

MEPI Alumni Connection

رابطة خريجي ميبي



2020 MEPI Alumni Survey

Tunisia 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: Tunisia

MEPI Alumni Connection

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Respondent Profile

48 respondents
from 2005 to 2019 (program completion years)

Age
20-29 years 64%
30+ 36%

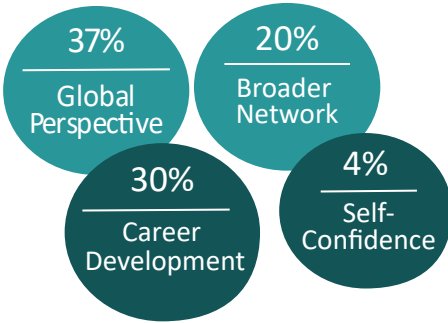
Gender
Male 54%
Female 46%



MEPI Program

47% Student Leaders Program
36% Leadership Development Fellowship
16% Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program
1% MEPI Women's Business Internship

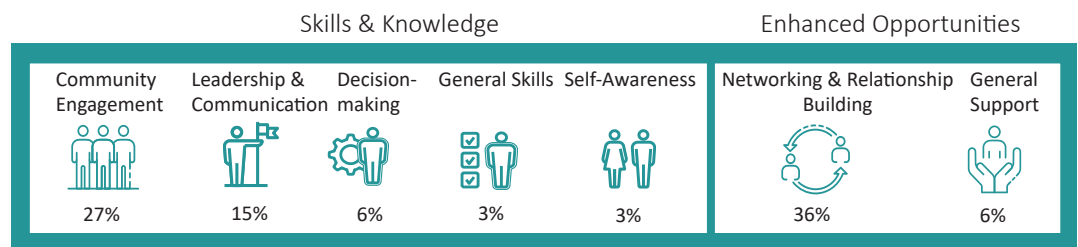
How was MEPI a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 46 responses.

Impact of MEPI

How MEPI has helped 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?"

Alumni Impact

Employment



About **3 in 4** respondents are currently working.

Community Projects



More than **19,000** individuals benefited from community projects conducted by alumni.

Leadership

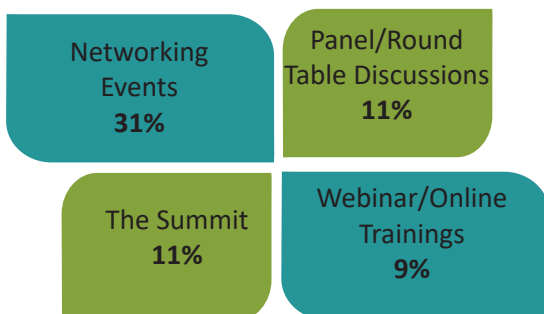
73% of respondents have served in a leadership role in the past year.

Type of leadership roles

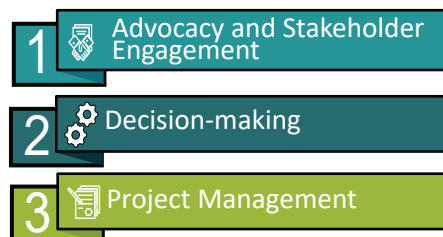


MEPI Alumni Interests

Desired Activities



Top Three Skills Respondents Would Like to Develop



Most helpful

Financial Resource Non-Financial Resource



Grants



Professional Mentor

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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 Tunisian 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

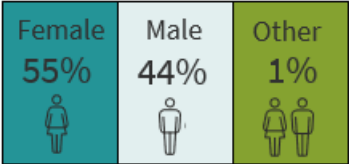
has been disaggregated and further analyzed by gender, citizenship, age, and MEPI program and program completion year, where relevant. Due to the lengthy nature of the survey, the response rates for many of the questions were uneven and low. Therefore, all percentages utilized in this report are calculated as a percentage (%) of total respondents for each corresponding question. Responses included in this report represent 38% (76/202) of all eligible alumni from Tunisia who had contact information available at the time of the survey.

III. Results

A. Respondent Profile

The survey includes 76 alumni respondents whose place of citizenship is Tunisia, making up approximately 19% (76/408) of the total sample of alumni respondents across all participating countries and programs.

There is a slightly higher percentage of female respondents than male respondents, as 55% identify as female, 44% identify as male, and 1% as other. Almost all the alumni from Tunisia had participated in one of the three MEPI flagship leadership programs, with 47% from the Student Leaders Program, 36% from the Leadership Development Fellowship, and 16% from the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program. The remaining 1% (i.e., one respondent) had participated in the MEPI Women’s Business Internship.



Note: Data based on 76 respondents.

MEPI Program

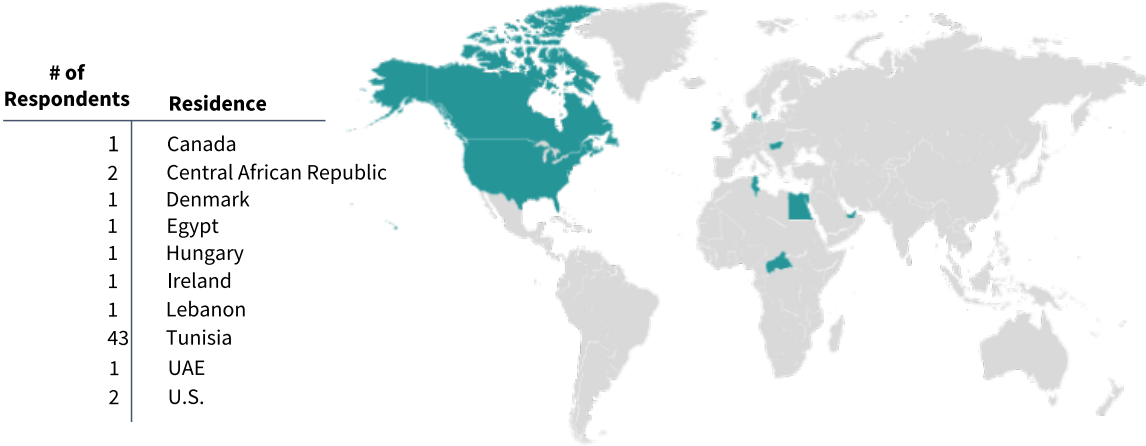
| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Student Leaders Program 47% | Leadership Development Fellowship 36% | Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program 16% | MEPI Women’s Business Internship 1% |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

Note: Figure based on 76 responses.

The year respondents completed their programs ranges from 2005 to 2020; however, there are no responses for 2006 and 2008. Out of 76 respondents, the majority (61%) of respondents completed their program within the last four years of the survey (2017-2020). About one-third (29%) completed their program from 2013 – 2016, and 11% completed their program in 2012 or earlier. Additionally, most of the respondents (64%), out of 67 responses, are between 20 – 29 years old, and 36% are 30 years old and over. The majority of alumni respondents from the Student Leaders Program, 75% (27/39), and the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program, 90% (10/11), are between 20-29 years old. However, respondents in the Leadership Development Fellowship tend to be older as 75% (18/24) are 30 years old or over and 25% (6/24) are 20-29 years old. Additionally, the one respondent who is an alumna of the MEPI Women’s Business Internship did not provide her age. Overall, findings suggest that respondents from Tunisia may tend to be more representative of younger alumni who completed their program relatively recently.

Responses also show that while many alumni report Tunisia as their current or primary country of residence, a significant number of alumni are abroad. Out of 54 responses, 80% (43/54) still reside in Tunisia. However, 20% (11/54) report Canada, the Central African Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Hungary, Ireland, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States as their current or primary country of residence. There was one respondent who reported residing in each of these countries except the United States and the Central African Republic, where there were two respondents.

Note: Data base on 54 responses.



B. Impact of MEPI

Findings from the survey indicate that respondents’ participation in their MEPI program significantly impacted their lives. It helped them gain a global perspective, further develop their careers, broaden their personal and professional network, and build self-confidence. Additionally, respondents felt that the skills/knowledge they acquired from and the opportunities provided by MEPI helped enable them to impact their communities. Many respondents said that MEPI helped them build skills in leadership and communication and community engagement. Moreover, MEPI offered opportunities for respondents to build new relationships.

In turn, alumni respondents have had an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Many respondents, who have employment, hold executive-level positions and work across various organizations. Respondents reported using skills developed from MEPI in their current positions, including skills in leadership, communication, and project management. Many respondents have also been active in their communities, conducting projects in youth engagement, civic engagement, education, professional skills, and gender equality and social inclusion. Moreover, MEPI programs, including the MEPI Alumni Connection, helped enable this impact by fostering partnerships among respondents. Many alumni respondents are also leaders in their community, serving in leadership positions as well as conducting various volunteering and mentorship activities to raise awareness, engage youth, and enhance civic engagement.

MEPI Impact on Alumni

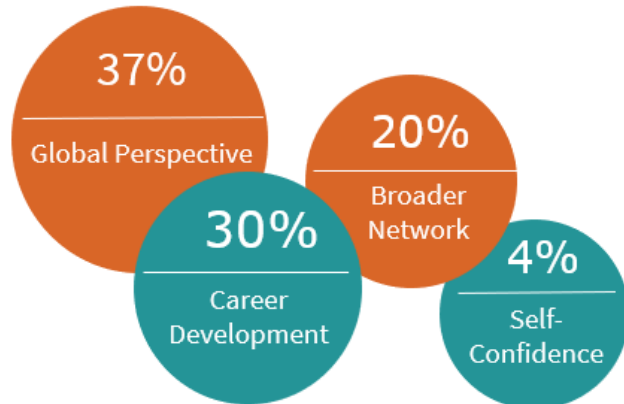
Many respondents expressed that MEPI was a positive and transformative experience for them. Moreover, they reported that the skills and abilities learned from the MEPI leadership program enabled them to have a greater impact in their communities.

Respondents were asked if MEPI was a life-changing experience and, if so, how MEPI had changed their lives. Among the 46 alumni who responded to the open-ended question, all but one fully agreed. The one respondent who did not agree stated, "I am still waiting for a chance to change," which may indicate that his or her external circumstances are preventing change.

A little over one-third (37%) of respondents stated that MEPI helped them gain a new global perspective and outlook. One respondent mentioned, "My MEPI experience has definitely been an environment where I grew...in my understanding of world issues, and of our interrelated needs and causes." Another one-third (30%) of respondents mentioned that MEPI was life-changing because it helped them grow and develop their careers. One respondent said MEPI "prepared me professionally," and another noted that it "helped me understand what I want to do in my professional life." Another primary reason provided by respondents was that MEPI helped them broaden and grow their network of friends and fellow professionals. One respondent said that MEPI's impact is "not only about the workshops and the courses we had, it was about the energy and the spirit of the group of participants, mentors, and experts." Additionally, several alumni (4%) mentioned MEPI helped them grow personally and become more self-confident. The remaining respondents agreed that MEPI was life-changing but did not provide detail as to why.

In addition to being a transformative experience, respondents also stated that MEPI helped them develop new skills and knowledge and provided enhanced opportunities, which enabled them to have an impact in their communities. There were 33 alumni who responded to the open-ended question of how MEPI helped them develop their ability to have an impact in their communities. Over one-third, (36%) of respondents said that MEPI provided them with new opportunities to build professional networks and relationships. Other common responses were that MEPI helped develop skills and knowledge that enabled respondents to better engage their community (27%) and in leadership and communication (15%). Additional comments included skills/knowledge in decision-making (6%), general skills (3%), and self-awareness (3%), and enhanced opportunities for general support (6%).

How was MEPI was a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 46 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 excluded responses that only confirmed the question and did not provide an explanation.

How MEPI 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?”

Community Engagement

“MEPI has helped me...do an accurate reading of communities’ most threatening issues and then come up with a concrete/realistic solution for the problem.”

Leadership & Communication

“The leadership training offered by the program team during my fellowship was very effective...this helped me tailor the training to my community context.”

Decision-Making

“MEPI has helped me “understand decision-making.”

General Skills

“I have learned new skills during my participation in...MEPI.”

Self-Awareness

“MEPI has helped me “[understand] my limits and passions.”

Networking & Relationship Building

“MEPI’s strongest asset lies in its network...being able to reach out to fellow MEPI’s opinions, expertise.”

General Support

“MEPI [has] been supporting me in many different ways to achieve what I want and empower others.”

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 have a broader impact in their communities.

Employment and Entrepreneurship

At the time of the survey, about three out of four, 72% (55/76), of respondents reported they were currently working with paid employment. Among those employed, 51% (28/55) were female and 49% (27/55) were male, indicating an even gender distribution. However, the survey had a higher percentage of female respondents than male respondents; therefore, more females are not currently working, 67% (14/21), compared to males. Across the three main MEPI programs, the employment rate is highest among alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program at 81% (29/36). The employment rate is lower among alumni respondents from the Leadership Development Fellowship, 78% (21/27), and it is lowest among alumni respondents of the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program, 67% (8/12). However, some caution should be taken when comparing employment rates across the three programs as there is variation in alumni respondents. The Student Leaders Program has 36 alumni respondents compared to 12 alumni respondents of the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program.

Employment rate of respondents



About **3 in 4** respondents are currently working.

Note: Data based on 76 respondents to the question, "Are you currently working? (Only select yes, if you have paid employment)"

The majority of those employed reported holding mid-level or executive-level positions. One-fifth, 20% (11/54), of employed respondents stated they held entry-level positions, while 31% (17/54) held mid-level positions, and 43% (23/54) held executive-level positions. Additionally, 6% (3/54) were self-employed and/or owed a business. Respondents of all levels work across a variety of organizations. Out of 51 respondents, the most common organizations respondents work for are international non-government organizations (NGOs), 41% (21/51), and large businesses, 25% (13/51). Additional organizations respondents work for include: local NGOs, 8% (4/51), the national government, 8% (4/51), medium-sized businesses, 8% (4/51), small businesses, 6% (3/51), the local government, 2% (1/51), and 2% (1/51) said they are self-employed.

While a smaller percentage of respondents reported they were self-employed or owned a business, a larger percentage, 35% (26/75), stated they had started their own business or organization after their experience with MEPI. These respondents may include individuals who no longer have a business, do not rely on their business as their only income, or started an organization and do not consider themselves business owners. Among those who reported starting their own business or organization, 92% (24/26)

35% of respondents started a business or organization

Among respondents who started a business/organization...

92%
Had a partner



50%

Met their partner through MEPI/MEPI alumni network

Note: Data is based on 75 responses, 26 responses who started a business, and 22 who provided a response if they met their partner through the alumni network or MEPI program.

had a partner. Moreover, 50% (11/22) had met their partner either through their MEPI program or the MEPI alumni network. This indicates respondents' experience with MEPI, and the alumni network, has helped enhance their professional network and provided additional opportunities for entrepreneurial activities.

MEPI has also been beneficial for respondents as they can use skills developed from their MEPI program in their current positions. Respondents mentioned that MEPI helped them build applicable job skills in advocacy, budgeting, conflict resolution, public speaking, and the ability to manage time. However, the most common responses included skills in leadership, communication, and project management.



Leadership

"Management skills helped me a lot in my work right now as a project manager with a humanitarian organization in Africa and the Middle East."



Communication

"I use my communication skills acquired during my MEPI program to be efficient in my communications with pupils and staff."



Project Management

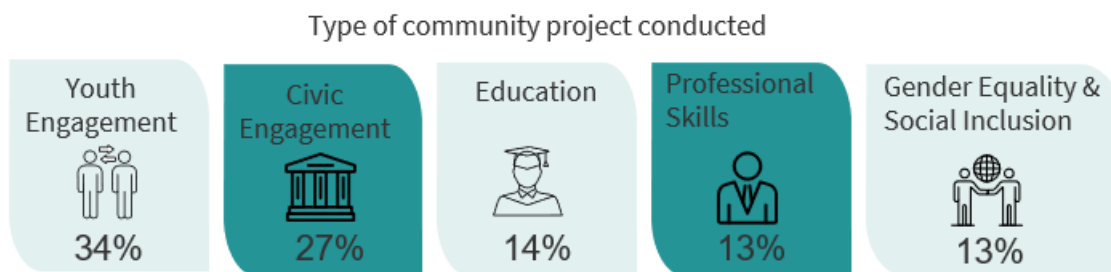
"MEPI enhanced my leadership and managerial skills, that's why I can perform well as a program manager and feel confident and dedicated."

Note: Quotes are based on 32 responses to the open-ended question, "How are you using what you learned through MEPI in your current position?"

Community Projects

Many respondents have been active in their communities as 65% (49/75) have conducted a community project within the last two years. Among respondents who conducted a community project, 55% (27/49) were female and 43% (21/49) were male.¹ Additionally, 74% (20/27) of alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship conducted a project. This is higher than alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program, 60% (21/35), and alumni respondents of the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program, 67% (8/12).

The most common types of projects that respondents conducted were focused on youth engagement (34%) and civic engagement (27%). This is followed by education (14%), professional skills (13%), and gender equality and social inclusion (13%). Numerous respondents also conducted multiple types of projects. Almost half, 48% (23/48) of respondents, conducted more than one type of community project.



Note: Data based on 48 responses to the question "What type of project did you conduct?" Respondents could select multiple options.

¹Percentage between male and female do not include the respondent who self-identified as other.

According to survey responses, more than 19,000 individuals benefited from projects conducted by alumni.² The number of beneficiaries each respondent reported ranged from 15 to 5,000. Out of the total number of beneficiaries, 62% are of projects conducted by females and 38% by males. This indicates that females may have conducted more community projects and/or larger projects.



More than **19,000** individuals benefited from community projects conducted by alumni.



To understand the impact of respondents' community projects beyond the number of beneficiaries, they also provided personal accounts of what they believed was the greatest success or result of a project they conducted. Responses ranged from empowering youth to pursue higher education to changing perspectives and improving awareness.

Respondents' greatest success or result

"We were able to cover more than 300 cultural and community events and demonstrations, in addition to encouraging and pushing 30 unknown artists and...[produced] nearly 200 videos and 300 articles within two years with our own capabilities."



Helped "change society's outlook"



"[Outreached] 3 delegations in Tunisia for voter elections awareness."



"[Reached] more than 300 students in all regions in Tunisia and [worked] with them on their applications to US universities."



Note: Data based on 29 responses to the open-ended question "What is the greatest success or result of your project?"

Many respondents' ability to have impactful and successful projects has been strengthened by their participation in their MEPI program and the MEPI Alumni Connection. More than half, 62% (29/47), of respondents who conducted a community project collaborated with someone they met through their MEPI program or the MEPI/US DoS alumni network. Additionally, 64% (14/22) of alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program, 61% (11/18) of the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship, and 57% (4/7) of the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program collaborated with someone.

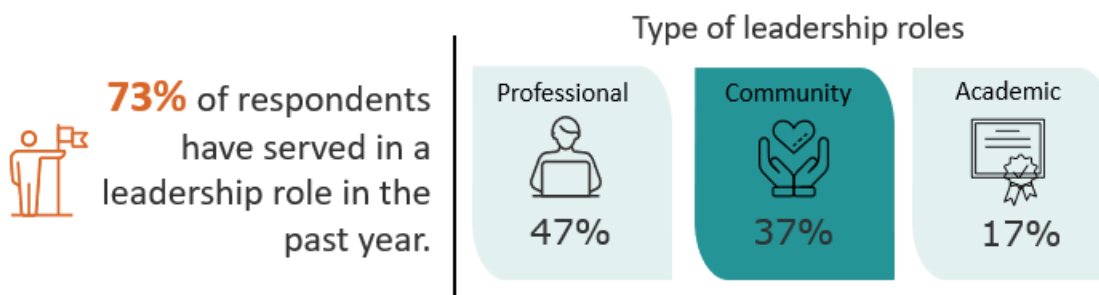
² This number is based on 36 responses from alumni who conducted a community project and answered the question, "How many people benefited from your project?"

Respondents report a variety of support and resources for their community projects. The MEPI Alumni Connection offers a menu of opportunities and support for alumni to conduct community projects. And just under half of the respondents, 49% (24/49) who conducted a project, reported support from the MEPI Alumni Connection for those projects. The most common form of support was through the Alumni Venture Fund (31%), followed by mentorship (25%) and training/resources (16%).³ An additional 16% also received support through other means, including MEPI small grants and external funding outside of MEPI. This indicates that respondents' participation in their MEPI program and the MEPI alumni network has helped them foster partnerships and receive support to conduct community projects.

Leadership

Many alumni have also impacted their communities by serving as leaders. Most respondents, 73% (45/62), stated they had served in a leadership role within the past year. Among females, 74% (25/34) have served in a leadership role compared to 70% (19/27) among males. Additionally, 72% (26/36) of respondents 20-29 years old said they served in a leadership role compared to 70% (16/23) of respondents 30 years old and older.

Among those who have served in a leadership role, 47% were in a professional environment, 37% were in a community environment, and 17% were in an academic environment. Females were most likely to serve in professional (38%) or community (38%) leadership roles, while males were most likely to serve in a professional (58%) leadership role.⁴



Note: Percentages for type of leadership roles are based on 45 respondents who could select multiple options.

Respondents have been able to use their leadership skills, gained from MEPI, to have a greater impact in their communities and change the lives of others. Respondents were asked how they have used their leadership skills to help people in their communities. One respondent noted that “the circumstances the world has been through have inspired me to launch an initiative with three other MEPI Alumni advocates.” Another respondent is serving as a leader by empowering youth “through the Local Youth Leadership School” and “[activated] 5 local projects in 5 states in Tunisia.” While another respondent “participated as a monitor of the election” and was able to “[help] reach real transparent election results.”

³ Percentages are based on 24 respondents who stated they received support from the MEPI Alumni Connection. Respondents could select all options that apply.

⁴ Percentages are based on 19 female and 25 male respondents who said they have served in a leadership role and could select multiple options.

C. Impact of the MEPI Alumni Connection

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers activities for alumni to grow their network and develop new professional skills. Respondents report participating in these activities within the past two years. Among them, networking was the activity with the highest participation. Additionally, the primary reason why respondents said they did not participate in any alumni activities was due to a lack of time. Survey findings also indicate that Facebook and LinkedIn are the most followed social media platforms.

Respondents' engagement with the MEPI Alumni Connection has led to numerous positive outcomes. Respondents were able to build new relationships and collaborate 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. Respondents' engagement in the Regional Alumni Summit also helped build new collaborations that led to new initiatives, discussions, and 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

The majority of respondents are engaged with the MEPI Alumni Connection as they have professional contact with MEPI alumni and have participated in numerous networking and professional development opportunities.

Professional Development Activities

Respondents were asked whether they had professional contact with other MEPI alumni; only 10% (6/62) said they had no relationship. Among respondents who have professional contact with other MEPI alumni, 70% reported it was through the alumni network, 10% noted it was through serving as a mentor, and 9% said it was through being a mentee. About 3% have professional contact as business partners or through a professional association. The remaining 6% reported "other" as their contact. This indicates that respondents predominantly associate with other alumni through the alumni network.⁵

Through the MEPI Alumni Connection, over half of respondents, 69% (43/62), have participated in networking or professional development opportunities. Participation in these events is slightly higher among females, 74% (25/34), than males, 67% (18/27). Additionally, younger respondents are more likely to have participated in networking or professional development opportunities than older respondents, as 75% (27/36) of 20-29 year old respondents participated in at least one event in the past year, compared to 61% (14/23) of respondents 30 years old and over. Moreover, alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship program had the highest participation rate of the three MEPI programs at 82%

⁵ Percentages are based on responses from 62 respondents who selected multiple options.

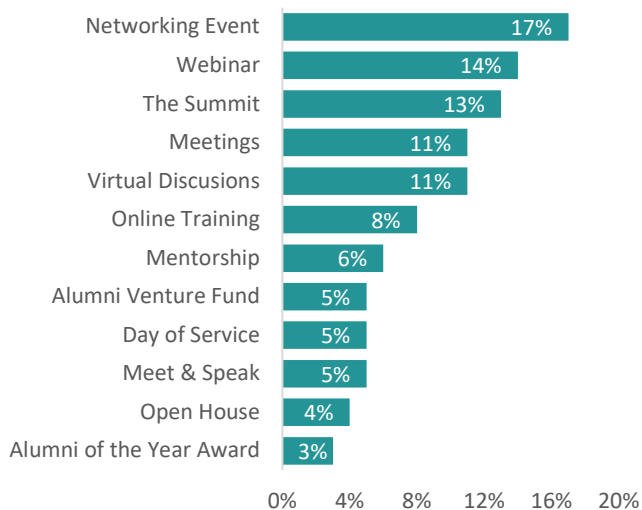
(18/23). The participation rate of alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program was 72% (21/29), and of alumni respondents of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program, 50% (5/10).

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers numerous types of opportunities to appeal to diverse alumni including, networking events, webinars, the Summit, meetings, virtual discussions, online trainings, mentorship, the Alumni Venture Fund, the MEPI Day of Service, opportunities of meet and speak, open houses, and the Alumni of the Year Award. The most popular activity, by participation, was networking events (17%).⁶ Moreover, networking events had the highest participation rate for males and females. While younger respondents were most likely to participate in networking events, the older respondents were slightly more likely to

participate in the Summit. There was also a high number of respondents who participated in webinars (14%), the Summit (13%), meetings (11%), and virtual discussions (11%). Mentorship opportunities (6%), the Alumni Venture Fund (5%), the MEPI Day of Service (5%), and opportunities to meet and speak (5%) have average participation rates. Open house opportunities (4%) and the Alumni of the Year Award (3%) have the lowest participation rates. However, participation may not directly indicate popularity of events as it likely depends on how often events were offered and the limited and competitive nature of events such as the Alumni Venture Fund and Alumni of the Year Award. Many respondents, 55% (34/62), have also participated in networking or professional development activities organized by the Department of State (DoS) or DoS alumni.

Out of 62 respondents, 31% (19/62) 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. Out of 18 respondents who provided an answer, 72% (13/18) said they did not have time to attend any MEPI Alumni networking events. Other reasons were respondents were not invited to any events, 17% (3/18), it was too difficult to travel to the events, 6% (1/18), and they were not interested in the topic of any events, 6% (1/18). Therefore, lack of engagement with alumni activities is likely due to time constraints and not a lack of interest.

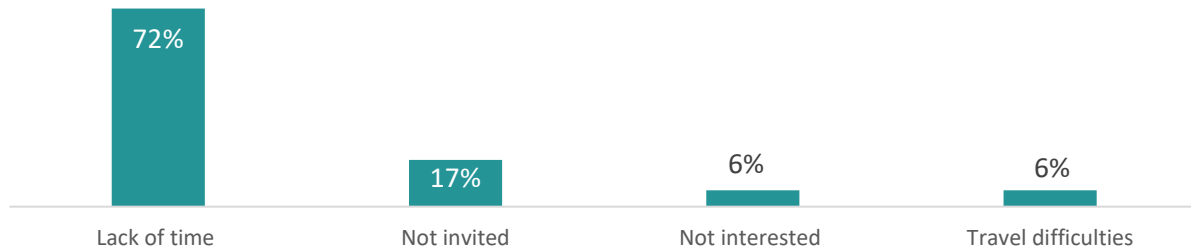
Participation in networking or professional development opportunities



Note: Data based on 43 respondents who answered they had participated in a networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection during the past two years. Respondents could select all options that apply.

⁶ Percentage is based on responses from 43 respondents who selected multiple options.

Primary reason for not participating in alumni activities

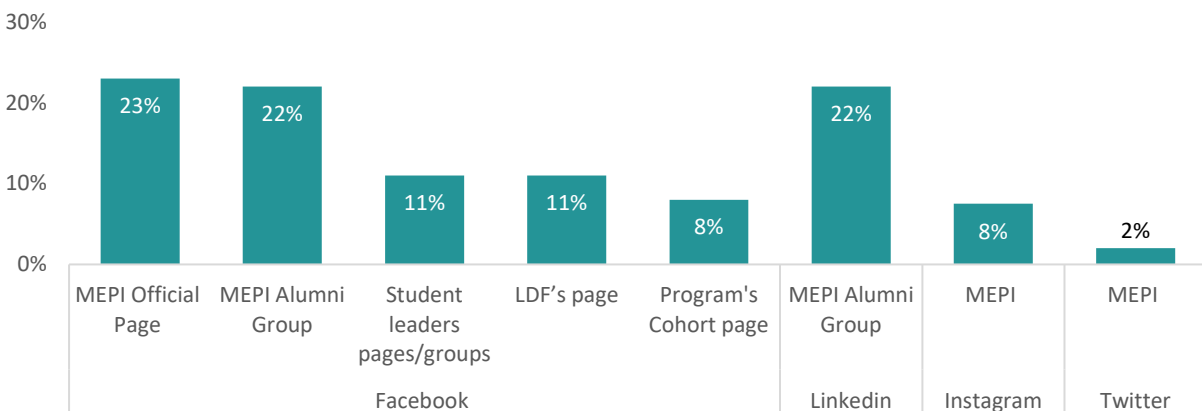


Note: Data is based on 30 respondents who answered the following question, “If you haven’t participated in any alumni activities, what is the primary reason?”

Social Media

Respondents were asked if they follow MEPI and MEPI groups on social media including Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Respondents could select multiple options from the provided list: MEPI official Facebook page, MEPI alumni Facebook group, MEPI alumni LinkedIn group, MEPI Instagram, their program’s cohort page, MEPI Twitter, the Student Leaders Program pages/groups, and the Leadership Development Fellowship’s (LDF) Facebook page. Out of 57 respondents, they were most likely to follow the official Facebook page of MEPI (23%). Many respondents also follow the MEPI Alumni Facebook group (22%) and MEPI alumni LinkedIn group (18%). These platforms have the highest following likely because they reach alumni across all completion years and leadership programs. The platforms least followed included MEPI Instagram (8%), respondents’ specific program’s cohort page (8%), and MEPI Twitter (2%). This indicates that Facebook and LinkedIn are the most followed social media platforms among respondents.

Followers on Social Media



Note: Percentages are based on 57 responses to the following question, “Are you following the MEPI social media pages/groups?” Respondents could select all that apply.

Impact of Alumni Engagement

Survey responses indicate that respondents' engagement with alumni activities has led to numerous positive outcomes, including new partnerships and projects.

In the past two years, 47% (29/62) of respondents have collaborated with at least one other alumni from MEPI or DoS on a project, initiative, or business idea. Among females, 53% (18/34) have collaborated with other alumni, while 41% (11/27) of males have. The percentage of respondents 20-29 years old and respondents 30 years old and over, who have collaborated with other alumni, is fairly equal, 47% (17/36) and 48% (11/23), respectively. Additionally, 65% (15/23) of alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship Program have collaborated with other alumni, compared to 50% (14/28) of alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program and zero respondents of the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program.

Respondents who participated in the Regional Alumni Summit also benefited in the form of new collaborations. The majority of respondents who participated in the Summit collaborated with other alumni who had also participated, 68% (13/19). Some examples of these collaborations include a new initiative, new relationships, and community projects.

Collaboration activities

New Initiative

"We founded the MENNA Initiative."

New Relationships

"Through the Summit, I got the chance to meet other alumni and discuss with them projects ideas...we can start together."



Community Projects

"Currently myself and [my partner] are working for a Media Literacy and Youth Empowerment project."

Note: Quotes are based on respondents who collaborated with alumni who participated in the Summit and provided a response to the open-ended question, "please tell us about the collaboration."

In addition to collaborations, the MEPI Alumni Connection has helped alumni build relationships with one another and new alumni. As a result of participation in a MEPI Alumni Connection activity, 82% (49/60) of respondents have built relationships with new alumni. Just under half, 47% (23/49), of those are with 11 – 20 new alumni. This indicates that alumni activities help foster numerous relationships.

Respondents have also been able to lead events and activities that promote specific issues and awareness. In the past two years, 262 events and activities were led by 51 respondents in collaboration with civil society organizations. While some respondents conducted up to 20 or 30 events/activities, the majority conducted five or fewer, 86% (44/51). Additionally, of the total 262 events/activities, 56% were conducted by 29 female respondents and 43% by 21 male respondents.⁷

 **262** events and activities were led by **51**  respondents.

The MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader impact beyond helping engaged respondents develop new partnerships and initiate activities. Almost all respondents, 90% (54/60), said they have shared what

⁷ The additional respondent who conducted an event/activity self-identified as other.

they learned through a MEPI alumni activity (event, training, partnership, etc.) with others. Among respondents who said they had shared what they learned, 23% have done so with colleagues, 20% in-person, 15% with other MEPI alumni, 14% on social media, 14% with family, 5% with other DoS alumni, and 1% in a publication.⁸ Therefore, MEPI alumni activities likely benefit not only alumni but also their colleagues, friends, and family.

D. MEPI Alumni Interests

Overall, the MEPI Alumni Connection appears to meet the needs of alumni. Respondents feel comfortable and secure participating in alumni activities. Additionally, they feel that the 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 2-4-day intensive trainings and in-person events during weekends. Additionally, respondents noted that they would like to develop skills in advocacy and stakeholder engagement, decision-making, and project management. In terms of support, respondents indicated that the most helpful form of financial support would be through grants, and having access to a professional mentor, would be the most helpful form of non-financial support.

Alumni Needs

Respondents were asked if the resources provided by the MEPI Alumni Connection were appropriate and relevant to their current professional or academic level, and 59% (33/56) agreed that they were. This indicates that the MEPI Alumni Connection resources met most of respondents' current professional or academic needs. Additionally, respondents were asked if they feel secure and comfortable participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities. Among 58 respondents, 79% reported that they felt very secure, 16% often felt secure, 3% felt infrequently secure, and one respondent reported that they rarely felt secure. This suggests that, overall, most respondents feel comfortable participating in alumni activities.

⁸ Percentages are based on 60 responses where respondents could select multiple options.

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, useful financial and non-financial support they would like to receive, and desired content for social media.

Respondents stated that the activities they would most like to see implemented were networking events (31%), such as networking events with diplomats and professionals, panel/round table discussions (11%), and the Summit (11%).

Additionally, the most common responses regarding the format of events/trainings were 2-4-day intensive trainings (26%), in-person events during weekends (19%), and in-person events during evening hours (15%). Other common responses were online events during evening hours (14%) and online events during weekends (13%).

Respondents were also asked to select three skills they would like to develop to advance their community and professional leadership. The three skills most selected were advocacy and stakeholder engagement (10%), decision-making (9%), and project management (8%). Other skills mentioned were developing public-private partnerships (7%), conflict resolution (6%), small business development (6%), technology/entrepreneurship (6%), women and gender issues (6%), and NGO management (6%).

There were 74 respondents who answered the question regarding financial resources, and they could choose all that apply among the options. Among financial resources, respondents stated that grants would be most helpful (39%), followed by investments (25%) and donations (15%). Some respondents (14%) also mentioned that all financial resources would be helpful (i.e., grant, investment, donation, and loan). Only 6% of respondents said a

Desired Activities

Networking and Discussions

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Networking Events | 31% |
| Panel/Round Table Discussions | 11% |
| Civic Engagement Discussions | 4% |
| Virtual Discussions | 2% |

Presentations, Webinars, and Trainings

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Webinar/Online Trainings | 9% |
| Mentorship | 6% |
| American Culture Presentations | 2% |

Other Activities

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Summit | 11% |
| Alumni Venture Fund | 8% |
| Pitch an Innovative Project | 4% |
| Open House | 4% |
| Day of Service | 4% |
| Alumni of the Year Award | 3% |

Note: Data are based on approximately 63 responses, select all that may apply.

Top three skills respondents would like to develop



Note: Data is based on 76 responses where individuals choose up to 3 top choices. A few individuals choose more than three choices.

loan would be helpful, and 1% stated that no financial resources were needed. This suggests that financial resources could be very beneficial for alumni, especially funds that do not require repayment. Additionally, 75 respondents answered the question regarding non-financial resources, in which they could choose multiple options. The non-financial resources respondents said would be most helpful were having a professional mentor (26%) and access to alumni or professionals with relevant experience (22%). Subsequent resources respondents mentioned were having access to in-person training (20%) and having partner(s) (19%).

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other suggestions to the MEPI Alumni Connection. Overall, the recommendations centered on funding and mentorship/training opportunities. Respondents suggested that funding should be “simpler and easier” and “open [to] more types of projects, such as research and prototyping of projects.” Respondents also suggested that “organizing more trainings” would be beneficial as it would help them “enhance [their] capabilities as leaders.”

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

MEPI and the MEPI Alumni Connection have significantly impacted respondents’ lives and enhanced their ability to impact their communities positively. MEPI has helped respondents gain a global perspective, further develop their careers, broaden their personal and professional network, and build self-confidence. Additionally, it has further developed respondents’ skills and knowledge to better engage with their communities and serve as leaders. Moreover, MEPI has helped enhance respondents’ opportunities to grow their network and build new relationships.

In turn, alumni respondents have had an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Many respondents are working in executive-level positions across various organizations, including international non-government organizations, the national government, and medium-sized and large businesses. Respondents have also conducted many community projects, predominately in youth engagement and civic engagement, which have benefited many individuals. Moreover, respondents have impacted their communities by serving as leaders, including serving in leadership roles and conducting mentorship and volunteering activities.

Overall, the MEPI Alumni Connection meets respondents’ needs through appropriate resources and by helping them feel secure and comfortable to participate in activities. However, not all respondents said they felt very secure when participating in alumni activities. 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.

Most of the respondents are engaged with the MEPI Alumni Connection through participation in professional networking opportunities. This engagement has been beneficial for respondents as it has led to new collaborations, partnerships, and initiatives. However, there are also opportunities for the MEPI Alumni Connection to strengthen alumni relations and provide further support. Respondents indicated that they would like the program to implement networking events and intensive and in-person trainings in the future. Additionally, respondents noted that offering more grants and professional mentorship opportunities would help them start or grow initiatives.

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