



REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Quarterly Progress Report #6

Cooperative Agreement Number 263-A-00-10-00052-00

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FHI 360

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The OMEP Regional Partnership for Culture and Development Program (RPCDP) was awarded as a cooperative agreement to FHI 360 on September 22, 2010. This is the sixth quarterly report and covers the period from January 1, 2012- March 31, 2012.

The purpose of the Program is to “support the dissemination of regional research on development issues, share best practices and lessons learned from international development programs, and provide a forum for knowledge sharing and intellectual innovation.”

Submitted to: Dr. Adly Hassanein,
Regional Development Research Manager
OMEP/USAID

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OVERVIEW

The sixth quarter of the Regional Partnership on Culture and Development (RPCD) saw a spike in the program's productivity, as it launched new publications, dramatically increased the level of its direct support to Missions, and laid the architecture for future program events.

Road Show visits were conducted to four countries to inform USAID Mission staff of RPCD services and activities, as well as to collect input on the Research Agenda. During the Road Show visits, RPCD conducted meetings with local research institutions to launch the Partnership Forum network in each country. Following the Road Show, RPCD planned for the first series of local workshops to support the capacity building of researchers in the region.

Also this quarter, the Research Team developed the first volumes of the three recurring RPCD research publications: the Technical Publication Series, Annotated Bibliography Series, and Research Highlights. The program additionally responded to six research questions from USAID Missions to support program design and implementation.

Finally, the quarter included several visits by staff from FHI360 Headquarters to support RPCD technical and administrative activities with hands-on training and technical assistance.

OMEP requested from RPCD a summation of all program accomplishments that have taken place to date. This is attached to the present report as Annex A.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Cairo office is fully staffed. During the quarter two new staff were engaged to support RPCD's financial and logistical operations: Financial and Administrative Assistant Dalia Bahaa, and Logistics Assistant Arafa Ragab. Ms. Bahaa has more than ten years of experience in financial management and has worked with AED for several years, making her extremely familiar with the rules and regulations of both FHI and USAID. Mr. Ragab is experienced in office support and has proven himself a valuable member of the team.

The Editor/Translator position was not filled due to a lack of qualified candidates; noting that the need for translation and editing is sporadic, the management team decided to assign these duties to short-term consultants and/or service providers. The program recruited editors to proofread and copyedit the research products put out by the team. RPCD also recruited a professional translation company to manage the trilingual translation of the Portal pages, and to translate articles and materials for the research products. The latter selection was made through an open and competitive bidding process to select the best value and highest quality of service.

During the quarter the Iraq Research Liaison Officer (RLO), Mohammad Eideh, elected not to extend his tenure beyond the probationary period. The program decided to hire as his replacement someone based in Iraq instead of Jordan, where the RLO would have a more effective role in collecting research, building relations with the Partnership Forum members, and liaising with USAID/Iraq Mission staff. RPCD determined to base this post in Erbil, as it is a relatively safe and stable part of Iraq where a large number of companies and NGOs are conducting operations. The job announcement was made through several channels and recruitment is expected next quarter.

The West Bank RLO, Emad Hwaitat, was hired and began to work effectively for one month, but for personal reasons was shortly forced to resign. As a result RPCD began another round of recruitment, and hired Husam Qaradeh—who came recommended by USAID but is expecting another assignment—on a short term basis to undertake the needed coordination and activities in the field until a full time RLO is hired. Currently the program is interviewing candidates for this position as well and recruitment is expected next quarter.

RLOs in Lebanon, Morocco, and Jordan are active in each of their respective countries, and the three are heavily involved in program field activities and deliverables.

The Research Team (Research Analysts and Research Liaison Officers) attended an intensive Research Training this quarter in Egypt from February 12 to February 24. The training was conducted by Dr. Christina Blumel, RPCD Program Coordinator. The following objectives were achieved through the training:

1. Enhanced staff awareness of USAID programs, goals, and context of work
2. Improved the ability of staff to conduct reference interviews, to analyze research questions and to effectively interview USAID clients
3. Strengthened the ability of staff to effectively search a wide range of quality resources to provide quality research to USAID staff
4. Strengthened the ability of staff to organize and synthesize information in research responses

Evan Case, Systems Analyst from FHI 360 headquarters, visited Egypt from February 12 to February 23. The objective of his trip was to train IT Manager, Mohamed Gawad on managing and maintaining RPCD Portal features and pages, and to instruct Hanan Morgan, Operations Associate as a back-up. During his trip, Mr. Case also supported the technical review of proposals received from vendors to provide web design services, and worked with the Research Team to advance their skills in uploading documents to the digital library.

Norman Sheehan, FHI360 Global Security Director, visited Egypt from Jan 9 to Jan 13, 2012, to develop a safety and security plan for the RPCD office. The objectives were to: 1) define the security threats and risks to RPCD staff and operations given the current situation in Egypt, 2)

review office facilities, communications and other equipment needs, and staff training requirements, 3) assess security Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols necessary for safe program implementation. Mr. Sheehan developed an assessment based on a number of visits with national and international stakeholders working in Egypt. Meetings were held with US officials, commercial representative, and international NGOs. Discussions were supplemented by consultation with InterAction members, OSAC, and a review of published materials and literature on security and programmatic issues in Egypt. As result of this trip, RPCD has a Safety and Security Contingency Plan in place.

From March 5-9, the RPCD Regional Program Director attended a conference in Washington, DC for all FHI 360 field leaders. The conference covered the ongoing merger process of the assets and programs of AED with FHI to form the new FHI 360, and explained how various technical management and administrative matters will be handled. At the same time, the event offered rich opportunities for field leaders to trade best practices and proven approaches to program management. The costs of the Regional Program Director's attendance were entirely borne by FHI 360 overhead.

To enhance the Research Team's ability to respond to quick research requests from USAID Missions as well as to find and select the most recent and relevant articles to be included in the research products, RPCD subscribed during the quarter to three research databases: EBSCO EDS, World Bank, and CAPMAS.

During the quarter RPCD and OMEP began discussions on potential modifications to the program, including a possible shift in geographic scope to include new countries where OMEP may be working and a realignment of the budget to cover events and research responses in harmony with USAID demand. Draft budgets and program descriptions were shared with USAID, and the process is expected to conclude in the next quarter.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Road Show Visits

As approved by USAID/OMEP in the last quarter, the Kick-Off Meeting anticipated in the RPCD award was supplanted by series of face-to face visits to USAID Missions in the region. These "Road Shows" were planned as a more effective way of communicating the objectives and services of RPCD. During the quarter presentations took place in four countries in the RPCD portfolio: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and West Bank (see Annex B: Trip Reports).

The objectives of the visits were to introduce RPCD to USAID Missions' staff and leadership, to elicit at least one request for research from each, and to conduct an introductory meeting with potential Partnership Forum members to launch the network. Due the sensitive situation

of USAID funding in Egypt, the PF meeting was postponed, and expected to take place next quarter.

RPCD produced communication materials to be distributed during these meetings. The material included one-page brochures on each of the RPCD activities. The content of these materials were approved by the AOTR before printing and dissemination, and the Overview brochure is attached as Annex C.

Egypt Road Show: The meeting with USAID Egypt was conducted on January 23. Around 25 participants attended the meeting from different offices of the Agency. Regional Program Director (RPD) Matthew Pietz and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) Mariam Hanna presented the RPCD Program components, and shared the latest updates on the Program's achievements. The team also gave an overview of the www.mena-partnership.info Portal, its various pages and features. The team demonstrated the use of USAID logins, and gave step-by step instruction on how to submit instant research requests. Mission staff expressed excitement about the support they could receive from the RPCD services.

Jordan Road Show: The meeting with USAID Jordan was conducted on January 29, followed by a meeting with potential PF members on January 30. Jim Harmon, Director of USAID/OMEP, Dr. Adly Hassanein, Regional Research Manager and AOTR, and the RPD presented OMEP office services and RPCD activities. The RPD provided details of RPCD components and how each of them can support USAID programming efforts. RPCD Research Liaison Officer Nazek Saleh was introduced to USAID and other stakeholders to start acting as the chief point of communication between FHI/RPCD Team and the Mission in Jordan. Ms. Kenana Amin from the Office of Program Management was assigned as the focal point at USAID Jordan, to coordinate all the research requests, as well as to be consulted when planning PF activities in Jordan.

As a result of these meetings, five potential research assignments were identified for RPCD:

1. Sector Assessment for Youth programs in Economic Growth and Civic Engagement
 - Assessment of existing programs
 - Meta-analysis of relevant studies
 - Survey of M&E tools for EG and recommendation
2. Annotated Bibliography of reports on Public Financial Management systems of the Government of Jordan
3. Survey of outreach tools and strategies used for family planning campaigns in MENA region
4. Sector Assessment of Energy activities in Jordan
5. Guidelines on the preparation and implementation of USAID Performance Monitoring Plans

On January 30, RPCD and OMEP met with the potential members of the Partnership Forum. Nine organizations gathered at the University of Jordan Library for a presentation of the RPCD

and the activities of the Forum, as well as a discussion of the state of research in Jordan, especially in RPCD's three areas (Youth, DG and Natural Resource Management) and the challenges facing the research organizations. The results of the meeting will be used to plan the first workshop for Partnership Forum members in the next quarter.

Morocco Road Show: Following the same structure of the successful meeting in Jordan, the RPCD/OMEP team presented their activities and services to the Morocco Mission staff. The meeting took place on February 14. RPCD Research Liaison Officer Loubna Rais was introduced to the USAID staff as the program's local representative, and USAID's Tamika Cameron was designated as the Mission point of contact.

As a result of the meetings the following studies were proposed for RPCD to potentially conduct:

1. Final Evaluation of civil society program, called SANAD, implemented by MSI.
2. Mid-term Evaluation of Local Governance Program (LGP).
3. Assessment of best practices in literacy for early-grade students.
4. A study of the competitiveness of the agriculture sector.
5. Mapping of entrepreneurship activities and players in Tunisia.

On February 15, 2012, RPCD conducted a meeting with potential PF members, with nine organizations attending. After a presentation of the program by the RPD, the discussion was open on the current state of research activities in Morocco. Attendees informed RPCD on capacity building needs and possible topics for the first national workshop.

West Bank Road Show: On February 27 the OMEP/RPCD team made its presentation to USAID staff in the West Bank/Gaza Mission. During the meeting with the West Bank/Gaza Mission Director two main points were emphasized: the low level of funding at the Mission due to the Congressional hold on its budget, with a strong impact on the amount of time staff could dedicate to supporting the work of RPCD; and the importance of carefully scrutinizing the quality of research produced by Palestinian organizations before considering it worthy of publication or inclusion in RPCD deliverables or outputs. The team explained the priority RPCD gives to minimizing the time required of Mission staff, and also explained the review process that local research undergoes before it is included in any RPCD products. Kimberlee Bell was appointed as the focal point from the WBG Mission side, and it was agreed that she would hold internal meetings to prioritize the top research requests for consideration by RPCD.

On February 28 the RPCD team met with the potential members of the Partnership Forum. Four organizations gathered for a presentation of the RPCD and the activities of the Forum, as well as a discussion of the state of research in WBG. Questions by attendees included whether the network would function simultaneously on the regional and national level, and what level of paperwork would be required from grantees. Although some promising organizations were

identified, the team had the sense that there needs to be another round of reviewing and vetting Palestinian organizations to ensure that the best possible organizations are being included.

RPCD and OMEP have been contacting USAID staff in Lebanon and Iraq to schedule Road Show visits. It is hoped that, with local Mission consent, these meetings will be conducted in the following quarter.

Partnership Forum

RPCD continues to undertake the process of vetting organizations for potential membership in the Partnership Forum. In the reporting period, the Research Team identified dozens of new suitable institutions to be invited, considering at all stages input from the AOTR (for example, the team drew upon the “2011 Global Go To Think Tanks Rankings” created by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania).

Personalized invitations were sent to almost 200 institutions in the region, and other international organizations which focus on the MENA region. More than 150 specialists in the three focus areas in the MENA region were also invited to the forum.

Fifty of the invited institutions have agreed to join the PF. RPCD will make public the list of accepted partners on the Portal early next quarter. RPCD is currently designing a searchable expert database that will be accessible only by USAID staff and confirmed PF members, who will be able to easily locate experts in the region in the three focus areas and access their resumes. The database is expected to launch next quarter.

Following the introductory meetings with select Partnership Forum members as part of the Road Shows, RLOs began direct communication with the institutions to plan for the first round of demand-driven capacity building workshops. The local workshops will be planned and designed differently in each of the countries, according to the research needs of the local PF members.

The Research Team is planning for face-to-face meetings with potential Partnership Forum members in Cairo, and will start in early April to inform institutions of the existence and importance of the PF network.

Research Publications

RPCD successfully produced the first volumes of all three of its regularly published research products. The three publications were submitted to the AOTR for final approval before dissemination. In March the Annotated Bibliography Series was approved and sent to all USAID staff and PF members. RPCD received positive feedback from USAID staff who found the

bibliography to be a useful and informative way to stay updated on available research. The Research Highlights and Technical Publication Series were also submitted by RPCD and approved by the AOTR, but RPCD and OMEP agreed to stagger the wider distribution of these publications so as not to overwhelm the program's audience of readers. Hence the TPS and RH will be shared with program stakeholders in the following quarter.

Before submitting the publications for approval, the RPCD team developed a unified design to be used for all RPCD products. The design followed USAID branding regulations, and will be customized to respond to the nature of the products and the audience of each report.

The process of producing each of the RPCD publications unfolded as follows (some steps took place before the reporting quarter):

1. Technical Publication Series:

- RPCD submitted a list of articles to be included in the TPS for AOTR approval. The selected articles were then summarized by the Research Team. The two-page summaries precede each of the reports, and include a brief on methodology, findings, and recommendations.
- As approved by the AOTR, articles kept their original published format. This agreement accelerated the process of securing copyright permissions from authors and publishers.
- RPCD sent requests for copyright and permissions for reprinting from the holders of rights for each of the articles. Where necessary, RPCD paid a fee for reprinting the articles.
- RPCD received assistance from FHI 360 headquarters in the form of editing and technical review of the summaries.
- The printing of 50 copies of this volume is scheduled for next quarter, when it will be shipped to USAID Missions in the region. The electronic version will be also available next quarter under the RPCD Portal for USAID users only.

2. Annotated Bibliographies Series:

- The final selection of the articles included in the Annotated Bibliography Series were approved by the AOTR in January.
- The Research Team developed comprehensive annotations for 15 articles in each of the three sectors. The annotations went through several rounds of editing and improvements to reach the highest possible quality, and at the same time respond to the USAID readers' needs.
- After the approval of AOTR, the three volumes of the ABS (one in each sector) were disseminated via email to all USAID staff, staff in the Washington Middle East Bureau as well as approximately 200 Partnership Forum partners and other stakeholders in

research and international development. The ABS products will be available on the RPCD Portal next quarter.

3. Research Highlights:

- A proposed list of Research highlights was submitted to USAID for approval. The list included recent and upcoming research products in the region.
- The Research Team developed annotations for 5 upcoming or recent articles in each of the three areas. As with the TPS and ABS, the annotations went through multiple rounds of review in both Cairo and Washington.
- These annotations were submitted to OMEP for final approval and will be disseminated next quarter as part of the RPCD monthly e-newsletter.

Annual Regional Conferences

In the reporting quarter, OMEP and RPCD opened a discussion with UNDP-Act and USAID/Cyprus on possible collaboration for the implementation of inter-regional conference examining the role of the citizen and knowledge management in navigating political transitions. Because both sides saw a clear benefit from mutual cooperation, it was agreed that OMEP/RPCD and UNDP-Act/USAID/Cyprus will work together to hold the event in October of 2012.

At the end of March, the AOTR and DCOP traveled to Cyprus to meet the UNDP-Act and USAID team. The Objectives of trip were to:

- further develop the concept for conference
- identify synergies and areas of collaboration
- identify categories of participants and roles and responsibilities.

As one result of the visit, the title of the conference was agreed: “THE POWER OF ONE - First Annual Inter-Regional Learning Exchange Conference on Citizen-led Innovation and Social Change Practices During Periods of Transition”.

The conference will have three main themes:

- Social cohesion and reconciliation
- Shaping the policy debate: research in action
- The right to be heard: community voice for representation

The teams also agreed on the objectives of the conference, which are to:

- share, in a structured manner, practical knowledge, tested tools and case studies that allow citizens, research institutions and civil society organizations to play an effective role in transitions.

- showcase successful examples of harnessing innovative ideas for social change and ensuring their successful implementation.

The estimated number of delegates is between 100 and 150. The conference will attract two main categories of delegates: think tanks/knowledge centers and civil society practitioners; and members of the international development community (see Annex D: Draft Cyprus Concept Note, authored by UNDP).

Broadly speaking, UNDP-Act/USAID Cyprus will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the conference, including logistics in Nicosia and technical management, and will also bring participants from NIS and Eastern Europe; OMEP/RPCD will identify speakers and leaders to develop and present relevant themes of the conference, and will bring around 40-50 participants from the MENA region.

During the coming quarter, RPCD will begin the selection of the participants it will sponsor, and will closely work with the Cyprus team to develop the technical content of the conference themes. RPCD will also consider hiring an events manager to manage the massive amount of logistics involved.

In addition to planning for the Cyprus event, RPCD began plans for a Regional Expert Working Group. The Research Analyst for Natural Resource Management began to develop a concept note for a regional expert meeting to take place in the final quarter of the project year, on climate change adaptation and mitigation. The draft concept note is expected to be ready in early April to be discussed further with the AOTR.

Competitive Research Grants Program

In January 2012, the RPD submitted a general grants plan for the AOTR's review. The plan laid out a roadmap for the implementation of grants given the short timeline, large grants budget and diversity of USAID research needs. The plan provided for two rounds of small grants to be issued. After discussion with the Director of OMEP and the AOTR in February, this plan was altered. The new proposal was to issue one round of a set of larger grants to highly reputable research institutions with the capacity to manage smaller, local institutions (which will also be Partnership Forum members) working beneath them.

The grants component has as its technical core the Research Agenda, a set of questions that all Missions in the region agree are of current importance for programming and planning. To finalize the Research Agenda, the Research Team distilled months of previous work by the AOTR, the RPCD Program Coordinator in Washington, and Mission representatives who gave input into the process, compiling all of their inputs into a concise, six-question Research Agenda. After securing the approval of the AOTR, this list of six questions (see Annex E, Research Agenda) was shared with the seven Missions for them to select their top priorities and to open

the gate for other pressing questions in the region. Feedback from the Missions is still being collected at the time of writing and will complete next quarter.

National Workshops

During the quarter the RPD and AOTR agreed that RPCD's planned National Workshops may be used most effectively as capacity-building events for Partnership Forum members.

Having launched Partnership Forums in Morocco, Jordan, and West Bank, RPCD was able to begin the design of the first round of National Workshops. The main theme identified in Morocco and Jordan was qualitative research methods. (Low attendance at the West Bank Partnership Forum meeting meant the results could not be taken as authoritative—a new survey of interested organizations will be undertaken in the next quarter.)

As there are a large number of stakeholders interested in each of these events—RPCD, the OMEP office, the local Missions, and the Partnership Forum members, each with separate and potentially diverging needs—a significant amount of coordination and communication is required to ensure all expectations are met. Experts have been identified and tentative dates set. The collaboratively-designed National Workshops are anticipated to begin in May 2012.

Quick Response Research Mechanism

The section “Road Show” above details the potential research requests discussed with RPCD as a result of visits to Missions in the region. Although West Bank/Gaza, Morocco, Jordan and Egypt all expressed interest in submitting research requests to RPCD, only Jordan and Egypt submitted requests during the reporting period.

The following research requests were submitted by USAID/Jordan, and completed by RPCD, during the quarter:

- Study on best practices in family planning in the region. (18 pages) The Mission client reported being "extremely satisfied" with the process, that the report answered their question "well", and that they will recommend RPCD to co-workers "regularly".
- Study on best practices in youth centers in the MENA region, complete with case studies and comparative analysis. (35 pages)
- Study on M&E practices for youth programming, including concrete and actionable recommendations for USAID's M&E efforts. (25 pages)
- Mapping of youth programming in Jordan, including extensive and detailed tables to facilitate comparisons and analysis. (35 pages)
- Meta-analysis of existing youth studies in Jordan. (28 pages)

At the time of writing, feedback from the Mission on the last four reports is still pending.

USAID/Egypt also forwarded a request from USAID/Jordan for a brief analysis of wastewater treatment approaches in region. RPCD will complete and submit the report in the coming quarter.

During the reporting period RPCD continued to work on the research request previously submitted by USAID/Egypt, for a public opinion survey to gauge awareness and opinion of USAID among Egyptians. RPCD advertised for bids for this work (composed of both a quantitative nationwide door-to-door survey and a series of focus groups to test outreach messages), collected and reviewed bids, and engaged the winner, the Nielsen Company. RPCD worked with Nielsen and USAID to design the survey instrument, which was then translated and submitted to CAPMAS, the Egyptian government agency that oversees research in the country, for approval. At the end of the quarter, approval from CAPMAS to conduct the survey was still pending.

Development and Maintenance of the Portal

In addition to sending out a call for applications to provide maintenance and design service to the Portal, RPCD continued to enhance the website during the quarter.

The architecture for creating pages in three languages was put into place and the vast majority of the translation work was completed. The trilingual version of the portal will go live in April.

RPCD launched a News Feed on the website, a weekly-updated scrolling feature on the home page that shows upcoming events of note, with links to the pages of the organizations sponsoring the events.

The Research Products page was designed and will also go live in April. Finally, RPCD's pages in Twitter, Facebook and Google Plus were designed, linked to the website and updated on a regular basis.

ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

In the sixth quarter of RPCD, April-June 2012, a number of activities will be launched whose groundwork was laid this quarter. Expected activities include:

- Publication of second volume of the Technical Paper Series
- Publication of second volume of the Annotated Bibliography
- Publication of second volume of the Research Highlights
- Submission of the final Report of Opinion Survey in Egypt
- Road Show visits to two countries in the RPCD portfolio (Iraq and Lebanon)
- Complete individual meetings to recruit Partnership Forum institutional members
- Conduct at least two National Workshops, in Jordan and Morocco

- Build a database for individual experts into searchable “Specialist Database” accessible only by Partnership Forum Members and USAID staff under the RPCD Portal
- Launch feature enhancements to the Portal, including a Research Products page and the listing of Partnership Forum members
- Responding to at least three more research requests submitted by USAID Missions

ANNEXES

Annex A: Main RPCD Accomplishments to Date

- Presence
 - Fully staffed in Egypt
 - Research Liaison Officers hired and actively working with Missions and Partnership Forum members in Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and West Bank, Egypt
 - Currently Liaising with FHI staff in Erbil, Iraq to identify Research Liaison Officer and vet Partnership Forum members
- Program Planning
 - Ongoing collaboration with OMEP on revising 2012 workplan to reflect current conditions in the region
 - Ongoing discussion with OMEP on modifying the RPCD scope and budget to better reflect needs of Missions discovered in Road Show, reflect the potentially expanded geographic scope of OMEP, and respond to the new operating environment in the region
- Road Show
 - OMEP and RPCD undertook visits to four Missions (Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and West Bank/Gaza) to introduce the program, solicit requests and hold launch meetings with Partnership Forum members. There were two clear effects:
 - Visited Missions began submitting research requests, after understanding better what RPCD can offer
 - Partnership Forum membership is much higher in countries where OMEP and RPCD presented the program in person, due to personal connections made.
- Research Requests
 - OMEP
 - **Completed:** Study of best practices on Youth Entrepreneurship in the MENA Region. Submitted June 2011.
 - **Completed:** Inventory of programs on Youth Entrepreneurship in the MENA Region. Submitted June 2011.
 - **Completed:** Annotated bibliography on capacity building and use of host country mechanisms. Submitted June 2011. (I believe this was for OMEP, can later confirm with home office)
 - Yemen: **Completed:** Evaluation of scholarship programs. Submitted May 2011.
 - Jordan
 - **Completed:** Study on best practices in family planning in the region. Mission client reported being "extremely satisfied" with the process, the report answered their question "well", and they will recommend RPCD to co-workers "regularly".

- **Completed:** Study on best practices in youth centers. With client, feedback pending.
 - **Completed;** Study on M&E practices for youth programming. With client, feedback pending.
 - **Completed:** Program Mapping for youth in Jordan. With client, feedback pending.
 - **Completed:** Meta-analysis of youth studies in Jordan. With client, feedback pending.
 - **Completed:** Initial draft analysis of wastewater treatment approaches in region. OMEP water expert reports the draft is "excellent," awaiting instructions on further research.
 - **Underway:** List of Public Financial Management documents in Jordan. 91 collected and referenced, awaiting further inputs from Mission.
- Egypt: **Underway:** Quantitative and qualitative analyses of public opinion of USAID programming, with partner Nielsen. Questionnaire with Government of Egypt for approval.
- Morocco: Expecting three SOWs for civil society program evaluation, local governance program evaluation, and literacy best practices assessment. Mission point of contact indicates SOWs will come within a week.
- West Bank/Gaza: Has confirmed interest in commissioning research, will send requests soon.
- Partnership Forum
 - Identified and vetted for inclusion 184 organizations in many countries, using criteria formed in collaboration with OMEP and Missions
 - Conducted kickoff meetings in three countries, with the fourth in Egypt planned for April 23rd and the fifth in Lebanon when we confirm our travel there
 - 50 members have completed the application process to date, largely in three countries. Rates of completion are much higher in countries that have received Road Show visits, where OMEP and RPCD met directly with potential Partnership Forum members.
- Publications - Will reach audiences every month.
 - Annotated Bibliography Series: Submitted completed first edition to USAID and sent in March to USAID Missions and ME Bureau as well as 200 partners and stakeholders in research and international development
 - Technical Publication Series: Submitted completed first edition to USAID, will forward to audience in April after USAID approval received
 - Research Highlights: Submitted completed first edition to USAID, will forward to audience at end of May after USAID approval
- Regional Conferences
 - Implemented Morocco Youth Conference in November with participants from RPCD countries plus Tunisia
 - Planning to co-implement conference entitled "The Power of One: First Annual Inter-Regional Learning Exchange Conference on Citizen-Led Innovation and Social Change Practices During Periods of Transition" with

UNDP and USAID/Cyprus in Nicosia, collaborative planning meeting has been held in Cyprus between OMEP, RPCD, UNDP, USAID/Cyprus and local partners concept note drafted

- National Workshops
 - Designing Local Capacity Development events for Morocco and Jordan to be held in May. Partnership Forum members will be beneficiaries.
- Grants
 - Research Agenda has been finalized and sent to Missions, one has given feedback, others we will follow up with.
 - RFP for the \$1.5 million grants program has been drafted and will be sent to USAID next week. RPCD expects to give 8-12 grants to consortiums of high-capacity, international or regional organizations working with local Partnership Forum members to answer research questions of interest to USAID Missions, expressed in the Research Agenda.
- Portal
 - Digital Library stocked with hundreds of articles on three technical areas, possible to search and browse
 - Weekly updated news feed, soon to be linked to RPCD's existing social media sites
 - Login created for USAID staff to submit rapid response research requests
 - USAID can view completed research requests submitted by their colleagues
 - Translations into Arabic and French to be completed by April 15
 - Hyperlinks to USAID Missions in the region and OMEP are on the main page
 - Login-accessible list of Partnership Forum members and their contact information is currently under construction, as is list of individual experts.
 - RPCD research products and publications are posted on the site

JORDAN TRIP REPORT

Regional Partnership on Culture and Development (RPCD)

Road Show Trip Report – Stop One: Amman, Jordan

January 28-February 3, 2012

Presented by:

Jim Harmon, Director USAID/OMEP
Dr. Adly Hassanein, Regional Research Director, USAID/OMEP
Matthew Pietz, Senior Chief of Party, RPCD

Objectives of trip:

1. To introduce RPCD to USAID/Jordan staff and leadership
2. To elicit at least one request for research from USAID/Jordan
3. To launch the RPCD Partnership Forum (PF) with introductory meeting

Activities:

The visit of Jim Harmon, Dr. Adly Hassanein, and Matthew Pietz (“the team”) to Amman, Jordan achieved outstanding progress for the RPCD program in a short amount of time. All three of the objectives listed above were met or exceeded. The locally based RPCD Research Liaison Officer Nazek Saleh was introduced to the mission and participated in the preparation of the partnership forum meetings and in achieving results.

On the second day of the visit, Jim presented OMEP and its programs and goals to Mission staff, and Matthew gave a presentation of the RPCD, with about 20 people attending. The audience showed great interest in the program, and questions centered on the practical aspects of submitting requests and how the Partnership Forum will be formed.

Jim and Adly also attended the Mission general staff meeting. Jim presented the OMEP portfolio, with a focus on the RPCD, and answered questions about the services that OMEP is prepared to provide to the Mission in support of their programming needs. Beth Paige, the Mission Director also reported successes by the Mission in their outreach campaign to the Jordanian public.

The team made a courtesy visit to the Front Office. Those present included Mission Director Beth Paige, Deputy Mission Director Doug Ball, Program Development Specialist Kenana Amin, and Office of Program Management Director Amy Tohill-Stull,

in addition to Jim, Adly and Matt. Jim explained OMEP's work and requested that the Mission submit requirements for TDY assistance from OMEP and USAID/Cairo in coming months. Matt and Adly described the work RPCD does. Kenana Amin was named as the OMEP liaison and contact person in the Jordan Mission, meaning all communications will include here. The team agreed to include the Mission in the planning process of any RPCD activities, including conferences, workshops, grants, and the selection of members for the Partnership Forum. The importance informing the Ambassador and the Embassy in advance of events was underscored, and it was agreed that the Mission will be notified before grants are given. The team also sent a list of selected Partnership Forum members to Kenana for broader distribution and input from the Mission, to ensure key organizations are not missing, and no organizations that are included should be removed for any reason.

Over the course of the trip, a series of meetings were held with various program officers, directors, and team leaders, from departments including Economic Growth, Youth, Energy, Population and Health, Democracy and Governance, Finance, and Education. At these meetings members of the team explained the parameters of assistance RPCD can provide and answered questions about whether funding or human resources are required from the Mission, what subject areas RPCD can work in, and the timing and format of the research projects.

RPCD Research Liaison Officer Nazek Saleh was included in several meetings with USAID, introducing her to the stakeholders and preparing the way for her to act as the chief point of communication between FHI/RPCD Team and the Mission in Jordan.

As a result of these meetings, five potential research assignments were identified for RPCD:

	Task	Status	Key Person	Expected Timeline
1	Sector Assessment for Youth programs in Economic Growth and Civic Engagement 1. Assessment of existing programs 2. Meta-analysis of relevant studies 3. Survey of M&E tools for EG and recommendation	Mission to send official memo of request to Adly	Kenana Amin	6 weeks to completion, from date of request
2	Annotated Bibliography of reports on Public Financial Management systems of the Government of Jordan	Request made through RPCD portal; RPCD to carry out research	Paul Markovs	Completion by February 16, 2012
3	Survey of outreach tools and strategies used for family planning campaigns in MENA region	Request made through RPCD portal; RPCD to carry out research	Leslie MacKeen	Completion by March 7, 2012
4	Sector Assessment of Energy activities in Jordan	Mission to first seek USAID/Washington funding; if this does not come through, will submit request to RPCD	Cheryl Jennings	TBD
5	Guidelines on the preparation and implementation of USAID Performance Monitoring Plans	Requester formulating request	Cheryl Jennings	TBD

The final major activity of the program was the meeting of potential members of the Partnership Forum. Nine organizations gathered at the University of Jordan Library for a presentation of the RPCD and the activities of the Forum, as well as a discussion of the state of research in Jordan especially in the RPCD three areas (Youth, DG and Natural Resources Management) and the challenges facing the research organizations. The findings and attendees are appended as Attachment 3. The results of the meeting will be used to plan the first workshop for Partnership Forum members in March.

Next Steps:

1. Launch research initiatives on Youth, Public Financial Management, Family Planning:
 - a. Configure teams
 - b. Propose timeline to USAID/Jordan
2. Create agenda and dates for first Partnership Forum workshop in collaboration with USAID/Jordan.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Agenda

Saturday, January 28th

11:00 Arrival in Amman

1:00 – 3:00 Meeting with key Partnership Forum Members at Center for Strategic Studies--Ahmed Al Salymeh, Director of Water, Energy and Environment Center; Nitham Assaf, director of Amman Center of Human Rights Studies; and Dr. Musa Shtewi, director of Center for Strategic Studies.

4:00 – 5:00 OMEP/RPCD Team planning of presentation to USAID/Jordan

Sunday, January 29th

8:30 – 9:00 In-briefing with Program Management Office (USAID/Jordan, USAID/OMEP and FHI360)

9:00 – 10:00 Meeting with Jordan youth team re possible youth programming collaborations/opportunities (USAID/Jordan and USAID/OMEP)

10:00 – 11:00 Meeting with mission staff on youth Research Agenda (USAID/Jordan, USAID/OMEP and FHI360)

1:00 – 1:45 Meeting with Energy team (USAID/Jordan, USAID/OMEP)

2:00 – 2:30 Courtesy Call with USAID/Jordan Mission Director (USAID/Jordan, USAID/OMEP)

7:00 – 9:00 pm Visit to training in qualitative research methods for civil society organizations

Monday, Jan. 30th

10:00 – 11:00 Mission briefing on RPCD program (USAID/Jordan, USAID/OMEP and FHI360)

11:00 – 12:00 Staff Meeting

12:00 - 1:00 Meeting with Mohammed Yassein on OMEP program support.

3:00 – 5:00 OMEP/ RPCD Team discussion and drafting of research plan for Youth sector assessment

Tuesday, January 31st

10:00 Meeting with Bill Thomas on strategies for outreach survey, to be duplicated in Cairo

11:00 Meeting with Cheryl Jennings on possibilities for energy sector assessment

12:00 Meeting with Paul Markovs on analysis of Public Financial Management approaches in Jordan

1:00 Initial meeting with Leslie MacKeen on family planning outreach research

3:00 Planning for Partnership Forum meeting

Wednesday February 1st

9:00-12:00 Partnership Forum launch meeting

2:00 Planning for first Partnership Forum conference

4:00 Designing of assessment of Public Financial Management Programs in Jordan

Thursday February 2nd

10:00 Debrief with Kenana Amin and Stevens Tucker on outcomes of Partnership Forum meeting and next steps to strengthen research sector

2:00 Meeting with Leslie McKeean on assessment of family planning outreach strategies

4:00 Meeting between Adly and Matt to prioritize and plan for execution of responses to three confirmed and two potential research requests. Review of important issues to be included in the trip report.

Attachment 2: USAID Staff met

Beth Paige, Mission Director

Doug Ball, Deputy Mission Director

Amy Tohill-Stull, Director of Office of Program Management

Bill Thomas, Program Specialist – Outreach

Mohammed A. Yassein, Senior Program Officer

Kenana Amin, Program Development Specialist

Susan Ayari, Education Team Leader

Cheryl Jennings, Director of Energy Office

Ramzi Sabella, Project Management Specialist, Energy Office

Stevens Tucker, Senior Development Advisor, DG, Social Sectors Office

Haya Shubailat, Project Management Specialist, Social Sectors Office

Leslie MacKeen, Project Manager, Population and Family Health Officer, Social Sector Office

Nujoud Serhan, Office of Economic Growth, Project Management Specialist, Community & Workforce Development

Paul K. Markovs, Deputy Controller

Attachment 3: Notes from Partnership Forum Meeting

Participants:

Attended
King Hussein Foundation's Information and Research Center
International Republican Institute
Jordan Environment Society (JES)
Center for Strategic Studies
Water and Environment Research and Study Center - University of Jordan
Albadeel Center for Studies and Research
Al Quds Center for Political Studies
Jordan Center for Social Research
Amman Centre for Human Rights studies
Expressed interest in Forum, but unable to attend meeting
Arab Archive Institute for Publishing, Studies and Research
Hashemite University/ faculty of Natural Resources and Environment/ Center for Environmental Studies
Philadelphia University, Center For Water & Environment Studies – Dead Sea Studies Center.
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
IRZ/ German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation
UNDP - Jordan
Arab Reform Initiative
Jordan Center for Public Policy Research and Dialogue
Middle East Studies Center
The Columbia University Middle East Research Center
Arab Thought Forum
Arab Foundations Forum

Key areas of research conducted by PF potential Institutions in Jordan:

- Women rights
- Child labor
- Honor crimes
- The right to grant for Jordanian Nationality for Non- Jordanians /children and husbands of women married to Non- Jordanians/ The political dimension and identity
- Violence in society
- Needs Assessments for poverty in Jordan
- Base line studies
- Impact assessment
- Polls and opinion exploring

- Surveys and needs assessments
- Attitudes gauging
- Preparing strategies for example /the national strategy for eliminating of violence against women& children in Iraq.
- Economic participation
- Studies on tourism
- Youth and employment
- Observing the representative of minorities in the third world.
- Woman image in media/content analysis study.
- CEDAW articles/ reserved ones.
- Academy freedom
- Constitution reforms.
- Arab- Israeli conflict studies

Challenges facing research institutions in the field of Research

- The concept of Research is not clear or well- identified
- The technical aspect of research methods and tools
- Donors guide the research towards certain topics which in many cases its repeated again and again, which eliminates the freedom of research and the scope of research.
- Lack of experience in the field of qualitative research in particular.
- Respondents are not aware of the importance of researches and studies.
- Lack of freedom of information, and the credibility of sources of this information.
- The problem of reservations on some results from different parities, hampering publishing it or dissemination of these studies in public or even translation of these studies/ from Jordanian side or external some times.
- Deficiency in the development of research tools
- Lack of experience in the report writing skills/ final research reports.
- Security restrictions/ regarding some titles/sensitive issues
- Blocking some sites... especially when publishing results or certain studies on the institutions portal or website.
- Lack of marketing for researches and information dissemination.
- Shortage in data bases.
- The importance of scientific research is not priority both by government and research institutions/ some of them.

Recommendations:

- ✚ Building the capacity of institutions in the field of research, to enable them to conduct studies on crucial political problems/ researching skills.
- ✚ Developing a national manual for research.

- ✚ The importance of focusing on the qualitative research and not only the quantitative it's not enough.
- ✚ Training on the Quality Standard of scientific research.
- ✚ To spread new research tools such as: evaluation cards & peer interview.
- ✚ Focusing on applied and actionable research and not the theatrical only/trend towards applied research.
- ✚ Developing and advancing e-learning tools and information.
- ✚ Updating regulation in the universities and institutions dealing with research, and the need of taking the local context into account when creating or dealing with standards.. And not only bringing international standards which don't suit or meet our national needs.
- ✚ The need of more focuses on water Governance and Water economics/ shortage in experience in these two areas in Jordan.
- ✚ The need of training in the field of processing data quality.
- ✚ To focus on institutions reforms/ old regulations/ enabling environment for quality research.
- ✚ Translation of key researches from English into Arabic/ written by western scholars handling crucial topics in the Middle East region issues..
- ✚ Developing the educational system both in schools level and high education/ universities/ ending the Indoctrination style in education/ incorporating research skills in all educational stages.
- ✚ Focusing on the copyright and registration of research.

MOROCCO TRIP REPORT

Regional Partnership on Culture and Development (RPCD)

Rabat, Morocco

February 12-17, 2012

Presented by:

Jim Harmon, Director USAID/OMEP
 Dr. Adly Hassanein, Regional Research Director, USAID/OMEP
 Matthew Pietz, Senior Chief of Party, RPCD

Objectives of trip:

1. To introduce RPCD to USAID/Morocco staff and leadership
2. To elicit at least one request for research from USAID/Morocco
3. To launch the RPCD Partnership Forum (PF) with introductory meeting

Activities:

The visit of Jim Harmon, Dr. Adly Hassanein, and Matthew Pietz (“the team”) to Rabat repeated many of the successes of the first RPCD “Road Show” trip to Jordan. All three of the objectives listed above were met or exceeded. The locally based RPCD Research Liaison Officer Loubna Rais was introduced to the mission and participated in the preparation of the Partnership Forum meetings and in achieving results.

On the first day of the visit, Jim presented OMEP and its programs and goals to Mission staff, and Matthew gave a presentation of the RPCD, with about 20 people attending. The audience showed great interest in the program, and questions centered on the practical aspects of submitting requests and how the Partnership Forum will be formed. This was also the case when the team visited Jordan.

The team made a courtesy visit to the Mission Director. Jim explained OMEP’s work and requested that the Mission submit requirements for TDY assistance from OMEP and USAID/Cairo in coming months. Adly described the work RPCD does. The Mission Director talked about potential changes in strategy for the Morocco Mission, including a streamlining of the number of areas of assistance and a greater focus on fewer sectors and subsectors.

Over the course of the trip, a series of meetings were held with various program officers, directors, and team leaders, from departments including Economic Growth, Youth, Democracy and Governance, and Education. At these meetings members of the team explained the parameters of assistance RPCD can provide and answered questions about whether funding or human resources are required from the Mission, what subject areas RPCD can work in, and the timing and format of the research projects.

USAID/Morocco staff expressed excitement to know that RPCD is ready to carry out research on their behalf. A number of potential research tasks were identified.

The first three were discussed, but before they can be launched the issue of potential conflict of interest needs to be resolved. FHI 360 and USAID are both working to find a solution to this issue currently. Those three tasks are:

1. Final Evaluation of civil society program, called SANAD, implemented by MSI.
2. Mid-term Evaluation of Local Governance Program (LGP).
3. Assessment of best practices in literacy for early-grade students. The Youth team would like us to find out where the highest levels of literacy

are in the country, and identify best practices that may be responsible for those high levels.

In addition, the Economic Growth team asked if RPCD can do a study of the competitiveness of the agriculture sector. But because the Mission is almost certainly cutting agriculture funding from the Mission budget, this study will never affect future programming and that hence falls outside the intent of RPCD. It is not likely the program will carry out this study.

The EG team also suggested an assessment of the state entrepreneurship in Tunisia, specifically what programs are being carried out and by whom. We will draft an SOW for this work if we can also acquire the necessary permissions to allow an STTA visit to Tunisia.

The team spoke to Grace Lang whose Youth office is supporting an International Youth Foundation program in Algeria. She said that the Morocco would support RPCD forming a Partnership Forum, placing an RLO or doing other work in Algeria. She said that since there is no USAID presence the point of contact is through the US Embassy in Algeria, specifically its Foreign Assistance Committee. She will put Jim and Adly in touch with that Committee.

The final major activity of the program was the meeting of potential members of the Partnership Forum. Nine organizations gathered at the Hotel Diwan for a presentation of the RPCD and the activities of the Forum, as well as a discussion of the state of research in Jordan especially in the RPCD three areas (Youth, DG and Natural Resources Management) and the challenges facing the research organizations. The findings and attendees are appended as Attachment 3. The results of the meeting will be used to plan the first workshop for Partnership Forum members in April.

Next Steps:

3. Obtain written decision on potential OCI issues, and receive clearance to start work on three evaluations and assessments.
4. Draft SOW for entrepreneurship study in Tunisia.
5. Create agenda and dates for first Partnership Forum workshop in collaboration with USAID/Morocco.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Agenda

Travel: Sunday, February 12, 2012

Day 1: Monday, February 13, 2012

- 10:00 – 11:00 Briefing meeting (YHDO) – Overview of the trip and of Partnership Forum members.
- 11:30 – 12:00 Courtesy visit to the front office
- 3:30 – 4:30 Presentation of OMEP and RPCD to all Mission staff

Day 2: Tuesday, February 14, 2012

Meetings with program officers to learn research needs, decide on a research request.

- 10:00 – 11:00 Youth and Human Development Office, Education Team
- 11:15 – 12:30 Youth and Human Development Office, Democracy & Governance, and Peace & Security
- 1:30 – 2:30 Trade and Economic Assistance Office

Day 3: Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Meeting with Partnership Forum members (see details in Attachment 3)

Day 4: Thursday, February 16, 2012

- 09:00 – 12:00 Draft SOW discussion with technical team leaders + finalization
- 2:00 – 3:00 Debriefing on results and outcomes of trip and next steps.
Discussion with mission staff on findings for the preparation of the first national research workshop.

Travel: Friday, February 17, 2012

Attachment 2: USAID Staff met

John Groarke, Mission Director

Grace Lang, Director, Office of Youth and Human Development

Mariam Britel-Swift, Development Assistance Specialist, Education Office

Andrew Colburn, Director, Democracy and Governance Office

Idriss Touijer, Program Officer, Democracy and Governance Office

Matthew Burton, Director, Economic Growth and Trade Office

Jude Aidoo, Private Enterprise Officer

Abderrahim Bouazza,, Program Officer

Attachment 3: Notes from Partnership Forum Meeting

Meeting Report:

Date: February 15th 2012, Scheduled at 9AM

Location: Diwan Hotel, Salle Diwan I , Rabat.

Start: 9.30 AM

End: 12 pm followed by refreshments.

PF members Present: FAB (2) IHARE (3) ISESCO (1) CERAB (1) CERSS (2)

Other: Matthew Pietz (RPCD), Adly Hassanein (OMEP), Loubna Rais (RPCD)

Comments: The short notice didn't allow for many of the PF members to confirm their presence. Two of them who didn't attend requested documentation sent to them, and asked to be included in future meetings and activities. One of the confirmed PF members confused the venue location, and also asked to be included in any coming activity.

The present PF members represent different actors involved in research, from donor, to private research institutes, think tank, NGOs, who were able to inform us on their institutions different and specific needs.

After a presentation of the program by Matthew Pietz, the discussion was open on the current state of research activities in Morocco.

Following are notes on the oral remarks of each PF member present at the meeting.

Fondation Abderrahim Bouabid

Omar Balafrej, President of the Foundation expressed the need to open the network to international (not only regional and local), because there is a need of expertise in research in certain subjects and topics that local or national researchers do not have.

He also stressed on the work they are already accomplishing in sharing their research and work through their WEB TV for example.

He Asked about ways to disseminate the research better (because nationally and locally they are already sharing it).

Matt suggested that we can help in disseminating the works and studies through our channels, perhaps organize a webinar, through newsletters and emailing etc...)

Institut Hypatia d'Alexandrie pour la Reflexion et les Etudes " I.H.A.R.E" (Hypatia of Alexandria Institute for Reflexion and Studies). (Think Tank)

Hind Arroub, founder and Director of IHARE highlighted the bad lack of confidence and trust in NGOS, Think Tanks and Research institutes from the Donors' part.

Dr Hassanein led the discussion on Ethics, which can be related to the remarks above.

As a new organization, IHARE suffers from very little visibility. New comers in the research field aren't trusted.

Dr Arroub also stressed on the lack of resources, proper training and guidance at the university level: student researchers do not benefit from any kind of support, they lack field research capacities. She expressed the need of real training in field research. Proper training in field research will make researchers socially engaged and therefore increase the impact of their researches and their accuracy. Students researchers don't get involved in NGOs and research centers.

She suggested that researchers should be able to freely share their knowledge and capacities, and develop critical thinking capacities of researchers, who are too often not free in choosing the issues they want to address. Students for examples aren't independent in that sense; they fear consequences and professors reactions when choosing the subject of their research. There is a need to develop a "research personality" in students who should be empowered. The current situation is such as there are still taboos in the research field, There are limits one cannot cross within research in Morocco. These limits are often political or social.

There is little help from government, no spending, no valuation of research in Morocco.

Dr Arroub stressed on the need to raise awareness of importance of research.

Dr Arroub also highlighted gender issues: there aren't many women in the research field.

Dr Arroub mentioned financial difficulties again related to bad reputation of local research centers and institutes.

Dr Abdelhak Bensaoula, who accompanied Dr Arroub but was not sent an invitation, shared his vision as a hard science researcher who often has to deal with social sciences also on tech transfer.

He highlighted the Expertise Diaspora, and stressed on the fact that many Moroccan nationals doing research abroad or working in research abroad are disconnected from their country. In order to transfer technology and knowledge, morocco should encourage specialists established in the western countries to engage in Morocco.

Dr Noui, assistant director of IHARE highlighted the lack of transparency in the funding process of research. He also expressed the need to change the mindset and the culture of research, referring to the credibility issue.

ISESCO (International Institution)

Dr Chtatou first addressed the need to transfer not only knowledge but also technology. He discussed the name of the program and asked why it does not include technology.

He also expressed the need for real capacity building in field oriented research and work. According to him, there is a need to help organizations and associations, research institutes to get into the field. Not many organizations in morocco have enough capacity to conduct field research properly, and many of them don't have standardized policy for field research.

Dr Chtatou, when asked by Dr Hassanein if he believes that PFs would benefit from a Qualitative/quantitative research seminar, mentioned the need to differentiate between "secondary research" and real primary applied research. He confirmed that technical workshops would be very useful.

He suggested that the first topic of our next workshop should be about developing research culture, which would also tackle issues related to credibility and accountability of research for example.

Dr Chtatou also suggested focusing on enabling the different actors in research for development to access information.

He also confirmed what Dr Arroub said about the need for students training. Better Methodology, capacity building activities should target students and not only research institutes. The Moroccan educational system is hierarchical, professors aren't facilitators, they do not guide and enable students to look for the information, and they just expect the information to be known. Information is dealt with as power "Who has information has power". There is not enough stress on critical thinking, and how to deal with information.

CERAB (NGO)

Mr Belal who came in late Relationship addressed briefly the issue of the relationship between donors and research centers and universities, and how to link them in a more efficient way, in order to enable these institutes to fund their research.

He also mentioned that most professors now conduct consultancies for donors, in a business oriented manner, which harms research quality. DR

CERSS (Private Research Institute)

Dr Saaf took the opportunity to mention that his institute has been sharing Four Major studies on the research situation in Morocco, in Humanities, social sciences etc...

Dr Saaf mentioned that universities are now more inclined to encourage research in democracy, youth and other development issues. These researches are based on territorial approach, but are more and more conducted on the field.

There is an unquestionable need in workshops on technical aspects of research and research techniques.

What can be said or cannot be said, opinion giving...what the results of the research can say and opine and what they cannot.

When discussing the issue of research findings dissemination, Dr Saaf opined that the new Constitutional reform allow for some freedom of information, which need to be implemented and reinforced. But he also later warned against the other consequence of free information sharing: a lot of unqualified people start conducting research in an unethical manner. He also mentioned plagiarism as a major obstacle to good practice in research.

Dr Saaf also suggested that a seminar or workshop on Organizational capacities of research institutions would be very much needed. It would help research institutions overcome some organizational and structural issues that most of them face, build their capacities in dealing with those difficulties.

Dr Saaf argued that we should consider capitalization and valuation of existing research and expertise, in order to improve and develop it so it would have more impact.

Dr Saaf expressed the need of a standardization of best practices and methodology in research. This, according to Dr Saaf would allow for more effective knowledge sharing and capacity building. He argued that there is a strong expertise available in Morocco, but its needs to be supported and encouraged, financially and technically.

The discussion led to Research Agendas, and Dr Arroub intervened: independence of research is a huge challenge in Morocco. Institutions, researchers etc...aren't totally free to conduct research, because donors most of the times hold an agenda: they want the research to convey the message they want to hear.

Dr Saaf also tackled the issue of consultancies, which are said today to produce much more material than research institutes.

When addressing the financial issues, dr Saaf argued independence and quality of research is also diminished by the financial aspect of consultancies and research.

Dr Saaf opined that there is a real need of quality research that responds and gives answers to issues faced by citizen (in governance for example)

Dr Adly led the discussion an intervened in several instances to address:

- Governmental Budget for Research.
- Who reads research that has been already published?
- How research can benefit citizen.
- Importance of Research from below rather than vertical based on local needs and issues.
- Importance of Regional approach to research, importance of regional information sharing.
- Research hypocrisy: oriented research, from donors, from government.
- Age of researchers, lack of new generation of researchers. In universities, we give students Work capacity rather than research capacity.
- Know how Vs how to know.
- Innovative solutions (use of webinars for example) in order to overcome funding related challenges.

Conclusions:

It appears from the discussion that the main needs of PF members are related to Ethics, Best Practices Sharing and Access. Funding and lack of standardized methodology, lack of government support and lack of student training in research are also some of the most important challenges according to our PF members. Finally problems related to organization and structure, expertise Diaspora or drain, gender related issues and technology transfer have also been mentioned by PF members.

PF members present at the meeting requested to be sent the PPT presentation, a summary of the meeting discussions, and the list of criteria used for selecting the PF members.

WEST BANK/GAZA TRIP REPORT

Presented by:

Jim Harmon, Director USAID/OMEP
Dr. Adly Hassanein, Regional Research Director, USAID/OMEP
Matthew Pietz, Senior Chief of Party, RPCD

Objectives of trip:

1. To introduce RPCD to USAID/West Bank/Gaza staff and leadership
2. To elicit at least one request for research from USAID/ West Bank/Gaza
3. To launch the RPCD Partnership Forum (PF) with introductory meeting

Activities:

The visit of Jim Harmon, Dr. Adly Hassanein, and Matthew Pietz (“the team”) to Tel Aviv and Ramallah continued the pattern of success established by the first two Road Show visits. All three of the objectives listed above were met or exceeded.

The team began at 10:00 am on February 27th with a meeting of office directors. Attendees included Kimberlee Bell, Mary Cobb, Ritu Tariyal, John Crihfield, Mariela Ruiz, and Ann Posner. Jim introduced OMEP and explained the process for scheduling OMEP TDY visits. Matt and Adly described the work RPCD does, with an emphasis on research requests that can be carried out for USAID.

Next, the team made a courtesy visit to the Mission Director, Mike Harvey. Again, Jim explained OMEP’s work and requested that the Mission submit requirements for TDY assistance from OMEP and USAID/Cairo in coming months. Adly described the work RPCD does. The Mission Director emphasized two points: the low level of funding at the Mission

due to the Congressional hold on 75% of its budget, with a strong impact on the amount of time staff could dedicate to supporting the work of RPCD; and the importance of carefully scrutinizing the quality of research produced by Palestinian organizations before considering it work worthy of publication or inclusion in RPCD deliverables or outputs. The team explained the priority RPCD gives to minimizing the time required of Mission staff, and also explained the review process that local research goes through before it is included in any RPCD products.

At 2:00 pm, Jim presented OMEP and its programs and goals to Mission staff, and Matthew gave a presentation of the RPCD, with about 20 people attending. The audience showed great interest in the program, and questions centered on the subject areas where RPCD can do work and how the Partnership Forum will be formed. USAID/West Bank/Gaza staff expressed excitement to know that RPCD is ready to carry out research on their behalf.

At 3:00 Jim and Adly met with the Mission's legal officer Ritu Tariyal.

The final major activity of the program was the meeting of potential members of the Partnership Forum. Four organizations gathered at the Best Eastern Hotel for a presentation of the RPCD and the activities of the Forum, as well as a discussion of the state of research in Jordan especially in the RPCD three areas (Youth, DG and Natural Resources Management) and the challenges facing the research organizations. The findings and attendees are appended as Attachment 3. The results of the meeting will be used to plan the first workshop for Partnership Forum members in the spring.

Attendees were excited about the possibility of a network and expressed a desire that local organizations have a significant degree of ownership and control. Questions included whether the network would function simultaneously on the regional and national level, and what level of paperwork would be required from grantees. Although some promising organizations were identified, the team had the sense that there needs to be another round of reviewing and vetting Palestinian organizations to ensure that the best possible organizations are being included.

Next Steps:

6. Kimberlee Bell is going to hold internal meetings to prioritize the top research requests for consideration by RPCD.
7. RPCD is going to hire a new Research Liaison Officer for West Bank/Gaza to facilitate the selection and invitation of new organizations to the Partnership Forum network.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Agenda

Sunday, February 26

5:00 pm - Arrive at Tel Aviv airport, go to American Colony hotel. Prepare presentations.

Monday, February 27

9:00 am - Arrive at USAID in Tel Aviv

10:00 am - Meet with USAID Officers

11:00 am - Meet with Mission Director

1:00 pm - Presentation to the Mission

3:00 pm - Meeting with Legal Office

4:30 pm - 6:00 pm - Return to hotel in Jerusalem.

Tuesday, February 28

8:45 am - 9:30 am - Travel from Jerusalem to Ramallah.

10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Meeting with Partnership Forum members in Best Eastern Hotel in Ramallah

1:00 pm - Depart Ramallah for Tel Aviv Airport

5:45 pm - Depart Tel Aviv Airport

Attachment 2: USAID Staff met

Michael Harvey, Mission Director

Kimberlee Bell, Director of Program Officer

Mary Cobb, Director of Health and Humanitarian Assistance

Ritu Tariyal, Legal Office

Ann Posner, Supervisory Executive Officer

John Crihfield, Director, Private Enterprise Office

Mariella Ruiz-Rodriguez, Education Office

Attachment 3: Notes from Partnership Forum Meeting

Date: February 28th 2012

Location: Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah.

Start: 10.00 AM

End: 12.00 PM followed by refreshments.

Comments: The short notice did not allow for several of the PF members to confirm their presence. Two of them who didn't attend requested documentation sent to them, and asked to be included in future meetings and activities. One of the confirmed PF members confused the venue location, and also asked to be included in any coming activity.

Attending Organizations:

Tawaun, AWRAD, Nujoud, Ben Charitable

Discussion:

1. AWRAD - Beware of creating unhealthy donor-beneficiary relationship by making it too easy and telling us nothing is required of us.
2. Nujoud – What is difference between academic and action-oriented research?
3. Nujoud – Will the compliance requirements be as difficult as we've had with previous USAID grants?
4. AWRAD – We don't represent all institutions. We need time to discuss the idea of the forum, what to expect, and how to form. Adly replied that this is the first contact, and the second will be a message sent to all members to discuss the meetings.

5. Nujoud – Important to work on capacity building of researchers and especially youth researchers. New methodologies of applied research, techniques, contrast it to academic research. Main obstacle is to funding. Universities are underfunded especially. Also there are some organizations that because the funding comes from USAID, they don't accept it.
6. USAID informed partners It isn't necessary for institutions to accept funding to be members of the forum, they can just share their information.
7. We will create joint efforts to build their capacity by pairing them with larger-capacity research institution. Another purpose of the Forum is to inform USAID about the needs aspirations and challenges of organizations doing research in Palestine.

Annex C: RPCD Overview Brochure



USAID | MIDDLE EAST

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON
CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

RPCD OVERVIEW

The Regional Partnership for Culture and Development (RPCD) is a three-year, \$7.2 million program funded by USAID/Egypt's Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP). It is implemented through a cooperative agreement with partner FHI 360. The goal of the program is to gather and disseminate information that will improve development efforts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

RPCD directly serves the seven USAID Missions in the MENA region: Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen, supporting them with actionable analysis and research in three focus areas: natural resources management, youth development and engagement, and democracy and governance.

RPCD also aims to create a culture of information sharing among members of the development community in the MENA region, to better plan and implement development projects. RPCD disseminates regional research on development issues, shares best practices and lessons learned from international development programs, and provides live and virtual forums for regional knowledge sharing.

The program has four components:

Component A: Access Available Regional Research

RPCD is creating the Partnership Forum, a network of MENA research organizations and experts which will share information and expertise electronically and in person through national workshops and regional conferences.

Component B: Conduct Research, Evaluations, and Analysis

The program receives requests for information from the seven client Missions, and responds to them rapidly with actionable, practical analysis. Long-term research initiatives are supported through the RPCD grants program.

Component C: Document USAID Lessons Learned and Best Practices

RPCD staff in each of the seven operating countries will work with USAID to capture concise snapshots of existing and recent programming, to identify best practices and lessons learned to inform future initiatives.

Component D: Disseminate Information

Through regular publications, email blasts and its versatile website (www.mena-partnership.info), RPCD improves knowledge sharing and networking among USAID Missions, regional institutions, community groups, and thought leaders. The program ensures that development actors in the MENA region have the most cutting-edge and useful information available.



RPCD focus areas:

Youth Development and Engagement
Natural Resource Management
Democracy and Governance



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Inter-Regional Learning Exchange on

**The Role of Civil Society in Periods of Transition:
*Practices in Citizen Led Innovation and Social Change***

Venue: UN Buffer Zone Nicosia, Cyprus

Date: October 2012

Duration: 2.5 days

Introduction

UNDP as a global development agency has made great strides in its work with civil society. In the past decade the organisation has continued to shift from viewing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as project implementers to key strategic partners engaged in advocacy and policy-making. As regions of recent historical state and citizen transformation, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) and the Regional Bureau for the Arab States (RBAS) have identified an opportunity to facilitate shared experiences and to generate new knowledge between the two geo-political landscapes through the lens of civil society's role in transformative processes.

UNDP in its role of a convenor and a facilitator can contribute to widening the environment for CSO action at the inter-regional level. As part of this effort RBEC and RBAS **will convene a learning forum for exchange on the renewal of Civil Society and of its role in periods of transition**. This inter-regional exchange/conference will be convened in Nicosia, Cyprus reflecting the position of Cyprus as a historical, cultural and geographical crossroad between the two regions. Moreover, Cyprus hosts one of UNDP's most concentrated Civil Society strengthening programmes, reflecting a programmatic juncture which resonates with the priorities for the role of Civil Society in the RBEC and RBAS regions.

The Learning Exchange will focus on three priority areas of clear relevance to the current historical moment in both regions and where an inter-regional dialogue between CSOs can maximize learning and transfer of practical solutions as well as foster future mutual collaboration.

Those areas are:

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation – The role of Civil Society in promoting constructive coexistence between diverse groups and communities whilst supporting the development of pluralistic societies.

Accountability and Responsibility – The role of civil society in fostering healthy and democratic relationships between citizens and the state.

The right to be heard: community voice for representation - The role of civil society in increasing the representation of the diversity of voices and thus contributing to a more pluralistic media landscape.

Context

The Exchange comes at a historic moment, as both regions grapple with the consequences of deep-seated social, economic and political transitions. In the Arab region the citizen-driven process in social-political change has brought to the fore the power of civic movements and civil protests in countries which historically had a weak civil society. The youth-led protest that occurred, first in Tunisia and then Egypt, galvanized every segment of society and were swiftly transformed into popular civil revolutions. They also set in motion similar youth-led civic movements in many of the countries of the Arab region, each with its own unique dynamics and each inducing different responses from the State – ranging from far-reaching reforms which responded to people’s aspirations (eg. Morocco), to armed conflict (Libya/Syria). These unprecedented social and political changes in the Arab region have led to a contagion of transformation. As of January 2012, protests in three countries have led to the removal of their autocratic leaders and other countries have witnessed a dramatic shift in the political landscape, including the introduction of more democratic principles and reshuffling of leadership.

Beyond the question of regime change these civil uprisings testify to a process of constructing “a new” civil society and a new culture of political and civic engagement in Arab societies in which the youth constitute the main actors. Whether in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen or Libya, it is becoming clear that many young people are already engaged in forming new associations, CSOs, and new political parties. One of the principal characteristics of this renewal and revitalization of civil society is the importance attached to the transformation of the existing media (print, radio, and audio-visual) and the emergence of new media, (including social media), which now plays a major role in the transition from authoritarianism towards an open and participatory democracy. In this context, community-based media (e.g. radio), as opposed to state-owned and privately-owned media, has an important role to play but remains largely under-developed in the Arab region.

However, the full the ramifications of the Arab Spring are still unknown and continue to unfold. Although the governing legitimacy of the transformation has not yet concluded, several countries are holding free elections for the first time in decades. New constitutions are in the process of being drafted and legislation aimed at redressing past abuses and instituting reforms are under review. In parallel different social groups (e.g. based on labour or ethnic affiliation) with long-standing demands that were hitherto ignored or denied by former ruling elites, are now articulating their demands in the form of strikes, work stoppages and at times conflict. There is still a dearth of effective mechanisms able to represent diverse interests and manage societal dialogue and social conflict. Thus the sense of optimism which spread through the Arab region

one year ago remains fragile and the reversal of progressive changes are already evident. For example, many of the youth are currently facing increasing violent reaction from the old guard. The result is deep distrust of formal politics on the part of the youth, laced with disappointment and apathy.

Parallels with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (including the former Soviet Union), after the fall of communism resonate powerfully. The transformation from a command social economic and political system to a system based on the free market and liberal democracy has often been challenging and many countries in the region continue to manage difficult change processes. While the period of 20 years may seem long enough to “come to terms” with the socialist legacy, many societies in the RBEC region are still in a transition phase and many countries remain democracy-poor, with weak civil societies and low levels of civic participation. In Eastern Europe and the CIS, civil society is continuing to go through a transition phase, with the complexities linked to the existence of old socialist type mass-organisations , traditional forms of association and the new CSOs that emerged in response to the needs of the newly democratic societies. The “old” and the “new” civil society organisations in the vast majority of the countries of the region operate in parallel with various levels of cooperation (Vesna Ciprus, RBEC Civil Society Note 2010-2013)

In order to support the civil society sector in both regions and sustain the gains in CSO development over the last two decades, some critical issues remain to be addressed. These include: a) legislative framework (the need for an enabling legislative framework), b) CSO sustainability (the need for locally rooted and financially sustainable civil society sector), c) CSO – government relationship (the need to create a space for a constructive government – civil society dialogue), d) CSO capacity (the capacity of CSOs to perform their work in an efficient, effective and transparent manner), and e) regional connectivity (the ability of CSOs to establish and maintain horizontal connections with like-minded organisations and networks). (Blue, Galaty and Green, 2006).

Results and objectives

Within this context the Exchange forum will focus on achieving the following results:

- To allow CSO’s to share, in a structured manner, practical knowledge and tested tools to play an effective role in transitions
- To encourage cross learning through the analysis of selected case studies
- To showcase successful examples of harnessing innovative ideas for social change and ensuring their successful implementation.

Through these objectives it is expected that the learning exchange will result in the following:

- Agreement on a declaration which captures a commitment for inter-regional collaboration between Civil Society Organisations

- Development of a framework for the sustainability of inter regional collaboration including proposals for mobilizing donor support

Conference Venue

The Conference will take place in locations in the United Nations Buffer Zone in Nicosia. This area has 4 venues, all within walking distance of each other: The Home for Cooperation, the Cyprus Community Centre, the Chateau Status Restaurant and the bi-communal rooms at the Ledra Palace Hotel (now the headquarters of the UNFICYP contingent responsible for monitoring the Green Line in Nicosia).

Local institutional and political framework

Plans to host the conference have been discussed with UNDP's official counterparts in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and the government of Cyprus has been informed. The initiative has been discussed with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General who leads the UN Mission in Cyprus and the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General who leads the UN Good Offices mission on the island. The wider UN family in Cyprus has already committed its support to the conference. Preparation for the conference will involve discussions with representatives of the international community in Cyprus and the two regions, including the EC.

Participation

The conference will attract two main categories of delegates:

- 1) **Civil society practitioners:** CSO representatives from Europe and the Arab states at the forefront of their fields in the areas of concern under the conference agenda; and
- 2) **International Development Community:** Representatives from UNDP and other UN agencies, from donor agencies and multilateral organizations/international NGOs from the countries of the RBEC and RBAS regions.

It is expected that the number of delegates will be between 100 and 150. RBEC and RBAS regional centres, along with the Cyprus programme will develop criteria for selection and that country offices will play a key role in identifying participants.

UNDP's civil society partner network in Cyprus (Peace it Together) will act as the local convenors of the conference and will play a significant role in local organisation and management of the conference agenda including a substantive facilitative role.

Format

The format of the Exchange will focus on a hands-on development marketplace. This means that the sessions of the Exchange will be interactive and utilize non-traditional methods for

achieving the exchange objectives. The Exchange will be one major milestone in a process, which is currently being designed in the following manner:

- Development of innovative solutions to challenges relating to the substantive priority areas indicated above. These solutions will emerge during a series of Social innovation camps which will take place before the inter-regional exchange in Nicosia.
- The Nicosia event will be the venue for showcasing the innovative solutions and providing a space for inter-regional civil society consultations which will de facto act as a development marketplace for knowledge and learning.
- Case studies, tools and knowledge products will be identified before the conference and selected resource persons will be asked to lead micro-workshops on each case study.
- The result of the innovation showcasing and case studies will be pulled together to form a consensus on a framework for forward looking inter-regional collaboration and partnerships.

Natural Resources Management

1. What are the linkages between population growth, water scarcity, and agriculture development/food security? How has climate change impacted these over the last five years?
2. What is the impact of land and water resource ownership on human security and what are the peace dynamics of water distribution in the MENA countries?

Youth Engagement and Development

1. What are the successful and unsuccessful approaches to target unemployed and underemployed youth in the MENA region?
2. In the context of the Arab Spring, what are the most innovative approaches and best practices to address social exclusion of youth, gender equity and political violence in each country in the MENA region?

Democracy and Governance

1. What are the current realities, benefits and limits of youth civic engagement in decentralization and local governance, including within local councils? What is the effect of local governance on the recent political transition in the countries?
2. What is the role of the civil society organizations and the private sector in the delivery of government services?