



## SNAPSHOT

### Youth Group Educates Libyans about the Transition Process

**Young people are working to advance the dialogue on democracy.**



Two members of H2O, a USAID/OTI-supported youth organization, explain the group's simplified model of Libya's democratic transition process to a group of university students.

*"The majority of students, they don't know about it [the transition]. There is a lack of information. But...they have the energy, they would like to participate, they would like to support Libya, but they don't know where to start."*

*—Hadi Hammuda  
co-founder of H2O*

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Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

**February 2012** – Young people are breaking new ground in Libya by openly discussing the steps necessary to rebuild their homeland, a country where Muammar Qadhafi violently suppressed community organizing and political discourse.

October 23, 2011—Liberation Day—marked the beginning of a 20-month process, outlined in Libya's constitutional charter, for holding elections, drafting a new constitution and electing a permanent government, and H2O, a youth-focused non-governmental organization (NGO), is working to ensure Libyans are informed and engaged in a constructive dialogue about the future of their country.

With assistance from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, H2O has developed civic education materials that concisely and simply outline the country's path toward democracy. With these tools in hand, the group launched an outreach campaign that visited five college campuses and provided 8,200 students with information on the country's transitional road map. The group also distributed materials that the students could discuss with their families and friends.

According to an observer, the "students were really interested in what these youth had to say. They weren't just listening to them but were proactively engaged in the process, actively asking questions and discussing concepts and ideas among themselves." To broaden their reach, the youth group also set up billboards at congested intersections, distributed T-shirts and, in a first for a Libyan NGO, used Facebook Ads to publicize the campaign. To date, H2O has received more than 29,000 "clicks" from users accessing its page.

Active political engagement and discourse in public spaces is new to Libya, but the young H2O activists learned quickly. Hana Muntasser observed some of the group's members in action and recounted how they approached a young man who bluntly stated that he was pro-Qadhafi and did not believe in the transition. According to Muntasser, the H2O members' non-confrontational explanation of why the transition process is important to all Libyans won him over. "The young man then sat down with the team members and listened to what they had to say, asking questions throughout," Muntasser said.

Although Libya will face many challenges during the transition process, there is a palpable sense of excitement in the country, and Libyans are motivated to make the process work. H2O and other civic organizations are helping ordinary Libyans to better understand the process and improving the chance for a successful transition with each citizen they reach.

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