

MEPI MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MEPI Partner holds 1
Voter Education
Workshops for
Egyptian Students

Grants \$ At Work: 2
How do I Request a
Payment?

MEPI Projects 2
Urges Youth and
Women in Mafraq
to Vote in
Upcoming Elections

Citizen Bus 3
Touring Tunisia

Spotlight on MEPI 4
Alumni:
Retelling the Arab
Spring through Art

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We welcome your
comments and
suggestions.

MEPI Partner holds Voter Education Workshops for Egyptian Students



Voter education is the key to engaging young people in a lifelong habit of civic participation. To address the need to support youth to be effective and more active citizens in the decision-making process, MEPI is partnering with the Egyptian civil company Al-Arabia Foundation for Enlightenment and Social Peace (AFESP), to raise awareness among university students about the importance of making citizens voices heard through voting.

The project "Student's Vote", by AFESP is training and promoting best voting practices among Egyptian youth.

Three-hundred university students, who are eligible voters representing six universities, took part in a three-day training workshop.

The first part of the workshops provided participants with a theoretical framework on the electoral process and the voting system including; elections registration

and why one should engage in elections.

The second part focused on practical exercises such as elections simulations and screening documentary films about the previous elections.

AFESP produced an election manual that was distributed during the workshops. The manual covered a wide range of topics and defined concepts such as: constitution, democracy, civic participation, and elections.

The manual, which includes drawings that illustrate how to vote, has been used as a guide for participants.

AFESP launched a website that will serve to connect voters and follow up with those who gave interviews in order to find out what kind of problems the voters face.

The trained group will then recruit another group of 1800 students, and train them on active participation in elections. ■



Participants during the workshop held by AFESP



Participants during the workshop held by AFESP

MEPI Project Urge Youth and Women in Mafraq to Vote in Upcoming Elections



With MEPI support, Mosawah for Civil Society Development, (MCSO) a youth NGO in the northern Jordan city of Mafraq produced creative videos urging youth and women to take part in upcoming 2011 municipal elections. This effort is part of a MEPI local grant project "Youth and Women's Participation in Decision Making in Mafraq".

The project is fostering the role of women and youth in the decision-making process.

In addition to videos, the group surveyed 15 villages to study reasons for apathy by youth toward politics.

As a follow up of these activities, MCSO held youth seminars, during which participants discussed the results and a governorate-wide competition to produce ideas for caricatures, articles and short stories on the topic of youth and women's political participation. Selected materials will be posted on the project's online "Democracy Portal," as well as on the project's Facebook page.

TO learn more about the project please visit the implementers website at: www.mossawah.org. ■

Awareness raising Videos:

Municipal Elections



Women and elections



Youth and Elections



How do I Request a Payment?

By MEPI Grants Unit

Use the SF270 to request an advance payment

MEPI is phasing a new form this month, the SF270, "Request for Advance or Reimbursement". This form is required by the US Government, and replaces our previous document. All recipients of MEPI grants will eventually be required to use this form. When in doubt, please ask your Grants Analyst. They will keep you informed as to which form to use. Please find the SF270 FORM available in our website at:

<https://tunisia-mepi.cms.getusinfo.com/local-grants.html>

At first glance the SF270 looks intimidating, but it's really not difficult to complete.

Much of the information on this form will be taken directly from other documents that are part of your award package. For instance, blocks 3, 4, 9, and 13 all come from the DS 1909, the "Federal Assistance Award" form. Many other blocks, specifically blocks 6, 10, and 11, will be left blank. We will provide you with detailed instructions on how to complete this document and we are always available to work with you on it.

The most difficult part of this form will be block 12. In this block you will a) list the amount of money you estimate that you will need in order to perform your work for the upcoming award period; b) list the amount of money you have left over from previous payments (if any); and c) list the amount you are requesting for the upcoming award period, which will be the balance of a minus b. To help you with this we here in the RO have developed a worksheet that will calculate the numbers you need to put in block 12. This worksheet will be available in mid December, just in time to help you calculate your Jan through Mar 2012 payment requests.

As always, please keep in touch with your MEPI RO and Embassy MEPI contacts and let us know of any questions as they arise or difficulties you have encountered. Be sure to always include tunismepigrants@state.gov as an addressee on all grant-related messages. ■

Citizen Bus Touring Tunisia

Through their partnership with MEPI, a pool of six Tunisian NGOs led by the partner organization Touensa launched the project entitled "Bus Citoyen" (Citizens Bus). Citizens Bus reached out to around 220,000 Tunisian across 23 Tunisian governorates, out of 24, to educate citizens about responsible citizenship, the fundamentals of democracy, the electoral system and to motivate them to make their



Citizens Bus

Volunteers visited 220 delegations, where they presented outreach materials and organized interactive discussion with citizens on themes related to democracy and citizenship.

The caravan's actions took place in different settings. Volunteers visited public squares, weekly markets, cafes and beaches. They also visited factories, where they met with 30 to 100 workers



Citizens Bus Volunteers reaching out to local communities



voices heard in Tunisia's elections of the National Constituent Assembly.

Touensa recruited 150 volunteers, who were trained, through a series of workshops, on Tunisian elections law, the Constituent Assembly and the Tunisian constitution, election day simulation, and political intuitions. The workshops were led by expert figures. Touensa also assured a regular coordination and communication with The Higher Electoral Independent Commission Committee of Elections (ISIE) to efficiently and properly transmit the



Citizen Bus in a Factory talking to workers

message to citizens via an agreed to methodology.

Together with the ISIE worked on compiling educational materials

including the production of awareness raising flyers in Tunisian dialect and the production of video capsules on voting process.

per session.

Citizens were taught about voting procedures and were exposed to "get-out-the-vote" campaign so that they would vote in elections as informed citizens.

The citizenship caravan raised the targeted Tunisian citizens' awareness on the current political challenges facing the country, tackling the issue of political apathy and abstention and highlighting the role citizens could play in the democratic transition.

Citizens Bus has received a tremendous press coverage. ■

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Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

Retelling the Arab Spring through Art

In light of the Arab Spring that is currently bringing sweeping changes to the Middle East, the MEPI Alumni Networks in Egypt and Jordan organized an art workshop focused on retelling recent events in the region through art.

Artists and cartoonists were invited to talk to participants about the role of art in social awareness and reform. Over the course of two days, participants discussed how revolutionary art has given different means of expression, emphasizing the powerful role art plays in engaging

communities by taking on new layers of meaning that reflect momentous changes in society.

Participants and speakers discussed how art can also be a powerful tool to address stereotypes and present new perspectives.

Through art work, participants reflected on their own perceptions of current events and projected their thoughts, inner reflections, and feelings through their art work.

At the end of the workshop several paintings from alumni in Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, and Libya were



collected and presented in a slide show along with several contributions from Jordanian cartoonists reflecting the Arab Spring through cartoons.

The highlight of the workshop was the contribution of a group

of children, who presented their understanding of recent events through paintings.

Participants selected 12 drawings of the children's work in order to prepare a calendar for the next year. ■



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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