

MEPI

## MEDREGION UPDATE

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## Because An Empowered Woman Means a Stronger Community

By Arabella Bohsali

"Because an empowered woman means a stronger community", Ajjalouna, a nonprofit organization in Lebanon, is implementing a project that is opening doors of opportunity for sixty low-income Lebanese women. The MEPI-funded project "Skills Development Workshops for Women", is providing women with a hands-on training to gain employability and entrepreneurship skills to find and secure jobs, support their families and thus, improve the role of working women in Lebanese communities.

Training workshops included sessions on computer skills,

make-up and beauty, management of small businesses and finance, and cooking.

On May 16, 2011, Lebanese NGO "Ajjalouna" organized a graduation ceremony for the first group of participants who completed their training on one of the following fields: computer skills, make-up and beauty, cooking, or hairdressing.

Dr. Lina Zaim Al Dada, the president of "Ajjalouna" and Mrs. Arabelle Bohsali, MEPI Program Manager at U.S. Embassy Beirut, presented the certificates to the 32 graduating ladies, aged between 18 to

*I owe all the thanks and appreciation to "Ajjalouna" & MEPI for their help. I am now working as a makeup artist and supporting my family and the training has improved my life tremendously.*  
**Howaida Jamal Bader, makeup training.**

*I'm a divorced lady, with no support. Ajjalouna helped me by teaching me cooking, and now I am self-employed and supporting myself.*  
**Suzanne Hussein Sayed, Cooking training.**



(From left to right) Dr. Lina Zaim Dada, President of the association, Mrs. Balkis Zaatari, Project Manager, and Mrs. Arabella Bohsoli, MEPI Program Manager at U.S. Embassy Beirut.

50 years old, in the presence of the executive committee for the "Women's Empowerment Program" at Ajjalouna, and representatives of training centers participating in the program, including Makhzoumi Foundation, International Hospitality Academy and Formatech.

*(Continued on page 2)*



A good photograph of your activities and projects is just as important to spreading the word about your organization as writing and distributing articles about it. Often, a picture tells the most compelling story, and so an organization must pay careful attention to its picture taking. The following article will offer a brief guide to better photography.

### DON'Ts

Pictures of groups of people We receive many pictures of groups of people standing and looking at the camera. While this picture can tell us about the participants in an organization, it does not show us what the organization does or what it has accomplished. It will not provide much information to reader.

### Blurry or Dark Shots

When the picture does not clearly show the subjects in the photo or the expressions on their faces, the viewer won't find it interesting or understand how people are engaging in your projects. Instead, try to snap clear shots of expressive faces.

### DO's

Pictures of a speaker lecturing to an

Action Shots

## How to Take a Photograph

A great photo: Bright colors and all the participants seem very interested, and engaged in their activity. This picture adequately shows the success of the program.



Many people crowded together and not everyone is paying attention. We can't fully appreciate the activities these people have completed.



entertained audience, or pictures of people working on projects will show those viewing your pictures the impact your organization can have on people. You should try to show pictures of people learning, doing, participating fully in their activities, and enjoying themselves. This will show how people can benefit from your projects.

### Bright Colors

Bright colors will draw attention to the picture, and make readers interested in what's happening in the picture. You want to show how brilliant your organization can be.

### Display your Logo!

Showing your organization's banner in the background or on the T-shirts of the people in the

picture is a great way to advertise your group. It's important that the logo is very clearly visible.

Don't underestimate the importance of your pictures and give careful attention to taking them well. After all, a picture says a thousand words. ■

## Because An Empowered Woman Means a Stronger Community

Dr. Dada thanked MEPI and US Embassy Beirut in her speech for their essential support to this program. Mrs. Bohsali commended

'Ajialouna' for their great work with the community for empowering disadvantaged women and proving them with opportunities.

After the certificates were presented, the ceremony ended by cutting a MEPI-Ajialouna designed cake and a group picture for

participants who expressed their enthusiasm about the program.

The activities of the project were covered by Lebanese local Television. Stations. ■

Continued from page 1

## MEPI Project Advances Bedouin Women's Knowledge on Health Care Issues



A nurse training two Bedouin women on measuring blood pressure during the first aid course.



Young Bedouin women practice evacuation of an injured child during the first aid course. The course was held in one of the Bedouin encampments in Jericho.

About 12 young Bedouin women, from the Jericho area in West Bank, participated in a ten-day first aid training course, during which women learned how to be prepared to handle emergency situations related to the Bedouin life style.

This training course is one of a series that are targeting women from 8 encampments in the surrounding Jericho areas. These courses are conducted by Al-Quds Nutrition and Health Research Institute, Al-Quds University with a grant from MEPI that aims to raise women's awareness about their rights to have access to health care information and develop health literacy knowledge and skills.

Within the "Health and Civic Education for the Bedouin Women in the Rural Jericho Areas" project, Al-Quds Nutrition and Health Research Institute conducted 16 health and civic education sessions on malnutrition, iron deficiency anemia, skin diseases and the right to access health service. About 20 students from the health faculties were recruited to prepare health and civic education lectures that were delivered to the Bedouin women under the supervision of a nurse and a physician. Twenty five outreach clinics were conducted during the last quarter. Women and children from 8 Bedouin encampments were medically assessed. Of the 271 individuals receiving medical intervention, 116 were women and 152 were children. About 353 drug units were prescribed and distributed to the Beneficiaries. ■

### Submit Your Grant Applications Now!

Funding is available now for Local Grants. Please contact your country's U.S. Embassy MEPI Committee and see the guidebook available on our [website](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov) for step-by-step instructions in English and Arabic.

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



## Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

## Media in Tunisia Plays a Critical Role in Democracy Development The Mission is no longer Impossible!

*By Khemais Arfaoui*

*The following is an op-ed piece written by Khemais Arfaoui, a MEPI alumnus and Tunisian journalist with more than 17 years of experience. In late 2009, Arfaoui participated in the Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship (CELF), a MEPI-funded program which brings educators from underserved colleges and universities to Syracuse University for four-month fellowships on social science education. Arfaoui told MEPI that he is trying to expand democracy in his country through journalism, something he took a keen interest in while studying in Syracuse through MEPI.*

### The Mission is no longer Impossible!

*By Khemais Arfaoui*

"A free, professional and developed press is a marker, among many others, to judge or evaluate any democratic experience anywhere. The press plays an indispensable and crucial role in the

promotion and the broadening of the democratic exercise in society. This role seems to me more interesting in what we call a democratic transition phase, as it is the case in Tunisia now.

The question is how to achieve this?

Evidently, democracy is a continuous practice whether at the political level or in the daily life of citizens. Democracy is not a value, it's a whole. It is a continuous and daily exercise which must be taught, enlarged, sustained, safeguarded and protected forever.

The press has to play a major role in this context. It has a noble and vital mission in the education of democracy and the establishment of the democratic practice.

Is the Tunisian press able and apt "here and now" to accomplish this mission rapidly and efficiently?

I think it is not an easy task, but it will never be an impossible mission.

The Tunisian press has no lack of professional journalists, but it has been

overwhelmed with deficit of practice of the professional journalistic exercise for a long time.

That is why the Tunisian press seems to me now as a child who has surpassed the biological age of a baby and who has to walk, or like somebody who had long been imprisoned and suddenly became free. In both cases, the steps are not going to be rapid and easy, there is going to be failure and success before being able to walk correctly and easily.

Therefore we have to aim in order to go straight to the desired intention.

And as we are building a democracy, we are also building a free and developed press.

Immediately after the revolution in Tunisia, I said in an article published in my journal, and I say again, that it's high time the Tunisian press returned to professionalism.

It is the moment for journalists to exercise our profession, passion, and job that we have already chosen, studied and loved as well. This is what I'm

trying to do daily through my work in order to contribute positively to the democratic transition in my country.

Therefore to make this transition successful we have to practice a professional and free journalism. This only happens when we always try to publish information credibly and honestly, reflect the different opinions, and be objective in the transmission of facts. And all of this is necessary for the well-being and development of the country with its different regions, which is getting ready for a new stage in its most elevated history.

On the other hand, we have to regain the lost confidence of the Tunisian interlocutors towards the medias. And this requires the practice of journalistic professionalism.

It's a challenge, and Tunisian journalists do not lack neither the will nor the knowhow and professionalism to achieve this objective.

We have to win the challenge, and we can do it. The mission is no longer impossible". ■

## Welcome to New MEPI Staff

MEPI Regional Office Tunis is very pleased to welcome Chuck Brackett Grants Unit Chief and Samantha Sisskind, a summer intern. Their biographic information is below. We wish them both a warm welcome to MEPI!

Chuck is a retired officer in the US Navy, where he had extensive experience managing budgets as well as procurement and logistics activities. He served aboard 5 ships, with multiple deployments to the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Western Pacific; his shore duty



Chuck Brackett

Leadership.

Samantha has just finished her third year as an undergraduate at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown

included tours at the Pentagon, Bahrain, and Qatar. He holds a Bachelors degree in Political Science, an MBA with a logistics focus, and a Masters degree in Organizational



Samantha Sisskind

Studies. After the summer, Samantha will return to Georgetown to complete her Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service. ■

University. She majors in International Politics, concentrates in International Security Studies, and she is a candidate for a certificate in Arab