

Training Assessment of Palestinian Contractors

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Abstract: The construction industry is the instrument through which urbanization is undertaken. As it is generally recognized as the major locomotive, the construction industry sets the tone for the national economy. In recent months, the construction activities have increased considerably and several major housing and infrastructure projects are now under way both in the West Bank and Gaza. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate a training programme, which is conducted in the Gaza Strip for Palestinian contractors. The primary purpose of the programme was to improve management and increase productivity of existing small scale construction enterprises in Palestine. An assessment of Improve Your Construction Business (IYCB) is made. The qualitative research of interviewing was used in this study. This has been conducted by reviewing project documents, reports, publications and interviewing all the project's stakeholders, at the institutional level as well as the level of the intended direct and indirect beneficiaries. The paper concludes with a set of findings and recommendations in order to supply the necessary feedback and information needed to assess and possibly revise policies, strategies, objectives, institutional arrangements and resources.

Keywords: Training, Assessment, Palestinian contractors, IYCB programme, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Shelter is a basic need and investment in housing, building and general infrastructure is a prerequisite to most forms of development, income generation and employment generation. Within the construction sector, small construction enterprises tend to use labor-intensive technologies and therefore offer the best prospect of creating productive and sustainable employment opportunities.

Over the past 25 years, the construction sector has been considered the largest sector in terms of real growth. In recent months, the construction activities have increased considerably and several major housing and infrastructure projects are now under way both in the West Bank and Gaza. The main aim is to alleviate the present housing shortage which is being exacerbated by the gradual return of the estimated 3.5 million Palestinian living abroad and to establish a full range of public buildings such as schools, hospitals and administrative centers required for the proper functioning of an autonomous state.

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The construction process is, however, being hampered by a number of insufficiencies and problems inherent to the emerging society such as the lack of access to credit facilities, the absence of a national housing strategy, inadequate planning and management of housing construction activities and lack of coordination among existing housing institutions. Furthermore, the sector suffers from the weak capacity of the contractors to perform according to international standards which is becoming increasingly important as international contractors are penetrating the local market to the detriment of the local employment situation. International contractors may use more mechanization rather than creating jobs (Enshassi, 1998, 1999).

The Palestinian contracting sector is characterized by the small size of its contracting business and its exposure to formal practices that are increasingly required by construction projects funded in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is estimated that since the arrival of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), over 500 Million US Dollars were invested in the sector. During the last 15 years, the construction sector had to evolve through informal trial and error business practices. It received very limited institutional support and was poorly represented at decision making levels. The limited exposure that this sector encountered provided limited opportunity for developing

and testing capacity and thus resulted in relative stagnation (World Bank, 1993).

The total number of contractors in the Gaza Strip who have valid registration with the contractor's union (categorized under first, second and third category) are 190 firms. The "first" class contractors are assigned to large projects while "third" class contractors are assigned to small projects. First level class contractors should have completed projects not less than 6 million US dollars during the last ten years. The main criteria for classification are related to company previous experience, capital, the value of executed projects, staffing and financial situation during the last five years. The lists of contractors are published annually and the qualification of contractors is reviewed every two years by the National Committee of Contractors Classification.

Since it is generally considered that the level and current state of infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza is inadequate and below that found in other countries at similar levels of development, and that investment in maintenance and in new infrastructure has been much below requirements, it is unlikely that the level of construction demand will diminish in the near future. Within the context of rapid growth in construction, many problems and limitations are emerging, and there is a danger that the overstretched small local contractors will

not be able to cope effectively with the growing demand for their services. It is, therefore, important and urgent to increase the capacity and efficiency of the private contracting sector as rapidly as possible.

The objective of this paper is to evaluate a training programme, which is conducted in the Gaza Strip for Palestinian contractors. The primary purpose of the programme was to improve management and increase productivity of existing small scale construction enterprises in Palestine.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training and development has been concerned not only with helping individuals adequately fill their positions, but also with helping whole organizations with regard to working methods, conditions, quality of output and improvement. Training and development, though primarily concerned with people, is also concerned with technology, materials and time. Training is concerned with the combination of two inputs to organizational effectiveness: people and technology (Enshassi, 1996). Continuing education and training is a normal part of all engineers' professional responsibility. Training should be geared towards the particular needs of contractors and

engineers involved, to equip them with the skills required to function effectively.

Training for construction industry in developing countries is generally contributed to the performance and effectiveness of both employer and employees. Training is essential to developing countries because effective manpower planning and development plays a crucial role in support of a flexible and dynamic labour force coping with the fast technology transfer and industrial growth (Ofori, 1991; Psacharopoulos et al., 1983). Blanchard and Thacker (1999) stated that employee training enables companies to adapt to the changing conditions and be more effective in the market. It is evident that appropriate training strategies and programs will be useful in upgrading the knowledge, skills, and attitude of workers and managers so as to enhance organizational performance in terms of both quality and productivity. Integrated training programmes, rather than fragmented or ad hoc ones, need to be designed in view of the long-term needs of particularly mobile industry personnel in a complex industry (Kumaraswamy, 1997).

Lack of technical and managerial skills is often identified as one of the major problems of contractors in developing countries resulting in poor competitiveness with their well developed and industrialized counterparts. Provision of training is therefore implicit in programmes to

develop their capacity and increase their participation in the local industry (Adams, 1996; Miles, 1999; Imbert, 1990; ILO, 1983; Jayawardane and Gunawardena, 1998). Adam, (1996) concluded from his study that contractors and professionals perceived training as very important and should be a prerequisite to other supports. He added that owners-managers of construction enterprises should be encouraged to participate in appropriate formal management training as a condition for registration as contractors.

The requirements for manpower in the construction industry are mainly dependent on the demand of construction work. The unstable level of activity in the industry causes severe fluctuations in manpower requirements, which in turn results in labour surpluses and shortages from time to time. These fluctuations in manpower requirements make it extremely difficult for contractors to maintain permanent labour forces in their organizations. They very often recruit workers on project basis for relatively short periods of time. Due to this temporary nature of employment, training of the construction manpower is largely conducted under the auspices of external agencies funded by the government or other non-governmental organizations (Gunawardena and Jayawardane, 2002). Planning for future labour requirements therefore is a very important factor in making investment decisions on training particularly in developing

countries, which are considered to have comparatively high proportions of untrained and unskilled construction workers (Uwakweh and Maloney, 1991).

Imbert (1990) stated that human resource development in the major factor inhibiting effective planning and implementation of project in developing countries. Abdel-Malek (1987) has suggested that the realization of human resources is an integral part of the overall concept of effective utilization of human resources. Neglect of human resource training ultimately results in human resource shortages and may seriously jeopardise the development of the whole industry (Wirth, 1992). Achieving a strategic fit between training provision and development needs is a goal that must be addressed by countries and organizations faced with the task of improving human resources performance in an environment of limited finance (Ogunlana and Thapa, 2002).

Training is a topic of urgency for policymakers, industry groups and academics because it is linked with the pressing questions of the maintenance and expansion of high-skill labor force. Training has been defined to include any activities at all through which managers and workers improve their work-related skills and knowledge. These activities may occur on- or off-the-job. They may occur in short bursts or be over a longer period of time.

They may be linked to a qualification or not (Abbott, 1993). Training activity can vary in terms of its quality (substantive content, mode of organization and delivery, location, accreditation), its quantity (number of employees receiving training, duration and intensity of training episodes) and its purposes.

Training programmes are directed toward maintaining and improving current job performance, while development programmes seek to develop skills for future jobs. Both managers and nonmanagers may receive help from training and development programmes, but the mix of experiences is likely to vary. Nonmanagers are much more likely to be trained in technical skills required for their current jobs; while managers frequently receive assistance in developing the skills – particularly conceptual and human relation skills – required in future jobs (Stoner and Wankel, 1986)

A number of studies have focused on formal training (Storey and Westhead, 1997; Cosh et al., 2000; Patton et al., 2000), thereby ignoring informal types of training. Recent studies show that many small employers rely heavily on in-house, on-the-job training (Vickerstaff, 1992; Johnson and Gubbins, 1992; Curran et al., 1993; 1996). Other studies have confined their scope to particular occupational groups, particularly managers (or aspiring managers), neglecting the training experiences of other categories of

worker (Storey and Westhead, 1996; Loan-Clarke et al., 1999; Patton et al., 2000). Other researchers have conducted evaluations of particular training initiatives which though often insightful may not be typical of most small businesses (Cushion, 1995; Marshall et al., 1995; Westhead, 1997).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Shelter is a basic need and investment in housing, building and general infrastructure is a prerequisite to most forms of development, income generation and employment generation. Within the construction sector, small construction enterprises tend to use labor-intensive technologies and, therefore, offer the best prospect of creating productive and sustainable employment opportunities. Thus the International Labor Organization (ILO) has recognized the urgent need to find ways of supporting the private small contracting sector, to make it more competitive, capable of growing and providing the employment so urgently needed.

One recent outcome of this effort has been the development of the Improve Your Construction Business (IYCB) methodology, which is a sector-specific derivative of the more general Improve Your Business (IYB) approach, and which has been developed in technical cooperation

projects financed by bilateral donors (e.g., Denmark and the Netherlands) and the World Bank. The three IYCB handbooks and workbooks have now been published in the English language edition by the ILO (IYCB, 1993).

The IYCB material is designed to suit the specific needs of existing small building and public works contractors, relating all issues related to their everyday problems. Emphasis is put on establishing a strong awareness of cost and productivity consequences of all management decisions taken. Establishing such cost awareness is one of the main tasks of a trainer running an IYCB course. The IYCB series consists of three sets of handbooks and workbooks: *Pricing and bidding, Site management, and Business management*. The three handbooks provide basic advice on most aspects of running a construction business, while the three complementary workbooks give the trainees a chance to test their management skills and assess the performance of their business in a structured way (ILO, 1993).

The project has been built on these efforts by adapting and translating the original material into Arabic and publishing an Arabic version of the three IYCB handbooks and workbooks, a specially prepared trainers' guide to suit the needs of small contractors in the West Bank and Gaza. Local institutional capacity will be developed through a "Training of trainers" (TOT) course,

group training and assistance with a pilot IYCB course, so that there will be an ongoing local capacity to deliver a continuing IYCB training programme within the West Bank and Gaza.

Project Strategy and Description

The project has been designed to make maximum use of local skills and resources, and it will accordingly be managed by a National Project coordinator (rather than an international specialist). Short-term international specialists have also been appointed to develop local skills and experience through collaborative work with the national project coordinator and local team. To the extent possible, it is intended to draw upon local skills for translation and adoption of the original IYCB material. Although the project will focus upon the specific needs of small contractors, these will be set in the context of the needs of the infrastructure sector as a whole and the project team will be expected to coordinate closely with complementary efforts both in general small enterprise development and in construction industry development.

The IYCB training and counselling programme developed by the ILO, will be used as a basis for the training, and will be published in an Arabic version as a result of project activities. The IYCB programme aims to assist owners and managers of small construction

enterprises by providing a number of specific ideas on how to improve their performance in all essential aspects of management such as pricing and bidding, site operations, book-keeping, accounting, marketing, office work and planning. These ideas are organized in an integrated package of three pairs of handbooks and workbooks: *Pricing and bidding*, *Site management*, and *Business management*.

Main Activities

The project was implemented in two phases, and the main activities to be carried out include the following:

1. Phase 1: Preparatory
 - Assessing the practices, problems and needs of small scale construction enterprises in the West Bank and Gaza, with emphasis on their management and business skills, training needs and also understanding constraints to optimum performance stemming from the prevailing business environment.
 - Preparation of report identifying institutions qualified and interested to participate in the programme.
2. Phase II: Contractor development
 - Translation and adoption of three IYCB handbooks and three IYCB workbooks into Arabic, leading to preparation and publishing of an Arabic edition of IYCB.
 - Preparation of a draft outline of trainer's manual for further development by the participants during the group study period.
 - Identification and selection of prospective trainers.
 - Planning and implementation of training of trainer's course based on the IYCB experience.
 - Planning and implementation of group study, which will include other ILO IYCB projects, institutions specializing in small enterprise development (e.g., Cornfield University, UK) and institutions specializing in construction industry development (e.g., Loughborough University, UK).

- First pilot IYCB training programme.
- Pilot problem solving workshops (first batch).
- Identification and selection of second pilot batch of contractors.
- Second pilot IYCB training programme.
- Pilot problem solving workshops (second batch).
- Project evaluation, including recommendations for institutional strengthening to ensure sustainability.

METHOD

The qualitative research of interviewing was used in this study. This has been conducted by reviewing project documents, reports, publications and interviewing all the project's stakeholders, at the institutional level as well as the level of the intended direct and indirect beneficiaries. The duration of each interview was approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. Several people and agencies were interviewed during the study, e.g., the National Project Coordinator (NPC), the Construction Management Expert (CME), four trainers, twenty trainees, the General Director of the Ministry of Housing, General Director of the Palestinian Housing Council (PHC), the Deputy Director of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAE), the head of the Palestinian Contractors' Union (PCU), the Director of the Development

Resource Centre, The Director of Beit al-Karma Engineering Services, the Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Deputy Director of the United Nations Relief Work Agency (UNRWA) and the Head of the Engineering Association. The interviews were concentrated on several issues: local training capacity, relationship between ILO-Gaza unit and PCU, training materials suitability, training of trainers, programme methodology, IYCB books, training guide, project design, project implementation, project performance and project achievement.

The principal issues that have been addresses regarding project implementation were: validity of design (e.g., logical, coherent, stated in unambiguous terms, and set out clear objectives) and delivery process (e.g., the overall execution of the project focused on the achievement of the objectives). The principal issues that have been addresses regarding project performance were: relevance (e.g., the problem that gave rise to the project still exists, the project was an appropriate response to the needs, and if the project continues to make sense), effectiveness (e.g., project achievement and the benefits of the project), efficiency (e.g., justification of the project to the cost incurred), and sustainability (e.g., the possibility of project sustainability after the withdrawal of the external support).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall objective of the project is to establish a local capacity for the continuous provision of IYCB training according to identified needs. The immediate objectives is that the beneficiaries of the project, the managers/owners of small scale construction enterprises, will apply the new measures and effective management practices, as taught under the IYCB programme in order to improve their management and increase productivity. The objectives are stated clearly and describe the solutions to the identified problems and needs. The project design was logical, coherent and did not include ambiguous terms.

PROBLEMS IDENTIFICATION

Local Training Capacity

The ILO mission recommended implementing the IYCB training through its local management unit which has been established in Gaza for this purpose as training provider. This is due to the fact that PCU does not yet have the technical professionals employed to coordinate and provide training and other services. In fact, PCU seems very interested in building such a capacity within its institution. Although the ILO management unit in Gaza was to some extent effective in managing the program, it was felt that a

training capacity within the potential IYCB host institution(s) should be seriously considered at the beginning of the programme for sustainability reasons. The authors feel that, due to the complex empirical realities of the peace process which affect directly the construction industry in Gaza, it is sometime difficult to predict the sustainability of this program. Direct core support will be required for the future. In the longer term, this program should rely on fees for the participation in training.

Relationship Between ILO-Gaza Unit and PCU

Several events lead to a serious deterioration in relations between the local project team and PCU. As part of the effort to re-establish a functioning working relationship, the officer in charge of the ILO coordination office Gaza and the West Bank, reached an agreement with PCU. This agreement covered three main points: establishment of a training room at the PCU office, transfer of training activities to PCU premises, and initiation of regular monthly meetings between PCU Board of Directors, ILO coordinator in Jerusalem and NPC.

This event has affected the working relationship between ILO project team in Gaza and PCU, which resulted in a disruption of the first step of project implementation. However, this issue has been resolved later, and a focal point represents PCU has been

delegated to coordinate the programme activities with ILO team in Gaza. It is also recommended that the PCU should be fully involved in the implementation of any future IYCB programme in the West Bank and Gaza.

Improve Your Construction Business (IYCB) Programme

The majority of the contractors have gotten a great benefit from the IYCB books. Some of them have already applied the techniques used, some are still not able due to a variety of reasons, e.g., they do not have any new project; others needed more practical examples from Gaza environment in order to grasp the theory. The duration for each module (three months) is too long. Some contractors feel that these books are more theoretical than practical. Others feel that the books need to be adjusted to suit Gaza Strip and West Bank. Some trainers and trainees feel that the Arabic translation needs to be re-checked again.

Study for the Assessment of the Contractors' Problems, Constraints and Training Needs

This study is supposed to analyze the practices, problems and needs of small-scale construction enterprises in Gaza. It should provide the basis for the adaptation of the material. The objectives of this assessment are to identify needs for adaptation of the IYCB material for small-scale

contractors and to identify subjects and appropriate levels for the specialized modules targeted for medium-sized contractors. The training needs' assessment, carried out by the local project staff, is primarily based on questionnaires sent out to 100 contractors and extensive interviews with 17 contractors and several visits to 30 construction sites to discuss training needs with the management team and observe their management practice. Unfortunately, the collected information was not analyzed and presented in a report as required. This has affected the adaptation process of the IYCB training materials and the identification of subjects for the specialized modules targeted for medium sized contractors.

THE TARGET GROUPS AND ADVISORY SERVICES

The project's activities are concentrated on two defined target groups for the contractor's training and counselling services:

1. Group 1 – Small-scale contractors, where the contractors/managers in principle undertake all management tasks themselves. These contractors are able to undertake contracts of about \$500,000, as main contractor. The IYCB training is targeted for this group (round 1 and 2).

2. Group II – Medium-sized contractors, where the managers of these firms are responsible for all management decisions but they are assisted by qualified technical, financial and administrative staff when undertaking the individual tasks. These contractors typically undertake contracts of \$1–2,000,000. The IYCB + training will be developed to meet the needs of the group (round 3). The training modul is supposed to present more advanced methods and tools related to well-define topics developed for this target group. The managers and/or the specialised staff will participate in the training.

The establishment of advisory services, providing contractors with an opportunity to follow-up on problems encountered when applying techniques learnt in the courses, was discussed between NPC, CME and trainers. The advisory services are an essential component for the success of the programme and would constitute a positive distinguishing feature of the IYCB programme compared to its "competitor" in the market. A minimum of 2 hours of "business clinics" per month were agreed upon with the team of trainers. It has been observed that the trainees/contractor did not hear about this service. It would be more beneficiary to conduct this services directly after each training module.

Based on criteria established jointly by the ITM and the CME, the project staff selected four trainers (plus the CME = five) to participate in the TOT course and deliver the contractor training courses. The TOT course was run part-time. The trainers were very satisfied with the training programme but they felt that they were under pressure from the huge information received. They also preferred to increase the number of trainers from five to ten in order to increase the participation and discussion.

The training was delivered by the five trainers that went through the training of trainers' course supplemented by a handful of "guest lectures" from companies/ organizations working directly with contractors and delivering selected topics. The sessions of the IYCB trainers were delivered as a mixture of lecturing (major part) and little participatory methods, like discussions, site visits, exercises, etc. The trainers expressed/admitted that although they made considerable efforts to include participatory methods in the sessions, they were not able to fully integrate them. The use of participatory methods should be expanded in the future.

Each guest lecturers presented a session, or part of a session, covering specific topics related to their experience. The provision of a direct link between the contractors and companies/institutions they deal with was highly appreciated. The guest lectures should be fully

integrated in the training programme and the topics covered should be linked to the themes of training. It is also essential that the project coordinates with the lecturers beforehand to ensure that their sessions are well-structured, enabling them to deliver a proper training session.

The IYCB Books

When discussing what trainers, trainees and others involved thought about the IYCB materials, the unanimous reply was very positive, it is on an appropriate level, covering all the main topics and uses a well adapted methodology. However, more practical case studies and examples are required in order to increase the profitability. A set of two modules, covering specific items identified as particularly needed by medium-sized contractors have been developed. A third module is in the process of development. These modules are: Project planning using CPM techniques, Contract procedures, and Quality management.

These modules, related to the existing IYCB material, are supposed to provide contractors with supplementary material covering advanced methods and tools to improve their construction management capacity. They should form a natural continuation/specialization for contractors that have completed IYCB course. The IYCB + materials have been developed in a very short time,

therefore it did not fully enable the project to incorporate the lessons learned from the two previous IYCB courses.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT

A draft Trainer's Guide, providing advice to trainers delivering the courses was produced prior to the start of the TOT seminar. The guide contains general recommendations on how to plan and conduct an IYCB course for small-scale contractors plus detailed advice linked to each chapter with examples of additional exercises, discussion points, role plays, etc. It is based on experience gained when delivering IYCB courses and other contractor training courses in several countries. The trainers all agreed that they had not fully benefited from the Trainers' Guide due to time pressure. The main objective of the project is to improve management and increase productivity of existing small construction enterprises in Gaza. The general impression was that the trainees were satisfied with IYCB modules and were able to apply some new measures as taught under the IYCB programme. However, the beneficiaries needed more practical examples that suited Gaza.

It has been observed that the problems/needs that gave rise to the project have been tackled and to some extent resolve. However, there are a lot of contractors,

who did not have the chance to attend this programme, strongly require such programme as it is the first one in Gaza. The majority of the trainees stated that the project was an appropriate response to some of the problems/needs. Some modifications and adaptations to IYCB materials are required in order to maximize the benefits. The object continues to make sense subject to the required modification.

The project is likely to achieve its immediate objectives. There is not sufficient data collected by the project on the indicators of achievement. They did not fully provide adequate evidence regarding the effects and impacts of the project. It is still necessary to collect additional data. The monitoring and impact assessment study needs more analysis. The target group did not fully participate in the formulation and implementation of the project. It is likely that the expected project's result continue to justify the cost incurred. The resources have been spent as economically as possible. The actions of the various concerned parties were complementary.

SUSTAINABILITY

Following the preparatory activities for the IYCB training and successful completion of the first and second sessions of training, the emphasis of the project is now switching to

questions related to the institutionalization of the programme. The project document states clearly that a local capacity capable of continuing the IYCB programme after the project ends should be created. The PCU currently does not have the capacity to take the role of host institution for the IYCB programme. PCU recognized a need for assistance in the field of developing, planning and implementing training activities, and suggested different modalities for this support.

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis have been conducted to determine the best strategy for enabling the IYCB training and counselling programme to continue after the project comes to an end. As a result of the SWOT analysis, an initial agreement was reached to transfer the IYCB programme in Gaza to a tripartite structure. The PCU-Gaza branch, BK Engineering services and the Development Resource Center (DRC), will respectively act as the endorsing body, the technical arm and the financial arm of this structure, and have agreed to unit their capabilities in a mutually, faithfully and collaborative manner to sustain and implement the IYCB programme.

The problem with financing the IYCB training and counselling programme after the project period has been recognized since its early stages. The options available consist of external support, revenue earning or a

combination of the two. External support would primarily come from foreign donors, Palestinian Authority (PA) or sector organizations like PCU. Initial information regarding support from the Palestinian Authority does not very optimistic while the option with donor support has not been explored. It was suggested that PCU could contact donors to further explore possibilities for donor funding. The PCU, with an established mission to serve the contractors in Gaza, has until now had a fairly narrow interpretation of this mission. The project should continue the dialogue with them concerning their support to a training program that is beneficial for their members.

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the project is to improve management and increase productivity of existing small construction enterprises in Gaza. The general impression was that the trainees were satisfied with IYCB modules and were able to apply some new measures as taught under the IYCB programme. However, the beneficiaries needed more practical examples that suited Gaza. The conclusion of this study consists of three issues: project design, project implementation and project performance.

Design

A local institution has been identified which will be capable of providing management training and counselling for small scale construction enterprises using the IYCB methodology and materials. This institution in a kind of a tripartite structure, namely the PCU-Gaza Branch, the BK and the DRC. There is an urgent need to increase the capacity and efficiency of the privateness contracting sector in Gaza as rapidly as possible through continuous training programmes; as the construction sector is significant both in its share of GDP and in its share of employment. The project was to some extent able to strengthen the local contractors association, PCU, including advice on establishing a code of conduct and constitution based on international experience.

The concerned organizations, e.g., PECDAR, Engineering Association, UNRWA, UNDP and others were not involved in the programme. The beneficiaries of the project, the managers/owners of small scale construction enterprises, were able to apply the new measures and effective management practices, as taught under the IYCB programme. The trainees were generally satisfied with the training programme. There is a great need for continuing IYCB training programmes in Gaza after the adaptation of the materials. The study for the assessment of contractors, problems, constraints and training needs

was undertaken by the project team but it was not fully completed. The trainees have no idea about the advisory services as they repeated the need for following visits from the training programme. The trainers are very satisfied with the programme achievements. The Marketing Plan and Material study were not conducted. The Client Advisory Committee was not established.

Implementation

The IYCB materials are on an appropriate level and the feeling of trainers and trainees were positive as it cover all the main topics and uses a well adapted methodology. The IYCB+materials have been developed in a very short time; therefore it did not allow the project to incorporate the lessons learned from the two previous IYCB courses. The trainers agreed that they had not fully benefited from the trainers guide due to time pressure. The ITMs and ENT/MAN unit in Geneva were fully supporting and following the programme, and have transferred the knowledge to the local staff. The NPC and CME have contributed positively to the training programme. The local trainers were highly qualified and transferred the knowledge of IYCB to the trainees. The general impression of the trainees and trainers is that the project has achieved its main objectives.

Performance

The programme was an appropriate response to some of the problems/needs. The object continues to make sense subject to the required modification. The trainees were very pleased and got more experience from both guest lectures and site visits. The trainers admitted that they had made considerable efforts to include participatory methods in the sessions they had not been able to fully integrate them. Guest lectures and the provision of a direct link between the contractors and companies/institutions they deal with were highly appreciated by the trainee. The target group did not participate effectively in the formulation and implementation of the project. The monitoring and impact assessment study was conducted by the project team, however it needs more details. The monitoring and evaluation system of IYCB was not conducted properly as suggested by ITM. The training process was to some extent hampered by the lack of coordination in the project.

Recommendations

The recommendation of this study consists of three issues: project design, project implementation and project performance.

Design

It is recommended to strengthen PCU by advising it on establishing a code of conduct and constitution based on international experience. It is advisable to involve other organizations in the programme, in particular PECDAR, UNRWA and Engineering Association. The duration of IYCB modules should be shortened by dividing each module into a number of topics to increase the benefit. An assessment of contractors, problems, constraints, and training needs is strongly recommended to be conducted thoroughly before implementing the training programme.

The advisory services which provide contractors with an opportunity to follow-up on problems encountered when applying techniques learnt in the course should be organized directly after each training round. It is essential for the success of the programme. It is recommended to increase the number of trainers in the TOT course in order to increase participation in the discussions. It is strongly recommended to conduct the marketing plan and material study as it is of vital importance. It is recommended that the target group participate in the formulation and implementation of the project.

Implementation

The IYCB training materials for small-scale contractors should be adapted to the Gaza setting and must include additional practical examples, exercises and case studies based on local practice in order to maximize the understanding and applicability. Arabic translation should slightly be revised. It is preferable to keep English expressions in the Arabic version. It is recommended to strengthen and adapt its material before developing IYCB+. Trainers' guide should be adapted; the objectives of each topic in the modules should be clearly defined to assist the trainers in controlling the sessions.

It is recommended to purchase some useful construction management books and relative video tapes in order to enhance the training resources. It is recommended that guest lectures and site visits be increased in future programmes. It is advisable that the project should coordinate the lectures with trainers beforehand to ensure that their sessions are well-structured, enabling them to deliver a proper session.

Performance

It would be more beneficially to invite clients' representatives to participate in ILO programme. This will

increase the cooperation between contractors and clients. Regular training planning meetings should be arranged to discuss all issues related to the training like timing, co-responsibilities, content, and methods and to identify support needed from the project. The use of participatory methods should be expanded in any future training.

In addition, using video and films is highly recommended. It is crucial to the success of the programme to conduct a continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Direct evaluations of training, business clinics, and follow-up visits/interviews with contractors, trainers' evaluation are also strongly recommended. Structured warm-up activities are encouraged. It is recommended that the target group should fully participate in the formulation and implementation of the project.

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