



MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

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Egyptians Campaigning for Teaching Human Rights at Schools

With MEPI support, the Egyptian Center for Human Rights (ECHR) launched a national campaign to promote teaching of human rights at schools. The campaign comes as part of the MEPI Local Grant project “a National Campaign for Integrating Human Rights Curriculum into the Egyptian Education System”. The kickoff ceremony was attended by eminent figures from a wide spectrum of Egyptian society including teachers, human rights activists, pedagogy

experts, former members of local councils, people’s councils and religious figures.

Within this project, experts will present a human rights curriculum to the Egyptian Ministry of Education and lobby for its adoption. ECHR will hold



workshops to train teachers and educational mentors on teaching human rights subjects. ■

Promoting Citizenship to Engage Arab Youth

The Arab Foundation for Development & Citizenship (AFDC) implemented its MEPI Local Grant project “Promoting Citizenship to Engage Arab Youth”. The one year project, engaged more than 230 young men and women from Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon. This project is a synergy between the Forum for the Future process and the United Nations Development Program—Information and Communication Technology for Development of Arab Region (UNDP– ICTIDAR).

Through workshops and engagement in relevant follow-up programs at local level, the project aimed to empower Arab responsible citizenship. AFDC conducted 10 training workshops that promoted the culture of responsible citizenship and provided participants from

the region with hands on training on how to become active in their communities.

At the end of each workshop, participants developed a set of project proposals to be implemented in their communities.

Over 200 ideas that promote public participation and citizenship values were submitted to UNDP for funding consideration.

AFDC supported a proposal from a Tunisian female participant. The project proposal consisted of the creation of a website dedicated to youth participation in the Arab World.



Participants during a workshop



Participating youth during a workshop on responsible citizenship

The website serves as a platform for Arab Youth to blog discuss and exchange ideas on the role of youth in the civic and political participation with focus on the concept of responsible citizenship. www.yparticipation.org. ■

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

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We welcome your comments and suggestions

MEPI Launches New Initiatives to Support Tunisia's Democratic Transition

Fact Sheet Mar 22, 2011

The State Department's Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is pleased to announce its plan to support the Tunisian people as they build the stronger democratic foundations needed for long-term stability and broad-based economic growth. The initiatives outlined below reflect MEPI's determination and ability to respond rapidly to Tunisia's strategic needs during this historic time of transition.

MEPI's Tunisia Transition Support

MEPI intends to provide \$20 million to Tunisia Transition Support that will help consolidate Tunisia's gains in the post-Ben Ali era and assist Tunisians as they progress toward sustainable democratic development and economic prosperity. MEPI plans to partner with local and international organizations to support the transition effort. Specifically, the \$20 million in new proposed assistance will strengthen efforts to:

- Establish an independent, professional, and pluralistic media sector that provides information transparently and constructively;
- Form an independent civil society that can play a critical role supporting effective advocacy and civic education;
- Strengthen and develop political parties;
- Develop a sound framework for elections; and
- Encourage economic reforms.

To kick off the Tunisia Transition Support initiative, on March 18, MEPI launched a new Annual Program Statement (APS) competition for innovative proposals supporting Tunisia's democratic transition, which includes the drafting of a new constitution, the election of a new president and parliament (anticipated for later in 2011), economic and political reforms, and other steps toward democracy. To learn more about this competition, please visit www.mepi.state.gov.

MEPI Support for Tunisian Civil Society

The MEPI Regional Office in Tunis provides direct grants to Tunisian NGOs. New partnerships to support the Tunisian transition will include:

- Club UNESCO-Bardo Tunisie to provide training on citizenship and local governance;
- E-Khedma to foster economic development and promote job creation through an online portal website that will connect skilled young entrepreneurs with potential clients and consumers.

To learn more about these new opportunities for Tunisia, please visit the MEPI website at www.mepi.state.gov.



Per Diem Expenses By MEPI Grants Unit

We've recently had numerous requests for Per Diem Allowances. As such, we wanted to provide some guidelines as to what Per Diem is and what we are authorized to pay. Per Diem is understood to include the additional expenses incurred when travelling away from home. For the purposes of our MEPI grants, this generally involves meals and incidentals while travelling.

Per Diem should only be considered for any individual who will travel away from their home (meaning outside of their locality) for a period of more than 12 hours of the day. Therefore, if you attend a training event that is 2 hours away from your home and the event is only 4 hours long, you do not qualify for Per Diem. However, if you travel 2 hours for the event, which is 8 hours long, based on the 12 hour guideline, you do qualify for this compensation.

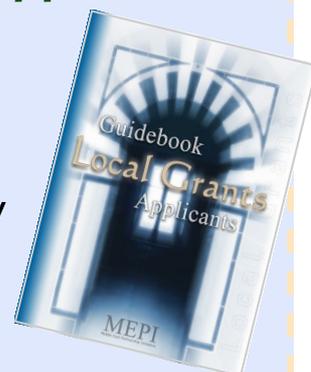
The implementer may authorize a reasonable flat rate for per diem or reimburse the traveler for actual expenditures. Grantees should not use Per Diem to cover the costs of snacks and refreshments that are not allowable by MEPI guidelines. This compensation is intended to cover the expenses of the individual traveler.

Lodging and Travel costs are considered separate items for the purposes of our grants and will be addresses in a separate article. ■

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.mepi.state.gov) for step-by-step instructions in English and Arabic.

www.medregion.mepi.state.gov



Have your Voice Heard and Your Vote Count

In the leadup to the parliamentary elections in Jordan, there was much debate over observing and monitoring elections. To allow or not to allow observation? Should it be observation, or monitoring, and, if allowed, should it be local, regional or international observation?

While this debate was exhausted by nearly all actors involved in the electoral process, not much attention was given to the importance of political participation and voting.

In this context, the Civil Society Development Center (CSDC) implemented the MEPI Local Grant project “Enabling Parliamentary Candidates to Deal with Media Platforms and to Run Election Campaigns”. The project’s purpose is to raise awareness on the importance of voting



Slogan of the brochure: *Make your voice loud*

and political participation and to assess candidates’ readiness and improve their personal and professional skills.

CSDC partnered with a sister organization “Voice For Democracy” and held two raising awareness campaigns on citizenship and voting that targeted youth. The campaign, which was launched at the university of Jordan in Amman,

emphasized the role of schools and universities in the development of youth’s role in their society and in developing a sense of belonging and community.

During the campaigns, CSDC produced and disseminated brochures, leaflets, billboards adverts, and electronic newspapers advertisements.

In addition, CSDC offered

training sessions to interested parliamentary candidates in working with the media. The sessions focused on how to reach the voters through: advocacy, lobbying, campaigning mechanisms, negotiation skills, organizing public events, writing speeches and media notes. Several participants were later successful in the elections. ■



CSDC disseminating brochures

MEPI Local Grant Project creates Forums for Moroccan Youth

On February 27, around 100 participants attended the kickoff conference of the MEPI Local Grant project “Youth Forums for Easy Integration and Active Participation in Local and Public Life” being implemented by “The Free Space of Citizenship for Training and Development Association in

Mohammadia” (ELCIFOD EM).

The event was attended by youth, parents, representatives of various local and national media outlets, and civil society leaders.

The “Youth Forums: for Easy Integration and Active Participation in Local and Public Life” project aims to integrate



Speakers during the opening ceremony



Attendees at the kickoff ceremony

and activate the participation of Moroccan youth in political, local and public life in Morocco through organizing four forums each of which will be followed by four follow-up workshops on each of the following themes:

- Youth and their economic and social rights;
- Youth and the problem of teaching and listening to their point of views;
- Youth and political participation; AND
- Youth and good local governance. ■

Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

MEPI Alumni-Egypt Chapter: Promoting Entrepreneurship Among Youth

In cooperation with the Egyptian Junior Association, the MEPI Alumni Network in Egypt organized the Mediterranean, Africa, and Middle East Young Entrepreneurs (MAME-YE) conference. The conference promoted the development of entrepreneurship among young people through presentations of specific strategies to support youth entrepreneurship including; the cooperation of national governments, local authorities and institutions of interest. Over 250 participants from 25 countries of North Africa and the Middle East including several MEPI Alumni, business leaders and government officials attended the conference.

The two-day conference presented a great opportunity for business-to-business (B2B) sessions and provided participants with a

platform to interact with business professionals and to advance their learning about entrepreneurship. The conference aimed also to strengthen collaboration with the associations of young entrepreneurs in the region through the sharing of organizational models, best practices and operational tools.

The conference provided great exposure for the MEPI Alumni Network. Many approached the participating alumni from Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi, UAE, and Bahrain to learn more about MEPI. Alumni spoke about their experience with great pride, representing a team with common memorable MEPI experience. ■



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 projects in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank/Gaza and accounts for more than \$5 million in program funding in 2010. In addition to coordinating with U.S. Embassies throughout the region, Tunis RO provides a variety of funding opportunities (such as the MEPI Local Grants program and Civil Society Grants) as well as supporting visits, seminars and training programs to advance the formation of communities for tomorrow.

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