



CHANGING LIVES

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

AMIDEAST
امديست



Opportunities to practice their conversational skills in a friendly, collaborative setting help these students in Jordan improve their English language proficiency.

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ABOUT AMIDEAST

An American nonprofit founded in 1951, AMIDEAST has a long and distinguished record as one of the primary U.S. organizations engaged in international education, training, and development assistance in the Middle East and North Africa. With 24 offices in 13 countries and over 650 dedicated professional staff, AMIDEAST provides programs and services to improve educational opportunity and quality, strengthen local institutions, and develop language and professional skills for success in the global economy.

MISSION

AMIDEAST is dedicated to expanding opportunity through education and training, while strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation between Americans and the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Few would disagree with the need to expand opportunities for education and training in the Middle East and North Africa, especially for the generation that is coming of age. However, the wisdom of pursuing this worthy objective is too often eclipsed by the immediate concerns of a region caught in turmoil. Yet, as our new annual report – titled “Changing Lives” – highlights, education and training do transform lives for the better, as demonstrated by individuals like...

- Ghada, a young woman from Gaza grateful for multiple scholarship opportunities that have taken her “step by step” to high academic achievement
- Galal, a young man transformed by a youth engagement program in Yemen into a “confident” youth leader and “rising star” in his community
- Safae, a young Moroccan woman who now has a job and feels empowered to “participate in positive change to build a better future,” thanks to a new employability training initiative

Their stories – and those of the more than 14,000 individuals in our programs that target the needs of youth and women – tell us we’re on the right track, using our capabilities where they have the greatest impact. The challenge is how to increase our ability to reach more individuals who are working to transform their lives.

We are gratified that our efforts to lay the foundations for future initiatives are bearing fruit. For example, we are now collaborating with Saudi Electric Services Polytechnic to staff and manage a modern training center in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, our new partnership with the Union for the Mediterranean now enables us to offer our Skills for Success® program to advance the employability of young women in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Our work would not be possible without the interest and support of our donors and individuals like you. We thank you for your past support and look forward to working together in the coming days and months.

Sincerely,

Mary W. Gray
Chair

Theodore H. Kattouf
President and CEO

Jordanian alumni of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program plant trees to celebrate the program's tenth anniversary.

AMIDEAST CHANGES LIVES

HOW

- By expanding educational opportunities
- By preparing individuals for jobs in the global economy
- By empowering youth and women
- By strengthening institutions
- By building cross-cultural understanding

OUR 2013 REACH

- 1,700+** Exchange and scholarship students
- 14,000+** Beneficiaries of youth empowerment initiatives
- 61,000+** Students and professionals trained
- 144,000+** Educational advising contacts
- 200,000+** Tests administered

WHERE

- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| Algeria | Morocco |
| Bahrain | Oman |
| Egypt | Qatar |
| Iraq | Saudi Arabia |
| Jordan | Tunisia |
| Kuwait | UAE |
| Lebanon | Palestine |
| Libya | Yemen |

ADVANCING EMPLOYABILITY



Orientation day at the new Rhamna Skills Center in Benguerir, Morocco.

The Middle East and North Africa is a region fraught with high unemployment, particularly among youth. Young men and women are eager for the security and opportunity that a job provides, yet one out of four faces joblessness. Paradoxically, however, many companies cannot find enough qualified applicants. The problem: few have the skills or know-how to meet the needs required in today's job market.

Enter AMIDEAST, helping to change lives, with an initiative to provide innovative, targeted training coupled with career counseling. In collaboration with Morocco's national phosphate company, OCP Groupe, and its philanthropic arm, OCP Foundation, AMIDEAST is helping youth enter the job market with a major employability training program in Morocco. The OCP Skills Program empowers and supports youth living within OCP's geographic areas of operation, enabling them to

build a better future for themselves and contribute to the country's economic development.

Five youth centers form the backbone of the OCP Skills Program. With AMIDEAST as managing partner, the first of these facilities – Rhamna Skills Center – began operating in 2013. Based in Benguerir, in central Morocco, the center serves youth in the city as well as the broader Rhamna province where Benguerir is located.

The center features a training program designed to meet the diverse needs of unemployed youth looking to strengthen, expand, or just top off their skill sets with specialized training and career counseling. School dropouts, aspiring entrepreneurs, nonprofit managers, and those seeking to develop particular vocational skills are typical students. Job coaching and personal development are emphasized, as are cultural and recreational activities that lead youth to become more engaged in their communities and ultimately attain a higher quality of life.

In 2013, Rhamna Skills Center, operating at near capacity, trained some 600 youth. The impact is undeniable: the center expects to achieve a success rate of close to 70 percent, similar to the job placement rate achieved by Training for Success, a job skills program benefiting 600 recent graduates that AMIDEAST implemented on behalf of OCP in 2011–12.

Elsewhere, AMIDEAST is managing a center located in Laayoune, with plans to bring a center online in Khouribga in 2014.

“At Rhamna Skills I discovered civic engagement. That forced me to think about my contribution to my community and that, even as a young person, I have the opportunity to participate in positive change to build a better future.”

– Safae Mehmud,
Rhamna Skills trainee, Morocco

PROFILE

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING EXPANDS ACCESS TO JOBS

Meet Safae Mehmud, a young woman from Benguerir, a mid-sized city in Morocco's interior. Like many recent college graduates in Morocco, she was frustrated that her degree wasn't helping her enter the country's tight job market. It didn't help either that the unemployment rate for graduates, especially women, was among the highest in the country.

Safae's prospects changed when the new OCP Rhamna Skills Center opened. On her first day, Safae joined other newcomers in a compulsory orientation session, an innovative feature of the program that ensures that training meets the specific goals and needs of the student.

Safae was placed in a track that emphasized career counseling and personal development, as well as training to strengthen her skills. In addition, she took a course in civic engagement, one of an array of electives designed to broaden the perspectives and awaken the civic spirit of Benguerir's up-and-coming citizens.

“My training benefited me greatly. I was able to develop competencies that will help me stand out in the job market [and] gain self-confidence. Today I am proud of my technical and personal abilities,” recalls Safae, who succeeded in finding employment as a web developer.

Safae's perspective on life also changed. “I discovered civic engagement. That pushed me to think about my personal contribution to my community and that, even as a young person, I have the opportunity to participate in positive change to build a better future.”



EMPOWERING YOUTH

Ehsan proudly reads his essay during the launch of a new session of the English Access Microscholarship Program in Jordan.

AMIDEAST programs and services have changed the lives of youth across the region. Working with international, regional, and local partners, AMIDEAST helps thousands of young men and women master English – the global language of academia and business – and hone cross-cultural competencies that are key to success in today’s global economy and technology-driven world. Youth become equipped to reap the benefits of new and challenging academic, professional, and entrepreneurial opportunities; they discover how to engage in their communities in positive and effective ways, with a focus on finding solutions that meet daily needs. Not least, by supporting diverse initiatives for underserved youth, AMIDEAST offers a ladder of educational and training opportunities at critical stages along the path to personal and professional maturity, helping many deserving young men and women pursue their aspirations for a better quality of life.



U.S. Ambassador Stuart E. Jones (center) is surrounded by enthusiastic Jordanian Access students.

PROFILE

DISCOVERING A LADDER TO ACHIEVEMENT

When Ghada Tafesh joined the English Access Microscholarship Program in 2010, little did she imagine how it would change her life. The determined teenager from Gaza thrived in the two-year program, improving her English well enough to qualify for the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program, which gave her the opportunity to spend a year of high school in Maryland. When she returned home with a dream of continuing her studies in the United States, AMIDEAST was there to help. Assisted by the Abraham Lincoln Incentive Grants program and the Diana Kamal Scholarship Search Fund (DKSSF), Ghada received a full scholarship to attend Wilson College in Pennsylvania.



“All of these opportunities have taken me, step by step, toward what I am now.”

Wilson College’s liberal arts curriculum is allowing Ghada to pursue her passion for English literature, as well as her top priority: a career in the sciences, an arena in which she shines brightly. With a double major in Biology and English, Ghada consistently makes the Dean’s List, won the Robert Shannon McElwain Prize as the college’s best student in mathematics, and participates in the highly selective NeXt Program, a U.S. Department of State initiative for outstanding young women in the STEM fields. Despite a demanding academic load, she also makes time for a variety of extracurricular activities that are building her self-confidence and nurturing a commitment to community service.

Ghada once believed that a bachelor’s degree was the furthest that she could go. Today, she aspires to complete her Ph.D. and build a career that will enable her to use her knowledge and benefit her community and broader society. “All of these opportunities have taken me step-by-step toward what I am now. I have gained many priceless skills, experiences, and relationships. All that I am – and all that I do and have done – would not be possible without them.”

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS



Early intervention – a key youth pillar of AMIDEAST – is changing lives of young people every day. English classes for young learners and summer camps develop capabilities that enable many youth to tap successive educational and training opportunities that would otherwise be largely out of reach. The biggest of these summer initiatives is Camp Discovery, a three-week program funded by the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem for at-risk Palestinian youth in refugee camps and other marginalized areas in the West Bank and Gaza. Camp Discovery marked its sixth summer in 2013, providing 648 girls and boys fun-filled, learning-centered activities in an environment focused on English language training, artistic expression, scientific discovery, community service, team-building, and leadership development.

That same year, AMIDEAST implemented the English Access Microscholarship Program in Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, the West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. This U.S. Department of State-funded initiative provided nearly 9,000

underserved youth in these countries the opportunity to master English through extensive language study at AMIDEAST training centers. But the benefits to the participants went far beyond simply learning English. They improved their leadership skills; they honed their information and communication technology (ICT) skills; and they developed a greater understanding of U.S. society and culture. Approximately 24,225 youth have benefited from AMIDEAST-administered Access grants since the program's inception in 2004.

Access and Camp Discovery are clearly succeeding in preparing youth to take advantage of student exchange and higher education opportunities. Access students who develop English language proficiency and cultural knowledge have significant advantages in their ability to gain admission into the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program and to win scholarships for higher education through the Diana Kamal Scholarship Search Fund (DKSSF) and other initiatives supported by AMIDEAST.

CAPTION: An enriching curriculum is key to success, whether for these Egyptian students in the English Access Microscholarship Program (1-3), or young learners in summer camp in Oman (4).

OPENING THE DOORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Members of the Competitive College Club in Egypt, joined by U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson (center), celebrate their acceptances by U.S. colleges and universities.

Giving young people a chance to receive a college degree is one of AMIDEAST's hallmarks. By working with key partners and mobilizing longstanding networks in the region and the U.S. higher education community, AMIDEAST is able to make the dreams of U.S. study come true for talented, deserving young men and women across the region. Several initiatives deserve mention.

EducationUSA centers that AMIDEAST manages on behalf of the U.S. Department of State in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, and Yemen organized Competitive College Clubs to help well-qualified undergraduate applicants improve their admission and scholarship chances through in-depth group application work and community service activities. The result: 43 high school seniors succeeded in receiving admissions to undergraduate programs at U.S. colleges and universities, including needy but well-qualified students who were assisted by the Opportunity Program to cover many of the expenses associated with the application process.

The Diana Kamal Scholarship Search Fund (DKSSF) opened the doors to U.S. undergraduate study for 16 deserving young men and women from Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and the West Bank/Gaza, who were given full scholarships from Barnard, Mt. Holyoke, and Williams Colleges; the University of Pennsylvania; and Columbia, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Hawaii Pacific, Northeastern, Toledo, and Brigham Young Universities. This was a record number of placements in a single year for the DKSSF, a fund established by AMIDEAST in 2006 to expand access to U.S. study for deserving, talented youth in the region.

The U.S. Department of State Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)'s Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program is yet another program in AMIDEAST's tool chest, enabling 27 underserved students from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen to earn full scholarships for undergraduate study at the American University of Beirut, American University of Cairo, and Lebanese American University. To date, more than 150 young men and women selected for their leadership potential and outstanding academic achievement have received Tomorrow's Leaders scholarships.

Nearly 150 promising, academically qualified but financially challenged Palestinian youth also benefited from AMIDEAST's efforts to pave the way for promising students to change their lives with a college education. Its support of the Hope Fund as its presence on the ground in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine helped make it possible for 10 deserving Palestinian men and women from refugee backgrounds to receive full scholarships for undergraduate study from U.S. colleges and universities.

In addition, AMIDEAST administered two U.S. Department of State programs for Palestinian youth: the Abraham Lincoln Incentive Grants program, helping 44 students to defray the costs associated with the process of applying for U.S. study; and the American Palestinian Local University Scholarships (A-PLUS) Program, enabling 82 students to receive scholarships for undergraduate study at local Palestinian universities. AMIDEAST material support additionally helped A-PLUS students benefit from the practical professional skills training and professional internship opportunities that are part of the A-Plus Program.

BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING



In the decade since the U.S. Congress created the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program, youth exchanges have proven without a doubt that they change lives and build bridges of understanding between the United States and countries with mainly Muslim populations. With AMIDEAST's support, this important initiative has enabled more than 2,000 boys and girls to spend a year in the United States, living with a host family, attending a local high school, and experiencing everyday life in an American community. In 2013, AMIDEAST assisted in the selection of 200 boys and girls from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, the West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen, as well as in their pre-departure orientation and travel to the United States.

The YES experience does not end with the conclusion of the exchange year. YES alumni organizations facilitated by AMIDEAST are gaining momentum, helping to ease the transition to home and keeping the YES spirit alive through community service, workshops, and other activities

“The YES Program changed my life in ways that can't be put into words.”

— Hanan Abou Ali, YES alumna from Lebanon

reminiscent of their time as YES students. In 2013, these activities took on added impetus, as alumni celebrated the 10th anniversary of the YES Program by organizing community service initiatives that enabled them to have an impact close to home.

Like many YES students, Hanan Abou Ali participated in community service during her year in Wisconsin. After returning to Lebanon, she continued to be engaged through a variety of YES alumni activities.

“The mission of YES students never ends. After coming back home, students teach people about the American society and people. Students also take the skills they gained while being on the program and implement them in projects in their home countries. YES students become active members in their societies,” she reflected on a blog devoted to her YES experience. “The YES Program changed my life in ways that can't be put into words. I am very thankful to have been able to be part of it. Thank you YES, thank you U.S., thank you all for believing in me.” For Hanan, her experience was truly life changing.

CAPTION CLOCKWISE: The YES experience never ends. Kuwaiti YES alumna Hadiya Al-Nasser visited her host brother (1) while Fatima Al-Qabandi, also from Kuwait, joined other YES alumni at their annual party for hospitalized children, and YES alumni in Lebanon (3), Jordan (4,5), and Yemen (6) engaged in a variety of activities celebrating the YES 10th anniversary.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Young and unemployed, Galal Al-Khader Al-Mansouri couldn't see the way to a brighter future. He had completed a degree in business administration at Aden University, but faced poor job prospects like many youth in Yemen, where chronic unemployment is endemic. He felt powerless.



“You can say that I was a youth of the street. I was on the street doing nothing. I was discouraged and even angry,” Galal recalls, looking back on his young life. But then he joined the Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE) project.

“Today, I feel more confident. PYCE has helped me become a rising star.”

A natural leader, Galal qualified to become a member of the PYCE Peer Network, a group of youth leaders who form the program's backbone. Through hard work, training, and taking on successive leadership responsibilities, he learned that it is “possible to shape the future through service to society and other youth.” As a PYCE youth trainer, Galal is spearheading project workshops in his home governorate of Abyan, a rural, primarily agrarian area.

Galal is also developing partnerships with other organizations, such as a PYCE-supported youth center, as well as with local government officials who support efforts to help youth in Abyan and Aden. “Today, I feel more confident,” he observes. “PYCE has helped me become a rising star. I am a respected trainer. I work with many initiatives and, most importantly, I work with youth who were like me, on the streets and feeling frustrated. I let them know hard work pays off, and that if I can make it, they can too.”

FOSTERING YOUTH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



PYCE's success depends on a network of youth leaders who shoulder broad responsibilities.

Youth in the Middle East and North Africa need opportunities to practice civic engagement as a way to learn social and civic values that will give them a voice in their own future. This is especially true in Yemen, where youth represent more than half of the population. Many simply feel excluded from public discourse and life. Since 2010, AMIDEAST has partnered with USAID to implement Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE), a program that enables youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities. PYCE trains youth leaders to develop and implement activities that encourage youth engagement. Youth are also taught to identify and train other young people, thereby leveraging the program's impact and sustainability. By working with a steering committee of civic leaders, young leaders are encouraged to engage with moderate religious figures, educators, local council members, sports enthusiasts, and other community members.

With strong community support, AMIDEAST and its partners, Peace Players International (PPI) and the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), conduct PYCE activities in Aden, Marib, Lahej, and Sana'a. In 2013, PYCE expanded activities into Abyan. PYCE's work is carried out in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports Endowments and Guidance and Education and with governors' offices and local councils.

More than 200 PYCE-supported leaders provided civic engagement opportunities in 2013, serving as peer models and participating in fostering locally-driven solutions, such as maintaining schools and public spaces and supporting installation of solar power systems to permit PYCE youth centers to function during electricity outages. These training, educational, community awareness, and recreational activities benefited more than 3,000 at-risk youths. PYCE has also encouraged female participation by designating female-only spaces and increasing activities for women and girls at the centers. Living up to its commitment to the development of female leaders, more than 40 percent of all youth leaders are female; about half of the 4,800 youth trained so far are girls and young women.

Participants in the 2013 AWEP training round in Lebanon.



CHANGING WOMEN'S LIVES THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“The AWEP program helped me discover how to use my talents and succeed.”

— Heba Reda Fahmy, Egypt

Participation of women in the labor market in Arab countries is among the lowest in the world, regardless of their gains in education and in their societies at large. Entrepreneurship, however, is providing a means for many Arab women to reach their potential by enabling them to realize both personal and career goals, allowing them to support their families, and paving the way for them to contribute to their communities in important ways, all at the same time.

For the second consecutive year, the Arab Women's Entrepreneurship Project (AWEP) — an AMIDEAST partnership with Citi Foundation — advanced the economic empowerment of women in the Arab world through entrepreneurship. The program was offered in Lebanon and Morocco, following the success of an earlier training round in those countries. Egypt and Jordan, both considered good fits for the AWEP model, were added to the program.

In each of the four countries, 20 women were selected from large applicant pools, demonstrating a strong interest in, and need for, what AWEP offers: basic business skills training combined

with mentoring and other support. The training is provided over a time frame long enough to permit participants to master the skills learned and begin to implement business plans. AWEP alumnae continue to benefit from the AWEP support network in all countries, once they graduate from the program.

For women in the Arab world, where political, economic, and regulatory conditions are already challenging, AWEP provides skills-building, mentoring, and other support to help them overcome numerous hurdles — rigid regulatory structures in their countries, limited avenues for financing, and not least, the uncertainties due to the current political situations in these countries. Work, family, and other gender-specific issues are also addressed.

As a result of the success of AWEP's second year, Citi Foundation and AMIDEAST agreed to offer a new round of training in 2014. This will bring the benefits of this groundbreaking initiative to nearly 250 aspiring women entrepreneurs in all.

By the end of Year 2, these six women launched successful new ventures or grew previously struggling enterprises in a diversity of areas after participating in AWEP.



Amina Majdi, President of a Women's Artisan Cooperative in Morocco



Sanaa El Amine, Early Childhood Education Specialist and School Founder in Lebanon



Jouhaina Elawar, Owner of Two Women's Clothing Boutiques in Lebanon



Intisar Al Khatib, Founder of a Health Foods Business in Jordan



Hoda Fouad, President of an Arts & Music Education Nonprofit in Egypt



Linda Hallak, Owner of an Online Marketing Business in Jordan

Teachers in the PCELT program, such as this teacher in Jordan, practice delivering interactive lessons to real students as their peers observe in order to provide supportive feedback.



MAKING BETTER ENGLISH TEACHERS

“I am really a different teacher now”

– Zeinab Deymi-Gheriani, PCELT graduate, Tunisia

English is important as a gateway to opportunities for youth in the Middle East and North Africa. Realizing those opportunities, however, is a problem because much of the region lacks well-trained, certified teachers with the capacity to advance their students' English language proficiency. AMIDEAST has stepped in with its new Professional Certificate in English Language Teaching (PCELT) program, a training initiative to enable teachers to develop critically needed pedagogical skills and expand the region's pool of qualified English teachers.

Through a partnership with World Learning/SIT Graduate Institute and with support from the GE Foundation, AMIDEAST launched PCELT in an extensive, six-country pilot in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia in 2013. As word of the new program spread, other countries asked to offer it. The result was that PCELT was also introduced in Lebanon, with funding from AMIDEAST's Lebanon Advisory Board, and in Yemen. Additional cohorts were trained with funding from the U.S. embassies in Yemen and Egypt and the Consulate General in Jerusalem.

Within a year, PCELT had certified 222 teachers in eight countries, trained 22 PCELT trainers, and strengthened partnerships with local ministries and other educational entities with the common aim of upgrading English language teaching skills in the region. The launching phase, moreover, enabled AMIDEAST to strengthen its own capacity to deliver a rigorous, internationally recognized program region-wide. A pool of PCELT-licensed trainers was established, local assessors were trained on PCELT program evaluation methodologies, and a comprehensive curriculum was adapted to the needs of MENA teachers.

As the year came to a close, planning was underway to expand PCELT in 2014, beginning in Lebanon and Palestine (Gaza), with the inclusion of PCELT in two new USAID-funded projects in those countries. In addition, new U.S. embassy-funded courses were being planned in Tunisia, Yemen and the West Bank; and PCELT will be featured on several AMIDEAST public course calendars.



Experiential learning, such as this in-class training session in the West Bank, is an integral part of the PCELT program.

A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

In its first year, the PCELT program earned praise from teachers for its transformational impact. One trainee from Tunisia said it plainly: “PCELT was a turning point in my professional life as a teacher.”

PCELT introduces methods and tools to enable teachers to significantly advance student learning. Its emphasis on an experiential approach offers trainees opportunities to observe, analyze, experiment with, and adapt a broad range of new teaching practices to their own students' needs and learning contexts. PCELT's practice teaching component allows teachers to apply their developing skills in an authentic classroom, while peers make observations to provide constructive and supportive feedback.

“PCELT changed my way of thinking about teaching and made me a different teacher,” said a Cairo public school teacher. Her students benefited, too, coming alive and becoming more comfortable in English as they worked in small groups, engaged in discussion, and acted out scenes in English – activities rarely found in the teacher-centered classrooms typical across the region.

HELPING FUTURE LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

AMIDEAST has been proud to administer the prestigious Fulbright Foreign Student Program in the Middle East and North Africa for nearly 45 years. As the flagship educational platform of the U.S. Department of State, the Fulbright Program recognizes young men and women who stand out for their academic achievements, leadership potential, and desire to make a difference in their fields. It provides these outstanding individuals the opportunity to pursue graduate study and research at leading U.S. institutions of higher education. The Fulbright program is also committed to promoting international cultural understanding and global citizenship by broadening students' understanding of the world, the United States, and their own communities and societies.

In 2013, AMIDEAST administered the Fulbright Foreign Student Program in 13 countries – Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, UAE, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen – making it possible for 354 grantees to pursue graduate study and research at colleges and universities across the United States, and 211 nominees to be placed in U.S. graduate programs. Over the years, more than 2,000 deserving young men and women have been awarded Fulbright grants through programs administered by AMIDEAST. Upon their return home, many of them have become leaders in their communities and their chosen fields, where they have helped shape the future of the places they live.

“Creative leadership and liberal education...are the first requirements for a hopeful future for humankind. Fostering these – leadership, learning, and empathy between cultures – was and remains the purpose of the [Fulbright] program.”

– J. William Fulbright

PROFILE

DISCOVERING NEW POSSIBILITIES

Iheb Guerhazi watched with excitement as the Arab Spring enveloped his country, Tunisia. The young architect was hopeful that the promise of change would open the doors to new thinking about architecture and how it serves Tunisia's growing urban centers. However, the revolution also brought turmoil, and with it a dampening of job prospects in his field. A job offer took him to China for an “amazing” experience, but it was his decision to apply for the Fulbright Program that would have the greatest impact.



“Because of my Fulbright experience, I am thinking that, once back home, I can both teach and work.”

As a Fulbright student at the University of Washington, Iheb pursued a Master's of Science in the History and Theory of Architecture. His studies focused on the relevance of Western architecture with regard to the needs of the developing world. A summer fellowship spent at the Agha Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT/Harvard University, included in his grant from the Fulbright program, enabled him to consider his research within the rich Islamic and Arab architectural traditions of Tunisia.

Iheb not only gained professional expertise from the Fulbright program. The experience of studying in an open, collaborative academic environment, opened his eyes to exciting new possibilities. When he returns to Tunisia, he hopes to bring with him the diversity of knowledge and elements of the academic atmosphere that impressed him. “Because of my Fulbright experience, I am thinking that, once back home, I can both teach and work. By dealing with students, you can effect change. But it's not only the information that I would bring back; it's more than that, it's the educational process.”

Fulbright students enjoy opportunities to see national landmarks during the annual Fulbright reentry workshop, hosted by AMIDEAST in Washington, D.C.

Students in an elementary school in the West Bank.



BUILDING CAPACITY IN EDUCATION

Expanding access to quality education is critical to improving the lives of youth across the Middle East and North Africa. This is no more so than in Palestine. To help do something about it, AMIDEAST, in 2013, partnered with USAID, the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), and Open Society Foundations (OSF) to strengthen the capacity of K-12 and higher educational institutions in the West Bank and Gaza.

REFORMING BASIC EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

Launched in May 2012, the USAID-funded Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD) Program supports a national strategy of the MOEHE to improve the quality of K-12 education. In the West Bank, LTD enhances policies, structures, and practices designed to support school-based reforms and strengthen the performance of principals and teachers through high-quality professional development. In Gaza, LTD supports strategic reforms in pre-service teacher education in the college of education at one of Palestine's largest universities. Over its four-year lifespan, the program will target some 300 public schools, benefiting more than 50,000 students.

In its first full year of operations, LTD progressed significantly. The program championed a new national policy to build the capacity of the ministry's National Institute for Education and Training (NIET) and provided NIET technical support to deliver school-based in-service training to more than 400 under-qualified teachers in mathematics, science, Arabic, English, and educational technology. It also supported (a) the development of a new national teacher training and licensing program aligned with 21st century learning skills; (b) the development and delivery of leadership training for 88 principals and equipped each one with a laptop computer; and (c) the design and implementation in partnership with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst of an inquiry-based training of trainers program at NIET for more than 50 teacher-educators.

IMPROVING SCHOOLS IN THE WEST BANK

AMIDEAST was pleased to be selected by USAID to implement the School Support Program (SSP), a four-year, \$20 million initiative focused on strengthening school leadership, teaching quality, and community engagement in 50 schools in marginalized areas of the West Bank. Additional measures, such as career guidance, life-skills training, and experiential learning, are designed to overcome low student achievement and strengthen student social competencies.

SSP's first step, begun in summer 2013, was to undertake an intensive school assessment process to identify the schools to be included in the program. This was followed by preparations for district-wide events with parents, teachers, students, and other community members, to be organized after MOEHE approves the final school selection.

SSP also worked with MOEHE's National Institute for Education and Training to lay the groundwork for a 10-month intensive Leadership Diploma Program to enable school principals to carry out the school improvement process that will be introduced during the course of the program. Longer term, SSP will introduce other measures designed to enhance student and parental engagement and foster learning. Among these measures will be an upgrading of computer and science labs and libraries based on the results of a needs assessment.

BUILDING CAPACITY IN PALESTINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

AMIDEAST and the Open Society Foundations (OSF) have collaborated with USAID to implement the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) in order to increase capacity within the Palestinian higher education sector since 2005. In particular, the program addresses long-term issues of reform in teaching and learning practices at colleges and universities in the West Bank and Gaza. As the program's end drew near, the groundwork was laid for increasing the number of Centers of Teaching Excellence (CTEs) supported by PFDP, and for supporting an important series of policy development roundtable seminars.

AMIDEAST signed a grant agreement with Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU) in 2013 to help the university build the capacity of its new CTE and train PPU faculty in effective strategies for teaching and learning. The establishment of a separate CTE at Palestine Technical University-Kadoorie – addition to the two existing CTEs, one at An Najah National University and one at Bethlehem University – has increased the number of centers supported through PFDP to four.

The roundtable seminars will engage senior decision makers in exploring current issues in higher education to help them make policy recommendations that inform the ministry's reform of the sector. The first of these, in 2013 in collaboration with the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, focused on quality assurance in Palestinian higher education.

American students, such as these undergraduates in the Cairo program, gain valuable perspectives living and studying in the region.



CREATING AWARENESS & UNDERSTANDING OF THE ARAB WORLD

"My study abroad in Morocco was the most intriguing, absolutely challenging at times, and astonishing experience of my life. Every day was spent learning and experiencing something wonderfully unique."



Student exploring Jordan's Roman heritage

In these words, Madinatou Diallo, a student at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, reflects on the rewards of her experience in AMIDEAST's Education Abroad Program in Morocco. Writing on Mosaic, the official blog of AMIDEAST Education Abroad

Programs, she added, "I can only hope to return soon and make new experiences."

In 2013, 360 students enrolled in summer, semester, or full-year study options offered by AMIDEAST Education Abroad Programs in the Arab World, earning credit for coursework in Modern Standard and Colloquial Arabic, as well as related area studies courses. Programs were offered in Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. Of note, the Area & Arabic Language Studies program in Amman, Jordan, welcomed its largest group ever, including 12 students from our new partners, Associated Colleges of the Midwest. However, the Egypt programs, which resumed in 2012 following a two-semester hiatus that began during the January 25, 2011 Revolution, were suspended in July 2013 in response to the ongoing political turmoil in that country.

CUSTOMIZING THE EXPERIENCE

AMIDEAST assisted 10 U.S. institutions in the development and implementation of short-term education abroad programs in Jordan, Morocco, Oman, and the UAE in 2013. Through activities such as homestays, lectures, cross-cultural discussions, site visits to community organizations, service learning projects, and cultural excursions, more than 340 participating high school and college students gained invaluable life-changing insights that expanded their understanding of the region, and fostered newfound connections with its citizens.

By tailoring these short-term programs to meet sponsors' objectives, AMIDEAST meets a variety of needs and interests. Reflecting a rising interest in Arabic language study at American universities, intensive language study is the focal point of several programs. Notably among them, two U.S. Department of State-funded programs in Morocco and Oman advanced the Arabic language proficiency of 114 secondary and post-secondary students.

Other customized programs enable participants to explore special topics. Students from Drew University in New Jersey, for example, learned firsthand about globalization and migration patterns during a summer program in Rabat and northern Morocco, while engineering students from the University of Maryland deepened their understanding of their discipline in a global context during a study tour in the UAE. Other college programs focused on the Middle East dimension of peace and conflict resolution, maternal and child health, and the business culture of the Middle East and North Africa.

LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

AMIDEAST Education Abroad Programs provide a solid classroom-based academic program, but what is transformative and life-changing for students are their firsthand experiences of Middle Eastern and North African society made possible by the program. In addition to opportunities to live with local families, two notable activities include the Language Partner program and Cultural Dialogues sessions.

In each host country, local students, young professionals, and participants in AMIDEAST English language courses serve as language partners for semester/academic year Education Abroad students. In a variety of extracurricular settings, Education Abroad students work with host-country peers to practice language skills and build cross-cultural friendships. Language partners are a core element of the Arabic language learning agenda of the programs.

Students also participate in structured dialogue sessions with carefully selected host country students. Held in both formal and informal settings, cultural dialogue sessions provide an opportunity for students to discuss cultural issues and interact with host country peers. By creating a "safe space" for both Education Abroad and host country students to express their views and ask questions, participants are able to broach topics that are not easily raised in day-to-day conversations, such as identity, marriage, religion, and gender.

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Gonzaga University, WA

H
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Harvard University, MA
Hawaii Pacific University, HI
Hood College, MD
Howard University, DC
Hult International Business School, MA
Hunter College, NY

I
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Illinois State University, IL
Independent Commission for Human Rights, WEST BANK
Indiana State University, IN
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, PA
Indiana University/Bloomington, IN
Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, IN
Injaz, LEBANON
Institut de l'Agdal, MOROCCO
Institute of Traditional Islamic Arts and Architecture, JORDAN
International Horizons College, Dubai, UAE

J
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Jordan Olympics Committee, JORDAN

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Kennesaw State University, GA
Kent State University, OH

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Lebanese American University, LEBANON
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Lehigh University, PA
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Middle Tennessee State University, TN
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Missouri University of Science and Technology, MO
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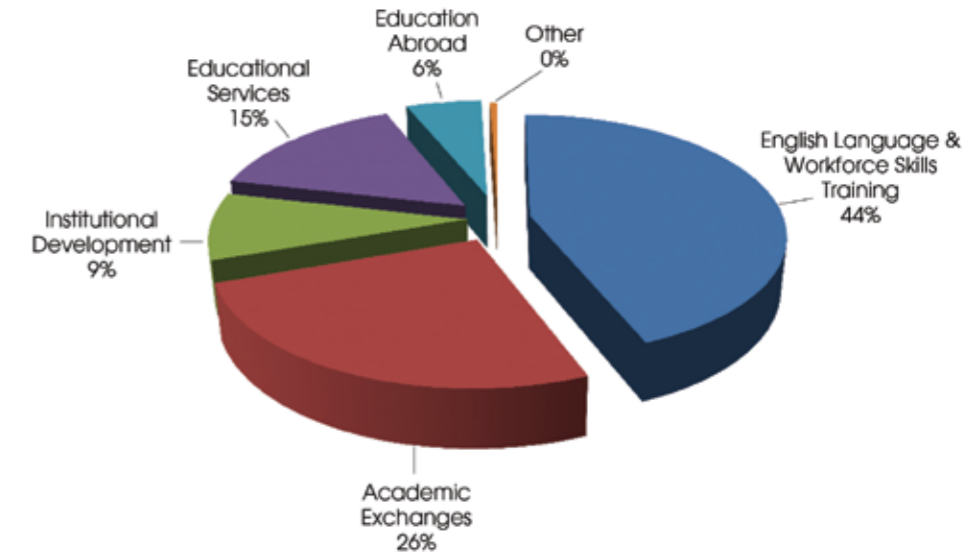
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FIELD AND PROJECT OFFICE



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