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# MEDREGION UPDATE



MedRegion Office, Tunis

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We welcome your comments and suggestions

*MEPI MedRegion Office  
Wishes you Happy Eid*

*عيد سعيد وكل عام وأنتم  
بخير*



## International Youth Day: Building a Better World: Partnering with Youth

*"Young people are at the heart of today's great strategic opportunities and challenges, from rebuilding the global economy to combating violent extremism to building sustainable democracies." – U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.*

As August 12 marks the United Nations' International Youth Day, MEPI dedicates this issue of the newsletter to showcasing youth-focused projects. MEPI recognizes the role of youth as stakeholders in society and a driving force for change and development. MEPI has been committed to empowering youth in the Middle East and North Africa through partnering with youth and youth organizations throughout the region to implement projects that give young people a voice and the opportunity to participate in the political and economic development of their countries.

## Empowering Youth to Give Back to Their Communities



The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) in Israel is a holistic, vocational training program that is empowering 60 Jewish and Arab youth from different religious backgrounds, including Druze, Muslim, and Christian. The YEP program, implemented by MEPI Partner IT Works, targets at-risk youth aged 15 to 17 who have dropped out of high school or are on the verge of doing so.

*Participants during a technical training session*

*(Continued on page 2)*

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*Youth learn marketable IT skills at a YEP training session*

The program combines technological education, professional development skills training, volunteering and personal mentoring in order to create job opportunities for young people from low income families and empower them to be productive and active members of society.

Every participant attends 200 hours of technological instruction, leading to a Cisco Systems "IT Essentials" certification. The diploma is a starting point for many careers in the information technology sector. With this certificate program, participants gain a basic knowledge of computer hardware and software needed to become a PC or networking technician.

Following the intensive series of training workshops, many students have already returned to school. Teachers have lauded participants for improved behavior and greater self-

confidence. YEP participants are influencing their classmates who witness a remarkable difference and are interested in pursuing similar avenues. Youth have already demonstrated proactive engagement with new material in the training and development components.

As part of this project, YEP launched a first computer call center to provide computer services for the community.

Participants practiced their troubleshooting skills and answered technological questions in a real-life situation while simultaneously giving back to their community.

Upon completion of the course, participants will have an individual career counseling session with one of IT Works' employment managers to create a work-plan regarding their immediate future and their personal and professional goals. ■



## Submitting Multimedia for Outreach

By MEPI Outreach  
& Grants Units

As stated in last month's edition of "Grant \$ at Work," the new SF-PPR (Performance Progress Report) form will be replacing the old MEPI Quarterly Report form as the document on which you report your progress in implementing your MEPI local grant project. If you have looked at the form, you may have noticed that it doesn't mention anything about attaching project materials when you submit it. While that isn't required, the MEPI RO Outreach Unit strongly encourages you to submit any products demonstrating your achievements—videos, pictures, news coverage, links to websites and social media sites, and personal testimonies from your project's beneficiaries. These items will help MEPI celebrate and share your projects' successes.

Therefore, even though the official quarterly reporting form has changed to the SF-PPR, we have not changed our outreach channels. Question number 11 in the SF-PPR asks for "Other Attachments"; just indicate there what you're attaching, attach the files to your email with your quarterly report, and send! Please continue to let us know what you are doing before or after the activities. We are still highly interested in learning about and sharing the impact of your projects throughout the region.

As is always true, please do not hesitate to contact your Grants Analysts or the Outreach Coordinator (Khaoula Touati at [TouatiK@state.gov](mailto:TouatiK@state.gov)) if you have any questions about reporting on your achievements. ■

## Stay Connected with MEPI

**E-mail:** [mepi-medregion@state.gov](mailto:mepi-medregion@state.gov)

**Website:** [medregion.mepi.state.gov](http://medregion.mepi.state.gov)



## MEPI Workshop Teaches Young Palestinian Entrepreneurs How to Start a Small Business



*Palestinian Youth during a brainstorming session*



*Participants during a training session*

In partnership with Tomorrow's Youth Organization (TYO) in the West Bank, MEPI is empowering university students in Nablus to become

the next generation of leaders and bring about change in their communities. TYO has formed a Youth Leadership Committee (YLC), building upon the organization's volunteering program, which

provides an opportunity for university students already engaged in community activities to build additional work and life skills, while enhancing their role as active citizens. The YLC is part of

the broader project "Youth Action Local Leadership Alliance (YALLA)", which provides youth aged 12-21 with the opportunity to lead a civic engagement program in Nablus.

Over a six-week period, YLC members received training from experts on topics that supported their implementation of the project. The YLC completed 50 hours of training on leadership, communication skills, public speaking, outreach strategies, event organization and management, problem solving, and self-awareness. Trainees then applied the newly acquired skills to manage a call for applications for youth-identified community initiatives and selected three initiatives for funding.

In June, TYO announced the winning three initiatives addressing societal and community issues. The three initiatives are "Get to Know Palestine" by Rakan Dbabseh, "Kids' Park in Deir al-Hatab" by Wala'a Omar and "Campaign against Junk Food" by Dima Nsash and Roula Khatatba.

Throughout the rest of the project the YLC members will serve as mentors for these committed young leaders. Each YLC member was assigned to an initiative in order to help monitor, follow and support the initiative on the ground. ■

## Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

### A MEPI Story: the Lebanese Center for Civic Education



*Students march in an LCCE-organized street parade*

The Lebanese Center for Civic Education (LCCE) emerged almost ten years ago from an initiative by Lebanese journalist Ms. Roula Mikhael, who saw the need for Lebanese citizens to find common ground in a country with deep sectarian divisions still healing from the wounds of civil war. Thus, she decided to push people to become active citizens capable of monitoring and influencing public policies. With the help of MEPI and with a small grant of \$10,000, the Lebanese Center for

Civic Education (LCCE) began work in 2004 with "Project Citizen," a project aimed at raising awareness among teachers and students of the importance of active citizenship and the monitoring of public policies.

Having started with 10 pilot schools working on "Project Citizen," LCCE is now a "mobilizer" for youth and educators in more than 400 public and private schools all over Lebanon. LCCE has built networks with public and private institutions and

partnered with the principle institution responsible for developing the school curricula in Lebanon, the Educational Center for Research and Development. "I have been teaching for 10 years, but after using LCCE's material, I feel I was reborn as a teacher," stated Mrs. Mirna El-Jibbe from Baalbek Public School.

From its modest beginnings, LCCE has grown into a crucial driving force for civic education in Lebanon. LCCE has tirelessly promoted active

citizenship through its "project citizen" methodology, with more than 800 teachers and 13,000 students having benefitted from its programs. LCCE has promoted human rights and democracy by introducing documentaries and teachers' manuals that offer interactive educational tools and activities and created a nucleus of youth camp capable of conducting advocacy campaigns and making their voices heard.

LCCE now influences the lives of many students through conducting summer camps and street parades that provide students with active citizenship skills and allow them to express themselves and advocate for their causes through art. "This is how we dream of Lebanon, to view diversity as richness and to abolish sectarianism and deal peacefully with our differences," said Ali

**"I have been teaching for 10 years, but after using LCCE's material, I feel I was reborn as a teacher," stated Mrs. Mirna El-Jibbe from Baalbek Public School.**

Sleiman, one summer camp participant.

Another participant, Esra Deeb, stated "These were the best days of my life; this was the first time I left home to spend time with students from other areas and other religious backgrounds.

This experience has taught me how to be independent and most importantly how to see the similarities in people from different backgrounds before realizing the differences and the stereotypes we are grown up to see." ■  
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#### MEPI MedRegion Office, Tunis

Housed in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the MEPI MedRegion Office 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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