



ESAF Voices from the Field

Enhancing Finance Education through Faculty Exchange

Photo: WDI



Elias Mukarker (right) is a Finance Instructor at Bethlehem University and participated in WDI's Faculty Exchange initiative, spending a semester in Michigan and auditing seven financial courses to learned about curriculum development and pedagogical methodologies.

The Expanded and Sustained Access to Financial Services (ESAF) program is a three-year \$36 million program, funded by USAID, and designed to build a more inclusive financial sector in the West Bank and Gaza, for Palestinian households and enterprises.

The program is implemented by AED in partnership with The William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan, ShoreBank International, CHF International, CARE and Save the Children. ESAF is an Associate Award under USAID's FIELD-Support Leader with Associates cooperative agreement, which is managed by AED.

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The need to improve curriculum, pedagogical methodologies and faculty capacity of Palestinian universities is clear. Through ESAF, the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI) continues to raise the quality of financial education at Palestinian universities through its Faculty Exchange Initiative, which links Palestinian and American academic finance programs through international exchanges. Most recently, WDI sponsored Elias Mukarker, a Finance Instructor at the Bethlehem University's College of Business Administration, to spend the 2010 Fall Semester at the Ross School of Business in Michigan. The exchange program supports the development of the University's newly accredited Minor in Finance program, with the purpose of providing better qualified recruits for the finance industry.

During the semester, Mr. Mukarker audited seven financial courses, and was continuously mentored by prominent Ross professors, including Dr. Nejat Seyhun and Dr. Robert Kennedy.

"The program supported our goal of having a new Minor in Finance program and had a positive impact on our students."

Elias Mukarker

"The courses were focused on presenting progressive methods of curriculum improvements and a more competitive approach to higher education," he said.

Immediately upon his return, Mr. Mukarker applied that learning to his responsibilities as lead instructor, which include the development of core and elective courses, introduction of new teaching methodologies, and criteria for admittance. Dr. Fadi Kattan, Dean of the College of Business Administration at Bethlehem University noted: "The expertise and support offered through the exchange program is of great significance to our University and students. This experience added value to their ability to compete in the marketplace, with 35 students enrolled in Minor in Finance, and 36 more attending two courses offered through the program." The Minor in Finance Program will pave the way for a full finance major, providing a new option for Palestinian undergraduates who wish to pursue a degree in finance.

The innovative teaching techniques and improved curriculum delivered at Bethlehem University can be a model for sustainable finance education reform to be replicated at other Palestinian Universities. In the final year of ESAF, WDI will continue providing technical assistance to its partner universities to further develop their internal capacity.