

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful

The Palestinian National Authority

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Education Sector and Cross-Sector Strategy

"2011 – 2013"

January 10, 2010

Preliminary draft

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Introduction

The goal behind building the education sector strategy (2011-2013) is to move Palestinian education from the process of rebuilding what was destroyed by the occupation and halt the deterioration in the educational process to the phase of comprehensive and holistic planning that takes care of quality and quantity and that translates the economic and social development needs as mentioned in the specific national goals of the 13th government working program "Palestine: Ending the Occupation and Establishing the State". The goal also entails reinforcing the reform and development agenda that is being implemented by the PNA in the context of establishing for Palestinian statehood.

The education sector strategy was based on diagnosing the current situation of the Strategic Plan for Educational Development at the Ministry of Education which was built on the basis of a thorough analysis of the education sector and its various aspects and dimensions with the participation of all stakeholders: the governmental, private and UNRWA, etc. in order to provide a holistic and objective description and analysis of the educational situation. This was done through reviewing the approved national strategic plans, namely, the five-year developmental plan of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2008-2012), the developmental reform plan, the Palestinian Independence Declaration Plan and the Guidebook on sector and cross-sector strategies Guidebook.

Throughout its stages, the strategy was built on the four basic pillars that were endorsed by the five-year developmental plan of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE). The four pillars are: enrollment, quality of education, management, linkage with the needs of the market and society, as realized and defined according to the international and universal criteria and standards. The process of building the plan also took into consideration the various sectors that make up the education sector: kindergartens, general education (basic and secondary stages), literacy programs, lifelong or continuing education, vocational education and higher education.

Moreover, the process used the same simulation system that was used in developing the five-year developmental plan of the MOEHE in order to set up the education policies, and to estimate the costs and projected indicators for the next plan.

Despite the young age of the Palestinian education experience, several educational accomplishments have been noted at the qualitative and quantitative levels. Notable examples include: the development of the Palestinian curriculum which reflects the needs of Palestinian students and the society's requirements, unifies the Palestinian education system, and resolves the issue of duality in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Other examples include the increase in number of schools from 1,080 schools in 1994/1995 to 1,661 schools in 2004/2005; reduced rates of school dropouts from 3.33% in 1994/1995 to 1.1% in 2004/2005, and other indicators that are listed in the chapter on education situational analysis. Despite the growing need for quantitative development as this aspect was not completed in the previous plans and because of

the continuous changes in the demographic and geographical realities as a result of the Israeli policies that aim to distort reality, the second five-year developmental plan (2007-2011) was developed to achieve quality improvement in line with the needs and requirements of the Palestinian reality in a manner that can cope with the modern era of technology which calls for continuous updating and modernization.

The first chapter of the plan presents a diagnostic summary of the current situation, which is one of the most important phases of strategic planning (long-term or medium-term planning). This chapter is also important as it constitutes the basic reference to study and comprehend the current situation and to define the priorities of the next phase which is viewed as the most practical step towards the aspired plan which should meet the short and long term needs and answer, at the same time, the problems of the current situation. Thus, the phase of diagnosing the current educational situation in Palestine depended on the use of more than one source and methodology in gathering the necessary information and data, mainly the information found in the diagnostic section of the five-year developmental plan of the MOEHE, which is considered a database for the purpose of education situational analysis, as it depended on the participation of all sectors of the society, such as individuals, government institutions and NGOs, in order to achieve a comprehensive process of gathering and analyzing all relevant information and come up with a joint vision on the Palestinian education reality for the next five years.

The diagnostic work also resulted in a very important element: the drafting of strategic goals, results, general principles, programs and activities for the years of the sector plan. After defining the procedural plan, a plan was prepared to monitor, assess and follow up the plan implementation, and assess the progress and annual accomplishments along with a process of defining the needed changes as a result of facts on the ground or expected developments.

Palestinian higher education has witnessed fast developments in the past four decades; it started to present educational and learning models whose outcomes brought about students and graduates capable of engaging in the local, regional and international labor markets as a competent human power with high qualifications. These developments were accompanied by many challenges and problems, such as the problem of expansion resulting from the urgent demand which came as result of the fast-rate increase in number of secondary schools graduates (Tawjihi), and the problem of competence and quality pertaining to the unplanned and random development of the higher education, in addition to the problems of funding resulting from the decreased Arab financial support to the PLO after the Gulf War in 1990. Moreover, there is the current severe financial crisis facing the PNA, which has raised concerns regarding the financial sustainability of this sector and its ability to survive vibrantly serving the citizen and the society.

In light of the above-mentioned challenges and problems, the priorities of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research which was established in 1996 included the establishment of a rationalization plan for the higher education sector for the period 1997-2001 because the Ministry believed that strategic planning is one of the most effective and useful administrative works as it defines priorities and fields of change and provides the necessary resources and follow up mechanisms. The status quo was assessed and steps were prepared to rectify the situation in the form

of a rough draft. Notable success was achieved then: the emergence of Law no. (11) for Higher Education.

In 1999, the Ministry felt that the five-year rationalization plan was incomplete in terms of vision and message, and formed a committee or a team to set up a ten-year plan for higher education. The committee didn't complete its work and didn't produce the strategy in its final form. Thus, work on the strategy was frozen for some time, and then it was revived once again. Work in this field has fluctuated between action and suspension depending on changes in the government and external funding availability until this year.

This year, the decision to set up a ten-year strategic plan for higher education was renewed. Preparatory work started, making use of previous surveys of the sector; work is still underway and is expected to be finalized in the last quarter of 2010.

In line with the above-mentioned decision, and upon a decision by the Council of Ministers on August 17, 2009. The Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development demanded the formulation of medium-term sector strategies, aiming to achieve a national plan for the period 2011-2013. Based on the above, the following is the medium-term strategy.

Education Sector Strategy "2011-2013" – Methodology

The Ministry of Planning commissioned the task of preparing the education sector strategy to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) in its capacity as the body that supervises the management and funding of the largest part of the Palestinian education system. The MOEHE formed a sector strategy national team headed by Assistant Deputy Minister for Educational Development and Planning at the Ministry. The team represents the various sectors and partner educational institutions at all levels and from the various private and governmental authorities, such as the UNRWA, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc.

In light of the of five-year strategic plan for educational development 2008-2012 which was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), and which adopted the principle of participation of all partners in the process of planning, and which was ratified and endorsed as a framework for funding by several donor countries, the sector strategy national team reviewed the five-year strategic plan and studied the course of planning at the Ministry in the first two meetings and reached the following methodologies and recommendations:

1- The need for the education sector strategy to be based on the strategic plan for educational development 2008-2012 of the Ministry. The national team reviewed the plan and drafted comments and remarks on the plan in order to adopt it as a basic reference in the process of preparing and developing the education sector strategy, including diagnosis, goals, policies and targets. In preparing the plan, the Ministry gave room for all partners at all levels to join in, and the partners included all stakeholders who influence and who are influenced by the plan and its implementation, and the parties who have a role in supervising, reviewing, assessing and amending the plan. The central team for planning in general, higher and vocational education assumed the role of supervising and leading the planning process in coordination with **the technical team for general and higher education** which consisted of representatives from the General Directorates in the Ministry, including higher education, which was led by there specialized teams:

- * Data and Simulation System: To provide all educational data and indicators in coordination with the technical team to build the simulation system.
- * Studies and Projects: To provide all data from available educational studies and reclassify them according to requirements of diagnosis and analysis.
- * General Education: to draft the elements of five-year plan for each of the following stages: early childhood, basic, secondary, literacy programs, lifelong or continuing education, in full coordination with the members of the technical team, and gather sector diagnostic inputs from all directorates and analyze the inputs and build up a structure for the plan for all educational sectors in coordination with the technical team and the general directorates.

The tasks that were commissioned to the technical team and the working groups were supported by various reference bodies and partners: funding parties, NGOs, the family, education directorates, private sector, local universities, the UNRWA, and other bodies, such as students, teachers, principals, etc... and at the same time, a

team of experts was formed to provide support to the process of implementing all phases.

The process of diagnosis has gone through two basic phases: the first phase dealt with the process of gathering information from the various relevant sources, including the general directorates in the Ministry, and the directorates and government schools, and the previous studies which were conducted by the ministry, or the donor countries, mainly the World Bank, the UNESCO and the British Council, in addition to the database at the Planning General Directorate and the specialized database at the various general directorates. The second phase included the process of analyzing the current situation. This phase depended basically on classification and analysis of information based on three pillars: enrollment, quality of education and management. The analysis covered the various sectors that make up the education sector: kindergartens, the basic and secondary stages, literacy education, lifelong or continuing education and vocational education. The Education Planning Handbook issued by the UNESCO was one of the most important reference materials that were adopted when defining the three main pillars.

The most important accomplishment that resulted from the education situational analysis was the **Diagnosis Document** that was updated to include 2007/2008 – 2008/2009. This document covered all aspects of the education sector and was disseminated to all general directorates for review and discussion in several workshops; later, the document was amended and a final version was produced. The education situational analysis also resulted in the preparation of a **List of Challenges** that face the Ministry on the short and long terms. Based on the above, a process of review was conducted regarding the **General Principles, Vision and Message** of the Ministry, along with the drafting of the general goals and specific objectives of the various general directorates.

The **Simulation System**, which was developed in the first five-year plan, was made use of in preparing various scenarios for the plan based on changing the strategies; this process came after updating the data pertaining to the educational indicators. This was followed by the process of preparing the plan budget which was distributed to all sectors. The simulation system is considered the tool and method to calculate the annual educational projections because it consists of three serial sub-systems for projection which are interlinked through mathematical formulas: system to project student numbers, system to project population and teacher numbers, and system to project school buildings.

As for **coordination with the partners** to prepare the plan, the process was conducted at the local and external levels. The first level included coordination with local partners, such as the private sector, the UNRWA, the universities, the local community. The second level included coordination with funding parties and international organizations. Nature of coordination was different between the two levels. Coordination at the first level focused on participation to enrich the new education situational analysis to define the future trends. The second level was divided into two approaches: the first approach moved towards offering technical support to build up the plan while the second trend dealt with offering financial support to build up and implement the plan.

The methodology used in building the plan came as part of a **clear strategy to develop and improve the skills of the Ministry's personnel working in the field of strategic planning**. Work at the outset embarked on setting up the plan to be an indispensable part of the action to implement the concepts pertaining to planning, as well as reinforcing the **practical implementation of the concept of participatory planning** and team spirit and sense of belonging and integration. The process included all general directorates and covered all levels. The methodology resulted in defining several training needs for the personnel working either directly or in a manner that complements with other aspects of work. It was possible to define several skills that need to be developed, whether at the level of planning or implementation.

2- Expansion in subsectors of kindergartens, literacy education and lifelong or continuing education: since these sectors are not subject only to the authority of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education but also to other authorities in the private and public sectors, and since the Ministry undertakes some supervisory and administrative in them, it was decided to expand these sectors more than what is mentioned in the developmental plan of the Ministry in order to cover the needs of all private and government responsible authorities.

3- Highlighting education in Jerusalem and expansion of programs and projects to support all aspects of education and find means to overcome challenges and obstacles

4- The General Directorate of Planning at the Ministry was commissioned to assume the role of the technical party to prepare the strategy and its tasks can be summarized as follows:

- * To review the five-year developmental plan of the Ministry and update the data on diagnosis, activities, programs and activities in general education, literacy education and kindergartens in accordance with the results of the annual reports on the accomplishments of the five-year plan (the rolling plan) of 2009, and conduct the amendments in according to the feedback mentioned in the results of the review of the education sector strategy national team.

- * To coordinate with all partners and authorities responsible for the above-mentioned subsectors (kindergartens, literacy education, and lifelong or continuing education) whether private or government parties in order to complete the strategic cycle of these sectors, in terms of diagnosis, policies and targets.

- * To form subgroups for each of the above-mentioned subsectors that will hold meetings and gather studies and data to analyze them with the competent parties and experts in each sector, and then submit the results to the technical team in the General Directorate of Planning which will study all the material and include them in a final document.

- * To prepare the education sector strategy preliminary draft after re-drafting some of the clauses in the developmental plan of the Ministry and updating its data and amending some clauses and complete the incomplete strategic cycles so that it can become an education sector strategy document, and then to present the document to the strategy national team for arbitration.

*** To review the documents that resulted from the developmental plan of the Ministry:**

- **Teacher Training Strategy Review / MOEHE:** In cooperation with the UNRWA and higher education institutions and through support from the UNESCO, the MOEHE developed a strategy for pre-service and in-service training and rehabilitation for teachers; elements of this strategy focused on building teachers vision, teacher training program, education as a profession, and rehabilitation system management.

- To prepare the education sector strategy preliminary draft after re-drafting some of the clauses in the developmental plan of the Ministry and updating its data and amending some clauses and complete the incomplete strategic cycles so that it can become an education sector strategy document, and then to present the document to the strategy national team for arbitration.

- **Review of administrative cadre training plan at the Ministry:** The planning team at the General Directorate for Planning in the area of general education reviewed the draft plan that was prepared with the assistance of the Representative of the International Institute for Planning in coordination with the National Institute for Training and General Administration in order to train and rehabilitate the administrative cadre in the Ministry at the three levels: The Ministry, the Directorates and the Schools. The training needs were estimated on the basis of the five-year plan in order to contribute towards its implementation. The fields of training for the administrative cadre focused on: international trends in developing policies, strategic and procedural planning, human and financial resources management, project design and implementation, monitoring, assessment and follow up, reporting, communication, English Language and some specialized skills, introduction to school management, International Computer Driving License.

During the years 2004-2009, several sectors of administrators were trained on the various administration levels with the context of the two tracks of preparation and empowerment, and in the fields of administrative leadership and all levels of planning and computer skills in the fields of specialized and general skills. More than 4590 participants were trained on several tracks. This strategy targets the administrative cadre at all administrative levels: higher directorates: general directors and their deputies; medium level directorates: directors of education directorates and heads of departments; executive directorates: heads of sections, administrative and technical employees.

Themes found in the strategy include specialized and general topic and administrative skills which meet the various job competences. The school principals will make up one of the strategic pillars for training the administrative personnel, and there will be a separate plan to develop their capacities. The strategy to train administrative personnel will devote a separate part for blended (e-learning) learning and training.

Due to the special features of higher, vocational and technical education, a special committee was formed, consisting of the following: Assistant Deputy for Higher Education as a coordinator, the general directors in charge of planning at the Palestinian universities and officials in charge of planning in four community colleges, and a representative of Palestine Academy for Science and Technology,

and a representative of the Chambers of Commerce and a representative of the Industry Union.

The committee held a first meeting to define the required role and clarify the demands of the Ministry of Planning and agree on the working mechanism. During another larger meeting which included also representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Economy, Planning, Labor and Social Affairs, the discussion tackled strategic themes, goals, and relevant policies and the interventions pertaining to the implementation of every policy. All were conclusions from analysis of the current situation and the weaknesses – as we will see later – in addition to the review of several surveys and former studies. After that, several internal meetings were held at the level of employees of the Ministry (higher education sector and policies committee) who reached a consensus on the goals, policies and implementation programs. All this happened within the general comprehensive vision of the Ministry and the general principles that guide its work and the main policies that were ratified by the governance representatives, such as the Higher Education Council. All the process came as translation of the comprehensive view and commitments of the PNA and the medium-term reform and development goals and the needs and the aspirations of the Palestinian society.

This draft in its current form was distributed to all planning officials at the universities and community colleges with the hope to get their feedback during the period allotted for amendments as defined by the Ministry for Planning and Administrative Development.

Chapter One

1- Executive Summary

1-1 Education Sector Vision “2011-2013”

In order to contribute towards the accomplishment of the Palestinian state vision as ratified in the document of the 13th government program “Palestine... Ending Occupation and Establishing the State”, represented in the establishment of the independent and democratic state on the basis of respect to human rights and citizenship that guarantee rights and duties to all its citizens on equal footing, and in adhering to the values of humanity and religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the international community, the education sector shall seek to:

“Prepare a Palestinian human being who shows pride in his homeland, identity and Arab and Islamic culture, and contributes to the development of his society, and seeks knowledge and creativity, and interacts positively with the requirements of scientific and technological advances, and is capable of competing in the scientific and practical fields and is open to regional and international cultures and markets, and is capable of building a society that is committed to values of humanity and religious tolerance and that can develop a quality higher education system with the following qualities: easily accessible, variety of programs, different levels, flexible, competent, effective, sustainable, and responsive to the local needs.”

1-2 Most important policies of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education "2011-2013"

Education for All: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is committed to provide quality education for all school age children in general education, higher education, vocational education, literacy education and lifelong or continuing education.

Focus on Quality: To focus on improving quality of education in the next phase and to implement the teacher rehabilitation national strategy, and there will be review and development of the general education curricula and school textbooks on a regular basis.

Gender: Despite the notable achievement of the education system in this regard, additional measures have been taken to bridge the remaining gaps between males and females in the rates of enrollment at all levels and in all kinds of education, and to encourage women to work in the field of education at all levels, especially in the highest decision making posts.

Reducing Poverty: To grant special attention and care to the poor through providing educational services in the marginalized areas and poorest areas, especially in the areas near the Apartheid Wall, and exempt poor students from school fees and open kindergartens in the poor remote areas.

Students with Special Needs: additional efforts shall be exerted in the field of inclusive education and at all levels of education.

Matching and linking education with socioeconomic development: special focus will be given to the process of linking education, especially in the post-secondary stage, to the labor market and the needs of the society.

Science and Technology: There will be improvement in studying science and technology with special attention to expanding the use of Information Technology and Communications in education at all levels and in computer related areas, and the policy of science and technology will be developed in higher education along with encouragement of relevant research.

Role of the Private Sector: To integrate strategically the private sector through holding consultations in the field of policies, especially in the fields of higher education, vocational education, kindergartens, literacy education and lifelong or continuing education.

Improving Partnerships: To coordinate and cooperate with the UNRWA and reinforce the relations with the private sector and international development partners, and have all partners join the dialogue on policies, planning, implementation, monitoring, regular review of the progress that will be achieved in the plan. The education strategic developmental plan shall be a framework to improve partnership. Investment outside the context of the plan will not be encouraged.

Planning and Organization Capacity: Work will focus on developing systems to support planning decisions and skills and the implementation and management of the plan. Work will also focus on developing a training strategy in the relevant fields and on setting up and implementing and linking incentives with training. There will be assessment of the performance of the various units in the Ministry, directorates, higher education institutions and schools on the basis of the progress that will be achieved in the plan.

Decentralization and Restructuring the Ministry: Measures will be taken to move towards decentralization, in addition to reviewing the organizational structure in the Ministry at all levels and institutions along with review of systems, instructions and job description of all posts in the various units.

Jerusalem: Education in Jerusalem will be given special attention, especially in the field of provision of classrooms and schools and improving salaries of teachers, and encouraging the donors to invest in education in Jerusalem. Loans and grants shall be provided to needy students in the higher education institutions in Jerusalem.

1-3 Strategic Goals "2011-2013"

The following main goals have been defined for the education sector strategy:

Goal 1:	To increase school age children enrollment opportunities and improve the system's capacity to keep them in schools (enrollment)
Goal 2:	To improve quality of education and learning (quality)
Goal 3:	To develop the capacities in planning and management and improve the administrative and financial systems and their uses (Management)
Goal 4:	To achieve gradual transformation in the higher education sector from supply-oriented education to demand-oriented education because this will increase more harmony between the higher education outputs and the market needs (relational), especially with regards to higher education, including vocational and technical education

*** Expected Outcomes:**

Several prioritized working programs have been deduced in the various sub sectors in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals; implementing these operational programs will lead to the most important expected results as follows:

1- Enrollment:

- * Increase in the student enrollment rates, including the students with special physical and psychological needs.
- * Increased capacity of the system to keep students enrolled.
- * Provision of education opportunities in the areas of literacy programs and lifelong or continuing education and supplementary opportunities for those who graduate from the literacy programs or continuing education.
- * Support to education in Jerusalem (reinforce national education in Jerusalem)

2- Quality:

- * Review of the Palestinian curriculum of formal education and literacy programs and continuing education.
- * Reinforced employment of learning technology.
- * Improved school and educational environment criteria.
- * Reinforced and development of the competences of the teaching staff.
- * Reinforced and development of the system of measurement and assessment.

3- Management:

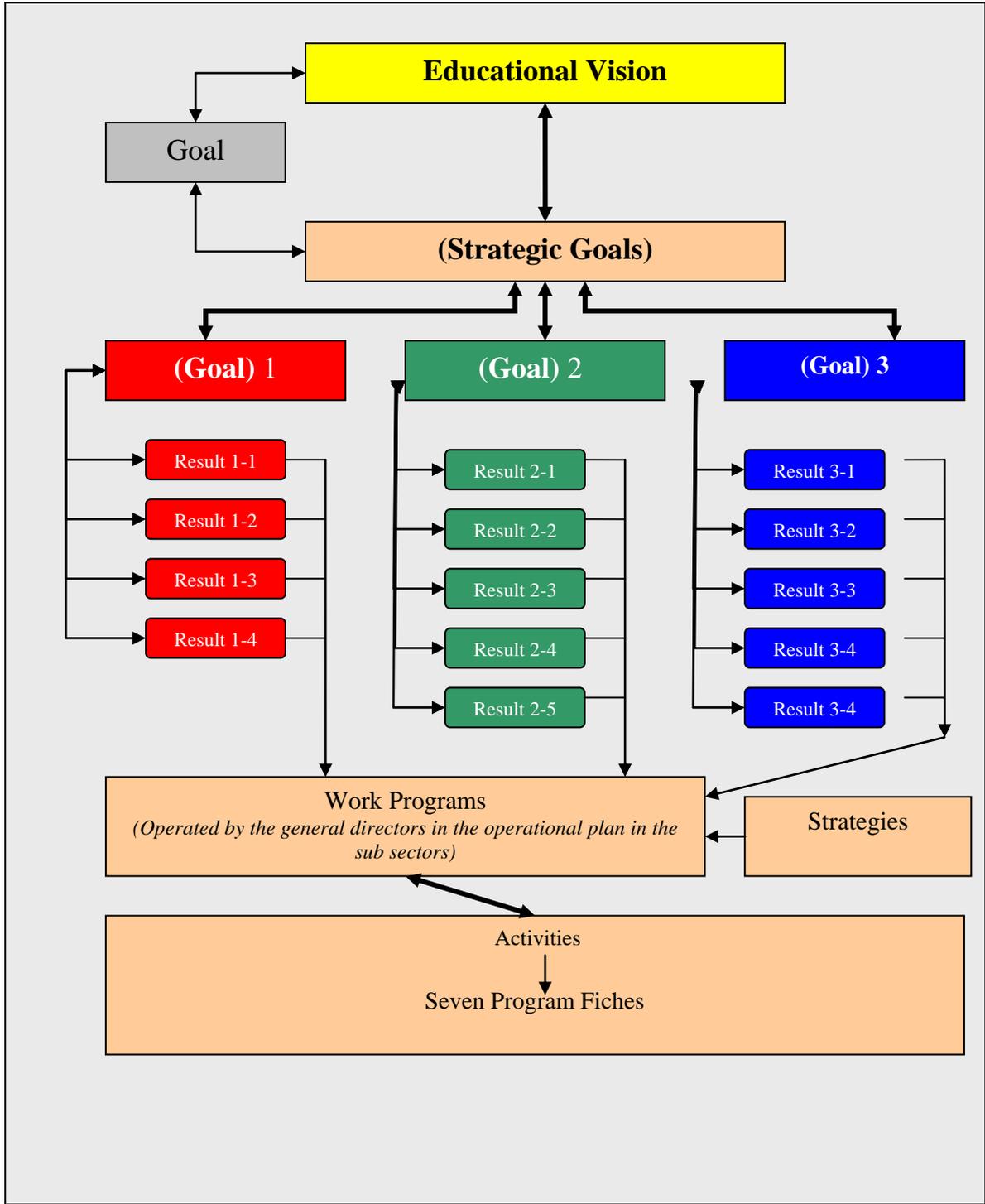
- * Developed administrative systems to serve the educational goals.
- * Developed planning system at all levels.
- * Developed financial system for educational planning.
- * Upgraded levels of competence of the administrative cadre at all levels.
- * Developed cooperation and partnerships with universities and the civil society and partners in development, such as the donors and the UNRWA.

1-4 Program Fiches by sector goals:

The sector strategy adopted the same program fiches that resulted in the strategic developmental plan of the Ministry in order to facilitate mechanisms of funding and budgeting.

The program fiches by sector goals

Goal	Program Fiche
1- First Goal (enrollment)	* fiche to provide the physical infrastructure * fiche to provide equipment and educational aids
2- Second Goal (quality)	* curriculum development fiche * fiche of teacher rehabilitation and teaching staff training strategy * fiche of school health, educational counseling and students activities
3- Third Goal (management)	* fiche of capacity building in financial and educational planning * fiche of developing administrative and legislative commitment



1-5 Criteria Defining Priorities

General Criteria:

The definition of priorities was based on the main policies in the five-year plan, as follows:

* Education for All (enrollment)

* Top priority is granted to general education as opposed to other sub sectors.

* Top priority is granted to enrollment access due to the natural growth as opposed to the priority of keeping the students and reducing dropout rates.

* Quality

* Priority is granted to the management of the five-year plan as opposed to other planning activities.

* Priorities selected in the field of management and decentralized management.

* Planning and Management

* Education in Jerusalem

* Top priority was granted to some selected activities.

* Special Education

* Top priority was granted to some selected basic activities.

* Gender: it is interrelated issue – there are no specific priority activities.

* Reducing level of poverty

* Medium level priority was granted to literacy programs, lifelong or continuing education and students support programs.

Specific criteria:

Priority (1): To maintain sustainability of work in the educational system through providing enrollment opportunities for all – some activities are necessary to maintain the educational process as is the current reality.

Priority (2): To select some main and necessary basic activities to accomplish the goals in general education sector – selective activities that deal directly with the process of improving the outputs of the educational-learning process.

Priority (3): Supplementary activities in the subsectors: general education, kindergartens, literacy programs and lifelong or continuing education.

Priority (4): Better development in the areas of enrollment, quality and management – secondary activities.

1-6 Implementation and Follow up arrangements

The sector strategy is translated into annual operational plans at the central level for the various general directorates in the Ministries, and then in the departments and their sections in the directorates and regions, and these will be reflected in the schools that belong to every ministry and region.

The annual budget for the education sector is taken from the annual operational plan in the sector plan. The process of programming and planning that have been developed in the General Directorate for Planning and Projects in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education might contribute and facilitate the process of preparing the budget because it links the financial system in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Finance Ministry with the system of planning and projects in order to apply the principle of program-oriented budgeting from the system of budgeting and accounting.

In order to adhere to the principle of building operational plans and budgets based on the education strategic developmental plan, there will be follow up with the general directorates and other units in the Ministry at all levels along with assessment based on the progress report and the extent of progress in achieving the agreed upon targets in the annual operational plan. The quarterly and annual reports offer indicators on the work progress in the various units in the right direction and it will be necessary to take corrective measures in case of discovering any deviations away from plan. The performance of the various directorates in the Ministry shall be assessed at the centralized and decentralized levels based on the plan implementation.

Coordination has been achieved with the Planning Ministry and the Finance Ministry to link the budget with the plan. In order to have a program-oriented budget, activities and the operational programs of the plan were gathered in fiche programs.

1-7 System of Follow up and Assessment

In addition to the follow up mechanisms used in the process of implementation follow up as mentioned above, which depends on following up the operational plans and progress in implementing these plans, an additional system of follow up and assessment has been added to monitor progress in terms of meeting the goals and results drafted in the plan; this system depends on monitoring several main performance indicators at the level of goals and results as follows:

Enrollment Indicators

- * Enrollment rate in the first grade
- * Gross enrollment rate in the basic grades
- * Gross enrollment rate in the secondary grades
- * Net enrollment rate in the basic grades
- * Enrollment rate in the secondary grades
- * Stay-at-school rate until the fifth grade
- * Stay-at-school rate until the tenth grade
- * Rate of promotion from basic grades to secondary grades
- * Rate of students in Jerusalem under the PNA supervision.

Quality Indicators

- * Content and methodology of curricula that meets the educational needs of the Palestinian society
- * Ratio of teacher engagement in the education/learning process
- * Rate of use of educational techniques in learning
- * Students achievement in the normative tests at the directorate and school level in three main subjects for three grades to be selected annually (provided that they do not overlap with the later indicator 2.5)
- * Students achievement in the national normative tests in Arabic and mathematics for the fourth and tenth grades
- * Ratio of students enrolled in the scientific stream after the tenth grade
- * Ratio of qualified teachers in accordance with teacher training strategy
- * Ratio of schools that achieve child-friendly school standards

Management Indicators

- * Computerized information system connecting all parts inside the General Directorate for Planning and Projects in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- * Finance/budget system designed in a manner that meets with the general expenditure system
- * Project implementation mechanisms adapted between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the donor countries and the local communities
- * Ratio of qualified employees and administration personnel in line with the job description
- * Decisions are made at a senior level based on studies and the information system

Annual Review Meetings and Rolling Plans

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education organizes, in coordination with the sector-wide team, annual review meetings to review the progress achieved in the plan compared with the previous year and agree on the goals of the next year. This will be an opportunity to renew the joint commitment and responsibility to implement the strategy on the part of the PNA in general (The Ministry), the stakeholders, the donors, and other partners. Various partners, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the main ministries, shall make their presentations, including their positions on the plan and its implementation for the next years, and the Ministry and the sector-wide team will organize quarterly meetings to discuss the interim reports.

The Ministry will also organize a mid-review for the progress achieved in the plan, in addition to an assessment process at the end of the five years.

Sector-wide Approach (SWAP)

The process of drafting the sector policies and strategies is a comprehensive integrated matter. This is the first step that is needed to make sure that the development efforts are not fragmented by the various partners and that there won't be any overlap or competition in the plan implementation but collective concerted contributions to achieve a common vision and goals in an integrated approach. The first necessary step lies in developing the education sector through the wide-sector approach and other necessary steps which are joint planning, funding scope, implementation and joint regular monitoring and medium-term planning which should be linked to the national development context. The sector strategy is a completely national strategy as it covers the education services offered by the UNRWA, private institutions and the NGOs. It is a major step in the direction of a national strategy since the Ministry is the largest provider and supervisor of education services. Therefore, the Ministry will cooperate and coordinate with the other providers through implementing the plan in an integrated national context.

Tremendous efforts have been exerted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in order to move towards the sector approach in the process of supporting and financing the education sector. The Ministry was able to reach a joint Principles Memo of Understanding to support the education sector. The memo was signed by 15 donor countries. Moreover, the donor countries adopted the strategic plan to develop education as the sole terms of reference to all support mechanisms. As a result, five donor countries signed an agreement to unify support and funding

mechanisms after conducting a process of assessment and review of the preparedness of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Finance Ministry to include this as part of the administrative and financial systems.

An agreement was reached with the five donor countries to adopt two financing methods: the first method deals with adopting one single financing basket to finance all the activities of the plan as part of the above mentioned priorities; the second method entails direct support to selective projects and activities of the strategic plan. Both methods stipulate that funding must go through the Finance Ministry through the special account.

Major distinguishing features of the education sector strategic plan

In light of the continuous performance development that the Ministry seeks to achieve and adopt as a general approach in the various activities and because of the experience that has been accumulated in the process of strategic planning, major landmarks have been achieved in preparing and implementing the plan with the following major distinguishing features:

- 1- The plan depended on sound review with full awareness of the five-year plan of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2008-2012).
- 2- The plan depended basically on national efforts.
- 3- The strategy depended on the principle of participation in the various phases of preparation and implementation.
- 4- The strategy has been prepared on the basis of the education context diagnosis of the Ministry's strategic plan for educational development
- 5- The strategy included all sectors: daycare centers, kindergartens, general education, literacy programs, lifelong or continuing education, vocational education and higher education.
- 6- The strategy was based on a system of follow up and assessment of the strategic plan for educational development with more detailed work in some sectors in order to achieve the goals and results and not only follow up the achievement of the operational plans.
- 7- The budget of partner ministries can be extracted completely from the strategy through implementing the program-oriented budget.
- 8- The donor countries can adopt this strategy as the sole reference on all projects that will be supported in the context of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Chapter Two

General Education

(Kindergartens, Basic and Secondary Education, and Lifelong
or Continuing Education)

The Strategic Framework and Education Vision of Palestinian Education “2011-2013”

The Palestinian development vision is considered the compass which guided the education vision of the five-year plan and the message of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, including developmental and economic values and approaches, human principles and rights dealing with justice and gender equality and access to education for all.

In order to contribute towards the accomplishment of the Palestinian state vision as ratified in the document of the 13th government program “Palestine... Ending Occupation and Establishing the State”, represented in the establishment of the independent and democratic state on the basis of respect to human rights and citizenship that guarantee rights and duties to all its citizens on equal footing, and in adhering to the values of humanity and religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the international community, the education sector shall seek to:

Prepare a Palestinian human being who shows pride in his homeland, identity and Arab and Islamic culture, and contributes to the development of his society, and seeks knowledge and creativity, and interacts positively with the requirements of scientific and technological advances, and is capable of competing in the scientific and practical fields and is open to regional and international cultures and markets, and is capable of building a society that upholds the principle of gender equality and that clings to the values of humanity and religious tolerance and that can adapt quickly with the changes that might affect the environment and conditions and that can meet with the local needs in order to achieve sustainable development.

The Message of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education “2011-2013”

The message of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is to guarantee access to education for all and improve the quality and standards of education in order to meet the needs of the learners in adapting with modern requirements and to provide a sound balanced environment that qualifies the citizens to defend the national rights and perform the duties with competence and mental capacities.

Thus, the general principles of the vision and message were based on the following (strategic pillars):

- * Education and development is a human right to all.
- * Education that contributes to the preservation of the national identity and heritage and the building of the Palestinian state.
- * Education that contributes to the efforts facing challenges and emergency conditions and crises.
- * Education that reinforces values and principles of democracy and humanity and religious tolerance.
- * Education that can support comprehensive development and openness to the regional and international markets.
- * Education that copes with technological and scientific advancement and makes use of these advances.
- * Education that raises awareness on human rights and gender equality.

- * Student-centered learning and education that reinforces the professional and social status of the teacher.
- * Education that reinforces community participatory responsibility for education (universities, NGOs and official bodies).

2- The Organizational Structure of Palestinian Education: Palestinian education consists of five levels:

1- Preschool Education (Kindergartens): This education lasts two years and children enrolled in it are in the age group (3-5). National and international institutions and organizations provide the education services for this sector. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education supervises this sector in an indirect manner through the drafting of specifications and requirements needed to establish kindergartens based on physical conditions (the facilities) and criteria to employ workers and the curriculum to be used. The Ministry opened a limited number of governmental kindergartens.

2- School Education: Education in this sector lasts 12 years starting with the 1st grade until the 12th grade; children join school in the 1st grade at the age of six years. Schooling in this sector is divided into two phases:

1- Compulsory basic education stage: this stage includes from the first grade until the tenth grade.

2- Secondary education stage which consists of academic education and includes 11th and 12th grades; this sector is also linked with vocational and technical education which is under the supervision of the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education in the Higher Education Sector. Age of students at this stage ranges between 17 and 18. At the end of this stage, students sit for a general examination in order to get the General Secondary Education Certificate (Tawjihi).

3- Higher Education or Post-Secondary Education: this stage consists of institutions and programs of vocational and technical education and training, and universities and academic and technical colleges: governmental, private, public, and UNRWA.

4- Lifelong or Continuing Education and literacy programs: This sector includes:

1- Literacy and adult education (including also pilot activities and programs in continuing education). This kind of education is designed for individuals older than 15 years until the age of 50 who have not received education or enrolled in the education sector for a short period less than four years and who cannot read and write well.

2- Parallel education: this program is designed for young people outside schools between 15 and 40 years who dropped out from formal schooling after the fifth grade. Education is designed to allow these individuals to continue their basic education and later their secondary and higher education and training after the secondary stage.

3- Courses at special cultural centers: this kind of education provides short courses for several months or weeks at special centers (cultural centers) that belong to the private sector. Examples on this kind of courses: computer science and programming courses, business administration courses, Hebrew language courses.

The Ministry grants licenses to those centers in order to offer the courses based on set criteria.

The Organizational Framework of Palestinian Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

** The Organizational Framework of school education: school education is supervised by three main authorities:*

- **Governmental:** The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has assumed responsibility since 1994 for the management and funding to governmental schools and it also supervises the schools run by the private sector. Ratio of governmental schools makes up around 6% of the total number of schools in 2009. As for the Arab Jerusalem schools, there are two kinds of governmental schools: official schools which are under the supervision of the Israeli Education Ministry and Municipality while the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education has no supervision over those schools. The second kind is other governmental schools which are under the supervision of Islamic Waqf and are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

- **UNRWA:** The UNRWA supervises the Palestinian refugees' schools in the West Bank, including the schools in Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, with the majority of the Palestinian camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The number of the UNRWA schools comes in second place after the governmental schools. The UNRWA schools are mostly concentrated in Gaza Strip; the UNRWA supervises more than half of the schools in Gaza Strip. Ratio of UNRWA schools is >>>>> out of the total number of schools in 2009.

- **Private schools:** These schools are supervised and financed by the charitable associations and religious sects and individuals. Ratio of private schools is >>>>> out of the total number of schools.

3- The Education Sector: Situational Analysis

First Axis: Enrollment

The diagnosis of the education reality for the period of 2006-2008 depended basically on classification and analysis of information as part of three main axes, including all indicators that are linked to the development of the educational process. The axes are: enrollment, quality of education and management. A definition has been assigned to each axis based on local references.

Enrollment: enrollment in the education sector is to provide the education opportunity to the population who are within the learning age group. This includes taking in new students and the capacity of the system to maintain or keep students in schools and promotion of students from one stage to another and the absorption of students with special needs and to employ male and female personnel and provide books and all kinds of teaching aids, and classrooms and various facilities.

1- Total number of students:

The total number of students in Palestine rose from 1,067,126 students in 2005/2006 to 1,097, 426 students in 2007/2008 and the rate of increase in number of students is 2.84% during the above mentioned period. Ratio of male students is

49.8% while female students make up 50.2%. In terms of number of students according to the supervising party (government, UNRWA, private), we find that the number of students in the governmental schools rose from 749,964 students in 2005/2006 to 766,730 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 2.24%. In private schools, the number of students rose from 66,195 students in 2005/2006 to 77,906 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 17.7%. As for the UNRWA schools, number of students rose from 250,967 students in 2005/2006 to 252,790 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 0.73%.

1-1 students of the first grade

The number of students in the first grade was 95,379 students in 2005/2006 and rose to 98,240 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 3% in the above mentioned period. The ratio of male students was 50%. When looking at the supervising party, we notice that the number of students went down from 57,685 students in 2005/2006 to 56,023 students in 2007/2008 with a decrease ratio of 2.9% in the government schools. In private schools, the number of first grade students rose from 11,799 students in 2005/2006 to 14,030 students in 2007/2008 or an increase rate of 18.9%. As for UNRWA schools, the number of students rose from 25,895 students in 2005/2006 to 28,187 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 8.9%.

1-2 students in the basic stage

The number of students in the basic stage was 994,562 students in 2005/2006 and rose to 957,505 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 1.37% in the above mentioned period. The ratio of male students was 49.9% and female students make up 50.1%. When looking at the supervising party, we notice that the number of students rose from 631,737 students in 2005/2006 to 631,976 students in 2007/2008 with an increase ratio of 0.04% in the government schools. In private schools, the number of students rose from 61,858 students in 2005/2006 to 72,739 students in 2007/2008 or an increase rate of 17.6%. As for UNRWA schools, the number of students rose from 250,967 students in 2005/2006 to 252,790 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 0.73%.

1-3 students in the secondary stage

The situation is different when analyzing the situation of students in the secondary stage. The number of students in the secondary stage was 122,564 students in 2005/2006 and rose to 139,921 students in 2007/2008 or an increase by 14% for the above-mentioned period. The ratio of male students was 57% and female students make up 43%, and this ratio is due to the high rate of female students' dropout when compared with male students at this stage. When looking at the supervising party, we notice that the number of students rose from 118,227 students in 2005/2006 to 134,754 students in 2007/2008 with an increase ratio of 14% in the government schools. In private schools, the number of students rose from 4,337 students in 2005/2006 to 5,167 students in 2007/2008 or an increase rate of 19%. This increase can be the result of several factors, including the notable improvement in the internal competence rates and continuous improvement in rates of promotion from the basic stage to the secondary stage.

1-4 Rates of enrollment

The average rate of enrollment and entry to the first grade and basic stage in 2007/2008 reached around 94.8% for male students and 94.8% for female students.

Therefore, the challenge lies in raising the rate of enrollment and entry to both genders in the coming years. The rate of enrollment in the basic stage in 2007/2008 was 96.4% for both genders (males: 95.2%; females: 97.6%) rate of enrollment and entry to the secondary stage reached 78.6% for both genders (males: 72.2%; females: 85.3%).

1-5 Rates of promotion from the basic stage to the secondary stage:

The rate of promotion from the tenth grade (end of the basic stage) to the eleventh grade in the next year showed notable improvement in the period between 2005/2006 until 2007/2008. Rate of promotion to the secondary stage reached 91.6% for both genders (males: 89.8%; females: 93.3%) and this of course explains the increase rates in number of students in the secondary stage.

1-6 Rates of success, failure and dropouts

Rates of success in 2007/2008 reached around 97%. Rates of failure were 2%. Rates of dropouts were 1% for both genders. Rates of success, failure and dropouts for males were 98.3%, 1.6%, 1.4% respectively. As for female students, the rates of success, failure and dropouts were 98.7%, 1.3%, 1% respectively. These rates are for education in the basic and secondary stages in general. As for the secondary stage, the rates of dropouts for males were 3% and 3.8% for females and this is because of the society's culture and economic reasons.

2-1 Development of number of classes in schools

Number of classes in the government schools reached 22,110 classes in 2005/2006 distributed among 1,726 schools with an average of 12.8 classes per school. In 2007/2008, number of classes reached 23,492 classes distributed among 1,833 schools with an average of 12.8 classes per school. In private schools, number of classes in schools rose from 2,802 classes distributed among 272 schools with an average of 10.3 classes per school in 2005/2006. In 2007/2008, number of private schools reached 288 schools with 3,193 classes with an average of 11.1 classes per school. In the UNRWA schools, number of classes rose from 6,107 classes distributed among 279 schools with an average of 21.9 classes per school to a total of 6,672 classes distributed among 309 schools with an average of 21.6 classes per school in 2007/2008.

2-2 development of number of school buildings and classrooms

Number of classrooms in the government schools rose from 19,582 classrooms in 2005/2006 distributed among 1,554 with an average of 12.6 classrooms in each school building. In 2007/2008, number of classrooms reached 21,181 classrooms distributed among 1,664 school buildings with an average of 12.7 classrooms per school building. In private school buildings, number of classrooms reached 2,800 classrooms distributed among 272 school buildings with an average of 10.3 classrooms per school building in 2005/2006. In 2007/2008, number of school buildings was 288 school buildings which accommodated 3,193 classrooms with an average of 11.1 classrooms per school building. In the UNRWA school buildings, the number of classrooms rose from 4,286 distributed among 202 school buildings with an average of 21.2 classrooms per school building to 4,966 classrooms distributed among 288 school buildings with an average of 23.1 classrooms per building in 2007/2008.

2-3 development of rented classrooms

Number of rented classrooms in government schools rose in 2005/2006 from 1,629 classrooms to 2,641 classrooms in 2007/2008. In private schools, the total number of rented classrooms rose from 516 classrooms to 781 classrooms during the same period. In UNRWA schools, the total number of rented classrooms went down from 361 classrooms to 242 classrooms for the same period.

2-4 Evening Shift

Number of government schools that operate an evening shift went down from 172 schools in 2005/2006 to 169 schools in 2007/2008 while the number of UNRWA schools that operate an evening shift rose from 77 schools in 2005/2006 to 94 schools in 2007/2008. There are no private schools that operate evening shifts.

With regards to number of classrooms used in the evening shifts, the number went down in government schools from 2,528 classrooms to 2,311 classrooms. In the UNRWA schools, the number of classrooms used for evening shifts declined from 1,821 classrooms in 2005/2006 to 1,706 classrooms in 2007/2008.

The number of government school classrooms that are used in evening shifts in 2005/2006 represented about 13% of the government classrooms and the ratio declined in 2007/2008 to 11%. In the UNRWA schools, the schools which operated an evening shift made up 28% of the UNRWA schools while this kind of schools rose in 2007/2008 to make up a ratio of 30% of the UNRWA schools.

2-5 Rate of crowdedness in the classes:

There has been a decrease in the crowded classes in general. The rate of crowded classes in government schools reached 35.5 students per class in 2005/2006; the ratio went down to 32.6 students per class in 2007/2008. In private schools, the rate of crowded classes was 23.2 students per class in 2005/2006 but then it rose to 24.5 students per class in 2007/2008. In the UNRWA schools, the rate of crowded classes was 39.3 students per class in 2005/2006 and the ratio went down to 37.9 students per class in 2007/2008.

The rate of crowded classes varies according to the education stage (basic and secondary). The rate also differs between one directorate and another and between one region and another and between one school and another. There is set policy with regards to the size of crowdedness in the classrooms. The situation on the ground imposed itself in relation to the crowdedness of classrooms. Regions where there is no student attraction and lack of possibilities to build new schools because of absence of lands or for other reasons, the rate of crowdedness is usually higher. These regions are concentrated in the cities, especially in Gaza Strip. In the rural areas where there are possibilities for construction of new schools, the rate of crowdedness in classrooms goes down. In general, the policy of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education aims to reduce the rates of crowdedness through opening new classrooms where possible or to maintain the crowdedness rates at a set rate and not allow any escalation of the phenomenon of classroom crowdedness.

3-1 development of number of teaching and administrative posts

With regards to enrollment, the analysis will take into consideration the teaching posts and not the actual number of people working in the school. Our schools have

many principals who also teach. The same applies to the secretary. In many cases, the school principal or the secretary of the school teaches a set number of classes per week. Thus, we will deal with the teaching posts. Ratio of males at the various levels reached 45.5% and female participation reached 54.5%. The number of teaching posts in the government schools rose from 30,239 posts in 2005/2006 to 32,694 posts in 2007/2008 which is an increase by 8.12% for the above mentioned period.

The same trend applies to the administrative posts which increased from 4,057 posts in 2005/2006 to 4,415 posts in 2007/2008 which is an increase by 8.84%. with regards to technical posts, they rose from 808 posts in 2005/2006 to 1,025 posts in 2007/2008 which is an increase by 26.88% for the same period. Regarding other posts, they rose from 2,689 posts in 2005/2006 to 3,019 posts in 2007/2008 which is an increase by 12.29% for the same period.

3-2 student/teaching post ratio

The student per teacher ratio declined from 21.3 students per teacher in 2005/2006 to 20.1 students per teacher in 2007/2008 which reflects a significant improvement in this area. In private schools, the ratio increased from 14.1 students per teacher to 14.5 students per teacher. In the UNRWA schools, the ratio decreased from 29.6 students per teacher to 27.3 students per teacher for the same period.

The Israeli authorities evade their responsibility as an occupying force which has to provide the people of Jerusalem with the right to education; the Israeli authorities transfer their responsibilities for education to investors who open what is termed as contractors' schools. Funds are transferred to the investors who present to the authorities names of individuals in the age group 5-18 and they offer them also freedom of construction and imposes on them stringent conditions; the Israeli authorities demolish any installation that violates its regulations without showing any sense of responsibility towards the needs of the residents in terms of housing and school buildings.

Jerusalem:

According to data from Alternative Center in Jerusalem, 48,4% of the families that live on the eastern side of the separation wall and 8.7% of the families that live on the western side of the wall pointed out that the separation wall had negative impact on school enrollment. A ratio of 43.9% of the students in Jerusalem over five years old were enrolled in schools but a ratio of 24.7% who enrolled in schools dropped out after a short period, and 24.6% of the students enrolled in schools and completed the first grade, and a ratio of 6.8% have not joined any schools at all. The ratio of those who didn't enroll in schools and who dropped out from schools is higher among the residents who live on the eastern side of the wall (12.3% who have not enrolled at all and 28.8% who dropped out) rather than the people who live on the western side of the wall.

(Kutab, Eileen, Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Woman, 2000-2006, Beirut: ESCWA, 2007)

Impact of the Apartheid Wall and the Political Situation on Education:

There are many schools close to settlements and checkpoints and electronic gates. In Hebron Directorate, especially in the Old City whoosh is under the Israeli control, there are around 26 schools which suffer from such conditions. These schools provide education services to 9,408 male and female students, and 312 classes and 491 teachers.

4- School textbooks

Total number of themes that were printed in 2005/2006 reached around 308 themes, reaching 1.3 million copies with a total cost of \$8.7 million. Due to the rising cost of printing and natural growth in number of students, the prices of these printed materials increased to reach \$10.6 million in 2007/2008. Annually, the general directorates and units are provided with their educational printing materials. There were 13 themes printed in 2005/2006 with a total cost of \$26,200. In 2007/2008, the total costs of printing the themes cost \$42,500.

5- Teaching Aids in schools

Ratio of government schools that include computer labs rose from 57% in 2005/2006 to 73% in 2007/2008. In private schools, the ratio declined from 75% to 57%. In the UNRWA schools, the ratio rose from 25% to 71% for the same period.

Number of government schools that include science labs rose from 61% in 2005/2006 to 66% in 2007/2008. In private schools, the ratio went down from 67% to 66% and in UNRWA schools, the ratio rose from 46% to 55% for the same period.

Ratio of government schools that include libraries went down from 64% in 2005/2006 to 62% in 2007/2008. In private schools, the ratio increased from 60% to 76%. In UNRWA schools, the ratio rose from 65% to 86% for the same period.

6- School furniture

The projects of school buildings that are implemented by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education include the provision of all furniture for the new schools and classrooms that are added to existing schools as part of school enlargement projects. However, the majority of the school building projects that are implemented by external parties don't include the provision of furniture for the schools or the added classrooms.

- Enrollment in kindergartens

Work to develop this kind of education started to develop just after 1994 after the Ministry of Education and Higher Education assumed responsibility for education and after it started to promote the private sector in this field. Currently, the Ministry supervises this sector through setting special specifications for kindergartens; it established regulations and principles that organize and regulate the work of kindergartens and grants licenses for parties that work in this field. The Ministry set up the age of enrollment in kindergartens ranging between 3.8 years to 5.8 years after which children join the first grade in the basic education. Preschool education in Palestine is not considered part of the educational scale. This sector is run by the private sector and women and charitable organizations. Enrollment in preschool education is not considered a prerequisite for joining the basic stage.

1- Number of Kindergartens: number of kindergartens in Palestine rose from 935 in 2005/2006 to 972 kindergartens in 2007/2008 with an increase by 4% during the above mentioned period.

2- Units in kindergartens: number of units in kindergartens rose from 3,080 units in 2005/2006 to 3,372 units in 2007/2008 with an increase by 9.5% during the above mentioned period.

3- Kindergartens Teachers: number of teachers in kindergartens rose from 2,974 teachers in 2005/2006 to 4,280 teachers in 2007/2008 with an increase by 44% for the above mentioned period.

4- Rate of crowdedness in the units: rate of crowdedness in units reached 25 children per unit during the same period.

5- Ratio of children to teachers: the ratio declined from 26 children per teacher in 2005/2006 to 20 children per teacher in 2007/2008.

6- Children enrollment: rate of children enrollment in kindergartens in 2007/2008 for the age group (3-5) reached 0.37%.

7- Rate of participation of first graders in early childhood programs: the ratio of those who enrolled in early childhood programs in the first grade rose from 53.2% in 2005/2006 to 53.3% in 2007/2008.

8- Kindergartens Supervisors: number of supervisors does not match with the number of kindergartens. Every supervisor in each directorate is responsible for 50 to 90 kindergartens.

9- The educational and teaching aids in kindergartens: the Ministry of Education and Higher Education supported the kindergartens through providing furniture and educational games. A total number of 370 licensed kindergartens in all the homeland directorates have been supported with such items in the past two years through funding from international and regional organizations; the kindergartens are selected by the Education Directorates. Forty kindergartens in Ramallah and al-Bireh and the Jerusalem suburbs and Jericho were provided with educational games, such as drawing boards, small theatre, clinic, traffic signs and other items, in addition to furniture and equipment to government center and kindergarten in Nablus.

10- Licensing of Kindergartens: there are certain criteria set by the Ministry to license the kindergartens, including the provision of safe indoor and outdoor games and the provision of minimal conditions that allow the implementation of activities with the children through the activities centers in the kindergarten. The licensed kindergartens shall abide by these instructions and re-licensing will be granted based on this commitment. A kindergarten supervisor shall conduct field visits during the year to the kindergartens which are licensed with environmental and educational reports.

- Enrollment in the informal education sector:

Informal education includes two basic fields: 1) literacy programs and adult education; 2) Lifelong or continuing education.

1- Rate of illiteracy in Palestine declined in 2005/2006 from 6% for the age group (10 years and above) to 5.8% in 2007 for the same age group.

2- Number of literacy program centers, units and teachers: In 2005/2006, number of literacy program and adult education centers reached 127 centers in all directorates in Palestine. The centers included 218 classes for both genders (85 classes for males and 133 classes for females). Total number of individuals in the programs reached 3,645 learners (1,645 males and 2,000 females). Total number of teachers for the programs reached 218 teachers (98 males and 120 females), but this ratio

decreased in 2007/2008 when the number of centers declined to reach 107 centers for literacy programs and adult education all over Palestine, including 102 classes for both genders (40 classes for males and 62 classes for females). Number of individuals in the programs reached 3,251 learners (1,283 males and 1,968 females) and number of teachers reached 200 (90 males and 110 females).

3- Parallel Education Program: planning and preparation for this program started in 2002 where it targeted students between 15 and 20. Currently, it is designed to include all those who completed the first basic grades or who finished the literacy program and passed the literacy program selection test (15-40). Any individual who had to leave school because of difficult conditions or who dropped out of school can join this sector. These students cannot be brought back to classrooms in formal education again; these individuals cannot be taught under the same conditions of schools or use with formal education curricula which might be one of the reasons for their school dropout. This program aims to provide the learners with daily life skills and vocational knowledge in a manner that achieves the principle of education for all. The program aims to upgrade their professional standards, thus assisting them to join academic and vocational education institutions and vocational training institutes which can direct and guide them to the labor market, and this can raise their living standards. Period of studying in the program is two years in a row divided into four semesters with each semester lasting five months (20 weeks) or 120 classes per semester (two days per week and three classes per day and every class lasts 45 minutes). Number of parallel education centers rose from three centers in 2005/2006 to six centers in 2007/2008 which is an increase by 100%.

4- Continuing Education Centers: Continuing education has been implemented in three pilot centers distributed in the education regions. In 2005, number of learners reached 44: 21 in Jerusalem and 23 in Ramallah.

5- Cultural centers: there are two kinds of cultural centers: licensed centers and unlicensed centers. Number of cultural centers in 2005/2006 reached 238 centers; it is difficult to calculate the exact number of cultural centers because the owners of such centers don't provide the directorate with any information, except the titles of courses whose customers need licensed certificates from the Ministry while all other courses are not provided to the directorate.

Second Axis: Quality of Education and Criteria

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education defined the concept of quality education based on the special Palestinian situation and its education system and basic needs, and improving the achievement levels of students, especially in the subjects of Arabic Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and provide the students with basic life skills. This can be achieved through the continuous development and assessment of the Palestinian curriculum.

- Quality in General Education

1- Palestinian Curricula

The Ministry embarked on drafting a plan for the Palestinian curricula in 1995; the plan was concluded and ratified by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1998. The curricula was prepared and implemented for the grades (1-11) during the first five-year plan (2000-2005). The curriculum of the 12th grade was prepared in the middle of 2006 and was implemented at the start of the new scholastic year 2006/2007.

"The curricula contained text for students with special needs; it was also published for visually impaired students using the Braille System. There is a need to issue a special guidebook for students with hearing impairments. As for the students with general learning problems (difficulty in learning) or slow learners or with minor mental handicaps, the curricula does not suit them because it contains a large amount of information"¹

2- In-Service Training Strategies

a- Training Strategies Prior to Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Strategy

1- In-service Training Methodology: During the first five-year plan, the Ministry adopted the Cascade Model which can be very effective in training a large number of people through implementing central training to train a team of trainers from each directorate and each team can train teachers in its own directorate.

2- There are various methods and tools to determine the training needs, including performance assessment, role playing, observation, questionnaire, individual meetings, focus groups, tests, review of documents and records, problem analysis, seeking the advice of experts, publications and magazine and work specimens.

3- Timing and place of training: the majority of the training courses are implemented during summer vacations and mid-year holiday. Training programs might be implemented throughout the year through relieving the teacher from his teaching load after the third class on the day of the training. There are seven directorates where there are training centers, in addition to the Ministry's National Institute for Training in Ramallah, and there are 11 directorates where there are no training centers and training sessions are held in schools.

4- Training Program for School Principals: The number of principals who were trained during the period 1999/2000 – 2004/2005 reached around 7,845 principals with an average of 25.6 training hours per principal (estimated weight of the training hours). Total number of trainees increased from 584 to 1,945 trainees in the first three years (1999/2000 – 2001/2002) which is an increase by 233%. The rate started to decline in the last three years as the rate of decrease reached 139.3%.

¹ Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Review of the Education System, 2005.

Ratio of principals who were trained in 2001/2002 reached 117% and the ratio declined to 106% in 2002/2003. This explains that the principal might join more than one training course out of the 12 training courses that are offered during the year and it also means that not all principals have joined training.

- The school as a training unit: this program aims to reinforce technical decentralization in the schools that participate in the program; it grants the school principal and teaching staff authorities in developing the professional competences of the teachers. Ratio of schools that participated in this project rose from 13% in 1999/2000 to 66% out of all government schools in 2004/2005 which means that more than half of the government schools were briefed about the project. A total number of 24,879 teachers were trained with an average rate of 22.7 training hours per trainee.

- Education supervisor training programs: The Ministry adopted courses to train education supervisors on a continuous basis. Number of education supervisors who were trained in the period 1999/2000 – 2004/2005 reached 16,548 trainees with an average of 4.27 training hours per trainee. The highest ratio of trainees was in the years 2002/2003 and 2003/2004: the supervisor participated in an average of 16 to 17 training courses.

- Number of education supervisors (teacher/supervisor): The rate of increase in number of supervisors during the period 1999/2000 – 2004/2005 was around 89%. The annual rate of increase during the same period was 17.8%. The ratio of teacher to supervisor declined from 100.7 in 1999/2000 to 71.7 in 2004/2005. This decline is viewed as better than what was expected in the first five-year plan which presumed in its education policies that it will reduce this rate from 100 to 80 during the five-year plan period 1999/2000 – 2004/2005.

b- Developing a new strategy for pre-service and in-service teacher training:

During the second five-year developmental plan in 2008, the Ministry adopted and developed a new training policy through preparing a strategy with all partners in the universities and local institutes in cooperation with the UNRWA and higher education institutions with support from the UNESCO. Currently, there is work to set up an executive plan to start the implementation of this strategy. The elements of this strategy focused on the building of the teachers' vision, teacher training programs, teaching as a profession, and management of the rehabilitation system,

The strategy recommends adopting seven pre-service training programs: kindergartens teacher programs, lower basic education teacher programs, higher basic education teacher programs, secondary education teacher programs, post-school teacher programs and education specialists programs (special education teacher and counselors), and education supervisors and principals program. The document proposes the development of the higher education institutions through the development of the human and financial resources and the development of new programs, and the development of research and exchange of experiences.

As for the continuing professional development education (in-service), the strategy recommends developing four kinds of programs: programs for the experienced teacher who does not have the adequate educational qualification, programs for experienced teachers who don't have adequate education qualification in the subject matter, programs for the experiences and qualified teachers, and programs for the newly qualified graduates.

Currently, and in cooperation with the World Bank, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education started to implement this strategy through the preparation of an operational plan in cooperation with the universities and higher education institutions.

The idea of establishing a commission to develop the teaching profession emanated during the process of preparing and adopting this strategy which came to respond to the five-year strategic plan to develop education 2008-2012. The teacher training strategy is considered an organized holistic approach that aims to improve quality of education in Palestine, in addition to the need for clear frank policies to rehabilitate teachers and provide them with continuous development and to improve methods used by the various institutions that provide professional support to teachers. There is also a need to develop the profession and to build the capacities of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the field of teacher rehabilitation system management.

Moreover, the commission has to develop the national criteria and standards and continue with the review process with all stakeholders at the various phases with regards to the people planning to join the profession: new teachers (first year), the teacher, licensing teachers, developing code of conduct for all teachers at all levels and stages, and developing the criteria of education supervisors and review it with all stakeholders and relevant parties that deal with professional development. The commission has to establish a framework for rehabilitating teachers and keeping a record of qualifications for teaching and the teachers who need to be trained and conduct assessment of the teachers qualifications where needed and disseminate the criteria along with supporting instructions and other relevant material, and reinforce the positive image of the quality teacher and the image of the teaching profession in general, whether in place of work or in the society at large. The commission has to provide advice to the Minister on the amendments needed in the areas of policies, legislations, regulations and mandates pertaining to the rehabilitation of teachers and principals and their licensing and the development of their professional skills, and setting up governance principles and management of performance and annual plans arrangements and submitting the reports of the commission.

3- Achievement Tests

The Department of Assessment and Measurement conducted several national achievement tests on representative samples of Palestine students from focus classes and basic subjects. Other research tools were attached to these tests in order to gather data about education variables that are related to achievement. The following are the indicators of achievement tests that were conducted by the department:

- Success rate of 8th grade students in the Arab Language test for the year 1999/2000 was 39.50% while the average performance of students in the questions of the test was 44.57% with normative deviation reaching 17.12. The median was 45.00. The performance of male students in the national test reached 38.72% while performance of female students reached 50.59% which shows that female students performed far much better than male students.
- Success rate of 8th grade students in the Mathematics test for the year 1999/2000 was 15.9% while the average performance of students in the questions of the test

was 33.1% with normative deviation reaching 15.5. The median was 29.6. The performance of male students in the national test reached 32.43% while performance of female students reached 33.71% which shows that female students performed slightly better than male students.

- Success rate of 5th grade students in the English Language test for the year 1999/2000 was 32.8% while the average performance of students in the questions of the test was 43.5% with normative deviation reaching 16.28. The median was 42.1. The performance of male students in the national test reached 41.0% while performance of female students reached 45.6%, which shows that female students performed far much better than male students.

- The Initial study in Mathematics and Science for the 8th grade (TIMSS 2003): Palestine participated for the first time in 2002/2003 in the studies series "TIMSS" and the major results are as follows:

1- Performance level of Palestine students in Science was better than their performance in Mathematics even if performance in both subjects is poor; average performance in both subjects came below the international standard.

2- The differences in performance levels between males and females in Science reflected core differences and can be considered as a statistical sign in favor of females.

3- The differences in performance levels between males and females in Mathematics did not reflect core differences although average performance of females was higher than average performance of males.

4- A ratio of 34% of Palestine students suffers weakness in Science; their average performance was less than the international normative grade for poor performance which is 400.

5- A ratio of 54% of Palestine students suffers weakness in Mathematics; their average performance was less than the international normative grade for poor performance which is 400.

4- Educational technology and Information Technology

- Usage rate of science lab by teachers reached 68.5%. A ratio of 22.1% of the science teachers uses laboratories.

- The major impediment that faces the process of activating the school science labs is the large number of students, large curriculum, the absence of incentives to the science teachers and lack of equipment in the labs.

- It was found out that there are inappropriate electric extensions in many school labs and the furniture in the science labs is not sufficient for the number of students.

- School libraries lack electronic educational material (video tapes, educational CDs, etc.)

- The labs do not include all necessary equipment to teach and apply the new curriculum. A large part of the lab equipment found in schools has existed there before 1995 and meet with the Jordanian curriculum but not the content of the Palestinian curriculum which is different. This resulted in lack of harmony in some cases between the actual school needs in terms of technical equipment and what is really found on the ground.

- Central resources centers have been established in Hebron and Jenin in order to produce and manufacture educational aids to serve all schools. Ten centers were

established in 10 directorates and they were equipped with simple manufacturing material to be used by the teacher. Centers were also established to lend equipment and centers to train teachers on the use and manufacturing of the material. A study to assess the centers pointed to the accomplishment of positive results in the field of teacher training, but in general, there was no theoretical explanation on the importance of using educational aids in the educational process. The study also showed that 65% of the resources rooms in the schools were transformed into rooms for other uses.

5- Palestinian Education Initiative

The Palestinian Education Initiative is considered the context and platform that reinforces and support invigorative projects and openness to modern educational practices.

This initiative adopted the participatory model in its development among the various partners in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and other parties concerned with education. As such, the initiative has to be flexible to allow development within proper timing. The initiative needs to be effective and manageable in line with the Palestinian context.

The Context – Background

Several indicators point to the fact that despite the difficult political and economic conditions facing the region, education has achieved prominent achievements in the past years. However, in order to meet the future needs and cope with the international and universal tendencies, there is a need to adopt many new approaches.

The educational vision on the future of Palestinian education was realized in an integrated approach in several documents issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, especially in the developmental five-year plan 2008-2012, which focused in its strategy on reinforcing and improving quality of education through developing and improving the Palestinian curricula, and the educational facilities and teacher training.

These documents still focuses its philosophy in ICT which is the effective method in creating and develop effective education.

The main goal of the Palestinian Education Initiative is to achieve the second goal in the five year-plan 2008-2012 of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In order to achieve this, all stakeholders need to intervene in a comprehensive and integrated manner at all levels:

The most important decisions that have been taken in the context of Palestinian Education Initiative Strategy are:

1- The Palestinian education system still needs to move towards meeting the competence needs and requirements in the 21st century as the education methodologies and teaching used in schools still follow the traditional style in teaching and rarely reinforced the higher intellectual skills and achieved the social and educational competences.

2- There is still weakness in moving towards ICT in the Palestinian society, in general, and in schools, in particular, especially that access to ICT has not been taken for granted yet.

3- As the case with other initiatives, there is a need for enthusiastic human cadres with high competence to be invested in expertise and commitments. Currently, the available expertise is not adequate to push the initiative at the popular level. The first level of this initiative stipulates narrowing the extent and scope of intervention and focusing on achievable interventions to target specific groups.

Priorities

The Palestinian Education Initiative aims to reinforce quality of Palestinian education through an interrelated group of interventions that were classified into four tracks:

- 1- First Track: to improve quality of educational environment in the schools.
- 2- Second Track: to improve competences of teachers, principals and heads of education directorates.
- 3- Third Track: to upgrade the minimal level of competence in the field of ICT (literacy program in ICT) and improve the infrastructure.
- 4- Fourth Track: to improve vocational and technical training which is viewed as an important pillar in the quality education system.

In order to place the strategic goals as part of concrete concepts, the Palestinian Education Initiative needs to provide an integrated track that reveals the social, cultural and economic challenges that need innovative and creative concepts and approaches and courage in implementation. Therefore, the education initiative is the hub and incubator for future educational practices.

The objectives of Palestinian Education Initiative

The general objective of the first track: to improve the quality of educational environment in schools

The specific objectives:

- To develop Palestinian curricula in selected subjects for specific stages and to improve the curricula to become of high quality and modern through developing the educational goals and problem challenging.
- To match between the tests and home assignments and the goals of learning and international assessment criteria.
- To develop material in some selected subjects (lesson plan, media tasks, teacher's guidebook).

The general objective of the second track: to improve competences of teachers, principals and heads of education directorates

The specific objectives:

- To select a group of consultants and experienced individuals and competent institutions to train and guide the trainers.
- To develop and implement modern training programs to train trainers.
- To design teacher training program (such as education, goals, content, material, assessment).
- To develop training for heads of education directorates and school principals and decision makers and other people concerned.

The general objective of the third track: to reinforce ICT for a set of priorities based on the initiative; the priority to be granted to teachers and principals in the pilot schools and heads of education directorates and decision makers and other people participating in the initiative.

The specific objectives:

- To provide the ICT infrastructure and provide its maintenance in accordance with mobile laptop model in the pilot schools and the infrastructure of ICT in the community centers and provide computers to teachers and families.
- To provide permanent and easy-to-use systems with low costs and programming tools and a mobile ICT infrastructure.

The general objective of the fourth track: to improve vocational and technical education as an important pillar of a high quality educational system

The specific objectives:

- To assess the competence-oriented stereotype curricula in two to three vocational fields; every field covers the rehabilitation of levels (1-5).
- To implement the developed stereotype curricula to rehabilitate several levels and provide teaching concepts and learning resources in order to clarify the method of applying the philosophy of “student-centered educational/learning process” and “effective teaching” and employ ICT in education. To assess appropriate learning models such as vocational education schools and training institutes.
- To improve the competences of personnel working in vocational education and enable them to update their knowledge and skills through self-learning based on the labor-market changes, and focus on the acquisition of pedagogical concepts in line with the “student-centered educational/learning process” and “effective teaching” that make ICT a necessary tool for education.
- To equip vocational schools and training institutes with appropriate educational resources, especially ICT.

6- Government school buildings and quality of education

- The Ministry has considered the school building as one of its top priorities and granted the issue special attention in terms of financing, planning and implementation in order to accommodate the new students because of natural growth of the population. The Ministry also works on reducing the number of rented school buildings and classrooms or the unfit buildings, and reducing evening shift classes. The Ministry seeks to develop a school environment that meets with needs of the new Palestinian curriculum. The General Directorate of Buildings continues to exert efforts to prioritize the need for more classrooms in the existing schools or the need to establish new schools; this priority is considered the top priority in the first procedural program of the five-year plan of the Ministry as this has major importance and impact on improving quality of education and increasing rates of enrollment.
- The Ministry divided the area of the school building into a teaching area and a non-teaching area, such as labs and libraries. The best method to define the criteria for the total area of a school building is to link it to the number of students and the stage.
- The area of the room has been set as 6.3m X 7.9m. This will provide the student with an area of 1.2 square meters per student out of the area of the classroom and 0.6 square meters out of the area of the new land.

- The specialized rooms such as the laboratory, library, handicrafts room, arts room, applies technology room, home skills, reflect the criteria of Palestinian curricula; these need to be distributed in a flexible manner that allows such educational activities. The area of the employees' room varies according to the size of the school and depending on whether there is more than one teaching shift or not. The management or administration room is preferred to be located in the main floor to facilitate access to it by the public and to supervise the gathering of the students, taking into consideration the need to move away the education counselor room from the management room so that the students won't feel they are monitored.
- In the case of distribution of furniture, the Ministry depends on the measurements of human body of Palestine students at a certain age and on the basis of having 40 students in each class. This varies according to the teaching methods widely used in the education system. The teaching classrooms accommodate 70% of the furniture based on the size of the student in the stage, and 15% of the furniture based on the average size of the tallest students and 15% of the furniture based on the average size of the shortest students. Care is needed to distribute the furniture in the classrooms in a manner that provides natural lighting to the left of the student with a ratio of 15% to 20% of natural lighting.
- The Ministry has developed a system to determine the priorities in terms of school building needs in the various regions in order to achieve best investment of resources and achieve equity between the regions when providing the school building needs with each region according to its needs in accordance with a unified system.
- To improve the school health environment which has major impact on the quality of education and to offer special facilities to students with special needs.
- The General Directorate for Buildings seeks to provide a proper environment for the employees in the buildings of the education directorates as this has major and important impact on the convenience of employees and the improvement of management system efficiency. There is still a need to build several buildings for the Ministry in order to replace the rented and inappropriate buildings.
- It is important to provide proper plots of land with areas, forms and locations to be selected in a manner that serves the students in the attraction areas, in addition to the other administrative buildings, such as the education directorates, warehouses, and resources centers.
- The majority of the rented schools in major concentration areas such as Hebron and Nablus are located in strategic regions; therefore, there is a need to set up a policy of owning the buildings where it is possible to replace them or to add annexes to them and also to set up a policy of giving up the buildings that cannot be developed. This has to be part of a comprehensive vision in cooperation with the relevant ministries.

7- School Health

In the field of school health, the Ministry seeks to improve the physical, psychological, mental and social well being of the students through reinforcing concepts and skills that support their capacities to deal with their daily life events in an effective manner within safe environmental conditions. The Ministry also seeks to reinforce health conduct and practices among the students and develop activities that lead to healthy life systems as part of the primary health care concepts that are linked to the efforts of the local community which should assume an active role

towards a better health and developmental situation. The following points present a brief summary of the accomplishments in the field of school health for the five past years at the four axes level:

- Health services: this axis aims to fortify students against diseases and to conduct the necessary tests and follow up the treatment of sick cases and provide them with the necessary support. The most important challenge that faces school health is the sustainability of comprehensive medical examination for the first grade students and then the provision of health services to the needy students and introduce other tests as part of the comprehensive medical examination or examinations linked to certain age groups.

- Nutrition and school cafeteria: The Ministry aims to improve the nutritional situation of school students and build up a sound nutritional conduct. There are several problems related to the nutritional situation in the Palestinian lands and Gaza Strip, and the spread of malnutrition diseases due to shortage of food or bad nutrition habits. Several projects have been implemented to upgrade nutritional awareness among the students and raise awareness on health issues. The educational database at the Ministry points to the existence of cafeterias in 1,210 schools, but the most important step is the continuation of supervision and development of these cafeterias to make sure that they meet the health criteria and standards. A study on diagnosis of the situation of cafeterias in government schools shows that 10% of the schools lack cafeterias and that 47.2% of the cafeterias don't have a sewage system, in addition to other indicators.

- School environment: Development in the field of school environment has been limited to the establishment of school clubs. A total of 414 environmental clubs were established in 2004/2005 with the participation of around 19,500 students and 900 teachers. School parks have also been established. A total number of 1,550 school parks were established, in addition to establishment of public health facilities, water wells, sun shades, and water purification stations or provision of water to schools. Despite all of this, a study conducted by the Ministry on diagnosis of the health facilities shows that 23.1% of the health units in the schools need maintenance. The study recommended directing investments to projects that focus on maintenance, expansion and building of adequate health facilities that meet with the national standards for new school buildings and to allow the participation of the local community in the maintenance campaign.

- Health education and reinforcement: Work in this field focused in the past five years on training students and teachers in the field of first aid treatment, evacuation, fire fighting, safety on the roads, reproductive health, daily life skills and reduction of violence, in addition to the implementation of the child-friendly school project and the provision of schools with first aid kits, and firefighting devices, and the formation of road safety teams. Still, there is still weakness in the health conduct and there are bad health practices among groups of students. A study on the spread of smoking among students in Palestine showed important indicators: a ratio of 23.5% of the students in schools smoke cigarettes, water pipe or other kinds of tobacco. There is no real awareness on the dangers and risks of smoking among students. One of the important indicators on the importance of investment in the field of school health lies in the fact that there are 72 government schools which have clinics in 2004/2005. This faces a major challenge including the need to find an education mechanism based on active learning model and the use of modern methods, such as play and games, in conveying health messages to the students.

- A study on the psychosocial assessment of Palestinian children showed that the majority of children in the sample (93%) feel insecure and fear of being attacked and that 52% of the children believe that their parents are incapable of protecting them and meeting their needs.

- Numbers and distribution of counselors: there has been an increase in the number of education counselors in the government schools in the past years to reach 850.4 counselors in 2007/2008. Number of counselors in private schools reached 91 counselors in 2007/2008. In UNRWA schools, number of counselors reached 105.

- Qualifications of the education counselor: there are set criteria which have been endorsed by the Ministry with regards to the appointment of the educational counselor who needs to have at least a Bachelors degree in one of the following subjects: psycho-educational counseling, psychology, social work or service, community and family development/ with focus on social work, or sociology with focus on social work or three years of experience in the field of educational counseling or mental health or social work or training courses in the field psychological and educational counseling with no less than 100 training hours. Training courses will also be provided after recruitment, either in rehabilitation courses based on requirements of projects or counseling programs or specialized courses in the field of educational counseling.

- Sources of support to educational counseling:

1-10-1 Educational counseling room: the educational counseling is considered one of the pillars of educational counseling; the presence of the room has positive impact on organizing the work of the educational counseling and the provision of professional climate to work with the students. Number of schools where there is a special room for educational counseling rose to 1,053 rooms making up a ratio of 57.5% of the total number of schools.

1-10-2 the reports of the educational counselors and officials in educational counseling show that ratio of students who approach the educational counselor increases where there is a counseling room. The reports also showed that presence of a room increases the capacity to follow up individual cases and meet with parents separately.

1-10-3 Professional supervision in educational counseling: the Ministry implemented in cooperation with the Islamic Bank for Development through the UNDP a training program for part of the educational counselors on the subject of professional counseling. The first group of graduates consisted of 52 educational counselors (12 in Gaza and 40 in the West Bank) at the start of 2005. Later, nine of the trainees from the West Bank were selected to continue training as part of a pilot program to get a diploma in professional supervision.

8- Special education and inclusive education program

* Kinds of impairments: this includes the special education sectors: mental handicap, visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairments, affective impairment and learning difficulties.

* The Ministry of Education issued a decision to amend all school buildings that are built recently so that they can meet the students with special needs. More than 650 schools have amended out of 1,900 schools (through the adding of corridors and curvy surfaces and health units) until the end of year 2007/2008.

* The Palestinian curriculum written with the Braille System was provided to all students with visual impairment. Currently, work is underway to print the curriculum of the 12th grade using the Braille System. The Ministry provided fifty students out of

72 students who suffer from visual impairment Perkins 2 machines. Priority is granted to students in the upper grades.

* A total number of 4,150 male and female students with special needs were integrated in the government schools in 2007/2008 distributed among all education directorates; the number includes all kinds of impairments.

* Number of students with special needs who sat for the Tawjihi Exams in 2008 reached 110 students and 45 students benefited from the facilitation measures.

* Number of employees in the Ministry who have special needs reached 230 employees (administration employees, teachers and janitors) in 2008.

* Support was provided to more than 200 educational centers which include individuals with special needs, in addition to 30 new centers in 2010.

* The Ministry is committed to employ 5% of the graduates with special needs.

* There are 35 counselors on inclusive education and three coordinators on inclusive education (one in Gaza and two in the West Bank) distributed among all West Bank and Gaza directorates.

* The resources room: It is one of the most important resources that support inclusive education. It is a classroom added to the regular school which is equipped with all teaching aids and educational games and proper furniture. Number of such rooms reached 50 rooms until 2008/2009. There are criteria to select the resources room: in the basic school from grades 1-4, there is one educational counselor who serves several basic schools. One special education teacher stays at school to work with students with special needs. There are 50 male and female teachers distributed among West Bank and Gaza directorates. The importance of the resources room lies in supporting students with learning problems (learning difficulties, slow learners, slight mental impairment) in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics and social and psychological daily life skills. Students attend classes in the resources room in two shifts for the subjects of mathematics and Arabic Language. As for the remaining subjects, students attend regular classes. The special education teacher prepares an individual educational plan for every student in line with official curriculum. The students who benefit from the resources room are usually students who suffer from lack of communication with teachers.

* Resources center: there are three resources centers (Gaza, Ramallah, South of Hebron) and there are five specialists in each center in the fields of special education, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work, and physiotherapy. Professional supervision of the resources center is conducted by the director of the center.

* Integrated classes: The project of integrated classes aims to integrate children with slight and medium mental impairment in basic grades (1-4) in general education through the special class. The project shall be implemented in three phases in 32 schools:

First phase: to prepare 10 special classrooms and appoint teachers in 10 education directorates in 2009.

Second phase: to prepare 12 special classrooms and appoint teachers in 10 education directorates in 2010.

Third phase: to prepare 10 special classrooms and appoint teachers in 10 education directorates in 2011.

Special education faces several problems, mainly:

- a- The centers that work with students with special needs employ cadres who hold different qualifications and achievement levels and not necessarily certificates in the field of special education; their qualifications range between general secondary education certificate and a Bachelors degree. Number of cadres who hold the general secondary education certificates in the field of hearing impairment make up 50% of the total number of cadres.
- b- Absence of specialized cadres in the field of impairments, especially that focus on the experience in the fields limits down the presence of enriching material and knowledge which has to be disseminated to all workers. For example, the cadre deals with the hearing impairment in case he commands the sign language used by the deaf people but the cadre does not know a lot about the society of people with hearing impairment.
- c- Most often, the supervisor who is in charge of the cadres does not command adequate experience in the assessment process because of lack of specialization in supervising different impairments.
- d- Training in the special education department focuses on training the teaching staff in the directorates because of integrating various impairments in the schools.

Several training programs have been implemented for the workers in the field of special education in several fields, such as the concept of impairment, mass communication, special needs in class, behavior control, professional development, visual and hearing impairment, learning difficulties, needs of students with special needs, and other topics.

9- Student activities

* Scouts activities: these include the scouts' activities in schools (camps, visits, trips, voluntary work, marches, festivals, studies and seminars, contests, cultural seminars, traffic awareness campaigns, addiction, drugs) and the regular and continuous organization of such activities during all kinds of occasions at the level of school, directorate and ministry. Number of scouts groups in all education directorates in 2005/2006 reached 1,686 groups with a total number of 44,383 scouts (males and females, children and adults). Total number of scouts' activities for this year reached 15,161 activities with the participation of 188,287 scouts and 15,964 teachers (leaders of scouts). Number of scouts' leaders in the government schools rose from 955 in 1999/2000 to 1,686 leaders in 2005/2006 with an annual increase by 57%. The difficulties in the field of scouts' activities can be summarized as follows:

- a- shortage of qualified scouts' leaders in some directorates.
- b- lack of special equipment needed for scouts activities.
- c- Some officials don't understand the importance of scouts' activities.
- d- Annual transfers of teachers who are scouts leaders at the end of every scholastic year.
- e- Lack of special budgets for scouts activities at the level of (school, directorate and ministry).
- f- lack of safe places for camping (permanent camps).
- g- Absence of authority in the hands of the scouts' supervisor in the directorate (example: supervisory report).

- h- Teachers shun away from assuming responsibility for scouts activities because the administration does not reduce teacher's load by three classes in some schools.
- i- Lack of financial incentives to scouts leaders.

* Sports activities: these include group and individual games and contests at the level of school, directorate and districts and at the Arab level. These activities also include honoring the outstanding students in sports activities. The activities include arbitration courses and training for the physical education teachers in the various fields along with sports festivals and sports exhibitions at the level of directorates.

a- Number of sports officials rose from 308 teachers in 1999/2000 to 471 teachers in 2005/2006 which is an increase by 52.9%. In private schools, the number increased from 15 teachers to 23 teachers during the same period.

b- Ratio of sports officials specialized in physical education went up from 77% in 1999/2000 to 81.5% in 2005/2006. The number of sports rooms in government schools increased from 91 rooms to 508 rooms. In the UNRWA schools, the number went up from 10 to 17 rooms. In private schools, number of sports rooms rose from 64 rooms to 99 rooms during the same period.

c- Difficulties in the sports activities field: there are no sports halls. There is a shortage of playgrounds inside the schools to be used for sports activities. Lack of budgets for the central and Arab sports activities. Students shun away from summer clubs which are supported by the national committee. Lack of sports equipment. Weak participation of female students in the sports activities. Difficulty in following up the students in the field during school trips.

* Cultural activities: these include the school radio station, scientific activities, cultural activities, music and arts.

The cultural activities face the following problems:

a- Shortage of cultural activities facilities (halls) in the schools and directorates and the ministry.

b- No allocation of specific budgets to implement cultural activities.

c- Low level of participation in educational contests and activities.

d- Lack of musical instruments in schools.

e- School principals don't pay due attention to such activities.

f- Small share for musical education training between the first and sixth grade.

g- Low level of student participation in musical activities.

- Quality of education in kindergartens

1- Children curriculum in kindergartens:

* There is no curriculum in the meaning of school textbooks because the Ministry believes that this stage must not depend on books but has to be based on working papers and practical activities as the children use educational material prepared by kindergarten teachers; these materials include the concept of mathematical logic. Linguistic concepts, science, nature, social concepts, and other activities and concepts related to music and drama. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has to coordinate with all stakeholders in order to develop a strategy for early childhood (5-7 years or 3-5 years) in 2010. This has to include strategies that

aim to develop protection and learning which are based on the centers, the family and the childcare providers. This will also include strategies for national curricula which will lay the cornerstone for the criteria that defines the most appropriate goals, methods and activities for children in a manner that reinforces comprehensive development: in terms of knowledge and physical surrounding, including the use of ICT.

* The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has implemented a pilot program in cooperation with Save the Children Organizations as part of quality education program under emergency conditions. The project aims to provide a learning model through playing and the activation of the role of mothers in the educational process, such as providing alternative mothers instead of the kindergarten teachers during emergency conditions. The project aims to train the kindergarten teachers and mothers on learning through play and how to make toys and games and educational material and training on the use of drama.

2- Rehabilitating the educational apparatus in the kindergarten stage:

* Ratio of kindergarten teachers who hold no higher than general secondary education certificate from 47.3% in 1999/2000 to 50.5% out of the total number of kindergarten teachers in 2005/2006. Ratio of kindergarten teachers who hold diploma or community college certificate went down from 37.3% to 29.7% and the number of kindergarten teachers witnessed an increase rate faster than the increase of children which led to decline of ratio of children to every teacher from 26 children per teacher in 2005/2006 to 20 children per teacher in 2007/2008.

* Currently, there are no criteria or measures to define the tasks of the labor force in early childhood. Members of the committee and owners of the business will review the pre-service and in-service training programs in order to set up criteria for all people working in this sector, including the qualifications needed. They will also draft guiding principles to upgrade the level of professional standards of people working in the sector for the next ten years. This work will take place in 2011-2012.

3- Training kindergarten teachers

* Kindergartens are followed up and competences of people working in them are being upgraded through a central course that is organized by the Ministry on an annual basis for 300 to 350 kindergarten supervisors, principals and teachers. Every supervisor shall organize courses for principals and teachers in her own region, in addition to field visits to kindergartens.

* A project was started in 2006 to reinforce health practices among children in kindergartens in all education directorates.

4- Follow up of health conditions in kindergartens

* The Ministry does not grant license to any kindergarten unless it employs a physician to conduct regular medical checkups and in case of any emergency, the physician is summoned to provide the necessary medical treatment. The physician or the kindergarten shall keep a special medical file for every child. The medical file shall include information about the child and his health condition and the vaccines he took and physical growth and any other changes affecting his health condition. The Ministry also asks the kindergarten to provide means of safety and protection for the children.

5- Psychological and educational counseling

* The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has no special psychological and educational counseling system for early childhood. However, a total number of 425 kindergarten principals and teachers from all directorates were trained in 2007/2008 on how to deal with children in times of crises and this is the sole service that is provided to children at this stage. In addition, the NGOs perform psychological support activities through general recreation activities and programs or therapeutic psychological support or direct counseling with the parents. The Ministry organized entertainment days for children and their parents through support from the British Save the Children Institute in 2004/2005 which benefited a total number of 538 children and 213 mothers and teachers.

6- Special education in kindergartens

* A total number of 591 children with special needs were integrated in kindergartens in 2005/2006. Ratio of boys was 40.1% while girls made up 59.9%. The children suffer different kinds of impairments: mental impairment, hearing impairment, speech problems and physical impairment. The majority of the needs of the children with impairments were not met in an appropriate manner. The rehabilitation centers lack adequate resources to offer such services. Major obstacles are placed in front of the activities of children who suffer from mental impairments and their most basic needs are not met.

* A ratio of 24% of the total number of children suffer from speech and hearing problems. Data show that there isn't an adequate number of specialized institutions to meet the needs of those children. Data also point out to the reasons that lead to impairments which reveal similar trends in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in relation to the birth defects or deformities, diseases and factors related to birth, genes, poverty and environmental factors.

a- Literacy program and continuing education curricula

1- Literacy program: a new curriculum has been prepared for Arabic Language (first and second levels). Review of the first draft has been completed and amendments will be included this year as recommended by the Review Committee.

Work is underway to amend the study plan and add the subject Holy Quran Recitation and make the English Language an optional subject so that the learner can exclude English Language from the subjects that he will be tested. Some of the adult learners (over 40) consider English Language as an obstacle which might force them to drop out from the centers.

2- Parallel education: The Ministry is currently preparing educational packages for the English Language (first and second levels) to be added to the study plan in the parallel education program.

In line with the modern approaches in education which move more towards the use of ICT in education and moving along the lines of Electronic Education Initiative, we believe there is a need to reflect this approach on this important sector and increase the technology classes for students of parallel education with focus on practical application in these classes. Learners at literacy program centers will also be provided with some basic and simple information on the use of computers.

b- Training

1- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has trained cadres from government school teachers to teach at the literacy program centers or parallel education centers, but this training is not sustainable because it depends on funding that is offered through projects.

2- Currently, negotiations are underway to discuss the possibility of including informal education programs teachers as part of the pre-service and in-service teacher training strategy.

3- Training has started with principals of literacy program and parallel education centers on a program that has been designed specifically to build up a special database for centers that belong to the Ministry. During training, it was noted that part of the principals and teachers of literacy program and parallel education centers lack some skills in use of computer; therefore, the names of these people will be included in the plan of the National Institute to train them on the use of computers.

3-3 Third Axis: Administrative and Financial Situation

- Education Law and Civil Service Law

1- Education Law

1- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has formed a committee to draft an education law. The committee submitted the text of the law to the Council of Ministers which in its turn submitted it to the legal consultation office. Amendments were made on the law based on comments made by the legal office and the amended text has been submitted to the ministerial office. The text is still pending approval of the Legislative Council in the third reading.

2- Civil Service Law

2- The most important feature of the Palestinian Civil Service Law with regards to the education sector is that it is a Palestinian law applied in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; in the past, the West Bank applied the Jordanian law and Gaza Strip abided by the Egyptian law. The Civil Service Law contributed to a certain extent in a significant raise in the living standards of the employees.

3- However, this law did not take into consideration the special features of some ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in terms of quantity, mechanisms, measures, working formula, and official working hours, as is the case in other countries.

- Administrative Structure (Organizational Structure Chart)

1- Upgrading the administrative structure: In 2005, the Council of Ministers took an official decision to reformulate the administrative structure of all the PA ministries as part of the administrative and financial reform program. The Council of Ministers requested from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to rebuild the administrative structure in accordance with general specifications that were agreed upon to match the organizational structure model that was adopted by the PA for all its ministries.

2- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education rebuilt its administrative structure, thus meeting the development needs:

4- The Ministry added four new senior posts as follows: Assistant Deputy for Higher Education, Assistant Deputy for Administrative Affairs, Assistant Deputy for Educational Affairs, and Assistant Deputy for Development Affairs.

5- New units were established such as the General Directorate for Counseling and Special Education, General Directorate for School Health, General Directorate for Projects, National Institute for Educational Training, Internal Control Unit, Jerusalem Affairs Unit, and the Cabinet's Affairs Unit. At the level of directorates, two new general directorates were established in the southern districts (Central Gaza) and Southern Nablus.

6- Separate units were merged with general directorates, such as the computer center which was merged with the General Directorate for Technology, and the center for measurement and assessment was merged with the general directorate for measurement, assessment and examinations.

7- However, this structure didn't solve the contradictions and overlaps in roles, responsibilities and tasks between the various general directorates or between the committees in the structure or between the assistant deputies. Every unit did place its own responsibilities and tasks without taking into consideration the impact of this on other units and on the education directorates in the districts, thus causing several overlaps in tasks with repetition of other tasks.

8- The Ministry didn't study in a scientific manner how the scientific qualifications and practical experience meet with the tasks of the posts at all levels. On the contrary, every employee worked to match his scientific qualification and practical experience with the tasks he/she performs.

9- The terms used in the job description and tasks of each post are flexible allowing all kinds of interpretations, and this can lead to overlap of tasks.

10- Moreover, there are no official scientific tools to assess performance. There are no criteria to measure performance. Assessment of performance is not based on the job description. Promotions are not conducted in accordance with scientific standards.

Regulations and Procedures

1- There is an indefinite number of regulations and procedures for many educational, administrative and financial operations and activities. These regulations and instructions are issued by all levels and tackle all aspects of the educational process starting with the Ministry, and the education directorates, schools, students and finally parents.

2- The regulations and procedures are either old with their origins from Jordan or Egypt or they have been issued by the general directorates after the PNA assumed its authorities:

11- There are common or coordinated instructions among all general directorates. The regulations and instructions are neither documented nor classified, thus making it difficult to access them.

12- There are many educational activities that happen without going back to instructions that can help the employees in taking decisions.

13- It is noted that there is a lot of overlap and contradictions between the instructions and procedures issued by the general directorates in the Ministry and the instructions issued to education directorates and schools because of lack of coordination. Most often the instructions are issued without taking into consideration the conditions of each directorate.

14- In some cases, instructions are sent to education directorates, especially verbal instructions, without going back to the head of the education directorate which is a violation of the structural chain of posts, and without taking consideration the work load of the employees. The education directorate is not consulted before issuing instructions.

Education information systems: sources, nature and usage

1-The database aims to unify the Palestinian educational statistical figures and facilitate the dealing with the data by the educational decision making, planners, researchers and people concerned with education and development and educational rehabilitation. The database aims to translate quantitatively the education reality in the various education institutions and meet the needs of all units in the Ministry and general directorates in terms of figures and indicators.

2- The most significant databases that have been developed: general school database, specialized school database, quality school database.

3- The major challenges that face the effective employment of educational databases are:

15- Some specialized databases have not been updated, such as the specialized databases on libraries, laboratories, health facilities, cafeterias, sports facilities, etc... especially in light of the fast changes that are happening in the Palestinian schools in all fields.

16- Many employees lack skills to use computer programs, especially Access and Excel and SPSS, and other software programs, and this deprives them from making use of the databases they have available for their use and analysis.

17- Shortage of cadres working in the field of gathering and classifying data and weak financial potentials and weak funding for such projects.

18- There are databases that have been established by directorates other than the general directorate for planning which is the party responsible for the databases. These databases use different coding system, especially in relation to the national number of the school, such as data of administrative affairs and training. Such a situation does not help integrating these databases with the main databases, and this poses a major challenge in rebuilding them in terms of coding and unifying the concepts in order to achieve integration of all databases of the Ministry.

Decentralization in Educational Management

1- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education does not have a comprehensive plan to achieve decentralization in educational management which is considered one of the goals that the Ministry seeks to achieve on the long term. The system of decentralization is being replaced nowadays with a system of mandating some authorities from the headquarters to the education directorates which also commission of the authorities to the schools.

2- During al-Aqsa Intifada and the escalation of the Israeli attack against the educational process, the Ministry commissioned broader authorities to the education directorates and schools to deal with the emergency cases and solve the problems in school management and operate the educational process according to the conditions on the ground. This had positive impact on the process of solving problems that faced the educational process. This took place through mandating authorities to take decisions on the ground and solve problems without the need to go back to the headquarters.

19- Although the emergency programs dealt with many of the issues that the occupation caused against the Palestinian education, but there was no assessment of the crisis management in a scientific manner in order to study the experience and deduct lessons and make use of them in setting a national strategy at the ministry level in the field of education under crisis.

20- The broad authorities that were mandated to the schools and education directorates were not fully invested as personnel contacted the directorate to get the approval for fear of committing mistakes and this is due to lack of experience and training in this area.

21- It was noted that employees in the education directorates circumvented the authorities that were mandated to the schools and didn't show adequate commitment to the mandates, thus resulting in unclear responsibilities.

3- There were some individual practices performed by the general directorates towards decentralization through expanding the authorities of schools as part of a pilot program implemented at the level of the school, such as self-autonomous schools.

4- Decentralized management in ordinary conditions through self-autonomous schools:

22- This pilot program is based on mandating some authorities at the ministry level to the directorate level and from the directorate level to the school level in order to support the capacity of the school towards gradual administrative and financial independence as a mechanism to train and rehabilitate some schools. This comes as part of introductory steps towards planned and gradual transformation into decentralization.

23- Administrative and financial authorities were mandated to heads of education directorates and principals of pilot schools as part of the project. The authorities that were mandated include: the school principal has the authority to select the alternative teachers in the schools and the authority to follow up disbursing allowances to the teachers through the education directorate. The school principal has the authority to conduct any appropriate amendments on the classes and school time as deemed necessary according to the position of the school management team, and the authority to grant sick leaves and other kinds of accident leaves in accordance with the law for a period not exceeding three days, and the authority to enforce the penalty of notification and warning against his employees in accordance with the violation and its penalty. On the financial aspect, the principal has the authority to prepare the budget of the school in terms of spending and the ratio of each item in the budget and the authority to change priority of items as deemed necessary to serve the interest of the school at the end of the year, and the authority to keep all revenues of the school inside the school without deducting any ratio for any party.

Management of Planning and Policies

1- Short, medium and long term plans: When the Ministry assumed its education tasks, it prepared an emergency plan with the aim of halting the deterioration affecting the Palestinian education system which suffered under the occupation for 27 years; the plan aimed to prevent the collapse of the Palestinian education system. The plan included rebuilding the system through drafting new structures and gradual development of the infrastructure. After achieving stability in the education system, a process of short, medium and long term planning started. The annual short-term plan included emergency plans under the Intifada conditions and plans

for the various general directorates and the education directorates. The medium-term plan was the five-year developmental plan 2000/2001 – 2004/2005. The long-term plan was the Education for All Plan for 2015.

24- The first five-year plan 2000/2001-2004/2005 included the following principles, goals and issues:

a- the basic principles of the education vision: Education is a human right to all school-age children; education is the basis of citizenship where children learn through the education system about their civil rights and duties. Moreover, education is tool of social and economic development to build a Palestinian democratic society; education is a lifelong learning process that crosses the boundaries of schools.

b- The general strategic goals: to provide enrollment opportunities to all school-age children, and improve quality of learning and teaching, and develop the formal education system and literacy programs and continuing education and develop the organizational capacities in the fields of planning, management and finances, and to develop the human resources in the education system.

c- To define the activities, measures and policies for implementation, follow up and assessment in order to achieve the general and specific goals in accordance with a timetable that extends over a period of five years.

d- To build a system of simulation that includes qualitative and quantitative projections about the education system for the years of the plan.

e- To provide an estimate on the cost of the developmental plan in the various fields in terms of programs, school buildings, classrooms, educational aids and human resources, and other needs.

f- To build an emergency plan that can treat and handle the impact caused by the occupation during the Intifada years.

25- Expected results at the end of the first five-year plan

a- To establish a unified Palestinian education system in the West Bank and Gaza Strip where the new Palestinian curriculum is applied, and this goal has been fully achieved in the basic education stage and it is being taught in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

b- To improve the quality of learning and teaching and have high achievement levels and develop the capacity of the student to solve problems and think critically and develop the student's daily life skills and introduce the civic education curriculum in the basic stage.

c- To accomplish a curriculum linked to the needs of scientific and technological advancements and have graduates who have the capacity to compete in the labor market and establish linkage between what the student learns and the socioeconomic needs of the labor market.

d- Effective use of financial resources and achieve high internal competences in the basic stage. Internal competences in the basic stage have increased with decline in ratios of failure and dropouts at the basic stage.

e- To prepare qualified human resources that have the capacity to plan and manage. This result has been partially achieved. Extensive training in the field of strategic planning and management has been conducted, especially in the education directorates and heads of planning departments and supervisors and school principals.

26- Education for All Plan (2004-2015)

a- Palestine participated in the Education for All (EFA) Forum (Senegal/Dakar 2000). The forum ratified six goals that the member countries in the Forum have to abide by and achieve by 2015 through the preparation of EFA national plans. The plan included five fields: early childhood, basic education, literacy programs, adult education and lifelong or continuing education.

b- The aim of EFA is to expand and improve care and education in the early childhood stage, especially for the most vulnerable and most deprived children, and enable the children to have access to free and compulsory elementary education and have them gain necessary daily life skills and improve quality of their education and reduce levels of illiteracy, especially among women.

2- Ratified policies to implement the plans

The Ministry formulated a set of policies to achieve the goals that were mentioned in the five-year plan and in EFA and the emergency plan. The process of implementing the policies faced several challenges, mainly:

27- The majority of the policies that were ratified were not realistic, so implementing them faced difficulties because of the conditions imposed by the Intifada and because of limited resources.

28- The projections on fund paid by the donors were not realistic. There was exaggeration in the projections and the donors didn't honor their financial pledges.

29- The process of implementing the programs were not linked to the ratified policies. The majority of the programs and activities focused on issues of emergency and extraordinary nature.

30- There was no review and follow up of the implementation mechanisms on an annual basis to rectify work in accordance with the ratified policies.

31- There was no review and updating of the policies on a regular basis; there were no amendments aimed to meet the real life needs.

32- The policies didn't include some emergency programs but policies were set up to tackle emergency ad-hoc cases.

Financial Management

1- Procedures to develop financial performance: several measures have been taken to develop financial performance:

33- In the financial field, measures were taken to computerize the financial system and link the system with the directorates and to train the cadres on the new software programs at the level of the ministry and general directorates.

34- Development of the budget system on the basis of the basic and constant programs and items

35- A manual has been set up for financial procedures in the general directorate for financial affairs and at the level of the directorate and the school.

36- Cancellation of the bank accounts of the Ministry and merging them in accounts known by the Finance Ministry.

37- The Finance Ministry appointed a financial monitoring unit on a permanent basis to monitor financial performance.

38- Application of the financial system pertaining to ministries and public institutions no. 43 of 2005.

2- Weakness in the financial system

39- In the field of funds and banks: there are no written internal regulations regarding the mechanism for the miscellaneous expenditure fund in terms of disbursing mechanism and the monetary ceiling of the fund based on its location (ministry, directorate, school) and other issues. There are no internal regulations with regards to the authority to open a bank account in terms of authorization, number, disbursing mechanism, transfer from one currency to another and banking settlements and special records on cheques, and other matters.

40- The step of the Finance Ministry to open a financial monitoring unit on a permanent basis in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education increased complexities and bureaucracy in financial work.

41- The donor countries didn't respond to the call for coordinating between them to unify their financial and administrative measures and didn't take into consideration the financial and administrative regulations applied in the Ministry, thus complicating work and wasting the time of employees who had to get acquainted with the measures and procedures of each donor country.

3- Annual plans and budgets

42- Budgets are considered one of the most important tools of planning and monitoring because they aim to set up a prior vision on the best means to use the resources, in addition to the setting up of a timetable for the use of the resources in order to achieve the goals of the Ministry. The budget in itself is a political tool because it allows implementing the education policy found in the plan. It is one of the tools for coordination and monitoring the educational plans from a financial perspective. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education abides by the criteria and limitations set up by the Finance Ministry when preparing the annual budget.

The relations with the donors, civil society institutions and the local community

1- The relations with the donor countries and funding parties to education projects

43- The funds from the donor countries cover the expenses of development in the field of infrastructure, especially in building new schools and maintenance and expansion of the existing schools. Total assistance in the field of education reached around \$288.9 million during the period 1995-2005, including spending on vocational education with an average rate of 26% per year. Ratio of spending on school construction and other buildings makes up 57.2% of the total spending of the donor countries. Funds were also provided to prepare the curricula and school textbooks with a total amount of \$43.7 million which makes up a ratio of 15.1% of the total spending of the donor countries.

44- Weaknesses in the working mechanism of the donor countries:

a- Funding is received from the donors for some projects through the general directorates without coordinating with the other relevant general directorates or with the projects unit in the Ministry and this takes place outside the context of the five-year plan.

b- Measures and procedures for financing, implementation and follow up differ between one donor country and another. This doubles the efforts exerted because of several different measures and in many cases, these measures contradict with the

regulations and instructions at the Ministry, especially in the disbursement mechanisms.

c- The funding parties define their own priorities which are not necessarily part of the priorities of the Ministry and this causes confusion and disruption of the developmental programs that are linked with the annual and five-year plan.

d- The donor countries focus on the provision of technical assistance which results in poor quality although there are local expertise, in addition to the high cost of this kind of external assistance, and the heavy burden on the administrative expenses of the funding parties.

e- The donor countries don't have a mechanism for program sustainability after the end of the external funding and there are no mechanisms for follow up and assessment at the end of the project.

f- The coordination mechanisms among the donors have not succeeded in agreement on the implemented programs and projects. Still, there is overlap and repetition with more than one donor country doing the same job because every country has interests in certain education aspects.

2- The relations with the private sector and the civil society institutions

45- The local community made effective contribution to support the educational process through building and expanding schools and classrooms. The total amount of the local community contribution reached about 1,500 classrooms and the construction and expansion of 97 classrooms in the past ten years with a total cost of \$44 million which makes up 14% of the total cost. The local community also provided lands for new school buildings in the various regions.

46- The private sector and the NGOs still play a marginal role in the education process in Palestine. They are concentrated more in the cities in the central region in Ramallah and Jerusalem and its outskirts and in Bethlehem region in the south and in the city of Nablus in the north. Villages and camps lack this kind of education.

47- The private education centers and institutions suffer from weak financial incentives and privileges from the government. The official institution does not have economic policies and incentives to education projects. The political and economic conditions are not ready to encourage the private sector to invest in education because of absence of security due to the Israeli occupation measures.

3- The relations with the UNRWA

48- The UNRWA was formed upon a UN resolution on December 8, 1949 and its task was to assume acts of relief and employment in cooperation with the local governments. The education program of the UNRWA makes this organization resemble a lot the education ministries in terms of the works and services that they offer, but the UNRWA lacks political power over those who benefit from these services.

49- Areas of coordination between the Ministry and the UNRWA: The UNRWA has a major contribution in the educational process as it provides education to 24.2% of the total number of students in the Palestinian schools and a ratio of 12% of the total number of schools. There is coordination between the UNRWA and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at all levels and through exchanged documents and through a series of regular meetings at all levels and through the formation of joint coordination committee which work on the following:

a- The UNRWA is briefed on the future plans of the Ministry and they discuss means of developing the education process.

- b- To develop coordination with the Ministry in order to introduce the tenth grade in the UNRWA education program and this has been introduced in the UNRWA program in the schools of Jerusalem.
- c- To develop coordination in the field of school textbooks and to get its share of these books.
- d- To reinforce cooperation between the Ministry and the UNRWA in the field of training teachers, administration personnel and education supervisors.
- e- To allow participation of the UNRWA students in the extracurricular students activities and in summer camps and sports programs and other activities.
- f- To allow the participation of the UNRWA schools in the majority of developmental pilot programs that are implemented by the Ministry in the government schools, such as the school health program and nutrition program and child-friendly school and daily life skills program, etc.
- g- To develop cooperation in training programs and vocational and technical rehabilitation and the school map and in the field of specifications of the school building.
- h- To coordinate in the field of preparing the Palestinian curricula through making use of the UNRWA experts and coordinate in the field of school management, and exchange of educational aids between the schools and science labs and computer labs.
- i- To coordinate in the field of national achievement tests and apply the Palestinian curricula in the UNRWA schools.
- j- To coordinate at all levels in the field of preparing the five-year plan so that the Ministry's plan would include and reflect the UNRWA plan
- k- To coordinate in the field of exchange of information and statistical data, especially data related to refugee students in the government schools and in quality studies, such as dropouts, learning difficulties, health conduct, and other issues.
- l- To coordinate in the field of student promotion after completing the ninth grade and absorb them in the government schools.

50- weakness in the field of coordination between the Ministry and the UNRWA: theoretically, there is coordination between the Ministry and the UNRWA at all levels. However, on real grounds, there are some coordination shortages in several fields, especially in the field of planning, implementation and follow up:

- a- The first five-year plan is the plan of the Ministry and was not a holistic plan for education; therefore, the plan's activities reflected the minimum aspects of the UNRWA's plan.
- b- The results of studies and recommendations that were prepared by the Ministry were not reflected on the UNWA schools.
- c- There was no exchange of experiences, especially in the field of teacher training although the UNRWA has a rich experience in this area.
- d- Communication between the Ministry and the UNRWA was very minimal. There is no systemic mechanism to coordinate in the field of exchange of education knowledge, publications, and studies, administrative and technical expertise.
- e- There was no objective comparison and assessment at the academic, achievement and behavior levels between tenth grade students in government schools and the students who came from the UNRWA schools.
- f- The UNRWA section in the General Directorate for General Education in the Ministry has the task of following up marginal procedural issues with the UNRWA.

Third Axis: Administrative and Financial situation in Literacy Programs and Continuing Education

1- The system of bonus to personnel in the literacy program centers and continuing education centers was linked to the salaries program of the General Directorate for Administrative Affairs and the Finance Ministry. The education directorates provide the special data on the people working in these centers and number of work hours at the centers that belong to each directorate while the General Directorate for General Education in the Ministry verifies these data and then these reports are sent on a monthly basis to the Finance Ministry which pays the allowances and bonus to the people working in these centers.

2- The program of informal education in the Ministry implemented its various activities based on funding coming through projects. However, a special item in the general budget has been allocated for the last two years for literacy programs and adult education; this item in the budget allows the implementation of these activities, such as providing the centers with stationery, and training the personnel and developing the curriculum and the literacy test.

7- Priorities and Strategic Goals "2011-2013"

4- The Strategic Goals of the Education Sector Strategy

Based on the diagnosis of the sector and the national development context and the education strategic framework, all members of the Education Sector Strategy National Team and the technical team in the General Directorate for Planning agreed that the strategic goals of the education sector are the same goals of the Strategic Plan for Educational development 2008-2012:

Goal 1: To increase the opportunities of enrollment for school-age children and improve the capacity of the system to keep students in schools (Enrollment).
Goal 2: To improve quality of learning and teaching (Quality)
Goal 3: To develop the capacities in planning, management and improve the financial and administrative systems and their usage (Management)

The first goal aims to provide enrollment for all school-age children and for various age groups based on the sector where the student or the learners enrolls: kindergartens, basic and secondary general education, literacy programs and continuing education. The second and third goals aim to improve quality of learning and teaching and improve and develop the administrative systems in all these sub sectors.

In order to achieve these goals, a simulation process was conducted on the content of the developmental strategic plan of the Ministry, including the results, and education policies for each goal. The policies resulted in several strategies which will be shown as follows: the goals and results emanating from them and the strategies that are expected to be achieved by the end of the strategy implementation:

1- The first goal: to provide enrollment opportunities for all learning-age individuals.

Relevant results:

- * To increase rates of enrollment of students, including students with special physical and psychological needs
- * To increase the capacity of the system to keep students in schools.
- * To provide education opportunities in literacy programs and continuing education and supplementary opportunities for those who graduate from literacy programs and continuing education.
- * To support education in Jerusalem (reinforce national education in Jerusalem)

Relevant targets (strategies)

- * To increase rate of admission to the first grade from (females: 91.1% - males: 92.2%) in 2009 to (females: 96.5% - males: 97.3%) in 2013.
- * To increase gross rate of enrollment in the basic education grades from (females: 97.6% - males: 95.2%) in 2009 to (females: 98.35% - males: 99.55%) in 2013.
- * To increase gross rate of enrollment in the secondary education grades from (females: 85.3% - males: 72.2%) in 2009 to (females: 85.75% - males: 82.55%) in 2013.
- * To increase net rate of enrollment in the basic education stage from (females: 96.3% - males: 97.2%) in 2009 to (females: 97.2% - males: 96.75%) in 2013.
- * To increase net rate of enrollment in the secondary education grades from (females: 75.7% - males: 65.9%) in 2009 to (females: 76.6% - males: 74.15%) in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students staying in school until the fifth grade in the West Bank from (females: 99.3% - males: 97.9%) in 2009 to (females: 99.45% - males: 99.1%) in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students staying in school until the tenth grade in the West Bank from (females: 93.1% - males: 90.7%) in 2009 to (females: 93.7% - males: 93.1%) in 2013.
- * To increase rate of promotion from the basic stage to the secondary stage from (females: 99.3% - males: 89.8%) in 2009 to (females: 93.75% - males: 92.95%) in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students in Jerusalem under the supervision of the PNA from (females: 40.8% - males: 26.9%) in 2009 to (females: 51.45% - males: 40.4%) in 2013.

2- The Second Goal: Improving quality of learning and teaching

Relevant results:

- * To review the Palestinian curricula in formal education and literacy programs and continuing education.
- * To reinforce the employment of ICT in education.
- * To improve the criteria of educational school environment.
- * To reinforce and develop the competences of the teaching staff.
- * To reinforce and develop system of measurement and assessment.

Relevant targets (strategies)

- * Rate of review and enriching the curriculum and improve it when compared with what came in the curriculum plan for 2011-2013.
- * To increase representation rate of the five needs of the Palestinian society in the Palestinian curriculum for the grades (6, 8, 10) from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of involvement of the learner students in the learning/education process from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of use of educational technology in education from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students achievement in the normative tests at the level of directorate and school in three major subjects for three classes to be selected on an annual basis from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students achievement in national normative tests in Arabic Language and Mathematics for the 4th and 10th grades from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of students enrolling in the scientific stream after the 10th grade from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase number of qualified teachers in accordance with the teacher training strategy from () in 2011 to () in 2013.
- * To increase rate of schools that meet the criteria of child-friendly school from () in 2011 to () in 2013.

3- To improve and develop the financial and administrative systems

Relevant results:

- * To develop administrative systems that serve the educational goals.
- * To develop the planning system at all levels.
- * To develop the educational planning financial system.
- * To upgrade the competence levels of the administrative cadre at all levels.
- * To develop cooperation and partnership with the universities, civil society, and partners in developments (donors and the UNRWA).

Relevant targets (strategies)

- * Rate of computerizing the system of General Directorate for Planning and Projects at the directorate and ministry levels during the period 2011-2013 in comparison with the major phases of the computerization plan.
- * Rate of developing the financial/budget system from item-oriented system to program-oriented system during the period 2011-2013 in comparison with the major phases of the action plan for this policy.
- * To match between project implementation mechanisms of the Ministry, the donors and the local communities.
- * Annual rate of qualified administrative employees in accordance with the job description compared with those below qualifications level distributed by gender.
- * Annual rate of financial commitments inside and outside the five-year plan and the reform plan distributed according to the funding mechanisms and amount of contribution from the NGOs and the local community.
- * Annual rate of administrative decisions taken by the various administrative teams based on data systems and studies.
- * To increase rate of qualified teachers according to gender from 36.4% - 47.2% and ratio of qualified teachers and the ratio of qualified teacher to student and class.

5- Priorities

Criteria that define the priorities

Priority (1): To maintain sustainability or work in the educational system through providing enrollment opportunities for all – some activities are necessary to maintain the educational process as it is right now.

Priority (2): To select some main activities that are necessary to achieve the goals in the general education sector – selective activities that have direct relation with the efforts to improve outputs of the education/learning process.

Priority (3): Supplementary activities in the sub sectors: general education, kindergartens, literacy programs and continuing education.

Priority (4): To further improve enrollment, quality and management – secondary activities

Criteria that define priorities

* General Criteria

Defining the criteria was based on the main policies in the five-year plan:

* Education for All (Enrollment)

- * Top priority is granted to general education sector as opposed to other sub sectors.
- * Top priority is granted to enrollment access due to the natural growth as opposed to the priority of keeping the students and reducing dropout rates.

* Quality

- * Priority is granted to train teachers and develop the curriculum as opposed to school health and educational counseling.

* Planning and Management

- * Priority is granted to the management of the five-year plan as opposed to other planning activities.
- * Priorities selected in the field of management and decentralized management.
- * Planning and Management
- * Education in Jerusalem
- * Top priority was granted to some selected activities.
- * Special Education:
 - * Top priority was granted to some selected basic activities.
- * Gender: it is interrelated issue – there are no specific priority activities.
- * Reducing level of poverty
 - * Medium level priority was granted to literacy programs, lifelong or continuing education and students support programs.
- * Top priority granted to the general education sector when compared

Distribution of priorities according to the five-year plan policies along with expansion in kindergarten, literacy programs and continuing education sectors

Main policies	Priority (1)	Priority (2)	Priority (3)	Priority (4)
Education for All	To guarantee enrollment opportunities for all new students and meet the annual rate of natural growth	Core activities necessary to keep students in the education system in general education sector	Activities related to literacy programs, continuing education, kindergartens, supplementary programs in literacy programs and continuing education	Physical infrastructure that supports general education
Quality of education	Basic exams, basic issues of school health	To implement strategy of training and review curriculum and basic activities in educational counseling and school health programs	To improve quality of education in kindergartens, literacy programs and continuing education	Secondary activities such as students activities, and external visits
Planning and management	Planning and management within the available capabilities (there are no additional requirements)	To improve information systems and decision taking processes, tools and devices in the general education sector	Supplementary activities in planning and management in the general education sector, main activities in planning and management in kindergarten, literacy programs, continuing education sectors	Secondary activities such as measurement and assessment, studies, additional training, conferences, field visits...
Education in Jerusalem		To improve conditions of schools, and provide free school textbooks to students in Jerusalem, especially private schools		
Special education	To improve basic infrastructure and educational aids and methods	Training of teachers and educational counselors	To provide services and other facilitation measures in schools	Participation in students activities
Gender	Interrelated issue			
Reducing poverty	To guarantee enrollment opportunities in kindergartens for those in dangerous areas, and in marginalized areas	To provide basic educational aids for literacy programs, continuing education and kindergartens	To assess needs and improve educational aids and methods for literacy programs and continuing education	Awareness campaigns

Sector strategy elements as written in the strategic plan for educational development (2008-2012)

6- Sector policies

Most important policies of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

"Education for All": The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is committed to provide quality education for all school age children (males and females) in general education, and increase opportunities to have access to good education at the other levels, such higher education, vocational education, literacy education and lifelong or continuing education.

Gender: Despite the notable achievement of the education system in this regard, additional measures have been taken to bridge the remaining gaps between males and females in the rates of enrollment at all levels and in all kinds of education, and to encourage women to work in the field of education at all levels, especially in the highest decision making posts.

Reducing Poverty: Special attention shall be granted to the poor through providing them with educational services, and scholarships and student loans.

Students with Special Needs: additional efforts shall be exerted in the field of inclusive education and at all levels of education.

Focus on Quality: To focus on improving quality of education in the next phase and to implement the teacher rehabilitation national strategy, and there will be review and development of the general education curricula and school textbooks on a regular basis (with regards to vocational education and training, the Ministry will prepare unit-based curricula) and to exert major efforts to improve quality of higher education, including promoting and encouraging research.

Matching and linking education with socioeconomic development: special focus will be given to the process of linking education, especially in the post-secondary stage, with the labor market and the needs of the society.

Science and Technology: There will be improvement in studying science and technology with special attention to expanding the use of Information Technology and Communications in education at all levels and in computer related areas, and the policy of science and technology will be developed in higher education along with encouragement of relevant research.

Role of the Private Sector: To integrate strategically the private sector through holding consultations in the field of policies, especially in the fields of higher education, vocational education, and participation in implementing activities through promoting investment in education.

Improving Partnerships: To coordinate and cooperate with the UNRWA and reinforce the relations with the private sector and international development partners, and have all partners join the dialogue on policies, planning,

implementation, monitoring, regular review of the progress that will be achieved in the plan. The education strategic developmental plan shall be a framework to improve partnership. Investment outside the context of the plan will not be encouraged.

Planning and Organization Capacity: Work will focus on developing systems to support planning decisions and skills and the implementation and management of the plan. Work will also focus on developing a training strategy in the relevant fields and on setting up and implementing and linking incentives with training. There will be assessment of the performance of the various units in the Ministry, directorates, higher education institutions and schools on the basis of the progress that will be achieved in the plan.

Decentralization and Restructuring the Ministry: Measures will be taken to move towards decentralization, in addition to reviewing the organizational structure in the Ministry at all levels and institutions along with review of systems, instructions and job description of all posts in the various units.

Jerusalem: Education in Jerusalem will be given special attention, especially in the field of provision of classrooms and schools and improving salaries of teachers, and encouraging the donors to invest in education in Jerusalem. Loans and grants shall be provided to needy students in the higher education institutions in Jerusalem.

6-1 Policies related to enrollment

- * To adopt the admission age in the first basic grade at (five years and seven months) which means the children who were born on February 7 for the government schools and UNRWA schools, and (five years and four months and a half) which means children who were born on April 14 for the private schools.
- * To adopt a policy of encouraging the private sector to invest in education, especially in al-Quds al-Shareef.
- * To integrate students with special needs in schools.
- * To adopt a system of providing one basic school for each community taking into consideration that conditions of the community.
- * To maintain the same endorsed policy when building new classrooms in terms of design and average of students per room in West Bank and Gaza Strip (West Bank: 36 students per room; Gaza Strip: 40 students per room).
- * To preserve Palestinian heritage inside the school buildings
- * To develop the existing schools through adding specialized and administration rooms.
- * To adopt the system of rehabilitating the existing schools so that they can receive students with special needs.
- * To adopt the approach of identifying the level and gender of the school in the new school buildings.
- * To adopt the policy of conducting furniture maintenance in the region where the school is located.
- * To provide furniture warehouses in each directorate.
- * To provide all school textbooks for students for all grades (1-12), including textbooks for students with special needs and students of vocational education and guarantee their distribution before the start of the new scholastic year.

- * To adopt approaches towards changing the specifications of the school textbooks in order to reduce cost without any impact on the quality of education.
- * To provide guidebook for teachers according to the curriculum.
- * To increase ratio of schools which have science labs (classes over the sixth grade need independent science lab; schools with classes under sixth grade need appropriate tools and cupboards for the science teachers; schools with secondary classes – scientific stream – need two science labs).
- * To move towards rehabilitating kindergartens so that they can receive students with special needs.
- * To rent rooms and buildings in Jerusalem in case it is not possible to build or purchase with focus on opening male schools.
- * To provide at least one school (government, private or UNRWA) in every community in Jerusalem.
- * To adopt programs that aim to raise the rate of people enrolled in literacy programs and guarantee their sustainability.
- * To adopt programs that aim to raise the rate of people enrolled in continuing education programs and guarantee their sustainability.
- * To move towards increasing number of government kindergartens.
- * To support the policy of integrating the pre-school grade in kindergartens with basic education in a gradual process within the next ten years.
- * To guarantee enrollment of all children in early childhood programs, especially children in marginalized and poor areas, and support comprehensive development of their areas.
- * To support and raise awareness of families of children in the early childhood program in order to achieve comprehensive development of the children within the environment of their families.
- * To develop infrastructure in new and existing basic schools to meet with the needs of early childhood through re-development of school design and architecture criteria.
- * To define and locate the poor sectors that receive social support and care from the Ministry of Social Affairs in order to assist them in paying the enrollment fees in kindergartens as part of the package of social services and assistance.
- * To encourage the private sector in providing at least one kindergarten for every community taking into consideration the size of the community (population density)
- * To work on gradual opening of kindergartens in Jerusalem and adopt several model kindergartens there.
- * To provide books for all students in classes (1-12) for free in Jerusalem.
- * To support the salaries of employees in Jerusalem.
- * To support education on both sides of the separation wall, especially in Jerusalem.
- * To support the policy of protecting Jerusalemite students and their right to education.
- * To amend the items pertaining to the success and failure for the students with special needs. Students with visual impairment shall be exempted from mathematics and technology and any drawings and to appoint a person to write for the totally blind student. Students with hearing impairment shall be exempted from expression in Arabic and English and from the subjects of Quran reciting and science of poetry, and to provide a sign language translator with the students who sit for exams.
- * The Ministry shall be committed to appoint 5% of the graduates from the students with special needs.
- * To support the institutions working with people suffering from various impairments at educational centers.

- * To integrate the children who suffer from slight and medium mental handicap in the basic grades (1-4) in general education through the special class.
- * To allow married young women to enroll in the education system.

6-1 Policies related to quality

- * To ratify the regular development of curricula in a manner that meets with the strategic plan of the Ministry.
- * To move towards computerizing the educational curricula in a manner that meets with the Electronic Education Initiative.
- * To move towards E-learning
- * To move towards reducing violence in schools.
- * To adopt a policy of assessing students with special needs (talented, suffering a handicap, outstanding).
- * To ratify a system of professional supervision in counseling and special education.
- * To expand work to provide support services and resources for counseling and special education.
- * To adopt systems of transferring students from schools to specialized institutions based on certain criteria (talented, suffering a handicap, health condition, mental health condition, etc.)
- * To provide proper nutrition and health services.
- * To adopt a system of health supervision on schools.
- * To facilitate use of the school facilities for health and environment activities after classes according to certain criteria.
- * To rehabilitate the school environment and health facilities in the school.
- * To abide by the classes allocated for activities in accordance with the curriculum.
- * To increase number of schools which have multipurpose halls and playgrounds for the various school activities.
- * To support the teachers in following up school activities.
- * To ratify modern policies for the General Secondary Education Exams that take into consideration the Palestinian curricula.
- * To develop mechanisms that make use of the achievement, diagnostic, national; and international tests in the process of educational development.
- * To ratify the system of student assessment in a manner that takes into consideration all aspects of the educational learning process.
- * To move towards adopting the supervisor teacher according to the specialization.
- * To ratify a system that activates the specialized rooms (library, different kinds of labs).
- * To adopt the system of opening sections of the same class if the students number in the class exceeds 41 on the second grade as is the case in the first basic grade.
- * The area allocated per student dependent on the stage remains unchanged: 1.23 square meters (for the basic stage 1.21 and 1.41 for the secondary stage).
- * To maintain rates of post per class 1:4, and administration personnel per class 0.17, and other posts per school 2.2 and take into consideration the posts that were assigned tasks in accordance with the previous items.
- * To adopt a therapeutic program for students with low achievement levels.
- * To review the educational curricula and programs and define the strong and weak points of children who join the first grade in order to take them into consideration in the recommendations on developing the general framework of kindergarten curriculum.

- * To review the training programs for kindergarten teachers (pre-service and in-service) in order to determine the main aspects of educational needs of the early childhood stage and integrate them in the current training programs.
- * To review the programs that are offered to students with special needs in kindergartens and raise awareness level among the families who have children with special needs and provide early inspection and detection and diagnose their cases.
- * To support and raise awareness of families of children with special needs in order to achieve the children's comprehensive development inside their families.
- * To develop criteria of quality education in early childhood stage.
- * To raise awareness of parents to achieve quality care and education inside the family.
- * To encourage national distinction in the field of professional development of teachers and supervisors in pre-school phase.
- * To act as institutions that contribute towards simplifying the activities and programs pertaining to child development.
- * To have no more than 25 children in the class in kindergartens.
- * To have no more than 25 children per teacher in kindergartens.
- * To decrease ratio of teacher per supervisor in kindergartens from 165 to 100.
- * To accelerate work to complete the curriculum of Palestinian literacy program.
- * To show more attention to E-Learning and make use of the computerized systems used in the Ministry and higher education institutions.
- * To increase number of education counselors in Jerusalem in order to treat the problem of school dropouts and the transfer of students to the Israeli education ministry and municipality schools.
- * To intensify education counseling to girls, especially on issues of early marriage and adolescence.
- * To assess and reinforce gender philosophy in the Palestinian curricula during the process of enriching and amending it.

6-3 Policies related to management

*** To develop and adopt a unified strategy in training educational and administrative cadres at the various levels:**

- 1- To link the training programs with the needs and job description.
- 2- To adopt one party as reference for the training.
- 3- To adopt set specifications for the trainers and training material by an authorized and specialized party.
- 4- To link training with a system of incentives (administrative and financial)
- 5- To adopt a unified financial system for training.
- 6- To select the right timing for training in a manner that does not contradict with the work interests.
- 7- To adopt a comprehensive system for assessing training.
- 8- To ratify a system that compels transfer of experience from the trainers to their colleagues and show prior commitment to work in the Ministry for periods that match the period and cost of training that he/she received.
- 9- To keep up with the local, regional and international developments.
- 10- To adopt a system to develop the organizational structure and reconsider it based on clear and endorsed criteria in a manner that meets with the strategic plan provided that it does not contradict with the bylaws.

11- To adopt endorsed scientific tools in preparing the job description and assess performance for every post and the system of promotion within the perimeters of the law.

- * To develop and activate the regulations and instructions to implement the text of the law (law of education) when necessary and publish them in accordance with the legal standards.

- * To adopt the General Directorate for Planning as the authorized party that assumes the task of building, integrating and unifying the databases.

- * To adopt the computer skills as a requirement for all administrative posts.

- * To adopt a unified approach in preparing the strategic plan based on the current five-year plan.

- * To refrain from adopting any program outside the context of the plan unless there is a decision by the Committee of Policies and Planning.

- * To adopt the goals of the strategic plan when assessing the accomplishments of the administrative units.

- * To reinforce the approach towards decentralization as part of the clear concept that we need for our educational system.

- * To adopt the Policies Committee as the sole reference body to ratify the educational policies.

- * To write down a clear system and endorse it when preparing the budget and link it to the five-year plan.

- * To authorize the General Directorate for Planning to follow the implementation of the plan.

- * To reformulate and activate the budget committee in the Ministry.

- * To adopt the computerized and consolidated financial system in the Ministry and directorates.

- * To adopt one reference to manage the projects in the Ministry (General Directorate for Projects).

- * To develop a unified policy for funding and implementation with the donor countries.

- * To follow the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education when distributing the funding.

- * To develop a mechanism for sustainability of the successful programs at the end of the funded projects.

- * To activate the principle of participation of the international organizations, the donor countries, the NGOs and the private sector.

- * To ratify clear and specific standards when signing contracts with local and international experts.

- * To activate monitoring and supervision on the private educational institutions.

- * To form a coordinating committee for education that includes the UNRWA, the NGO sector and education specialists, etc.

- * To coordinate with the UNRWA in order to include the tenth grade in the UNRWA education program similar to what was applied with some schools since the basic education stage is from the first grade until the tenth grade.

- * To activate the text of the law on education tax.

- * To activate the role of the community in supporting and developing the education system in all phases of planning, implementation and assessment.

- * To grant education in Jerusalem all administrative and financial facilitation measures.

- * To guide the donors towards supporting education in Jerusalem.

- * To adopt the General Directorate for Buildings as the reference upon implementing funded projects to build schools, expand them and conduct their maintenance.
- * To adopt the post of school principal deputy.
- * To work on continuous assessment of the various administrative and financial activities in the Ministry and higher education institutions.
- * To adopt system of incentives to encourage employees and improve their performance in the higher education institutions.
- * To work on automatic development of financial sustainability and develop the financial capacities in the higher education institutions.
- * To reinforce cooperation with the private sector in financing higher education.
- * To develop system of loans and financial assistance to students in higher education institutions in a manner that guarantees sustainability.
- * To establish an early childhood national committee in order to build a comprehensive system to develop early childhood programs through the following:
 - To offer advice to the Ministry (through the Minister of Education and Higher Education) on the matter of public policies pertaining to the development of early childhood phase, including the necessary initiatives to achieve the national goals pertaining to early childhood.
 - To assist in preparing plans and programs pertaining to education in early childhood.
 - To assist in preparing national strategy for early childhood and develop early childhood curriculum.
 - To raise awareness and support the parents in order to achieve quality care and education inside the family.
 - To prepare criteria and systems to grant licenses to all early childhood institutions in a manner that secures the provision and reinforcement of comprehensive services to children.
 - To develop criteria and measures of employment, work and criteria to determine the needs in terms of human resources and the scientific qualifications inside the early childhood centers.
 - To develop and monitor a set of national criteria for education and leadership in pre-school phase and apply a unified system to license the profession of teaching inside the kindergartens in accordance with these criteria.
 - To conduct consultations with the stakeholders with the aim of reinforcing dialogue to develop early childhood between governmental and non-governmental institutions.
 - To monitor and assess the plans in the field of early childhood development and offer recommendations to the government through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
 - To support issues of research that concerns the national council in developing the early childhood sector.
 - To analyze the needs in terms of resources and offer recommendations pertaining to the budget allocations for early childhood.
 - To determine funding alternatives through negotiating with the funding parties and the donor agencies to secure best use of resources.

7- Program Fiches according to the sector goals

The sector strategy adopted the same program fiches that were the result of the developmental strategic plan of the Ministry in order to facilitate mechanisms of funding and implementation based on funding basket and to implement the policy of the Finance Ministry in relation to the program-oriented budget. These programs contribute to the accomplishment of the strategic goals as follows:

Goal	Program Fiche
1- First Goal (Enrollment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Program to provide physical infrastructure* Program to provide educational equipment and aids
2- Second Goal (Quality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Program to develop the curricula* Program of the strategy to rehabilitate teachers and train teaching staff* Program for school health, educational counseling and students activities
3- Third Goal (Management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Program to develop capacities in financial and educational planning* Program to develop administrative and legislative commitment

Program number	Name of program fiche	Summary of program
Program (1)	Educational infrastructure	To build and equip the new buildings for general education, kindergartens, literacy programs and continuing education, facilitation measures to students with special needs and maintenance of school buildings
Program (2)	Educational aids and technology	To provide school textbooks and educational aids and science and computer labs and libraries
Program (3)	To improve curricula	To assess and amend the curricula of general education, kindergartens, literacy programs and continuing education, and asses the student performance, and improve literacy programs and continuing education
Program (4)	School health and educational counseling	Health education, developing health prevention and care (nutrition, vaccination, medical exams), students activities, educational counseling, training of counselors
Program (5)	To implement the training strategy	To develop the teacher training system and improve incentives to teachers and reinforce vocational training for teachers according to their needs, and implement the pre-service and in-service training strategy
Program (6)	Educational planning	To improve educational planning and information system management and building capacities in the field of budgeting and financial planning
Program (7)	Administrative and organizational system	To improve educational legislations, laws and policies and administrative systems and strengthen horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms and building administrative capacities and develop the organizational structure and job description and assessment system.

These programs were extracted from the set of activities mentioned in each of the three goals related to the program fiches as mentioned in the table above without taking into consideration the education sector that these fiches belong to, meaning that each program fiche included the activities that meet with the expected results and outputs for each of the sub sectors: kindergartens, school general education, literacy programs and continuing education. Thus, the first goal was divided into two fiches. The second goal was divided into three fiches. The third goal was divided into two fiches. Each fiche was named a fiche program.

1- Program to provide the physical infrastructure: this program contributes to the accomplishment of the first goal (enrollment) through achieving the first and second expected results: the first result: to provide enrollment for the learners in the formal education and kindergartens and literacy program centers; the second result: to keep the learners in the education system. This is done through the accomplishment of the following specific objectives:

- * To provide buildings in order to provide enrollment to the new learners, including the learners with special needs.
- * To provide buildings in order to keep learners in the education system whether in the kindergartens, or school education or literacy program centers.
- * To develop supplementary programs for those who graduate from literacy programs.

2- Program to provide educational equipment and technology: this program contributes side by side with the first program in achieving the first goal, but it aims to achieve the second expected result as part of this goal and focuses on the specific objectives pertaining to educational technology and aids. This is done through the following specific objectives:

- * To develop and provide laboratories and libraries to the students and learners.
- * To provide the educational aids for the students, learners and children.

3- Program to develop the curricula: this program aims to achieve the second goal pertaining to the quality of education in the three sub sectors, and contributes to the accomplishment of the expected results as part of this goal: to review and improve the Palestinian curricula for formal education, kindergartens, and literacy programs and continuing education, and reinforce the employment of technology in education, and reinforce the system of measurement and assessment. This program contributes to the accomplishment of the specific objectives:

- * To assess the curricula of formal education and kindergartens and literacy programs and adult education.
- * To develop the curricula of the learners in the literacy programs centers.
- * To improve the general framework of the kindergartens curricula.
- * To produce the educational aids that support curricula in formal education, kindergartens, and literacy programs centers.
- * To activate the use of labs and libraries in the schools.
- * To develop the criteria to assess the performance of students.
- * To develop the system of performance and national tests.

4- School health program, educational counseling and students activities: this program contributes to the accomplishment of the second goal on development of quality of education through achieving the relevant expected results: To improve the

educational environment in the kindergartens, schools, literacy programs. The following specific objective helps achieving the results of this goal:

- * To improve the health and counseling services and the students activities pertaining to the three sub sectors.

5- Program of the strategy to rehabilitate teachers and train the teaching staff:

this program contributes to the accomplishment of the second goal on development of quality of education through achieving the relevant expected results: To develop competence of the teaching staff in kindergartens, literacy programs and adult education. This program focuses on developing the pre-service and in-service competence of the teaching staff through developing training programs in coordination with the universities and higher education institutions for the teachers of schools, kindergartens, and the specialists with special needs and educational counseling and supervision. The following specific objectives were the result of this goal:

- * To implement the strategy of pre-service and in-service teacher training.
- * To develop system of comprehensive follow up.

6- Program to develop the capacities in financial and educational planning:

this program contributes to the accomplishment of the third goal on management through achieving the relevant expected results: To improve educational planning financial system and improve the system of planning at all levels. The following specific objectives were the results of this goal:

- * To develop the mechanisms and systems that support decision making through studies, research and data systems.
- * To empower the administrators in the field of educational and financial planning.
- * To develop the financial policies and programs.
- * To develop annual planning mechanisms at all levels in the organizational structure.
- * To develop mechanisms of activating internal monitoring.
- * To develop the mechanisms of preparing the budget based on the five-year plan.
- * To develop the mechanisms of dealing with the donor countries.

7- Program to develop administrative and legislative commitment:

this sixth program deal with the achievement of the third goal pertaining to management. It contributes to the achievement of the expected results as part of this goal: To upgrade the competence level of administrative cadre at all levels in all sectors, and improve cooperation and partnership with the universities and local community and partners in development and improve the existing administrative systems. There is a set of specific objectives that contribute in achieving the results:

- * To activate the application of regulations, laws and instructions.
- * To move towards decentralization in educational management.
- * To computerize administrative work.
- * To implement the administrative cadre training strategy.
- * To encourage horizontal and vertical expansion in private education.
- * To encourage partnership mechanisms between the Ministry, the UNRWA and the local community.
- * To raise awareness of the local community on importance of education.
- * To unify training methodologies for administrators and supervisors in the field of literacy programs and continuing education.

8- Implementation and follow up arrangements

The sector strategy is translated into annual operational plans at the central level for all general directorates in the ministries, then in the departments belonging to the ministries in the directorates and regions and then they are reflected in the schools belonging to every ministry and region.

The annual budget of the education sector is extracted from the annual operational plan in the sector plan. The programming and planning process that is developed in the General Directorate for Planning and Projects in the Ministry might contribute to facilitate the process of preparing the budget because it links the financial system of the Ministry and the Finance Ministry with the system of planning and projects in order to implement the principle of program-oriented budget from the system of budgeting and accounting.

In order to guarantee commitment to build the operational plans and budgets based on the developmental plan for educational strategy, the general directorates and other units in the Ministry are followed up at all levels and are assessed based on the progress report and the extent of achieving the targets that are agreed upon in the annual operational plans. The quarterly and annual reports present indicators on the progress of the various units in the right direction and it will be necessary to take corrective measures in case of discovering any deviations away from the plan. The performance of the various general directorates in the Ministry shall be assessed at the centralized and decentralized levels based on the plan implementation.

Coordination was conducted with the Planning Ministry and the Finance Ministry to link the budget with the plan. In order to make the budget a program-based budget, all activities and procedural programs of the plan were gathered in program fiches.

9- System of follow up and assessment

In addition to the mechanisms adopted in following up the implementation process as mentioned above, which depends on following up the operational plans and the extent of progress achieved in implementing these plans. A system of follow up and assessment has been added to monitor the progress achieved in work in terms of achieving the goals and results that have been drafted in the plan. This system depends on monitoring several major performance indicators at the level of goals and results in the following manner:

9-1 Enrollment indicators

- * Rate of admission to the first grade.
- * Gross rate of enrollment in the basic grades.
- * Gross rate of enrollment in the secondary stage.
- * Net rate of enrollment in the basic stage.
- * Rate of enrollment in the secondary stage.
- * Rate of survival until the fifth grade.
- * Rate of survival until the tenth grade.
- * Rate of transition from the basic stage to the secondary stage.
- * Rate of students in Jerusalem under the supervision of the PNA.

9-2 Quality indicators

- * The content and methodology of the curricula meet the education needs of the Palestinian society.
- * Rate of involvement of learners in the education/learning process.
- * Ratio of use of educational technologies in education.
- * Achievement of students in the normative tests at the levels of directorate and schools in three major subjects for three grades to be selected on an annual basis (on condition that these do not contradict with the later indicator 2.5).
- * Achievement of students in the national normative tests in Arabic Language and Mathematics for the 4th and 10th grades.
- * Rate of students enrolled in the scientific stream after the 10th grade.
- * Rate of qualified teachers in accordance to the teacher training strategy.
- * Ratio of schools that achieve the child-friendly school criteria.

9-3 Management indicators

- * Computerized information system that links the General Directorate for Planning and Projects in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- * Finance/budget system is designed in a manner that meets with the public spending system.
- * Project implementation mechanisms have been aligned between the Ministry, the donor countries and local communities.
- * Ratio of qualified employees and administrators according to the job description.
- * Decisions are taken at a senior level based on studies and information system.

System of follow up and assessment

Baseline and targets values of the performance indicators for the three goals (enrollment, Quality and Management) of 2009

1- Enrollment indicators

Enrollment Goal Indicator	Baseline year value 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
IG 1.1 rate of admission to first basic grade	97.9%	97.9%	99.1%	99.1%
IG 1.2 Gross rate of enrollment in the basic stage	96.6%	99.7%	99.7%	99.7%
IG 1.3 Gross rate of enrollment in the secondary stage	70.0%	85.7%	86.0%	86.0%
IG 1.4 Net rate of enrollment in the basic stage	95.6%	98.7%	99.0%	99.0%
IG 1.5 Net rate of enrollment in the secondary stage	63.7%	75.2%	77.0%	77.0%
IG 1.6 Survival rate until the fifth grade	97.9%	99.3%	99.5%	99.5%
IG 1.7 Survival rate until the tenth grade	90.7%	93.1%	94.0%	94.0%
IG 1.8 Rate of transition from the basic stage to the secondary stage	88.2%	93.8%	94.0%	94.0%
IG 1.9 rate of students in Jerusalem under the PNA supervision	26.9%	40.8%	45.0%	55.0%

(All data of enrollment indicators were published by the educational database / Ministry of education and Higher Education)

2- Quality indicators

The General Directorate for Planning implemented nine quality studies to find the baseline year values for the quality performance in accordance with the following mechanism:

- 1- Working groups were formed for each of the studies from the relevant directorates and education supervisors and experts from universities and educational institutions.
- 2- Various tools were developed to measure the indicators through continuous coordination with follow up and assessment expert Dr. Fafeh.
- 3- Experimentation of the tools in the schools and feedback was provided; education discussions were conducted and amendments were made based on the feedback and discussions; experimentation was done again and until the final copy of the tools was reached.
- 4- The researchers were trained on the use of photographed samples of classes and practical experiences so that the researchers can monitor what is needed as accurate as possible. In some cases, the tools were applied on the researchers so that they can understand the details of what is needed.
- 5- The supervisors "researchers" were distributed among various directorates other than their original directorates and the aim for such a step is to make sure that the visit the researchers make is to study the case and not assess it.
- 6- The studies were applied to government schools (one representative sample per study) and the data was gathered, coded into the computer and analyzed.
- 7- The results were interpreted and recommendations were written by the studies team with the participation of supervisors from the field.
- 8- Targets were set up by the working team and the follow up and assessment expert based on the baseline year results and the reality of the five-year plan.

First Quality Indicator (IG 2.1): Content and methodologies of the curricula meet with the education needs in the Palestinian society

A study on the extent to which students acquired the daily life skills upon which the Palestinian curriculum was built (critical thinking, openness to the cultures, communication and interaction, preserving the environment and natural resources, self confidence and self esteem, resisting pressure, problem solving and decision taking) on the basis of the of the tool that depends on studying the case study for each skill.

Results of the study:

Skills	Baseline year results / 2009						Targets 2014					
	4 th grade		8 th grade		10 th grade		4 th grade		8 th grade		10 th grade	
Average mark / 100												
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Critical thinking	49.6%	49.7%	59.8%	62.5%	62.2%	66.1%	60.0%	60.0%	70.0%	70.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Openness to the cultures and communication and interaction	70.7%	83.3%	75.8%	82.2%	79.2%	84.8%	80.0%	90.0%	80.0%	92.0%	85.0%	95.0%
Environmental awareness / preserving the environment and natural resources	68.7%	69.7%	82.3%	85.1%	68.1%	71.7%	75.0%	75.0%	85.0%	90.0%	80.0%	85.0%
Self confidence and self esteem	61.8%	72.9%	68.6%	75.9%	73.1%	80.6%	71.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Resisting pressure and problem solving and decision taking	57.1%	67.6%	69.3%	74.0%	74.0%	79.8%	65.0%	75.0%	75.0%	80.0%	80.0%	85.0%

These results reflect the knowledge aspect and attitudes for each skill

Main recommendations:

- 1- It is necessary to develop the daily life skills among the students, especially the skills of critical thinking and problem solving through building the capacities of teachers and supervisors on the importance of these skills and to give the student the opportunity to initiate and pose ideas and questions and engage in discussions and issues that don't have specific answers as they develop the skills.
- 2- It is necessary to focus on enriching the school textbooks with these skills during the process of developing the curriculum.

Second Quality Indicator (IG 2.2): Level of active engagement of learners in the educational/learning process

A study that reveals to what extent the students are actively engaged in the educational/learning process through the use of Flanders Tool after amending it in a manner that meets with our reality.

Results of the study:

	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rate of initiative to pose ideas and questions out of all the student's talk	9.08%	11.67%	17.0%	17.0%
Rate of "indirect" encouragement conduct of the teacher out of all acts of the teacher	33.8%		45/0%	

PIE GRAPH – ratio of utterances and actions of the student and teacher in the class

Accepting idea – 9.19% Accepting emotions – 1.68% Encouragement – 8.56% Posing questions – 15.23% Explanation – 11.63%
 Giving instructions – 7.27% Criticism – 3.86% Response of the student as reaction – 36.17% Response of the student as an initiator – 4.22%
 Positions of silence – 2.19%

Main recommendations:

- 1- It is necessary to upgrade the capacities of the teachers and supervisors in the field of stimulating active involvement of the students through implementing the strategy of teach rehabilitation which focuses on teaching methodologies that make the student the center of the education/learning process.
- 2- It is necessary to enrich the school textbooks with these issues that urge the student to pose ideas and to initiate during the process of developing the curriculum.

Third Quality Indicator (IG 2.3): Level of employing education technologies in teaching

a- School library

A study that reveals to what extent the library is used in the learning/teaching process through calculating the ratio of students' use of school library and the ratio of the student using the library and average time that the student spends doing library activities linked to the educational process.

Results of the study

	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Library per capita usage time	0.022 minutes	0.019 minutes	2.0 minutes	2.0 minutes
Average usage time per student	8.5 minutes	7.5 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
Percentage of student using the library	0.316%	0.321%	10.0%	10.0%

* Library activities that were monitored: 1- the students borrows a book; 2- returning the book; 3- reading a story/book/magazine; 4- watching a film/looking at photos; 5- listening to a tape or CD from the library; 6- preparing wall journal (on condition of making use of library content); 7- writing research; 8- creating writing (story/poetry/essay) on condition of making use of library references; 9- assisting the librarian to place the books in their places and organizing work (library friends committee); 10- drawing paintings and posters on condition of making use of library; 11- finishing a school assignment on condition of making use of the library; 12- conducting an interview with a literary figure or poet; 13- preparing for the school radio; 14- preparing for exhibition or contests; 15- present a summary or ideas of a book that the student read or discuss it with the librarian; 16- telling a story in front of the students; 17- library class; 18- others.

Main recommendations:

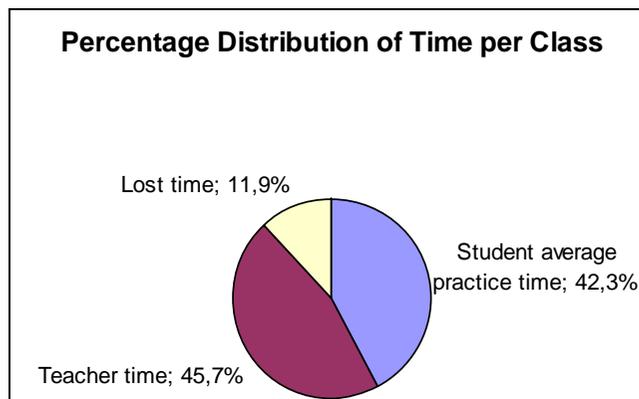
- 1- It is necessary for the teachers, school principals and librarians to encourage the students to visit the library through assigning to them various assignments that require library resources.
- 2- It is necessary to allocate a library class where students can perform library activities in order to create a reading educated generation.
- 3- To provide the libraries with necessary books and references.

b- Computer lab

A study that reveals to what extent the computer laboratory is used in the learning/teaching process through calculating the ratio of computer lab per capita usage time, and average usage time per student and percentage of student using the computer lab and utilization of lab according to the plan.

Results of the study

	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Computer lab per capita usage time	4.11minutes	5.06 minutes	8.0 minutes	10.0 minutes
Average usage time per student	14.06 minutes	19.4 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes
Percentage of student using the computer lab	42.8%	72.2%	60.0%	80.0%
Utilization of lab according to plan	91.4%	85.4%	95%	95%



Main recommendations:

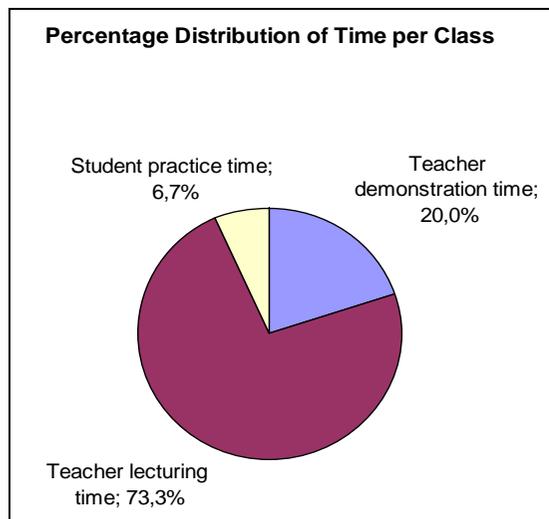
- 1- It is necessary to provide the schools with devices and adequate number of computer labs for the students.
- 2- It is necessary to upgrade the teachers' capacities in the field of developing the students' skills in using the computer as much time as possible during the computer class.
- 3- It is necessary to reduce the lost time as much as possible.

c- Science lab tools / practical activities in the science lab and science class

A study that reveals to what extent the science lab tools are used to conduct experiments related to the science class whether in the lab or inside the classroom through calculating the ratio of science lab per capita usage time, and average usage time per student and percentage of student using the science tools and percentage of carrying out activities according to planned in the text book.

	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Science lab – class per capita usage time	0.71minutes	0.86 minutes	3.0 minutes	3.0 minutes
Average usage time per student	2.09 minutes	3.24 minutes	10.0 minutes	10.0 minutes
Percentage of student using science tools	35%	28%	55%	55%

Percentage of carrying out activities according to planned in text book	32.4%	52.6%	80%	80%
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Main recommendations:

- 1- It is necessary to upgrade the capacities of teachers in using scientific experiment during the science class and the need to give the student an opportunity to conduct science experiments by themselves (Hand on).
- 2- It is necessary to provide the schools with adequate number of science lab tools.
- 3- Part of the teacher assessment of the student must be based on the use of science lab tools.

d- ICT - tools

A study that reveals the rate of ICT usage in education.

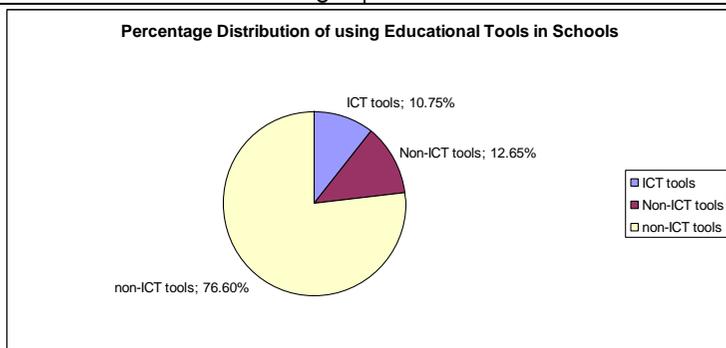
Note 1: the science and technology class was excluded from this study because the other studies covered this aspect.

Note 2: ICT tools include the video, TV, LCD, recorders, computer, camera, mobile.

Note 3: Non-ICT tools: boards, maps.

Results of the study

	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ratio of usage of ICT – tools	10.4%	11.1%	25%	25%
Ratio of non-ICT tools usage	12.0%	13.3%	20%	20%



Main recommendations:

- 1- The need to upgrade the capacities of teachers in employing ICT tools in education.
- 2- Part of the teacher assessment of the student must be based on the use of ICT tools.

Fourth Quality Indicator (IG 2.4): Achievement of students in standard tests at the directorate level / annual

	Baseline year results / 2009						Targets					
	7 th grade Arabic Language		8 th grade Mathematics		9 th grade Science		7 th grade Arabic Language		8 th grade Mathematics		9 th grade Science	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Standardized achievement test	44.2	56.2	28.2	38.2	42.4	54	62.5	62.5	53.0	53.0	55.0	55.0

Fifth Quality Indicator (IG 2.5): Achievement of students in national normative tests in Arabic Language and Mathematics for the 4th and 10th grades, and TIMSS

		Baseline year results / 2009				Targets							
		4 th grade		10 th grade						4 th grade		10 th grade	
		Male	Female	Male	Female					Male	Female	Male	Female
National achievement	Arabic Language	52	62.7	37.8	48.3					70	70	55	55
	Mathematics	34.8	39	21.5	26.3					55	55	50	50
	Science	35.7	42.7	34	39.7					55	55	55	55
	TIMSS 8 th grade									TIMSS 8 th grade 2011			
	Mathematics (2007)	349	385							400	400		
	Science (2007)	386	422							450	450		

Major recommendation for achievement indicators:

- 1- The need to set up a comprehensive strategy for all assessment methods at the various levels.
- 2- The need to build therapeutic plans based on the tests results.

Sixth Quality Indicator (IG 2.6): ratio of students enrolled in the scientific stream after the 10th grade

Ratio of students enrolled in the scientific stream after the 10 th grade	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	22.9%	21.4%	26%	26%

Seventh Quality Indicator (IG 2.7): ratio of qualified teachers in accordance with the teacher training strategy

Ratio of qualified teachers in the education system	Baseline year results / 2009		Targets 2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	36.4%	39.9%	50%	50%
Ratio of qualified new teachers (appointments 2009)	45.5%	53.3%	70%	70%

Eighth Quality Indicator (IG 2.8): rate of schools achieving the child-friendly school criteria

	Baseline year results / 2009	Targets 2014
Rate of schools achieving child-friendly school criteria	64.2% +.82 <i>(international standard for child-friendly school scale between +3 and -3)</i>	70% +1.8 <i>(international standard for child-friendly school scale between +3 and -3)</i>
Rate of schools achieving child-friendly criteria from the viewpoint of students with special needs	64.6% +0.93 <i>(international standard for child-friendly school scale between +3 and -3)</i>	70% +1.2 <i>(international standard for child-friendly school scale between +3 and -3)</i>

Main recommendations

- 1- The need for the general directorates in the Ministry to adopt the indicator of child-friendly school and work to reinforce this concept, each with its own tasks and capacities.
- 2- The need to raise the awareness of teachers and supervisors on the child-friendly matrix because it has direct impact on quality of education.

3- Management indicators

Indicator	Baseline year results / 2009	Targets / 2014	Source of information
(IG 3.1) Computerized information system linking the General Directorate for Planning and Projects in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education	48.8%	100%	Rate of achievement of the focal points that were set up in 2009
(IG 3.2) Financial system designed in a manner that meets with the public spending system	100%	100%	Rate of achievement of the focal points that were set up in 2009
(IG 3.3) Project implementation mechanisms that were aligned between the Ministry, the donor countries and the local communities	92.5%	100%	Rate of commitment of the funding parties to the strategic plan of the Ministry
(IG 3.4) Rate of qualified employees and administrators in accordance with the job description	This will be available in 2010 as soon as the job description scheme is finalized		A tool to monitor rate of qualified administrators in accordance with the job description and the academic grade and years of experience and skills
(IG 3.5) decisions are taken at a senior level based on studies and the information system			A questionnaire has been distributed to the decision makers and heads of education directorates and directors of departments
Self assessment by the decision makers	89.7%	90%	
Assessment by heads of education directorates of the decision making process	68.6%	80%	
Assessment by directors of departments of the decision making process	49.3%	60%	

Chapter Three

Higher, Vocational and Technical Education

Chapter Three

Higher, Vocational and Technical Education

1- Vision of the higher education sector

Based on the set of expertise and interactions by the people in charge of Palestinian higher education with their counterparts in other regional and international; countries, and based on the analytical exploratory view of the situation and structure of higher education in the advanced countries and the newly established countries and based on the meticulous diagnosis of the situation of the PLO and the PNNA and the general national goals, and the Palestinian society and its values, philosophy and capacities and vision towards the future in terms of needs for higher education, the following higher education vision has been formulated:

To achieve an **accessible** higher education (open to all academically qualified individuals regardless of their social and economic conditions and regardless of their citizenship and place of residents and their handicap); a higher education system that has **multiple fields and specializations** in science and knowledge in government public and private institutions that grant scientific degree to the various levels, and **diverse** (several teaching methodologies), and sustainable (covered financially by various financial sources) and **flexible** (capable of adjusting quickly with the needs and changing conditions), **serving and supportive** (meeting the needs of the society, the local and regional market), and **competitive qualitatively** (its criteria competes with the criteria of higher education regional and international systems) and **distinguished** (scientific research environment, creativity and innovation), and a **vehicle** for economic and social development.

Thus, the message of the Ministry and the higher education sector focuses on developing higher education through following up the implementation and assessment of the strategic plan and offering all kinds of necessary support in order to reach the aspired vision.

2- The current situation of the Palestinian higher education

This part tackled the distribution of the higher education institutions by kind and geographical location, and the distribution of the registered students by gender and specialization, and the number of workers and their job classifications, and description of the administrative governance and the economies of higher education and scientific research and admission.

2-1 Palestinian higher education institutions and their students

The current number of higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is 49 institutions (including 6 newly licensed and accredited but not included in the statistics here). Table (1) shows the distribution of these institutions by kind and location and a distribution of the registered students according to the required certificate and the kind of institution.

Table (1)
Students' distribution by kind of institution and required certificate

Kind of institution	Location			Less than BA		BA		Higher studies		Total
	West Bank	Gaza	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	
Open Education	(16)*	(7)*	1	1527	2824	34429	57816			60640
Traditional universities	8	3	11	1002	1926	53137	93349	2384	5626	100901
University colleges	8	4	12	1959	3998	1347	2137	8	17	6152
Community colleges	14	5	19	5757	14872					14872
Total	30	12	43	10245	23620	88908	153267	2397	5678	182565

* Education centers belonging to al-Quds Open University.

The table shows that there are 11 traditional universities (added to them are two private universities recently licensed in Gaza) which are different from the open university which is spread in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through several education centers.

The reader might note that the number of universities is too large compared with the small size of the area and the population, but this is due to the conditions under which these universities were established, especially that these universities aimed to provide the Palestinian young people with chances to pursue higher education and reduce the immigration in the absence of a national authority and government and in the presence of the occupation. The universities vary in terms of size and absorption capacity – as we will see later – and grant various levels of degrees starting with a specialized technical education and ending with a Masters degree (with the exception of one sole PhD program in chemistry).

The table also shows a rise in the number of university colleges (12 colleges). The number doubled within the past three years because of the accreditation of new BA programs in the colleges that used to grant a diploma only.

The last kind shown in the table is the community colleges that grant diplomas in vocational and technical programs. There is one sole private university which is the Arab American University in Jenin, and two traditional government universities which are al-Aqsa University in Gaza and Khadouri University in Tulkarem. The rest of the institutions are public non-profit universities. As for the community colleges, three of them are under the UNRWA supervision and the rest are either government, public or private. Total number of students registered in the higher education institutions for year 2008/2009 is 182,556 students as shown in the table, including 5678 students in higher studies (higher diploma or Masters) which is around 3%. In the community colleges or specialized technical colleges, there are 22,679 students (around 13%) while the programs that grant BA degree include 153267 students who make the highest ratio (84%).

The above-mentioned distribution of students according to the required degree or certificate reveals several facts: the overwhelming majority of the students are BA students while the community college and specialized technical college students make up a slight ratio. This reflects the real tendency and attention of students who aim to get a BA degree, even if the specialization or field of study is not desired in the local economic market. Moreover, the fact that there is no PhD degree (with the exception of the PhD in Chemistry that includes three students and which is semi-frozen) reflects that the first basic function of the Palestinian higher education institutions is teaching and that scientific research is marginal. Students who study for the BA degree do not need to conduct research and the same applies to the majority of the Masters programs. Therefore, research in most cases is limited to the teaching faculty and administration academics only.

The table also shows that the ratio of students in the Open University make up around 33% of the students body. This ratio points to the strong approach towards the Open University, especially that it provides opportunities to working sectors and people who hold old general secondary education certificates, to join a university and get a BA degree. In addition, the Open University accepts new students who are secondary stage graduates with success grades less than the minimum required grades at the traditional universities (entrance for the preparatory year). Al-Quds Open University has more than 22 centers and this enables the students to study in their own areas with less cost and time.

The table also shows a slight difference between the numbers of male and female students at the level of the required degree with the exception of the higher studies level. Male students in the higher studies make up 58%. At the level of the universities and colleges, ratio of females is higher than ratio of males in the ten traditional universities and in al-Quds Open University (59%) and the community colleges (60%) but the ratio was less in the community colleges (47%). The first discrepancy can be accounted for in the difference between grades of males and females in the general secondary examination. The average grades of females was 10 points higher than the average grades of male students, thus giving female students better chances to join universities in light of the strong competition. Moreover, the ratio of female students who travel abroad to pursue their higher studies is less than male students due to the social norm that shows more acceptance to the male student to travel abroad. The second discrepancy lies in the lesser female students in the

community colleges because females do not approach the vocational or technical programs with the exception of some programs and because of lack of industrial and agricultural colleges for females.

If we divide the number of students registered in the higher education institutions by the total number of population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2009 (3,935,249 persons – PCBS, 2009), we get the raw average enrollment which is 4.6%. The general enrollment rate can be calculated by dividing the number of students registered in the higher education institution by the number of population within the age group (18-24) in 2009 (556,600), **we get 33%. This is a high and deceiving ratio and when compared with international ratios, we have to take into consideration those who are in technical education and those who are in higher studies.**

For planning purposes, it might be useful to calculate the ratio of the total number of students to the higher education-age group (18-30) (906,248 persons), and the ratio would be 20%.

2-2 Major study areas of registered students

We will deal here with the students registered in the major specialization areas in the first level of International Standard Classification of Education. These areas are: Education, arts and humanities, social and administration sciences, sciences, engineering, agricultural science, medical and health sciences and services. It is noteworthy to see that education makes up 35% of the students body (24% females and 11% males) distributed among 124 education programs (70 programs without repetition). This is followed by the social and administration sciences which form 31% of the students' body (12% females and 19% males) distributed among 172 programs (85 programs without repetition). Students in the engineering made up around 6% distributed among 111 programs (64 programs without repetition). Medical and health fields had a similar ratio of 6% distributed among 98 programs (46 programs without repetition). As for agricultural sciences, they included 1% of the students' body. This means that less than one quarter of the students is registered in the applied sciences.

2-3 workers in the higher education institutions:

Total number of workers in the Palestinian higher education institutions in 2008/2009 is around 12,433 (21.7% part time) including 76% males and 25% females distributed according to job classification of the Ministry as follows: **44% educational academic, 4% academic administrator, 0.1% academic researcher, 4.5% administration, 15.2% clerical work, 7.4% assistant teacher and researcher, 3% specialized professionals, 8% technicians and artisans, 13.8% unskilled laborers.**

The above-mentioned distribution shows that the teaching faculty make up 44% of the workers (around 55% with the research and teaching assistants) and this ratio is not in harmony with the international distribution (two thirds for teaching and the rest as administration and services). Members of the teaching faculty do not enjoy job security and often look for jobs abroad or part time work with companies, industries and NGOs, meaning an increase in emigration of the qualified competent people abroad. On the other hand,

and in light of the current conditions in the higher education institutions, it is extremely difficult to attract teaching expertise from abroad into Palestine.

On real grounds, 34% of the members of the teaching faculty in the Palestinian universities hold PhD degrees and more than 50% hold Masters Degree (database of higher education, 2006), and as we go higher in the academic degrees, we notice lower female representation. Ratio of part-time members of the teaching faculty is 21.7%.

2-4 Enrollment and admission and graduates in Palestinian higher education institutions:

First, we need to diagnose the scope of demand on higher education as the results of the Tawjihi exams is its main source. Number of students who passed the Tawjihi Exam in 2008/2009 was 42,992 male and female students, including 12,972 students in the scientific stream with a ratio of 30% and 27,745 students in the literary stream with a ratio of 64.5%, and 275 students in vocational education with a ratio of 2.5% only. According to estimates and statistics of the higher education database, a ratio of 5% can be added for those who passed the Tawjihi Exam in previous years. As for the number of students who were admitted to the higher education institutions and from the same year, it reached 33,482 male and female students in the BA program (including 13,000 students at al-Quds Open University) and 5,205 male and female students in the community colleges.

As for the number of graduates, there were 27,000 male and female students who graduated last year (around 16,000 from traditional universities, 6,000 students from al-Quds Open University, and 5,000 students from community colleges).

2-5 economies of higher education

Since the establishment of the higher education institutions in the mid seventies, the PLO assumed the task of supporting their operational expenses and this support was reinforced in the beginnings of the eighties to the point that students were exempted from paying any tuition fees and higher education became almost free of charge. In the late eighties, the eruption of the Intifada and the closure of several higher education institutions and the Gulf War led to the reduction of the financial support from the PLO and students started to pay all their tuition fees.

But these tuition fees did cover only 40% of the educational cost of the students in some public universities. In some other institutions, the tuition covered around 60% of the cost, thus emerging a real deficit in the budgets of the universities. With the establishment of the PNA and when the ministry of higher education and scientific research assumed authority over higher education in the mid nineties, the ministry was able, with full financial support from the EU, to cover the salaries of workers in the Palestinian universities for three years. The office of the President offered partial support to the universities and the Ministry continued with its attempts to solve the deficit problem. In cooperation with the World Bank, the Ministry was able to formulate a strategy to finance higher education which was applied in 2002. The strategy focused on finding mechanism to provide students with loans so that the universities can collect the tuition. It also

worked on finding a quality development fund to support projects that develop capacities and programs on a competitive basis and start to conduct reforms of units and governance bodies in the higher education, such as the Council for Higher Education and the National Commission for Accreditation, and reinforce the capacities of the higher education institutions in the field of planning, management and quality, and focus government support to the scientific and applied specializations and programs. The Ministry worked on applying this strategy through support from the World Bank and the European Union to a project that will be concluded in 2010. However, the final results have not released yet, but what appeared so far reflected development and improvement but did not reflect financial sustainability.

We need to recall that the Finance Ministry cooperated with the PNA on the deficit and allocated government support to the Palestinian public universities reaching around \$20 million annually but it failed to offer this annual support in full. In 2003, the Finance Ministry distributed \$12 million only and in 2004, the universities were supported with \$14 million and in 2006, only \$10 million were offered while in 2008, all the amount was paid. Support increased in 2009 to reach \$37 million but an amount of \$23 million was disbursed so far.

In parallel lines, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was able in 2002 to establish a student loan and aid fund which received dozens of millions of US dollars in student assistance from the brotherly country Saudi Arabia. Several millions were also injected to this fund from several sources and the funds were distributed in accordance with a clear mechanism in terms of criteria, principles and repayment assurances. But the fund failed to collect the amount of loans from the graduate students who benefited from the loans. In 2009, the fund succeeded in setting up a new lending mechanism along with a repayment mechanism through which the student pays 4% of the loan value during the semester and the fund succeeded in collecting around half of a million Jordanian Dinars and work is underway to regain the old loans.

Despite this, the financial crisis is escalating gradually, and even if the tuitions are paid in full, they wont cover on average more than 60% to 70% of the operational expenses of the eight public universities (with the exception of al-Quds Open University). In 2007, the total amount of operational expenses of the eight universities reached more than \$112 million (around \$80 million for salaries and \$32 million for other operational expenses). Revenues reached around \$90 million without government support (\$80 million for fees and tuition, and \$10 million in revenues of research and community activities and assistance (Kamal, 2008). This difference between the revenues and the expenditure will increase if the Ministry implemented its quality criteria through defining a certain ratio of students per teacher, and the ratio of the Masters holders to the PhD holders and ratio of the graduates and non-graduates and number of hours in addition load, etc. there is a direct proportional relation between financial deficit and poor quality for teaching.

Around the end of 2008, public universities witnessed protest union measures demanding the improvement of the standard cadre scale and the protests were ended after reaching an agreement on a new standard cadre scale that has major financial ramifications on the public universities, thus causing further worsening of the deficit.

In general, the sector of education and higher education had around 12% of the general budget in 2008. The share of higher education out of the total amount of the budget did not exceed 5% and this is one of the lowest ratios in the world.

The deficit of the budget of several higher education institutions had negative impact from several aspects:

- a- Resorting to accepting students under the umbrella of “Parallel or Continuing Education” where the student pays higher fees for the credit hour compared with regular admission.
- b- Salaries were not paid on the set time every month; the saving funds were used to achieve sustainability.
- c- “artificial” reduction of the cost of the student through refraining from increasing the number of faculty members to meet the increasing number of students.
- d- Expenses of libraries were reduced.
- e- The Masters Program was opened as a source of high tuition and fees.
- f- The load of the faculty member was increased.
- g- Number of part time workers was increased.
- h- Expenditure on attending scientific conferences was reduced and budgets of scientific research was also reduced.
- i- Scholarships and similar chances were reduced.

2-6 Institutes of higher education and scientific research

The Palestinian universities place major attention to university teaching at the expense of scientific research. Since their establishment, the general tendency of universities was to take in as many students as possible in order to reduce the chances of their immigration abroad and support the student’s steadfastness, in addition to the attempt to lay the pillars of an infrastructure that can confront the schemes of the military rule which made quantitative expansion a goal in itself and university teaching because their major priority and focus. The Palestinian universities were established in the first place to grant the first university degree (BA) which requires an infrastructure that is not adequate to support and establish active scientific research. Thus, officials in universities focused their attention on providing a climate conducive to the teaching process and the majority of the time of teaching faculty was spent on teaching and other kinds of administrative tasks at the expense of scientific research which almost did not exist.

This explains the late emergence of the majority of the higher studies programs which started in the middle of last decade only. With this development, scientific research was activated slowly in the local universities and will become more active in case the programs move to the higher PhD degree. Scientific research is a vital field where societies and countries compete to achieve their interests and superiority. In this, it is a targeted and guided field and not neutral and must be exploited to serve the surrounding community. In order to achieve this, scientific research must be linked to the priorities of the society’s economy, needs and plans. This, in itself, raised several questions pertaining to the organization and administration of scientific research and its venues.

In most of the advanced countries, scientific research started in universities and was spread to government and private research centers, but the universities remain the major incubator of most of the research activities. Here, it is natural to see scientific research start in the universities where there are the thinking brains but the beginnings are still fragile and weak because there isn't enough financial support and because it has not been placed as one of the priorities.

But now, and as the features and pillars of the Palestinian state started to emerge and as the Palestinian society started to define its economic priorities, there is a need for having scientific research that accompanies and supports the economic activities, and it has become necessary to show support and encouragement to scientific research in the Palestinian universities.

Scientific research has witnessed notable activity after 1995 due to the attention displayed by the donor countries on development in Palestine. This was due to funding to projects in order to promote regional cooperation in the field of science and technology through bilateral and multilateral assistance. Palestinian researchers were able to participate in several joint cooperation programs in the field of research and technological development, in addition to the bilateral programs that were devoted to Palestine.

Research activity in Palestine is undertaken by four basic parties: higher education institutions, mainly the Palestinian universities, and the government institutions, the NGOs and the private sector.

There are more than 30 centers for scientific research in the Palestinian universities in the fields of Agriculture, Environment, Water, Nanotechnology, Energy and Health. Most of these fields suffer from weak planning, administration and funding. These centers cover a small part of the sectors that are related to sustainable development. Very few research activities implemented in Palestine had impact on economy and industry.

At the level of the government institutions, some of them established their own research centers, such as the National Center for Agricultural Research at the Agriculture Ministry and the Water Research Administration in the Water Authority. At the level of the private sector and the NGOs, the non-governmental organizations established research centers with most of them focusing on social studies and research. The private sector focused on research activities dealing with existing industries, such as pharmaceuticals.

In general, all scientific research centers in Palestine depend on external assistance, mainly from the donor countries, and this affected the priorities of scientific research and whether such research meets the real needs. The study prepared by Science and Technology Unit at the Planning and International Cooperation Ministry in 1998 showed:

- * A large ratio of the research cannot be classified as scientific research according to the international definition.
- * There are no indicators on the use of innovation and finding solutions to existing problems.
- * Economic feasibility of the research projects is not considered a priority.
- * There is absence of coordination between those centers and strong competition between them.

With the start of the current decade (al-Aqsa Intifada), there has been decrease in research activities which were affected by the restrictions on movement through the policies of closure and siege which were imposed by the Israeli occupation, and support from the donor countries was transferred to meet the emergency needs.

In general, scientific research in Palestine lacks clarity of goals and weakness in planning and administration. Despite dozens of scientific research in the various fields of science on an annual basis, the situation of scientific research lacks the administration process elements, especially planning, monitoring and follow up. On the other hands, most of the research activities come in the context of routine work or the job or might be for purposes of promotions for the teaching faculty in the Palestinian universities. Research for purposes of publishing in journals is conducted in a random way without plans. Moreover, the investment of scientific research to upgrade national economic barely exists because of the absence of guidance and best use of such research trends and because there is no system to protect intellectual property, and the absence of scientific accredited journals that can publish the scientific research.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has strong conviction on the importance of planning scientific research and of providing it with all enabling means, in addition to the need to develop the research institute as part of the Ministry's responsibilities in the next phase. Thus, the Ministry has acted as follows:

1- The Ministry has attempted to formulate a policy for science and technology in Palestine and prepared a draft in 2000 which was called then the "Green Paper".

2- The Ministry has established a scientific research council which deals with general policies of scientific research in the higher education institutions in Palestine and defines the priorities of scientific research plans and provides financial support to research projects that are conducted by the higher education institutions and their research centers.

3- The Ministry tried to transform the Green Paper into a White Paper in 2005 but it failed. This year, the Ministry started in cooperation with the UNESCO to formulate a science and technology strategy based on a survey of the current situation of scientific research.

4- The Ministry allocated 2% of government support to the Palestinian public universities for the sake scientific research. This is relatively a small ratio.

5- The Ministry established a database for scientific research as part of the universities research activities and coded in the database around 1400 questionnaires from faculty members, then its work has been frozen because of administrative changes and transfers.

6- A unit has been established to link Palestinian researchers with European FP7 Research Program in order to encourage and conduct joint research.

7- The Ministry contributed 25% of the French funding to the Joint French-Palestinian Committee projects.

2-7 Higher Education Governance

The Higher Education, which was established in the late seventies, is considered the most important governance body in higher education, especially that its establishment came before the Ministry. The Council played the role of the coordinator, the supervisor, and the funding party to higher education institutions that existed before the PNA. The Council was mentioned in the Higher Education Law no. 11 of 1998 which said: “the Minister may establish an advisory committee or council”. The Council continued to work on the basis of the bylaws as a draft that the Ministry prepared in 2003 and it has not been ratified by the Council of Insulters yet.

In accordance with the bylaws draft, the Higher Education Council is headed by the Minister and consists of all presidents of the public and government universities, one representative (on a rotational basis) from the private universities, one representative from community colleges for two years, Finance Minister Undersecretary, Planning Minister Undersecretary, Education and Higher Education Undersecretary and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and six academic members and one general secretary. The draft bylaws mandates the Council to perform the following tasks and responsibilities:

- * To ratify and approve general policies of higher education.
- * To develop and assess higher education institutions from all aspects and guarantee coordination between the institutions.
- * To set up the general principles on admission of students and determining their numbers on an annual basis.
- * To ratify the minimum and maximum ceiling of education fees in the various academic programs in the government and public higher education institutions.
- * To review the annual budget of higher education institutions.
- * To discuss annual reports submitted by the higher education institutions and get acquainted with their work progress and difficulties and have them abide by the general policy of higher education.
- * To ratify the general policies related to students assistance programs.
- * To ratify the national priorities of academic programs in the higher education institutions.
- * To ratify the general principles in funds distribution to the higher education institutions.

Currently, the Higher Education Council focuses on distribution of annual government support and funding to the public higher education institutions and proposes the admission policy and ratifies the loans policies and the cost of living rate and prepares the standard cadre scale in the public universities.

The Higher Education Council is criticized on lacking the correct structure when dealing with policies as bias might exist due to the larger representation of the presidents of the universities in its membership.

As for the quality and accreditation commission, it was established based on an administrative decision and not by the Higher Education Law no. 11. Despite this, an internal draft has been drafted to organize the work of the commission which is criticized because it does not

have a neutral board since the board members are the higher education institutions and the commission does not have an independent head of commission who does not work in any of the higher education institutions. As for its authorities, there is a tendency to reconsider them, especially if the structure of the Higher Education Council is changed.

With regards to the scientific research council, Law no. 11 stipulated its establishment and the Minister did establish this council in 2003 and the council works in accordance with a bylaws draft that has not been ratified yet by the Council of Ministers. The council is not effective because it lacks funding and resources. Law no. 11 of 1998 pertaining to higher education is good but it needs amendments and additions. For example, the classification of universities needs to be amended to become more similar to the world countries and the form of enrollment needs to be clarified. There are many bylaws coming from the law which didn't set up a certain timetable to complete the relevant legislations.

On the issue of university-related legislations, there might be a need to reconsider the mechanism of appointing the presidents of universities and the structure of board of trustees and agreement among the universities on unified instructions and regulations to handle some issues.

3- Main accomplishments during the reform and development plan period

Under the umbrella of the main goals of the reform and development plan that started in 2008, in particular, the goals to develop a human and social capital, and regain economic growth on the path towards national prosperity and improve the life quality of Palestinians, one can summarize the achievements as follows:

The capacities of the Ministry/higher education sector have been reinforced through:

- a- Enriching the library of the Ministry of Higher Education with a set of books and resources in various fields that deal with governance, planning and other topics.
- b- Conducting an analytical study about the decision-making parties in higher education and the Higher Education Council and the labor market costing \$99,591.
- c- Designing a program to follow up the graduates costing \$57,381. The program has been disseminated to all higher education institutions to follow up their graduates and get feedback in a manner that benefits the development of the academic programs inside the institution and this will serve and meet with the needs of the labor market.
- d- Upgrading and developing the electronic webpage of the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality.
- e- The National Commission for Accreditation and Quality participated in regional and international electronic networks in the field of developing quality.
- f- Conducting a comprehensive assessment study for al-Quds Open University costing \$150,890. The study analyzed and assessed the university from all administrative, financial, academic, and legal aspects and came up with a set of recommendations.

g- Concluding a project to develop mechanisms of gathering higher education data (costing \$67,635) which is considered extremely important in terms of organizing the information flow between the higher education institutions and the Ministry. It is also an important support tool to follow up the development of academic programs in the institutions and link them with the society needs.

Enhancing higher education institutions capacities through:

a- A comparative study was concluded on the administrative structures in the higher education institutions costing \$130,530.

b- A special guidebook was prepared for the process of institutional self-assessment and strategic planning inside the higher education institutions costing \$127,338. This guidebook was the reference used by the higher education institutions in conducting institutional self-assessment and strategic planning.

c- Twenty grants were granted to higher education institutions costing \$2,150,905 to support institutional self-assessment and strategic planning inside the institutions. Twelve universities and 23 community colleges benefited from the grants.

Supporting quality developmental projects inside the higher education institutions through quality development fund:

a- The third round specialized in ICT costing \$2,882,576 which included 14 grants to higher education institutions.

b- The third normal round costing \$2,014,542 which included nine grants to higher education institutions.

c- Fourth round specialized in education programs and teacher rehabilitation costing \$1,863,974 which included six projects to higher education institutions.

Eleven projects served Gaza Strip out of a total number of 45 quality development projects inside the higher education institutions through the Quality Development Fund.

Developing the infrastructure of vocational schools

* building a female unit inside Tulkarem Industrial Secondary School as part of the project to build the school costing \$2.7 million (The Norwegian Project).

* Building Jenin Industrial Secondary School costing \$2.5 million (the Korean Project).

* Developing Nablus Industrial Secondary School costing \$2 million (Islamic Bank for Development).

* Work to establish female units in the industrial schools (a Norwegian project)

* Following up maintenance works in the industrial schools.

* Opening new specializations in the industrial schools.

* opening new classes for the commercial sector in the various districts.

* Introducing and equipping several workshops through the Brazilian Project (\$250,000).

- * Equipping the workshops in the vocational schools with necessary annual supplies.
- * Providing the colleges with financial resources and lab equipment according to tenders.
- * Building two floors at Palestine Technical College – Arroub
- * Start of work to launch electronic webpages for the vocational schools.

Increase in rate of enrollment in vocational education and input quality improvement

- * Implementing the project “vocational awareness and counseling” – through the UNESCO (\$150,000).
- * Implementing the project “Get to know to Workers” through the ILO (\$630,000).
- * Implementing the project “From School to Labor” (STC) through support from the USAID (\$170,000).
- * Implementing vocational awareness program through GTZ costing 12,000 Euros.

Developing specializations in the colleges

- * New specializations were accredited in cooperation with the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality.
- * Some diploma programs were developed into BA programs in the colleges.
- * Plans of programs in colleges were developed.

Developing and improving vocational education curricula on the basis of linking the with the labor market

Through the Belgian Project (2 million Euros). Currently, work is underway to develop the electricity curriculum.

Scholarships offered from internal and external parties

The Ministry offered many internal scholarships to secondary school graduates, such as the scholarships from the President to outstanding students on an annual basis (50 students) who represent the top ten students in the literary and scientific streams in the West Bank and Gaza, and the top student in his district in the literary and scientific streams, and the top three students in the industrial and commercial streams. The annual budget allocated for this grant is 400,000 Jordanian Dinars per year. Total number of students who benefit from this grant on a permanent basis is 244 male and female students.

There are also the internal scholarships offered by the Council of Ministers to the outstanding students in the general secondary education exams. Around 2700 male and female students benefited from this kind of grant in the past three years costing around \$3 million. Moreover, the Ministry offered full scholarships to around 450 students through exempting them from the tuition fees as part of the “Ministry grants from the Palestinian universities”. Total number of beneficiaries from this grant who are studying in universities reaches 615 male and female students. The Ministry announced 1686 scholarships offered from brotherly and friendly countries in coordination

with the Higher Committee for Scholarships, in addition to 1200 seats in Jordanian universities within the three past years at the BA, MA and PhD levels; these external scholarships and seats are distributed between the inside and the Diaspora.

Loans Fund Activities

The Ministry developed a new system for the loans fund through which students will start repaying during the study period. The student shall pay 4% of the tuition fees every semester. This system succeeded for the first time to implant the culture of repayment and gathered half a million Jordanian Dinars. Moreover, The Ministry implemented through the loans and assistance fund the grant from the Council of Ministers to assist the students (\$4 million).

Equivalence Certificates

The Ministry issued equivalence certificates during the period for more than 1780 certificates (292 Tawjihi, 35 diplomas, 535 BA Degrees, 549 Masters Degrees, and 369 PhD Degrees). As for validation, the Ministry validated around 2500 higher education documents every month and verifies around 20 certificates every month.

Scientific Research

The Ministry implemented the following in the past few months:

First: The Ministry continued to enhance participation of Palestinian researchers in European FP7 Program:

The Ministry launched the electronic website www.euncp.ps which offers a lot of information and services, mainly registration as member to receive all information on the new call for proposals that is published by the European Union, in addition to the announcements related to the program and the inquiries service, and some important instructions on participation in FP7 program. The website includes a whole set of brochures and lectures on FP7 in Arabic and English. The Ministry appointed, in coordination with the Palestinian universities, contact points in some local universities which can act as the middle party between the university and FP7 unit in the Ministry and in order to assist in publishing information pertaining to the dates of new calls for proposals.

The Ministry established a database on the active centers, individuals and institutions in the field of scientific research. Number of entries in the database reached around 800 entries. Information and announcements and calls for proposals and their dates are disseminated to them on a regular basis.

The Ministry organized workshops to introduce and talk about FP7 and means of benefiting from it in the Palestinian universities. The last workshop was organized at Bethlehem University on October 15, 2009, and at al-Najah University on December 9, 2009 and another workshop at al-Quds Open University on December 12, 2009.

Second: As part of the Joint Palestinian-French Committee activities in the area of research led by the Ministry: Nine research projects were presented in the field of environment in partnership with French researchers in French universities and research centers in the past two months. The research projects will be assessed and around four or five projects will be selected with total financial coverage reaching around 80,000 Euros and the Ministry will contribute with 25% of the cost.

Third: As part of the Tempus Office activities which is funded by the EU and hosted by the Ministry During the new phase in Tempus IV which aims to develop the higher education sector, extending from 2007 until 2013. Two calls for proposals were announced for joint projects in the program and Palestine participated in four projects as part of the EU-funded projects:

- * The first project in the field of quality. The Ministry Unit for Quality participates in the project with al-Najah University with a total amount of 763, 162 Euros, and the share of the Palestinian universities in the project is 80,000 Euros.

- * The second project aims to establish a program in the e-business field, and a Masters program in Administration and Services offered to the students with a total amount of 131,521,4 Euros. Birzeit University participates in this project. The share of Palestinian universities in this project is 105,000 Euros.

- * The third project is a national project led by Birzeit University with a total amount of 504,368 Euros. The project aims to build a strategic plan at the national level for the environment curriculum in the Palestinian universities. The participants include the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, al-Quds University, and al-Najah University. The share of Palestinian universities reaches 380,000 Euros.

- * The fourth project aims to establish central offices for international relations in the academic field. Al-Quds and Hebron Universities participate in this project with a total amount of 720,378 Euros. The share of Palestinian universities in the project reaches 154,000 Euros.

Fourth: The Ministry signed a contract with Arij Center to conduct a survey on the research infrastructure and human resources pertaining to scientific research in Palestine with support from the UNESCO.

The Ministry – higher education sector – started implementing the first steps in preparing higher education strategy for the next ten years 2101-2020 through a participatory consultation mechanism supported by scientific tools, questionnaires and surveys, such as Delphi Survey. The strategy will be concluded in the last quarter of 2010. the Ministry has prepared the medium-term strategy as part of the ten-year strategy.

4- Assessment of the situation

Based on the above-mentioned data in item 2 which deals with description of the current situation, one can diagnose the weak and strong points and available opportunities and challenges as follows:

4-1 Strong points

- * Rise in ratio of females registered in the Palestinian higher education to reach 54% out of the students' body.
- * Increasing demand on Palestinian higher education.
- * The officials in the Palestinian universities are fully aware of the need for reform and development.
- * General acceptance to diversity in the higher education institutions and presence of higher education institutions in all regions.
- * Participation of 33% of the population with age group (18-24) in higher education.
- * The majority of institutions have programs to absorb older students who desire to pursue their education.
- * Presence of an independent commission on accreditation and quality
- * All existing programs are accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Commission which reinforces the credibility of the programs.
- * External assessment is endorsed to accredit the programs.
- * Increasing trend of the higher education institutions towards scientific research.
- * Gradual and increasing participation of young researchers in important research projects.

4-2 Weak points

- * The increase in number of Palestinian universities faculty members is not in harmony with the accelerating pace of students joining the Palestinian universities.
- * The highest ratios in enrollment are in the BA programs and not in the higher studies programs.
- * Absence of PhD programs in the higher education institutions, with the exception of one single program at al-Najah University in the field of chemistry.
- * The inputs of Palestinian higher education in terms of specialization are distributed as follows:
Around 74% in the literary stream and 20% in the scientific stream and the rest of the students are in the various vocational branches and this reflects its negatively on the students body structure in the higher education institutions.
- * The students who come from lower socioeconomic levels study in fields that are more prone to unemployment, thus impeding the social role of higher education.
- * The ratio of Masters degree holders to the ratio of PhD degree holders who teach in the higher education institutions is high (60%) and the ratio of those holding the title of professor or associate professor is low.
- * Ratio of the universities faculty members to the students is high; on average, it is 1:35
- * Performance of the faculty members in general is not high as certain factors affect their performance, such as the salary, heavy teaching load, and absence of educational preparation.
- * High unemployment among university graduates.

- * The employees are dissatisfied with the performance of the graduates.
- * Unbalanced development between the various institutions.
- * High ratio of withdrawal, especially in Gaza Strip.
- * The higher education institutions desire to open Masters programs even with the absence of basic requirements for such programs and the reason for that is that students joining the Masters programs have better capacities to pay their tuition fees.
- * Limited contribution from the private organizations and sector in the assessment process.
- * Results of the programs reviews are not published.
- * The assessment process focuses on assessing the input more than assessing the output and outcomes.
- * Major differences in the criteria used for internal assessment by the higher education institutions.
- * Minimal usage of the results of the assessment in the development process in general.
- * Inadequate financial resources and dependency on external funding.
- * Very few research projects include creativity and inventions.
- * Inadequate number of qualified researchers.
- * Some research projects are repeated because of weak coordination and cooperation between the existing scientific research institutions.
- * Low capacity to attract foreign experts to work in the higher education institutions.
- * Absence of adequate support to transfer new information and technology.
- * Simple and inadequate intervention by the higher studies students to participate in research and development during their study periods.
- * Absence of laws on intellectual property.
- * Heavy teaching load on the lecturers, thus reducing time allocated for research.
- * Inadequate financial support by the government and private institutions to scientific research.
- * Absence of national policy for scientific research.
- * Weak infrastructure.
- * Relations between industry and research are weak.
- * Very few accredited scientific journals.
- * Lack of incentives.
- * Slow decision-making process.
- * Inadequate intervention by the people concerned in the decision making process.
- * Continuous changes in the higher cadre scale.
- * Unqualified human resources, especially in the medium-level posts.

- * Gaps and overlaps between the various administration levels.
- * The financial system is not transparent.

4-3 Available opportunities

- * To focus on investment that takes into consideration the expected qualitative and quantitative needs of the sector.
- * To respond to the future needs of the labor market as one of the strategies to develop human resources.
- * All those who have the desire and capacity to study must enroll in fields that match their preferences and respond to the labor market.
- * To unify the existing programs in order to avoid redundancy.
- * To maintain the current high quality Masters programs.
- * To accept long-term education.
- * The Council of Ministers shows real tendency to reform the higher education sector and confront its problems.
- * Moral support and guidance from Arab academic institutions and the Arab League institutions.
- * Gradual development of the internal assessment system.
- * To make use of the current assessment measures as part of international cooperation.
- * To enhance the capacities of the Masters program through having students participate in research projects.
- * To increase cooperation with the private sector (amending the Tax Law).
- * The Boards of Trustees of the universities are aware of the need to seek new financial resources.
- * To have Palestinian funding parties who can pay the capital expenses in the universities (new buildings, facilities, services, etc).
- * External support from some countries and international organizations to the higher and general education sectors, such as the UNESCO, the World Bank and the EU.
- * Arab assistance (Saudi assistance, assistance from Arab funds).
- * The higher education institutions show desire and readiness for development.

4-4 Challenges and threats

- * Unplanned and unguided expansion away from the strategies.
- * The quality might decline due to lack of capacity to control the number of higher education institutions (increasing expansion).
- * The current infrastructure is incapable of coping with the expansion in the sector.
- * A high ratio of students who do not meet the academic requirements join the Masters Programs.
- * It is possible that there is “too much” education more than the labor market needs.

- * Chronic conflict between the universities administrations and the Ministry on one hand and the workers union on the other hand because of the bad economic and political conditions.
- * Lack of qualified academic cadres in some new fields that are needed in the society because it is difficult to attract back immigrant Palestinian expertise.
- * Globalization might succeed in supporting technological, electronic and financial specializations at the expense of humanity, identity and culture.
- * The meaning of assessment has changed to become an artificial process that highlights the shortcomings of the program.
- * The condition of human resources is almost constant and does not improve (example: very few researchers).
- * A high ratio of basic research while applied research barely exists.
- * Bad organization in the field of management of research and development in the higher education institutions.
- * Quality of teaching will worsen if the financial problem is not solved.
- * Even more, some non-profit universities might collapse if they do not get financial support.
- * Incorrect and inadequate targets.
- * Unsound selection of criteria that might lead to less effective quality and performance.

5- Challenges and Goals

Through analyzing the current conditions of Palestinian higher education and the existing weak points, one can view the weak points as branches of a tree of problems and challenges. This tree makes up the basis in formulating the tree of goals, strategies and programs.

5-1 Challenges

If we classify the weak points and challenges in groups (sort of factors analysis), we get a group of factors or challenges that can be listed as follows:

- a- To achieve equity in admission between the social sectors and expanding the base of enrollment in vocational and technical education and to provide an adequate number of competent faculty members.
- b- To achieve financial resources sustainability in order to support development, scientific research, academic and vocational and technical education and all reform strategies.
- c- To have the necessary development and reform in order to govern and manage the higher education and the authorities of its council and its higher units and increase competence.
- d- To have the necessary follow up in order to control quality and upgrade education quality.
- e- To upgrade scientific research and work on providing the research environment with all its elements to serve the development priorities.

f- To reduce unemployment among the graduates and work on enabling the students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to get a proper job. This requires reviewing the curricula and teaching methodologies in order to have a human resources base that continues to sustain and develop on the long term.

5-2 Goals

Based on the above, the following tree of goals has been deduced:

First goal: It deals with enrollment: “To meet the increasing demand on higher education at all levels and raise the rate of enrollment for the lower socioeconomic sectors and those with special needs.”

Second goal: It deals with relevancy: “the higher education outputs must be relevant to the needs of the Palestinian society and the local and regional labor market.”

Third goal: It deals with funding: “To guarantee sustainability of funding which is necessary to cover the deficit in the operational, developmental and capital expenditures of higher education institutions.”

Fourth goal: It deals with scientific research: “To upgrade level of scientific research so that it can become effective in the process of economic and social development”.

Fifth goal: It deals with management and governance: “To reform and develop the administration and governance of higher education at the level of the Ministry and institutions.”

Sixth goal: It deals with quality: “To improve and control quality.”

Seventh goal: It deals with vocational and technical education: “To upgrade level of vocational and technical education qualitatively and quantitatively.”

6- Policies and relevant interventions

The goal pertaining to enrollment

Policy 1: To expand base of enrollment of students from lower socioeconomic levels in the education programs:

* To enhance the capacities of loans fund and assistance to students in order to cover the expenses of this sector either through loans or financial assistance.

* To encourage the universities to grant the students from this sector partial tuition exemption.

* To direct grants and scholarships from the private and industrial sectors to this sector.

Policy 2: To facilitate the enrollment process of students with special needs in higher education:

- * To have an exceptional admission system for this sector in the programs according to the kind of impairment.
- * To conduct amendments on the infrastructure in terms of health facilities, corridors and elevators in order to facilitate their integration.
- * To conduct amendments on the libraries and information sources for their sake.
- * To establish a voluntary unit that can follow up on them inside the higher education institutions.

Policy 3: To conduct semi-annual development of the admission criteria inside the higher education institutions:

- * To conduct an annual study in May of every year with focus on the effectiveness of the admission policy of the previous year and study the new developments.
- * To take into consideration the results of the study.
- * To work gradually on freezing admission in non-technical fields in the university colleges.

Policy 4: To open a PhD program in certain fields and strengthen the open masters programs:

- * To form a committee with the task of studying the priority fields in order to open new PhD programs.
- * To encourage qualified universities to open these programs whether individually or in partnership with other foreign or local universities.

Policy 5: To check the extent of internal and legislative need and readiness to use other higher education models in the traditional universities, such as distance learning and On-Line learning:

- * To study experiences of universities that use these models.
- * To conduct a study in order to know the extent of need for such models.
- * To define requirements and impediments if such an approach is adopted.

The goal pertaining to relevancy

Policy 1: To introduce Entrepreneurial learning in the higher education institutions:

- * To raise awareness of officials in the Palestinian universities on the importance of Entrepreneurial learning.
- * To start with an Entrepreneurial course as a university requirement in a government university and government technical colleges.
- * Participation of businessmen with rich experience in university teaching and training.
- * To train students in the community institutions.
- * To open and encourage continuing education programs in the universities.

Policy 2: Participation and representation of the industry and business sector in the governance structures of higher education that operate the higher education institutions:

- * Representation of the business sector and chambers of commerce and industry in the Higher Education Council membership.
- * Representation of business sector in the Board of Trustees of universities.
- * Representation of the business sector in the councils of commission and others.

Policy 3: To review the students body structure according to the fields in the higher education institutions in order to expand the science field and applied fields and vocational short-term programs:

- * To increase enrollment rate in scientific fields such as Mathematics and Physics, especially among males, and medical sciences.
- * To decrease enrollment rate in social sciences and humanities (with focus on quality development to maintain the identity and social cohesion) and bridge them with short-term technical fields.
- * To grant students partial tuition exemption in the fields to be expanded.
- * To increase transfer to scientific and vocational fields starting from the phase after graduating from the secondary stage.

Policy 4: To integrate the higher education institutions with their surroundings through partnerships with economic institutions and civil society organizations:

- * To organize dialogue sessions between the higher education institutions and the business sector in order to define the need of each side in the fields of training and transfer of technology.
- * To appoint employees or contact persons (relevancy unit) for the sake of continuous dialogue and coordination on the possible employment of graduates and improve the students readiness to work.
- * To start joint developmental projects through competitive grants.
- * To allow faculty members to take sabbatical leave to work in the business sector with tax exemption.

Policy 5: To set up qualifications frameworks (competences that the graduate has to acquire in every field) and upgrade study plans accordingly:

- * To define the outputs of the intended learning process at the level of each program.
- * To upgrade and amend the curricula and courses according to the intended outputs.
- * To gather more than one subfield in one program.
- * The study plan or course outline must include hours allocated for practical application in community services, industrial or educational institutions.

The goal pertaining to funding

Policy 1: To diversify sources of funding:

- * To develop mechanisms and programs of scholarships and assistance to students.
- * To develop the student loan fund in order to secure repayment and sustainability.
- * To encourage private investment in higher education.
- * To encourage graduates from higher education institutions to participate in partial coverage of higher education expenses.

Policy 2: To keep government financial support to higher education:

- * To allocate annually a set amount of money from the PNA budget to support higher education in accordance with a committed and improved disbursement mechanism based on standard cost.
- * To encourage funding organizations such as the UNESCO, the EU, the World Bank and Japanese Agency and the Korean...) to finance developmental projects in higher education through the Ministry.
- * To encourage the Arab governments to finance developmental projects in higher education institutions.

Policy 3: To develop self-financing methods from research activities and community services:

- * To support joint projects with the industrial sector instead of individual self-project.
- * To encourage higher education institutions to open services and commercial facilities on campus and outside campus.
- * To encourage the universities to open continuing education programs and consultancy programs.

The goal pertaining to scientific research

Policy 1: To formulate science and technology policy at the homeland level:

- * To conduct a survey study to diagnose the current status of scientific research.
- * To come up with recommendations towards formulating developmental strategic approaches.

Policy 2: To diversify and develop financial resources allocated to scientific research:

- * To increase government support to scientific research in the Palestinian universities to reach a ratio of 5% of the allocated fund per year.
- * To establish a national fund to support scientific research.
- * To allow the private sector to join in scientific research.
- * To support internal and external cooperation between the university research institutes.

- * To allocate a special budget in the universities to support research and publishing and participation in conferences.

Policy 3: To link Palestinian universities and research centers with international networks and encourage joint research:

- * To establish a database that includes all information about the scientific research centers and the results of the annual research and where the research was published.
- * To join the Euromed network for scientific research.
- * To join the Arab network for scientific research.

Policy 4: To establish scientific research distinction centers at the Palestinian universities and open PhD programs in certain fields and improve the Masters Program:

- * To transform cone research centers that belong to the universities into distinction centers.
- * To provide a mature scientific research climate in order to start a PhD Program.
- * To decrease the teaching load for the sake of scientific research and develop the instructions that promote conducting research.

Policy 5: To develop legislations and legal regulations pertaining to scientific research standards and patent rights and publishing rules:

- * To develop a system for publishing.
- * To develop a system for patent rights.
- * To develop a code of ethics for scientific research.

The goal pertaining to management and governance

Policy 1: To review, assess and change the structure and authorities of the Higher Education Council and the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality:

- * To change the structure and membership of the Higher Education Council in accordance with recommendations from some studies in this field.
- * To change the authorities of the Higher Education Council.
- * To change the authorities of the National Commission to become one of the arms of the Higher Education Council.

Policy 2: To increase internal competence in the work of the Ministry in the area of higher education:

- * To develop mechanisms of accrediting Arab and foreign higher education institutions.
- * To develop the currently used mechanisms for certificate equivalence in order to shorten the period.
- * To set up measurements and criteria to direct grants and assistance towards developmental processes.
- * To reconsider management of daily time and means for best investment of time.
- * To reconsider the mechanism used in preparing the annual budget of higher education.

Policy 3: To amend and develop higher education legislations:

- * To amend Law no. 11 of 1998.
- * To develop regulations taken from the law in order to govern the work of all councils, commissions, units and committees in the Ministry and government education institutions.
- * To review the universities regulations and legislations and work on unifying clauses in them for purposes of retirement and other issues.

Policy 4: To develop university administration and adopt the principles of decentralization, accountability, competence and competition:

- * To set up specific mechanisms and clear criteria when selecting those who will assume administrative and academic posts.
- * To work towards the independence of universities along with accountability mechanisms.
- * To shorten the cycle of decision-taking mechanism and support it with regulations, information and semi-automatic and regular reports.

The goal pertaining to quality

Policy 1: provide adequate and proper infrastructure for the teaching/learning process:

- * Appropriate classrooms, halls, and laboratories in terms of ventilation, air conditioning and sound system.
- * Internet and computers ready for use by the students and staff.
- * A library rich with reference books and connected with international libraries electronically.
- * A supportive academic, psychological and social environment (to care for the students and reinforce trust between the students and the university, and support extracurricular activities and organize the work of the students' council).

Policy 2: To provide an adequate number of faculty members and work towards professional development in order to reduce ratio of part time staff and extra load:

- * To work on attracting the competent staff who have immigrated.
- * To find participatory programs with international universities in order to exchange teaching experiences.
- * To conduct rehabilitation training on modern teaching methods.
- * Instructions pertaining to reduction of extra load and partial load.
- * To encourage scholarships and training.

Policy 3: To set up criteria that can guarantee quality and develop systems of assessment and comparison and rank classification according to performance:

- * To prepare a set of criteria by the Ministry pertaining to the ratio of students to teachers, ratio of books to students, ratio of Masters degree holders to PhD degree holders, ratio of computer terminals to students, ratio of full timers to part timers, teaching load per hours, ..etc.
- * To develop system of self assessment.
- * To measure performance of higher education institutions.

Policy 4: To develop teaching methodologies in order to make the student the center of the learning process and use modern methods:

- * To adopt the student-based learning.
- * To use the computer in the teaching/learning process.
- * To use E-learning as a method in some courses.

The goal pertaining to upgrading vocational and technical education

Policy 1: To develop admission capacities and human resources in the vocational and technical schools and colleges:

- * To provide adequate financial support to new buildings and labs.
- * To ensure geographical distribution of the schools and colleges.
- * To cooperate with the relevant international organizations.
- * To set up programs to develop teachers in technical aspects.

Policy 2: To upgrade status of vocational and technical education and raise the social and economic value of the graduate from such institutions:

- * awareness campaigns and programs at the level of students, parents and teachers.
- * To issue legislations banning the licensing of car mechanic workshops and other workshops unless there is a technical qualification.
- * To grant specialization allowances to those who graduate from vocational and technical colleges and work in the civil service.
- * To encourage students to enroll through granting them partial exemptions from tuition.
- * To open the prospects of vocational and technical education so that it won't appear closed from the viewpoint of students and teachers.
- * To prepare brochures, films and radio programs to raise vocational awareness.
- * To follow up the training and employment of the graduates through agreements with the various economic sectors.

Policy 3: To assess the existing programs and curricula in the vocational and technical schools and colleges:

- * Gradual freezing of some non-technical programs.
- * To introduce priority technical programs.
- * To develop some existing programs.
- * To develop curricula and include in them entrepreneurial and creative education.
- * To develop the Comprehensive Exam.
- * To develop the mechanism of general secondary exam/practical training.

Policy 4: To link and network vocational and technical education with the production and manufacturing sector:

- * To apply professional apprenticeship (shifting between the school and the productive institution).
- * To exchange experiences with the productive sector in teaching and training.
- * To activate the higher council for vocational and technical education with participatory membership.

7- Mechanism to follow up the strategy implementation

The successful implementation of the strategy depends on sound understanding of the contents of the strategy and the existing higher education system and the relation between them. The implementation process means a continuous planning process that might lead to amending some of the goals and partial measures and rearrangement of priorities. It also includes certain actions, such as field visits and holding meetings with the partners and documentation and reporting.

Moreover, the follow up mechanism requires a monitoring process to keep on the right track and it also requires a regular monitoring process on the accomplished tasks and to check their relevance to the accomplishment indicators and expected results.

The official parties in charge of the follow up are the same party that coordinated the strategic planning process. These official parties will depend on the reports presented from the units and departments which are formally commissioned to implement the activities within their own jurisdictions, in addition to the reports that come from the planning units in the higher education institutions. Then, the reports are studied and commented on and then they are submitted to the Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs who in his turn will submit them to the Undersecretary and to the Minister who will present them to the Policies Committee in order to get feedback. The feedback will then go to the authorized parties for follow up.

8- The medium level executive matrix for higher education strategy

The goal	Policy related to the goal	Intervention	Sub-activity if found	Implementing party	Cost 2010 ()		Cost 2011 2012 2013	Accomplishment indicators
					Funding party	Needs funding		
Funding	To diversify funding resources	1- To develop mechanisms and programs for scholarships and assistance to students.						
		2- To develop student loan fund in order to ensure repayment and sustainability.						
		3- To encourage private investment in higher education.						
		4- To encourage higher education graduates to participate in covering part of the higher education expenses.						
	To keep government financial support to higher education	1- To allocate a specific annual amount in the PNA budget for the support of higher education in accordance with a committed improved distribution mechanism based on standard cost.						
		2- To encourage the funding organizations such as the UNESCO, the EU, the World Bank, Japanese Agency, Korean, to finance developmental projects in higher education through the Ministry.						
		3- To encourage the Arab governments to finance development projects in the higher education institutions.						

	To develop self financing mechanisms from research activities and community services	1- To support joint projects with the industrial sector instead of individual self projects						
		2- To encourage higher education institutions to open services and commercial facilities on campus and outside campus.						
		3- To encourage universities to open continuing education and consultancy programs.						
Relevancy	To introduce Entrepreneurial learning in the higher education institutions	1- To raise awareness of officials in the Palestinian universities on the importance of Entrepreneurial learning.						
		2- To start an Entrepreneurial learning course as a requirement course in government universities and government technical colleges.						
		3- To adopt Entrepreneurial learning in the universities strategies to include the various colleges and programs.						
		4- To allow businessmen with rich experience engage in university teaching and training.						
		5- To train students in the community institutions.						

		6- To open and encourage continuing education programs in universities.						
	Participation and representation of business and industry sectors in higher education governance structures that operate higher education institutions	1- Representation of business sector and chambers of commerce and industry in the Higher Education Council membership.						
		2- Representation of business sector in the board of trustees of universities.						
		3- Representation of business sector in the council of the commission and other bodies.						

	To review the students body structure according to the study fields in the higher education institutions in order to expand scope of sciences and applied programs and vocational short term programs	1- To increase enrollment rate in scientific fields, such as Mathematics and Physics among males and in medical sciences.						
		2- To decrease enrollment rate in social sciences and humanities (with focus on their quality development to preserve the identity and social cohesion) and bridge them towards short-term technical fields.						
		3- To grant partial exemption of tuition fees in the fields to be expanded.						
		4- To increase transfer to scientific and vocational streams starting from the phase after secondary education.						

	To integrate higher education institutions within their surroundings through partnerships with economic institutions and civil society organizations	1- To organize dialogue sessions between the higher education institutions and business sector in order to define the needs of each side from the other in the field of training and transfer of technology and other areas.						
		2- To appoint employees or contact representatives (relevancy unit) to keep dialogue and coordination on the possibility of employing the graduates and improve the students readiness for work.						
		3- To start joint developmental projects through competitive scholarships.						
		4- To allow university faculty members to use their sabbatical leave in the business sector with tax exemption.						
	To set up qualifications frameworks (that the graduate has to acquire in every field) and upgrade course outlines accordingly	1- To define the intended outputs of the learning process at the level of each program						

		2- To upgrade and amend the curricula and course content according to the intended outputs						
		3- To gather more than one sub field in one program.						
		4- To include in the course outline hours for practical application in service community institutions or industrial or education institutions						
Enrollment	To expand base of enrollment of students from the upper lower socioeconomic status in the education programs	1- To enhance the capacities of students loan and assistance fund in order to cover the expenses of this sector through either loans or financial assistance.						
		2- To encourage universities to grant this sector of students partial tuition exemption.						
		3- To guide scholarships from the private and industrial sector to this sector.						
	To facilitate enrollment of students with special needs in the various higher education programs	1- To allow exceptional admission for this sector in the programs according to the kind of handicap.						
		2- To amend the infrastructure in terms of health facilities and corridors and elevators to facilitate their integration.						

		3- To amend the libraries and sources of information for their sake						
		4- To establish a voluntary unit which will follow up on them inside the higher education institutions.						
	Semi annual development of admission criteria in the higher education institutions	1- To conduct an annual study in May of every year with focus on effectiveness of admission policy in the pervious year and study the new developments.						
		2- To take the recommendations of the study into consideration.						
		3- To work gradually on freezing admission in non-technical programs in the university colleges.						
	To open PhD programs in certain fields and strengthen Open Masters programs	1- To form a committee to study the priority fields in order to open several PhD programs.						
		2- To encourage qualified universities to open such programs, either individually or in partnerships with other foreign or local universities.						

	To test level of legislative need and self readiness to use new higher education learning models in traditional universities, such as distance learning and On-line learning	1- To know more about experiences of universities which use such models.						
		2- To conduct a study to know the extent of need for such models.						
		3- To define the requirements and impediments in case such an approach is formulated.						
Governance	To review, assess and change structure and authorities of Higher Education Council and National Commission for Accreditation and Quality	1- To change structure and membership of Higher Education Council according to recommendations of some studies in the field.						
		2- To change the authorities of the Higher Education Council.						

		3- To change authorities of the National Commission to become one of the arms of the Higher Education Council.						
	To increase internal effectiveness in the work of the Ministry in the area of higher education	1- To develop mechanisms of accrediting Arab and foreign higher education institutions.						
		2- To develop the current mechanisms of certificate equivalence in order to shorten the period.						
		3- To set up standards and criteria for guiding the grants and assistance towards developmental treatment.						
		4- To reconsider management of daily time and best means of using it						
		5- To reconsider the mechanism used to prepare the annual budget for higher education.						
	To amend and develop higher education legislations	1- To amend Law no. 11 of 1998						

		2- To develop regulations taken from the law to govern the work of all councils, commissions, units and committee in the Ministry and the government education institutions.							
		3- To review the regulations and legislations of the universities and work on unifying clauses in them for purposes of retirement and other matters.							
	To develop the university administration and adopt the principles of decentralization, accountability, competence and competition	1- To set up specific mechanisms and clear criteria in selecting personnel to assume administrative and academic posts.							
		2- To work towards independence of universities with accountability mechanisms.							
		3- To shorten cycle of decision-making mechanism which should be based on information systems, and semi-automatic and regular reports.							

Quality	To provide adequate and appropriate infrastructure for the teaching/learning process	1- Appropriate classrooms, halls and laboratories in terms of ventilation and air conditioning and sound system.						
		2- Internet and computer terminals ready for use by the students and staff.						
		3- A library rich with references and connected electronically with international libraries.						
		4- To provide the supportive academic, psychological and social environment (care for students, enhance trust between the students and the university, support to extracurricular activities and organize work of the students Council)						
	To provide the necessary number of teaching staff and continue to achieve professional development in order to reduce ratio of part timers and overload.	1- To prepare a set of criteria by the Ministry dealing with the ratio of students to teachers, ratio of students to books, ratio of Masters holders to PhD holders, ratio of computers to students, ratio of part time teachers and teaching load in hours,...etc.						

		2- To develop the self-assessment system.						
		3- To measure performance of higher education institutions.						
	To develop teaching methodologies so that the student becomes the focus of the learning process and use modern methods.	1- To apply the concept of student-based learning						
		2- To use E-learning as a method in some courses.						
	To formulate a policy for science and technology at the homeland level.	1- To conduct a survey study to diagnose the current status of scientific research.						
		2- To come up with recommendations to formulate developmental strategic approaches.						
	To diversify and develop financial resources allocated to scientific research	1- To increase government support allocated to scientific research in the Palestinian universities to reach 10% of the total amount allocated per year.						
		2- To establish a national fund to support scientific research						
		3- To allow participation of the private sector in scientific research						

		4- To support internal and external cooperation between the university scientific research institutions							
		5- To allocate a special budget in the universities to support research, publishing and participation in conferences.							
	To link universities and Palestinian research centers with international networks and encourage joint research	1- To establish a database which includes all scientific research centers and results of annual research and places where the research was published.							
		2- To join Euromed Network for Scientific Research							
		3- To join the Arab Network for Scientific Research.							
	To establish distinction centers belonging to the Palestinian universities and open PhD programs in certain fields and improve the Masters program	1- To transform some university research centers into distinction centers.							
		2- To provide mature scientific research environment in order to open a PhD program.							
		3- To reduce the teaching load							

		for the sake of scientific research and develop instructions that promote research						
	To develop legislations and legal regulations pertaining to standards of scientific research and patent rights and rules of publishing	1- To develop the system of publishing						
		2- To develop system of patent rights.						
		3- To develop scientific research code of ethics.						
To upgrade vocational and technical education	To develop capacity and human resources of vocational schools and technical colleges	1- To provide adequate financial support to the new buildings and laboratories.						
		2- To ensure geographical distribution of schools and colleges.						
		3- To cooperate with the relevant international organizations.						
		4- To set up programs to develop teachers in the technical areas.						

	To upgrade status of vocational and technical education and raise social and economic value of the graduate from this kind of education	1- awareness campaigns and programs at the levels of students, parents and teachers.						
		2- To issue legislations that ban licensing car mechanic workshops unless there is technical qualification.						
		3- To grant specialization allowances for vocational and technical education graduates who work in the civil service.						
		4- To motivate students to join this sector of education through granting them tuition partial exemption.						
		5- To open prospects of vocational and technical education so that it will not appear closed in the eyes of students and parents.						
		6- To prepare brochures, films and radio program on vocational awareness.						
		7- To follow up the training and employment of graduates through agreements with the various economic sectors.						

	To assess existing programs in the vocational schools and government technical colleges and their curricula	1- Gradual freeze of some non-technical programs.						
		2- To introduce priority technical programs.						
		3- To develop some existing programs.						
		4- To develop the curricula and include in them entrepreneurial learning and creativity.						
		5- To develop the Comprehensive Exam.						
		6- To develop mechanism of general secondary exam/practical training.						
	To link and network vocational and technical education with the production and manufacturing sector	1- To apply vocational apprenticeship (shifting between the school and the production institution).						
		2- To exchange experiences with the production sector in the areas of teaching and training.						
		3- To activate the Higher						

		Council for Vocational and Technical Education with participatory membership.						
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