



MEDREGION UPDATE



MedRegion Office, Tunis

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MEPI MedRegion Update Newsletter is produced by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) MedRegion Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions!

Jordanian Youth Get Out the Vote

MEPI partner, the Community Media Network (CMN), mobilized to drum up civic spirit among young Jordanians in preparation for parliamentary elections in January.



Through its project entitled "Your Voice Counts," CMN encouraged Jordanian youth aged 18 – 30 to participate in the decision-making process by providing them with information on the elections, engaging them in debates, and helping them in becoming more vocal in their communities through conventional and social media platforms.

On January 5th, 2013, (CMN) organized a screening event at the Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development in Amman to air Public Service Announcements (PAS's), a recorded theatrical production, and a rap song, all of which tackled topics related to the elections with a focus on and youth participation. Around 40 youth attended the screening,

which was followed by in-depth discussions. The theatrical play focused on the importance of political participation, and the fact that civic responsibility goes beyond casting ballots in elections.

The play also examined specific aspects of the electoral system, especially the repeated dissolution of parliament, and the banquets that candidates offer to potential voters during the election season. The rap song urged youth to vote and maintain their rights, and responsibility to affect positive changes in their country. ■

MEPI Alumni Debate the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections

Within the "Diwanieh Initiative", the MEPI Alumni Network in Jordan organized a debate in the run-up to the Jordanian parliamentary elections on January 23.

The debate aimed to create a forum to exchange different views, ideas, and expectations for the newly elected members of parliament. Guest speakers included candidates running for parliament, as well as MEPI alumni. ■



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Tunisian and Moroccan Youth Build Civic Awareness through Social Media



The Arab Foundation for Development & Citizenship (AFDC) launched a new project to enhance the skills of Moroccan and Tunisian youth in producing videos to promote the concept of active citizenship. The project, “Get Your Voice Heard,” encourages youth to use compact and mobile phone cameras in combination with basic editing software to produce videos that reinforce the role of youth, while enhancing their ability to express their views through social media

This project is implemented in cooperation with United Association for Supervision of Children & Youth in Morocco the International Foundation For Training & Development in Morocco, Jahedh Forum in Tunisia, and the "I am Digital" project.

Through a series of workshops were implemented in Tunisia and Morocco, participants received training on the concepts of citizenships, youth participation, and the role of the youth in society. They also received technical training on filming and editing videos.

“This program provides youth with a space to express themselves in a more creative manner while empowering them to contribute to their communities in better ways by providing them with the technical and informative tools to achieve this, as well as to get their voices heard while adhering to the societies’ legal and cultural boundaries,” said Mr. Mohamed En-Nosse, the program coordinator.

Participating Youth produced and edited their own videos. The final



“This program is one of the best programs I have ever participated in. It allowed me to understand citizenship-related concepts in a more interesting manner.”

products will be uploaded to the Citizenship Gate website, which will be launched in the upcoming weeks.

Aysha, a participant from Tunisia, praised the program: “this is one of the best programs I have ever participated in. It allowed me to understand citizenship-related concepts in a more interesting manner. This was even more interesting when it involved filming.” Aysha and

her team produced a short film on Active Citizenship, following the training they received during the workshop. Aysha also said that she is eager to produce another short film for the program competition, which will choose 15 short films produced by the participating youth.

Mr. En Nosse added that “Young people expressing themselves through such projects and systematic frameworks, help provide a positive environment for expression, and provide a stimulating atmosphere for youth, which in return helps them to utilize all their energies.” ■

MEPI Local Grant Provides a Gateway to e-Opportunities

In partnership with MEPI, the Appleseeds Academy is providing access to economic opportunity for socially disadvantaged communities through Information Technology training courses.

Through the Net@ Project, Appleseeds is empowering 210 Arab youth, aged 14-18, from socially and economically marginalized communities in Nazareth, Acre, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Tel-Aviv-Jaffa.

“The NET@ program, which combines technological courses with personal and community development skills, gives the teenagers personal and professional skills and access to new employment opportunities through improving their

English, developing self-learning capacities, strengthening their self-confidence and providing opportunities for accomplishment.”

Participants took part in a series of course modules on:

- Training as computer technicians and network administrators.
- Technology studies
- English studies
- Digital media course,
- Website constructions.

The rate of high school enrollment among NET@ students is 50% higher than among their peers who are not in the program: 94% compared to 44%. The level of volunteerism among NET@ graduates is also twice the level of their peers. ■



Photos from the Technological English Summer Camp in Nitzana, Israel



Established in 2000 as a business sector initiative, Appleseeds Academy has focused in the past 12 years on reducing social disparities by providing accessibility to information and technology. Appleseeds Academy specializes in the initiation, management and operation of technological programs throughout Israel, combined with socially oriented training adapted to each sector, population and age group.

The organization carries out its mission by creating cross-sectorian partnerships, partnering with businesses, public sector and other social organizations to create sustainable projects with long-term impact. Appleseeds Academy is a certified academy of multinational high-tech companies such as Intel, Microsoft, Cisco, Google and others.

Areas of activity include:

- Community Knowledge Centers.
- Vocational Training.
- NET@ - The technological youth movement.
- Technology training for the education system.
- Young adults.

<http://www.appleseeds.org.il>

Stay Connected with MEPI

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Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

Interfaith Understanding through “Hiwar” Dialogue



The MEPI Alumni Network in Jordan conducted a five-day interactive training session aimed to promote intercultural dialogue and help participants better understand how the sensitive issue of religion can impact mutual comprehension and cooperation in one's community.

Sessions were held at the historic Greek Orthodox

Church of St. George Madaba, a Christian pilgrimage site and one of Jordan's major religious attractions. The site added to the spirituality of the sessions and emphasized the unity of the religions of the Holy Land.

The training was held in cooperation with Institute for Leadership Excellence (ILE) and the Euromed program,

and brought together MEPI alumni and participants from the Euromed region.

Participants focused on:

- Providing vital basic knowledge on Human Rights, justice and peace building, and gender issues.
- Discussing Tolerance, understanding, cooperation, and willingness to take on

the challenging issues of our time.

- Empowering and mobilizing youth to become active members of their inner circles, their communities, and their society. ■



Middle East Partnership Initiative

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments.

MEPI Regional Office, Tunis

Housed in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the MEPI Regional Office Tunis administers MEPI local grant projects in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank/Gaza. Each year, MEPI provides a significant number of local grants directly to local organizations based in the Middle East and North Africa. These Grants promote reform and civic activism at the local and national levels in the Middle East and North Africa, build the institutional capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and strengthen civil society.

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