

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative in Yemen

MEPI helps build stronger, more sustainable institutions in Yemen to advance citizen interests and address important economic and social issues.

In accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered political transition initiative, the Yemeni government and people have taken significant steps toward achieving meaningful and peaceful change, including the formation of a national consensus government, election of a new president for the first time in over three decades, and the launch of a credible National Dialogue process. MEPI supports these efforts and is committed to assisting the people of Yemen in carrying out each phase of the process, in cooperation with the international community.

MEPI supports Yemen in public outreach, civic education, and advocacy around issues important to the nation's peaceful political transition. MEPI also supports entrepreneurial innovation, fosters an inclusive and transparent political system, and empowers women and youth in Yemen.



SUPPORTING A PEACEFUL TRANSITION

MEPI supports the Yemeni people in achieving meaningful and peaceful change as they engage in a credible National Dialogue, constitutional reform initiative and elections process. This programming specifically supports strengthening political processes, enhancing civil society's important role in shaping public policy, and ensuring youth and women are actively involved in decisions affecting Yemen's transition.

Through the Local Engagement for Advocacy and Dialogue (LEAD) project, Partners for Democratic Change and MEPI are working to increase the community outreach and advocacy work of Yemeni civil society organizations (CSOs) around the issues of constitutional reform and electoral education in advance of the country's upcoming referendum and national elections.

In partnership with the Yemen Polling Center, MEPI works to increase women's civic and political participation by collecting, analyzing, and publicly presenting data on barriers to women's political and social engagement. This initiative works with over 1500 citizens across six governorates, gathering data that reflects these barriers.

In partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), MEPI supports the increased engagement of female civil society and political leaders in national decision-making to ensure women's interests are both recognized and protected throughout the transition. MEPI also funds NDI-led training to strengthen political parties and has supported parties' civic outreach around critical political issues through broadcast

media work, as well as public opinion research conducted in partnership with the Yemen Polling Center.

MEPI supports the "Let's Be the Best Together" radio and civic dialogue project with Equal Access International. This project is designed to engage youth in six governorates on key national issues, especially those under discussion in the National Dialogue. The project includes training for youth community reporters who present and produce weekly radio episodes, as well as interactive conversations that include SMS feedback, listening groups, youth councils, and roundtable fora designed to empower Yemeni youth to exercise their rights for a more accountable government.

EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY

MEPI continues to expand its engagement with local CSOs through its unique Local Grant Program, which directly supports civic actors throughout the country. One of MEPI's local grants supports the Future Partners Foundation for Development (FPFD) to build the capacity of student unions at 14 Yemeni universities. These students are being trained in advocacy and campaign lobbying, new social media tools, and political development.

MEPI is also supporting Partners for Democratic Change (PDC) and its affiliate, Partners Yemen, to enhance the organizational development of newly-established or less-experienced CSOs in Yemen. The Support for Training, Advocacy, and Networking in Developing Democracies (STAND) project provides training, resources, curricula, and mentoring support to CSOs in the areas of leadership and governance, administration, and project development, as well as funding for small grants. The CSOs receiving training will also be encouraged to develop cross-country coalitions to work collaboratively to amplify their efforts.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MEPI's economic programming in Yemen supports projects that foster entrepreneurship, offer job skills and leadership training, and cultivate broad-based, private-sector led growth during the country's transition.

In partnership with the Samaa al-Yemen Foundation, MEPI works together with more than 10 local CSOs, a wide range of community leaders, and 600 women in the highly populated Hodeida governorate to raise awareness about the important social and economic role that women play in its Marawaa and Aldoraihim districts. The project also builds the entrepreneurial skills of 200 rural women in traditional small businesses.

MEPI is also working with the Al-Amal Microfinance Bank (AMB) to establish advanced entrepreneurship training and lending centers in the Aden, Hodeida, Sanaa, and Taiz governorates. AMB will also provide access to capital for training graduates in the form of no-collateral, low- and no-interest loans.