



MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

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MEPI Activism 2.0 Project Trains Civil Society Groups in New Media Skills



A group photo of participants

In spite of the widespread use of New Media by civil society organizations for activism, advocacy, and advancing reforms, there are still many organizations in remote areas in Egypt handicapped by a technology gap. To develop the capacities of these organizations, the Development and Institutionalization Support Center (DISC), with support from the MEPI Local Grants program, is implementing the “Activism 2.0” project. The 12 month project is empowering civil society organizations to advocate for social reforms and freedoms using cyberspace. “Activism 2.0” was developed in response to the Civil Society 2.0 initiative launched by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the 2009 session of the Forum for the Future. This initiative helps grassroots organizations use digital technology to tell their stories, build membership, and connect to their community of peers around the world.

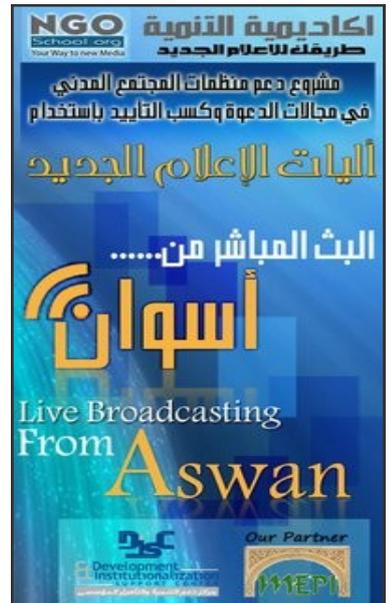
DISC recognizes the potential benefits of the internet in empowering individuals, grassroots organizations, and civil society, and has developed Activism 2.0 to extend the reach of the Civil Society 2.0 initiative to those lucky enough to take part in its activities.

DISC conducted a series of training sessions on building websites, blogging, launching online advocacy campaigns, and connecting with constituents.

During these training sessions, beneficiaries have learned how to effectively use the internet and the new media platforms, including Facebook and Tweeter, to better serve their communities. DISC has also held lectures, during which it presented case studies of successful e-activism.

So far, almost 200 trainees, from about 10 provinces outside greater Cairo, have benefited from these courses.

To benefit the maximum number of people, DISC produced training manuals on reform and freedom advocacy in



cyberspace, which it distributed to over 2000 people. The manuals were uploaded to www.ngo-school.org, a website launched by DISC. The website is an Arabic language site for e-learning, to which thousands of people registered during the past few months. The website has been developed to help other organizations that didn't get the chance to attend the courses to benefit from the uploaded online manuals. ■

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Apply to Establish a MEPI Local Alumni Chapter

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) announces a competition for proposals to establish a network that connects all alumni of MEPI-funded projects. Currently, there are over 11,000 MEPI alumni and this number is growing daily.

The MEPI Alumni Network will connect a group of local MEPI Alumni Chapters (single or multi-country) that together provide coverage for the entire region where MEPI operates. Through this MEPI Alumni Network, we hope to support and strengthen MEPI alumni and their commitment to and engagement in civic activism, creating an environment where MEPI alumni can work together to bring positive change to the region using and expanding upon the skills acquired through their various MEPI experiences. For more information on this, please [click here](#) or visit www.mepi.state.gov.

Active MEPI Alumni chapters across the region carried out different activities that aim to promote democratic values and encourage effective civic participation.

MEPI Alumni chapter in Egypt held a conference during which it discussed unemployment and how to prepare job seekers for the market from the vantage point of business owners, recruiters, human resources, and the social aspect.

In Jordan, the MEPI Alumni Network conducted a training workshop “Needs & Requirements: Taking the Next Step in Business”, which focused on tangible and useful tips young entrepreneurs should know to develop their businesses.

In Morocco, the MEPI Alumni Network conducted a “Be Heard Now” national campaign introducing new media tools and innovative methods to organize implement and lead successful awareness campaigns tackling important social issues. ■

Welcome to New MEPI Staff



Wajih Hammami

MEPI Regional Office in Tunis is very pleased to welcome our new MEPI administrator Wajih Hammami. Wajih joins MEPI from the FSI Arabic Field School, where he has been an Arabic language instructor for five years.

Wajih has a Master degree in Applied Linguistics from High Institute of Languages Bourguiba School in Tunisia.



The Fly America Act

By MEPI Grants Unit

The Fly America Act requires that foreign air travel funded with Federal dollars be performed on U.S. flag air carriers, unless one has a good reason not to. This applies to ALL foreign travel funded by Federal dollars, which means that these restrictions also apply grants provided by MEPI.

To every rule, there are some exceptions, and the Fly America Act is no different. As a matter of fact, there are many exceptions to the Act. Basically, you have to use the U.S. air carrier unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, use of the U.S. air carrier would: (1) increase the number of aircraft changes you have to make en route by 2 or more; (2) extend your travel time by 6 hours or more; or (3) require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

To ensure compliance with the Fly America Act, all flights must be approved by MEPI prior to travel. Please submit your proposed itinerary with names, dates, times, and flight information at least one month in advance of the flight. ■

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](#) for step-by-step instructions in English and Arabic.

www.medregion.mepi.state.gov



“Aasks El Seir” a Documentary about Cross-communitarian Solidarity in Lebanon



As part of the MEPI Local Grant “Toward a comprehensive Memory”, the Lebanese Foundation for Interfaith Studies and

personalities are: Prince Abdul Kader Al Jazairi, Bishop Salim Ghazal, Imam Moussa Al Sader and Reverend Makram Kozah.



Spiritual Solidarity (ADYAN) produced a documentary, about cross-communitarian solidarity during the 1860 and 1975-1990 civil wars in Lebanon. The documentary entitled “Aaks El Seir” (*against the current*) was launched during the “Fanaticism blinds us, faith enlightens us” national campaign conducted by ADYAN. Aaks El Seir highlights the power of faith facing discrimination, intolerance and extremism. The movie sheds light on personalities highly respected and valued within their religious communities.

Through the documentary, Adyan stresses the efficient and positive role played by each of these personalities to ensure communication and solidarity with other groups during times of crisis and confessional conflicts in Lebanon. Among these

The launching ceremony of the documentary “Aaks El Seir” was marked by the attendance of 1100 person from different religious sects and backgrounds. Among the participants were most notably the representatives of the President of the Republic, the president of the Parliament and Prime Minister, as well as the Apostolic Nuncio and the Ambassadors of Spain, Algeria and Egypt.

In his speech during the opening ceremony, Mr. Fadi Daou, ADYAN Director, stated that “it is the essence of our mission in Adyan to face reality as it is, so as to be able to dismantle religious fanaticism, eradicate radicalism and celebrate our spiritual solidarity by spreading out its values and honoring its symbols. The feeling of responsibility pushes us today

to adopt this slogan: ‘fanaticism blinds us, faith enlightens us’, since our Lebanese society suffers from many aspects of seclusion and intolerance towards others, which augur increasing religious fanaticism on the expenses of faith”, explained Fadi Daou.

Prior the screening of the movie, ADYAN launched a media campaign that lasted a

whole month. In order to have a national campaign all over Lebanon ADYAN produced over 200 billboard and banners that were hung in several cities.

The event received extensive media coverage: 10 TV appearances, six radio appearances, 22 newspaper hits, more than 45 online articles, and hundreds of Facebook and other social media tags.■

About ADYAN

Established on August 6, 2006, ADYAN is a Lebanese foundation for interfaith studies and spiritual solidarity, with Christian and Muslim founding members: Fadi Daou (Professor in Fundamental Theology and Political Philosophy), Nayla Tabbara (Professor in Religious and Islamic Studies), Tony Sawma (Educational Leader and researcher in psycho-sociology), Mireille Matar (Teacher and Social worker) and Samah Halwany (Researcher and

Lecturer in Sociology of Conflicts).

ADYAN is registered in Lebanon as a non-governmental and non-profit organization (NGO/NPO), under the number 1103, by ministerial decree dated September 18, 2008.

ADYAN is an independent organization. It achieves its mission in Lebanon and abroad, regionally and internationally, through different programs, in cultural, educational, social and spiritual areas.

In addition to its members, ADYAN benefits from the commitment and the support of its three Networks: the Volunteers, the Consultants and the Friends.

For more information on ADYAN please visit:

www.adyanvillage.net



Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

Palestinian MEPI Alumni Engaged in Environmental Activities



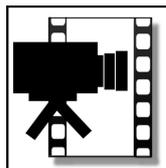
As part of the “Youth Environment Awareness Campaign”, being implemented by Amideast and funded by the Public Diplomacy Section in the U.S. Consulate General, Jerusalem, MEPI alumni in West Bank and Gaza from the MEPI Student Leader and The American-Palestinian Local University Scholarship (A-PLUS) programs participated in a series of environmental activities in their communities.

MEPI Alumni visited schools and reached out to 1300 students in Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, and Jerusalem. During these visits MEPI Alumni gave presentations and carried out

different environmental activities with the participation of the students from the schools. All together, Alumni and



students painted murals and colored posters that have different environmental themes. The murals that were painted symbolized living peacefully in a green environment, and encouraged the students to protect the environment, and keep their schools clean. ■



Palestinian Alumni Network: The Launch Event



Alistar Baskey "This network will support, and help achieve our goal in building an independent and prosperous Palestinian country, where all citizens express their opinions, and have equal rights"

Kudos to MEPI Tunisian Alumna Amel Bouchamaoui Hammami

Congratulations to Mrs. Amel Bouchamaoui Hammami on being elected the first woman President of the Tunisian American Chamber of Commerce (TACC). “I have been in the board of TACC for many years but I have never thought of being the President of TACC. My main concern was to serve TACC for the well being of my country” said Amel.

Amel is a MEPI alumna, Vice-President of the MENA Business Women's Network, and Vice-President of the National Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs. She participated in the “Building Public-Private Partnerships for Women Artisan's Empowerment in Tunisia” program implemented in partnership with the Tunisian National Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs, Vital Voices, and the MENA Business Women's Network with support from MEPI.

This Public-Private Partnership program promotes sustainable partnerships between the Tunisian government, NGOs, and the private sector for the advancement of women artisan's economic



Amel Bouchamaoui

development. This program aims also to establish a Center of Excellence for Women's Artisans in Tunisia, a network of businesswomen to expand the number of women in business, to increase the value of their businesses, to advance the role of women in society, and to promote a regional culture of women's entrepreneurship. The Center of Excellence for Women's Artisans will be duplicated in all the MENA region hubs, that are part of the MENA BWN.

Talking about her MEPI experience, Amel stated that “MEPI program enabled our organization to build business connections with other organizations worldwide. During the training sessions women artisans acquired new technical skills such as advocacy, and project evaluation and monitoring.” ■

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