



# The Middle East Partnership Initiative

*Supporting Democratic Reform and Opportunity  
in the Middle East and North Africa*

**T**he Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), launched in 2002, serves as the principal U.S. Department of State initiative to foster democratic reform and the advancement of vibrant, prosperous societies in the Middle East and North Africa. **Through the provision of technical assistance to reformers and reform efforts in the region, MEPI is contributing to: 1) the advance of women's rights; 2) educational reform; 3) economic opportunity; and 4) democratic governance.** These four core areas have been identified by leading Arab academics, economists and political leaders as vital to the promotion of prosperous, stable societies in the region. Since its establishment, MEPI has devoted more than \$480 million to over 450 programs to advance these goals in the Middle East and North Africa.

## A Focus on Reform

Focusing in on the structural underpinnings of a sustainable, prosperous society, MEPI complements the development assistance offered by other agencies of the U.S. Government and the international community.

**DEMOCRACY** MEPI programs aim to give citizens a greater say in the decisions impacting their daily lives through promoting democratic governance and civic participation across a range of issues and sectors including: the administration of elections; campaigning for public office; voter and civic education; reform advocacy; freedom of expression and the media; and rule of law and independence of the judiciary.

**WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT** MEPI programs serve to increase the vital role of women in society and public life. By providing access to professional growth opportunities, including skill-building for prospective leaders of the community, MEPI is contributing to more sustainable development and just societies in the Middle East and North Africa.

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY** MEPI economic programs are contributing to the dismantling of trade barriers and other obstacles to sustainable economic growth and employment and are encouraging entrepreneurship throughout the region. Addressing regulatory and institutional impediments to job creation and investment, MEPI programs in the economic sphere aim to see a region where investment, laws, and institutions come together to provide a stable foundation for society.

**EDUCATION** MEPI education programs are preparing a new generation for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century. With initiatives aimed at revitalizing education systems through improved curriculum content and delivery, increasing students' awareness of civic rights and responsibilities, and developing leadership and critical thinking skills, MEPI is serving the next generation of the region's leaders.

## A Targeted Approach

MEPI programs are targeted at identified priorities and opportunities with a preference given to directly supporting local reformers and organizations. **Since 2004, MEPI has supported more than**



*A young Jordanian girl reads from a book provided to her school through the My Arabic Library program*

**150 indigenous organizations working to advance reform in their home countries.** Through direct support to local reform efforts, MEPI is strengthening the sustainability and capacity of those organizations and actors that will serve as the region's most dedicated and successful agents of change.

Partners include local civil society organizations, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, universities, and elected institutions.

## Integrated Programming

With regional offices in Tunis and Abu Dhabi, a main office in Washington, DC, and dedicated committees at every embassy in the region, MEPI programming is coordinated at every level with U.S. policy and fully integrated into overall U.S. assistance efforts. With its own teams in the field, MEPI programming is specifically tailored to the particular challenges and opportunities in each setting. Afforded the experience and insights of U.S. diplomatic personnel in the field, the MEPI approach to programming and its direct link to policy and diplomacy provide a unique approach to promoting reform and U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa.

Fiscal Year	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
Non-Earmarked Funding Level	29.0	100.0	79.4	74.4	126.3	50.0	32.5
Overall Funding Level	29.0	100.0	89.4	74.4	142.3	50.0	49.5

MEPI Annual Funding, FY02 to the Present (in millions of dollars)

## MEPI COUNTRIES OF FOCUS

ALGERIA  
 BAHRAIN  
 EGYPT  
 ISRAEL  
 JORDAN  
 KUWAIT  
 LEBANON  
 LIBYA  
 MOROCCO  
 OMAN  
 PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES  
 QATAR  
 SAUDI ARABIA  
 SYRIA  
 TUNISIA  
 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
 YEMEN

## Select MEPI Programs and Partners

The **International Research and Exchange Board (IREX)** leads a MEPI project to increase the professionalism and sustainability of independent media in the Middle East and North Africa. The *MENA Media* program funds journalists from the region to attend a six-week program on leadership and media management. The program also distributes grants to local organizations working on media law reform, media management, and professionalism.

**Transparency International**, with local partners in Jordan, Morocco, and Bahrain, embarked on a campaign to secure government action on the UN Convention Against Corruption.

**International Executive Service Corps (IESC)** helped open new export markets for small-to medium-sized enterprises in Morocco.

In Egypt, **Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC)** and the Capital Market Authority (CMA) introduced new rules and regulations governing mergers and acquisitions.

As part the *Commercial Law Initiative*, MEPI-funded projects in Oman and UAE have reformed and modernized law school curricula and instruction methods.

**Scholastic, Inc.** has distributed 8.2 million books to 40,620 classrooms in nearly 6,770 primary schools through the *My Arabic Library* program.

Through the *Student Leaders* program, MEPI and various U.S. universities provided future leaders with instruction in leadership, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial skills.

With **ICF International**, MEPI created the *U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research* to extend community outreach on issues of women's health and create more women advocates.

During the 2006 Kuwait parliamentary elections, the first parliamentary elections to be contested by women, MEPI and the **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** played an instrumental role in preparing women candidates for their campaigns. Over 75% of the women who registered to run as candidates were alumni of MEPI programs.

An NGO coalition led by the **Ibn Khaldun Center** organized Egypt's first nationwide domestic election monitoring effort during the 2005 presidential elections.

**Sisters Arab Forum's "Women Democracy Watch"** created a network of Arab women leaders that monitored the status of women being represented in politics.