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MEPI in 2010—Apply for a Grant!

- The Tunis Regional Office has around \$2 million to support grants in the region.
- Details on how to apply can be found on page three or with your local MEPI Committee.
- Make this the year to become involved with your community...and MEPI activities!

Congratulations to MEPI Awardees

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs recognized MEPI staff's efforts, hard work and commitment with awards in January 2010. We would like to offer our congratulations to the awardees.

Shirin Baskey is a model Coordinator, working tirelessly to build support for and understanding of MEPI in the West Bank and

Gaza. She managed the process of requesting and evaluating projects proposals ensuring our would-be partners in the West Bank and Gaza were able to take advantage of MEPI funding. She was an enthusiastic and energetic participant in our training programs, and she applied program lessons to her work. Shirin contributed a wealth of articles on MEPI grants and exchange

programs for our monthly newsletter.

"SVF could not have done a wonderful and successful work without Shirin's support." said Ibrahim Natil, Director General of the Society Voice Foundation (SVF), which implemented "Empower Future Leadership on Parliamentary Work to Prevent Corruption" project.

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Not to Forget Society, MEPI grantee, presenting Shirin Baskey with a plaque

Shirin Baskey, MEPI Coordinator of the Year 2009 U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem

"I am deeply honored to be selected as a 2009 MEPI Coordinator of the Year. The creation of this award should serve to highlight MEPI's field efforts — particularly its local grants -and encourage all posts to investigate ways of utilizing this impactful programming tool toward fulfillment of their own Mission objectives. Thank you once again for this honor."

Wahid Labidi, Meritorious Honor Award Political/Economic Specialist MEPI RO Tunis

"I am honored for this award and I am grateful for the trust placed in me. I am also proud to be recognized by NEA/PI that I have played such a significant role in BMENA and in 2009 Forum for the Future in particular. This will definitely continue to motivate and inspire me to further support BMENA Civil Society and enhance democratic practice across the region. My tasks within MEPI go well beyond my day-job to reflect a deeply enrooted activism and willingness to serve the Community."



Wahid Labidi (on left,) facilitated Civil Society actors meetings with Secretary Clinton.



Ruba Matarneh with Deputy Assistant Secretary Tamara Cofman Wittes

Ruba Matarneh, MEPI Administrator of the Year U.S. Embassy Amman, Jordan

"Putting excellence and high performance as main goals motivated me to perform my best, and kept me active. I always think that the key to success lies in dedication and hard work, which I always aim to achieve. Being a MEPI coordinator is not only a job for me -- MEPI gave me the chance of my life to contribute to people's lives, and helping them realize their dreams and shape their future. MEPI had a positive impact on my life on both professional and personal levels and I am proud to be part of the dynamic and extended MEPI community."

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Ruba Y. Matarneh was recognized as the 2009 MEPI Administrator of the Year for exceeding many challenges, and managing numerous projects. She is an ideal Administrator and represents what we all know—that successful programs happen from the work of committed energetic people serving the region.

The Department of State recognized Wahid Labidi, the Political Economic Specialist in MEPI Regional Office Tunis, was recognized for his superb and sustained contributions to the G8 – Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative, including support to the 2009 Forum for the Future, that have significantly enhanced the status of civil society across the region.

Wahid's extensive relationship

with civil society leaders and non-governmental organizations across the BMENA region helped to facilitate the active participation of civil society in the 2009 Forum for the Future. There he was instrumental in a meeting between the Secretary of State and civil society leaders to discuss efforts to advance democracy and human rights for the people of the region.

MEPI Regional Office, Tunis also congratulates awardees from the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau, Partnership Initiative Group:

Timothy D. Andrews, Katherine Bartels, Alice Blayne Allard, Catherine Bourgeois, Charles E. Kiamie III, Andrew Mosley, Walter Neill, Onsomu Onchonga AnnaMary Portz, Saira Saeed, Elizabeth G. Sullivan, and Lisa Sullivan. ■

Journalists Work Collectively Towards a Culture of Human Rights Education

By Wahid Labidi, Political Economic Specialist, MEPI Regional Office Tunis

Sixteen journalists from Television, Radio and Press operating in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt attended a MEPI funded Human Rights training session in Casablanca, Morocco from January 12 to 17, 2010. The workshop was organized by the Tunis-based Arab Institute for Human Rights in partnership with the Moroccan Institute of Press and Television, and the National Union of the Moroccan journalists.

During the six day-training, participants addressed different topics to hone their media skills and enhance their knowledge on international human rights stan-



Human Rights training session

dards. The first part of the training was dedicated to human rights and concepts such as defining human rights, defining freedom of opinion and expression within the international system of human rights, and the role of media in promoting a human rights culture.

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REPORTING

By MEPI Grants Unit

Programmatic and financial reporting is an important step that helps to track a project's progress towards defined objectives. As a recipient of a MEPI grant award, you are required to submit reports and provide evaluation and findings to MEPI by filing out the standard forms provided by MEPI for both the performance and financial aspects.

Reports should be submitted quarterly to your project officer following the schedule laid out in data element number eight of the Award Specific Requirements which is part of your Notification of Award. We prefer the reports be in English, but we have accepted French and Arabic. It is important that you respect the calendar quarters in your reports (i.e. Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep and Oct-Dec). Very often we receive reports that overstep the pre-determined reporting periods (like reports covering the period from February to May for example) sadly we cannot accept these because they do not satisfy the requirements of the award.

Quarterly reporting can be submitted anytime after the end of the reporting period (March 31st, June 30th, September 30th or December 31st) but no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter. For example a Jan-Mar report can be submitted from Apr 1st through Apr 30th. This is true even if the award period ends before the calendar quarter ends. For example if the project ends on Feb 15th the last report would cover Jan-Mar and its deadline would still be Apr 30th.

A final performance and financial report is also required and is due within the 90 days following the end of the performance period. The final report should provide a review of the project as a whole from start to finish. This report needs to be signed and submitted on time to allow smooth close-out of your project.

Before you submit the reports check the following:

Make sure the award period is mentioned in the third box from the top right hand side in the report header.

- Make sure that actual completion dates for activities are entered under the third column entitled "objective" in the work plan for each instance.
- Make sure that, if any future activity is going to be delayed, the requested revised date is entered in the relevant fourth column of the tables entitled "objective" for review by the Project Officer.
- For the agreed upon "indicators" (itemized in the report template), it is extremely important that the result box is filled with the figure reached during that quarter (if applicable). For example "20 students trained." This result will show us your progress toward the pre-defined target.
- For "activities" and "indicators," there is a discussion box where you can explain successes you had in these areas or the challenges that prevented you from achieving the target or completing the activities.

All attachments are welcome whether it is media outreach or project documents. All attachments sent have to be listed in the last box labeled "appendices."

Your Project Officer is very interested in your progress and needs to review the reports, so it is important to send your report and attached files to him/her. Please also copy the Tunis MEPI RO (TunisMEPIGrants@state.gov). ■

The Civil Society for Civic Activities Training Lebanese Youth on Human Rights

The Civil Society for Civic Activities (CSCA) in Lebanon conducted a project to enhance the knowledge and abilities of seventy-five young men and women in the field of human rights, and increase effective civic activism in support of reform. The seventy-five trainees were divided into three groups each of twenty-five; and attended three different workshops. The workshops included training sessions addressing:

- The history, concept, principles and different aspects of democracy and human rights;
- International Human Rights documents including the two international conventions (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- International conventions relevant to women's rights;
- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women; and
- Different forms of violence against women in private and

public law.

The workshop used an array of training materials and methods to better involve the trainees in the discussion and foster a dynamic and enthusiastic atmosphere. The training aids included brainstorming, play acting, team work, case studies and debates. During the final workshop session, participants were invited to express their opinions and comment on the workshop and the different topics discussed.

Following the workshops, an evaluation session was carried out, to address and explore different aspects to assess and measure the extent to which the desired goals were achieved. Trainers concluded that the topics covered in the different sessions helped create a democratic atmosphere and engendered a feeling of mutual respect between the young participants coming from diverse religious, political, regional and social backgrounds. This was in harmony with the workshops' and the ultimate aim to promote the principles of human rights and democracy.



A workshop training on human rights and democracy



A workshop training on human rights and democracy

Participants created a Facebook page and posted pictures from all three workshops to commemorate the event and foster networking among them. Participants are also planning to launch a website. ■

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The second part of the training, focused on how to best use media tools to empower reform stakeholders in order to be able to support internal changes, advocate for public participation, and develop culture of democracy and citizenship.

Participants analyzed articles from newspapers from the perspective of human rights.

They also learned how to include human rights related topics when producing television and radio programs and press articles. Finally they agreed to further discuss networking mechanism that would improve collaboration and exchange of information on issues of freedom of expression and journalist protection. ■

Submit your grant applications now!

Funding is available now for Local

Grants. Please contact your country's U.S. Embassy

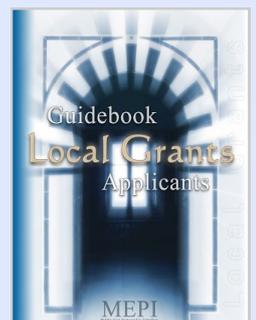
MEPI Committee and see

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



MEPI Alumni

The MEPI Effect

By the MEPI Alumnae, *Sabrine Assem*

Sabrine Assem was a MEPI Student Leader in 2006 and is launching *YoVenture*, an online magazine for youth entrepreneurship in Egypt look for its first edition at :

<http://www.yoventure-mag.com>

“I always regard my MEPI experience in the summer of 2006 as one marked by the richness of the human interactions involved. I am currently a student at the German University in Cairo, Egypt, studying management. I was one of the student leaders chosen to have a six-week intensive leadership program at Dickinson College in Carlisle – Pennsylvania. During my stay in the United States, I learned about American history, politics and leadership. I was expecting to be amazed by the beauty of the place and by the structure of the program. To my own surprise that wasn't the main highlight of my MEPI-experience. I was more touched by the human frame of the program. The interaction between us, whether the Arab participants or the Americans, proved that there was more space for exchange and for conversation than for useless disputes. We became more than friends and till now we've kept in touch, always hoping for another gathering.

One of the main outcomes of the program on a personal level is that I became more attached to my country than I was before. I was inspired and I was motivated which made me determined to actually do something when I returned.

What is really impressive about this experience is that you don't only get to know more about the “other” whether it is

the Americans or the Arab students. But you actually get to rediscover yourself. I'd been put in a situation where I had to depend on myself and where I had to act as a leader. The whole experience was like a journey through which you discover the missing parts of your personality and you develop yourself as a whole.

As a management student I particularly liked our visit to the Silicon Valley in San Francisco. We met with entrepreneurs who shared with us their entrepreneurial success stories. I have to say: I was much impressed and not only that – I was inspired. Entrepreneurship was three years ago a vague term for me. During our talk with the entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley I got to learn more about the subject. I had the intention of doing more research and having more details so that I could perhaps apply an idea that was somehow related. Here I found it. After returning home and after I learned that I could apply for a grant to finance a follow-on project I immediately proposed the idea of starting a business magazine for youth in Egypt that mainly focuses on promoting the culture of entrepreneurship, which in itself promotes innovation and risk-taking and fosters progress and development.

The idea of starting a magazine has always been on my mind ever since I was in secondary education because writing is my passion. It kept growing and growing but it



remained an idea till I was selected for MEPI back in 2006 as a student leader. There I had a turning point when I went to Silicon Valley and learned about Entrepreneurship not just as a concept to be applied in business but as a complete life style. This visit gave me the theme I was looking for in a magazine. After returning from MEPI, I wrote a proposal about the idea I had in my mind; how much a business magazine with particular focus on entrepreneurship would have a magnificent impact on the progress here in Egypt and how it would affect the main areas of MEPI. I applied for a small grant (4000 \$) from MEPI for a follow-on project. I got the grant in 2007 and I launched my magazine: “YoVenture.” When you promote entrepreneurship you work on several attributes that all together shape mindsets in a way that doesn't limit them. On the contrary: it sets them free. You let out the innovative potentials of people and release the positive energies that were held back by routine work to which they are NOT attached.

I've been working a lot on issuing “YoVenture” and it finally made it through. This magazine is supposed to be both serving the community and acting as my own entrepreneurial experience. You can approach youth with their language and their spirit and tell them: “it can work and you can come up with the next big thing.” I'm very passionate about it and I'm sure it will succeed.

I've had a number of experiences throughout my life but MEPI was definitely the richest. I've learned a great deal from MEPI and I know that it's more than a bridge between cultures. We didn't only cross the bridge and fill in the gaps. We've engraved our signatures in each others' memories and personalities.

The MEPI-Effect made me certain of the kind of person I wish to become. It made me meet some of the best people I've ever met in my life. In addition to that: it surely did help me find out what was missing in my own puzzle. ■