

Palestinian MEPI Alumni, Who are we?

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a regional program that helps citizens in the Middle East and North Africa develop more pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies.

The Palestinian MEPI alumni are a group of people from diverse professional and educational backgrounds who participated in one of the MEPI programs in the US, as well as local organizations that were grantees of local grants to implement projects which promote civil society and the rule of law, increase political participation, empower women and youth, create civic educational opportunities, support independent media, and foster economic growth and opportunity.

The Palestinian MEPI Alumni Network

The Network's officially launched on the 4th of February 2011, the Palestinian MEPI Alumni Network aims to provide a platform for the MEPI Alumni to exchange their expertise and opinions, encourage active participation, increase alumni involvement in the community, promote mutual understanding within the Palestinian society and the international community as well as develop empowering programs to foster positive change in the lives of the Palestinians. Since its launch, the network has planned and carried out a wide range of activities that supported the above mentioned goals.



Peace for Hebron

On December 28th 2010, the MEPI alumni participated in a community service activity that took place in Hebron city. The alumni were divided into different groups and helped in renovating the Turkish bath, assisted in replacing old lights in an old alley and painted a mural 20 meters long and 4 meters high on the back of Al-Yaqatha Boys School in the old city. The wall drawings represented the rich history of the city and symbolized hope, ambition and the desire for a peaceful life.



Youth Environment Awareness Campaign

With the hope of contributing toward building a better future, and as part of each citizen's social responsibility, the MEPI Alumni along with others alumni from different US exchange programs organized a Youth Environmental Awareness Campaign, to educate the Palestinian community about the importance of protecting the environment and keeping it clean. The campaign was carried out in three stages; educating the youth, creating environmental art work, and making a difference through painting environmental murals in Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, and East Jerusalem. More than fifteen schools were visited, and around three thousand and five hundred students were reached. Naser Touqan, one MEPI alumna from the student leaders program, helped in developing an environmental presentation that focused on the different types of the environmental pollution; air, water, and waste linked with the efforts that can be taken to preserve the environment and reduce the pollution effect.



AL-Zahra' Girls School – Hebron
March, 2011



MEPI Alumni Network Steering Committee members

Abdel Fattah Abu Srour, Anwaar Jaber, Fidaa Al Ghuseein, Hazem Abu Hilal, Hiba Attashan, Laila Othman, Lana Matar, Naser Touqan, Naser Zalmout, Renad Daoud, Sami Thwabi, Sinan Abu Shanab, Yehia Idrees

Elderly Home Visit

On March 21, (Mother's Day), more than a dozen alumni of various MEPI programs visited a home for elderly women in Qaddoura refugee camp in Ramallah. The alumni joined 22 women at the Elderly Women Society Association for lunch, and organized diverse activities to bring happiness and joy for the senior women



Team building and Leadership Training

In order to strengthen the bonds between the MEPI alumni, and enhance their leadership skills, a leadership and team building training was held on the 27th of May at Padia center in the city of Beit Sahour. Sixteen MEPI alumni from different programs came full of energy and enthusiasm to meet with their peers and develop their time management, communication, and conflict resolution skills in a unique and rewarding way.



Conflict Resolution Workshop

Gaza Strip

Early May, a MEPI alumnus and a member of the steering committee, Yehia Idrees, organized a conflict transformation/ resolution workshop in Gaza. Although the workshop aimed mainly to provide MEPI alumni with the skills necessary to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas and to enrich their knowledge in dealing with conflicts without turning back, it was also a good opportunity to facilitate networking between alumni.



The two-day training was very dynamic as it adopted participatory method. The alumni were engaged in experience based activities that involved learning by doing, short presentations, group discussions, role play and other exercises. During the two days, the alumni were exposed to a variety of vital topics. The first day focused on clarifying concepts of conflict, violence and peace, difference between resolving and transforming conflict. While in the second day, the alumni discussed theories of conflict and the values and attitudes that can be undertaken in dealing with violence.

MEPI staff in Nablus

On Saturday February 26th 2011, a group of the MEPI alumni met with Karen Volker; the MEPI Director. During the meeting three APLUS students who are originally Gaza residents expressed their gratitude to the MEPI program for giving them the chance to study in West Bank Universities, "a dream comes true". Moreover the MEPI alumni network coordinator gave a brief summary about the different activities that were carried by the MEPI alumni so far. Ms. Volker expressed her satisfaction and shared various ideas about different activities that can be carried out to empower the alumni and the Palestinian society.



Multi Media Training Course



A group of MEPI alumni from three different programs; Student Leaders, APLUS, and MEET were selected to participate in an intensive multimedia training course. The training was conducted in cooperation with the Palestinian Movie & Video Director Association (PMVDA) - A MEPI local grantee- and covered the following topics; script writing and story board, visual language, theory of directing, video editing and photography. At the end of the course, students were asked to come up with different topics for possible adaptation to short films. They voted on two topics namely: Child Labor and Youth & political parties. They will now work in collaboration with PMVDA to produce these short video clips (3min) which are meant to raise awareness in Palestinian society. The students were thrilled to participate in the program and thankful to the Alumni network for the opportunity.

In cooperation with America House and the USG Alumni Association, a friendly basketball game was held on June 26th 2011 in a public school in Ramallah, Palestine. Around 12 alumni from Peace Players local grant teamed with other alumni from the YES and ACCESS programs against US Consulate and America House employees. During this activity, the alumni had the opportunity to network with each other and learn more about other US exchange programs.

