are primarily concerned with the latter function of education, specifically examining the school to work transition of those persons at the tertiary level, i.e., university graduates. If we subscribe to Richard Dole's notion that 'education is learning to do a job, qualification is a matter of learning in order to get a job,'³ then we can posit the assumption that persons attending tertiary education are doing it as a means to obtain post-tertiary employment, as it is considered that the relative skills acquired by an individual affect their relative employment prospects, and also have a determining influence on wage levels.

The transition from education into work represents a seminal moment in young adulthood which may include other firsts such as departure from the institutions of education and possibly the family home, as well as receipt of a wage. The International Labor Organization (ILO) Director General notes the importance of considering these key stages in life as it is at these periods that people are vulnerable to falling into poverty; indeed, they are the starting point for understanding the dynamics of life and work of poor communities.⁴ The ILO considers transition not solely to be the move from education into *any* form of employment, but that this work has to be 'decent' in the sense that it provides security and/or the employee is satisfied with the nature of the work, introducing a new quality element to the standard definition of school-to-work transition.

Dangers of low graduate absorption into the labor market

The concern in the oPt is that ever-rising joblessness among youth is leading to the disenfranchisement of young people from their socio-economic rights, potentially resulting in a range of consequences including an upturn in social unrest, out-migration and conflict. As the UN Office for West Africa states, "joblessness among youth in traditional conflict zones poses a considerable medium-term destabilizing effect."⁵

The threat that a mismatch between graduate skills and labor market opportunities pose for an already drastically hampered economic situation are enormous, with the individual prospects for graduates resulting in other detrimental phenomena, for both the state and the individual. These include discouraged workers, long term unemployment and the potential for brain drain.

- 1 Brown, Phillip, 'The Opportunity Trap: Education and Employment in a Global Economy,' European Educational Research Journal, Volume 2, Number 2, 2003, p. 143.
- 2 O'Higgins, Niall, 'Trends in the Youth Labor Market in Developing and Transition Countries,' Social Protection Unit, Human Development Network, The World Bank, October 2003, p. 1.
- 3 Dore, Ronald, *The Diploma Dilemma*; London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976, p. 8
- 4 Report of the Director General, 'Working out of Poverty', International Labor Conference, 91st Session, 2003. See at: <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/kd00116.pdf>.
- 5 UN Office for West Africa, 'Youth unemployment and regional insecurity in West Africa,' UNOWA Issues Papers, Dakar, Senegal, August 2006, Second Edition, p. ix.

Discouraged workers

A discouraged worker is a person who is without work and available for work but who is not looking for work (and therefore could not be classified as “unemployed”) because s/he felt that no work would be available to her/him.⁶ Discouragement is most apparent in post qualification attempts, or lack of attempts, to find work as they believe they do not have the skills to obtain decent work, the opportunity to find decent work or they do not know how/where to find decent work. This can result in lack of attempts to find employment that corresponds with their skills. What is less measurable is the extent to which this affects education pathways. If students are dissuaded or dejected in terms of the actual consequences of their education itself and the impact that this will have on them gaining decent work, it may result in disengagement with education, seeing no value in pursuing further qualifications or even high grades or in evaluating the impact of educational choices on their career prospects. Discouragement can pervade the entire education system, having an alarming impact on policy planning which attempts to regenerate economic capacity through educational reform.

Long term unemployment

Niall O’Higgins considers that high levels of post-secondary unemployment will discourage workers from directly entering the labor market. This makes tertiary education an attractive filler pursuit. O’Higgins notes the increasing participation of European teenagers in tertiary education to be indicative of the poor labor market prospects of young people in those countries.⁷ If the lack of employment opportunities at the post-secondary level is reflective of the entire employment spectrum, then this approach will lead to a large volume of medium to high level unemployed or result in the over-qualification of the employed, as those with low level skills are squeezed out of the employment sector.

There is significant concern regarding the long term unemployment of individuals who fail to achieve graduate employment. Although a graduate may be fairly likely to experience unemployment post graduation, which may actually be a part of the ‘shopping around’ process for a career path, the consequences of protracted and/or repeated periods of unemployment can have damaging long term effects. O’Higgins argues that early unemployment may permanently impair an individual’s productive potential, income prospects and therefore long term employment opportunities, as people are considered more flexible and therefore trainable early in their working life. This invariably has an impact on their stock of human capital and consequently large scale unemployment of young people can impact upon state capabilities.⁸

The dilemma is that Palestine cannot devalue education or begin to work on contingency planning. This is particularly significant in the Gaza Strip, given that education is almost a zero-sum game in terms of employment prospects. Several commentators, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have noted that they have had to adopt

6 International Labor Organization, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*: Geneva, 2006, p. 49.

7 O’Higgins, Niall, ‘The Challenge of Youth Unemployment,’ *Action Programme on Youth Unemployment, Employment and Training Department, International Labor Office (Geneva)*, 1997, p. 17.

8 O’Higgins, Niall, ‘The Challenge of Youth Unemployment,’ *Action Programme on Youth Unemployment, Employment and Training Department, International Labor Office (Geneva)*, 1997, p. 53-54.

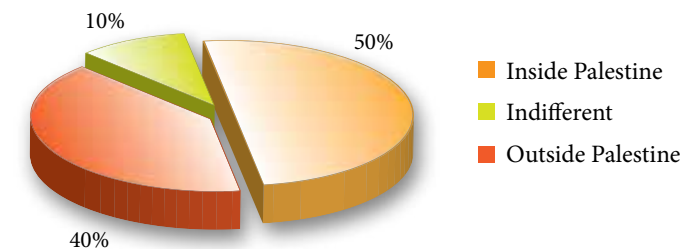
a ‘business as usual’ model towards education provision and work on the premise that they are providing students with optimal opportunity to gain employment. They cannot commit to the idea of a reduction in skills levels or educational opportunity.

Although ‘The Youth Talk,’ a publication by Sharek Youth Forum,⁹ signals that only 3% of those surveyed stated that they were attending college because ‘there is no other choice,’¹⁰ reinforcing the idea that pursuit of education in Palestinian society is more dynamic than operating as a filler activity, the latter issue of long-term unemployment is a significant concern. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) identified that the average number of months unemployed of those with associate diploma degrees was 24, and 20.4 months for those with bachelor degrees.¹¹ This inability to enter directly into the labor market is a potential trigger for the second associated phenomena of the labor market, the brain drain of graduates.

Brain Drain

In 2006 the Development Studies Program found that sharp rises in unemployment and the impasse in the political situation is becoming an ever greater migration push for young Palestinians.¹² This is undoubtedly a rational decision for young students who do not know (a.) what the political landscape will be over the upcoming years (and the impact that the occupation will have on their attempt to study, including university closures, student arrests etc.) and (b.) employment possibilities upon the completion of a tertiary level course. This is leading to the brain drain of graduates but also pre-tertiary level students, as Jamil Hillal’s 2008 study suggests that 53% of all Palestinian migration into Europe was for university study.¹³

Figure 1: Where will you seek employment?



9 Sharek Youth Forum, ‘The Youth Talk. Perception Youth on their Living Conditions,’ May 2008.

10 Sharek Youth Forum, ‘The Youth Talk. Perception Youth on their Living Conditions,’ May 2008, p. 52.

11 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Conditions of Graduates from Higher Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 1005- January 2006)*. Main Findings: Ramallah, May 2006, p. 46.

12 Development Studies Program, *Palestine- Human Development Report 2004*; United Nations Development Program: Ramallah, 2005.

13 Hilal, Jamil, ‘Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,’ *CARIM RR- 2007/02*; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 8.

There are those that deviate from the consensus that the promotion of education is inevitably positive for societies. Some theorists posit the suggestion that rather than develop the human capital base, through developing and consolidating the quality of education, this process is facilitating and encouraging out-migration as skilled workers seek better job opportunities elsewhere. Some actually argue that in an environment of reduced employment prospects (including career, wage and working hours) through conflict people are actively pursuing skills to strengthen their migration prospects.¹⁴ This process of human capital depletion through out-migration is commonly referred to as 'brain drain.'

This term 'brain drain' is used to specifically describe the out-migration of those with technical and intellectual expertise. This 'drain' is from less economically developed countries to those more economically developed countries. The countries of in-migration are characterized by preferential professional and economic conditions MAS. In a survey conducted by MAS, The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute and based on available data, they found Palestine to be 'ranked third amongst all Middle East and North Africa countries in term of external migration rates.'¹⁵ In a survey of graduates, 82.2 % of those surveyed by MAS-Palestine held postgraduate degrees (MA or PhD), with 30.8% of the respondents declaring a desire to out-migrate. Of these 77.2% stated personal development to be a motivating factor for out-migration. The respondent case studies cited reasons for out-migration as being the inability to find suitable employment, low remuneration and the lack of job security. This also needs to be understood in the context of an occupation which is arguably worsening the economic situation for graduates, and the Palestinian economy as a whole.¹⁶

Hilal remarks that, '[t]he fact that the formal education system in the West Bank and Gaza remains geared to white collar employment is bound to channel graduates to out-migration, as the local market could not absorb so many applicants for white-collar jobs, and no attempts was made to institute technical education and training to widen the capacities of the Palestinian labor market.'¹⁷ Hilal therefore argues that a discussion on the appropriate education policy more geared to the needs of the local economy (with a limited productive capacity and small population) is necessary to ensure greater synergy between education and labor market.

The primary concern for education and economic planners is that this form of migration, i.e., high skilled workers, can have a negative impact on economic growth prospects, particularly for territories such as Palestine which are dependent upon the expansion of

14 Stark, Oled, Taylor, Edward J., Yitzhaki, Shlomo, 'Migration, Remittances and Inequality. A sensitivity analysis using the extended Gini Index; Journal of Development Economics, Issue 528: North Holland, 1988.

15 Mataria, Awad, Abu Hamtash, Ibrahim and Amer Wajeeh, The 'Brain Drain' of the Palestinian Society: with an Explanatory Study of the Health and Higher Education Sectors: Ramallah, MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2008.

16 International Labour Organization, The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories: Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference, 97th Session, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2008.

17 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza', CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 27-8.

a 'knowledge based economy' due to a lack of (including control of) natural resources. It has an impact not solely with respect to the immediate loss of skills but also spill-over implications in attempting to institutionalize a cross/trans-generational culture of education. Although given the importance of education in Palestinian society, the latter feature is unlikely to emerge, concerns for the implications for depletion of the human capital base are legitimate, particularly given the survey findings by MAS-Palestine.

The implications for economic planning are that the average education level of those left behind in the home country may be lower than otherwise should brain drain not be a factor. Secondly, those proponents of 'brain drain' theory argue that the reduction in skilled labor will have negative implications on internal investment, as investors in oPt to focus their financial resources on areas of human capital.

Despite these concerns, there are those who dispute that brain drain need be a negative factor. These 'revisionists' of the 'brain drain' argument consider that in fact the process can have positive feedback effects, transforming the system of 'brain drain' into one of 'brain gain.'¹⁸ Commonly, it is accepted that the country of origin may benefit through two processes, that of the sending of remittances and of investment.

Investment and Remittances

Investment and remittances are considered to be two key benefits of out-migration. Many migrants form a Diaspora, that is, a socio-political entity that maintains some degree of contact with both their homeland and their country of residence. It is noteworthy that Diasporas need not be born in the country they identify as being 'home' and with individual/groups within their country of residence whom they consider as having a similar background as themselves.¹⁹ These persons, in this case Palestinians, often make economic contributions to their home country in the form of investment and remittances.

The focus on the contribution of this Diaspora on the home country, in this case Palestine, is their economic contribution through remittances and investment. Remittances take the form of money sent back to a person's home country. These remittances can be substantial and significantly contribute to capital flow in the home country. Emigrant remittances back to their country of origin can be substantial contributors to the GNP of the home country, increasing liquidity. Docquier and Rapoport discuss two types of remittances, altruistic remittances and exchange remittances. The former are remittances directed towards one's family; the latter is given to be a signal of the migrant's potential return as they buy assets in their home country, such as property and livestock.²⁰

Tjai M. Nielsen and Liesl Riddle discuss the forms of investment that can be undertaken by the Diaspora community, where rather than through altruistic or exchange remittances, the individual may choose to remit their capital back in the form of business

18 Fiani, Riccardo, 'Is the Brain Drain an Unmitigated Blessing,' Discussion Paper No. 2003/64; World Institute for Development Economics Research, September 2003, p. 1.

19 Sheffer, Gabriel, Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 10.

20 Docquier, Frédéric and Rapoport, Hillel, 'Skilled Migration: the Perspective of Developing Countries,' World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 3372, 2004, p. 24-5.

investment. This can be in the form of purchasing equity in or loaning money directly to local businesses, or alternatively contributing to a venture capital or lending fund that invests money in firms within the country of origin.²¹

Ismail Lubbad indicates a modest flow of remittances into the oPt. 'A total of 15.5% of the households with emigrants abroad had a regular transfer of money from those emigrants. Only 8.5% of households with emigrants received regular financial support from their emigrants, while 6.5% with emigrants sent regular financial transfers to their emigrants abroad'... the latter is particularly true for persons who are studying abroad.²²

In addition (or as a substitute) migrants may accumulate savings and then return home, using the capital gained to promote investment projects through entrepreneurship, but also stimulate other businesses through the building of a home and the purchase of goods upon their return.²³

Frédéric Docquier and Hillel Rapoport discuss the other possible positive feedback effects that skilled migrants can have on their territory of origin, and cite one benefit as being the potential return migration after additional skills have been acquired abroad, often skills which would be difficult to acquire in the territory of origin. They also argue that migrants may have formulated and created networks which 'facilitate trade, capital flows and knowledge diffusion.'²⁴ Other possible benefits include technology transfer and charitable activities of the Diaspora community. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah warns against considering out-migration as being a purely negative feature, stating that, 'brain drain can only tell part of the story about migration's overall impact on an economy or society. When all the other impacts of migration... are taken into account, the net impact may actually be positive.'²⁵ As Sriskandarajah argues, out-migration is not directly equitable to 'brain drain' but can have positive effects. Such effects must be acknowledged and discussed but ultimately it is an effect of a larger economic conundrum rather than its cause, and that is the economic retardation of the country of origin.²⁴ One large obstacle for Palestine in retaining highly skilled migrants is its inability to generate large scale economic growth due to the degree of control Israel has over its economic system. Given the nature of the situation in Palestine, migration is a feature of Palestinian society. Emigration is most clearly in response to shocks within Palestine, showing peaks most recently during the first and second *Intifada*. Public opinion polls indicate that emigration is becoming a serious option to a worrying percentage of the young and educated. This has to be seen in the context of the sharp rise in rates of unemployment (including among university graduates) since 2001, and the impasse in the political negotiations. Although brain drain can have positive effects, like aid dependency, it is unpredictable

21 Nielsen, Tjai M., and Riddle, Liesl, 'Investing in Peace: The Motivational Dynamics of Diaspora Investment in Post Conflict Economies,' Center for International Business Education and Research at the George Washington University, School of Business, 2008, p. 3.

22 Lubbad, Ismail, 'Palestinian Migration Any Circularity? Demographic and Economic Perspectives,' CARIM AS 2008/36: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2008.

23 Docquier, Frédéric and Rapoport, Hillel, 'Skilled Migration: the Perspective of Developing Countries,' World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 3372, 2004, p. 26.

24 Sriskandarajah, Dhananjayan, 'Reassessing the Impacts of Brain Drain on Developing Countries,' Migration Information Source; Institute for Public Policy Research, August 2005.

and unreliable for long term policy planning initiatives. In order to address these threats, this project examines the interrelationship of education and employment, to improve the probability of graduates achieving decent work. The report initially examines the nature of the economy and its capacity to absorb graduates. Although this is a bleak picture of an economy characterized by the illegal Israeli occupation, the assumption must be that moves can be made within limited capacity to develop a system that can facilitate the movement of graduates into decent work.


Key Themes and Findings of the Report

Youth Futures examines the entire arc of school to work transitions, including how graduates make their education and career decisions and regarding how they enter (or attempt to enter) the labor market. The intention of such an examination is to highlight, where necessary, the potential mechanisms that make tertiary education more relevant to the labor market, allowing for greater coordination between education and economic planners in order to maximize the economic potential of the oPt and to find graduates better work, offsetting some of the potential risks identified above.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project is divided into two complimentary research streams. Stream A follows participant graduates in the Souktel project in their endeavor to achieve gainful employment. Souktel can be considered an innovative delivery system which uses technological progress, particularly mobile phone ownership, to match tertiary education graduates to available jobs. CDS will be able to utilize the Souktel service to monitor the processes and outcome of the job matching initiative in order to better understand how career choices are made by young people in the oPt.

Souktel is therefore not only a device that allows job search patterns to be explored, but also an operational part of the transition service industry in the oPt. This is one potential career service to be developed further to facilitate the movement of graduates from education into gainful employment.

In order to understand how graduates reach the point of attempting to gain employment, we are required to examine the interface between the education sector and economy and the extent to which the education and economic sectors coordinate in order to facilitate the absorption of graduates into decent work. For the flow of information to be improved, we must explore the pedagogy of the education system as well as the way in which it fosters careerism within students to promote the most appropriate skills match in the labor market. In doing this we should be able to better understand the (potential) function and nature of transition services in bridging the two sectors. Stream B will therefore compliment this need by exploring the core inter-variables of employability through the use of both literature review and pertinent interviews. It will begin by contextualizing the economic situation of the oPt and the impact this has on labor market opportunities for graduates. Secondly it shall explore the nature of the education system in the oPt and the synergy that this has with the labor market. Finally, the review will explore the mitigating and facilitating nature of career services in assisting the transition from education into the labor market. Additionally, CDS will gather information regarding the transition from education to employment through interviewing



pertinent stakeholders including educational practitioners, NGOs, employers and PNA Ministries. Finally CDS will compose policy recommendations on how best to integrate career services and employment pedagogy into the education system of the oPt.

This report identifies poor coordination between the economic and education sector, which has had a reverberating negative impact for those individuals transitioning between the two sectors. The lack of mediating career services, but more significantly the lack of a pedagogy infused with career education, has meant that in spite of the PNA's ambition to raise the education and vocational level in a standard way appropriate to labor market needs.

Although the single largest factor undermining the prospects of graduates in the oPt is the economic retardation caused by the Israeli policy of asymmetric containment, including the limitations placed on freedom of movement (an obstacle in itself to seeking employment, making job searches difficult and territorially limited) there are infrastructural factors within the control of the PNA that can be improved to strengthen the capacity of graduates to find meaningful employment.



Chapter Two

Economics and Employment in the oPt



An armed conflict between nations horrifies us. But the economic war is no better than an armed conflict. This is like a surgical operation. An economic war is prolonged torture. And its ravages are no less terrible than those depicted in the literature on war properly so called.

Mahatma K. Gandhi, 'Non-violence - The Greatest Force,' 1926

Nu'man Kanafani and David Cobhaim describe the economy of the oPt as, '*characterized by structural imbalances created by decades of occupation: the high dependence on external employment, low industrialization, dependence on a single partner for nearly all external trade, and poor human and physical infrastructure.*'²⁵ This is exacerbated by the fact that the PNA has a limited number of policy instruments available to control economic growth due to the Israeli policy of asymmetric economic containment and the continuing corrosive effect of the Occupation. These factors have been particularly malignant after the second *intifada*, with poverty rates on the increase from 23.6% in 1996 to 34.5% in 2007²⁶ and unemployment rates rising to 25.4%²⁷, two such indicators marking the rapid decline of the Palestinian economy. This has created a very hostile labor market for Palestine's young graduates, in terms of both career planning and labor market entry.

The Oslo Accords: A basis for hope?

The 1993 World Bank Study which examined the economic prospects for the oPt, in anticipation of the impending establishment of the PNA, is reflective of the optimism at the time for the transfer of sovereignty, all be it limited, from Israel to the PNA. The consequences for the economy were uncertain but approached with buoyancy. The PNA was to inherit the administration of the oPt (excluding East Jerusalem which was illegally annexed by the State of Israel in 1981), and with it, able to direct education and economic policy, amongst others, for the first time. The promise of a peace accord which would bring a mutually beneficial trade relationship between Israel and the oPt, as well as consolidate the strength of the Palestinian economy in tandem with the step towards full self-determination, failed to materialize, and rather the system continues to be marked by Israeli military and economic policies. Four key issues dominate the Palestinian economy; the Occupation, the system of closures and movement restrictions, an incapacity of the PNA to regulate its own economy and aid dependency.

The 1993 Oslo Accords, although never delivering the rapid and sustained economic growth anticipated, did mark the beginning of a period of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and what appeared to be the beginning of the so called 'peace dividend.' This proved to be short lived. In 2000, the outbreak of the second *intifada* and the strict closure regime instigated by Israel propelled the economy of the oPt into a downward spiral. The GDP of the oPt fell by over a quarter to an estimated \$3,540 million at the height the *intifada*.²⁸ During the period 2000-2004 alone unemployment soared from

25 Kanafani, Nu'man and Cobham, David, 'The Economic Record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the West Bank and Gaza: An Assessment, Palestinian Economy: Forty Years of Occupation...Forty Years of Arrested Development; 2007, p. 61-2.

26 See at: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/mdgs/7aa0b69a-341e-4c39-ba1c-325c15555acd.pdf.

27 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'On the Eve of International Population Day,' 7 November 2009.

28 World Bank, 'Interim Strategy for West Bank and Gaza for the Period FY08- FY10 and Request for the Replenishment of Funds for Gaza and West Bank,' Report No. 43065-GZ, 2008, p. 7. See at: <http://sitere-sources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/WBGStrategyFY08-FY10.pdf>.

under 12% in 1999 to almost 32% by April 2005.²⁹ Despite a brief period of growth between 2004-2005, Israeli policies, including the construction of the Wall dividing East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, the internal closure system, settlement growth and the devastating response to the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip (which has witnessed the Gaza Strip being placed under siege since November 2007) have crippled the Palestinian economy. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) refers to this Israeli policy as being one of 'asymmetrical containment',³⁰ i.e., Israel is using its position of economic supremacy and military control over the Occupied Territory to squeeze the Palestinian economy.

Asymmetric Containment

Asymmetric containment is the dominant feature of Israel's control, as the occupying power, over the oPt. Israeli practices, particularly those stemming from 'security measures' have resulted in extreme political and economic instability, as evident in macroeconomic indicators, most noticeably the 30% decrease in GDP between 1999 and 2006, and the doubling of unemployment over the same time period. Not only has this resulted in internal economic deterioration, but as MAS-Palestine argues, this has done little to attract the foreign investment promised in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords.³¹

The oPt, in whole or in part, has experienced three significant economic shocks, in addition to a multitude of mini shocks and attrition tactics, since the Oslo Accords. These demonstrate the phenomena of asymmetric containment; the ability of the State of Israel to harm the economic viability of the oPt is clear, particularly in light of the second *intifada*, the election of Hamas in the January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections and the siege of the Gaza Strip.

Second Intifada

The second *intifada* was to have extraordinary repercussions for the Palestinian economy. Although the gradual restriction on Palestinian entry into the Israeli labor markets was a feature of the Israel -Palestine inter-relationship since the beginning of the first Gulf War until the creation of the PNA; the second *intifada* proved to be the death of mass movement of labor from Palestine into the Israeli labor market. Until this point, Palestine had been a major exporter of day labor into Israel, with Israel attracting between a fifth and a quarter of the Palestinian labor force in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip until early 2000.³²

In a conflict where approximately 4,123 Palestinians (excluding Palestinian Israelis)³³ were

29 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 'The Palestinian War-torn economy: Aid, Development and State Formation,' 2006, p. 6.

30 United Nations Conference on Trade And Development, 'The Palestinian War-torn economy: Aid, Development and State Formation,' 2006, p. 1.

31 MAS-Palestine, 'Strengthening the Role of the Palestine Securities Exchange in Attracting Investment,' MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2008, p. 2-3.

32 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,' CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 1.

33 See at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3694350.stm (4123).

killed, the second *intifada* also had an enormous infrastructural toll on the economy of the oPt. The World Bank estimated in 2002 that the total physical damage between September 2000 and December 2001 was United States Dollars (US \$) 305 million, with US \$2.4 billion losses to the Gross National Income in the first 15 months of the second *intifada*.

The security matrix introduced by the Israeli's in response to what they referred to as PNA supported acts of terrorism was to introduce a closure system which dramatically hindered movement, and which has come to be symbolized by the construction of a 709 kilometer Wall between the oPt and Israel.³⁴ Although Jamil Hilal contends that this loss is mainly due to low and unskilled workers³⁵ the loss of the Israeli wages (which were considerably higher than their Palestinian equivalent) into the economy of the West Bank was an enormous capital loss to the PNA.

January 2006 elections and the international response

An already rapidly deteriorating economic situation has only worsened since the victory of Hamas in the January 2006 elections, winning 74 of 132 possible seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections. The Government of Israel responded to this outcome by refusing to pay the PNA the VAT duties and customs which it collects on its 'behalf' for all goods which are imported into/out of the oPt, as agreed in the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the PLO (1994). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights argued that by withholding USD \$60 million in VAT and customs duties, that the Government of Israel is making it impossible for the PNA to ensure that its elementary social and economic rights are respected.³⁶ Furthermore, the Israeli security position was adopted by the international donor community who also responded by withholding aid to the PNA.

Siege of the Gaza Strip

The siege of the Gaza Strip, which has entered its third year, has had a devastating impact on the economy, driving it to a grinding halt after a period whereby the regional economy of the Gaza Strip was already in decline. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that the loss to potential income to the Gaza Strip between 2000 and 2005 stands at US \$8.4 billion. The situation further disintegrated with Israeli 'disengagement' from the Gaza Strip in 2005, when it dismantled the illegal settlements from the territory and removed its permanent military presence because the loss of labor in the Israeli market removed a substantial source of income; for example, the Erez industrial zone in the Northern Gaza Strip employed approximately 4000 Palestinian workers.

In June 2007, in response to the Hamas take-over of the security apparatus in the Gaza Strip, Israel utilized its control over the entry and exit points between the Gaza Strip and

34 To date 58% of the Wall is complete. Once finished, the Wall will be twice the length of the Green Line and 85% will cut through the West Bank. See at: http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_wb_barrier_july_2009_excerpts_english.pdf

35 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,' CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 3.

36 Fédération Internationale des lings de droits de L'Homme, 'Failing the Palestinian State: The human rights impact of the economic strangulation of the occupied Palestinian territory,' Paris and Brussels, 6 July 2006.

Israel to squeeze the Gazan economy. Israel closed trade routes to regular trade, allowing only humanitarian goods into the Strip. As a result, 77% of all imports into the Gaza Strip consist of essential food.³⁷ Karni, the largest trade crossing operates at only 20% of the pre-blockade levels.

The Gaza Strip has been all but hermetically sealed from the outside world, with Israel using its control over the crossings to limit the flow of goods. John Ging, director of operations in Gaza for the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) has stated that the situation in the Gaza Strip is one where, "for everybody here, they have a daily crisis in their life to survive and that crisis is created by a policy to close the Gaza Strip off from the outside world."³⁸ By prohibiting the free passage of goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip, and allowing in only the bare minimum of humanitarian goods (which even excludes oil and gas for domestic consumption), the State of Israel has deliberately utilized a method of collective punishment. The impact of this economic suffocation is little short of grim, and has an inevitable repercussion for the labor sector. The economic sector, as with all other areas of life, is operating under sustained pressure.

The industrial sector in Gaza used to employ approximately 35,000 people in mid-June 2007 but by November of that same year fewer than 9% (3,000) persons were still employed.³⁹ 75% of all factories were closed by the turn of the year. Further restricting employment opportunities, Erez crossing into Israel has been closed for workers for more than 3 years (since 12 March 2006)⁴⁰ therefore the people of the Gaza Strip, unlike their counterparts in the West Bank, are not able to attempt to seek day labor in Israel. Between 9 June 2007 and April 2009 the Rafah crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt had been closed for the movement of people (other than in exceptional circumstances) for 647 working days.⁴¹

Since 'disengagement' the population of the Gaza Strip have had to endure Operation Summer Rains (June 2006), Operation Autumn Clouds (November 2006) and Operation Cast Lead (27 December 2008 - 18 January 2009). In addition to the enormous death toll exacted in these offences (and in the interim period), they also had devastating consequences for the essential infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, including the destruction and disruption of water services, the destruction of six electric transformers in 2006 (which along with fuel restrictions has limited the Gaza Power Plant to ¾ of its former capacity). All in all, with the accumulated death toll, infrastructure damage and restrictions on the free movement of goods and people, including students, OCHA estimates that 95% of all previously operating businesses are closed, resulting in the loss of 120,000 jobs.⁴²

37 OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor: June 2009. See at: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/79636D6503391C25852575F400695B31>.

38 Rory McCarthy, 'A Disaster for Everyone,' The Guardian, 12 May 2008. See at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/may/12/israelandthepalestinians.unitednations>.

39 OCHA, 'The closure of the Gaza Strip: The Economic and Humanitarian Consequences,' December 2007, p. 4.

40 OCHA, 'Implementation of the Movement and Access and Update on Gaza Crossings,' Report No. 87, March 2009.

41 OCHA, 'Implementation of the Movement and Access and Update on Gaza Crossings,' Report No. 87, March 2009.

42 OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor: June 2009. See at: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/79636D6503391C25852575F400695B31>

The economy has become dependent on a unique tunnel system between the south of the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Originally devised to smuggle arms, it has proved a source for essential materials prohibited by the State of Israel. 'It is very detrimental to the business environment, because it encourages the black market and even though it is a mixed blessing people become accustomed to an unnatural way of exchange'⁴³

If we contrast a few economic indicators identified from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) labor survey between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, we can fully appreciate the stark conditions facing those in the Gaza Strip.

	oPt	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Percentage of Labor Force Unemployed	19	26	46
Percentage of people under the poverty line	34.5	23.6	55.7
Private sector wage (Daily average, NIS)	76.1	82.9	50.7

As Gisha commented, 'This policy is destroying the business sector, creating a new welfare regime in Gaza, and turning growing numbers of Gaza residents into dependents on international welfare agencies and religious charities.' It is therefore self-evident that the internal economic prospects for recent graduates are minimal with the strip being all but hermetically sealed from economic participation. This grim outlook is further exacerbated when we consider the movement restrictions implemented by the State of Israel making it all but impossible to exit the Gaza Strip aside from exceptional circumstances.⁴⁴

Those interviewed regarding the economic situation in the Gaza Strip all expressed a feeling of despair. The Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA) states that there is very little investment in the Gaza Strip, despite the existence of PIPA there. Difficulties prevail in that the *de facto* government in the Gaza Strip and the PNA do not cooperate with each other, resulting in the increasing isolation of the Gaza Strip. One interviewee, when questioned about the business situation in the Gaza Strip replied:

Gaza? What can I say? Things are very difficult in Gaza. It is hard to know what to do with the siege, and there is very little help. We have business members in Gaza but their numbers are in constant decline.

Restrictions on movement and access

These punctual shocks on the structural and administrative system of the PNA have undermined their ability to regulate the economy in the West Bank, and all but obliterated the economy of the Gaza Strip. The World Bank Interim Strategy writes that "[t]he movement and access restrictions related to Israeli security concerns and settlement growth, and the resulting fragmentation of the oPt, is considered by the World Bank to be the defining feature of the economy of the oPt."⁴⁵ Given that inhibition on the move-

43 BBC, 'Gaza economy faces a tough struggle,' 9 Friday 2009. See at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7817308.stm>.

44 Gisha, 'Commercial Closure: Deleting Gaza's economy from the Map,' Gisha- Legal Center for the Freedom of Movement, July 2007.

45 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association, 'In-

ment of people and goods have been identified as significant detractors to the pursuit of employment and the realization of the economic potential of both the individual and the PNA, it is important to discuss these phenomena.

The closure system is categorized between:

1. Internal closures prohibiting movement within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and between the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
2. External closures between the oPt and Israel;
3. External closures of international crossings; therefore between the West Bank and Jordan and Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

Kanafani estimates that between 1993 and 1999, i.e., prior to the second *intifada* and the resulting security restrictions, the oPt was subject to 311.5 days of 'comprehensive closure' (i.e. both forms of external closure were operational).⁴⁶ This is in excess of 50 days per year. In addition to the closure system, the World Bank is critical of the crossing points established between the State of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip to allow for the transfer of commercial goods between either the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israel. The five crossing points between Israel and the West Bank and the three crossing points between the Gaza Strip and Israel use a back-to-back cargo transfer system. Even without the restrictions in place following the siege of the Gaza Strip, the system is ill-equipped to accommodate the heavy volume of traffic, with over 95% of Palestinian trade being with Israel.⁴⁷

Although cognizant of Israeli concerns for the security of its citizens, the World Bank Interim Strategy 2006 regards the restrictions on movement and access as the *main* challenge as these restrictions not only restrict the movement of peoples within the oPt and across the boundaries but they also limit access to essential natural resources and restrict the access of Palestinian goods within the domestic market and in attaining international markets.⁴⁸ In economic terms, the restrictions arising from closure not only increase transaction costs, but create such a high level of uncertainty and inefficiency that the normal conduct of business becomes exceedingly difficult and stymies the growth and investment which is necessary to fuel economic revival.⁴⁹

Of particular interest to the SoukTel project is the restricted movement of people, and the difficulties such restriction represents for people to obtain and maintain a job. All Palestinians are required to hold an ID card, divided into three classifications: East

terim Strategy for West Bank and Gaza for the Period FY08-FY10 and Request for the Replenishment of the Trust Fund for Gaza and the West Bank: World Bank, Middle East North Africa Region, 2008, p. 17.

46 Kanafani, Nu'rman, *The Economics of Palestine*: Routledge Press, 2004.

47 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association, 'Interim Strategy for West Bank and Gaza for the Period FY08-FY10 and Request for the Replenishment of the Trust Fund for Gaza and the West Bank: World Bank, Middle East North Africa Region, 2008, p.9.

48 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association, 'Interim Strategy for West Bank and Gaza for the Period FY08-FY10 and Request for the Replenishment of the Trust Fund for Gaza and the West Bank: World Bank, Middle East North Africa Region, 2008.

49 World Bank Technical Team, 'Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy; World Bank, 9 May, 2007, see at, p. 1.

Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and West Bank holders. Treated

as three distinct classifications, the movement restrictions for these three ID holders differ. Palestinians are often required to obtain permits to travel outside of the municipal areas of their ID address, and West Bank and Gaza ID holders require mandatory permits to enter East Jerusalem (given Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, it is treated by the Israeli authorities as constituting a part of Israel. All West Bank and Gaza Strip ID holders require permits to enter Israel. For those able to acquire permits for movement between municipal and territorial areas, these permits are only issued on a three-month basis and can be revoked at any time; permit requirements are rarely published and highly unpredictable.⁵⁰

The inability to move freely into and out of East Jerusalem is having a devastating consequence for businesses operating there. The Palestine Business Association (PBA) asserted that:

Business is declining because of closure and the denial of entry of people into Jerusalem. This is causing a critical problem for people of Jerusalem. Also big taxes are demanded from Jerusalemites [by the Israeli Jerusalem Municipal Authorities], so they suffer from low income and high taxes. More people come in to shop in Ramallah because it is cheaper.⁵¹

This is echoed by the Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights who state this situation has resulted in the paralysis of the East Jerusalem economy.⁵² High rents accompanied by high taxes have made it exceedingly difficult for businesses to afford to operate in East Jerusalem when combined with the enormous loss of revenue due to the inability of shoppers from the rest of the West Bank to enter East Jerusalem. For those that are able to work, the average per capita salary of those in the West Bank is NIS 1,151 a month, compared to NIS 3, 515 a month in West Jerusalem.⁵³

As discussed above, it has become prohibitively difficult for Gaza ID holders to leave the Gaza Strip, and for non-Gaza ID holders to enter the territory. For West Bank ID holders, despite commitments made during the Oslo Accords, and reiterated during the "Road Map to Peace," that normal economic and social life for Palestine and Palestinians would be unimpeded.

Compounding these permanent inter-territorial movement restrictions, persons residing or travelling within the West Bank are subject to additional movement restrictions. As one example, the Jordan Valley has been declared a closed military zone and comprises 28% of the West Bank. It is for the most part closed to Palestinians with the exception of residents who have to navigate the checkpoint system along the major access

50 OCHA, 'Increasing Need, Decreasing Access: Tightening Control on Economic Movement,' 29 January 2008.

51 Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.

52 Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights, 'Closures and Checkpoints,' 19 April 2009. See at: http://www.jcser.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=10.

53 Alternative Information Center, Israel-Palestine, 'The Economy of the Occupation 13-15: Report on the Education System in East Jerusalem,' 4 September 2007. See at: http://www.alternativenews.org/publications/econoccupation/985-the-economy-of-the-occupation-13-15-report-on-the-educational-system-in-east-jerusalem.html#Success_in_Matriculation_Exams.

points. Another example is the effective siege of Nablus, sealed with the exception of four checkpoints regulating entry and exit to the city.⁵⁴ Israeli policies have ensured that the 'freedom of movement and access for Palestinians within the West Bank is the exception rather than the norm.'⁵⁵

In addition to these administrative obstacles to the free movement of people in the West Bank are the physical impediments to travel. OCHA lists these as being checkpoints roadblocks, earth mounds, earth walls, road barriers, road gates and trenches. As of July 2009, there were 60 permanent checkpoints in the West Bank,⁵⁶ 23 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad hoc basis), 522 unstaffed obstacles (including 84 inside Israeli controlled areas of Hebron alone).⁵⁷

The Israeli movement restrictions, for goods and persons, have made the cost of trading exorbitant, and dependent upon an unfavorable trade relationship with the State of Israel. Goods must pass through internal closures around the West Bank and then through an additional trade crossing into Israel or Jordan. These trading obstacles exacerbates the loss of perishable goods and natural resources, particularly in the agricultural sector, as the unabated construction of the Wall and of illegal settlement expansion removes access to natural resources.

The resulting effect of such a restrictive regime is that, despite the initial economic optimism with which the PNA successfully negotiated duty free access to a number of countries including the United States, European Union, European Free Trade Association and Arab Free Trade Area, there are a limited number of instruments available to the PNA to manage its own economy, as noted by UNCTAD.⁵⁸ The Israeli movement and access policies have generated a system with exorbitant customs and transport costs and procedures, stifling external trade. The economy therefore is reliant upon capital inflows, predominantly consisting of international aid. The oPt currently has an annual deficit of US \$2,079 million import versus export of goods and services⁵⁹

The World Bank Technical Team comment on the economic, physical and administrative obstacles: *'[b]eyond the personal hardship, an economy cannot run effectively if there is significant uncertainty about the ability of workers to reach their jobs, of goods reaching their markets, and of entrepreneurs being present to manage their place of business.'*⁶⁰

54 Both examples can be found at: http://www.btselem.org/English/Freedom_of_Movement/Statistics.asp

55 World Bank Technical Team, 'Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy,' World Bank, 9 May, 2007, see at, p. 1

56 B'Tselem, 'Restrictions on Movement. Checkpoints, Physical Obstructions, and Forbidden Roads.' See at: http://www.btselem.org/english/Freedom_of_Movement/Checkpoints_and_Forbidden_Roads.asp.

57 OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor: June 2009. See at: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/79636D6503391C25852575F400695B31>.

58 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Palestinian War Torn Economy: Aid, Development and State Formation; Geneva 2006, p. 18.

59 World Bank, 'West Bank and Gaza at a glance,' September 2008. See at: http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/wbg_aag.pdf.

60 World Bank Technical Team, 'Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy,' World Bank, 9 May, 2007, p. 4.

The effects of the Occupation are consistently cited as the single largest inhibitor to economic growth in the oPt by those interviewed by CDS. One interviewee asserted:

*It is our belief that it all goes down to occupation. I believe if we got rid of it, we have no problems. In fact we would be very prosperous.*⁶¹

For businesses operating in the oPt, movement and access restrictions are overwhelmingly destructive. The Palestinian Businessman's Association (PBA; now known as the Palestinian Federation of Businesses) states:

The labor market is shrinking rapidly by years because of rigid closure and harsh procedures in the commercial sector and on citizens. Large cities like Jerusalem and Ramallah are dependent on villages and suburbs: when their linkages to suburbs are cut, so are their linkages to life.

Impact on employment and investment

It is unquestionably difficult for the economy to thrive under such conditions of suffocation and as PIPA notes, the latter has had a negative impact in attracting investment into the oPt:

*There are practical problems that we face with investors; political problems are our main problem. We face soldiers and they try and put difficulties in our way.*⁶²

These difficulties have made the oPt a hostile environment for investment, creating a vicious circle of deteriorating economic capabilities. MAS-Palestine identifies the problem of being able to attract investment as an impediment to economic expansion, and therefore limiting potential for the growth of employment. The Oslo Accords brought a burst of expatriate investment into the oPt, including a return of expatriates keen to start their own businesses and by the end of 1997, returning expatriates constituted no less than 10.5% of the population of the oPt, excluding East Jerusalem.⁶³ The Palestinian Development and Investment Company (PADICO)⁶⁴ and the Arab Palestinian Investment Company (APIC) were established by a number of wealthy Palestinians. This was proactively facilitated by positive initiatives ratified by the Palestinian Legislative Council, such as the *Law for the Encouragement of Investment* (2005). This policy was initially successful as subsidiaries such as PALTEL, PIIC, PEC and the Arab Islamic International Bank and the Arab Bank were created, generating employment opportunities.

The deterioration of the economic situation, as outlined above has served to dissuade expatriate investment and actually create capital flight from the oPt.⁶⁵ The World Bank Interim report also states that Palestinian firms have not adequately invested in order to secure or maintain international competitiveness due to the unpredictability and insecurity.

61 Interview, Palestinian Businessman, July 2009.

62 Interview, Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency, July 2009.

63 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,' CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 21.

64 <http://www.padico.com/>.

65 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,' CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 24.

ity of their access to both domestic and international markets.⁶⁶ This has resulted in the dominance of small business models, which do not have the capacity to generate employment opportunities. The World Bank's Palestinian Economic Prospects report states that over 95% of businesses have ten employees or less.⁶⁷

A World Bank study entitled 'West Bank and Gaza Investment Climate Assessment' contends that the investment climate in the oPt is actually favorable in terms of low levels of corruption, relatively efficient bureaucracy and developed financial markets but that the lack of freedom of movement and ever shrinking market access are operating as the constraints to the growth of Palestinian enterprise initiatives.⁶⁸

The Palestinian Economic Prospects report states that *'[b]eyond the physical impediments affecting access to inputs, supply chains, and markets, investors in a Palestinian economy face an unclear horizon with which to measure and mitigate their risks. This is linked, first and foremost, to the uncertain political horizon, and the resulting unpredictability in the investment horizon. In addition, the system of permits and visas make it difficult for foreign investors and create uncertainty for local investors.'*⁶⁹

In spite of favorable legislation, a relative lack of corruption, and relative efficiency of bureaucracy, the constraints placed on the Palestinian economy have the oPt ranking in a low position regarding the World Bank's business indicators:⁷⁰

Ease of Doing Business	131/181
Ease of Starting a Business	166/181
Getting Credit	163/181

Paltrade states that although trade exhibitions held in Palestine do receive a lot of interest, there are considerable concerns regarding the cost of conducting trade in/with the oPt. The main obstacles to trade are the checkpoints and the back-to-back cargo system and, as a result:

*More businesses are closing rather than opening.*⁷¹

PIPA shares this opinion, noting that despite the good coordination that they have with the Ministries of Labor and Planning to encourage investment:

... due to the famous problems that we have, investors have a bad view of investment in Palestine.

66 World Bank, 'Interim Strategy for West Bank and Gaza for the Period FY08- FY10 and Request for the Replenishment of Funds for Gaza and West Bank,' Report No. 43065-GZ, 2008, p. 29.

67 World Bank, 'Palestinian Economic Prospects. Aid, Access and Reform. Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,' 22 September 2008, p. 1.

68 Finance and Private Sector Development Group, 'World Bank and Gaza Investment and Climate Assessment: Unlocking the potential of the private sector,' World Bank, 20 March 2007.

69 World Bank, 'Palestinian Economic Prospects. Aid, Access and Reform. Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,' 22 September 2008, p. 1-2.

70 World Bank, 'Doing Business 2009: Country Profile for West Bank and Gaza,' Washington, 2009. See at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&menuPK=64187510&searchMenuPK=64187511&cid=3001&entityID=000333037_20081013001331.

71 Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.

These factors act as deterrence to investing in the oPt and, when combined with the import dependency resulting from the physical and administrative restrictions, have had a devastating impact on employment rates, prospects for young graduates and employment in general. To compensate in part, international aid has been used to absorb a considerable percentage of the Palestinian working age population into the public sector, generating an enormous degree of aid dependence. More troubling than the negative growth is that the GDP is being increasingly driven by consumption financed by remittances and donor aid while investment has fallen to exceedingly low levels leaving little productive base for a self-sustaining economy.⁷²

Aid Dependence

Foreign assistance has assumed a dominant role in the context of what Nu'man Kanafani and David Cobham describe as being 'the extraordinary crisis' which stems from 'the economic impact of the closure on employment, trade, investment and fiscal accounts.'⁷³ The international donor community has been instrumental in propping up Palestinian infrastructure and offering budgetary and technical support to the PNA (estimated to be in excess of US \$3,450,524,753)⁷⁴ in addition to other forms of aid. UNCTAD stated that '[t]he Palestinian economy was saved from total collapse with the injection of \$1102 million US a year on average by the international donor community.'⁷⁵ Another point of concern is the evolving nature of this aid, which has been increasingly characterized by its emergency nature.⁷⁶ Despite the volume of aid, the PNA for instance is largely only able to meet the recurrent expenditure needs in the oPt rather than focus on development as international aid is also channeled into addressing the impact of the occupation on the daily lives of Palestinians. Although the donor community has rallied to in effect save the PNA from economic collapse, a result that would have undoubtedly have questioned the viability of the entire state-building enterprise in the oPt, this has created a twin problem: PNA dependence upon foreign aid, and a propped-up employment sector which is based primarily on the public rather than private sector. As Kanafani and Cobham state, *'employment in the public sector is driven by a host of complex and powerful dynamics. Some are understandable, such as the relatively high levels of unemployment and demographic pressure to create jobs for new entrants into the labor force; the precipitous collapse in remittances from workers in Israel; a highly constrained private sector's inability to absorb surplus labor; and the pressure to incorporate irregular militia into the security forces in*

72 World Bank, Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery Economic Monitoring Report; September 2007. See at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCMainReportfinalSept18&cover.pdf>.

73 Kanafani, Nu'man and Cobham, David, 'The Economic Record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the West Bank and Gaza: An Assessment, Palestinian Economy: Forty Years of Occupation... Forty Years of Arrested Development; MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2007, p. 47.

74 See at: <http://db.mop.gov.ps/amc/sectorprofile.asp>.

75 United Nations Conference on Trade And Development, Palestinian War Torn Economy: Aid, Development and State Formation: Geneva 2006.

76 Kanafani, Nu'man and Cobham, David, 'The Economic Record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the West Bank and Gaza: An Assessment, Palestinian Economy: Forty Years of Occupation... Forty Years of Arrested Development; MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2007, p. 59.

Gaza.⁷⁷ Jamil Hilal is quick to point that the reason why unemployment did not soar to higher levels 'is due, in no small part, to the intentional inflation of employment in the public sector (government sector).'⁷⁸ Currently 24.7% of the total Palestinian labor force is employed in the public sector.⁷⁹

	2000	2005	2008
Public Sector (%)	19.4	23	24.7
Private Sector (%)	61	67.1	63.5
Israel and illegal settlements (%)	19.6	9.9	11.5

Although the absorption of people into the public sphere is contextually understandable, and arguably a financially responsible way to spend aid money, there are legitimate concerns regarding the assimilation of a trend towards increasing absorption of the labor market into the public sector, as indicated above. Alberto Alesina, Stephen Dunninger and Massimo V. Rostegno raise the concern that public sector employment, although a vital source of disposable income when there are limited private sector opportunities, risks generating skills stagnation as skills which are useful in the private sector are not acquired. This can additionally lower expectations about future employment prospects outside of the public sector.⁸⁰ If we consider the wage discrepancy between public and private sector work, the public sector is certainly an appealing option. In the West Bank the daily public sector wage is 84.3 NIS versus 76.1 NIS for the private sector. The discrepancy in the Gaza Strip is even higher: 71.7 NIS and 50.7 NIS respectively. The public sector is particularly vulnerable to any reduction in government spending;⁸¹ this is a more acute risk for governments such as the PNA who are aid dependent for budgetary support. An employment base which is volatile in the short term will find it difficult to policy plan in the long term, particularly the linkage between the education and policy.

Conclusion

The overall economic picture in the oPt is one of immediate improvement following Oslo, but consequently marked by a period of overall stagnation and decline. This macro-economic picture has led the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

77 Kanafani, Nu'man and Cobham, David, 'The Economic Record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the West Bank and Gaza: An Assessment, Palestinian Economy: Forty Years of Occupation... Forty Years of Arrested Development; MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2007, p. 57.

78 Hilal, Jamil, 'Assessing the Impact of Migration on Palestinian Society in the West Bank and in Gaza,' CARIM RR- 2007/02; Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI), European University Institute, 2007, p. 10.

79 Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, 'Labor Force Survey Annual Report: 2008,' Palestinian National Authority, April 2009, p. 102.

80 Alesina, Alberto, Stephen Dunninger and Massimo V. Rostagno, 'Redistribution through public employment: the case of Italy,' Working Paper 7387; National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, USA, October 1999. See at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w7387>, p. 4-7.

81 BBC News, 'Vulnerable to public sector cuts: 15 July 2009. See at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/8152800.stm.

(UNCTAD) in 2006 to declare the Palestinian economy to be on the verge of collapse.⁸² Kanafani and Cobham declare the PNA to be effectively bankrupt given the continual decline of tax revenues.⁸³ In this context it is unquestionably difficult for young graduates to enter the labor market. It is therefore vital that there be coordinated efforts between labor market representatives, educationalists and young people in order to attempt to get young people into 'decent work.'

The oPt is now characterized by a shrinking economy, resulting in escalating poverty despite aid flows. This situation is particularly debilitating in the Gaza Strip, kicked further into economic decline by the siege. The current deep poverty rates in the Gaza Strip stand at 35%.⁸⁴ The Palestinian economy now stands distorted and skewed, experiencing both under-development and de-development with both having a devastating impact on the capacity on the labor market and its ability to absorb recent graduates and other young workers.

It is clear that the Occupation creates a labor market environment that is little short of a dire situation for young graduates seeking decent work. An interview with the Ministry of Labor estimated that the market force will not exceed 700,000. The saturation of the labor market is evident then when not only is unemployment approximately 300, 000 but:

40,000 estimated people annually enter the labor market and we are not able to provide for all of these. Less than 10,000 can get a job, this is a problem.⁸⁵

A tracer study conducted by the Ministry of Labor (MoL) which tracked 3000 graduates between 2003-2007 illustrated the problems that faced graduates. Of those that were participants within the Ministry of Labor trainee-scheme, only 50% were able to gain employment and of those, only 20% of did so within the same field in which they studied.⁸⁶ There is a clear saturation within the labor market as it struggles to generate employment for young graduates. The MoEHE pointed to the fact that for 2,000 teaching positions they receive over 50,000 applications.⁸⁷ There is a pressure in that Palestine must continue to train graduates but that these graduates cannot all be absorbed into the economy. A question mark has to be raised over the saturation in skills. If only 1 in every 25 candidates will be accepted into the MoEHE teacher training scheme, why are there so many graduates who continue to pursue these courses and not diversify into other sectors? This is echoed across other sectors. The spokesperson for PEDEX estimates that there are cultural forces at play which propel individuals towards certain courses despite low promise of employment. This is coupled with a lack of awareness of

82 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Report on UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian People; 19 July 2006. See at: <http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/TDB532.pdf>.

83 Kanafani, Nu'man and Cobham, David, 'The Economic Record of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the West Bank and Gaza: An Assessment, Palestinian Economy: Forty Years of Occupation...Forty Years of Arrested Development; MAS- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institution, 2007, p. 47.

84 See at: http://www.unicef.org/oPt/overview_851.html.

85 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.

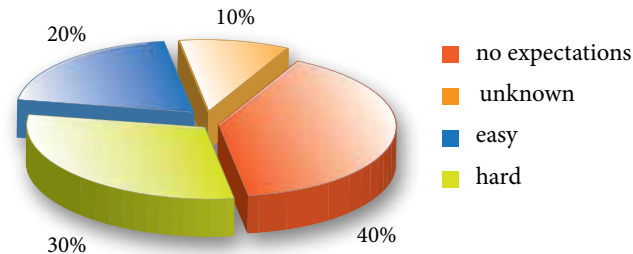
86 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.

87 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009. MoEHE.

potential future careers, such as industrial and chemical engineers who will be required should the plan for developing industrial zones in the oPt be successful.⁸⁸

It is therefore not surprising that, as revealed in a survey conducted by CDS, students have low expectation of achieving employment upon graduating, with 30% of those surveyed believing it would be hard and a further 40% having no expectation of receiving a job.⁸⁹

Figure 2: What are your expectations of gaining employment after graduating?



How do graduates get jobs?

The obvious question emerging is that given the employment constraints, how do graduates find 'decent work?' It is significant that of those surveyed by CDS who had been matched by Souktel, only 20% had entered a career field directly related to their subject, with 40% half matches (that is within their chosen field but not directly relating to their skills, e.g. performing administrative support roles), and 40% undertaking jobs that did not correlate to the degree topic they studied.

There is a clear lack of awareness of career services and/or job matching services. PCBS found in their survey of graduates that 31.7% are not registered with employment office as they did not know about it.⁹⁰

In a survey of current students, when asked how they would seek employment upon graduation, the breakdown was notable. Only 10% stated that they would use a job matching service, such as Soutkel, with 50% planning to use more traditional methods such as newspapers. Interestingly, 30% stated that they would use private connections such as family or friends. The perception of the need for adequate connections is a common one. In a PCBS survey that questioned graduates on why they had not achieved employment, 52.1% felt that it was due to limited connections, versus 7.8% who felt that

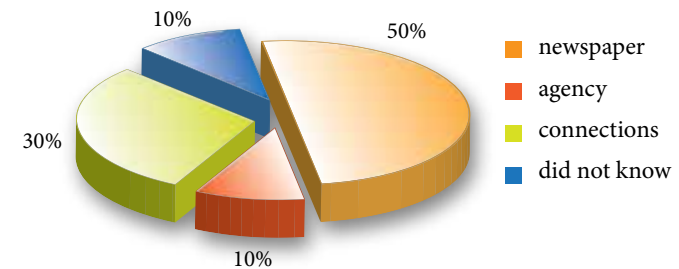
88 Interview, PEDEX, August 2009.

89 Survey conducted on behalf of the Center for Development Studies for the YouthFutures project, September 2009.

90 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Conditions of Graduates from High Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 2005-January 2006). Main Findings,' Palestinian National Authority, May 2006, p. 220.

it was due to their grades and 28.9% who regarded it to be due to the a lack of correlation between job and their education specialty.⁹¹

Figure 3: How will you seek employment?



Nepotism, i.e., employing family members/friends for positions, was raised as a potential obstacle to graduates gaining employment (or an asset for those graduates who felt that this option was available to them). The business community in particular cited this as an issue with Paltrade stating:

Nepotism is a problem in getting jobs: it is a general problem in Palestine.⁹²

PBA acknowledged this also, summarizing their frustration in the following manner:

[the] business sector may be hiring from families but instead they should have interview committees and procedures: all the candidates should go through the right processes to ensure that the best candidate gets the job. It is especially necessary for small businesses who are more likely to employ within the family but need to select most carefully to ensure that their performance is more effective.⁹³

These concerns are validated by PCBS survey into the condition of graduates which revealed that the most common way people found jobs was through friends, with 29 % finding employment this way, and 27.5% applying to employers.⁹⁴

There is strong evidence to suggest that men have an easier time to find employment than women, with anecdotal evidence that they are favored over women in the hiring process. One employer interviewee stated:

We prefer to hire men as they are family providers.⁹⁵

Aside from the overly simplified discrimination on display, and the implications that this

91 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Conditions of Graduates from High Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 2005-January 2006). Main Findings,' Palestinian National Authority, May 2006, p. 179

92 Interview, Paltrade, July 2009.

93 Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.

94 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Conditions of Graduates from High Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 2005-January 2006). Main Findings,' Palestinian National Authority, May 2006, p. 221

95 Interview, Businessman, July 2009.

have for women who have no male family members, it creates a blatant skills mismatch in the labor market as girls tend to out perform boys at *Tawjihi* level. Women are fast over taking men in terms of educational achievement with both An Najah and Birzeit University reporting a higher percentage of female students, with 58% and 58.9% respectively. In 2008, An Najah graduated 1617 females compared to 1449 males.⁹⁶

Anecdotes are supported by figures collated by the PCBS. They state that the unemployment rate of males with bachelor degrees is 15.3% compared to 38% of females.⁹⁷ Not only that but women earn less than their male counterparts, with men holding a bachelor degree earning an average daily wage of 100.8 NIS as compared to women with the same qualifications who receive 75.3 NIS on average per day.

Not only is Palestine facing economic retardation, but the lack of available work has created a discouraged workforce, which is gender biased and relies heavily upon informal means of hiring that favors connections over meritocracy, which further minimizes the economic potential of the workforce.

Potential Solutions?

In these stagnant and stifling conditions a number of education and employment initiatives have been generated in order to both enhance the employability of Palestinian graduates as well as identify a clear vision of the economy that will allow for it to adapt to the rigid and stifling parameters of the Occupation. It must be noted from the outset that this is a highly problematic and ultimately limited approach while the impediments to economic growth created by the Occupation exist. A representative from the Ministry for Planning articulated a frustration at trying to address these limitations in that:

The main factor in this relationship is the market itself and if even we have good students and good skills we have to increase the capacity of the market to create jobs. We are aware of this and trying to address it.⁹⁸

One approach identified to address this problem is to try and dictate the market by forming the nature of the economy. This recognizes the need for a vision of the national economy and then exploiting the skills to develop and meet this vision. One interviewee noted that Palestine;

...needs a national vision for the economy and then we think of labor market and skills from people to join the labor market.⁹⁹

The PBA representative stated the need for a Palestinian vision to be one where:

[We] must follow what is the new imagination of mankind and might create our own ways stemmed out of our own needs in our very difficult circumstances. It

⁹⁶ www.najah.edu/students/statistics

⁹⁷ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Conditions of Graduates from High Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 2005-January 2006). Main Findings,' Palestinian National Authority, May 2006, p. 123

⁹⁸ Interview, Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning, August 2009.

⁹⁹ Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

is sometimes difficult to acquire raw materials, sometimes workers cannot reach work. We have to compensate through new training methods and technology.¹⁰⁰

Several interviewees pointed for the need to create symmetry between the labor market needs to achieve this vision and skills developed. A representative from PBA states that:

You need to look at the labor market because this is the question that no one can answer clearly, what kind of economy do we need? Do we need agriculture? Do we need IT? We think of what is suitable for the Palestinian economy and after this we think what are the types of education and skills we need. No one has the ability to answer this alone but the Ministry for the Economy has a role. Even the labor market is dependent on the type of economy.¹⁰¹

The MoL is integral to the process of as a means of promoting and supporting job creation strategies and are now:

Working more to link education outcome to labor market needs.¹⁰²

But they additionally point to the fact that the MoEHE has to be active in the skill supply side. What is clear across all the interviews with pertinent stakeholders is that there exists a refreshing will to address the situation of graduates and promote their capacity for employability. The MoL is active in coordinating skills training with the ILO and GTZ in particular to encourage firms to employ new graduates by subsidizing 50% of their wages. This program has resulted in a 50% success rate for the absorption of graduates beyond the period of the involvement of the MoL.¹⁰³

One thing though that must be questioned is to what extent the education sector actually provides the labor market with the skill set required to allow the economy to evolve outside of the restrictive confines delineated by the Occupation due to movement and access restrictions. A representative of the MoEHE stated that:

We know one of the problems is that we don't have a good relevance to the labor market.¹⁰⁴

The interviewee was keen to place the blame for this problem with the labor market itself, stating that although a central goal of the five year educational planning process is to make education more relevant to the labor market, the fact is that the market is employment light and therefore cannot absorb all the graduates, thus diminishing demand for reform of the education sector. The MoEHE stated that there is a:

Need [for] economic development to require people to demand skills and specialty of universities.¹⁰⁵

This is an opinion that is not commonly held across those interviewed, with the empha-

¹⁰⁰ Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.


¹⁰¹ Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009

¹⁰² Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.

¹⁰³ Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.



sis placed on the need for educational reform in order to transform the skill set available to the economy, in order to allow for diversification. Strong coordination between the MoEHE, MoL and Ministry of Planning is required to facilitate this process, with needs expressed by the private sector and supported by educationalists. Promising strategies have been muted. PBA have stated that they are working in tandem with the MoEHE to create workshops that will coordinate output of graduates along with labor market needs.

One strategy that has been enthusiastically embraced by the respective Ministries and both international and national educationalists is the heavy emphasis on the development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) but as stated by many, TVET is at present only absorbing 4% of *Tawjihi* graduates and perceived to be the route for 'academic failures' making it thus far limited in terms of scope of graduate absorption and skills training.

Conclusion?

Given the aforementioned problem of a overlap of skills it leaves several pertinent questions, which necessitates placing the education system, including career education, under the lens of examination.

- Why is there a saturation of skills?
- How are young graduates equipped to enter the world of decent work in the face of limited career opportunities?
- What services are available pre-graduation to encourage a diversification of career aspirations?



Chapter Three

Education in the oPt



Education is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire.

- **William Butler Yeats**

To answer the questions posed above it is critical to place the education system itself at the center of analysis. The absolute function and necessity of education itself cannot be overstated. The right to education is enshrined as a *basic* human right in international legal mechanisms as the key to pursuing and obtaining human development, both individually and collectively. Article 26(2) of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (United Nations, 1948)

Jacques Hallak considers that education is deemed to be a human right because it enriches 'individual creativity, improving participation in the economic, social and cultural roles in society, and hence a more effective contribution to human development.'¹⁰⁶ Education is both regarded as a human right in itself but also as an essential means of achieving other human rights. At its basic level, education can lead to development of individual human rights, improve equality across the spectrum and it can also improve economic opportunities and prospects of the individual and of the oPt. As such education should receive a priority allocation of national resources.

The Rand Group state that:

*'Quality education is essential for human development. At its best, education allows individuals to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that translate into improved material circumstances, and it provides them with political, social, and economic resources that support their overall well-being. It builds critical understandings of government, economy, and culture and provides opportunities for individuals to better both themselves and their communities through participation and reform of existing systems. It offers insights into and connections across societies that enrich individual experience and contribute to common understanding.'*¹⁰⁷

It is for this reason that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) considers there to be significant economic benefit to widening access to education, raising education standards and furthering investment in education as they consider there to be a corresponding deliverance of opportunity, prosperity and justice which positively correlates with educational levels. There are empirical and theoretical grounds to support the promotion of education as a stimulant to economic growth, indicating the relevance of systems of higher education to national economies. This linkage is accepted by governments around the world and reflected in national educational policy strategies. This is indicative of a 'human capital' perspective in education devel-

¹⁰⁶ Hallak, Jacques, Investing in the Future. Setting Educational Priorities in the Developing World; UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, Pergamon Press, 1990, p. 45.

¹⁰⁷ The RAND Palestinian State Study Team, Building a Successful Palestinian State; RAND Corporation, California, 2007, p. 311.

opment, which emphasizes creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in the workplace, in addition to a range of other practices.¹⁰⁸

There is a strong empirical link between education and employment, with education providing one of the key sources of employability in many sectors. In terms of education: secondary and tertiary education is distinct from primary education in that they are preparatory for entering the labor market; therefore education level is a key variable in employability across many labor market sectors. Castellano, Stringfield and Stone III regard formal education to be 'society's best available route to assure citizens' participation in the world of work. The relationship between education and income has never been stronger than at present.'¹⁰⁹

Not only is formal education of extreme benefit to the individual but high education levels of the general population has advantages for the State. The stock of human capital (i.e. the education level of the population) affects the strength of the economy, taken as a whole. World Bank studies provide strong support for the view that raising the level of human capital in an economy raises its productivity and therefore the earning potential of an economy.¹¹⁰ Bo Hansen considers investment in the education system as being one of 'value creation;' and it is significant that he notes that this value is created by investment not only in the primary education level but throughout the education system and into the labor market itself. This is particularly important for developing nations as they strive to create a space for themselves in the globalized international market. The concept of synergy between the economic and education system is not lost on the PNA who place a high premium of developing educational capacity and output. A commitment to the development of the education system, and a recognition of the state development function it serves, is evident in the Paris framework entitled 'Building a Palestinian State,' devised by the PNA with the support of the international donor community. The core objectives of education are identified as being:

- Increased national prosperity;
- Enhanced quality of life;
- Development of social capital;
- Development of human capital;
- Restoration of economic growth;
- Fiscal stability.

The first Palestinian Curriculum Development Plan was a statement of such intent, that '*Palestinians are well aware of the fact that education is the basic tool for economic development. Therefore, we should prepare a curriculum that will produce a skilled workforce bearing in mind the priorities of the PNA and its plan to rebuild the nation.*'

¹⁰⁸ Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team, 'Pedagogy for Employability,' Learning and Employability; The Higher Education Academy, 2006, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Castellano, Marisa, Stringfield, Sam and Stone III, James R. 'Secondary Career and Technical Education and Comprehensive School Reform. Implications for Research and Practice,' Review of Educational Research; Volume 73, No. 2, 2003, p. 239.

¹¹⁰ O'Higgins, Niall, 'Trends in the Youth Labor Market in Developing and Transition Countries,' Social Protection Unit, Human Development Network, The World Bank, October 2003, p. 40.

In order to achieve this there is strong emphasis on promoting access to education at all levels, including improving both access to and quality of higher education. The role of modern education is the development of social life and its renewal and modernization is an accomplished historical fact, especially within the context of modern civilization which is based on science, research and technology. For this role to be positive there must be a qualitative as well as quantitative effectiveness in the sense that education should be qualitatively comprehensive and functional to bring about a society that is able to give and take, and to produce and consume. Such achievements lay the foundation for a 'learning society' and 'lifelong education.' One of the issues that must be carefully considered in this context is the subtle difference between originality and imitation, a prominent feature which is the question of 'purchasing progress' and 'creating progress.' The emphasis is necessarily on the creating of an endogenous system which meets the labor market needs of the oPt, as well as the needs of the student.

In the Palestinian context it is important to understand the nature of the education system in order to appreciate the form educational development must take. To consider a country to be 'developing' does not presuppose a dramatically underdeveloped education system. As Deborah Garner and Phillip Schrodt argue, Palestinians are among 'the best educated people in the post-colonial world.'¹¹¹ Rather than being characterized by extreme underdevelopment, the challenges facing the Palestinian education system are a reflection of the adversity experienced under the Israeli administrative and military occupation of the Palestinian Territories, now in its 42nd year, as well as the neglected condition in which the PNA received the education system with the transfer of limited powers from the Israeli military authorities to the PNA in 1994.

Education under Occupation

With the transfer of responsibility for provision of education from the Israeli military authorities to the PNA, it was '*the first time, in the brief spring that took hold, a Palestinian administration was able freely to plan strategically for the future development of its people and to implement policy for economic and cultural growth.*'¹¹² This is not to suggest that there is no continued impact of the military occupation on the education system in the oPt. As with the economic sector, the prolonged military occupation continues to have a considerable and detrimental impact on education in the oPt. This interrupts and interferes with both the structure of the education system and the day to day routine of students. Interruptions include the disruption of electricity supplies, particularly in the Gaza Strip; the checkpoint regime, which impedes regular access to schooling at all levels; the curfew system, particularly in Nablus and large scale military operations. Palestinian students and educators have had to cope with repeated human rights violations, negative psychosocial impact and pervasive violence in their lives. The Right to Education Campaign, Birzeit University, categorizes this impact:¹¹³

¹¹¹ Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999, p. 1.

¹¹² Right to Education Campaign, 'The Impact of Military Occupation on Palestinian Education,' Discovering Analytical Resourcing, 2005, p. 1.

¹¹³ Right to Education Campaign, 'The Impact of Military Occupation on Palestinian Education,' Discovering Analytical Resourcing, 2005, p. 1.

- A - Dedicated destruction of and indiscriminate violence directed towards educational institutions.
- B - Obstacles physically intervening to prevent students attending courses.
- C - Collective punishments imposed on communities (and universities).
- D - Attritional side-effects of military occupation on the ability of students, teachers and administrators to pursue courses.
- E - Measures degrading the morale of students, teachers and administration personnel in undertaking their daily routines.
- F - Suppression of Palestinian cultural expression.

A tragic example of the impact of the Occupation on education is evident in the Gaza Strip. The impact has been enormous for students and teachers alike. 'Operation Cast Lead' is merely the latest in a matrix of events that serve to undermine education quality.

In terms of amenities, over-crowding due to lack of facilities has resulted in schools operating in double shifts, i.e., the practice of teaching two groups of children an entire school day in two separate groups, effectively having resulting in the teaching staff conducting two school days in one. As a result, some 73 per cent of Gaza's students lose almost two hours of schooling a day.¹¹⁴ The inability to import concrete has meant that additional facilities cannot be built, or that facilities that have been destroyed, including large parts of Al-Azhar University, cannot be rebuilt.

Due to the inability to import goods, there is a shortage of school resources including text books and paper. Several people noted that given the inflated prices that emerge from limited goods, the purchasing power of UNRWA has allowed them to purchase these. Many interviewees noted the troubling inability to transport necessary books into the Gaza Strip. Although they note a positive willingness of NGOs to assist each other by manually carrying in pens, paper and text books, this does not address the chronic shortages. Some moves have been made by UNESCO to assist Universities address their shortage of books by assisting the development of electronic learning. These are temporary measures though and should not be taken as a substitute for removing obstacles to education.

Further inhibitors to educational development include military attacks, chronic poverty and malnutrition that affect students psycho-social wellbeing and capacity to engage with the education process. UNRWA notes a marked drop in class attendance and poor attention spans of those students who do participate.

As a result, low grades have become endemic in Gaza's schools. According to the World Bank, 80 per cent of students here are failing math, while an astounding 40 per cent are failing Arabic, their mother tongue. OCHA notes that in the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year, only 20% of 16,000 sixth graders in Gaza passed standardized exams in Math, Science, English and Arabic.¹¹⁵

114 O'Loughlin, Toni, 'Education suffers amidst political tension and conflict in Gaza,' UNICEF. See at: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt_42178.html.

115 See at: http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/un_ngo_fact_sheet_blockade_figures_2009_07_28_english.pdf

For those who reach tertiary education, they are restricted to attending university in the Gaza Strip due to the Israeli siege. In 2008, OCHA documented only 70 cases of students being able to exit the Gaza Strip between July and September in order to undertake university and post-graduate courses in other countries.¹¹⁶

For the oPt as a whole, in addition to the Occupation, the conditions of the education system as a structure, and the pedagogic emphasis on rote learning pose considerable challenges to the PNA in transforming the education system, and in turn increase economic capacity. These challenges shall be discussed at length below. What is of significant interest to the World Bank QIF Youth Futures project is the synergy within the education system, noticeably through the availability of career information and transition services, which reflect a coherent education and labor market strategy.

Education Systems in the oPt

When considering the Palestinian education system, it is vital to remember that it is afflicted with many of the inherent problems facing the Palestinian economy. With the activation of the Oslo Accords, in August 1994 the PNA first assumed control over all the schools in the oPt which were formerly under the control of the Israeli authorities with the exception of East Jerusalem. Private schools, including United Nations Relief Works Agency schools, remained in control of these bodies. Up until this point, the government schools were entirely financed and controlled by the Israeli military authorities, who were responsible for every aspect of the education system, from the hiring process to the content of the curricula. This system, as with every other system in the oPt, was under resourced and mismanaged. Andrew Rigby comments that the PNA inherited a system that was in crisis.¹¹⁷

In the same period the donor community reduced its support for the university sector. In spite of this, the PNA did not replace NGOs as the providers and financiers of the tertiary education system. Universities remain independently financed, which, as will be discussed later, has served to create challenges in integrating universities into cross-ministry plans as the PNA has limited leverage to compel the universities into reform.

In addition to this detachment, the opportunities and challenges facing Palestinian post-secondary education need to be understood within several distinct but overlapping contexts: global trends in higher education, issues common to higher education in many post-colonial, newly independent countries, and the unique aspects of higher education in Palestine, given its specific history of occupation, the *intifada*, and current state-building activities.¹¹⁸

A will towards education is clearly evident within Palestinian culture. With the net enrolment in school in 2007 being 83.9% and the completion of primary education being 99.4%,¹¹⁹ there is clearly a strong culture of education within Palestinian society. Su-

116 http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/un_ngo_fact_sheet_blockade_figures_2009_07_28_english.pdf

117 Rigby, Andrew, Palestinian Education. The Future Challenge; Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, March 1995, p. 35.

118 Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999, p. 1.

119 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Millennium Development Goals (Statistical Report); January 2009.

san Nicoli identifies the prevalence within Palestine towards education as being multifaceted in that it can, 'maintain Palestinian identity, investment in human resources in place and land, and hope that education can be used in a positive way to fight the occupation.'¹²⁰ An Arafat and Musleh survey reveal a similar perception; with 96% of children surveyed believing that education is that is the main means by which to improve their situation, both personal and collective.¹²¹ Gerner and Schrodt believe that education provides 'one of the best guarantees that they {Palestinian students} will be able to earn an income under adverse circumstances.'¹²² They argue that as a result Palestinians are cautious about what degree subjects to pursue, seeking educational credentials that are widely acceptable. This points to a problem of academic conservatism which may make economic-education policy planning difficult, at least in the short term before people witness a capital payoff for gaining certain qualifications.

Structure of Education

When exploring the interface between education and employment, the first point of examination is the structure of the education system. There is no united system of education, with the structure qualitatively different in East Jerusalem and hence resulting in its own particularities, which shall be addressed first.

Education in East Jerusalem

Students in East Jerusalem enter the same matriculation examination, *Tawjihi*, as the rest of Palestine but notably their education system is structurally different from that in the rest of the oPt. Given the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem by the State of Israel, East Jerusalem ID holders are regarded to be permanent residents (i.e. they are not afforded full citizen rights), and the State of Israel is responsible for providing for their education under the Compulsory Education Act (1949). Despite this, it is estimated that thousands of Palestinian children are denied access to State education,¹²³ due to a lack of education provision by the Jerusalem municipal authorities which does not allow the State system to absorb students transitioning from primary into secondary school. Therefore only half of the children in East Jerusalem are enrolled in the State system. The remainder are educated by UNRWA (in the case of refugee students) or in unofficial schools, where education providers include the *Waqf* (Islamic authorities), private companies, the church and other Palestinian organizations. It is estimated that one in ten East Jerusalemite children do not attend school, which is higher than the Palestinian average.

Not only is the education system much more fractured than that in the oPt; it is chroni-

120 Susan Nicoli, 'Fragmented Foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,' UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris, 2007, p. 21

121 Arafat, Cairo and Musleh, Thahabieh, 'A psychosocial assessment of Palestinian children,' A World Turned Upside Down: Social Ecological Approaches to Children In War Zones, Boothby, Neil, Strang, Alison and Wessels, Michael G.; Kumarian Press, 2006.

122 Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999, p. 1.

123 The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 'Status Report. The Arab-Palestinian School System in East Jerusalem,' September 2009. See at: http://www.ir-amim.org.il/Eng/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/EducationReport2009.pdf.

cally (and arguably purposefully) under resourced. Classrooms are repeatedly reported to be over-crowded and even unsafe due to the structural condition of the buildings.¹²⁴ This is largely due to the complete lack of space made available to Palestinian development in East Jerusalem, requiring schools to rent out rooms in local buildings, which are not designed for educational purposes. The situation is considered so poor that the legal advisor of to the Mayor of Jerusalem described the provision of education in East Jerusalem as discriminatory and illegal,¹²⁵ noting the preferential provision of resources to Jerusalem Jewish schools and the fact that the education system does not provide the opportunity for young Palestinians from East Jerusalem to study to enter tertiary education in Israel.

Physical obstacles serve to undermine the quality of education provision. The Wall serves to obstruct and prohibit children from East Jerusalem from accessing their schools. OCHA estimates that of the 33,000 students and 2,000 teachers in East Jerusalem, up to 6,000 students and 650 teachers have difficulties in reaching their school, due to circuitous routes, delays and closures in the checkpoint system.¹²⁶ The MoEHE is struggling to obtain access permits for West Bank ID holding teachers to enter Jerusalem. This has resulted in the drop in student numbers and the restricted ability of East Jerusalem schools to attract teaching staff. authorities), private companies, the church and other Palestinian organizations. It is estimated that one in ten East Jerusalemite children do not attend school, which is higher than the Palestinian average.

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124 BBC News, 'East Jerusalem's education crisis,' 6 September 2008, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article629>

125 BBC News, 'East Jerusalem's education crisis, BBC NEWS,' 6 September 2008, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article629>

126 OCHA, The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier on Palestinian Communities; June 2007. See at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/Jerusalem-30July2007.pdf>

127 BBC News, 'East Jerusalem's education crisis,' 6 September 2008, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article629>

128 BBC News, 'East Jerusalem's education crisis, BBC NEWS,' 6 September 2008, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article629>

due to circuitous routes, delays and closures in the checkpoint system.¹²⁹ The MoEHE is struggling to obtain access permits for West Bank ID holding teachers to enter Jerusalem. This has resulted in the drop in student numbers and the restricted ability of East Jerusalem schools to attract teaching staff.

All of these factors combine to have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and education in East Jerusalem. This is most evident when we compare East Jerusalem to Israel. In 2006, Jewish students were 3.6 times more likely to gain a matriculation certificate than their Palestinian peers in East Jerusalem. The problems in the system are evident much earlier with educationalists pointing to the poor correlation between primary and secondary education, with no control exercised over primary education. Students from many schools are reported to possess weak academic skills, particularly in the fields of English, Arabic and mathematics.¹³⁰ The overall condition is deemed to be so chronic that a Humanitarian Task Force to include OCHA, UNICEF and MoPAD, has been created to try and tackle the issues.¹³¹

The impact unquestionably reverberates throughout East Jerusalem society. Neglect of the education system has been deemed by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel studies as a major contributor to the low rate of participation of East Jerusalemites in the labor market, which is compounded by the increasing loss of businesses identified in Chapter 1.¹³² The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies considers that it would not be possible to assess exactly the loss of income due to the neglected education system, but that it is clear that Palestinians face clear discrimination in attempting to obtain not only their right to education but also exercise their socio-economic rights as well.

Education in the oPt, excluding East Jerusalem

Despite being under developed, the education system outside of East Jerusalem is structurally sound. The education system of the PNA has three clear educational tiers: basic compulsory, non-compulsory and tertiary (including universities and technical/community colleges). The basic compulsory cycle is 10 years, followed by two non-compulsory years of secondary education that ends with the *Tawjihi* exam. Upon completion of this, school leavers can opt to directly enter the labor market, enter one of the 13 universities in the oPt¹³³ or alternatively one of the numerous technical and community colleges.¹³⁴

129 OCHA, The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier on Palestinian Communities; June 2007. See at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/Jerusalem-30July2007.pdf>

130 Palestinian Human Rights Group Monitor, Plagues of Education in East Jerusalem Municipal Schools. See at: <http://www.phrmg.org/monitor2000/sep2000-plaguse.htm>.

131 See at: http://www.ochaopt.org/cluster/admin/output/files/ocha_opt_gaza_crisis_education_cluster_meeting_minutes_2009_0707_english-20090720-125659.pdf.

132 See at: http://www.alternativenews.org/publications/econoccupation/985-the-economy-of-the-occupation-13-15-report-on-the-educational-system-in-east-jerusalem.html#Success_in_Matriculation_Exams.

133 An Najah National University, Birzeit University, Al-Quds University (including Abu-Dies Campus), Bethlehem University, Hebron University, Palestine Polytechnic University, Arab American University, Al-Kadori University, Al-Quds Open University, Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, Al-Aqsa University and the University of Palestine.

134 Students that are able to travel abroad can additionally attend universities outside of the oPt.

Kindergarten: Aged 3-6

Compulsory: Aged 7-15

Secondary: Aged 16-18¹

Tertiary: 18+

Formal responsibility for the education system as a whole lies with the MoEHE, who administer nearly three quarters of the schools in the oPt. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has noted that Palestinians remained ahead of an ever-improving regional norm for higher education attendance.¹³⁵

Although the structure of the education system may be well developed and does not possess the same educational difficulties as other developing countries in terms of trying to generate social norms in favor of education (evidenced by the table below), there are two clear problems with the education system in the oPt: the pedagogy of education and the pedagogy of employment.

Susan Nicoli's comprehensive report examining the nature and structure of education in the oPt is unequivocally clear in the pedagogic flaws that it witnesses in the Palestinian education system; from an expenditure system that favors infrastructural development rather than quality development (such as increasing expenditure to improve teacher training), to the system of learning itself. The system of learning in the oPt remains to be:

'... book centered, with students learning by rote and sitting exams to test recall.¹³⁶ This examination process occupies the central role in the education system, with the curricula geared towards preparation for testing rather than the accumulation of softer skills. Those critics of the pedagogy of the education system argue that the testing process merely 'tests whether students have completed the curriculum rather than how well prepared they are with analytical skills for life or further education.'¹³⁷

This creates a considerable structural mismatch between the qualifications of recent graduates and the skills that are required in order to most appropriately utilize the human capital and such that individual students succeed.

Gramsci warned of education processes that were inculcators of 'small monsters' who were narrowly instructed for a specific occupation, who lacked in 'general ideas' and a 'general culture.' Any structure which seeks to be flexible and adaptable must be careful of creating such a system. Education policy planning has to be cognizant of the needs of

135 Development Studies Program, Palestine- Human Development Report 2004; United Nations Development Programme: Ramallah, 2005.

136 Nicoli, Susan, 'Fragmented Foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory'; UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris, 2007, pg. 29.

137 Nicoli, Susan, 'Fragmented Foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory'; UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris, 2007, p. 92.

the labor market in order to ensure that education is not merely rote but also integrates core skills which meet the needs of the employer.

The education policies identified in 'Building a Palestinian State' demonstrate that there is a strong will within the relevant government ministries to promote and encourage educational development. This is a reassuring sign but reforms have to be more than simply structural in order to also examine the ethos of the education process. While the occupation continues, planners of the Palestinian education system will need to adopt classic planning and management techniques for a situation of endemic instability and occasional violence. Employment prospects for young graduates are going to be limited given the restricted control the PNA has over the economic situation in the oPt. In this sort of environment, brain drain is inevitable and probably systemic. Unlike other countries in periods of development, the Occupation has an air of permanency, that is, the restrictions placed upon economic growth and development will remain until a final status is determined for the future State of Palestine. Despite this, however, alterations can be made to current practice.

The Rand Group has identified both the assets and problems of the Palestinian education system in terms of access, quality, and delivery.¹³⁸ These findings are summarized as follows:

	Assets of the Palestinian Education System	Problems of the Palestinian Education System
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to equitable access and success in achieving gender parity • Strong community support for education • Leadership that is supportive of both system expansion and system reform • Awareness of the importance of early childhood experiences in developing school readiness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a general enabling environment • Inadequate basic facilities and supplies • Unsafe schools and routes to schools • Lack of special education options for students with special needs • Lack of non-formal options for school-age children who are not in school or who are attending only part-time • Lack of lifelong learning opportunities.

138 The RAND Palestinian State Study Team, Building a Successful Palestinian State; RAND Corporation, California, 2007, p. 335-340.

Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to engage in curricular reform and vigorous debate around the nature of that reform • Strong interest in improving pedagogy and a range of resources for doing so • Commitment to improving the qualifications and compensation of staff • Perception of schools as a key location for the development of students' civic skills and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear goals and expectations for the system, and little accountability • Interest in pedagogical reform not matched by progress • Limited relevance of secondary, vocational, and tertiary programs • Limited research and development capacity and activity • Low staff compensation; administrative "bulge" emerging • Difficult monitoring process and outcomes in a crisis climate.
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management ability and transparency • Solid data collection infrastructure and collaboration in analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severely underfunded and donor-dependent

Need for diversification and its challenges

Sue Berryman comments of the education system in the oPt that it, 'is not well organized to develop the foundation skills and higher order cognitive thinking abilities that students will need to succeed.'¹³⁹ In keeping with the sentiments expressed by those interviewed regarding the need for a clear vision of the economy in order to facilitate coordination between labor and education, Berryman is a strong proponent of Palestine becoming a knowledge based economy, which is predicated on the accumulation of adaptable soft skills.

The Palestine Education Initiative (PEI), a branch of the MoEHE holds this idea at its core, with the representative stating the clear desire that:

We would like to move towards a knowledge based economy, and therefore like for individuals to acquire 21st century skills¹⁴⁰

Skills identified include: thinking, collaboration, team work, life long learning and com-

139 Berryman, Sue, 'Improving the Education System,' Development Under Adversity. The Palestinian Economy in Transition, Ishac Diwan and Radwan. A. Shaban Eds; The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 163.

140 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

munication. It is noted that these skills would support Palestine in moving away from a labor intensive economy (outside of the public sector) and into a knowledge based economy. Quality of education therefore becomes a primary focus of any such approach.

PIPA, the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency, has identified several sectors which can benefit from this knowledge based approach and attract investment in spite of the limitations placed on the Palestinian economy. These include banking, accountancy, information technology, communications and construction. They identify a strong regional interest in investing in these sectors as the cost of labor is low and the educational level high.

Those interviewed identified two key constraints to the future of educational reform in Palestine, one being the pedagogy of teaching itself, and the other, matriculation which has not evolved to facilitate the transformation of the nature and the scope of teaching.

Pedagogy of teaching

One of the issues identified is that efforts to reform pedagogy are hampered by consistency in teaching personnel and teaching methodology. As Dr. Marwan Awartani comments, the classroom environment is as critical, if not more so, than the curriculum, therefore the method of teaching, and the teachers themselves are the central element to the learning experience, concluding:

If an outstanding teacher is given a blank piece of paper, he can work miracles with it if he has sufficient vision and motivation. Conversely, even by providing him with the best possible curriculum one cannot ensure that he will teach effectively. Teachers need to be inspiring, open-minded, and provocative, and it is up to them to show these.¹⁴¹

One interviewee used the example of how students learn English as a microcosm for the entire education system. Working for an educational NGO, English classes are provided by this NGO. Students regularly complain that in school they have no opportunity in which to practice their language skills and therefore improve their linguistic competency; this is in contrast with the English language classes conducted by the NGO which has a strong learning-centered approach rather than a teacher-centered approach.¹⁴²

Most educationalists, with the exclusion of the MoEHE, pointed to what they perceive to be the philosophy of teaching itself, which is based on an oral tradition of education. The MoL referred to this as ‘indoctrination, not education.’¹⁴³ This has resulted in a problem whereby it is evident that the quantity of education is excellent compared to regional standards but that the quality of education is stymied as the rote-based approaches to teaching encourage passive learning rather than individuality, creativity and initiative.

PEI noted: “we need to kill learning by heart and forget about memorizing the curricula like a bible. There are other techniques to teaching that can be embraced which explore

141 Arwatani, Dr. Marwan, ‘The Palestinian Education System: The role of civil society in the education system,’ Ma’ale Hachamisha, June 2003. See at: <http://spirit.tau.ac.il/socant/peace/psp/downloads/s2p3.pdf>.

142 Interview, educational non-governmental organization, September 2009.

143 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Labor, July 2009.

not what people know but how they think.”¹⁴⁴

The lack of inter-activity was commonly identified as a flaw in the education system that has long term implications on the behavioral attitudes of students in a learning environment. PEI itself is predicated on using alternative resources such as internet technology in order to maximize self-exploration.

One University lecturer noted that this need for a change in attitude is not restricted to primary and secondary teaching but also university lecturers. The interviewee stated:

I sometimes wonder why some professors call themselves ‘teachers’ when all they do is talk. The problem is that lecturers often think they are more important than the student and so don’t take the time to teach.¹⁴⁵

This opinion was echoed by the Center for Continuing Education (CCE), whose representative stated that there is a requirement to change the culture of learning within the university. One person noted:

It is important for lecturers to realize that they are facilitators of knowledge. We have to work on their mentality also. This is a very, very hard task. It could be impossible. They believe that they are the source of knowledge...that they have to take charge all the time, that they are the masters of the room.¹⁴⁶

A sociology lecturer despaired in wondering why students were in his class as they failed to demonstrate initiative and were reluctant to deviate from the core texts and demonstrate independent thought, a key requisite to succeeding in an arts subject such as sociology.

Variations in styles of teaching have been noted across different school systems. An UNRWA spokes-person noted that their capacity to provide additional courses on top of the traditional curriculum is of enormous benefit.¹⁴⁷

UNRWA has been one success in terms of attempting to modify the nature of teaching practices. Given that UNRWA train their own teachers, they are able to instill a different philosophy to teaching, but even they note the difficulty in trying to surmount the traditional teacher-pupil dynamic within Palestinian schools.¹⁴⁸ Within the PNA system, moves are being made to redress the nature of teaching. PEI stated that the PNA has over 50,000 teachers. New approaches to education have been explored that attempt to demonstrate the benefit of collaborative teaching, which places the student in the role as both learner and teacher. It requires a cultural shift in teaching practices demonstrating that innovative learning is not an authority challenge to teachers.

With support from the World Bank, the PNA is able to facilitate teacher education and strategizing. This has allowed for the increased professionalization of teaching in the

144 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

145 Interview, University Lecturer An-Najah University, September 2009.

146 Interview, Center for Continuing Education, August 2009.

147 Interview, United Nations Relief Works Agency, August 2009.

148 Interview, United Nations Relief Works Agency, August 2009.

oPt, with teaching requiring separate training from within universities. This has meant that from the year 2012 on, all teachers will be required to possess teaching qualifications in order to practice.¹⁴⁹ These qualifications will contain a core emphasis on skills-based learning, including the principles of PEI. There is a strong realization from proponents that this process is long term and may take between 5-10 years to trickle down (or in this case up) through the education system. The key emphasis is that:

The first message that we have to get across to the teachers is that they are *facilitators* not a source of knowledge. They need to create a space for students to learn.¹⁵⁰

System of Matriculation

In addition to the philosophy of teaching, another reason for the stagnation in pedagogic reform has been the nature of the matriculation system itself, which evaluates the extent to which the curriculum has been met. The *Tawjihi* exam is taken upon completion of grade 12. Students can undertake tests in subjects including English, Arabic, Science, Math, Religion (students can choose from Islam or Christianity), Palestinian History, Geography, Biology, Physics, Industry and Agriculture, divided generically into two streams, science and literature. If the student fails one exam, then they do not pass the *Tawjihi* and cannot enroll in university.

The *Tawjihi* exam itself is based on information recall, i.e. memorization and repetition rather than puzzle/problem solving. It is therefore difficult to convince teachers to deviate from traditional classroom exercises. This is further exacerbated by the extreme social pressure to score very highly in the *Tawjihi* exam to ensure entry into their preferred University, placing considerable pressure on teacher and student alike.

The *Tawjihi* exam is the transitional exam which facilitates transition into tertiary education, based on a streaming system of science and literature. It is predicated more upon content memorization than the application of knowledge. Even if ambitions to reform the nature of education in Palestinian schools is successful, room for creativity and innovation are severely limited by the *Tawjihi* exam itself. This idea was echoed across the board, that the *Tawjihi* exam (in its current form, rather than the principle of matriculation) is an enormous problem to educational reform. One interviewee stated:

[We] Need to remove the *Tawjihi* exam. The evaluation needs to be totally different and has to measure competencies not memorization.¹⁵¹

The *Tawjihi* exam serves not only to institutionalize instructive rather than interactive teaching but also has a distortive effect on the academic paths taken by students, predicated on prestige rather than interest (and arguably therefore skill maximization). The science track is regarded as being for the most academically talented students so those with the best grades will enter this stream without necessarily considering their subjects of personal interest. The MoEHE representative resolutely defended the *Tawjihi*

149 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

150 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

151 Interview, Educationalist, September 2009.

exam stating that 'it is not multiple choice'¹⁵², however, this defense was not shared by many of those interviewed.

The impact of memorization-based learning rather than critical thinking is considered to have an enduring impact on how students are able to learn and approach problems at the tertiary level, and therefore how they approach problem solving at the professional level. One university lecturer provided an anecdote of some students bursting into tears during an exam as they were provided an exam question but not the theory required to answer the question [it was noted that there were 4 potentially valid approaches to answering the questions].¹⁵³ This is a common observation that notes that it is not that students are not intelligent but the nature of learning and matriculation results in low confidence to approach problem solving using critical skills, with another university lecturer mirroring the anecdote, adding:

Although students can recite a lot of information they cannot explore the nature of it.¹⁵⁴

One educationalist noted the difference in skills acquired by those who studied for the International Baccalaureate as compared to those who studied for the *Tawjihi* exam. The skills of those that studied for the IB were considered to be more appropriate for the international working world. It is noted that those who peruse the IB self-select into the program so their success can be a reflection of a range of factors beyond school education, including socio-economic class.¹⁵⁵

PIPA expressed concern with the nature of the skills developed by the *Tawjihi* exam, in that:

There is a problem that although a student's *Tawjihi* exam results may be very high, the standard is actually very low as it's about memorization.¹⁵⁶

A curricula based upon rote learning demonstrates a rigidity that is not adaptable or competent to compete in the modern global economy. It is critical that education systems be reflective and responsive to internal pressures but equally adaptable to developments in technology in order to be competitive as a source of knowledge. Rigid systems create a mismatch between skills required and those supplied into the market. This reduces both the competitiveness of the graduate in question but also the system as a whole to attract foreign investment. This reality points to a feature of the Palestinian education system that is identified by the Rand Group: that the interest in pedagogical form is not matched by progress. The Palestinian Curriculum Development Center in 1998 championed a holistic approach to education, in that:

'By perceiving the curriculum as a matrix of goals, contents, teaching methods and evaluation, we attain an integrated perspective, which is more important than separate plans for subjects and their contents. We are aware that successful implementa-

152 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

153 Interview, Lecturer Birzeit University, September 2009.

154 Interview, Lecturer Birzeit University, September 2009.

155 Interview, Educationalist, August 2009.

156 Interview, Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency, July 2009.

tion of the curriculum is essential, if appropriate levels of knowledge and skills are to be reached.¹⁵⁷

Another key feature of the *Tawjihi* is the science and literature streaming. Students opt into one or the other stream for the purposes of their *Tawjihi*. Students select the streams compared to their academic ability in school. Science is regarded by many as being the stream that more academically gifted students enter. Those interviews pointed out that the streaming system within the *Tawjihi* exam, between science and literature means that higher achieving students, regardless of interest, are propelled towards the science stream as it is perceived to be the more prestigious stream.

As high achieving students do not tend to enter the literary tract they are not exposed to a diverse range of subjects, nor in many cases do they pursue courses that are of specific interest to themselves. This leaves an intellectual shortfall in certain subject/degree areas. One interviewee put it that:

Literary and science tracking is telling high performing students that they should be studying science.¹⁵⁸

The decision for literary or science track is also made at a very young age, grade 11, and therefore has a long term determining influence on future career choices/areas.

The impact for universities is the skills mismatch, which is when a person may naturally be more interested in one area which would make of them a more fulfilled student and worker; instead, they enter streams predicated on results. Therefore subjects at University, including law attract students with lower grades, which is the inverse of other countries where subjects such as law demand high grades. This results in a large disparity between those studying science subjects and art subjects at university. Sultana points out that many students who fail to make the scientific track prefer to take up the humanities, even though graduates from this stream are finding it extremely difficult to find jobs or to find jobs that relate to their degree.¹⁵⁹

The nature of science verses literature streaming creates a situation of homogeneity of aspiration of students. As one educationalist puts it:

Society and educational structure tells them the fields they should go into rather than personal choice or real personal preference.¹⁶⁰

Going on to cite two examples of an all girl class of 18 *Tawjihi* students in 2008 who, when surveyed about their potential career goals, almost all stated that they wished to become dentists. The gender preference is notable. As medicine is currently unavailable to study in the oPt, therefore requires studying internationally, girls opted for the next 'highest' profession available in science. In another class 9 of 11 students wanted to become engineers. As the interviewee stated:

157 Palestinian Curriculum Development Center, First Palestinian Curriculum Development Plan, Ministry of Education and UNESCO, 1998, p. 10.

158 Interview, Educationalist, July 2009.

159 Sultana, Roland G, 'Mission Report Career Guidance in the OPT: Mapping the Field and Ways Forward, On behalf of UNESCO,' October 2008, p. 5.

160 Interview, Educationalist, September 2009.

If they do not get enough [high enough grade] in the *Tawjihi* exam there is no plan B.¹⁶¹

Finally, several people noted the very stressful nature of the *Tawjihi* exam, and how the need to secure high grades places enormous pressure on students to do well in order to secure degree places. UNESCO noted the particular strain on students from the Gaza Strip, who in 2009 had to undertake their exams in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, with several organizations attempting to provide 'catch up courses.' (A dispensation for students to undertake their *Tawjihi* exam at a later date than the rest of the students in the oPt due to the enormous disruption caused by 'Operation Cast Lead' and its impact was not granted by the PNA). One teacher questioned the merit of these highly stressful exams in light of the limited skills that it actually provided students.

Role of the Universities

Given the limiting nature of the *Tawjihi* exam in terms of both skills gathered and subjects studied, the university (indeed the entire tertiary education spectrum including TVET) would provide opportunity for students to diversify. It has already been noted above that there is concern that the teaching style at universities is similar to that of the school system. The range of subjects also is highly limited.

There are 247 programs and specializations offered by the institutions of higher education in the oPt including arts, sciences, commerce, economics, engineering, agriculture, law, pharmacy, medical professions, nursing, education, tourism and hotel management, etc.). Of these, 75 are post graduate programs at the master's level. All universities grant bachelors degrees. Several universities, mainly Birzeit and An Najah National University in Nablus, also offer Masters' degrees. There is only one doctoral program offered, which is chemistry offered at An Najah National University. The universities offer bachelors degrees, while the community colleges offer two-year diplomas, mainly in technical and commercial fields.¹⁶²

The number of 247 subjects is deceptive, as there is considerable homogeneity of courses. It is roundly felt that despite the existence of 247 programs, that this is not necessarily requisite to the needs of the economy or the interests of the students. Several university lecturers noted:

There is a problem in that there are a lot of students who enroll in the university but relatively few subjects for them so you have a range of levels of interests and capabilities.

As the universities themselves do not distinguish themselves from one other in the subjects they provide for study, there is a homogeneity of courses across the board in terms of courses provided. This creates a tiered system between the universities themselves with universities such as Birzeit having their pick of *Tawjihi* candidates as it is perceived to be the best; this is in contrast to Al-Qud's Open university, which is derisively referred to by some students as 'Al-Qud's Closed University,' as it is considered this is what it does

161 Interview, Educationalist, September 2009.

162 Sultana, Roland G, 'Mission Report Career Guidance in the OPT: Mapping the Field and Ways Forward, On behalf of UNESCO,' October 2008.

to your career.

The result is that the system leads to a saturation of similar skills, with universities not compelled to improve their standards to compete for students, with PBA noting:

There is a lack of some specific majors and an abundance of others. There are too many people with, for instance, business and management degrees who cannot get jobs. Students who are bright enough to achieve scholarships or afford it seek to study internationally due to the varied courses available and the perceived quality of the education they will receive.¹⁶³

Tertiary Education and Skills

For students, the purpose and effect of tertiary education is 'dual-use.' The transfer of *knowledge* of the subject matter studied, e.g. history, mathematics is not the sole function of the education process but is also paired with the acquisition of 'soft skills' or 'employability skills,' such as team working, problem-solving, communication and critical thinking skills. The acquisition of these skills allows for a diverse career pathway for the individual but also the diversification of the labor market. The Palestinian education system is required to provide both hard and soft skills for the labor market to be able to flourish through endowing individuals with the requisite skills set.

Soft Skills

It is evident that not all university courses seek to imbue their students with hard skills that channel them into rigid career pathways but instead seek to develop soft skills that are transferable across a range of sectors, and allow students to approach varied tasks.

Elias and Purcell (2003) suggest that the graduate sector consists of four types of graduate jobs (traditional, modern, new and niche) and show that these differ in their skill usage and earnings.¹⁶⁴ The emphasis in transferable jobs market is on the possession of high-level generic skills and personal attributes. In a study conducted over 25 years for the Higher Education Academy (2006), research into the attributes employers expected from graduate recruits demonstrated a broad consensus that they should exhibit¹⁶⁵:

- Imagination/creativity
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Willingness to learn
- Independent working/autonomy
- Ability to work in a team
- Ability to manage others
- Ability to work under pressure
- Good oral communication
- Communication in writing for varied purposes/audiences

¹⁶³ Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.

¹⁶⁴ Chevalier, Arnaud and Lindley, Joanne, 'Over-Education and the Skills of UK Graduates,' Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics, August 2007, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ Attributes are listed arbitrarily.

- Numeracy
- Attention to detail
- Time management
- Assumption of responsibility and for making decisions
- Planning, coordinating and organizing ability¹⁶⁶

Studies which demonstrate economies where most graduate jobs are open to persons from any academic discipline value these wider and transferable skills as a tool to guarantee a flexible workplace, maximize employability and ensure of economic competitiveness, leaving an adaptable and highly skilled workforce.

Hard Skills

• Work experience

Work experience can become an integrated part of many university programs, as it compliments the soft skills acquired at tertiary level with practical experience within the chosen career path. Many countries employ work/study models. There is probably no 'optimal' mix that can be identified outside of the needs of the labor market in question, although the enormous disparity between technical and academic education in the oPt is alarming with only 4% of those in tertiary education undertaking TVET courses and many of the university courses failing to provide work-based learning opportunities.

The OECD stated of the European education system, but remarkably apt for the Palestinian education system that; 'sustained policy responses will be needed involving both education and employment authorities to avoid declining opportunities for effective vocational education and training involving a work-based component.'¹⁶⁷ Work/study programs provide students with both career and technical knowledge of the field of employment which they intend to enter.

This model works on the premise that academic experience is often complimented by university provided work experience that pairs students within certain subjects with employers, to provide students with work based experience while undertaking their university subjects. For those subjects that do not make this possible, post-degree internships and work placements are increasingly viewed as avenues for students to enter their desired field of work. In both scenarios in the oPt there is concern that employers are misusing the students/graduates as a source of cheap/free labor rather than engaging in skills training for potential future employees. As noted by many, graduates lack practical experience; this is not a problem particular to the oPt.

As PALTRADE asserted, however, there is a concern that companies are misusing their trainees/interns in 'silly ways' using them as support administration staff or even tea/coffee servers for the staff. PALTRADE and PIPA both attribute this phenomena to low levels of confidence in graduates. As PALTRADE state:

¹⁶⁶ Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team, 'Pedagogy for Employability,' Learning and Employability; The Higher Education Academy, 2006, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development, Education at a Glance. 2009; OECD, 2009, p. 14.

There is a problem in though as they believe student output is limited as they don't know much.¹⁶⁸

The flip side is that even when graduates gain employment, employers can be ignorant of the skills that graduates actually possess and demand more from them than is actually appropriate for entry level graduates. A spokesperson for CCE provided an anecdote of an employer who employed an English literature graduate and attempted to utilize this employee as a translator, which is a different skill-set.

The expectations of organizations are so high. They don't go deeply to know what it means to get a degree.¹⁶⁹

One educationalist organization that works closely with the business sector remarked upon what they perceived to be a growing sense of despair over the caliber of graduates in terms of soft skills but additionally hard skills are missing due to the non-vocational nature of study. One organization commented on its hiring process:

We have an inordinate number applying with computer science, finance business and administration degrees. For one position we had over 300 applicants for a job which required only 3 basic skills: bilingualism (Arabic reading/writing/speaking, English speaking), computer literacy and had worked with children. We did not even require a degree and in all the applications we did not find one skills match. We ended up hiring someone with a finance background. Every job we have tried to fill has been like this; high applicant pool but no skills match. There is clearly an oversaturation of the labor market with people who cannot find a job.¹⁷⁰

This can only promote the disillusionment with Palestinian graduates and arguably encourage the propensity towards hiring international staff members.

There is a clear mismatch in understanding between universities and employers about what skills employers require and the responsibility of both private and public sector employers to develop and refine the soft skills gained by graduates in order to tailor their skills to their sector of employment. This is exacerbated by an apparent lack of responsibility taken by businesses in Palestine to develop the talents of young graduates. This has itself been attributed by many to the glut of graduates that mean that businesses can select the candidates they wish rather than have to provide incentives for graduates to work with them.

In view of the research and graduate reports indicating the skills linked to employability—namely communication, adaptability, teamwork, and time management—it is indicated that part time work experience can be more valuable to the student than coursework and examinations. It is therefore critical that the MoL and MoP should encourage universities to implement work-based learning into the curriculum.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) suggested that for anticipated transitions, such as starting a first job, the opportunity to engage in role playing can significantly ease the adjustment

¹⁶⁸ Interview, PALTRADE, July 2009.

¹⁶⁹ Interview, Center for Continuing Education, August 2009.

¹⁷⁰ Interview, Educationalist non-governmental organization, September 2009.

process. Preparation for workplace entry through rehearsal could be accomplished by advising, or even requiring, students to interact with industry through field work experiences, such as job shadowing and internships. This is significant as often the skills required to succeed professionally in a working environment differ from those that are required to succeed at university.

Wendenland and Rothen argue that 'by incorporating work experience with classroom instruction, students will be able to put theory into practice and to test and expand their abilities, interests, and knowledge while gathering information about the workplace. In this way, university career counselors can ensure that graduates possess the experience and skills essential for the workplace.'¹⁷¹

In this case it may be more important than ever for universities to provide hard skills. It is regarded that universally for skilled professional jobs, although educational levels are important, work experience is the most important factor. In a survey undertaken by the ILO to ascertain global employment trends, employers ranked the education level of the young job applicant for skilled professional positions as the most important factor influencing their hiring decisions in only two of the five countries with data (Jordan and Nepal). Employers in China and Kosovo rated work experience as the most important, while in Syria, employment decisions continue to be very much biased by the sex of the applicant.¹⁷²

Employers participating in the study confirmed the students' perception, believing that part-time work experience, whether paid or voluntary, familiarized students with the work environment and demonstrated discipline and motivation. Moreover, some employers explicitly said that a lack of work experience was a definite disadvantage.¹⁷³

There is also a need to match the needs of the employers with tertiary education provision. A CDS survey indicated that 77% of businesses surveyed in 2005 cited a "high reluctance" to hire new graduates because they "[lacked] proper skills and knowledge." This experience gap is also acknowledged in 'The Youth Talk,' where 32% of those surveyed considered that what an employer wanted from an employee was work experience (verses 25% who considered a degree to be the most sought after asset).¹⁷⁴ There is an apparent need to synchronize the nature of education with the needs of the labor market to ensure that graduates have the potential to obtain decent work.

• TVET

As noted above, given the limited range of subjects available at universities and the lack of work experience provided in the university curriculum, the current university system creates a surplus of skills and leads to saturation in the labor market that hinders both the capacity of the economy to reform and the ability of graduates to find jobs. A considerable asset TVET has over traditional tertiary education in the oPt is that it involves a work-based learning

¹⁷¹ Wendenland, Nancy B., Rothen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications or University Career Counsellors,' Journal of Career Development, Volume 35, 2008, p. 161.

¹⁷² International Labor Organization, Global Employment Trends for Youth: Geneva, 2006.

¹⁷³ Wendenland, Nancy B., Rothen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications or University Career Counsellors,' Journal of Career Development, Volume 35, 2008, p. 161.

¹⁷⁴ Sharek Youth Forum, 'The Youth Talk. Perception Youth on their living conditions,' May 2008, p. 36.

component. Unlike apprenticeships, TVET allows students to prepare for career clusters.

One attempt to redress the imbalance has been to promote TVET as an alternative to pure academic study. It is an approach that will invest in holistic and pertinent skills for the labor market. There is a perceived need by those that invest in TVET to develop practical skills. In contrast to apprenticeships, TVET affords students the opportunity to prepare for career clusters. TVET aims to absorb up to 20% of all future tertiary level students in the oPt. PEI establishes the aim of TVET to be:

Most of our enterprises are small so there is a lack of skilled workers and technicians. Also many businesses don't want/need someone trained as an engineer to university level but they need an engineer so they are forced to hire this person but the person is then under-employed. There is a gap in the needs of the market which can be provided by the TVET curriculum.¹⁷⁵

Gerner and Schrodt argue for the expansion and formalization of the role of community colleges and technical and vocational education and training. They describe the role of these institutions as being:

1. providing training in specialized knowledge beyond that provided in secondary school but do not require obtaining a full degree;
2. providing training for those whose education results were insufficient for university entrance, to allow them to attend on a latter stream;
3. to play a role in continuing education programs to ensure that the idea of lifelong education becomes an integral part of the Palestinian labor force.¹⁷⁶

In 1999, Gerner and Schrodt identified a significant number of vocational and training programs available at TVET, such as secretarial services, banking, civil engineering, and pottery production. Despite this, in 2006 Nicoli found a reluctance on the part of Palestinian school leavers to attend TVET courses, which the Minister for Further and Higher Education attributed to the attitude that, 'in our [Palestinian] society, vocational training is considered to be for those who failed.'¹⁷⁷ 'The Youth Talk' found, in direct contrast, that 81% of those surveyed rated vocational education as good or very good (64% and 17% respectively) and that 56% would 'definitely yes' consider enrolment in vocational education if the quality of education is good.¹⁷⁸

TVET though has remained the underdog of the tertiary level education system. At present less than 4% of tertiary level students enter the TVET stream. PEI compare this to the 50% that enter the literary stream. There is a dilemma for educationalists and labor market planners. TVET is clearly viewed as a positive way to develop skills as well as provide an education for a diversity of interests, and in so doing attracted significant international aid. The dilemma of lack of uptake is best summarized by Sultana that: some voca-

175 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Palestinian Education Initiative (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, August 2009.

176 Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999, p. 3-4.

177 Nicoli, Susan, 'Fragmented Foundations: education and chronic crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,' UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning and Save the Children UK, Paris, 2007, p. 77.

178 Sharek Youth Forum, 'The Youth Talk. Perception Youth on their living conditions,' May 2008, p. 55.

tional schools, equipped to the hilt thanks to foreign aid, nevertheless have difficulties attracting students, or recruiting high-achieving students. This is creating serious skills imbalances in the economy, with oversupply in some areas, and bottlenecks in others.¹⁷⁹

Problems of TVET not unique to oPt as we can see with the Maastricht Communiqué (Dec. 2004) which reviewed the priorities for TVET as defined in Copenhagen and mentioned explicitly the necessity to

- Increase attractiveness of VET in Europe.
- Facilitate the recognition and transferability of qualifications covering both VET and general (secondary and higher) education, based on competences and learning outcomes.
- Improve permeability within education and training systems, provide a reference for the validation of informally acquired competences and support the smooth and effective functioning of the European, national and sectoral labor markets.¹⁸⁰

One of the fundamental issues cited by Catellano, Stringfield and Stone III is that historically, vocational education programs tended to include the students who were at risk of not finishing high school. They were students who, counselors and other adults assumed, would not go on to any postsecondary education. Those students were provided with vocational education so that they could earn a decent living after leaving school.¹⁸¹ One solution that has been posited by many is increased coordination between the TVET sector and universities in order to empower high achieving students. Sultana's report, however, noted that Palestinian universities are reluctant to accept students with a TVET.¹⁸²

Implications of Gaps in Skills

Key gaps have been identified in the education system in its preparation for the labor market. The *Tawjihi* exam and the pedagogy of teaching are considered restrictive in terms of skills development. At the post-secondary level this is further hampered by the lack of work-based learning, either through weak uptake of TVET or work-based study at university.

Non-governmental organizations and government ministries have stepped up to address gaps in the education sector by providing additional career training in skills that are considered essential for work. Numbered amongst these are:


- AmidEast which states that they have a high demand for business training, from organizations including Jawal, Paltel and PNA ministries that seek to develop skills

179 Sultana, Roland G, Mission Report Career Guidance in the OPT: Mapping the Field and Ways Forward, On behalf of UNESCO; October 2008, p. 5.

180 Dunkel, Torsten and Le Mouillour, Isabelle, 'Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education,' INCHER- Kassel, October 2006, p. 3-4.

181 Castellano, Marisa, Stringfield, Sam and Stone III, James R. 'Secondary Career and Technical Education and Comprehensive School Reform. Implications for Research and Practice,' Review of Educational Research; Volume 73, No. 2, 2003, p. 243.

182 Sultana, Roland G, Mission Report Career Guidance in the OPT: Mapping the Field and Ways Forward, On behalf of UNESCO; October 2008, p. 6.



such as English, negotiation skills, customer service, business report writing and monitoring and evaluation. They intend to develop basic business skills acquisition, a program which attempts to give people office skills and business-oriented professional skills which give a lot of employers a comfort level that graduates will have a basic functioning level of professional skills.

- CCE operates 'Stepping Stones' and 'Education for Employment' which assists the capabilities every young professional needs to work in any organization e.g. writing skills, English language skills, Arabic writing skills, communication skills, and project management. This project tries to bridge the gap with what is gained in university and what is needed in the labor market, as reflected through the human resources departments of companies and even banks.
- PalTrade provides an Education Employment program. Upon evaluation they noted that the most beneficial aspect was the European Computer Driver's License. Similarly the program also provides English language skills, explores work environment skills and assists in the development of CV skills.
- Sharek Youth Forum provides services including Business 101 training and other specialized training in management, media and journalism, law, insurance, finance and banking. Additionally, the 'A Step Forward' program provides training for 3rd and 4th year students on topics such as languages, ICT, as well as providing career days, job fairs, workshops and conferences.

These programs are highly commendable and essential for Palestinian graduates to gain critical employment skills. It is at this juncture that Palestinian policy makers must interject to support these projects and within their own systems address the balance of professional (career oriented study which lead to specific career types, including medicine, law, pharmacy, engineering), liberal arts (literature, social science, languages) and sciences to ensure that a requisite balance is achieved to allow for a flexible economic base but also to ensure that university attendees are aware of employment possibilities.¹⁸³

This said, we have to be careful of a system which creates producers rather than facilitates empowerment and enlightenment. (Education for knowledge vs. utility). It is not that certain disciplines are unimportant but it is necessary to have a more balanced distribution of skills. There is a responsibility to establish national priorities without eliminating the individual's right to professional determinacy,¹⁸⁴ but professional determinacy is only possible where education is conducive to employment.

There is a need to ensure that students from a young age are aware of the career implications of education choices, in order to ensure that they are able to select careers which they will find personally fulfilling (and therefore be more likely to remain within the occupation) but also to ensure that the labor market receives a diversity of graduates. The diversification of education programs, including career training and refresher training, incorporate the specific needs from specific industries and businesses; this will assist meeting the current skills needs of operating businesses and companies but also distribute the skills more evenly.

¹⁸³ Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999.

¹⁸⁴ Rigby, Andrew, Palestinian Education. The Future Challenge; Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, March 1995, p. 16.



Chapter Four

Policy Approaches



The greater part of what is taught in schools and universities....does not seem to be in proper preparation for that of business

Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 1776

In light of the previous chapters, which explore both the labor market's capacity to absorb young graduates and the manner in which the education system develops skills to assist young graduates in their search for decent work, it is clear that policy makers are now required to intervene. A policy strategy which creates synergy between education, economic policy and planning is required in order to capitalize both upon educational development to encourage economic growth but also to drive a change in the nature and content of the education system in the oPt. This strategy should focus on evaluating the optimal skills mix in the oPt to maximize economic growth, productivity and social justice. This requires examining;

- Current skills profile and impact on the oPt;
- The drivers for skills and types of skills needed;
- Demand for skills from employees and individuals;
- Delivery mechanisms for education and training and their relevance to the labor market.

The optimal mix is dependent upon the social, cultural, political and economic differentials and therefore education-economic strategies can vary between countries. Sue Berryman, writing for the World Bank, argues that the sustainable growth of the Palestinian economy critically depends on an export-oriented development strategy. Israeli control of Palestinian borders, customs and excise tax makes this strategy prohibitive as a means of large scale development. As such, Berryman proposes an alternative strategy, which is to develop the oPt into a 'knowledge based economy,' one based upon the delivery of goods and services based on a skilled workforce, with 'a high premium on the diversification of goods and services, fast delivery of orders, high and constant quality and low prices.'¹⁸⁵ This approach was heavily endorsed by many of those interviewed.

As discussed above, governments regard post-secondary education as critical to productivity and economic growth. In a globalized market the advent of a 'knowledge based economy' has arisen. In Palestine this has a particular resonance given the inability to control other aspects of their economy. The knowledge based economy is possible within the oPt as it places prosperity with human agency rather than natural resources.

With the advent of a 'knowledge-based' economy, education is increasingly viewed as an agency capable of fostering economic prosperity by facilitating innovation and providing sufficient human capital (i.e., educated workers) to meet the changing demands of industry.¹⁸⁶

The pursuit of a knowledge based economy places education at the forefront of any economic planning. Its success is dependent upon the interplay between the education system and the labor market to ensure that adequately educated graduates are produced in the pertinent fields of study, requiring infrastructural development, political

¹⁸⁵ Berryman, Sue, 'Improving the Education System,' Development Under Adversity. The Palestinian Economy in Transition, Ishac Diwan and Radwan. A. Shaban Eds; The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 166.

¹⁸⁶ Kirby, Dale, 'Reviewing Canadian Post Secondary Education: Post Secondary Education Policy in Post Industrial Canada,' Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue 65, November 3, 2007, p. 5.

stability and a high level skills base across a range of professions. Berryman argues that if this is realized then the economy of the oPt could become a plausible and attractive commercial centre in the Middle East.¹⁸⁷

Policy planning is an inexact science and estimations of future work force demand even more so. Economic conditions in the oPt are unpredictable at best and volatile at worst. The promotion of education as a means towards economic growth leads to what can be described as the education rubric; increased promotion of education may lead to development but it can lead to a conflict in priorities. The quality of policy making and policy implementation in this area is critical given the degree to which education consumes budget expenditure, and serves as an important instrument for economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Economic shocks, flows of investment and divestment, the needs of employers and the international labor markets are in a state of flux and evolution. What is clear though is that despite these anxieties and uncertainties, some degree of labor market planning is both required and possible to guarantee an increasingly productive workforce within the oPt. This need for planning is further illustrated when we consider that in the oPt, children make up the majority of the population. The 2005 Census revealed the population of the oPt to be 3.8 million, with PCBS estimating that this figure will rise to 5.1 million by 2015. The sheer number of young people under the age of 18 will pose a challenge, impacting on mainstream service provision and needs, including the education system, the per capita expenditure of the PNA and the employment and income generating capacity of the economic sector. Medium and long term economic planning strategies can be devised and a regular population evaluation can be conducted to both assess needs and possible avenues for attracting further investment.¹⁸⁸

The need for human capital development of a 'knowledge based economy' to maintain and increase economic growth provides a stimulus for educational reform, which integrates the idea of school *for* work. It cannot be assumed that obtaining higher education levels in and of itself has the causal impact of stimulating economic growth; rather it must be coordinated and deliberate.

Arnaud Chevalier and Joanne Lindley explore the impact of tertiary expansion in developing pools of human capital. They point to the failure rate when there is little linkage between education and the economic strategy. They argue that rather than the education system simply being an abundant source of human capital, the lack of adequate synergy between the education and labor market can result in the diminution of human capital through a reduction in quality and appropriateness of education to the demands of the labor market. They envisage that the over-subscription of university courses can result in over crowding, reduction of academic content and the lowering of educational quality to integrate larger numbers of students who are functioning at different educational capabilities, therefore reducing supply of human capital.¹⁸⁹ Edu-

187 Berryman, Sue, 'Improving the Education System,' Development Under Adversity. The Palestinian Economy in Transition, Ishac Diwan and Radwan. A. Shaban Eds; The World Bank, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 166.

188 Stanley, Gordon, 'Education for Work: The Current Dilemma for Post Compulsory Education,' The Australian Educational Researcher, Vol. 34, No.3, December 2007, p. 92.

189 Chevalier, Arnaud and Lindley, Joanne, 'Over-Education and the Skills of UK Graduates,' Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics, August 2007, p. 3.

cational planners, therefore, need to avoid over-subscription to tertiary education as heterogeneous private educational services as these levels lead to overproduction of graduates in fields that labor markets cannot absorb.¹⁹⁰

As Meade argues, '[T]he great majority of politicians and other interested persons tend to... concentrate on... measures such as education and training labor and investment in modern efficient capital equipment... These reforms are of extreme importance but they are concerned basically with raising the output per head of those who are in employment rather than about the number of heads that will find suitable employment.'¹⁹¹

There is a need to synergize economic planning with educational development to ensure that graduates gain the appropriate skills necessary for the development of economic capacity while allowing the self actualization of the learner, i.e., allow the tertiary education attendee to make choices predicated on their own interests and ambitions. This places a greater emphasis on employability rather than pure education as the purpose of the tertiary system. The Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (U.K.) considers employability to be a set of achievements – skills, understanding and personal attributes – which make graduates more likely to gain employment, and then be successful in their chosen occupation.

Role of the Ministries

The need for coordination between all the relevant ministries is more critical than ever, to assist in the communication of labor market needs in order to generate the relevant skill supply. During the course of this project this coordination was demonstrated to be strained and lacking. The MoL, MoP and MoEHE are the three core Ministries involved in the process. The MoP appears to view its role as one of facilitation between the MoL and MoEHE, with both reporting a positive relationship with the MoP. The MoP noted the difficult relationship between the MoL and MoEHE, citing this difficulty in the interview process.¹⁹² The difficulty appears to arise from who is ultimately responsible for assisting the transformation of the economy, the labor market in pressuring universities to adapt? Or the education sector to provide new skills that allows the labor market to evolve?

The MoEHE notes that there is communication between the MoL and MoEHE for TVET, but that such communication is more strained regarding the university system. This is in many ways a reflection of the limited control that the MoEHE has over the sector. These relationships are in clear need of improvement in order to conduct the task at hand.

It will be unquestionably difficult to coordinate both educational and economic policy to generate the number of graduates who possess the relevant skills for graduate employment, combined with the demands of the labor market. To balance this dilemma there is a drive to emphasize types of education which are more broadly instrumental in promoting versatility and resilience, hence enabling students from university in their

190 Hallak, Jacques, Investing in the Future. Setting Educational Priorities in the Developing World; UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, Pergamon Press, 1990, p. 52.

191 Meade, James Edward, Full Employment Regained?: An Agathotopian dream: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. xvii.

192 Interview, Palestinian National Authority Ministry of Planning, August 2009.

transition to decent employment. As a result of this kind of thinking, the human capital economists tend to see academic education as the better hope for economic growth, when entered and undertaken with appropriate objectives.

Transition Services and the Matrix of 'Choice'

One area for cooperation is in developing structured and systematic transition services that assist school leavers into graduate courses and graduates into 'decent work' by providing labor market information that is threaded throughout the education system. The central concern, in addition to promoting and improving the Palestinian economy, is that raised by Chevalier and Lindley, that is the increasing supply of graduates rising faster than the demand for graduates.¹⁹³ An integrated policy approach which involves the MoEHE, MoL and MoP is required in order to ensure the relevant supply of human capital. Transition services, such as career training, career guidance and job-matching are all excellent examples of individual assistance mechanisms which run parallel and complimentary to economic planning that can create the drive for economic reform.

A range of these services are currently available in the oPt to both graduates and undergraduates. Job matching programs are in the rise in the oPt, through initiatives launched by organizations such as Soutkel, as well as a national data base planned by the MoL. PBA has now created the Federation of Palestinian Businesses in Palestine, to include Businesses in the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem which they state:

... gives us the potential to have a hub for those business people who are looking for graduates.¹⁹⁴

Approximately four years ago the PBA began a matchmaking service between businesses and graduates, including creating a six month training scheme that allows graduates to develop skills within their chosen field of employment. They are currently developing the idea of a CV data base that will allow businesses to search through CVs of prospective employees, which will shorten the time and cost required to search for an employee.

Job placement and matching programs require a good knowledge of vacancies in the labor market. This is difficult for Souktel to achieve as at present it is optional for companies in the oPt to register vacancies with a public employment body. In many cases, the rate of actual vacancy registration is quite low, with information about opportunities being disseminated through newspaper adverts, or through family and personal networks.

Additionally **career services** are provided by a number of organizations who assist with employment guidance, providing CV writing skills as well as interview training. Similarly job fairs and career days are hosted within Universities and by external agents such as PEDEX, Sharek and AmidEast among others. But as one interviewee from PEDEX comments:

193 Chevalier, Arnaud and Lindley, Joanne, 'Over-Education and the Skills of UK Graduates,' Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics, August 2007, p. 3.

194 Interview, Palestinian Businessmen's Association, July 2009.

There is very little connection between universities and the labor market, where they only have career days for fresh graduates can go and hand in CVs (often poorly written at that) and maybe get offered a job.¹⁹⁵

The only significant structural attempt at **career guidance** is offered by Sharek Youth Forum, who provide career counseling within several Palestinian universities – Birzeit, Al-Quds, Abu Dis, Al-Quds Open University, Al-Azhar, Islamic University in Gaza, Al-Asqa University and An-Najah. This service offers a career advisor to provide support and information regarding the job market, allowing students to enroll for training sessions as well as providing them with career manuals.

These interventions to assist graduates although positive do not challenge the broader problem that was noted throughout this research and that is that despite positive moves in job creation programs, assisting graduates finding decent work and a will to transform the economy-education binary, a lack of careerism within the education pedagogy will continue to push an homogenization of skills and create situations where students may not enter career clusters that labor market reformists are trying to develop. As Sultana notes:

In the oPt, for students making challenging decisions about university study programs, counseling services can be found in only a handful of private secondary schools; most state-run and UN schools provide no support or resources to help college-bound students make study choices. In high-school classrooms, less than 3% of instructional time is devoted to "vocational literacy" and tertiary study/career planning, leaving students to rely on often-inaccurate information from peers and family. Government services are equally limited.

In an environment devoid of pedagogy of careerism within the education sector it is legitimate to hypothesize that school leavers have a limited conception of career opportunities upon selecting university courses, and this situation is exacerbated due to a lack of career services within universities in the oPt.

A dilemma arises in a system which promotes education without acknowledging employability. If we consider now that 'post-secondary' education is closer to the norm in behavior of young people, there is no reason to assume that an individual who elects to pursue tertiary education does so as a result of career planning rather than following the dominant trend of their socio-economic grouping to enter education.

The choice of education as a means to bring long term economic benefits to the student, combined with personal interest, helps explain why students enter tertiary education and what motivates subject selection within tertiary education, with vocation in mind. Paul Beaudry, Thomas Lemeux and Daniel Parent argue that, "[o]ne of the main alternatives to participation [in the labor market] is schooling and therefore a reduction [in the labor market] in participation may simply reflect a perceived increase in the benefits of schooling (higher future income etc)."¹⁹⁶ This can also be conceived as individuals opting out of a weak labor market, which, given the de-development of the Palestinian

195 Interview, PEDEX, July 2009.

196 Beaudry, Paul, Lemeux, Thomas and Parent, Daniel, 'What is happening in the Youth Labor Market in Canada?,' Canada Public Policy-Analyse de Politiques, Vol. XXVI, SUPPLEMENT/NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL 1, 2000, p. 565.

economy, is critical to bear in mind when examining graduates' potential employment opportunities. As the two alternatives to participation in the labor market are therefore full time schooling and inactivity (the residual class), we can assume that individuals choose the alternative that maximizes their subjective utility.

Within the oPt the burden of unemployment is unevenly distributed among young people to those with lower levels of education, therefore it would make strategic sense to improve opportunity of employability by attending tertiary education.¹⁹⁷ The underlying premise of the YouthFutures project is that graduates sought their education qualifications in order to find meaningful employment.

More importantly though Patton, Fuller and Heath highlight the process of 'non-decision making' in the "choice" process, signifying that it is important for policy makers not to over-estimate the level of individual agency and research in the decision making process. They consider that non-decision-making is characterized by a lack of engagement with the active decision making process which characterizes the traditional conceptions of choice. This means that career services must continue to be active within the tertiary sector given the number of students who opt into the system as a norm rather than a considered development decision. As the focus of non-vocational study is rarely the highlighting of the parallels between academic tasks/skills and workplace tasks/skills, e.g. critical thinking skills, then students may not fully appreciate the skills acquisition feature of tertiary education as it is seen to be important that students in the oPt are cognizant of the link between academia and employability, to ensure that the latter is embedded into their thought process.

Nature of Choice in the Palestinian Education System

In the case of a limited labor market, as in the case of the oPt, and in light of the limited range of career guidance services, it is important to conceptualize how Palestinian students make their decisions. The educational conservatism of university students that results in the over-subscription of courses is understandable but through engagement may be avoidable. Through Gerner and Schrodt's study, we can see that students consider it more beneficial to invest in 'secure degrees' (i.e. those most likely to guarantee employment) and therefore students will opt for degree subjects such as medicine, engineering or teaching, where both internal and external prospects for employment are relatively high.¹⁹⁸ Should all university attendees pursue the same strategy then a situation of qualification saturation will be reached, a desirable situation for certain employers but ultimately damaging to the employment opportunity of the graduates and leading to a skills discrepancy in other sectors. Given the spectrum of non-vocational subjects available at university, it is unsurprising that a large volume of graduates make career choices which do not apparently relate to their primary degree.

197 Beaudry, Paul, Lemeaux, Thomas and Parent, Daniel, 'What is happening in the Youth Labor Market in Canada?,' Canada Public Policy-Analyse de Politiques, Vol. XXVI, SUPPLEMENT/NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL 1, 2000, p. 567.

198 Gerner, Deborah J and Schrodt, Philip A, 'Into the New Millennium: Challenges Facing Palestinian Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century,' Arab Studies Quarterly, Fall 1999, p. 2.

This is evident in such cases as although PCBS identifies that the highest rate of labor force participation was amongst those with engineering and/or math degrees, at 93%,¹⁹⁹ 25% of those surveyed by Sharek (the highest polled result) said that their preferred profession would be a business person.²⁰⁰ This is particularly striking given the difficulties of operating a business as identified above (only 17% of those surveyed aspired to be engineers). Similarly, 23% wished to become teachers although PCBS identifies those with teacher training specialization as having the highest rate of unemployment amongst bachelor level graduates at 31.6%. The question posed by Sharek may touch at aspiration rather than actual career path taken but it is reflective of a mismatch between career potential and career goals.

In this case it is particularly relevant to ensure the provision of education training and career services and guidance in schools increases the opportunity for young people to make well informed choices about education, and their subsequent career pathways. Karen Paton, Allison Fuller and Sue Heath argue that '[p]eople make pragmatically rational decisions in light of the opportunities and information available to them.'²⁰¹ In order for any synergy between education and economy to occur, avoiding over-education and ensuring that young people are guided to appropriate and available job sectors; young people need assistance during transitions and assistance locating employment opportunities upon graduation.

In order for policy makers to proceed in determining appropriate interventions, we first have to understand when decisions are made. The two principle choice based transitions occur during; secondary to tertiary education and from tertiary education to the workplace. The YouthFutures job matching project assists during the latter, in providing information regarding employment opportunities to graduates in the oPt. This will be revealing in terms of following choice making processes, understanding the current level of career orientation within the Palestinian graduates, illuminating the actual level and scope of career prospects for Palestinian graduates in the oPt and allowing us to understand how decisions are made regarding career opportunities by Palestinian graduates.

Cathy Howison and Sheila Semple's exploration of the use of the career services and career education provides some useful insight into the decision making processes. These services are effectively transitions services. Transition into education and subsequently into meaningful employment is not a given and to understand the choices made by school leavers it is imperative to consider the factors that motivate transition. Howison and Semple's critical career development research shows that transitions occur as a result of two types of prompts.

- First prompt: the 'externally prompted transition' is the matrix between the education and training system and the labor market.
- The second: 'personally prompted transitions' are those that depend on circumstanc-

199 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 'Conditions of Graduates from High Education and Vocational Training Survey (December 2005-January 2006). Main Findings,' Palestinian National Authority, May 2006, p. 46.

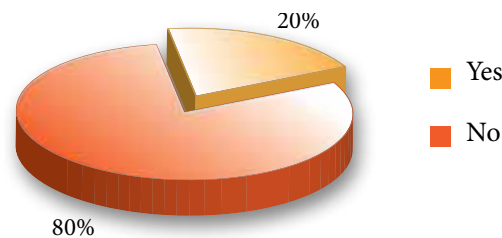
200 Sharek Youth Forum, 'The Youth Talk. Perception Youth on their living conditions,' May 2008, p 37.

201 Paton, Karen, Fuller, Alison and Heath, Sue, 'Educational and Career Decision-Making: Challenging the context of choice,' p. 27.

es which are particular to the person

Stephen Crump concurs with their findings, asserting also that socio-economic and socio-cultural factors, that are 'personally prompted transitions,' play a very strong role in decision making. These are what he describes as being 'opportunity structures, [t]hus "choice" about what qualification one might pursue, at which institution, in which sector, is now seen as better understood as related to individual biographies with institutional identities. Much of this is trapped within stereotypes, class and gender factors, along with attitudes to work and study.'²⁰² Similarly the role of family can have a key influence on how people make career/study decisions. CDS survey revealed that only 20% received advice on what to study from family or friends.

Figure 5: Did you receive university guidance from family or friends?



What is notable though is that these candidates did not receive any other career advice within school. This has been raised as an area of concern by some:

As we are an Arab culture, sometimes parents impose decisions, i.e., wanting their child to be a doctor or accountant and the child wants to do something else. This kind of culture makes it difficult for the child to make their own choices.²⁰³

There is a need for 'shared understanding of the purpose of life planning within the school, employer and parent communities. It is then this community-wide collaborative role that instills and supports life planning in their schools.'²⁰⁴ Efforts need to be made to not only promote students' understanding of careers and vocations open to them but also efforts need to be made to increase community awareness of other jobs in order to create an environment where young students feel free to pursue varied careers/vocations. Several students expressed that they had considerable parental pressure in which subjects they studied, including one student stating that he switched degree courses without notifying his parents from engineering to sociology as he knew they wouldn't approve of his subject choice.

Howison and Semple's findings appear to suggest that a career service within the education and transition process mitigates between the various prompts, particularly the dominance of the 'personally prompted transition' and focuses on the former, integrat-

202 Crump, Stephen, 'Changing Identities and Performance of Post-Compulsory Educational Providers,' *The Australian Educational Researcher*, Vol. 34, No. 3, December 2007, p. 4.

203 Interview, Educationalist, August 2009.

204 Drier, Harry, N, 'Career and Life Planning Key Feature Within Comprehensive Guidance Programs,' *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2000.

ing personal prompts with external prompts; in effect personal priority setting within the context of the external factors,²⁰⁵ such as the labor market and education provision and accessibility. As career services are designed to encourage the development of career thinking and career management skills, the employment planning is integrated with the personal narrative, therefore supporting the subsequent entry of young graduates (and those who opt not to enter tertiary education) into the labor market.

The critical element of a career service is that it is not solely predicated upon facilitating decision making but provides governments an opportunity to integrate economic priority planning by allowing the individual to contextualize this decision making within the broader framework of national priorities and the causal potential job availability. Good quality career guidance and labor market information is seen as necessary to the achievement of the government's education and training targets. A career service is therefore devised to deliver aspects of various government priorities in order to integrate government economic planning into the educational choices of transitioning students, but this must be careful not to conflict with the personal choices of the individual. Career education can be considered a vital contributor to economic prosperity of the oPt as it improves and strengthens human capital. Ideally, pedagogy for employability, i.e. the discourse of education for employment, would be institutionalized within the entire school system.

Contemporary literature emphasizes the role of the career service in secondary education rather than tertiary education, given the element of 'choice' to attend tertiary education, participation appears to denote a stronger awareness of the purpose of education, but there is a need for career education to continue in tertiary education. Although there are several vocationally-oriented curricula in higher education, such as medicine, education and business-related programs, the majority of students in the oPt study non-vocational subjects. This would go some way to indicate the high levels of un-employability of graduates in the oPt and the over-subscription of some courses. Additionally, the lack of coherent strategies to tackle unemployment further exacerbates the problem for Palestinian graduates. As the MoL considers, there are a range of job creation strategies targeted at secondary school leavers but no strategies for graduates that are systemic in nature.

Pedagogy of Careerism

Improving the flow of information between universities, youth and the labor market in an attempt to improve the opportunities of graduates to obtain decent work therefore hinges on the integration of pedagogy of employment that is reinforced through a system of services and provisions that support the young learner's capacity to obtain information about potential career/life paths.

Primarily career services are not to job match, rather they are designed to promote and encourage career self efficacy. Taylor and Betz (1983) reported that this was the successful completion of five tasks: selecting goals, gathering occupational information, problem solving, realistic planning and self-appraisal.²⁰⁶ As Arrington-Kelly argues, 'for students to

205 Howison, Cathy and Semple, Shiela, 'The Effectiveness of Careers Services. The Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department,' January 2001, p. 8.

206 Gianakos, Irene, 'Patterns of Career Choice and Career Decision-Making Self Efficacy,' *Journal of Vocational*

be able to think about their career plans with any kind of depth, they must have a foundation of career awareness and career exploitation experiences.²⁰⁷ This is preferable, and most effective, if embedded within the processes of the education system.

Sultana identifies five career guidance activities that could be employed in order to support knowledge about careers:

1. Career Information;
2. Career Education;
3. Career Counseling;
4. Employment Counseling;
5. Job Placement

Sultana agrees that these conceptually overlap, as typically activities include one or more of the following: informing, advising, assessing, teaching, enabling, advocating, networking, managing, feeding back, systems change, signposting, mentoring, and exposure to work experience and to learning tasters. The template of these approaches allow enough divergence to tailor the form of teaching to the needs of the individual and/or educational institution, dependent upon mode of delivery and resources of the staff and institutions (although it is noted that employing on one of the above methods often contains a considerable degree of gaps). Guidance and counseling programs work most effectively as they allow and encourage the student to self-explore, consider his/her options and establish logical steps to reach their goals.²⁰⁸

Arrington-Kelly argues in favor of a more integrated system that infuses careerism into the pedagogy of education. This system effectively allows the student to 'hit the ground running' when approaching career services and counseling as career awareness and aspiration is conditioned into the student. This can be done in a manner of ways, including:

- Curriculum infusion: identifying career competencies to be taught;
- 'Folding' them into academic curriculum;
- Assessment of current career interests including family histories, interest inventories, personal narratives etc;
- Life skills/personal development, including cooperative learning, self esteem, self confidence, individual learning styles etc.²⁰⁹

Having identified what can be done, there are question marks as to when to do it. Although the QIF YouthFutures Project centers around the transition from tertiary education into the work place, through the duration of the project it became abundantly clear

Behaviour; Vol. 32, Issue 2, April 1999, p. 101.

207 Arrington, Kelly, 'Middle Grades Career Planning Programs,' Journal of Career Development; Vol. 22, No. 2, December 2000, p. 103-104.

208 Drier, Harry, N, 'Career and Life Planning Key Feature Within Comprehensive Guidance Programs,' Journal of Career Development, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2000, p. 74.

209 Arrington, Kelly, 'Middle Grades Career Planning Programs,' Journal of Career Development; Vol. 22, No. 2, December 2000, p. 104.

that career information and guidance *must* begin in an organized and focused manner much earlier.

In the global context, the role of universities in providing the relevant education for economic growth is evident in the rise of vocational curricula at universities. These create a clear link between the needs of the employer and career specific skills. The principle of the knowledge based economy is that globalization results in students possessing the certificates to compete domestically but also allows states to use the human capital of its educated workforce to compete on the international market, to attract investment and to export ideas and technologies.

Career guidance at the tertiary level is essential as it has been acknowledged that the transition from tertiary education to work is a significant and often difficult process for the traditional undergraduate student.²¹⁰ Universities have a key role in assisting students in their preparation for the transition from education into employment by offering services such as providing job search assistance, improving résumés and practicing interview skills. Universities have an additional responsibility as, as Wendenland and Rochen state: 'the transition from undergraduate education to the workplace involves challenges that extend beyond securing employment.'²¹¹ They identify three clear themes that emerge during a graduate's entry into the workplace:

- A change in culture associated with the transition between two different environments;
- The lack of experience and skills required by employers; and
- Inaccurate expectations about work life.²¹²

A curriculum that serves to educate about the potential world of work should be developed throughout the education process, as well as addressing the core competencies and knowledge that students should possess when entering the world of work. Castellano, Stringfield and Stone III consider that all students

*need to learn about social aspects of work, such as democratic rights in the workplace, safety, and the prospect of race or gender discrimination. They need to know about career ladders, labor markets, job-seeking skills, and job-keeping skills. They need to understand how to allocate resources effectively, acquire and use information, develop solid interpersonal skills, use and troubleshoot technology, and work with and modify systems used in business and industry.*²¹³

Holton (1998) noted that the problem emerges from the paradox that although academic success is critical to a graduate's success, the skills acquired to succeed in school

210 Wendenland, Nancy B., Rochen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications or University Career Counsellors,' Journal of Career Development, Volume 35, 2008, p. 151.

211 Wendenland, Nancy B., Rochen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications or University Career Counsellors,' Journal of Career Development, Volume 35, 2008, p. 152.

212 Wendenland, Nancy B., Rochen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications or University Career Counsellors,' Journal of Career Development, Volume 35, 2008, p. 153.

213 Castellano, Marisa, Stringfield, Sam and Stone III, James R. 'Secondary Career and Technical Education and Comprehensive School Reform. Implications for Research and Practice,' Review of Educational Research; Volume 73, No. 2, 2003, p. 245

differ from those that which are required to succeed in the world of work. This is exacerbated by the fact that the work environment vastly differs from an educational environment.²¹⁴

By the time the student has left the tertiary education system they are on a more rigid career path that is to a large degree shaped by the subject the student opted to study. What is imperative in a constrained economic system such as the one that students are better informed upon entering tertiary education regarding their employment opportunities and potential career paths. As Arrington states, it is '... important, they need to know the decisions they make now will greatly influence their future. The consequences of not planning can be severe, such as limiting or eliminating future choices with regard to further education/training or high skill, high wage career opportunities.²¹⁵ In an environment with limited job opportunities, students need to be acutely aware of the impact that opting to undertake certain degree pathways will/can have on their future employment and career prospects.

There is a rich body of literature that supports the positive role of counseling during the preparation stages of attending university. It can be argued though that even this is too late in the one that is given the nature of the literature versus science *Tawjihi* exam track scheme; career pathways are determined much earlier.

Jacksons and Davis argue that there is a near consensus that career exploration and guidance should begin early. They state that not only will this reduce the risk of early drop-out rates by disaffected students but it will also encourage students to engage in a more meaningful debate on their working future.²¹⁶ But how early is too early? While there is little point arguing for most children to make immediate occupational choices, it is imperative for them to develop a meaningful understanding of the relevance of school-based learning to their future careers. Indeed career and life planning has long been considered a process that begins in childhood and a component that is vital to comprehensive guidance programs.²¹⁷ Palladino argues in favor of the pedagogy of careerism being integrated at primary level, stating that they positively effect children's academic achievement, particularly by enhancing emotional well-being and social relationships.²¹⁸

By promoting early interest in the career market, graduates may be more likely to find a diverse range of careers to aspire to, i.e. direct their attention away from finding a job to match their skills upon graduation to developing skills to match their career objectives.

214 Wendenland, Nancy B., Rochen, Aaron B, 'Addressing the College-to-work Transition: Implications for University Career Counsellors,' *Journal of Career Development*, Volume 35, 2008, p. 156

215 Arrington, Kelly, 'Middle Grades Career Planning Programs,' *Journal of Career Development*; Vol. 22, No. 2, December 2000, p. 107.

216 Castellano, Marisa, Stringfield, Sam and Stone III, James R. 'Secondary Career and Technical Education and Comprehensive School Reform. Implications for Research and Practice,' *Review of Educational Research*; Volume 73, No. 2, 2003, p. 261-2.

217 Palladino-Schuthesis, Donna E, 'Elementary Career Interaction Programs: Social Action Initiatives,' *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 31, No. 3. 2005, p. 186.

218 Palladino-Schuthesis, Donna E, 'Elementary Career Interaction Programs: Social Action Initiatives,' *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 31, No. 3. 2005, p.188.

Magnuson concurs with this idea, stating that: 'career planning is a life skill which embodies the concepts of career awareness, career exploration and skill development and which begins early in one's life.'²¹⁹ Programs that introduce young students to the work world and help them to understand the connection between what they are learning in school and what is expected in the work world are essential to promote lifelong learning, and a productive educational environment

The early integration of career awareness is premised on the need to interlink this with child development and self-efficacy. Development theorists suggest that findings of self-worth begin quite young, when children start to develop autonomy and industry. Early integration of career development is premised on the theory that it is fundamentally linked to self-perception. Gianokos summarizes this idea to be that the 'patterning of children's perceived efficacy influences the type of occupational activities they believe they can do.'²²⁰

Linda Gottfredson's theory addresses career aspirations, supporting Gianokos' hypothesis, believing that they are based on three assumptions:

- Career development is an attempt to implement one's self-concept;
- Career satisfaction is influenced by congruence between career and self perceptions;
- People develop occupational stereotypes that grade them in the selection process.²²¹

Essentially, career guidance must be an ongoing feature in a comprehensive education that focuses not only on assisting students to pass their examinations and enter tertiary education but also to assist them achieve decent employment upon graduation, by allowing them to explore their own interests and abilities within the world of work, and identify key employment clusters that allow them to develop these.²²²

It is therefore significant to bear in mind that career planning has several components:

- Life career development is a skill;
- Life career planning includes a series of sub-skills;
- Career awareness and career exploration form the foundation for effective life career planning;
- Idiosyncratic factor influence the decision making of each person;

Child development and career development theories are inter-related.

219 Palladino-Schuthesis, Donna E, 'Elementary Career Interaction Programs: Social Action Initiatives,' *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 31, No. 3. 2005.

220 Gianakos, Irene, 'Patterns of Career Choice and Career Decision-Making Self Efficacy,' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*; Vol. 32, Issue 2, April 1999, p. 133.

221 Palladino-Schuthesis, Donna E, 'Elementary Career Interaction Programs: Social Action Initiatives,' *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. 31, No. 3. 2005, p. 97.

222 Arrington, Kelly, 'Middle Grades Career Planning Programs,' *Journal of Career Development*; Vol. 22, No. 2, December 2000, p. 104.

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Time for reform

Chapters one and two identify considerable obstacles facing policy planners – constraints of the occupation combined by the nature of the education services have hindered the employment potential of the graduating workforce. Instigating educational reform, which places an emphasis on maximizing the potential of students by providing coherent direction tailored to the interests and needs of the student, has considerable potential in provoking both educational and economic reform. Career and transition services enable policy makers to direct graduates towards careers that have been identified in a knowledge based economy as well as create a body of graduates from diverse academic and vocational backgrounds. Career and transition services can serve to break the traditional science versus literature divide in academic selection by guiding students towards interest in subjects across a broader base, including promoting the intake up students into the TVET stream. It is apparent that students lack direction in career choices, creating a glut of graduates in certain sectors and under-subscription in others. A thorough examination of how the education system works in tandem with the economic sector is required, with career and transition services positively mediating between the two by improving the flow of information between the needs of the labor market and fulfilling the educational needs of the student to create a vibrant, diverse and adaptable labor force.

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