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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 Civil Society Organizations Advocate on Community Concerns

The MEPI-funded “Enhancing Youth Participation in Political Life” implemented by the Jordanian Center for Civic Education (JCCE) is actively working to empower Jordanian CSOs to advocate more effectively in supporting democratic reform, improving political freedom, and promoting anti-corruption legislation and practice and effective legislative changes.

JCCE is building the capacities and sustainability of nine CSOs to increase levels of political participation among youth and women and to issues of interest to the communities. The project targeted 27 young men and women, coming from nine CSOs in southern Jordan, including Al Karak, Maan, and Al Tafileh. In these cities, there is a strong need for capacity building address community problems through direct civic action.

JCCE conducted capacity building workshops on democratic involvement, civic participation, human rights, time management



techniques, and networking through social media tools. A second series was implemented and focused on the design and implementation of civic and advocacy action plans that address public participation in political life. The workshop concentrated on advocacy skills and how to run campaigns.

Participants developed ideas for advocacy campaigns in their communities. Nine campaigns will be carried out in the current month, including those covering youth political participation, student's participation in the universities' elections, and women's participation in the political life. ■

Combating Gender Inequality in Property Rights



“women’s rights are collective right for all”

Through MEPI funding, Wi’am, the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center, is working with ten community organizations and women’s groups to raise awareness about

women’s legal rights to property and equality in inheritance, across the West Bank and Gaza.

Wi’am conducted an advocacy campaign which

galvanized the support of 24 women organizations, decision makers, and the larger public. The campaign was carried out under two mottos: “women’s rights are collective right for all”, and “end discrimination against women’s inheritance rights”.

As part of the campaign, Wi’am organized study visits and community study circles reaching out to more than 110 women from Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem areas. One beneficiary from Bethlehem was invited to

share her story and experience in attaining her inheritance rights on a radio talk show.

In addition, counseling sessions were held to address cases of deprivation of inheritance rights. During these sessions, women were provided with legal solutions to seek justice. Wi’am is working on compiling different case studies to develop a training manual that will be printed and disseminated to NGOs, CBOS, women groups, and human rights activists. ■

Entrepreneurship Promotion and Economic Empowerment of Widows and Youth

Women’s access to economic opportunities is crucial to the region’s growth. To this aim, MEPI is promoting economic advocacy to help cultivate opportunities for women.

Supported by MEPI, WAEDAT partnered with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to conduct a comprehensive entrepreneurship promotion and economic empowerment program in six governorates of Jordan: Amman, Jarash, Ajloun, Irbid, Mafraq and Zaraq. The program assists women in attaining professional entrepreneurial skills and job skills. The projects is providing training and mentoring to



approximately 160 widows and orphan girls, aged 18-24, to launch and sustain their own small businesses.

WAEDAT conducted field visits to each of the six governorates and organized entrepreneurship and

business development workshops in each governorate to increase the widows and orphans awareness of local economic opportunities.

The project trained women on business skills, budget development, strategic

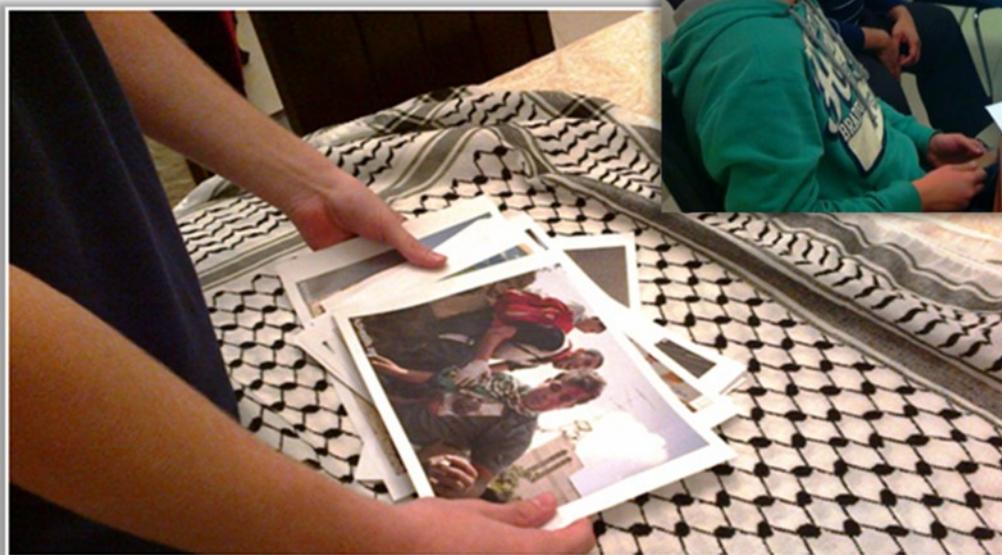
planning, and marketing. The activities of the workshops included case studies of successful women and youth enterprises. Participants acquired leadership and management skills that will support them in their outreach to funding agencies and in their successful small business operations.

In the upcoming months, the project will provide trainees with customized technical training focusing on handicrafts, textiles, cooking, managerial and accountancy (bookkeeping, billing, suppliers, and taxation). ■

Spring of Democracy Initiative

In cooperation with the Institute of Excellence, the MEPI Alumni Network in Jordan launched the “Spring of Democracy” initiative that brought together 48 youth from four partner countries: Sweden, Egypt, Jordan

and Palestine. The aim of the project is to empower youth aged between 15 and 19 to reflect and talk about democracy and human rights



by producing short mobile phone films.

12 participants from Jordan registered in the International Film Festival organized in April 2013 in Sweden. ■

Local Funding Opportunity - Annual Program Statement

Local grants promote reform and civic activism at the local and national levels in countries of the Middle East and North Africa, build the institutional capacity

of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and strengthen civil society. Local grants are implemented by members of civil society, including NGOs, civic groups, reform networks, and academic institutions that are committed to supporting democratic values and the active participation of all individuals in social, political, and economic life. Local grants are typically awarded only to local, not international, organizations. Funding is available for projects that protect and advance civil liberties especially political and civic rights, empower women and youth, strengthen the rule of law, develop independent and pluralistic media, foster economic - 2 -opportunity and economic reform, and promote an educated, active, and informed citizenry.

Local grant projects are intended to support quick impact activities. They generally are completed in one year and should be designed to carry out proposed activities and make an impact within that one-year period.

Applications for MEPI local grants should be submitted by email to the U.S. Embassy in your country. Please [click here](#) for a list of email addresses.

Applications are accepted in English, Arabic or French, but final grant agreements will be concluded in English. We look forward to receiving creative proposals.

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E-mail: mepi-medregion@state.gov

Website: medregion.mepi.state.gov



Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

MEPI Alumni Network Jordan

Debate and Dialogue: Violence among youth



In partnership with King Abdulla Fund for Development (KAFFD), MEPI Alumni Network chaired a session on debate and dialogue .

30 Participant stressed that one of the

key principles of the new program will be to enable greater engagement from all shades of political opinions. Stimulating debate will be held to encourage alternative views to be heard in a

respectful way and to promote tolerance and acceptance of the fundamental principles of political pluralism, mutual respect and democratic. ■

MEPI provides funding to support civil society groups, political activists, and business leaders in their efforts for political and economic reform, government transparency, and accountability projects. MEPI works in 18 countries and territories and contributed over \$600 million to more than 1,000 projects since its inception in 2002. MEPI has recently increased programming significantly in countries undergoing democratic transitions in the wake of the Arab Spring – including Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.



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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Website: medregion.mepi.state.gov
E-mail: mepi-medregion@state.gov
 Phone: +216 71 107 055
 Fax: +216 71 107 436

MEPI Regional Office Tunis
 U.S. Embassy
 Les Berges du Lac— 1053
 Tunis, Tunisia



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