

Reorienting & restructuring vocational training centres

This is an intervention summary from the MSD for employment (MSD4E) landscape assessment.

The BRIDGE project supported vocational training centres (VTCs) in Iraq to shift how they "conduct business." Several key new organisational units have been implemented and are now mandated across the system, including guidance and counselling, labour market assessment, gender, and tracer studies.

Background information

Project	BRIDGE Iraq
Funder	Global Affairs Canada (GAC)
Implementer	WUSC
Contact	Tania Jordan (tjordan@wusc.ca)
Rural or urban?	Rural and urban
Sectors	Construction (electrical installation, pipe fitting) Food Preparation Health Administration
Intended employment outcomes	Access to jobs
Target group (end beneficiaries)	Unemployed male youth (under 30) Unemployed female youth (under 30) Women heads of household
Cross-cutting priorities	Gender/WEE
Years of operation	2018-2023

What constraints did the intervention aim to address?

Weak supporting functions in the skills system:

- TVET not well connected with industry
- Inward orientation: lack of labour market demand information, or tracking of graduates

Which market actor partners did the intervention work with?

1. Vocational Training Centers (VTCs)
2. MOLSA (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
3. District government
4. Private sector employers

What were the intended behaviour changes for these partners?

1. **VTCs** develop and integrate a number of key internal organisational units, which shift their overall emphasis outwards to what happens to graduates in the labour market:
 - a. **Tracer studies:** track and analyse what happens to graduates after they complete their program.
 - b. **Guidance and counselling:** support to students to find jobs, and to navigate/benefit from internships
 - c. **Labour market assessment:** broader analysis of changing labour market trends and skills needs
 - d. **Gender unit:** embedding gender considerations into curriculum design, including apprenticeships, to improve experience of female students
2. **MOLSA** officially approved the new organisational units, and also instructed VTCs to follow the CBT approach in their training. MOLSA also took on a monitoring and evaluation role to assess the performance of VTCs and take corrective action as needed.
3. **District government** (Governorates) has mandated the roll-out of the new units across their VTCs in some governorates.

How sustainable are these behaviour changes?

- Post-project monitoring visits showed ongoing functioning of the new units in partner institutions
- Two governorates have also independently mandated the units, which shows significant expansion/scaling without project support.

What were the intervention's key results?

- **Direct:** 686 youth and adult women trainees participated in BRIDGE courses.
- **Indirect:** 471 youth and adult women trainees participated in other partner courses (non-BRIDGE).
- **Guidance counselling support:** 1,336 trainees received support annually through seven VTCs that added this organisational unit.

Has a third party been involved in measuring these results?	Yes
Is the partner behaviour change the sole/major/minor contributing factor towards the employment-related outcome you've reported? (i.e. are there other contributing factors?)	Major
Results chain available?	

What is one lesson learned from this work?

- Working with public sector VTCs, a critical challenge is finding the budget for new activities. BRIDGE succeeded in establishing new internal units by restructuring existing staff and resources, rather than adding new positions or budget lines. This creates the challenge of internal change management to restructure VTCs, develop

new Terms of Reference and job descriptions, and help staff understand and embrace their new roles. BRIDGE achieved this through close working relationships at the field/local level, with BRIDGE staff supporting, mentoring, and eventually coaching VTC staff to take on the new functions without external support. Additionally, BRIDGE focused on encouraging and assisting the broader ministry (MOLSA) to support and reinforce the new structures.

Other notes

- WUSC was awarded a new project, TAWASOL, which builds on the prior work of BRIDGE, with more emphasis on the demand side of the labour market.

The MSD4E Intervention Library was compiled by the MSD4E Community of Practice and funded by the ILO, Mercy Corps and Swisscontact.

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