

The Portland Trust is a British non-profit 'action tank' whose mission is to promote peace and stability between Israelis and Palestinians through economic development. We work with a range of partners to help develop the Palestinian private sector and relieve poverty through entrepreneurship in Israel. We have been, and continue to be, involved in a number of important initiatives, including the development of financial and economic infrastructure, housing, trade, investment and entrepreneurship. We also publish a monthly Palestinian Economic Bulletin.

Project Aims and Vision

The Portland Trust has recently launched a new project to address the skills gaps in different economic sectors in the Palestinian Territory.

Mid-level executives from well established companies in the Palestinian Territory will be placed for up to three months in relevant UK businesses. During the placement period participants will develop skills and knowledge that will be relevant to the day-to-day management of their own companies in the Palestinian Territory.

The role of human capital in promoting long-term sustainable growth is extremely important. For such a process to succeed, the economy must invest in human capital, increase the supply of skilled labour and ensure there are proper employment opportunities available.

Research carried out by The World Bank has demonstrated the need for such a programme. A recent report on business education stated, 'The region is currently unable to provide the necessary resources to train its 'captains' in industry and banking.' Not only does this lack of skills hinder the potential to establish large labour intensive firms, but the dearth of trained middle managers is likely to further deter potential foreign investment. Executive programmes are therefore critical in developing future top managers and leaders.

The Portland Trust will partner with the Palestinian private sector, the British Consulate-General Jerusalem and various other international and UK based companies during the various stages of the programme.

Background

This project has been designed following The Portland Trust's successful Corporate Leadership Programme which finished at the end of 2011.

This initiative has a much more targeted approach to dealing with key problem areas and capacity gaps within the private sector.

This will be the first focused intervention to address specific challenges faced by private sector companies.

Results of Initial Research Work

After several interviews with key private sector figures The Portland Trust has identified a number of gaps within different areas of the economy. Addressing these gaps now will allow faster business development and economic growth. The needs that have so far been identified include:

- Expertise in hedging and swaps in the banking sector;
- Expertise in fund and asset management and;
- Expertise in areas of IR, PR, marketing and sales in the ITC sector (primarily telecoms).

Each of the companies involved has identified a specific person who will participate.

The Portland Trust has started to identify potential companies in the UK that could provide a suitable 'match' to the needs of the companies that have already been identified from the West Bank.

Programme Format

Internships will consist of a programme running between 2 and 12 weeks in the UK with approximately 10 schemes running per year. 90% of the programme will be funded by the participating companies from the West Bank.

Benefits

- Mid-level executives from the West Bank will gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills through the work carried out within the UK company.
- Increased awareness and understanding of topics with high strategic importance for businesses in the West Bank and immediate added value to the Palestinian company.
- Introduction of mid-level executives from the Palestinian Territory to international companies and other professionals within the UK thereby allowing 'fellows' to increase their network base beyond the West Bank and allowing for potential partnerships in the future.

Contacts

If you would like to discuss any part of the programme further please email: camilla.conrath@portlandtrust.org