

Clinton Scholarship Program

The Clinton Scholarship Program was created in 2000 at USAID to provide funding for Palestinians to attend Masters programs in the United States. The program's name was changed twice in 2003, first to the Master's Degree Scholarship Program and then to the Presidential Scholarship Program. The Program ended in 2008.

Background:

According to a 2008 USAID evaluation of the program, the Clinton Scholarship Program (CSP) was implemented in 2000 implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The Program sought to contribute to Palestinian economic and social development by providing Master's degree training to promising Palestinians to address the shortage of qualified managers in the business, public administration, health, urban planning, law and engineering sectors.

In 2003, the program was renamed the Master's Degree Scholarship Program (MDSP) and continued with the same recruiting practices, goals and students supported. Altogether, the CSP/MDSP provided scholarships to 94 participants, of whom 89 successfully completed their Master's degrees.

The initial contract ended in 2003 and a follow-on program was developed and renamed the Presidential Scholarship Program (PSP). PSP became a component of the Higher Education Support Initiative (HESI), a project implemented in Palestine also by AED. The program included the original masters programs areas and added new areas for scholarships in the IT, environmental sciences and education sectors. The ended in 2008. In total, 69 Palestinians successfully completed their Master's degrees through PSP, bringing the total output for the two programs to 158 Master's degree recipients.

Although the recruitment process placed an emphasis on recruiting women, the Master's degree recipients included 36 percent women and 64 percent men. Recruitment of women posed a challenge given Palestinian societal reservations about women traveling and living alone. A number of women who had applied and been selected eventually withdrew due to family considerations.

Data from USAID suggests that 84 percent of participants returned to Palestine to complete their two years' required service, and 80 percent of participants contacted

by the team currently reside in Palestine. Although the data does not represent the entire universe of participants, it suggests a large percentage of participants are living and working in Palestine, contributing to the social and economic progress.

USAID's evaluation of the Programs cites the scholarship programs as successful given the increase in participants' job opportunities, leadership roles, professional linkages and cultural exposure. Supplementary research is needed should this Administration seek to to reactivate the program.

Note: A separate program, the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP), initiated in 2005 by USAID to increase capacity within the higher education sector in the West Bank and Gaza, is still active. It provides opportunities for professors to obtain doctoral degrees; it encourages teaching methods that involve active student participation; it introduces host country institutions to advances in educational technology; and, it encourages joint research and other linkages with U.S. universities.