

# MEPI Alumni Connection

## رابطة خريجي ميبي



MEPI



### 2020 MEPI Alumni Survey

### Algeria 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: Algeria

MEPI Alumni Connection

رابطة خريجي ميبى



## Respondent Profile



**48 respondents**  
from 2009 to 2019 (program completion years)



### Age

20-29 years 71%  
30+ 29%

### Gender

Female 46% Male 54%



### MEPI Program

52% Student Leaders Program  
31% Leadership Development Fellowship  
15% Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program  
2% Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship

### How was MEPI a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 32 responses.

## Impact of MEPI

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



Note: Data based on 29 responses.

## Alumni Impact

### Employment



**69%** of respondents are currently working.

### Community Projects

Type of community project conducted



**78%** of respondents conducted at least one community project within the past two years.

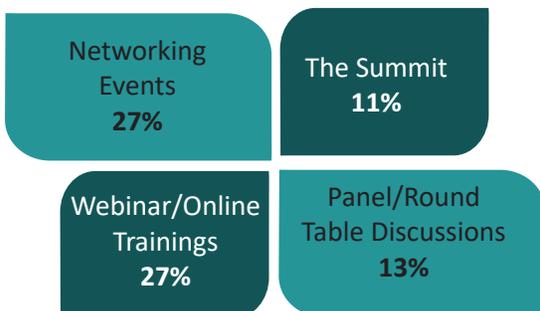
### Leadership

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



## MEPI Alumni Interests

### Desired Activities



### Top Three Skills Respondents Would Like to Develop



### Most helpful

Financial Resource Non-Financial Resource



Grants



Partner(s)

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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 Algerian 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 30% (48/161) of all eligible alumni from Algeria who had contact information available at the time of the survey.

### III. Results

#### A. Respondent Profile

The survey includes 48 alumni respondents whose place of citizenship is Algeria, making up approximately 12% (48/408) of the total sample of alumni respondents across all participating countries and programs. A slightly higher percentage of males responded to the survey than females; 54% (26/48) of respondents identify as male and 46% (22/48) identify as female. Almost all respondents are alumni of one of the three MEPI flagship leadership programs. About half of respondents are alumni of the Student Leaders Program, 52% (25/48), with one-third, 31% (15/48), alumni of the Leadership Development Fellowship, and 15% (7/48) alumni of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program. Only 2% (i.e., one respondent) is an alumnus of the Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship.



Note: Data based on 48 responses.

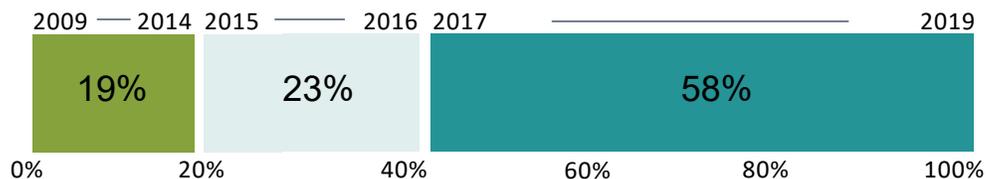
#### MEPI Program

Student Leaders Program <b>52%</b>	Leadership Development Fellowship <b>31%</b>	Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program <b>15%</b>	Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship <b>2%</b>
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Note: Data based on 48 responses.

The majority of respondents are younger and completed their program within the last three years, at the time of the survey. Just over half, 58% (28/48), of respondents completed their program in 2017, 2018, or 2019. About one-fifth of respondents, 23% (11/48), completed their program in 2015 or 2016, and another 19% (9/48) completed their program in 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, or 2009. There were no respondents from 2003-2008. Additionally, 71% (32/45) of respondents are 20-29 years old and 29% (13/45) are 30 years old or older.

## Percentage of Alumni Respondents by MEPI Program Completion



Note: Data based on 48 respondents.

Findings also show that most of the respondents' current or primary country of residence is in Algeria, with a few respondents residing abroad. Out of 39 respondents, 85% (33/39) reported Algeria as their current or primary country of residence and 15% (6/39) reside abroad. Among the six respondents who noted their current or primary country of residence was outside of Algeria, one resided in Ethiopia, one in France, one in Lebanon, one in Poland, one in Tunisia, and one in the U.K.

## B. Impact of MEPI

Findings from the survey indicate that respondents' participation in their MEPI program significantly impacted their lives. It helped motivate respondents to become more engaged in civic and community activities. It also helped respondents gain a new global perspective, enhance their entrepreneurial and leadership skills, develop a supportive network, and build self-confidence. Additionally, respondents felt that the skills they acquired, and the opportunities provided by MEPI, helped enhance their ability to impact their communities. Some of the skills respondents said they developed from their MEPI program were problem-solving, leadership and communication, personal responsibility, and project management. Moreover, it enhanced their access to networking and training and resources.

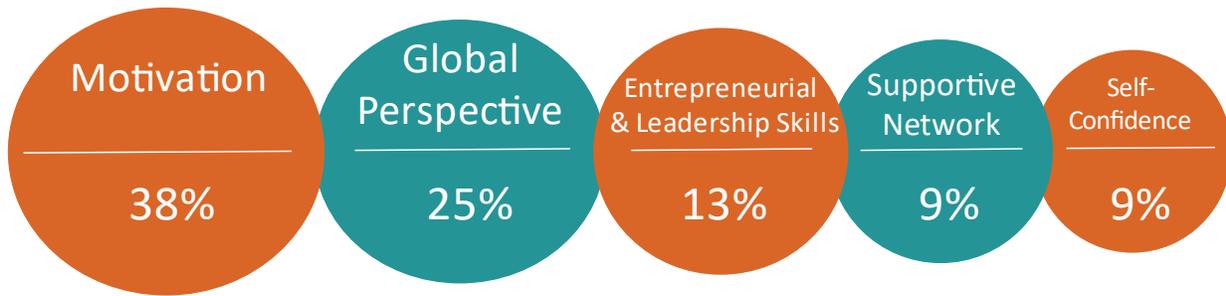
In turn, alumni respondents have had an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Respondents hold executive-level positions and work across various institutions. Respondents noted that MEPI helped them develop applicable job skills, including leadership, communication, and time management skills. Additionally, respondents have been active in their communities, conducting projects predominately in youth engagement, education, and civic engagement. Many alumni respondents are also leaders in their communities, serving in leadership positions as well as practicing leadership skills in their daily lives.

### 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 gained 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. There were 32 respondents who provided an answer to the open-ended question, of which, all agreed MEPI was life changing. Respondents provided a number of reasons as to how MEPI changed their lives, including motivating them to become more engaged in civic and community activities, encouraging a more global perspective, increasing new entrepreneurial and leadership skills, providing a supportive network, and enhancing self-confidence.

## How was MEPI was a life-changing experience?



Note: Data based on 32 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.

Over one-third, 38% (12/32), of respondents mentioned that MEPI was transformative because it motivated them to become more engaged in civic activities and help their communities. One respondent noted that MEPI helped alumni become “more active in our community...and [help] others develop their skills.” Another said that MEPI motivated them to become a volunteer and it “became...one of [their] top priorities.” One-quarter, 25% (8/32) of respondents said MEPI was life changing by helping them gain a global perspective. The exchange opportunities and trainings offered through MEPI helped respondents “discover new horizons, [learn] new things, [discover] a new culture.” One respondent said that “MEPI changed my life by giving me a chance to travel, seek world-class education, meet people from different backgrounds, and contribute to community development.” Additionally, 13% (4/32) said MEPI helped them develop new entrepreneurial and leadership skills.



“I could have never gotten my program *I Speak* to where it is today without the help of MEPI. Not only did the...training push me to actually create the program, but also with the [MEPI Alumni Connection’s] Alumni Venture Fund, I was able to have an even larger impact.”

Another 9% (3/32) of respondents said MEPI provided them with a supportive network, which has helped advance their careers and offer new opportunities to learn. One respondent said, “MEPI...has definitely helped me grow as a person by offering an international dynamic environment and a solid network of supporting people.” The remaining respondents said MEPI helped them build their self-confidence, 9% (3/32). Two respondents, 6% (2/32), also mentioned that MEPI overall was life changing but did not provide specific details on how.

In addition to being a transformative experience, respondents also stated that MEPI helped improve their ability to make an impact in their communities. Specifically, MEPI helped respondents build skills in problem-solving (18%), leadership and communication (18%), personal responsibility (14%), and project management (11%). It also enhanced respondents’ access to a professional network (25%) as well as trainings and resources (14%).

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



Note: Data based on 29 responses to the open-ended question, "How has MEPI helped you develop your ability to make an impact in your community?"

### Problem Solving

"I acquired the ability to analyze problems and self-control in order to help the largest number of those who needed my help in my community."

### Leadership & Communication

"Participation in the program...was a turning point in terms of honing leadership and volunteer skills, through which several community initiatives were implemented that had a great impact on my community."

### Personal Responsibility

"MEPI succeeded at ingraining a culture of 'I care' and 'I shouldn't wait for others to do it' in me and my peers."

### Project Management

"MEPI...gave me the tools on how to write and implement an effective civic engagement plan which helped me save time by knowing all the different steps I should follow before starting my work."

### Networking

"MEPI...gave me the opportunity to meet colleagues and exchange experiences, information and experiences...that gave us a strong impetus to continue working for positive change in our society."

### Training & Resources

A "MEPI...course on social entrepreneurship...was what ignited the idea which turned into a start up that's implementing a recycling circular economy model in Algeria."

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?"

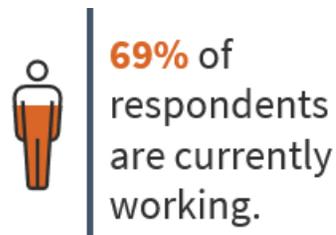
## Alumni Impact

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 further impact their communities.

## Employment and Entrepreneurship

At the time the survey was conducted, 69% (33/48) of respondents said they were currently working with paid employment. The employment rate is higher among males than females, as 73% (19/26) of males said they were working compared to 64% (14/22) of females. Additionally, older respondents are more likely to be working than younger respondents; 92% (12/13) of respondents 30 years or older are working compared to 56% (18/32) of respondents 20-29 years old. Moreover, the employment rate is highest among respondents who are alumni of the Leadership Development Fellowship as 93% (14/15) are working. The rate is lower among respondents who are alumni of the Student Leaders Program, 52% (13/25), and Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program, 71% (5/7).

### Employment rate of respondents



Note: Data based on 48 respondents to the question, "Are you currently working? (Only select yes, if you have paid employment)"

Out of the 32 respondents, who are working and provided their position level, 19% (6/32) hold an entry-level position, 28% (9/32) a mid-level position, 44% (14/32) an executive-level position, and 9% (3/32) are self-employed. Among the six respondents who hold an entry-level position, four are female and two are male. Among those who hold mid-level positions, three are female and six are male. Additionally, among those who hold executive-level positions, five are female, whereas nine are male. This indicates that males are more likely to be employed and hold higher-level positions (i.e., mid-and-executive-level positions).

Employed respondents work across numerous types of institutions. Of 26 respondents, 38% work for a large business and 31% work for an international non-government organization. Additionally, 8% work for a medium-sized business and 8% work for a small business.<sup>1</sup> The remaining respondents work for a local NGO (8%), the national government (4%), or are self-employed (3%).

While a smaller percentage of respondents reported they were self-employed or owned a business, more



than half, 60% (28/47), stated they had started their own business or organization after their experience with MEPI. This discrepancy in responses may be due to the fact that some respondents started a business in the past but are no longer business owners, they do not rely on income from their business and therefore do not consider themselves self-employed, or they started an organization and do not consider themselves to be self-employed or a business owner. Among those who started a business/organization, 78% (21/28) had support from a partner or partner organization. Additionally, 55% (11/20) of respondents said they met their partner either through their MEPI program or through the alumni network. This indicates respondents' experience with MEPI and the alumni network, has helped enhance their professional network and provided opportunities for entrepreneurial activities.

<sup>1</sup> A large business is defined as having more than 201 employees, a medium-sized business is defined as having between 50 to 200 employees, and a small business is defined as having no more than 50 employees.

MEPI has also been beneficial for respondents as they can use skills developed from MEPI in their current positions. Respondents noted that some of the job applicable skills they gained through MEPI were leadership, communication, and time management. These skills have enabled respondents to be more proficient in their positions, including empowering youth, training students, and exchanging ideas with colleagues.



“Using leadership and time management skills I was taught, thanks to the program, helps me [manage] my career.”



“I use my MEPI knowledge to become a better trainer at the center I work at school.”



“I use the communication and leadership capacities that I developed during my MEPI experience on a daily level. I engage constructively with my team, communicate my thoughts and ideas properly.”

## Community Projects

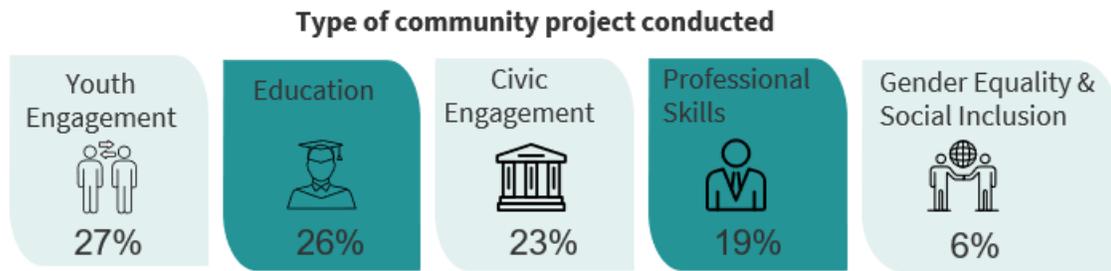
Respondents have been active and impactful in their communities, 78% (35/45) conducted at least one community project within the past two years. A slightly higher percentage of females, 79% (15/19), conducted community projects compared to males, 77% (20/26). Additionally, older respondents were more likely to conduct projects as 92% (12/13) of respondents 30 years old and over conducted a community project compared to 76% (22/29) of respondents 20-29 years old. Across MEPI programs, 100% (15/15) of alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship conducted a project, compared to 71% (17/24) of alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program, and 60% (3/5) of alumni respondents of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program.

Among the 35 respondents who conducted a project in their community, 27% focused on youth engagement, 26% on education, 23% on civic engagement, 19% on professional skills, and 6% on gender equality and social inclusion.<sup>2</sup> However, there are differences in the type of community project conducted by gender. The types of community projects most conducted among females were education, 28%, and

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<sup>2</sup> Percentages are based on 35 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

youth engagement, 28%.<sup>3</sup> The type of community project most conducted among males was civic engagement, 29%.<sup>4</sup>



Among respondents who conducted at least one community project, 30 provided an estimate of how

Note: Data based on 35 responses to the question “What type of project did you conduct?” Respondents could select multiple options.

many people they believe benefited from their projects. According to responses, more than 16,000 individuals were positively impacted by respondents’ community projects.

 More than **16,000** individuals benefited from community projects conducted by alumni. 

The impact of these projects can be further understood through respondents’ accounts of their greatest success or result. Many respondents provided specific project outcomes. One respondent noted their project(s) was able to “[gather] 300 children,” while another said they were able to “[produce] more than 70 educational videos.” However, other respondents mentioned that their projects achieved more intangible outcomes, including a sense of motivation, engagement, and personal responsibility among beneficiaries. One respondent said their greatest success was being able to “[offer] hope to young people and [try] to refine their energy towards community service,” while another considered that “[making] people smile” was their greatest result.

Many respondents’ ability to have impactful and successful projects has been strengthened by their participation in their MEPI program and the MEPI Alumni Connection. A little under half of the respondents, 42% (14/33), who conducted a community project, did so by collaborating with someone they met through the alumni network or their MEPI program. This indicates that the MEPI program and the alumni network have been beneficial in fostering partnerships and collaborations among respondents.

### Leadership

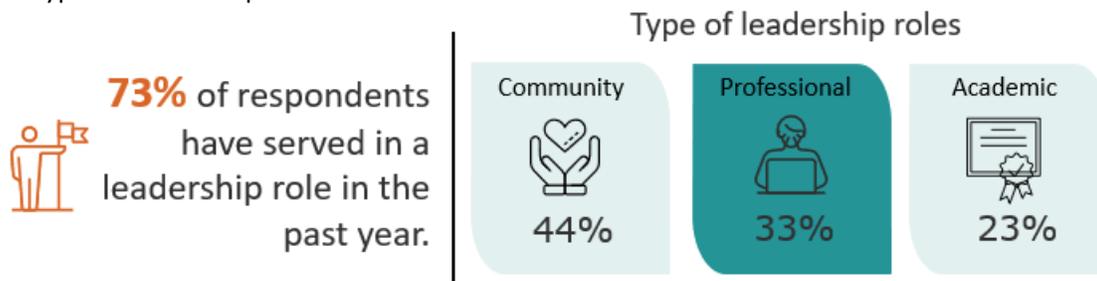
Respondents have also impacted their communities by serving as leaders. Out of 41 respondents, 73% (30/41) have served in a leadership role within the past year. Those in leadership roles are more likely to be male and older. Among females, 65% (11/17) have served in a leadership role compared to 79% (19/24) of males. Additionally, 65% (17/26) of respondents 20-29 years old have served in leadership compared to 92% (11/12) of respondents 30 years old and over. Respondents who are alumni of the Leadership

<sup>3</sup> Percentages based on 15 female responses in which multiple options could be selected.

<sup>4</sup> Percentages based on 20 male responses in which multiple options could be selected.

Development Fellowship were most likely to serve in leadership, 85% (12/14), compared to alumni of the Students Leaders Program, 71% (15/21), and Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program, 40% (2/5).

Among respondents who served in leadership, 44% were in a community setting, 33% were in a professional setting, and 23% in an academic setting.<sup>5</sup> Male respondents most commonly served in a professional setting (40%) but many also served in their communities (36%). Females most commonly served in a community setting (56%).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, 37% (11/30) of respondents served in at least two different types of leadership roles.



Note: Percentages for type of leadership roles are based 30 respondents who could select multiple options.

Respondents have been able to use their leadership skills, gained from MEPI, to have a greater impact on and change the lives of others. Respondents provided an answer to the open-ended question of how they have used their leadership skills to help people in their communities. One respondent noted that they had used their leadership skills in the workplace, “I [do] this every day in my recent jobs working on human rights enhancement in the MENA region.” Additionally, others said that leadership can be practiced routinely and by sharing knowledge both in-person and online. Respondents have shared their knowledge with the “local community online” as well as “[spread] awareness privately and online.”



“I believe that leadership...is a daily life practice, it becomes a routine and a way to live to impact people and be responsible.”

## C. Impact of MEPI Alumni Connection

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers numerous activities for alumni to grow their network and develop new professional skills. Many respondents have participated in these activities within the past two years. Among them, webinars and networking were the activities with the highest participation. Additionally, the primary reason why respondents said they did not participate was because they were not invited to any events.

Respondents’ engagement with the MEPI Alumni Connection has led to numerous positive outcomes. They 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. Support received from the MEPI Alumni Connection, such as the Alumni Venture Fund, has enabled respondents to conduct and expand community projects.

<sup>5</sup> Percentages based on 30 respondents who served in a leadership setting and could select multiple options.

<sup>6</sup> Percentages based on 19 male respondents and 11 female respondents who served in a leadership setting and could select multiple options.

Moreover, the MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader impact on communities as many respondents have shared what they learned from alumni activities with colleagues and family.

## Alumni engagement

### Professional Development Activities

Out of 41 respondents, 71% (29/41) participated in networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection within the past two years. Engagement appears to be higher among females as 82% (14/17) have participated in opportunities, compared to 63% (15/24) among males. Additionally, engagement is higher among older respondents, 75% (9/12) of respondents 30 years and over participated in opportunities compared to 65% (17/26) of respondents 20-29 years old.

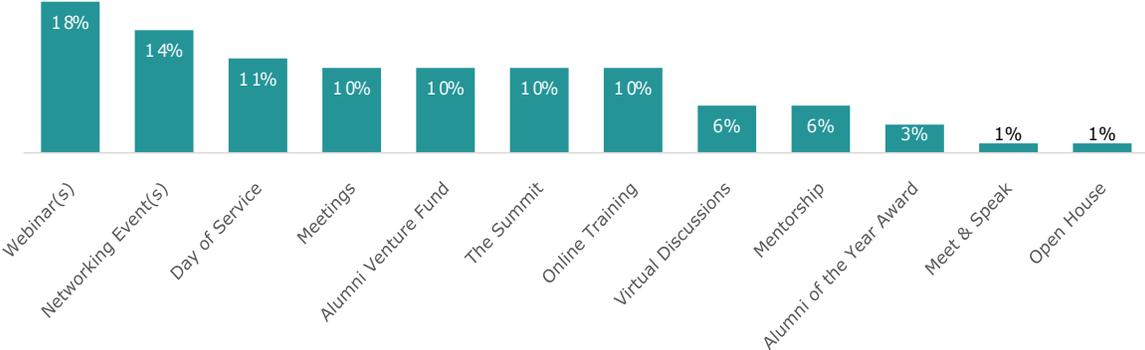
### Respondents’ Participation in Networking or Professional Development Opportunities



Note: Data based on 41 responses among all respondents, 17 among females, 24 among males, 26 among respondents 20-29 years old, and 12 among respondents 30 years old and over.

The MEPI Alumni Connection offers numerous types of networking and professional development opportunities to appeal to diverse alumni including, webinars, networking events, the MEPI Day of Service, meetings, the Alumni Venture Fund, the Summit, online trainings, virtual discussions, mentorship, the Alumni of the Year Award, opportunities to meet and speak, and open houses. The activity with the highest participation was webinars as 18% of respondents participated. The next most participated activities were networking events (14%), MEPI Day of Service (11%), meetings (10%), the Alumni Venture Fund (10%), the Summit (10%), and online trainings (10%).<sup>7</sup> While webinars had the highest participation

### Participation in networking or professional development opportunities



Note: Data based on 29 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.

<sup>7</sup> Percentages are based on responses from 29 respondents who participated in networking/professional development opportunities and where multiple options could be selected.

rate overall, this appears to be mainly driven by male participation. Among males, 23% participated in webinars compared to 12% of females.<sup>8</sup> The MEPI Day of Service was the activity that had the highest participation rate among females.

Out of 41 respondents, 29% (12/41) 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 10 respondents who provided an answer, five said they were not invited to any events, four did not have enough time to attend any events, and one had difficulty traveling to the events.

## Impact of Alumni Engagement

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

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, 72% (28/39) of respondents have built relationships with new alumni. Additionally, over half, 54% (15/28), of respondents have built relationships with 11 to 21 new alumni, indicating that alumni activities help foster numerous relationships. Moreover, the MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped enhance collaborations.

In the past two years, 41% (16/39) of respondents have collaborated with at least one other alumni from MEPI or DoS on a project, initiative, or business idea. Among males, 55% (10/22) have collaborated with other alumni, while 35% (6/17) of females have. Respondent collaborations have led to events and activities to promote specific issues and awareness. In the past two years, 172 events and activities were led by 32 respondents in collaboration with civil society organizations. While a few respondents conducted up to 25 events, the majority of respondents conducted five or fewer, 88% (28/32). Of the total 172 events/activities, 54% were conducted by 15 females and 48% were conducted by 17 males. Support from the MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped respondents conduct and expand community projects.

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

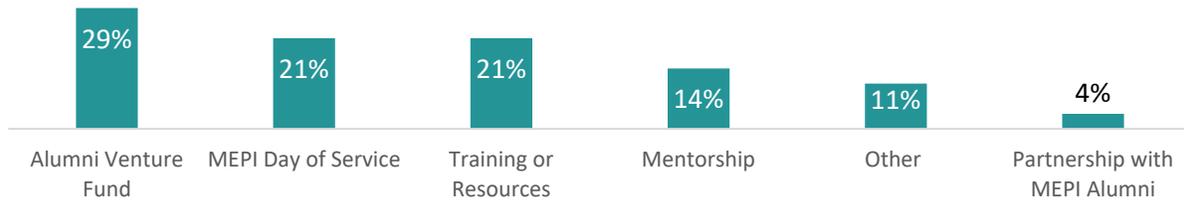
The MEPI Alumni Connection offers a menu of opportunities and support for alumni to conduct community projects. Among respondents who conducted a community project, 48% (16/33) report having received at least one form of support. The most common forms of support received were the Alumni Venture Fund (29%), followed by the MEPI Day of Service (21%), and training/resources (21%). A smaller percentage of respondents received support through mentorship (14%) and partnership with MEPI alumni (4%). Additionally, 11% of respondents received support through other means, including MEPI small grants and funding outside of MEPI.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Percentages are based on 14 female responses and 15 male responses.

<sup>9</sup> Percentages based on 16 respondents who received support for their community project in which multiple options could be selected.

## Type of Support Received from the MEPI Alumni Connection



Note: Data based on 16 respondents who received support for their community project in which multiple options could be selected.

This support has also enabled respondents' projects to have long-term results and impact. One respondent noted that the award allowed them to "create agricultural projects...through which we were able to direct and follow up [with] several successful projects." Another respondent said that through the award, their "project was able to establish a new direction...of training employees" and "since the results of the project were impressive...the Ministry of Education pledged to incorporate the [training] in future training courses."

Moreover, the MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader impact beyond helping engaged respondents develop new partnerships and conduct activities. Out of 39 respondents, all but one, 97% (38/39), said they have shared what they learned through a MEPI alumni activity (event, training, partnership, etc.) with others. Among respondents who said they had shared what they learned, 24% have done so with colleagues, 19% in-person, 15% with family, 15% on social media, 9% online, 7% with other MEPI alumni, 5% with other DoS alumni, and 5% in a publication.<sup>10</sup> 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 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. Additionally, respondents noted that they would like to develop skills in conflict resolution, decision-making, project management, and small business development. In terms of support, respondents indicated that the most helpful form of financial support would be through grants and having partners would be the most helpful form of non-financial support.

### Alumni Needs

The majority of respondents, 61% (22/36) agreed that the MEPI Alumni Connection provides resources that are appropriate and relevant to their current professional or academic level. Additionally, respondents were asked if they feel secure and comfortable participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities. Among 36 respondents, 78% reported that they always felt secure, 14% often felt secure, 6%

<sup>10</sup> Percentages are based on 38 responses where respondents in which multiple options could be selected.

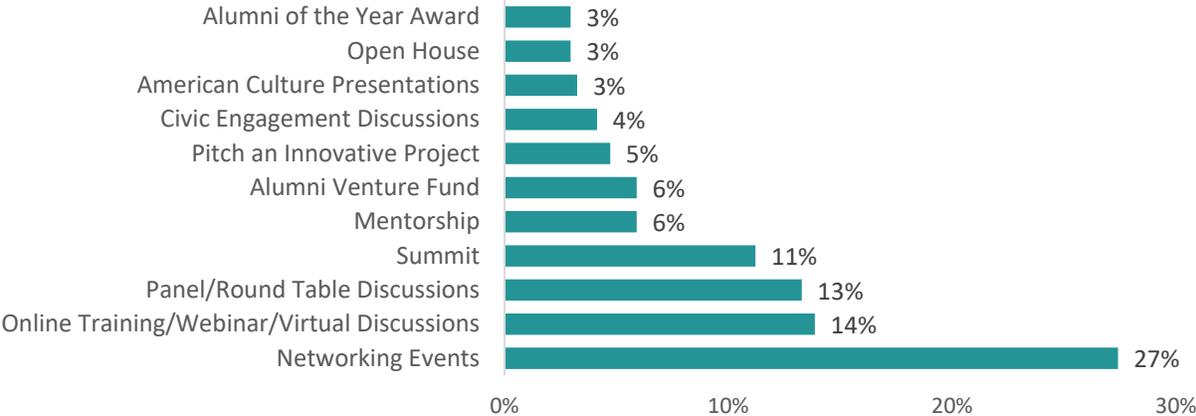
infrequently felt secure, and one respondent reported that they rarely felt secure. This indicates that, overall, most respondents feel secure and comfortable participating in alumni activities.

### Opportunities to Further Strengthen and Grow the MEPI Alumni Connection

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

Respondents stated that the activities they would most like to see implemented were networking events (27%), such as networking events with diplomats and professionals, online trainings (14%), panel/round table discussions (13%), and the Summit (11%).<sup>11</sup> Networking events were selected as the most preferred activity by respondents across all ages, gender, and MEPI program.

#### Respondents’ Desired Activities



Note: Data are based on 45 responses, in which respondents could select multiple options.

Additionally, the most common responses regarding the format of events/trainings were 2-4-day intensive trainings (21%), in-person events during weekends (19%), and online events during weekends (19%). Other common responses were online events during evening hours (12%), and 1-day trainings (11%).

Respondents were also asked to select three skills they would like to develop to advance their community and professional leadership. Among all respondents, the skills most preferred were conflict resolution (9%), decision-making (9%), project management (8%), and small business development (8%).<sup>12</sup> There were some differences in preferred skills across gender and age; females would most like to develop skills in project management (14%), while males would prefer skills in leadership development (10%).

<sup>11</sup> Percentages are based on 45 responses in which respondents could select multiple options.

<sup>12</sup> Percentages for format of events and skills are based on 48 responses in which respondents could select multiple options.

Additionally, younger respondents prefer to develop skills in small business development (11%), while older respondents would like skills in conflict resolution (10%), leadership development (10%), and NGO management (10%).<sup>13</sup>

**Top three skills respondents would like to develop**

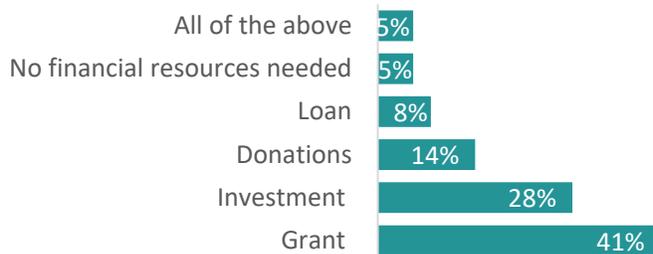


Note: Data based on 48 responses in which respondents could select multiple options to the question.

In addition to activities and skills, respondents were asked what financial and non-financial resources would be most beneficial in helping them feel prepared to improve or launch new projects.

There were 48 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 (41%), followed by investments (28%), donations (14%), and loans (8%). Some respondents (5%) also mentioned that all financial resources would be helpful (i.e., grant, investment, donation, and loan). The remaining 5% of respondents said that no financial resources were needed. This

**Most beneficial financial resources**



Note: Data based on 48 responses in which respondents could select multiple options.

suggests that financial resources could be beneficial for alumni, especially funds that do not require repayment.

Additionally, 48 respondents answered the question regarding non-financial resources, in which they could choose multiple options. The non-financial resource that respondents said would be most helpful would be having a partner or partners (25%). Additional resources included having a

professional mentor (23%), access to alumni or professionals with relevant experience (20%), access to in-person training (18%), and access to on-line training (14%). This suggests that partnerships and professional collaborations may help respondents feel more prepared to launch an initiative than formal trainings.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other suggestions to the MEPI Alumni Connection. Overall respondents noted that they would like more funding opportunities and opportunities to learn and exchange ideas with one another. Respondents mentioned they would like “more grants.” One respondent noted that that they have “a lot of youth waiting for more events, so the funding is the only obstacle standing in my way.” Other respondents said they would like additional conferences, meetings, and trainings that could contribute to “creating motivation, enhancing skills, and exchanging ideas.” These gatherings could also help alumni “benefit from each other’s experiences.”

<sup>13</sup> Percentages are based on 26 male respondents, 22 female respondents, 32 20-29-year-old respondents, and 13 30-year-old and over respondents, respondents could select up to three options.

## 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 motivate respondents to become more engaged in civic activities and their communities. It has also helped them gain a global perspective, develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills, provide a supportive network, and build self-confidence. Additionally, it has further developed respondents' skills in problem-solving and leadership and communication. Moreover, MEPI has helped enhance respondents' opportunities to grow their professional network.

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 types of institutions, including large businesses and international non-government organizations. Respondents have conducted many community projects, predominately in youth engagement and education, which have benefited many individuals. Moreover, respondents have impacted their communities by serving as leaders, including serving in leadership roles and practicing leadership in their daily lives.

Overall, the MEPI Alumni Connection is able to provide appropriate resources to respondents and many feel secure and comfortable when participating in activities. However, not all respondents said they felt very secure when participating. 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 as they have participated 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 opportunity to participate in networking events and online trainings. The format of events most preferred were 2-4-day intensive trainings and in-person events during weekends. Additionally, respondents would most like to develop skills in conflict resolution, decision-making, and project management. To further support alumni's ability to improve or launch new projects, respondents said grants would be the most beneficial financial resource and having partners, the most beneficial non-financial resource. Moreover, offering additional opportunities of funding and for alumni to meet and exchange ideas could further enhance alumni's ability to impact their communities.

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