

# Ex post evaluation – Palestinian Territories

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**Sector:** Vocational training (CRS Code 11 33000)  
**Programme/Project:** CP - Technical College, Nablus, BMZ No. 2000 65 441\*  
**Implementing agency:** An-Najah University, Nablus



## Ex post evaluation report: 2015

		Project (Planned)	Project (Actual)
Investment costs (total)	EUR million	17.49	19.33
Counterpart contribution	EUR million	11.87	12.43
Funding	EUR million	5.62	6.90
of which BMZ budget funds	EUR million	5.62	6.90

\*) Random sample 2015

**Summary:** The overall project comprised the construction and equipping of the Nablus technical college in, as well as institutional support measures and the preparation and implementation of the training organisation. FC funds were used to purchase furnishings for workshops and laboratories with roughly 600 training places. In parallel, professional and organisational development support was provided to the college as part of TC. The construction of the college was co-financed by Arab donors.

**Objectives:** The intended impact of the project was to support the economic development of the Palestinian Territories (PT) with qualified workers suited to the labour market, thereby helping to improve living standards in a politically and economically instable environment. The FC measure's key outcome focused on qualifying the college students in the fields of automobile/industrial technology, electrics/ electronics and technical drawing, in accordance with the needs of the labour market.

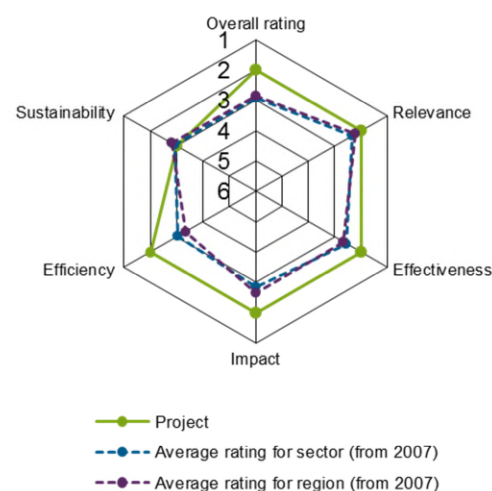
**Target group:** The target group was the students of the technical college, i.e. graduates of academic or vocational secondary schools, as well as working people with and without varying degrees of formal educational qualification.

## Overall rating: 2

**Rationale:** The college in Nablus still numbers among the most renowned vocational training facilities in the country. It garners its good reputation primarily from the technical training material provided during the FC project. In spite of the still relatively poor state of vocational training in the Palestinian Territories, the college attracts a rising number of students who, with a college degree, can significantly enhance their opportunities on the labour market.

**Highlights:** The college was established immediately after the start of the second Intifada and therefore had to struggle in the early years with import restrictions and the restricted freedom of movement of the population. Meanwhile, it is being attended by more than 1,500 students.

To reduce the dependency on external funding under difficult conditions, the college used residual FC funds to establish a vehicle inspection facility, which is recognised by the state and by now generates roughly 15 % of the college's annual revenues.



## Rating according to DAC criteria

### Overall rating:2

#### Relevance

The insufficient supply of adequate vocational training opportunities - coupled with extremely high youth unemployment - was a key problem in the Palestinian Territories (PT) at the time of the project appraisal, and still is today.

The availability of qualified specialists is crucial for economic development. Vocational training and advanced education offers people an opportunity to enter the labour market, generate income and therefore escape poverty. Offering training that is tailored to the labour market of the PT can therefore help to reduce unemployment, boost economic development and ultimately contribute to stability in a persistently fragile environment. The intervention logic of the project is therefore plausible.

The PT's overall potential for economic development is low - given the political and socio-economic situation. The Palestinian labour market therefore exhibits some special features. In the wake of the second Intifada, the Israeli labour market for skilled Palestinian workers all but collapsed. Additionally, the PT's economic development is heavily dependent on Israel. To a lesser extent, some Arab countries (e.g. Jordan, Kuwait) also provide employment opportunities for Palestinians. Essentially, local employment is mainly offered by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with fewer than 20 employees, and a few larger companies. Demand is particularly strong for technicians and apprentices, while the unemployment among academics is comparatively high. Alongside Hebron, the region surrounding Nablus is known as a manufacturing area.

The project approach takes those characteristics into account by focusing on the creation of training places in specialist areas relevant for the employment market. While the project was being implemented, the national "Technical and Vocational Education and Training" (TVET) strategy was introduced. The college is one of the main TVET institutions and continues to be aligned with the national TVET strategies.

The project was implemented in close cooperation with TC (including the German Development Service), which was responsible for developing curricula and for training college staff. The German DC's vocational education strategy was therefore implemented jointly. Alongside the German DC, mainly Arab donors were involved in the project by building the college. Donor activities were coordinated by the Jordanian Hisham-Hijawi Foundation, which played an instrumental role in establishing the college. The individual measures supported in subsequent years by the EU and the World Bank were also independently managed by the college and the Foundation.

The overall relevance of the project is rated high.

#### Relevance sub-rating: 2

#### Effectiveness

The project's intended outcome was to qualify the technical college's students in the fields of automobile/industrial technology, electrics/ electronics and technical drawing, in accordance with the needs of the labour market - and under the tense political circumstances in the project area.

The achievement of the outcomes defined during the project appraisal (PP) can be summarised as follows:

Indicator	Status PA	Ex post evaluation
(1) 500 of the formal training places are occupied	-	Achieved. Some 638 training places were filled at the time of the evaluation.

<p>(2) NEW: the equipment at the school is used for training purposes up to at least 60 % of capacity.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>The equipment at the school is used for training purposes for more than 60 % of its operating time on average. While some workshops are only used to a small extent, others are occupied every day for several courses. Only the kitchen is not used because the students prefer cold snacks over a warm meal.</p>
<p>(3) NEW: at least 80 % of the students successfully complete their studies at the college.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>More than 80 % of the students successfully complete the training at the technical in the specialist field of their choice. The remaining 20 % change their specialist subject or drop out of the technical for social reasons (e.g. get married) or financial circumstances. The drop-out rate is less than 5 %.</p>

1) Indicators 2) and 3) were added as part of the evaluation to quantify the "outcomes" on an approximate basis.

From the evaluation's perspective, the college's utilisation (i.e. training places occupied) should not be used as the sole indicator of the project's success. On the one hand, completing a technical course successfully is a prerequisite for entering the labour market as a skilled worker (see indicator 3). On the other, the utilisation rate of the financed equipment must be evaluated to establish a direct link to the FC investments (see indicator 2).

At the time of the evaluation, 638 students attended the technical college. The previous years exhibited similar utilisation rates, which mean the indicator defined during appraisal is fully achieved. Additionally, the college now offers advanced training and evening classes, increasing the total number of students above 1500. Roughly 80 % of the students successfully complete their technical course. In some cases, courses are delayed or even abandoned due to financial difficulties or changes in social circumstances (e.g. getting married). Some 40 %-50 % of the graduates also take the national final examination ("shamel") of the Ministry of Education, which is a prerequisite for jobs at public institutions and with some private-sector companies, too. Last year, 98 % of those students passed the "shamel".

The curricula designed at project appraisal are still offered by the college. They have now been expanded to include other subjects, such as graphic design and agricultural technology, to meet the changing demands of the private sector.

In light of the import restrictions caused by Israeli customs, some of the project's outputs could not be realised. Some machines or components were therefore procured second-hand on the local market. Since the project's completion, some donors (EU, World Bank, private donors) have supported the college with additional equipment. Where necessary, training materials and spare parts have been sourced on the local market so far, since international procurement is too costly while some workshops and laboratories could therefore not be used at the start of the project - or only to a limited extent, all of the rooms are now in regular use, with the exception of the kitchen.

The curricula's practical relevance is not specifically referred to in the objectives. It should be noted here that all of the college's training programmes comprise a mandatory number of practical lessons. These are mainly spent at larger companies, SMEs and family-run businesses, as well as in companies owned by the teachers. The technical teachers often provide the contacts for these placements and to potential employers at the end of the study period, many of whom have their own businesses and hence maintain close links with the private sector. Representatives from the private sector also cooperate on expert committees, designing individual curricula produced with TC support, which are elaborated by the college

in conjunction with other colleges and expert committees and approved at national level. Overall, up to 50 % of the respective curricula consist of practical training units, alongside theoretical classes. This means the chosen approach of combining theory with practical training content in a pragmatic and effective manner can be considered achieved. Although English lessons are offered, the students themselves as well as other labour market participants consider the graduates' language skills to be too low. In contrast, all parties confirm the courses' quality in terms of basic technical skills. Students and private sector representatives sometimes criticise the limited attention paid to new technologies in the courses. After some initial reluctance, the share of female students now totals roughly 40 %, and deserves to be specially highlighted, as it is substantially higher than at other vocational training institutions (15 %).<sup>1</sup>

From the evaluation's perspective, the link between the college and the labour market merits further intensification - with particular view to improving the student's social skills as early as possible, recognising the relevance of English as a technical language and opening access to new technologies. Even though many management courses (accounting, HR, etc.) are now offered as well, it would be justified to prepare students more deliberately for self-employment, which could open up further opportunities in the current political and economical climate.

While the teaching staffs qualification is deemed good across the board - according to the students surveyed, experts at national level agree that teacher training and further training needs to be promoted more intensively in the PT. At the Nablus College, further teacher training is partly financed by donors, but otherwise funded largely by the teachers themselves.

In essence, we rate the project's effectiveness as good.

**Effectiveness sub-rating: 2**

### Efficiency

The college is affiliated to the public "An-Najah National University" and has benefited from the university's good reputation to date; for example, diplomas are issued jointly by the university and the college. At the same time, the college was a project of the Jordanian Hisham Hijawi Foundation, which coordinated the activities of the various donors. The need for technical materials was elaborated by TC experts. The project's supplies and services, which were split into seven lots, were tendered by An-Najah National University in coordination with the Foundation, and supported by an implementation consultant. The coordination between both institutions was difficult, especially in the initial stages of the project.

There were substantial delays caused by import restrictions imposed by Israel after the second Intifada. In light of those restrictions, some of the deliveries could not be made, and were substituted in some cases by used machines sourced locally. While exchange rate fluctuations and higher risk premiums drove up the costs for some deliveries by up to 57 %, other batches were procured at more favorable prices than originally planned.

All of the workshops and teaching rooms that are equipped with training machines and materials are used regularly by the college. While some rooms (mainly with PCs and workstations) are used daily, special technology equipment is sometimes used only 2-3 times per week. In spite of the regular use, there have been few breakdowns and repairs in the last 10 years. Smaller repairs and maintenance are carried out by the college or handled locally. As in other institutions of the country, the kitchen is not used due to the lack of demand among students for warm meals, mainly for financial reasons. Sandwiches and cold snacks are offered instead in the cafeteria.

The efficiency of the vehicle inspection centre built from residual funds totaling EUR 600,000 is particularly high; this centre accounts for roughly 15 % of the college's annual revenues. Overall, production and implementation efficiency are deemed appropriate in the special context brought about by the second Intifada.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation of the "Educational Development Strategic Plan, March 2014"

The allocation efficiency (input relative to impact) is rated high because the robust technical machinery and workshops are regularly used by a large number of students for training purposes. The training provides the students with basic technical skills, which facilitate their entry into working life (see below).

**Efficiency sub-rating: 2**

**Overarching developmental impact**

The project’s intended impact was to support the economic development of the PT with qualified workers suited to the labour market, thereby helping to improve living standards in a politically and economically instable environment. The underlying logic is coherent and plausible. With hindsight, the project achieved a positive impact as envisaged; given the prevailing conflict situation only moderate economic development can be expected in the PT.

The students’ subsequent career development was initially defined as outcome indicator. However, it is better suited to quantify impact achievement. It has to be noted that the college has only started to systematically trace the graduates’ employment records since early 2015, despite many years of TC commitment. Accordingly, the planned assessment at national level has not yet begun, and the assessment of this indicator is based on the results of the final inspection, selected graduates’ self-disclosure and expert opinions.

The achievement of this indicator is thus as follows:

Indicator	Status PA	Ex post evaluation
Every year some 80 % of the graduates, but at least 200 students, find employment in line with their qualification within 12 months of completing their training.	-	So far there has been no systematic study on student retention in courses. Based on final inspection data, self-disclosure by the college and expert opinions we can assume that more than 80 % of the graduates find a position that suits their specialisation. Some others find employment elsewhere.

2) The indicator formulated at "outcome" level during the project appraisal rather tracks the ultimate objective ("impact"), which is why it is used here.

Education in Palestine is understood as a means of "nation-building". Teachers, parents and students consider school education as something which helps them to change the political situation and improve perspectives for future generations - be it to enable them to find work abroad, or to excell in an intellectual competition with Israel.

The PT labour market is primarily shaped by SMEs, especially in the services sector. The region around Nablus is also characterised first and foremost by manufacturing and technological companies. In many cases, those are family-run enterprises. In this respect A overall growth opportunities for the Palestinian economy and thus its labour market are restricted, the project’s impact is also constrained for the time being. Besides the PT, labour markets in other Arab countries (mainly Gulf States, Jordan and Saudi Arabia) come into question, too. A reasonable number of graduates indeed take up this opportunity, although no statistics are available. Access to the Israeli labour market remains limited.

Studies have shown that companies also expect social skills, in particular, from their employees - alongside practical capabilities. In addition to this, graduates of training institutions (TVET levels 2 and 4 offered by the technical, "skilled worker & technician") are especially in demand, as opposed to academics. This means there is a growing trend in the sector to re-train workers skilled in other areas. By contrast, all of those questioned believe that school graduates and their families still prefer an academic career, whereas the TVET system continues to enjoy just an average reputation.

In summary, we can assume that the project's impacts have been achieved to an appropriate extent.

**Overarching developmental impact sub-rating: 2**

**Sustainability**

The sustainability aspect must be examined against the background of political insecurity and everyday conflicts. The impacts of the Second Intifada have shown that changes in the political situation negatively affect the project's impacts. Sustainability is thus heavily dependent on future political development.

The appraisal report focused only on risks in terms of financial sustainability. As assumed back then, improvements in the technical equipment of the college continue to be largely financed by donors. Due to the growing number of students and the equipment's increasing degree of sophistication, maintenance costs are on the rise as well. Tuition fees at the college are EUR 40-50 per course and term, in line with national standards. Alongside those fees, the college has seen revenue growth in recent years particularly from the expansion of further education courses and from the vehicle inspection centre. Those additional income sources are a positive change. Nonetheless, the college generates a deficit every year which is absorbed by An-Najah University. In 2014 the deficit totaled approximately USD 150,000.

The equipment is kept clean and in good condition. Maintenance work is carried out both by the students and the teachers, as well as by staff hired specifically for this purpose. Thus it can be assumed that the facilities financed from FC funds will continue to be used for some years to come. Depreciation calculations with view to long-term investment planning are not undertaken.

Given the equipment's current good condition - alongside with college's insufficient financial resources and the persistent political risk, we rate sustainability as satisfactory.

**Sustainability rating: 3**

### Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects (and programmes) are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **overarching developmental impact**. The ratings are also used to arrive at a **final assessment** of a project's overarching developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

<b>Level 1</b>	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
<b>Level 2</b>	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
<b>Level 3</b>	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
<b>Level 4</b>	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
<b>Level 5</b>	Clearly inadequate result – despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
<b>Level 6</b>	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Rating levels 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while rating levels 4-6 denote a negative assessment.

### Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability): the developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability): the developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected).

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability): the developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex-post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability): the developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex-post evaluation and is very unlikely to improve. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The **overall rating** on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Ratings 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while ratings 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") **and** the sustainability are rated at least "satisfactory" (rating 3).