



QATAR COUNTRY PROFILE

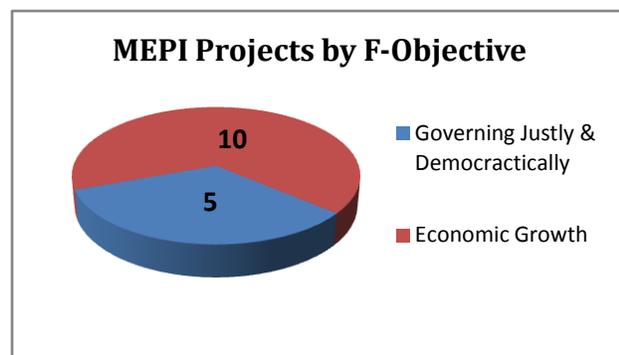
MEPI in Qatar: Partnership for a Progressive Vision

Qatar's leaders have a vision of building a modern and educated society. Partnerships with MEPI help to lay the groundwork to advance Qatar's goals as they strive towards this vision. Development of democratic institutions and an independent civil society has been slow, with the country's first parliamentary elections repeatedly delayed, but there is evidence of a strong commitment to the rule of law and expanded higher education. Our goal is to assist Qatar's citizens to realize the shared progressive vision that could make Qatar a regional model for democratic institution building. In addition, MEPI provides assistance to Qatari non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and reformers working to expand political participation and strengthen civil society and the rule of law.

MEPI's Qatar Portfolio

There are currently 15 active MEPI projects in Qatar: 13 multi-country projects including Qatar; and 2 Qatar-specific projects.

The pie chart shows which U.S. Foreign Assistance objectives are addressed by MEPI programming in Qatar.



MEPI's Partnerships in Qatar

The **American Bar Association (ABA)** is establishing a framework for NGOs in Qatar to provide ongoing Continuing Legal Education to practicing legal professionals, as well as training Qatari legal professionals in interactive adult teaching methodologies. ABA, in cooperation with Qatar University College of Law, held a continuing legal education program in May 2009 on recent legislative developments in the areas of residence and sponsorship, rents and real estate, and consumer protection. Participants included law students, lawyers, and legal researchers. Panelists included representatives of Qatar's Ministry of the Interior, law professors, and private practitioners.



The **Solidarity Center** is partnering with the Qatari National Human Rights Committee to advance basic workers' rights for migrant and Qatari workers through capacity-building programs and cross-border exchanges. In March 2009, the Solidarity Center and the National Human Rights Committee signed a groundbreaking memorandum of understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation around human and worker rights issues and fighting human trafficking. With this agreement, legal protections will be extended to migrants and more workers will gain access to support networks and information about their rights.

As part of its efforts to improve local council performance, the **National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Expanding Support for Political Reform** project provided a series of workshops for members and staff of the Qatari Central Municipal Council (CMC). The workshops, held in April 2009, assisted local government officials in strategic planning and capacity-building. Attendees included a significant number of women staffers and the lone elected woman on the CMC. NDI is also working to strengthen Qatar's Permanent Elections Committee's capacity to implement civic education campaigns and stands ready to provide assistance should the Government of Qatar call national elections, as indicated in the constitution.



Qatari students took part in a workshop where, for the first time, young Qataris were able to produce films reflecting youth perspectives on national issues. The **Qatari Youth Promote Democratic Engagement through Film** project was the creation of the award winning filmmaker, critic and camp director **Abdulrahman Najdi**. This project, launched in August 2009, was the first of its kind and a significant Qatari breakthrough, given that young people constitute a large proportion of the population of the State of Qatar. The films, which were screened and

discussed in a series of seminars, will be posted on the internet to serve as the basis for an online discussion forum between youth and the filmmakers, reaching out to a wide audience of youth, public figures, and opinion leaders. In addition, after the films premiered public on January 10, 2010, one of the films was selected for the April 2010 Al Jazeera Documentary Film Festival and a 2010 film festival in Beirut.

Finally, it is noteworthy that Qatar and the G8 chair, Canada, will co-host the **BMENA Forum for the Future** in Doha in the fall of 2010. This represents an opportunity to continue a meaningful dialogue between G8 government representatives, region-based governments, and civil society and business leaders from throughout the region.