

MEPI Alumni Connection

رابطة خريجي ميبي



2020 MEPI Alumni Survey

Morocco Report



Acknowledgments

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Alumni Connection develops an active alumni network that fosters long-lasting relationships and opportunities to stimulate social and business entrepreneurship in the MENA region. The MEPI Alumni Connection supports community leaders from across the Middle East and North Africa to strengthen their networks, collaborate on leadership initiatives, and develop their skills in order to contribute to their communities.

IREX would like to acknowledge the contributions of MEPI alumni who took the time to respond thoughtfully to the biennial survey and share their experiences. Data collection outreach was conducted by the program team and supported by MEPI staff and partners. Hallie Davis conducted analysis and drafted this document with support from the MEPI Alumni Connection team.

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2020 MEPI Alumni Survey: Morocco

MEPI Alumni Connection

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Respondent Profile



49 respondents
from 2004 to 2019 (program completion years)



Age

20-29 years 57%
30+ 43%

Gender

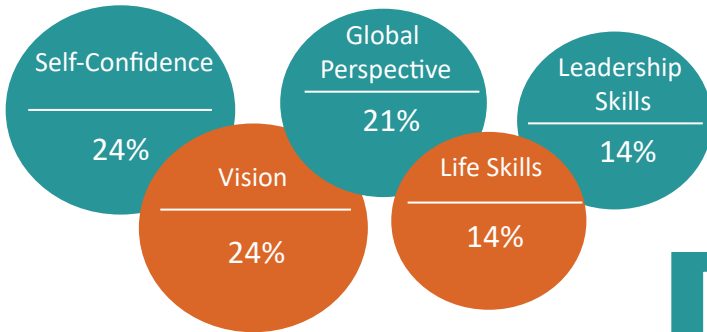
Female 49% Male 51%



MEPI Program

49% Student Leaders Program
41% Leadership Development Fellowship
4% Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program
4% Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship
2% MEPI Women's Business Internship

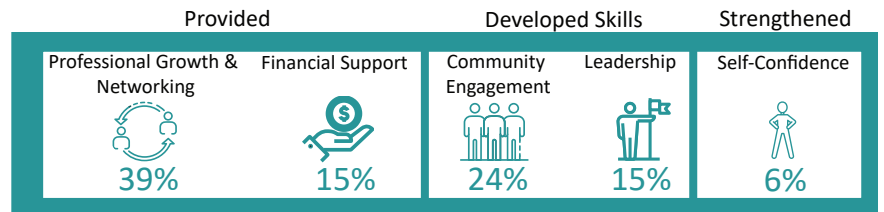
How was MEPI a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 29 responses.

Impact of MEPI

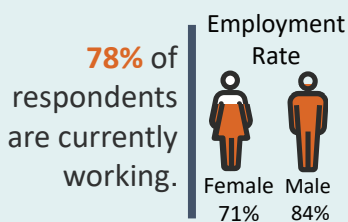
How MEPI has helped develop alumni's ability to make an impact in their communities.



Note: Data based on 33 responses.

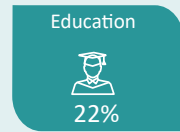
Alumni Impact

Employment



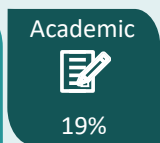
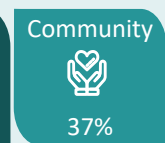
Community Projects

Type of community project conducted



Leadership

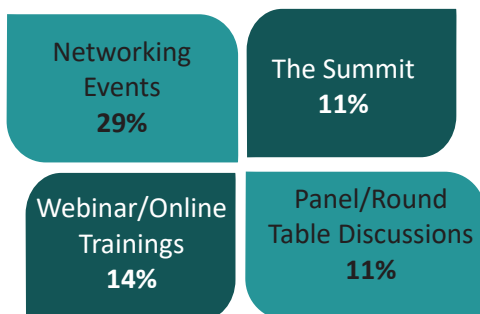
88% of respondents have served in a leadership role in the past year.



82% of respondents conducted at least one community project within the past two years.

MEPI Alumni Interests

Desired Activities



Top Three Skills Respondents Would Like to Develop



Most helpful



I. Introduction and Background

For nearly two decades, the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) has fostered partnerships between citizens, civil society, the private sector, and governments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to resolve local challenges and promote shared interests in the areas of participatory governance and economic opportunity and reform. The MEPI Alumni Connection aims to further strengthen and sustain a network of approximately 1,500 graduates of MEPI leadership programs, including the Student Leaders Program, the Tomorrow's Leaders Program, and the Leadership Development Fellowship (LDF) (previously the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship). The MEPI Alumni Connection engages with alumni by offering a variety of activities to promote community and business leadership and enhance professional development opportunities. Alumni from across the MENA region in Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen are included in the MEPI Alumni Connection.

This report presents and analyzes the 2020 MEPI alumni survey results from Morocco respondents.

II. Methodology and Limitations

In 2020, the MEPI Alumni Connection team surveyed alumni of MEPI leadership programs to better understand the backgrounds and needs of these alumni, the impact of MEPI leadership programming in MENA, and assess mid-line results of the MEPI Alumni Connection. The survey is conducted biennially, and an initial needs assessment was conducted in 2018.

In July-September 2020, an online survey with up to 64 questions, provided in English and Arabic, was distributed to MEPI leadership alumni who had contact information in the MEPI Alumni Connection database and completed their program in 2003-2020. The questions were designed to learn more about engaging the MEPI alumni; the impact of MEPI programming on alumni professional, personal, and community leadership development; and the reach of MEPI programming and alumni in MENA.

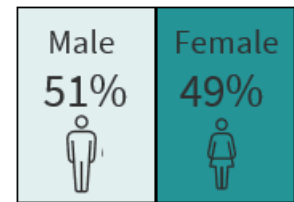
Responses were collected using Survey Monkey. The survey was distributed initially to a representative group, 20% of alumni, to test its effectiveness over the course of a week. The order of questions was subsequently adjusted, and fewer questions became required to encourage survey completion and response rate. The survey was then distributed to the remaining 80% of alumni. Alumni who had not completed the survey received approximately weekly reminders via SurveyMonkey. Alumni were encouraged to complete the survey by IREX, MEPI, U.S. Embassies, and other MEPI leadership program stakeholders via program platforms and activities. Additionally, team members called a selection of alumni from diverse programs and countries who had not responded to the survey to encourage them. Alumni who completed the survey were eligible to be randomly selected for a professional development honorarium.

The survey was closed in September 2020 with a response rate of 30% (504/1663). Duplicates and any response from individuals not eligible for the MEPI Alumni Connection were removed for a total sample of 408 eligible responses. For analysis and reporting, the open-ended answers in Arabic were translated into English. The results were analyzed through quantitative data analysis and qualitative coding. The data has been disaggregated and further analyzed by gender, citizenship, age, and MEPI program and program completion year, where relevant. Due to the lengthy nature of the survey, the response rates for many of the questions were uneven and low. Therefore, all percentages utilized in this report are calculated as a percentage (%) of total respondents for each corresponding question. Responses included in this report represent 32% (49/154) of all eligible alumni from Morocco who had contact information available at the time of the survey.

III. Results

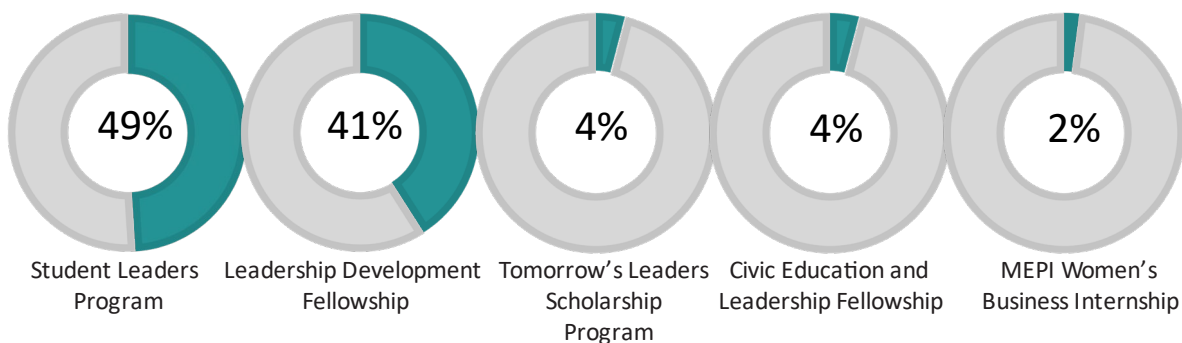
A. Respondent Profile

The survey includes 49 alumni respondents whose citizenship is Morocco, making up approximately 12% (49/408) of the total sample of alumni respondents across all participating countries and programs. There is a fairly even gender representation of respondents as 49% (24/49) are female, and 51% (25/49) are male. Across MEPI leadership programs, 49% (24/49) of respondents are alumni of the Student Leaders Program, and 41% (20/49) are alumni of the Leadership Development Fellowship. Two respondents (4%) are alumni of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program and two from the Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship. It should be noted that the response rate for Tomorrow’s Leaders alumni in Morocco is 18% (2/11) as there are so few individuals from this program. Additionally, there is one respondent who is an alumna of the MEPI Women’s Business Internship.



Note: Data based on 49 responses.

MEPI Program

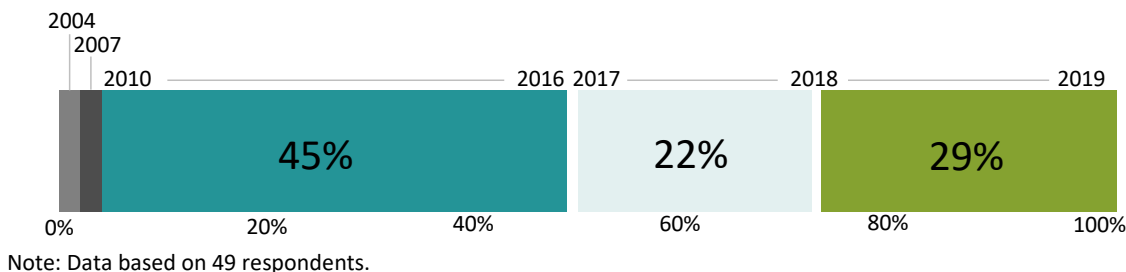


Note: Data based on 49 responses.

Respondents tend to be younger, and the majority have completed their program relatively recently. Out of 44 respondents, 57% (25/44) are 20-29 years old and 43% (19/44) are 30 years old or older. There is one respondent who completed their program in 2004 and one in 2007. The remaining respondents completed their program between 2010 – 2019. About half of respondents, 51% (25/49), completed their

program in 2017, 2018, or 2019. Moreover, almost one-third, 29% (14/49), of respondents completed their program in 2019 alone.

Percentage of Alumni Respondents by MEPI Program Completion



Findings also show that most of the respondents' current or primary country of residence is Morocco, with a few respondents residing abroad. Out of 33 respondents, 82% (27/33) reported Morocco as their current or primary country of residence and 18% (6/33) lived abroad. Among the six respondents who noted their current or primary country of residence was outside of Morocco, three said they resided in France, one in Germany, one in Spain, and one in the United Arab Emirates.

B. Impact of MEPI

Survey results show that respondents' participation in their MEPI program had a significant impact on their lives. It improved their self-confidence and helped them develop a new vision to impact their community positively. It also encouraged a more global perspective and equipped respondents with more robust life and leadership skills. Additionally, respondents felt that MEPI enhanced their ability to impact their communities by providing new opportunities, developing skills, and boosting personal growth. Some of these opportunities included access to a professional network and financial support. Respondents were also able to develop skills to better engage their community and serve as leaders.

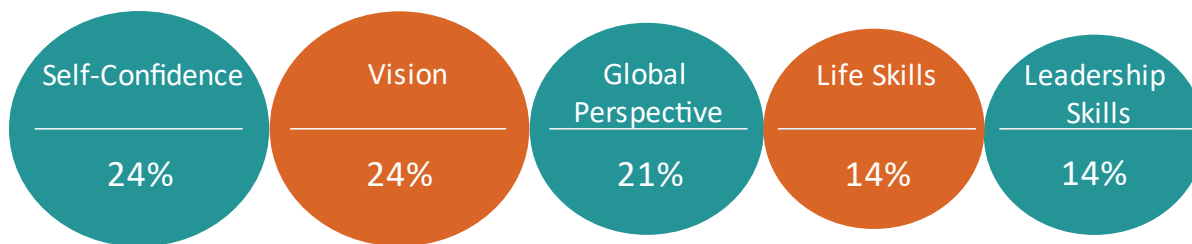
In turn, alumni respondents have had an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Respondents work across a variety of industries and have started businesses and organizations. Additionally, respondents have shared their knowledge gained from MEPI, with colleagues in the workplace. In their communities, respondents have been active, conducting projects mainly focused on youth engagement, education, and professional skills. Respondents' impact also extends to serving in leadership roles and demonstrating leadership through empowering youth and encouraging entrepreneurship.

MEPI Impact on Alumni

MEPI was a positive and transformative experience for respondents. They reported that participation in their MEPI leadership program changed their lives and enabled them to impact their communities significantly.

Respondents were asked if MEPI was a life-changing experience and, if so, how MEPI had changed their lives. Respondents noted that MEPI improved their self-confidence and helped them develop a new vision for community impact. It also gave them a global perspective and developed life and leadership skills.

How was MEPI was a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 29 responses to the open-ended question, “Many alumni say that MEPI was a life-changing experience. How, if at all, did MEPI change your life?” Percentages exclude responses that only confirmed the question and did not provide an explanation.

Among 29 respondents, 24% (7/29) said MEPI was life-changing because it increased their confidence and belief in themselves. They felt MEPI helped them understand their potential and ability to make an impact. One respondent said MEPI “had a major impact on me as it gave me the confidence, I needed...to start seizing the opportunities life gave me.”



“MEPI has allowed me to discover my potential and the things I can achieve in my own country.”

About one-quarter, 24% (7/29), of respondents said MEPI helped them develop a vision for impact and solutions in their communities through creative and innovative thinking. One respondent noted, “I now have a clear vision in making decisions.” Other respondents indicated that MEPI “unlocked [their] mind” and helped them develop “innovative ideas.”

Another 21% (6/29) of respondents said MEPI helped them develop a global perspective. MEPI “[permitted respondents] to see the world from another perspective” and allowed them to “meet amazing people from all over the world.” Finally, MEPI also helped respondents develop new skills; 14% (4/29) of respondents were able to gain life skills and 14% (4/29) gained skills in leadership. One respondent said their MEPI experience “has given me a lot, both personally and strengthened my life skills.” Another noted that “MEPI was an eye-opener on the importance of leadership training for positive civic engagement.”¹

In addition to being a transformative experience, respondents also stated that MEPI helped improve their ability to impact their communities. They noted that MEPI provided new opportunities for professional growth and networking as well as financial support. It also helped them acquire new skills to engage their community better, serve as leaders, and it strengthened their self-confidence.

¹ Percentages exclude one respondent that only confirmed the question and did not provide an explanation.

How MEPI has helped develop alumni’s ability to make an impact in their communities.



Note: Data based on 33 responses to the open-ended question, “How has MEPI helped you develop your ability to make an impact in your community?”

Of 33 respondents, 39% (13/33) said MEPI provided them with opportunities that helped them grow as professionals and develop their network. MEPI “helped in capacity building,” and respondents “gained a lot of qualifications.” Another 15% (5/33) of respondents appreciated the financial support they received from MEPI as it enabled them to start and grow their initiatives and have an “unprecedented impact on [their] community.” Additionally, 24% (8/33) of respondents were also able to develop skills that enabled them to better engage their community, and 15% (5/33) to serve as leaders. A few respondents, 6% (2/33), also said that MEPI improved their self-confidence.

Professional Growth & Networking

“Through [the MEPI] program I had the chance to...[meet] influential people who already made a change and who inspired me to do the same.”

Financial Support

“The continuous support from MEPI...financially through grants, has greatly contributed to my personal development and the development of my institution.”

Community Engagement

MEPI “gave me the resources and know-how to better understand my community, in order to help it.”

Leadership

“MEPI has helped me develop my leadership skills and improve myself.”

Self-Confidence

“MEPI experience has developed in me more confidence, changed my perspective towards the impact of small changes and how they do help in major changes.”

Note: Quotes are based on 33 responses to the open-ended question, “How has MEPI helped you develop your ability to make an impact in your community?”

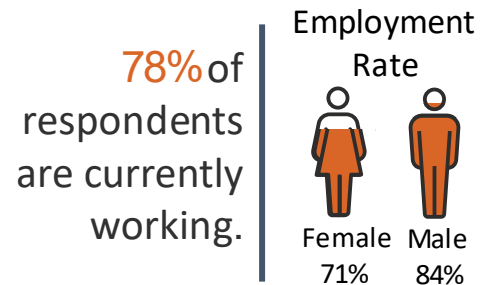
Alumni Impact

Alumni respondents have made an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, their communities, and as leaders. Additionally, they have been able to use their experiences from MEPI to impact their communities further.

Employment and Entrepreneurship

At the time the survey was conducted, 78% (38/49) of respondents said they were currently working with paid employment. The employment rate was higher among males than females, as 84% (21/25) of males said they were working compared to 71% (17/24) of females.



Additionally, older respondents were more likely to be employed than younger respondents; 84% (16/19) of respondents 30 years or older were working compared to 76% (19/25) of respondents 20-29 years old. Across MEPI programs, respondents from the Student Leaders Program had an employment rate of 75% (18/24) and respondents from the Leadership Development Fellowship, had the same rate of 75% (15/20). Five other respondents were not alumni from these two programs, of which all five reported having employment.



Note: Data based on 49 respondents to the question, "Are you currently working? (Only select yes if you have paid employment)"

Of 38 employed respondents, who provided their position level, 24% (9/38) held an entry-level position, 24% (9/38) a mid-level position, 42% (16/38) an executive-level position, and 11% (4/38) were self-employed. The majority of women, 65% (11/17), worked in either an entry or mid-level position. However, the majority of males, 62% (13/21), worked in an executive-level position. This indicates that males were more likely to be employed and hold higher-level positions (i.e., executive-level positions).

Across all levels, respondents reported working across a variety of industries, organizations, and businesses. Of 32 respondents, 28% (9/32) worked for a large business, 22% (7/32) for a local nongovernment organization (NGO), 13% (4/32) for a small business, and 13% (4/32) for the local government. Additionally, 9% (3/32) indicated they worked for an international NGO, 9% (3/32) for a medium-sized business, and 6% (2/32) reported they were self-employed.²

 **49%** of respondents started their own business or organization after their experience with MEPI. 

While a smaller percentage of respondents reported they were self-employed or owned a business, almost half, 49% (24/49), stated they had started their own business or organization after their experience with MEPI. This discrepancy in responses may be because of several reasons, including respondents may have started a business in the past but are no longer business owners, they do not rely on income from their business and therefore do not consider themselves self-employed, or they started an organization and do not consider themselves to be self-employed or a business owner. Among those who started a business/organization, 88% (21/24) had support from a partner or a partner organization. Additionally, 38% (8/21) of respondents said they met their partner either through their MEPI program or through the alumni network. This indicates that respondents' participation in their MEPI program and the alumni network has enhanced opportunities for entrepreneurial activities.

² A large business is defined as having more than 201 employees, a medium-sized business is defined as having between 50 to 200 employees, and a small business is defined as having no more than 50 employees.

MEPI has also helped respondents be successful in their careers because they have been able to apply skills learned from MEPI in their current positions. Respondents said that MEPI helped them develop skills in project management, communication, decision-making, and marketing. Respondents have also used leadership skills to “achieve better results” and “empower youth to be change-makers.” Moreover, respondents felt it was important to share the knowledge they gained from MEPI with others in their workplace.



“I am cascading most of what I learned from the [MEPI] program to the teachers and school staff.”

Community Projects

The majority of respondents have been active in their communities, as 82% (40/49) have conducted at least one community project within the past two years. Females were more likely to conduct a community project than males, 83% (20/24) compared to 80% (20/24). Similarly, a higher percentage of older respondents conducted a community project, 84% (16/19), compared to younger respondents, 80% (20/25). Additionally, 88% (21/24) of respondents from the Student Leaders Program and 90% (18/20) of respondents from the Leadership Development Fellowship conducted a community project.

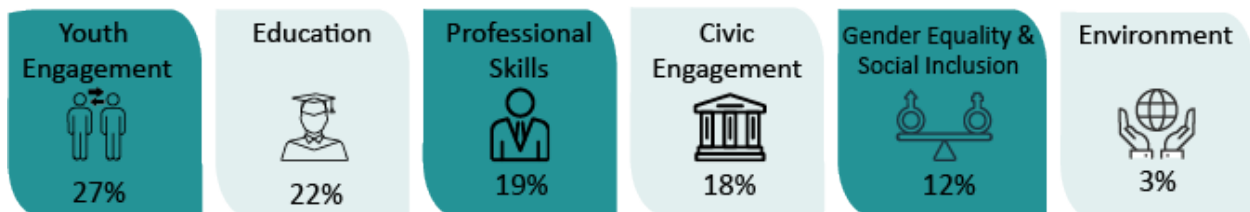


82% of respondents have conducted at least one community project within the past two years.



Among respondents who conducted a community project, 38 provided information as to the type of project. The most common type focused on youth engagement, 27%, followed by education, 22%, and professional skills, 19%. An additional 18% of respondents conducted projects on civic engagement, 12% on gender equality and social inclusion, and 3% on the environment.³ There are some differences in the type of project conducted across gender. Females were most likely to conduct projects focused on education, 21%, youth engagement, 21%, and professional skills, 21%. However, males were most likely to conduct projects focused on youth engagement, 34%.⁴ Additionally, many respondents conducted more than one type of project, 50% conducted at least two types, and 34% conducted at least three.

Type of Community Project Conducted



Note: Data based on 38 responses to the question “What type of project did you conduct?” Respondents could select multiple options.

Among respondents who conducted at least one community project, 33 provided an estimate of how many people they believe benefited from their projects. According to responses, more than 16,000 individuals were positively impacted by respondents’ community projects. Projects ranged from having

³ Percentages are based on 38 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

⁴ Percentages are based on 18 female responses and 20 male responses in which multiple options could be selected.

four beneficiaries to as many as 7000; however, most respondents, 55% (18/33), conducted projects with 150 beneficiaries or less.

The impact of community projects can be further understood through respondents' accounts of their greatest success or result. Respondents noted the impact their projects had on youth in their communities and the environment. One respondent was able to "[establish] the first academy in [the] region," which "offered many skills to the children." Another respondent trained youth teams on social leadership, where the students "have been able to translate their learning into social action projects."



"Youth Debates Project...became the first open platform for youth...which contributed to enhancing [their] participation in local affairs through debate."

However, respondents also noted a number of challenges that have made starting and growing their projects difficult. Some of these challenges included the pandemic, lack of financial resources, and societal norms. One respondent said the COVID-19 pandemic "and the changes it has brought about, [has] made the implementation of the project...difficult." Other respondents noted they faced "financial challenges" and experienced an "absence of financial support." Respondents also expressed challenges with some aspects of society. One respondent said they faced "difficulty [in] overcoming prejudices, norms, and traditions deposited in the minds of society." Another mentioned challenges "related to conservative culture, especially the exclusion of women from entering the public space."

Despite challenges, many respondents have been able to impact their communities and experience success in their projects. This ability has been strengthened by their participation in their MEPI program and the MEPI Alumni Connection. Half of the respondents, 50% (18/36), who conducted a community project collaborated with someone they met through the alumni network or their MEPI program. Among those who collaborated with someone, 48% met their partner through the MEPI alumni network, 33% through their MEPI program, and 19% through the Department of State alumni network.⁵ This indicates that the MEPI program and the alumni network have been beneficial in fostering partnerships and collaborations among respondents.



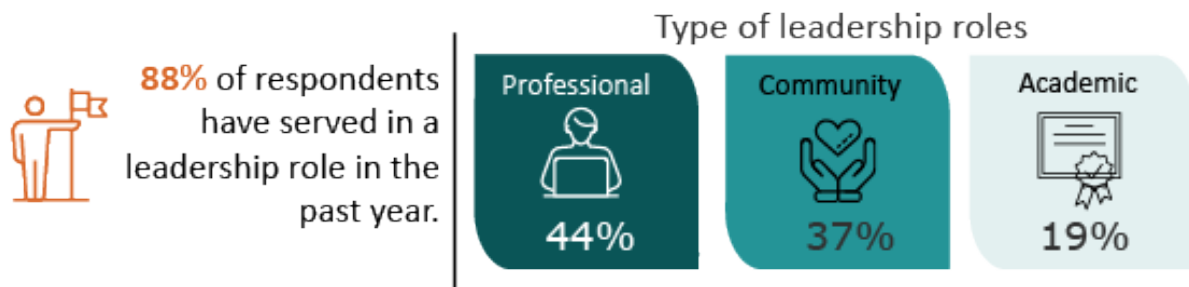
50% of respondents who conducted a community project collaborated with someone they met through the alumni network or their MEPI program.

Leadership

Respondents have also impacted their communities by serving in leadership roles. Of 42 respondents, 88% (37/42) have served in a leadership role within the past year. Across gender, a fairly equal percentage of males and females have served in leadership roles, 88% (21/24) and 89% (16/18), respectively. However, there is a notable difference across age. Among respondents 30 years old and older, 94% (17/18) have served in a leadership role, compared to 81% (17/21) among respondents 20 -29 years old.

⁵ Percentages based on 18 respondents who collaborated with someone on a community project, multiple answers could be selected.

Among respondents who served in a leadership role, 44% were in a professional setting, 37% in a community setting, and 19% in an academic setting.⁶ A professional setting was the most common type of leadership role across all respondent ages and gender; however, there is a difference across MEPI programs. Alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program most commonly served in a professional setting (50%) while alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship most commonly served in a community setting (55%).⁷



Note: Percentages for type of leadership roles are based 37 respondents who could select multiple options.

Beyond serving in a formal leadership role, respondents have also demonstrated leadership in their communities and workplaces. When asked how they have used their leadership skills to help people, respondents noted they have empowered youth, encouraged entrepreneurship and civic engagement, and provided new ideas to colleagues. One respondent had “run several empowerment workshops for the benefit of teenage girls from underserved communities.” Another was “able to share what [they learned] from MEPI...to inspire a number of girls...to take on leadership in their lives.” Other respondents focused on encouraging entrepreneurship, including “training young people on creating start-up initiatives and companies.” While another respondent was able to influence their workplace and “helped change colleagues’ minds over issues related to hiring new faculty, curriculum design, and department management.”



“By virtue of being a person with a disability, I offer an inspiring model for the children of my community in achieving self-realization and overcoming difficulties. I also motivate them and spread the spirit of hope and self-confidence [and to] engage in civic work.”

C. Impact of MEPI Alumni Connection

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers numerous activities for alumni to grow their network and develop new professional skills. Many respondents have participated in these activities within the past two years. Among them, webinars and networking were the activities with the highest participation. Additionally, the main reason respondents did not participate in activities was either because of a lack of time or difficulty in travel.

⁶ Percentages based on 37 respondents who served in a leadership setting and could select multiple options.

⁷ Percentages based on 20 respondents from the Student Leaders Program and 17 from the Leadership Development Fellowship, multiple options could be selected.

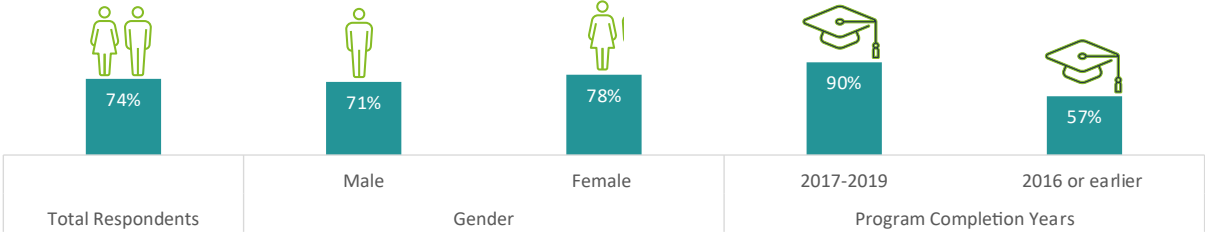
Respondents' engagement with the MEPI Alumni Connection has led to numerous positive outcomes. They built new relationships and collaborated with other MEPI alumni on projects, initiatives, and business ideas. Additionally, respondents have been able to conduct numerous events and activities to promote specific issues and awareness. Support received from the MEPI Alumni Connection, such as the Alumni Venture Fund, has enabled respondents to conduct and expand community projects. Moreover, the MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader impact on communities as many respondents have shared what they learned from alumni activities with colleagues and family.

Alumni engagement

Professional Development Activities

Of 42 respondents, 74% (31/42) participated in networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection within the past two years. The participation rate among females is 78% (14/18), which is higher than males, who have a participation rate of 71% (17/24). Additionally, participation is higher among respondents who completed their program relevantly recently. Among respondents who completed their program in 2017 – 2019, 90% (19/21) participated in an alumni opportunity. This is compared to 57% (12/21) of respondents who completed their program in 2016 or earlier.

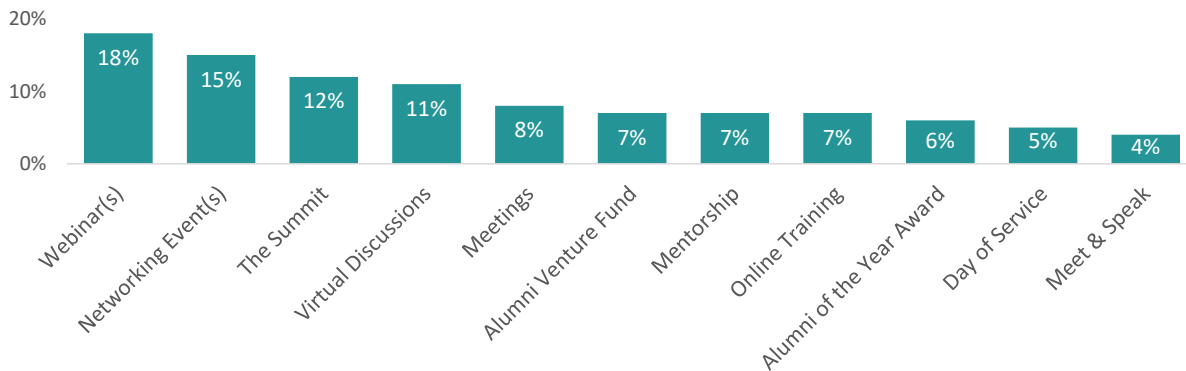
Respondents' Participation in Networking or Professional Development Opportunities



Note: Data based on 42 responses among all respondents, 18 females, 24 males, 21 respondents who completed their program in 2017-2019, and 21 who completed their program in 2016 or earlier.

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers numerous types of networking and professional development opportunities to appeal to diverse alumni including, webinars, networking events, the Summit, virtual discussions, meetings, the Alumni Venture Fund, mentorship, online training, the Alumni of the Year Award, MEPI Day of Service, and opportunities to meet and speak.

Participation in networking or professional development opportunities



Note: Data based on 31 respondents who indicated that they had participated in a networking or professional development opportunity through the MEPI Alumni Connection during the past two years. Respondents could select all options that apply.

The activity with the highest participation was webinars, as 18% of respondents participated. The next most highly participated activities were networking events (15%), the Summit (12%), and virtual discussions (11%).⁸ Webinars had the highest participation across gender and age. However, respondents who completed their program relatively recently (i.e., 2017-2019) were more likely to have participated in networking events (19%) than webinars (17%).⁹

Of 42 respondents, 26% (11/42) said they did not participate in any networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection. These respondents were then asked to provide a response as to their primary reason for not participating. Of the 9 respondents who answered, three said they lacked time to attend any alumni events, three faced difficulties in traveling, two said they were not invited, and one respondent said they were not interested in the topics of any alumni events.

Impact of Alumni Engagement

The MEPI Alumni Connection has helped alumni build relationships with new alumni and one another. As a result of participation in a MEPI Alumni Connection activity, 80% (32/40) of respondents have built relationships with new alumni. Additionally, 65% (26/40) of respondents have built relationships with at least six new alumni, indicating that alumni activities help foster numerous relationships. The MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped enhance collaborations.

In the past two years, 46% (19/41) of respondents have collaborated with at least one other alumni from MEPI or the Department of State on a project, initiative, or business idea. Among males, 57% (13/23) have collaborated with other alumni, while 33% (6/18) of females have. There is also a difference across age; 43% (9/21) of younger respondents have collaborated with other alumni compared to 56% (10/18) of older respondents. Additionally, respondents have collaborated with civil society organizations to conduct events that promote specific issues and awareness. In the past two years, 247 events and activities were led by 32 respondents. While one respondent led 40 different events, the majority, 72% (23/32),

⁸ Percentages are based on responses from 31 respondents who participated in networking/professional development opportunities and where multiple options could be selected.

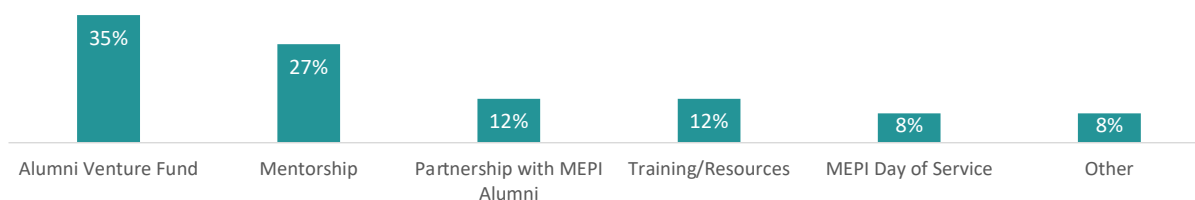
⁹ Percentages are based on responses from 19 respondents who completed their program in 2017, 2018, or 2019.

conducted five or fewer. Of the total 247 events that were conducted, 24% were conducted by 12 females and 20 males conducted 76%.

 **247** events and activities were led by **32**  respondents.

Beyond helping develop relationships and collaborations, the MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped respondents conduct and expand community projects through offering a menu of opportunities and support. This includes the Alumni Venture Fund, mentorship, partnerships, training/resources, and the MEPI Day of Service. Among respondents who conducted a community project, 47% (18/38) report having received at least one form of support. The most common support respondents received was the Alumni Venture Fund (35%). Other forms of support included mentorships (27%), partnerships (12%), training/resources (12%), and the MEPI Day of Service (8%). An additional 8% of respondents (i.e., two respondents) received support through other means. One respondent received support through an unspecified alumni small grant and the other through the World Learning alumni fund for COVID-19 projects.¹⁰

Type of Support Received from the MEPI Alumni Connection



Note: Data based on 18 respondents who received support for their community project in which multiple options could be selected.

Support received from the Alumni Venture Fund enabled respondents' projects to have long-term results and impact. One respondent, who received the award, said their media production project "motivated many [students] to establish their own [media] channels as well as...[study] media." Another respondent was able to "[train] more than 600 students in the field of entrepreneurship" who "were able to produce innovative projects that [served] the youth and the environment." These students were then "able to make their projects seriously and distinctly successful."

The MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader influence beyond its direct impact on helping respondents develop new partnerships and conduct events and projects. Of 36 respondents, 94% (34/36) said they have shared what they learned through a MEPI alumni activity (event, training, partnership, etc.) with others. Among respondents who said they had shared what they learned, 25% have done so with colleagues, 17% in-person, 16% on social media, 11% online, 7% with other MEPI alumni, 6% in a

¹⁰ Percentages are based on 18 respondents who received support for their community project and could select multiple options.

publication, and 4% with other DoS alumni.¹¹ Therefore, MEPI alumni activities likely benefit alumni and their colleagues, friends, and family.

D. MEPI Alumni Interests

Overall, the MEPI Alumni Connection appears to support alumni. Respondents feel comfortable and secure participating in alumni activities. Additionally, they think that alumni resources are appropriate.

Respondents also expressed their interests and preferences for different activities and opportunities they would like. Respondents indicated that networking events, including networking events with professionals and diplomats, were the type of activities they would most like to see implemented through the MEPI Alumni Connection. Regarding the format of events, respondents would most prefer online events during evening hours, in-person events during weekends, and 2-4-day intensive trainings. Additionally, respondents noted that they would like to develop skills in project management, conflict resolution, and advocacy and stakeholder engagement. In terms of support, respondents indicated that the most helpful form of financial support would be grants, and a professional mentor, would be the most helpful form of non-financial support.

Alumni Needs

The majority of respondents, 57% (21/37), agreed that the MEPI Alumni Connection provides appropriate and relevant resources to their current professional or academic level. Additionally, respondents were asked if they feel secure and comfortable participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities. Among 38 respondents, 89% reported that they always felt secure, 8% often felt secure, and one respondent reported that they rarely felt secure. This indicates that, overall, most respondents feel secure and comfortable participating in alumni activities.

Opportunities to Further Strengthen and Grow the MEPI Alumni Connection

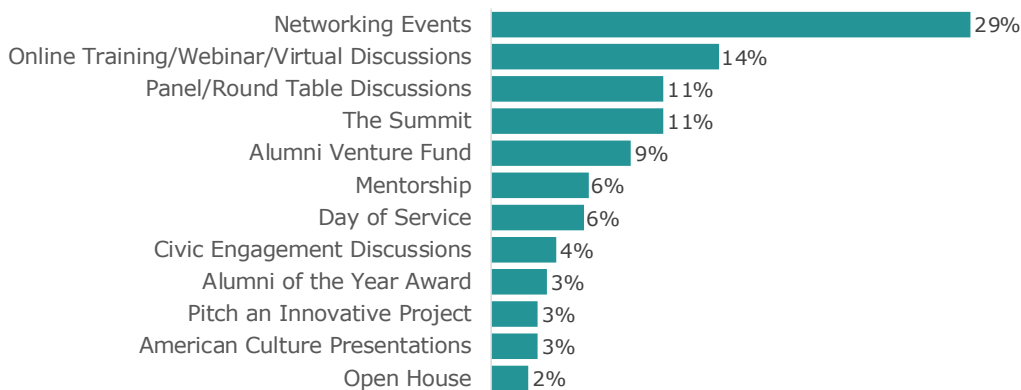
There are several opportunities for the MEPI Alumni Connection to continue its support for alumni and meet their needs. The survey included questions to understand respondents' interests in activities and opportunities with the MEPI Alumni Connection. Question topics included activities alumni would like to see implemented, preferences for format of events, skills they would like to develop, as well as useful financial and non-financial support they would like to receive.

Respondents stated that the activities they would most like to see implemented were networking events (29%), such as networking events with diplomats and professionals. The next most desired activities were online events (14%), including online trainings, webinars, and virtual discussions. Other activities included panel and round table discussions (11%) and the Summit (11%).¹²

¹¹ Percentages are based on 34 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

¹² Data is based on 49 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

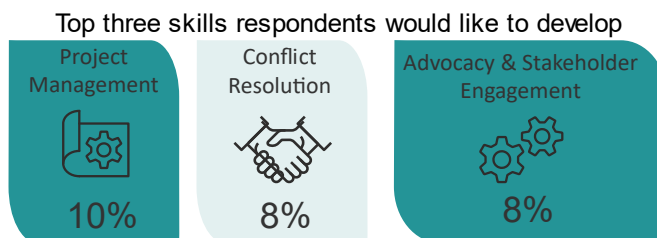
Respondents' Desired Activities



Note: Data based on 49 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

Additionally, the most common responses regarding the format of events/trainings were online during evening hours (18%), in-person during weekends (18%), and 2-4-day intensive trainings (18%). Additional responses included online during weekends (15%), in-person during evening hours (10%), and up to 1-day trainings. Females indicated they would prefer events online during evening hours (18%) and in-person during weekends (18%), while males would prefer 2-4-day intensive trainings (24%).¹³

Respondents were also asked to select three skills they would like to develop to advance their community and professional leadership. Among all respondents, the skills most preferred were project management (10%), conflict resolution (8%), and advocacy and stakeholder engagement (8%). Among females, negotiation was the skill they would most like to develop, and among males, it was project management. There were also differences in desired skills across age. Younger respondents indicated they would like to develop skills in project management (12%) and advocacy and stakeholder management (12%), while promoting youth engagement (14%) was selected among older respondents.¹⁴



Note: Data based on 49 responses in which respondents could select multiple options to the question.

In addition to activities and skills, respondents were asked what financial and non-financial resources would be most beneficial in helping them feel prepared to improve or launch new projects. Regarding financial resources, 48 respondents indicated grants would be most helpful (40%), followed by investments (24%), donations (20%), and loans (6%). An additional 6% of respondents indicated that all financial resources would be helpful (i.e., grant, investment, donation, and loan), and another 6% noted no financial resources were needed.¹⁵

Additionally, 48 respondents indicated that the most beneficial non-financial resource would be a professional mentor (27%). Other non-financial resources included access to alumni or professionals with

¹³ Data is based on 48 total respondents, 24 females and 24 males, in which multiple options could be selected.

¹⁴ Data is based on all 49 respondents who could select multiple options.

¹⁵ Data is based on 48 respondents who could select multiple options.

relevant experience (25%), partner(s) (18%), in-person training (16%), and online training (13%). This suggests that partnerships and professional collaborations may help respondents feel more prepared to launch an initiative than formal trainings.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

MEPI has significantly impacted respondents' lives and enhanced their ability to make an impact in their communities. MEPI has helped transform respondents' lives by improving their self-confidence, helping them develop a vision for community impact, and providing them with a global perspective. It has also further strengthened respondents' life and leadership skills. Moreover, it has improved respondents' ability to make an impact in their communities by providing new opportunities and supporting the development of new skills and personal growth. Respondents felt their ability to positively impact their community was enhanced because MEPI provided access to a professional network and financial support. It also strengthened respondents' self-confidence and helped them develop skills to engage their community better and serve as leaders.

Alumni respondents have been able to use their MEPI experience to have an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Many respondents are working in various industries and have started their own businesses and organizations. Respondents have also conducted community projects with numerous reported beneficiaries, predominately in youth engagement and education. Moreover, respondents have impacted their communities by serving as leaders in formal leadership roles and by encouraging youth and influencing colleagues.

Participation in the MEPI Alumni Connection has also been highly impactful for respondents as it provides numerous opportunities for them to grow their network and develop new professional skills. The majority of respondents have participated in these opportunities and activities, with participation highest in webinars and networking events. Respondents' engagement and participation in these activities have led to many beneficial outcomes, including collaborations and community projects. Respondents have also collaborated with other MEPI alumni and civil society organizations. Moreover, support received from the MEPI Alumni Connection has enabled respondents to conduct and expand their community projects, resulting in greater impact.

Overall, most respondents felt secure and comfortable when participating in alumni activities. However, not all respondents said they felt very secure. Therefore, additional follow-up should be conducted to understand alumni's needs and identify potential solutions in helping ensure all alumni feel comfortable and secure. There are also opportunities for the MEPI Alumni Connection to strengthen alumni relations and provide further support. Respondents indicated that they would like the opportunity to participate in networking events and online trainings. The format of events most preferred by respondents were online during evening hours and in-person during weekends. Additionally, respondents would like to develop skills in project management, conflict resolution and advocacy and stakeholder engagement. To further support alumni's ability to improve or launch new projects, respondents said grants would be the most beneficial financial resource, and a professional mentor, the most beneficial non-financial resource.

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<https://www.irex.org/project/mepi-alumni-connection>