

Al-Quds University/Brandeis University Partnership
Grantee: Brandeis University, Grant 1030-0957-2
Grant Extensions Period
Report to the Ford Foundation, March 2011
Covering January – December 2010

The following report covers the no-cost grant extension period, January – December 2010. During that period, our two universities continued to make progress on advancing the goals of the partnership between Brandeis University (Waltham, MA USA) and Al-Quds University (Palestine/Israel). In particular, we laid the groundwork for future phases of the partnership to focus on issues of faculty and academic leadership development – particularly involving women.

It is useful to first enumerate the overall goals of the partnership. These goals, established at the very beginning of the project, are to:

- Improve the administrative and infrastructure capacities at Al-Quds University, one of Palestine’s nascent civic institutions;
- Strengthen academics and offer opportunities for faculty, staff and students at both institutions;
- Educate the campuses about the advantages of cooperation, goodwill, and understanding

To accomplish these goals, the partnership is divided into several two-way “exchanges,” including administrative exchanges, faculty exchanges, and a student exchange. In addition, from time to time the two universities have also undertaken some “special projects,” either as part of these exchanges or as related work. For example, during this grant extension period our major project was the creation of a nine-minute digital video documenting the partnership’s success. Other special projects have included a partnership brochure, a joint conference on women and leadership, and other media and communications projects.

ACTIVITIES/ISSUES ADDRESSED AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Documentation

Over the years, the two universities have attempted to document the activities of the partnership. Since the partnership activities themselves can only include so many participants directly, our goal has always been to educate the campus communities about the benefits of cooperation. In addition to providing a kind of diary and history of our achievements, this documentation will also hopefully provide communities outside Brandeis and Al-Quds with insight into cross-cultural exchange.

A few years ago, we attempted to make a short film about the partnership, and succeeded in providing some film clips. We also created a partnership brochure (forwarded to the Ford Foundation in last year's final report). All of these projects are necessarily time-consuming and intensive, owing to the multiple messages of the partnership and the process of working across two institutions with different timelines for media and communication activities.

Last year, we thought it was an apt time to celebrate the achievements of the partnership, and decided to make a short film, focusing especially on the student exchange, the effective teaching exchange, and the November 2009 visit of Al-Quds students and faculty to Brandeis. We are excited to announce that the video is now available online at:

<http://www.brandeis.edu/aqu/movie/index.html>

DVD copies will be shipped to the Ford offices in New York and Cairo under separate cover.

This video was a year-long process. We began by hiring Seth Bernstein, a Brandeis alumnus, director, and creative consultant based in New York. Mr. Bernstein shot copious amounts of footage and interviews during the November 2009 visit. Beginning in spring 2010, we worked with Mr. Bernstein to develop a concept for a short film, of around six to twelve minutes, that would tell a narrative about the partnership. Additional interviews with Brandeis staff, faculty, and students were conducted in the spring to supplement the Nov. 2009 material. Photographs and video footage from numerous exchanges were also incorporated.

Over the summer, we worked with Mr. Bernstein to further shape the narrative, add details, and edit the video down to under 10 minutes. Final work and editing was completed in fall 2010.

Since the film was completed, we have publicized it by first presenting it to those who have been involved in the partnership as participants and supporters, and then to our campus communities. On January 28, 2011, we screened it to 22 senior international officers and faculty as part of a "Forum" on internationalization hosted at Brandeis under the auspices of the national Association of International Education Administrators. (see <http://www.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/office/aieaforum/index.html>). In addition, we've passed it on to other colleagues in the global higher education community.

Student Exchange

Our goal this past year was building upon the positive energy and relationships generated by the students who have been most heavily involved in the exchange. The November 2009 visit brought forth a plethora of new ideas for continuing these relationships, and several students continued to further their interests by hosting events on the campuses, starting clubs and organizations, getting involved in their communities, and building their knowledge of the Middle

East. For example, Claire Cooper '11 (who participated in the 2008 Summer Institute in Turkey, the May 2009 visit to Al-Quds University, and the November 2009 visit of Al-Quds to Brandeis University) spent the spring semester of her junior year in Rabat, Morocco studying abroad with World Learning, and the following summer she secured a State Department Critical Languages Program Scholarship to study Arabic in Tunisia.

To highlight the path these students have taken from the Brandeis-Al-Quds Partnership to other accomplishments, we profiled Ms. Cooper here:

<http://blogs.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/2010/10/27/critical-encounters-with-the-arab-world-claire-cooper-11-shapes-a-career/>

In the fall 2010, we met with these “partnership alumni” on a few occasions to formulate the next steps of the student exchange, including potential additional fund-raising given the completion of the grant. Those conversations have led to a draft proposal from the students that we are currently reviewing, which may include another student delegation visit to Al-Quds University and further efforts to share ideas about student life and organization at both universities.

Faculty Exchange

The faculty exchange is centered on a number of different projects.

The most successful aspect is the “Effective Teaching” project, which matches staff and faculty at both institutions together for joint workshops and activities on assessment, course design, pedagogy, faculty development, and other academic issues. As noted in previous reports, the measurable outcomes of this aspect include a new Committee for the Support of Teaching at Al-Quds University. That committee continued to strengthen its position in 2010, and under its auspices a number of subsequent faculty workshops and mentoring programs were undertaken. Staff and faculty at Brandeis continued to be in touch with their Al-Quds counterparts over email to offer support and advice. We also held meetings to prepare for a potential new visit by a Brandeis delegation to Al-Quds University in spring/summer 2011, to advance this work further and develop a master guide – and potentially a web site – for shared resources.

Another aspect of the faculty exchange matches Brandeis faculty with Al-Quds faculty for joint research and teaching collaboration. As noted in past reports, this aspect has been challenging to implement and sustain. Much goodwill and many ideas are usually generated at initial meetings, but other commitments and the challenges of overseas collaboration usually provide substantial roadblocks. While we had tentatively planned to continue to support these faculty partnerships in 2010, these roadblocks were difficult to overcome.

However, progress was still made, and it set the groundwork for activities in 2011. The collaboration between Daniel Kryder (Politics, Brandeis) and Amneh Badran (Political Science – Al-Quds) flourished. Both faculty research and teach about how social movements influence political reform, and vice versa. They are both particularly interested in using cultural sites as

models of exploration of these ideas, and in using students in experiential learning projects at these sites. The relationship between these two faculty members led to Dr. Badran's visit to Brandeis in February 2011, which will be described in more detail in the next report.

During conversations over the past year with Al-Quds University President Sari Nusseibeh, the partnership Steering Committee determined a promising and much-needed next step for the partnership: focusing faculty and academic leadership development specifically on the issues of women in the academy and civil society. Part of that focus stems from a successful joint conference on women and leadership held by the universities in May 2009. But it also builds on a real need that Dr. Nusseibeh identified within his university and in Palestinian society generally. That need also resonates at Brandeis, home to an extremely strong Women's and Gender Studies department, a separate Women's Studies Research Center, various projects on gender and development, and women who are visible in senior leadership – but also a place where members of the population still feel limited by historic academic and societal barriers.

Over the last few months, we held conference calls with Al-Quds colleagues to discuss this project further, and developed a preliminary concept paper outlining a possible next phase of the partnership to focus specifically on these issues. Activities might include campus residencies for promising young Palestinian scholars, joint workshops, and perhaps even the creation of joint certificate or degree programs. This is an exciting new venture that is now taking shape in early 2011.

Other projects

In addition to the above activities, in November 2010, we were approached by WorldBoston (part of the World Affairs Council) to host a delegation of Palestinian technology and distance learning experts. We agreed to host the delegation for a day, which was a tremendous learning experience for our faculty and staff and built upon some earlier work of the “continuing education” exchange. The delegation included staff members at Al-Quds University who had not previously been part of the partnership. Details on the visit are at <http://blogs.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/2010/11/16/university-technology-experts-from-the-west-bank-visit-brandeis/>

EVALUATING PROGRESS ON LONG-TERM GOALS

Our work in 2010 was, in fact, largely dedicated to reaching our long-term goals, and was conducted via conference calls, emails, and visits in both directions. These long-term goals are roughly identical to the original goals outlined above, but we are seeking to make them more focused on specific problems and issues of concern for both institutions – such as women's leadership and faculty development. Our challenge now is seeking additional funding for these projects, and creating a sustainable infrastructure that does not depend mostly on the initiative of just a few people.

ORGANIZATIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES AND ISSUES

The major organizational change in 2010 was the resignation of Brandeis University President Jehuda Reinharz and the transition to incoming President Frederick Lawrence. The typical uncertainty surrounding that transition may have caused some normal uncertainty about the partnership, but it did not effect how the partnership was managed. New President Lawrence is a staunch supporter of international partnerships, and has promised to make Brandeis the premier “global liberal arts university.”

As noted above, the ability to engage faculty in partnership activities has been an ongoing challenge. Occasionally, plans for faculty partnerships, visits, and exchanges that seemed relatively easy to facilitate at first never materialized. On the other hand, the relationships that have built up over the last six or seven years have meant that informal conversations and email exchanges are much easier and more efficient.

DIVERSITY

The partnership Steering Committee is strongly committed to diversity within the partnership leadership and participation, and has made considerable achievements on this aspect of the partnership over the last few years. As noted in last year’s report, many of the staff and faculty leaders of the partnership are women who research gender roles. In addition, as noted above, we plan to focus the next phase of the partnership on women’s leadership in academia. In doing so, the Steering Committee is also committed to diversity of race, socio-economic background, sexual preference, and religion.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

2010 was, in many ways, a transition year for the partnership. It was a chance to step back and reflect on our successes and prepare for the next phases, as well as build on the relationships that have been formed between faculty, staff, and students. We anticipate the final six months of the grant extension to be extremely productive, and we have already hosted one visitor here at Brandeis in February. We are currently expanding the concept paper for the women’s leadership project, preparing for an Effective Teaching delegation visit in late spring/summer, and also considering another student delegation visit in early summer. A report on these last six months of the extension period will be sent to the Ford Foundation during the summer.

FINANCIAL REPORT

A financial report for 2010 is attached to the cover email.

CERTIFICATION

X By submission of this report we hereby certify that the individual submitting this report is authorized to submit it on behalf of the organization and that we are in compliance with the requirements of the grant letter and that any funds expended have been expended in accordance with the purposes of the grant.