MEPI Day of Service Virtual 2021

Alumni Toolkit

Contents

About the MEPI Day of Service

The MEPI Day of Service is a movement by the MEPI alumni network to encourage building team spirit, connecting with U.S. embassies, and fostering community engagement. The MEPI Day of Service will leverage the power of social media as a way for MEPI alumni and partners to honor the MEPI values of meaningful and effective partnerships in the Middle East and North Africa to generate shared solutions that promote stability and prosperity in the region.

The MEPI Day of Service will encourage alumni from the eligible MEPI Alumni Connection countries to plan and participate in community service activities in their home communities. Due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, MEPI Day of Service will be hosted virtually in 2021, only online activities. These activities via online platforms ensure both safety and prevention measurements to all MEPI alumni and their respective communities. Therefore, alumni will be encouraged to think creatively about serving community needs.

The MEPI Day of Service Virtual 2021 theme is "**climate change and environmental issues**." The MENA region has been facing a wide array of environmental stresses that include water shortage, arable land depletion, air pollution, inefficient waste management, and degradation of coastal ecosystems. We encourage you to focus on projects and awareness related to climate change and environmental issues in their communities for their MEPI Day of Service 2021 activities. Make sure to use the theme hashtag **#Climate&Environment**. All alumni are invited to participate with other project themes as well.

The MEPI Day of Service is a day of volunteering and online community engagement; no financial support is provided. To support your success in this annual activity, the MEPI Alumni Connection team developed this Toolkit to support you in:

- planning and implementing your service activities;
- sharing your efforts and impact on social media, using **#MEPIDayofService2021**; and
- Supporting you in hosting MEPI Day of Service activities in your communities on the same day in future years.

Act: How Will You Volunteer

The first step is to choose the type of volunteer work that you would like to do for the MEPI Day of Service Virtual 2021.

Would you like to organize your own event?
Use this toolkit for guidance and tips for organizing and implementing community service events.

Looking for ways to volunteer at existing events?
Leverage your network to find people who need volunteers! Here are some resources to start searching:
- o Friends and colleagues – *ask you friends, colleagues, and cohorts if they are planning events or are members of groups that need volunteers*
- o Local schools and associations – *local schools and community groups often need volunteers to help them complete their work successfully*
- o Social media – *follow #MEPIDayofService2021 to learn about events that fellow MEPI alumni are planning and how to get involved*

Additional Resources:

50 + Examples of Virtual Community Service Projects: https://tribesforgood.com/50-virtual-community-service-ideas-that-will-make-you-stand-out-from-the-crowd/

Organizing Successful Events
Successful events rely on intentional planning; most of your time and effort in implementing an activity will go into the planning and preparation.

Assessing the Need and Setting Goals

- o Prioritize the people you are serving: What is the most useful for them?
- o Determine: What is the goal of this activity?
- o Envision: What kind of short-term or long-term impact could this activity stimulate?
- o Define: Set clear objectives for the service activity.
- o Collaborate: Consider coordinating with an existing organization or working with another community leader to design a virtual impactful activity.

Think through the process for a successful event. Some guiding questions to consider:

- o What online platforms you want to use?
- o How many people do you anticipate serving?
- o How many volunteers are needed? What will the volunteers be required to do?

Develop a timeline and workplan leading up to the event and for the event:

- o How much time will it take to learn about your community's needs and discuss your ideas with your community members?
- o How much time will it take to get a meeting and approval from local authorities?

- How much time will it take to reach out to friends and community members to confirm volunteers for planning and implementing your project?
- How often should you be following up with community members and volunteers?

Additional Resources:

How to organize a virtual Community Service Project in the time of Covid-19:
https://www.nonprofitlearninglab.org/post-1/the-ultimate-guide-to-setting-up-virtual-volunteering-in-your-organization

Garner Volunteers

To successfully accomplish your community service project, you will need to assemble the right team and establish clear roles.

Examples of volunteer roles:

- Organizing and planning
- Advertising for and recruiting, and managing other volunteers
- Designing materials
- Implementing the virtual activity

You will likely need many types of volunteers. How will you recruit volunteers?

- Make the activity relatable and fun.
- Is this a new activity you are proposing or building on a success from previous similar initiatives?
- Have a simple, concise message of:
  - What you want to do and why it is important to the community.
  - Benefits the volunteers will gain, such as a new skill.
  - A realistic estimate of the amount of time the volunteers will contribute to planning and on the actual day.
- Working with an established group can make it much easier to find dedicated volunteers:
  - Start with your MEPI alumni network and your friends, who may be like-minded or who may have personal experience with the problem you are addressing.
  - Share with colleagues, classmates, and members of other groups to which you belong.

Additional Resources:

Volunteerism: A Practical Guide for Non - Profit Organizations:

https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/volunteers/recruiting/main

https://maktabatmepi.org/ar/tags/volunteerism (Arabic)

How to Get Volunteers to Help at Your Event: https://www.attendstar.com/how-to-get-volunteers-to-help-at-your-event/

How to Find Volunteers for an Event: https://www.gevme.com/blog/how-to-find-volunteers-for-an-event/

Safety & Risk Mitigation (in case of in person activities)

Due to the spread of the COVID- 19 pandemic across the world, MEPI Day of Service will be hosted virtually in 2021. We do not encourage Alumni to plan in person activities. If you were not able to plan online events and you prefer to do in person activities, please make sure to follow your countries' governments recommendations; take all the safety measures like social distancing, wearing masks, and hygiene care.

It is important to ensure that you've assessed the risks that may be present at your event and take steps to mitigate those risks.

- Prepare ahead with contingency plans such as:
    a. Having a list of all the relevant persons phone numbers
    b. A backup plan for weather
    c. Who's in charge if something happens to you that day?
- Determine what equipment you may need and ensure that equipment will be available:
    o Provide it yourself
    o Ask for donations
    o Ask volunteers to have their own equipment

    Examples may include paper, art supplies, shovels, hammers, books, prizes, games, transportation, microphone, water, chairs, etc.

- Determine if any of the work that you may be doing has associated risks such as exposing chemicals, loud noises, or dust
    o Determine if the risk can be avoided
    o Determine if you need a specialist at the event due to the risk
    o Determine if special equipment is needed to reduce the risk, such as facemasks or earplugs.
- Brief your team and volunteers about your risk assessment and provide everyone with information on emergencies contact number or procedures in case of injury or sudden sickness
- Established contact with your local authorities early in the planning process and stay in touch throughout planning and the day of the event to ensure their support, for example visiting the mayor's office or local police stations.
- Bring a First Aid kit with you during the activity day for any sudden injury or sickness.

Use the following resources to support you in assessing and mitigating for risks:

Appendix 3 – In person Risk Assessment Form

Additional Resources:

Risk Assessment and Volunteering Information Sheet, Volunteer Now: http://smallcharityweek.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Risk-Toolkit-Volunteers.pdf

Risk Management for Your Volunteer Program, Verified Volunteers:
https://www.sterlingvolunteers.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Risk-Management-For-Your-Volunteer-Program-Whitepaper-2.pdf

How to Complete a Risk Assessment, Know How Non Profit: https://worksmart.org.uk/health-advice/health-and-safety/hazards-and-risks/what-are-five-steps-risk-assessment

Sample Photo/Image Release Form

https://www.nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/media/Sample_Volunteer_Consent_and_Release_Form.pdf

Promote & Connect

Volunteering not only benefits the community but also builds community! MEPI Day of Service is an opportunity for MEPI alumni to connect with each other and with like-minded individuals in your communities, countries, and region. Leverage the momentum of the day and social media to build enthusiasm for your event, garner volunteers, and share the results and impact of your hard work and dedication.

Sharing catchy, clear, and engaging posts on social media will boost both your work impact, exposure, and outreach to potential volunteers and local partners who would support your activity.

Share your plan

Use social media to share calls for volunteers or learn about opportunities to volunteer. Sample Posts:

> *Help us collect book donations for the pupils at Example School in Example Community! Drop off your books at Example School between 11:00 – 16:00 on Example Day. See you there! #MEPIDayofService2021*

> *Example Event aspires to spread awareness about financial literacy to contribute towards the advancement of our community at large. Everyone is welcome to join us on Example Day starting at 9:00 am. #MEPIDayofService2021*

See also Appendix 1 – Developing an Advertising Plan

Share your actions

This is the big day! Using social media on the day of your event demonstrates the drive and force of MEPI alumni action across the region. Join the movement to contribute to your communities and share your actions proudly with your fellow MEPI Alumni Connection alumni by sharing updates and photos throughout the day using the unique *#MEPIDayofService2021* hashtag. We also encourage you to tag the handles of @USMEPI, @IREXintel, and the U.S. Embassy in your country for wider interaction and outreach on social media for the MEPI Day of Service. Sample Posts:

Come join us at our zoom conference! We have 3 environment experts who volunteered to talk about "5 simple steps to save our environment". Let's make our community an environmentally friendly space. #MEPIDayofService2021 #Climate&Environment

Resources: See Appendix 2 – Hashtags and Social Media Platforms for a list of relevant Hashtags and Social Media platforms to tag when sharing your MEPI Day of Service Virtual 2021 activities.

Share your results

Keep the energy going after the event!

Show Appreciation:

Use social media to thank your volunteers. Sample Post:

Thanks again to our 3 environment experts who volunteered during our Zoom call to join #MEPIDayofService2021 movement; we reached 100 citizens that day @XCommunity. You can find the recoded conference on our webpage here: XXX. #Climate&Environement

Use social media to connect your partners and highlight their work to others through future opportunities. Sample Post:

Thanks again to @localschool for inviting us to come share our skills for #MEPIDayofService2021; we reached 100 students that day! @localschool is always looking for professionals to share their skills; learn more on their webpage here: XXX.

On behalf of our team, we want to thank everyone who committed both their time and efforts and believed dearly in the event power to positively impact our community. #MEPIDayofService2021

Show Impact:

Share the impact of your work on social media and also with IREX and MEPI. Submit photos and a MEPI Day of Service Impact Report Form to IREX using this link:

English: https://irexorg.formstack.com/forms/mdsv2021_impact_sharing_report_english

Arabic: https://irexorg.formstack.com/forms/mdsv2021_impact_sharing_report_arabic

Resources: See Appendix 4 - MEPI Day of Service Impact Sharing Report template

Questions and Contact Information

Please email IREX at mepialumni@irex.org with any questions concerning social media and your #MEPIDayofService2021 and #Climate&Environement engagement.

IREX and MEPI can help publicize the great work that you are doing if you let us know about it!