

MEPI Alumni Connection

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2020 MEPI Alumni Survey

Jordan 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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Table of Contents

I. Introduction and Background	5
II. Methodology and Limitations	5
III. Results	6
Impact of MEPI	7
Impact of the MEPI Alumni Connection	13
MEPI Alumni Interest	16
IV. Conclusion and Recommendations	18

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 Jordan respondents.

II. Methodology and Limitations

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

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

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

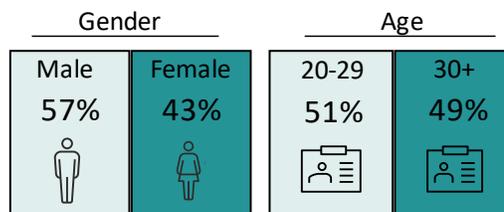
The survey was closed in September 2020 with a response rate of 30% (504/1663). Duplicates and any response from individuals not eligible for the MEPI Alumni Connection were removed for a total sample of 408 eligible responses. For analysis and reporting, the open-ended answers in Arabic were translated into English. The results were analyzed through quantitative data analysis and qualitative coding. The data has been disaggregated and further analyzed by gender, citizenship, age, and MEPI program and program completion year, where relevant. Due to the lengthy nature of the survey, the response rates for many of

the questions were uneven and low. Therefore, all percentages utilized in this report are calculated as a percentage (%) of total respondents for each corresponding question. Responses included in this report represent 32% (53/164) of all eligible alumni from Jordan who had contact information available at the time of the survey.

III. Results

A. Respondent Profile

The survey includes 53 alumni respondents whose place of citizenship is Jordan, making up approximately 13% (53/408) of the total sample of alumni respondents across all participating countries and programs. There is a higher representation of male respondents, 57% (30/53), compared to female respondents, 43% (23/53). However, there is an even distribution across age as 51% (25/49) of respondents are younger (20-29 years old) and 49% (24/49) are older (30 years old or older).



Note: Data based on 53 responses for gender and 49 for age.

Across MEPI leadership programs, 45% (24/53) of respondents are alumni of the Student Leaders Program, 32% (17/53) are alumni of the Leadership Development Fellowship, and 19% (10/53) are alumni of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program. There is also one respondent who is an alumnus of the Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship (2%) and one from the MEPI Women’s Business Internship (2%). Respondents’ completion year of their program ranges from 2005 – 2019, with no respondents from 2006. About one-quarter of respondents, 25% (13/53), completed their program in 2005 or 2007-2013. An additional 45% (24/53) of respondents completed their program in 2014 – 2016 and 30% (16/53) in 2017-2019.

Student Leaders Program	Leadership Development Fellowship	Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program	Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship	MEPI Women’s Business Internship
45%	32%	19%	2%	2%

Note: Data based on 53 responses.

Findings also show that most of the respondents’ current or primary country of residence is Jordan, with a few respondents residing abroad. Of 32 respondents, 78% (25/32) reported Jordan as their current or primary country of residence and 22% (7/32) resided abroad. Among the seven respondents who noted their current or primary country of residence was outside of Jordan, three said they resided in the United Arab Emirates, two in the United States, one in Egypt, and one in the Palestinian territories.

B. Impact of MEPI

Survey results show that respondents' participation in their MEPI program had a significant impact on their lives. Respondents grew personally, they were able to gain an improved motivation for community service, a higher level of self-confidence, and new relationships. Respondents also grew professionally; they accessed a larger network of professionals, developed new skills, and gained a global perspective. Additionally, respondents felt that MEPI enhanced their ability to impact their communities positively. Respondents noted their ability was improved because of the new skills they developed, the professional network they had access to, and the support they received from MEPI.

In turn, alumni respondents have had an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Respondents work across a variety of industries and have started businesses and organizations. Additionally, respondents' participation in their MEPI program has helped them develop applicable job skills. In their communities, respondents have been active, conducting projects mainly focused on youth engagement and education. Moreover, respondents' impact also extends to serving in leadership roles and demonstrating leadership in their communities through serving as mentors and building new connections and partnerships.

MEPI Impact on Alumni

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

How was MEPI a life-changing experience?

Respondents report MEPI helped them grow...



Note: Data based on 24 responses to the open-ended question, "Many alumni say that MEPI was a life-changing experience. How, if at all, did MEPI change your life?" Percentages exclude responses that only confirmed the question and did not provide an explanation.

Among 24 respondents, 50% (12/24) said MEPI was life-changing because it helped them grow personally. An additional 42% (10/24) said MEPI changed their lives because they grew professionally through the opportunities and support they received. MEPI helped respondents grow personally by motivating them

to conduct community service, increasing their self-confidence, and helping them build new relationships. Professionally, MEPI helped respondents grow by providing them with new opportunities to expand their network and connect with other professionals. It also helped them develop new skills and gain a global

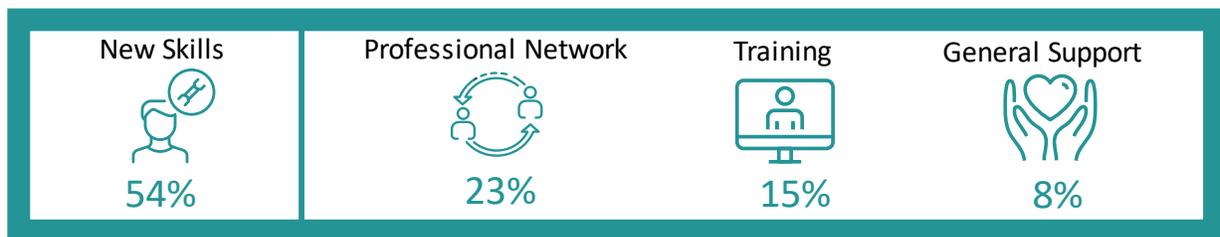


“After MEPI...I managed to change and lead other initiatives in my community, effecting more lives. MEPI did something more than knowledge and connections, it [made] us believe that we are capable of change in our communities... I think that's what I am carrying with me always after MEPI... it's my strength and ability to change what I don't like and find wrong.”

perspective. Additionally, 8% of respondents agreed that MEPI was life-changing but did not detail how it had changed their lives.

In addition to being a transformative experience, respondents also stated that MEPI helped improve their ability to impact their communities. The majority of respondents noted that their ability was enhanced because they were able to develop new skills. Respondents also said that MEPI provided new opportunities, including access to a professional network, training, and general support.

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



Note: Data based on 26 responses to the open-ended question, “How has MEPI helped you develop your ability to make an impact in your community?”

Of 26 respondents, 54% (14/26) said MEPI helped them develop new skills, including leadership, communication, conflict management, project management, advocacy, and decision-making. One respondent said, “MEPI helped me in becoming a decision-maker; it truly reshaped my identity and expanded my horizons.” Other respondents noted that MEPI helped them “develop great leadership skills” and “see how different leadership styles [led] to vastly different outcomes.” About one-quarter of respondents, 23% (6/26), said MEPI provided access to a new professional network in which respondents could learn and share experiences. One respondent noted that “MEPI helped me to create a large network.” Another respondent appreciated the opportunity to “exchange experience with alumni, politicians, and professionals in the field.” An additional 15% (4/26) of respondents noted that the training they received had a significant impact on their ability to impact their community. One respondent said, “through the...training, I was able to create my own initiatives and also...help others to create their own initiatives.” The remaining 8% (2/26) of respondents said they could better impact their communities

“The skills and experiences learned were invaluable to my personal and professional development. Therefore, MEPI has been an essential part of my ability to impact my community.”



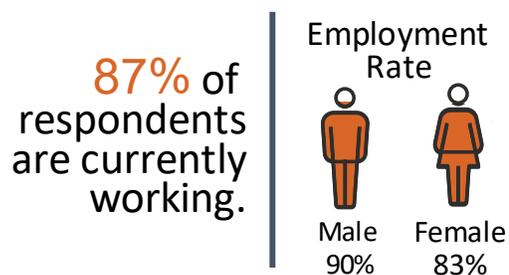
because of the general support they received from MEPI, including facilitating communication with alumni.

Alumni Impact

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

Employment and Entrepreneurship

At the time the survey was conducted, 87% (46/53) of respondents said they were currently working with paid employment. The employment rate is higher among males than females, as 90% (27/30) of males said they were working compared to 83% (19/23) of females. Additionally, older respondents were more likely to be working than younger respondents; 96% (23/24) of respondents 30 years or older were employed compared to 80% (20/25) of respondents 20-29 years old. Across MEPI programs, respondents from the Leadership Development Fellowship had the highest employment rate as 100% (17/17) of respondents were employed. Respondents from the Student Leaders Program had the next highest rate at 88% (21/24) followed by respondents from the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program, 70% (7/10).¹ The employment rate is likely lower among respondents of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program because seven of the ten respondents are female and at least nine are younger.²



Note: Data based on 53 respondents to the question, “Are you currently working? (Only select yes, if you have paid employment)”

Of 45 employed respondents, 16% (7/45) held an entry-level position, 47% (21/45) a mid-level position, 29% (13/45) an executive-level position, and 9% (7/45) were self-employed. Older respondents were more likely to have executive-level positions while younger respondents were more likely to be in mid-level positions. Among older respondents, 43% (10/23) held executive-level positions compared to 5% (1/19) of younger respondents. Moreover, 39% (9/23) of older respondents held mid-level positions compared to 63% (12/19) of younger respondents. This indicates that older respondents were more likely to be employed and hold higher-level positions (i.e., executive-level positions).

Employed respondents’ position



Note: Data based on 45 respondents who indicated they were currently working and provided their position.

¹ The other two respondents are from the Civic Education and Leadership Fellowship, who is employed, and the MEPI Women’s Business Internship, who is unemployed.

² One of the ten respondents of the Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarship Program did not provide their age.

Respondents work across a variety of organizations and businesses. Of 40 respondents, 20% (8/40) work for an international non-government organization (NGO), 17% (7/40) for a small business, 15% (6/40) for a large business, and 15% (6/40) for a local NGO. Additionally, 12% (5/40) work for the local government, 8% (3/40) for a medium-sized business, 8% (3/40) for the national government, and 5% (2/40) are self-employed. The predominant industry respondents work in is education services, 26% (11/43). The other most common industry that 19% (8/43) of respondents reported was religious, civic engagement, or grant-making (categorized as other).



40% of respondents started their own business or organization after their experience with MEPI.



While a smaller percentage of respondents reported they were self-employed or owned a business, 40% (21/52) 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 a business owner. Among those who started a business/organization, 38% (8/21) said they had support from a partner or partners, who they met through their MEPI program or the alumni network. This indicates respondents' participation in MEPI programs, and the alumni network, has enhanced opportunities for entrepreneurial activities.

MEPI has also helped respondents be successful in their careers as they have applied skills learned from their MEPI program in their current positions. One respondent noted, "I apply the skills that I learned [from MEPI] through becoming a leader and team player." Another said, "I applied what I learned in the field of project and operations management, which enabled me to write and prepare development projects." Other respondents used "communication and networking skills" and "soft skills" while serving as leaders and managers in their teams.

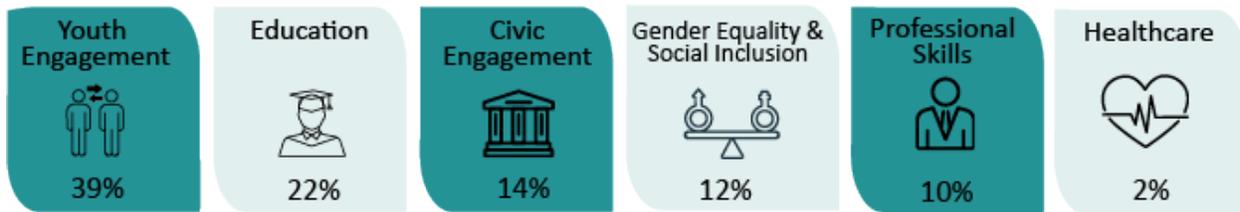


"I am a manager on a team of four, each from a different country and background...the leadership skills, negotiation, and conflict-solving skills I had in MEPI are helping me till this day."

Community Projects

Respondents have been active in their communities as 51% (26/51) have conducted at least one community project within the past two years. Males and females conducted community projects at a similar rate; 52% (15/29) of males and 50% (11/22) of females. However, younger respondents were more likely to conduct a community project than older respondents, 63% (15/24) and 38% (9/24) respectively. Additionally, the Student Leaders Program, 61% (14/23), had a higher percentage of respondents who conducted a community project compared to respondents from the Leadership Development Fellowship, 56% (9/16), and the Tomorrow's Leaders Program, 20% (2/10).

Type of Community Project Conducted



Note: Data based on 25 responses to the question “What type of project did you conduct?” Respondents could select multiple options.

Among respondents who conducted a community project, 25 responded as to the type of project. The most common was focused on youth engagement, 39%, followed by education, 22%, and civic engagement, 14%. An additional 12% of respondents conducted projects on gender equality and social inclusion, 10% on professional skills, and 2% on healthcare.³ Youth engagement was the most common community project conducted across gender, age, and MEPI program. Additionally, 64% (16/25) of respondents conducted more than one type of project and 20% (5/25) conducted at least three.

Among respondents who conducted at least one community project, 20 provided an estimate of how many people they believe benefited from their projects. According to responses, more than 38,000 individuals were positively impacted by respondents’ community projects. However, one respondent reported that 25,000 individuals were impacted by their project(s), making up 65% of the total number of beneficiaries. For all other respondents, the number of beneficiaries ranged from 10 – 5,000, with an average of about 700 beneficiaries, per respondent.

 **More than 38,000 individuals were positively impacted by respondents’ community projects.** 

The impact of these projects can be further understood through respondents’ accounts of their greatest success or result. Some of these achievements included raising awareness on mental health, encouraging greater youth engagement, and influencing the local government. One respondent was able to use the COVID-19 pandemic to “[increase] personal awareness...to deal with the...crisis in terms of mental health.” Another respondent was “training and assisting young people to improve mental health...through videos.” Other respondents mentioned the positive results of their projects on the young. One respondent’s achievement was that “200 children [developed] healthier hygienic habits through mentoring teachers on how to deliver an interactive curriculum.” Another respondent launched a network “for youth to actively participate in local decision-making.” Additionally, one respondent was also able to push “national lobbying for new legislation.”

However, respondents also noted challenges that have made starting and growing their projects more difficult. Some of these challenges included “lack of financial support,” difficulty in finding “specialists willing to help,” and “establishing partnerships or business with organizations or companies.”

Despite these challenges, many respondents have been able to make an impact on their community and experience success in their projects. This ability has been strengthened by participation in their MEPI program and the MEPI Alumni Connection. Among respondents who conducted a community project,

³ Percentages are based on 25 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

80% (20/25) collaborated with someone they met through their MEPI program or the alumni network. This indicates that the MEPI program and the alumni network have been beneficial in fostering partnerships and collaborations among respondents. **Leadership**



80% of respondents who conducted a community project, collaborated with someone they met through the alumni network or their MEPI program.



74% of respondents have served in a leadership role in the past year.

Type of leadership roles



Note: Percentages for type of leadership roles are based 34 respondents who could select multiple options.

Respondents have also impacted their communities by serving in leadership roles. Of 46 respondents, 74% (34/46) have served in a leadership role within the past year. Those who have served in leadership are more likely to be female and younger. Among females, 83% (15/18) have served in a leadership role compared to 68% (19/28) of males. Additionally, 80% (16/20) of younger respondents have served in leadership compared to 67% (16/24) of older respondents.

Among respondents who served in a leadership role, 58% were in a professional setting, 32% in a community setting, and 11% in an academic setting.⁴ A professional setting was the most common type of leadership role across all respondent ages and gender; however, there are differences across MEPI programs. Alumni respondents of the Student Leaders Program (64%) and Tomorrow’s Leaders Program (78%) most commonly served in a professional setting, while alumni respondents of the Leadership Development Fellowship most commonly served in a community setting (54%).⁵

Beyond serving in a formal leadership role, respondents have also demonstrated leadership in their communities in other ways. When asked how they have used their leadership skills to help people, respondents said they have served as mentors and strengthened connections among community members. One respondent noted they “[mentor]...rising stars, who possess great potential but require a guiding hand to help them throughout their professional and social lives, ensuring they excel in every step

“I worked to form a live discussion space for youth to interact with each other and exchange experiences and opportunities. We have established partnerships and built programs that contribute to reducing...challenges among young people.”



⁴ Percentages based on 34 respondents who served in a leadership setting and could select multiple options.

⁵ Percentages based on 13 respondents from the Student Leaders Program, 9 from the Tomorrow’s Leaders Program, and 10 from the Leadership Development Fellowship, multiple options could be selected.

they take.” Other respondents said they “employed the techniques of how you create other leaders” and “gave some training...to university students,” of which “some of them started their own projects helping their communities.” Other respondents noted they have helped create new connections and partnerships. One respondent was able to “[network] and [provide] opportunities for community members to benefit from the grants and opportunities offered by international and local institutions.”

C. Impact of the 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, networking events and meetings had the highest participation. Additionally, the main reason respondents said they did not participate in any alumni activities was that they were not invited.

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

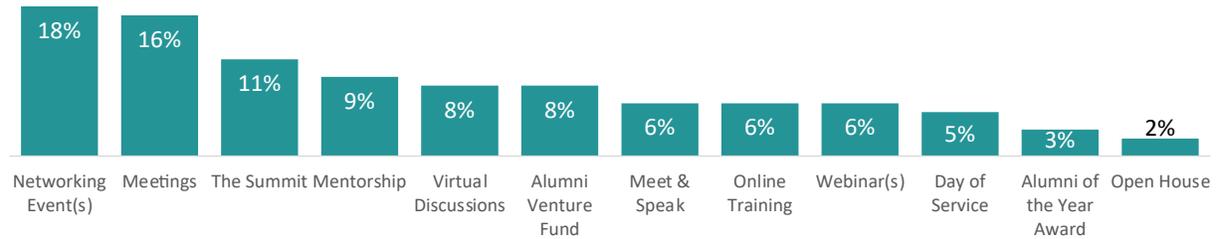
Alumni engagement

Professional Development Activities

Of 46 respondents, 63% (29/46) participated in networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection, within the past two years. The participation rate is slightly higher among females than males, 67% (12/18) compared to 61% (17/28). However, the participation rate is fairly even across age. Among younger respondents, 65% (13/20) have participated in professional development activities, and 63% (15/24) of older respondents have participated.

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

Participation in networking or professional development opportunities

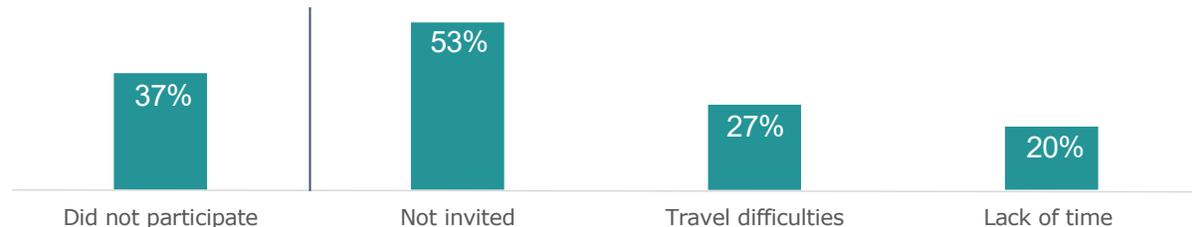


Note: Data based on 29 respondents who indicated that they had participated in a networking or professional development opportunity through the MEPI Alumni Connection during the past two years. Respondents could select all options that apply.

The activities (opportunities) with the highest participation were networking events, as 18% of respondents participated. The activities with the next highest participation were meetings (16%), the Summit (11%), and mentorship (9%).⁶ There are some differences in participation across gender and age. The activities with the highest participation among females were networking events (21%), and meetings had the highest participation among males (19%). Additionally, younger respondents had the highest participation in networking events (21%), and meetings were highest among older respondents (16%).⁷

Of 46 respondents, 37% (17/46) said they did not participate in any networking or professional development opportunities through the MEPI Alumni Connection. They were then asked to respond as to their primary reason for not participating. Of 15 respondents, 53% (8/15) said they were not invited to any MEPI alumni networking events, 27% (4/15) said it was too difficult for them to travel, and 20% (3/15) said they did not have any time to attend. Additionally, there were no respondents who said their lack of participation was a result of disinterest in the topic of any MEPI alumni events.

Respondents' reasons for not participating in alumni activities



Note: Data based on 17 respondents who did not participate in any networking or professional development opportunities.

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 new alumni and one another. As a result of participation in a MEPI Alumni Connection activity, 69% (31/45) of respondents have built relationships with new alumni. Additionally, among respondents who built new relationships, 58% (18/31) have built relationships with more than five

⁶ Percentages are based on 29 respondents who participated in networking/professional development opportunities, in which multiple options could be selected.

⁷ Percentages are based on 28 male respondents, 18 female respondents, 20 younger respondents, and 24 older respondents.

new alumni, indicating that alumni activities help foster numerous relationships. The MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped enhance collaborations.

In the past two years, 33% (15/44) of respondents have collaborated with at least one other alumni from MEPI or the Department of State on a project, initiative, or business idea. Among males, 39% (11/28) have

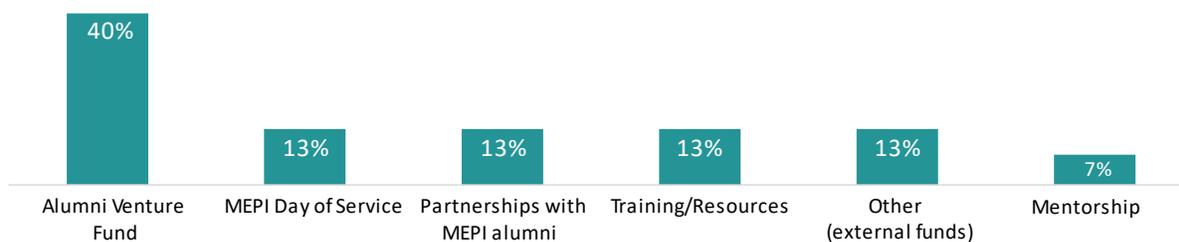
 **210** events and activities were led by **33**  respondents.

collaborated with other alumni, while 24% (4/17) of females have. There is also a difference across age; 37% (7/19) of younger respondents have collaborated with other alumni compared to 29% (7/24) of older respondents. Additionally, respondents have collaborated with civil society organizations to conduct events that promote specific issues and awareness. In the past two years, 210 events and activities were led by 33 respondents. Of these 33 respondents, 36% (12/33) were female and 64% (21/33) were male. One respondent led 30 events, and two respondents each led 20 events. However, the majority, 82% (27/33), conducted five events or less.

Beyond helping develop relationships and collaborations, the MEPI Alumni Connection has also helped respondents conduct and expand community projects through offering a menu of opportunities and support. This support includes the Alumni Venture Fund, the MEPI Day of Service, partnerships with MEPI alumni, training/resources, and mentorships. Among respondents who conducted a community project, 40% (10/25) report having received at least one form of support from the MEPI Alumni Connection. Older respondents report a slightly higher percentage of receiving support, 44% (4/9), compared to younger respondents, 40% (6/15).

The most common support respondents received was through the Alumni Venture Fund (40%). Other forms of support included the MEPI Day of Service (13%), partnerships with MEPI alumni (13%), and training/resources (13%). Additionally, 13% of respondents received support through other means including, funds through the U.S. Embassy and World Learning administered grants. The remaining 7% of respondents received support through mentorships.⁸

Type of support received from the MEPI Alumni Connection



Note: Data based on 10 respondents who received support for their community project in which multiple options could be selected.

⁸ Percentages are based on 10 respondents who received support for their community project and could select multiple options.

The MEPI Alumni Connection likely has a broader influence beyond its direct impact on helping respondents develop new partnerships and conduct events and projects. Of 44 respondents, 82% (36/44) said they have shared what they learned through a MEPI alumni activity (event, training, partnership, etc.) with others. A higher percentage of older respondents shared what they learned compared to younger respondents, 88% (21/24) and 74% (14/19), respectively. Among respondents who said they had shared what they learned, 24% have done so with colleagues, 20% in-person, 14% with family, 14% on social media, 13% with other MEPI alumni, 7% online, 4% in a publication, and 3% with other Department of State alumni.⁹ Therefore, MEPI alumni activities likely benefit alumni and their colleagues, friends, and family.

D. MEPI Alumni Interests

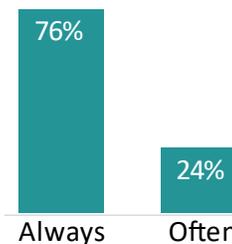
Overall, respondents feel comfortable and secure participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities. Additionally, they feel that the resources provided by the MEPI Alumni Connection are appropriate.

Respondents 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 and training, respondents would most prefer 2-4-day intensive training and in-person events during weekends. Additionally, respondents noted that they would like to develop skills in project management, advocacy and stakeholder engagement, and developing public-private partnerships. In terms of support, respondents indicated that the most helpful form of financial support would be through grants and having a professional mentor, the most beneficial form of non-financial support.

Alumni Needs

The majority of respondents, 63% (24/38), agreed that the MEPI Alumni Connection provides appropriate and relevant resources to their current professional or academic level. Additionally, respondents were asked if they felt secure and comfortable participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities. Among 37 respondents, 76% reported that they always felt secure, and 24% often felt secure. Additionally, there were no respondents who said they rarely felt secure. This indicates that, overall, most respondents feel secure and comfortable participating in alumni activities.

Do respondents feel secure participating in MEPI Alumni Connection activities?



Note: Data based on 37 responses.

Opportunities to Further Strengthen and Grow the MEPI Alumni Connection

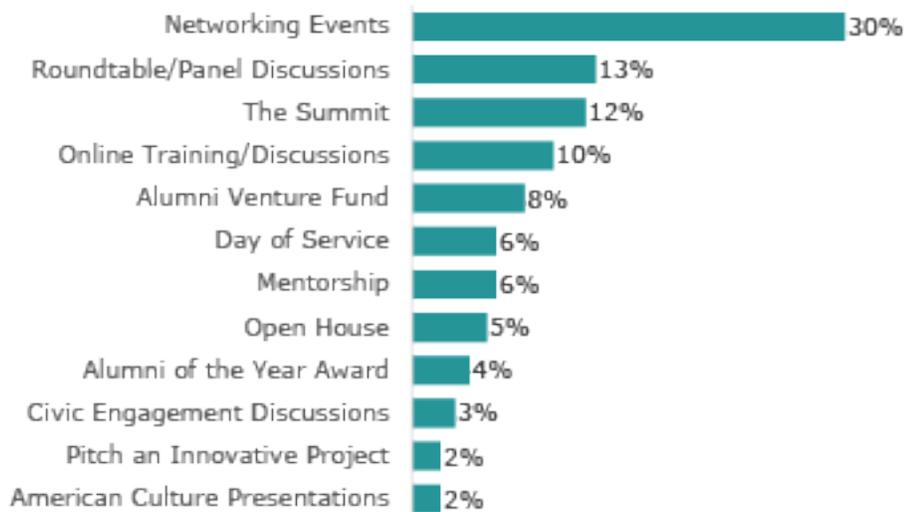
There are several opportunities for the MEPI Alumni Connection to continue and further strengthen its support for alumni. The survey included questions to understand respondents' interests in activities and opportunities with the MEPI Alumni Connection. Question topics

⁹ Percentages are based on 36 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

included activities alumni would like to see implemented, preferences for format of events, skills they would like to develop, as well as beneficial financial and non-financial support they would like to receive.

Respondents stated that the activity they would most like to see implemented were networking events (30%), such as networking events with diplomats and professionals. The next most desired activities were panel and round table discussions (13%), the Summit (12%), and online events (10%), including online training, webinars, and virtual discussions. Other activities included the Alumni Venture Fund (8%), the MEPI Day of Service (6%), and mentorship (6%).¹⁰

Respondents' Desired Activities



Note: Data based on 53 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

The most common responses regarding the format of events/training were 2-4-day intensive training (20%) and in-person events during weekends (20%). Additional responses included online events during evening hours (19%), in-person events during evening hours (14%), online events during weekends (11%), one-day training (9%), and in-person events during work hours (7%). The format of events most preferred among females was in-person events during weekends (21%). Among males, it was online events during evening hours (22%).

Respondents were also asked to select three skills they would like to develop to advance their community and professional leadership. Among all respondents, the skills most preferred were project management (10%), advocacy and stakeholder engagement (9%), and developing public-private partnerships (8%). However, the skills respondents would most like to develop differed by gender and age. Females said they would most like to develop skills in project management (13%). Advocacy and stakeholder engagement (8%), developing public-private partnerships (8%), and project management (8%) were the skills most preferred among males. Additionally, younger respondents said they would like to develop project

¹⁰ Data based on 53 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

management skills (12%). In comparison, older respondents said they would like to develop skills in advocacy and stakeholder engagement (8%), women and gender issues (8%), and negotiation (8%).¹¹

Top three skills respondents would like to develop



Note: Data based on 53 responses in which multiple options could be selected.

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 launch and/or improve new projects. Respondents indicated that the most beneficial financial resource would be a grant (41%). An additional 23% of respondents said investment, and 15% said a donation would help them feel prepared. Instead of choosing a specific resource, 10% of respondents said that all financial resources would be helpful (i.e., grant, investment, donation, and loan) and 6% said that no financial resources were needed. Additionally, the financial resource respondents indicated would be least helpful was a loan (4%).

Respondents indicated that the most beneficial non-financial resource would be a professional mentor (29%), followed by having a partner or partners (24%), and access to alumni or professionals with relevant experience (23%). Other responses for helpful non-financial resources included access to in-person training (18%) and access to online training (7%). These results suggest that partnerships and professional collaborations may help respondents feel more prepared to launch an initiative than formal training.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other suggestions to the MEPI Alumni Connection. Respondents noted that they would like the Summit to continue “due to its utmost importance.” Respondents also indicated they desired greater support to help develop and build connections with local leaders. One respondent said they would like “support to connect the...graduates when they need technical support with leaders and decision-makers who have the ability to facilitate the tasks.” Another noted their desire for “MEPI graduates” and “the actors and leaders in the community...to work closely with each other.”

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

MEPI has significantly impacted respondents’ lives and enhanced their ability to make an impact in their communities. MEPI has helped transform the lives of respondents by helping them grow personally and professionally. Personally, respondents have gained a new motivation for community service, they have improved their self-confidence, and have been able to build new relationships. Professionally, respondents have accessed a larger professional network, developed new skills, and gained a global

¹¹ Data for the format of events, preferred skills, and resources was based on 53 respondents. This consisted of 23 females, 30 males, 25 younger respondents, and 24 older respondents. Multiple options could be selected.

perspective. MEPI has also improved respondents' ability to impact their communities by enhancing their skills, expanding their network, and providing training and general support.

Alumni respondents have been able to use their MEPI experience to have an impact in their careers and entrepreneurial activities, in their communities, and as leaders. Many respondents are working in various industries and have started businesses and organizations. They have also applied their skills, gained from MEPI, while serving as leaders and managers in their careers. Respondents have conducted community projects with numerous reported beneficiaries, predominately in youth engagement and education. Moreover, respondents have impacted their communities by serving as leaders both in formal leadership roles as well as through mentorships.

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

Respondents said they always or often feel secure and comfortable when participating in alumni activities and that the MEPI Alumni Connection's resources are appropriate. 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 more networking events and roundtable or panel discussions. The format of events and training most preferred by respondents were 2-4-day intensive training and in-person events during weekends. Additionally, respondents would like to develop skills in project management, advocacy and stakeholder engagement, and developing public-private partnerships. To further support alumni's ability to improve or launch new projects, respondents said grants would be the most beneficial financial resource, and having a professional mentor, the most beneficial non-financial resource.

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